

The Washington Times



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60 years later, Korean War veteran's remains returned to family

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The flag-covered casket of Artie Hodapp is carried by Korean War veterans at the St. Joseph's cemetery during funeral services in Freeport, Ill., on Wednesday. More than half a century after he died in Korea, the bones of the young soldier are returned after being matched with relatives' DNA. (Associated Press)

By - Associated Press

5:19 p.m., Sunday, May 29, 2011



Frances Meyers, 88, receives the flag that covered her brother

FREEPORT, Ill. — For 60 years, Artie Hodapp's family agonized over a heart-rending mystery: Where had the young man, known for his rollicking sense of humor, come to rest after dying in the Korean War?

They couldn't know that the answer was among 17 boxes of remains that the North Koreans turned over nearly two decades ago. Nor could they know that the DNA the Army collected from his surviving siblings several years ago would finally help solve the riddle.

Hodapp's long journey home came to an end last week at a Catholic cemetery in northern Illinois, where he was buried with full military honors beneath a grave marker his sister bought despite not knowing where he was.

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Artie Hodapp's casket from Korean War veteran Dwight Allmon during services in Freeport, Ill., on Wednesday. (Associated Press)

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"We waited all this while," said Frances Meyers, 88, remembering her parents and siblings who died without knowing Hodapp's fate. "The rest are all gone, but I've got to feel good about it for them too, the rest of the family. Everybody wanted him back but there was nothing we could do about it."

Six decades later, Hodapp is no longer a forgotten soldier of the so-called Forgotten War, but an example of the U.S. Defense Department's stubborn efforts to account for young men lost in long-ago battles. Through a review of Army reports and the memories of a fellow POW tracked down in New Jersey, the Associated Press was able to reconstruct the conditions under which the young man starved to death in a prisoner of war camp.

The story of Arthur Leon Aloysius Hodapp comes partly from a soldier held in the same camp, who described the pasty cattle feed given to prisoners, the agonizing dysentery and the "give-up-itis" to which some men succumbed. Other clues surfaced in a cousin's chance meeting with a former POW in Minnesota who had Hodapp's name and date of death scratched in his boot. Finally, U.S. military scientists were able to link his siblings' DNA to Hodapp's dental records.

Army officials announced the identification just shy of 60 years after Hodapp's April 23, 1951, capture by Chinese Communists in heavy fighting 40 miles north of Seoul. He died July 3, 1951, in or near the POW camp, which his family didn't know until the war ended two years later.

Hodapp is one of just 162 missing soldiers from the Korean War who has been identified since the 1950s. He is one of the about 90 service members identified each year by the U.S. military from among tens of thousands still missing from World War II, Korea and Vietnam — including 7,995 from Korea.

"We don't want any of our guys lost over there forever," said Clyde Fruth, founder and commander of Freeport's chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association, who chokes up when talking about Hodapp because of his own Korean combat experience. "All the guys over there, they all say that if they die, they don't want to be left over there."

After three older brothers served in World War II, Artie Hodapp enlisted in February 1946, serving two years in Germany. When he returned, he joined the reserves. On July 2, 1950, when Frances and Edmund Meyers were celebrating their first wedding anniversary, Hodapp showed up with a gift and a farewell — he would be in Korea by October.

In April 1951, Hodapp's 5th Regimental Combat Team, attached to the 24th Infantry Division, was part of a front fighting off the "Spring Offensive," a push to capture Seoul by Chinese Communists who had invaded to aid North Korea. Hodapp did not return.

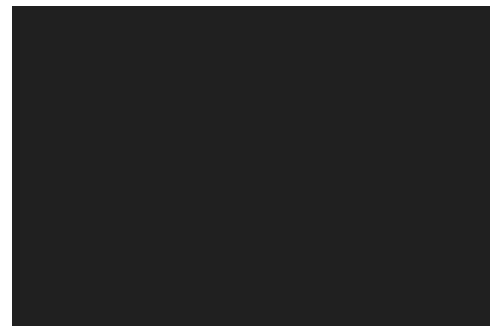
By August 1953, Army documents reviewed by the AP indicate, five soldiers had confirmed that Hodapp died at Mining Camp No. 1. It was a temporary camp also known as "Death Valley," according to Lewis H. Carlson's oral history, "Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War."

Harry Borie, a medic, was captured in the same battle as Hodapp and

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Obama: 'Nation owes a debt to its fallen heroes'

By Dave Boyer - The Washington Times

President Obama marked Memorial Day on Monday by laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery and calling on the nation to reflect on its "debt to its fallen heroes." Published 12:52 p.m. May 30, 2011



Pubs, grocery stores first to reopen in Japan's disaster zone

By Christopher Johnson - Special to The Washington Times
In many parts of the tsunami disaster zone, the first Japanese shops to reopen have been pubs and grocery stores. Published 5:49 p.m. May 30, 2011



Memorial Day parade remembers heroes, prefaces 9/11 anniversary

By Claire Courchane - The

Washington Times
Thousands of spectators braved the heat Monday in Washington, D.C., to honor members of the U.S. military at the annual National Memorial Day Parade. Published 7:01

was held initially at the Mining Camp. Now 81 and retired after careers in the Army and pharmaceutical sales, Mr. Borie doesn't remember Hodapp. But Army documents suggest he knew him at the time. A report of an Army interview with another former prisoner, reviewed by the AP, said he learned about Hodapp's death from Mr. Borie.

The Army declared Hodapp's remains "nonrecoverable" in 1956 and efforts to retrieve American remains were stymied through decades of the Cold War. But between 1990 and 1994, North Korea handed over 208 boxes of remains. Hodapp's were among 17 boxes transferred on July 12, 1993.

"It's incredibly laborious, and sadly it doesn't happen as fast as it does on these TV shows," Defense spokesman Larry Greer said.

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