



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 Pfc. Jimmie J. Gaitan, 21, of San Antonio, Texas, will be buried on Nov. 26, in his hometown. Gaitan was serving with the Clearing Company, 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, when he was reported missing in action in Feb. 1951, near Hoengsong, South Korea. The 2nd Infantry Division had been fighting to block Chinese advances in the area when Gaitan was captured. Gaitan, and other prisoners, were forced to march north in stages, covering over 300 miles before reaching Changsong on the south bank of the Yalu River in North Korea.

Following the end of the Korean War, it was reported that Gaitan, along with more than 400 other servicemen had died in the Changsong prisoner of war camps. Interviews with returned prisoners of war confirmed that Gaitan had died of malnutrition in Camp 1 near Changsong, in late May, 1951. In the fall of 1954, during Operation Glory, China turned over remains they claimed to be those of U.S. servicemen who died in the Korean War. At the time the Army was unable to identify Gaitan and the remains were buried as "unknown" at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

In 2011, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) re-examined the records and concluded that because of advances in identification technology, the remains could be exhumed and identified. Scientists from the JPAC were able to analyze the remains and identified Gaitan.

Along with forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the JPAC used dental records and radiography in the identification of Gaitan's 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) 699-1420.