

No. 751-00
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2000

U.S., NORTH KOREA REACH AGREEMENT ON MIA REMAINS RECOVERY

U.S. and North Korean negotiators have reached an agreement for 2001 under which joint teams will recover the remains of Americans missing in action from the Korean War, marking the sixth consecutive year that the United States will conduct remains recovery operations in North Korea.

The agreement, following four days of negotiations in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, led by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, expands similar operations that have been conducted since 1996.

The 2001 agreement significantly expands the size of the U.S. teams, increases the length of U.S. activities and adds areas of operations around the Chosin Reservoir to the current areas in Unsan and Kujang counties, approximately 60 miles north of the capital of Pyongyang.

Ten operations will be conducted in the three areas between April and November. Each operation will last 32 days - up from 26 days each in 2000. Repatriation of remains will follow immediately thereafter. The increase in the number of days essentially equates to 60 additional days, or two complete operations, beyond the levels set in the 2000 schedules. The U.S. component of the joint teams was expanded to 28 members from 20.

The agreement also establishes a procedure for sharing records and data related to witness interviews, potential burial locations and other information not previously made available by the North Koreans.

During the five operations in 2000 in the Unsan and Kujang areas, joint teams recovered 65 sets of remains. Forty-two were recovered in the four previous years. Five have been positively identified, with another 10 nearing the final stages of identification. More than 8,100 servicemen are missing in action from the Korean War.

Operations in 2001 will include areas of investigation near Kaechon, approximately 18 miles south of Unsan and Kujang. Kaechon includes an area nicknamed the "Gauntlet," where the U.S. Army's 2nd Infantry Division conducted its famous fighting withdrawal along a narrow road through six miles of Chinese ambush positions during November and December 1950. More than 950 missing in action soldiers are believed to be located in these three areas.

The Chosin Reservoir campaign left approximately 750 Marines and soldiers missing in action from both the east and west sides of the reservoir in northeastern North Korea.

The field teams are comprised primarily of specialists from the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii (CILHI), where the forensic identification work is done after the remains are repatriated. In addition to the mission of recovering and identifying remains from the Korea War, CILHI has the same responsibility in accounting for MIAs from the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and WWII.

More information on U.S. recovery efforts is available at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or <http://www.cilhi.army.mil>.

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