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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LARGEST MIA RECOVERY OPERATION CONCLUDES

Remains believed to be those of 15 American soldiers, missing in action from the Korean War, will be repatriated on Veterans Day, Saturday, Nov. 11, Korea time. This is the largest number of remains recovered during a single joint recovery operation.

The remains will be flown on a U.S. Air Force aircraft from Pyongyang, North Korea, under escort of a uniformed U.S. honor guard to Yokota Air Base, Japan, where a United Nations Command repatriation ceremony will be held.

A joint U.S.-North Korea team operating in Unsan and Kujang counties, about 60 miles north of Pyongyang, recovered the remains during an operation that began Oct. 17. The area was the site of battles between Communist Chinese forces and the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division, and 2nd and 25th Infantry Divisions in November 1950.

The 20-person U.S. team is composed primarily of specialists from the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii (CILHI).

This year's work in North Korea was the most productive to-date, recovering 65 sets of remains during five operations. As a result of negotiated agreements with North Korea, led by the Defense Department's POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), 107 sets of remains have been recovered in 17 joint recovery operations since 1996. Five servicemen have been positively identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors. Another 10 are nearing the final stages of the forensic identification process.

Officials at DPMO have initiated contact with North Korean officials to begin preliminary planning for formal discussions in December to establish a schedule of operations for 2001.

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