



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. SOLDIER MISSING FROM KOREAN WAR IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Cpl. Agustin Alvarez, 22, of Los Angeles, Calif., will be buried on Dec. 17, in his hometown. In November 1950, Alvarez and soldiers from the Heavy Mortar Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, were forced to withdraw during a battle on the eastern side of the Chosin Reservoir, near Kaljon-ri, North Korea. Alvarez and many other men were taken as prisoners of war at that time.

Following the end of the Korean War, returned prisoners reported that Alvarez had died from wounds and lack of medical care while in enemy hands, sometime in December 1950. In the fall of 1954, during Operation Glory, Communist forces turned over remains of U.S. servicemen who died in the Korean War, but Alvarez was not included among those remains.

Between 1991 and 1994, North Korea gave the United States 208 boxes of remains believed to contain the remains of 200-400 U.S. servicemen. North Korean documents, turned over with some of the boxes, indicated that some of the human remains were recovered near Kaljon-ri, where Alvarez been held as a prisoner of war. Metal identification tags that were included with the remains bore Alvarez's name and service number.

Along with forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and AFDIL used mitochondrial DNA – which matched that of Alvarez's nephew—in the identification of the remains.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1169.