



Ministry of Patriots and
Veterans Affairs

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Bringing Back Every Last Hero Across the Globe” MPVA Plans to Repatriate Remains of Independence Activists in Brazil

- *For the first time, a status survey was conducted on the gravesites of three Korean independence activists in South America: Kim Gi-joo and Han Eung-gyu in Brazil, and Jang Deok-gi in Argentina.*
- *In addition, a status survey was carried out on the gravesites of independence activists Kim Jae-eun, Won Dae-sung, and Jung Sung-jang, who are buried in the United States.*
- *The Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs has identified a total of 346 gravesites of independence activists in 18 countries. Out of these, the remains of 148 have been successfully repatriated to Korea.*

[Korea, April 4] Next year, marking the 80th anniversary of liberation, the remains of independence activists Kim Gi-joo and Han Eung-gyu, who are buried in Brazil on the opposite face of the Earth, will be repatriated to Korea.

The Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs (Minister Kang Jung-ai) announced in March that for the first time, a status survey was conducted on three gravesites of independence activists buried in Latin America such as Brazil and Argentina, and that it will repatriate the remains of the two members of the Korean Liberation Army from Brazil on the occasion of the 80th Anniversary of Liberation on August 15th, 2025.

This status survey was conducted to confirm the families' intention to repatriate the remains of the two national heroes, who are each buried in cemeteries in São Paulo and Curitiba, Brazil, respectively, by visiting the sites to check on the graves' maintenance status and discussing the detailed time and procedures with the families and local consulates.

Kim Gi-joo joined the replacement depot of the Korean Liberation Army Headquarters after escaping from the Japanese army and carried out independence activities, while Han Eung-gyu joined the 3rd squad of the 2nd force of the Liberation Army after escaping from the Japanese army and engaged in intelligence gathering as well as clandestine recruiting of Korean soldiers in the Japanese army.

In particular, Kim Gi-joo, who is a graduate of the Military Academy's 5th class, later received the Chungmu Order of Military Merit for his distinguished services during the Korean War, including in the battles of Hwaryeongjang and An'gang district. Both activists immigrated to Brazil, Kim Gi-joo in 1971 and Han Eung-gyu in 1972, and passed away in 2013 and 2003, respectively.

Additionally, the gravesite of independence activist Jang Deok-gi, also a member of the Korean Liberation Army buried in the Korean section of the La Oracion Cemetery near Buenos Aires, Argentina, was inspected. In the case of Jang Deok-gi, it was decided to continue to manage the site through regular visits in cooperation with the Korean Veterans Association in Argentina, according to the wishes of his family.

Jang Deok-gi was active in the 2nd force of the Liberation Army and joined the 1st team of the Pyeongando section of the Korean Liberation Army in May 1945 after receiving special training through the United States Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Liberation came while he was awaiting domestic infiltration operations. He immigrated to Argentina in 1977 and passed away in 1996.

Alongside the status survey in South America, MPVA also conducted surveys on the gravesites of independence activists buried in the United States, including Kim Jae-eun and Won Dae-sung in Georgia, and Jung Sung-jang in Tennessee.

In this process, MPVA discussed future gravesite management and support measures with local consulates, the Nashville Korean Association, and cemetery management offices, and the families of Kim Jae-eun and Jung Sung-jang were informed about the methods and procedures for the repatriation of remains. The families plan to decide on the repatriation after reaching a consensus among themselves.

Minister Kang Jung-ai expressed the significance of being able to repatriate the remains of Kim Gi-joo and Han Eung-gyu from Brazil and emphasized that MPVA will make every effort to prepare for the repatriation so that the two heroes can rest in peace in their homeland with national respect. She also stated that the status survey of independence activists' gravesites overseas, including those in South America, demonstrates the government's firm commitment to repatriating every last hero to their homeland and pledged to continue to devote efforts to honor the dedication of independence activists and their families.

Since the early 1990s, MPVA has been identifying and inspecting the location and management status of gravesites of independence activists buried worldwide, identifying a total of 346 gravesites in 18 countries including the United States, China, and Russia, and has repatriated the remains of 148 independence activists from 9 countries, including the United States, China, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

Attachment 1: Profiles of the Independence Heroes







Attachment 2: Photographs of the Gravesites

Attachment 3: Status of Independence Activists Buried Abroad

For further information, please contact the International Spokesperson Mr. Seongwon Lee (reasonwon@korea.kr / +82-44-202-5021) of the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs.

