



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. SOLDIER MISSING IN ACTION 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. Aaron Pearce, 23, of Johnston, N.C., will be buried on Oct. 8 in Kenly, N.C. In late April of 1950, Pearce and the 25th Infantry Division were advancing north of the Han'tan River in South Korea when Chinese forces attacked, in what came to be known as the "Spring Offensive." After days of heavy fighting, the 25th Infantry Division was pushed back to Seoul, Korea. Pearce and many other soldiers were reported missing in action as a result of this engagement.

In 1952, U.S. Graves Registration Service personnel recovered military clothing and human remains near the area that had been covered by the 25th Infantry Division during the Spring Offensive. At the time the Army was unable to identify Pearce, and the remains were buried as "unknown" at the United Nations Military Cemetery in Tanggok, South Korea. In 1954, the remains were exhumed and reanalyzed. No identification was possible given the technology of the time and the remains were once again interred as "unknown" at the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

In 2010, analysts from the Department of Defense's Central Identification Lab re-examined the records for all unaccounted-for losses in the vicinity of where the unknown remains had been recovered, and exhumed the remains for further analysis. Military clothing and metal identification tags that were included with the remains, along with improved technology and methods of analysis helped to determine the identity of the remains.

Among forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command used dental records and radiography in the identification of Pearce'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) 699-1169.