



News Release

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Soldier Missing From Korean War Accounted For

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

Army Cpl. Leland F. Smith, 18, of Angola, Ind., will be buried Dec. 8, in Angola, Ind. On the night of Nov. 27, 1950, elements of the 25th Infantry Division (ID) and 35th Infantry Regiment (IR) were engaged in fighting when Chinese forces attacked their position near the Ch'ongch'on River, North Korea. Due to extensive losses and casualties, Smith's unit began a fighting withdrawal south. On Nov. 28, 1950, Smith was reported missing in action.

In late 1953, as part of a prisoner of war exchange, known as "Operation Big Switch," a returning U.S. service member told debriefers that Smith was captured by enemy forces and later died of malnutrition in February 1951 at prisoner of war Camp 5, in Pyokdong. In 1954, a military review board changed his status from missing in action to presumed dead.

Between 1991 and 1994, North Korea turned over to the U.S. 208 boxes of human remains believed to contain more than 400 U.S. servicemen who fought during the war. North Korean documents, turned over with some of the boxes, indicated that some of the remains were recovered from the vicinity where Smith was believed to have died.

On Oct. 6, 2000, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC)/Democratic People's Republic of Korea (D.P.R.K.) team excavated a purported burial site near the Kujang, North Korea, recovering remains.

In identifying of Smith's remains, scientists from the JPAC and Armed Forces DNA Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including two forms of DNA analysis: mitochondrial DNA, which matched his sister, half-sister, nieces and nephew, and autosomal Short Tandem Report DNA (auSTR), which matched his sisters.

Today, 7,868 Americans remain unaccounted for from the Korean War. Using modern technology, identifications continue to be made from remains that were previously turned over by North Korean officials or recovered by American teams.

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

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