ATTACHMENT 1

PROFILES OF THE INDEPENDENCE HEROES

NAME	AWARD	GRAVESITE	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
 Jang Deok-gi (張德祺) Nov 11, 1921 ~ Dec 17, 1996	Patriotic Medal (Order of Merit for National Foundation, 1990)	Korean Gravesite within La Oración Cemetery Park, Buenos Aires, Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Served in 2nd Force, Korean Liberation Army - Received US OSS (Office of Strategic Services) training, May 1945 - Assigned to Team 1, Pyeongando Section, Homeland Recovery Forces - Saw liberation while standing by for infiltration operations into Korea
 Kim Gi-joo (金基周) Nov 21, 1924 ~ Mar 28, 2013	National Medal (Order of Merit for National Foundation, 1990)	Congonhas Cemetery, São Paulo, Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Escaped from the Japanese army - Conducted operations with the guerrilla unit of the Chinese central army - Enlisted in the replacement depot of the Korean Liberation Army headquarters
 Han Eung-gyu (韓應奎) Feb 1, 1920 ~ Jun 19, 2003	National Medal (Order of Merit for National Foundation, 1990)	Iguacu Cemetery Park, Curitiba, Paraná Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enlisted in the Gangnam Squad, 3rd Unit, 2nd Force - Conducted intelligence operations and clandestine recruiting activities
 Kim Jae-eun (金在殷) Jan 9, 1923 ~ Nov 4, 2019	National Medal (Order of Merit for National Foundation, 2002)	North Atlanta Memorial Park, Atlanta, Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Posted at frontal lines in May 1944, after being conscripted by the Japanese army - Escaped from the Japanese army in Oct 1944 - Enlisted in the 2nd Force, Korean Liberation Army - Saw liberation while undergoing OSS training
 Won Dae-sung (元大成) Mar 3, 1916 ~ Jan 5, 2010	Presidential Citation (2004)	Peachtree Memorial Park, Norcross, Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Placed on the wanted list in 1933, accused for conducting enlightenment movement for rural communities in Suncheon, Jeonnam Province - Entered Pyeongyang Higher Biblical School in May 1934 and participated in the Students' United Enlightenment Movement in Pyeongyang - Dropped out of school in Mar 1936 due to enhanced probation of the Japanese police - Later continued enlightenment movements and movement to refuse the forced worship at Japanese shrines - Caught by the police in Feb 20, 1938 and lived 8 months in prison
 Jung Sung-jang (鄭聖璋) Dec 24, 1923 ~ Dec 1, 2020	Presidential Citation (2008)	Nashville, Tennessee, USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joined the Josun National Liberation Cooperation Party in 1944 - Contributed to the expansion and enhancement of the party by recruiting new members - Caught by the police in Dec 1944 - Released late July, 1945

ATTACHMENT 2

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE GRAVESITES



▲ Jang Deok-gi's Grave (Argentina)



▲ Kim Gi-joo's Grave (Brazil)



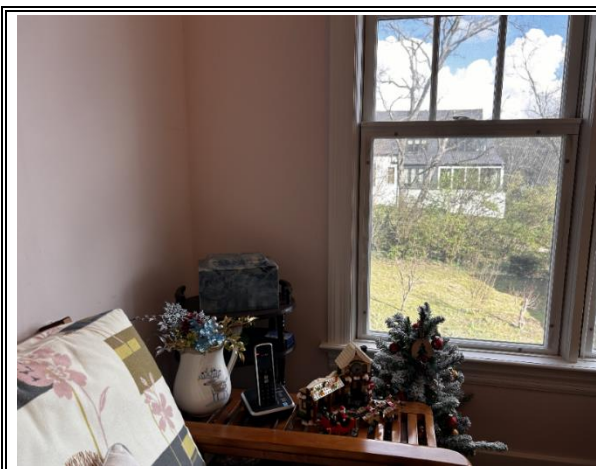
▲ Han Eung-gyu's Grave (Brazil)



▲ Kim Jae-eun's Grave (USA)



▲ Won Dae-sung's Grave (USA)



▲ Jung Sung-jang's Urn (USA)

ATTACHMENT 3**STATUS OF INDEPENDENCE ACTIVISTS BURIED ABROAD**

(As of March 2024)

COUNTRY	TOTAL (a+b)	OVERSEAS (a)	REPATRIATED (b)
Total	346	198	148
China	130	48	82
USA	164	119	45
Russia	13	12	1
Japan	17	6	11
Kazakhstan	6	3	3
Uzbekistan	3	3	-
Kyrgyzstan	1	1	-
France	1	-	1
Germany	1	1	-
Swiss	1	-	1
Canada	1	1	-
Mexico	1	1	-
Brazil	2	2	-
Argentina	1	1	-
Taiwan	1	-	1
Cuba	1	-	1
Netherlands	1	-	1
Singapore	1	-	1