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REMAINS OF 15 U.S. SERVICEMEN RECOVERED IN NORTH KOREA

Remains believed to be those of 15 Americans missing in action from the Korean War will be repatriated Saturday, Korea time, in a formal ceremony at Pyongyang, North Korea.

This is the largest number of remains recovered in one operation since this joint recovery work began in North Korea in 1996.

The remains will be flown on a U.S. Air Force aircraft from Pyongyang to Yokota Air Base, Japan, escorted by a uniformed U.S. honor guard. A United Nations Command (UNC) repatriation ceremony will be held in Yokota, then the remains will be flown to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. Following a U.S. Pacific Command ceremony there, they will be transferred to the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI) for forensic examination and positive identification.

A joint U.S.-North Korean investigation team recovered the remains from former battlefields in the North Korean counties of Unsan and Kujang, approximately 60 miles north of Pyongyang. The 20-person U.S. team is composed primarily of specialists from CILHI.

This recovery operation is the 16th in North Korea since 1996. One more is scheduled for this year, and is set to conclude on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2000. Joint U.S. - North Korean teams have recovered 50 sets of remains so far this year, and 92 since the joint operations began. Five of these have been positively identified, while many others are in the final stages of the forensic identification process.

Of the 88,000 U.S. servicemembers missing in action from all conflicts, more than 8,100 are from the Korean War.