

POW/MIA Update

Army Cpl. Cletus R. Lies, 26, of Bremen, N.D., was buried on July 3, in New Rockford, N.D. In late 1950, Lies was assigned to the Medical Company, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT), east of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. On Nov. 29, 1950, the 31st RCT, known historically as Task Force Faith, began a fighting withdrawal to a more defensible position. Following the battle, Lies was declared killed in action.

Between 1991 and 1994, North Korea turned over to the U.S. 208 boxes of human remains believed to contain 350 - 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 Chongriyang-ri, a village near the area where Lies was believed to have died.

To identify Lies' remains, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including DNA comparisons. Two forms of DNA were used: mitochondrial DNA, which matched his maternal-line sister and brother, and Y-STR DNA, which matched his paternal-line brother.

Today, 7,882 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 from North Korea by American teams

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