

Last bodies returned; ID efforts begin

By GERALD CONNELL

POWER AIR FORCE, EAST
The bodies of 11 American soldiers killed by enemy fire in a battle here in the Pacific and military aircraft shot down by enemy fighters were returned to the United States today. The bodies were flown from an Air Force base here

plane on the right of the aircraft from the wreckage of the plane where the bodies were found. The bodies were returned to the United States today. The bodies were flown from an Air Force base here

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Military task force moves out of Guyana

By PETER ARNETT
AP Special Correspondent

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (AP) — The U.S. military task force, its gruesome job at Jonestown completed, began moving out of Guyana Sunday. Black smoke hung over the airport here as the troops burned uniforms, boots and tents that might have been contaminated by the decaying bodies at the site of the mass suicide-murders of American cultists.

The contingent's commander, Col. William I. Gordon, said a total of 909 bodies were found at Jonestown. But in Dover, Del., where the bodies were taken, officials said they had counted 912 corpses.

Others slain in the weekend of violence were Rep. Leo J. Ryan, D-Calif., three newsmen and a Jonestown woman killed in an ambush at the Port Kaituma airstrip, and four cult members murdered at the sect's Georgetown headquarters.

The body of the one Guyanese was reported among the dead in Jonestown. The identity of this victim, the first

known non-American among the bodies, was not known.

The evacuation of bodies was finished Saturday night, with the departure of the last American C-141, carrying 83 caskets containing more than 180 bodies, many of them children, to the mortuary at Dover Air Force Base, Del.

"No one has ever been involved in something as massive as this before and it was a distasteful task," Gordon said.

He said all American equipment and personnel have been moved out of the Jonestown area and should be on the way back to bases in the Panama Canal Zone and the United States by Monday morning.

American helicopters with loudspeakers had been flying over the dense jungle near Jonestown broadcasting appeals for Americans to return to the settlement. "Maybe there are one or two people still missing in the jungle," Gordon said, "but we can't be sure about that."

Air Force Capt. John Moscatelli, the task force spokesman, said the bodies "appeared to be in rings or circles with

the kids in the center and the larger adults on the outside."

Except for cult leader the Rev. Jim Jones and two women, all three of whom died of bullet wounds, none of the bodies showed any signs of death other than by poison, Moscatelli said.

U.S. Embassy officials here said survivors not involved as material witnesses or suspects in the slayings could return to the United States as soon as Guyanese officials release them, but they could not say when that would be. Guyanese officials were not available for comment Sunday.

One cult member, Miguel De Pina, 64, apparently left by commercial flight for the U.S. Sunday. De Pina was in a Georgetown hospital at the time of the slayings. His grandson, Michael Woodward, of Long Beach, Calif., came to Georgetown to escort him back.

Richard Dwyer, second-in-command at the U.S. Embassy, was released from the hospital late Saturday. He was recovering from a gunshot wound suffered in the ambush of Ryan's party by member of Jones' American sect, the Peoples Temple.

An embassy spokesman said Guyanese officials turned over the passports of more than 850 Americans at the settlement, along with a three-inch-thick stack of Social Security checks, some of which had been endorsed.

He said the embassy informed the Guyanese government that the embassy would take charge of the property in Jonestown, which had a closed-circuit television station, a radio transmitter and receiver, agricultural machinery, a sawmill, a soap factory and other equipment as well as the personal belongings of the residents.

A Guyanese spokesman said the Jonestown area is under police guard with a full-time police post inside the otherwise deserted settlement.

Acknowledging the value of the built-up community, Guyanese Information Minister Shirley Field-Ridley said the government would like to reopen an agricultural project there but probably will not permit the Peoples Temple or other religious organization to run it. "We would prefer that it be managed by Guyanese," she said.

Pact with chaos: what really happened in Guyana?

By SID MOODY

And

VICTORIA GRAHAM

Associated Press Writers

"It's a bleedin' queer place, that stinkin' forest" — Smithers, in Eugene O'Neill's "Emperor Jones."

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" — verse from Matthew 25 used on Peoples Temple letterhead.

Friday's supper was Sloppy Joes with pork. Saturday morning the children watched "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" projected by the camp videotape machine. The end came at nightfall when something at the very essence of humanity collapsed.

Only the jungle and its beats and its beasts and serpents remained to be a witness to the vision of the Abyss.

Ask why 800 or so people obediently took their own lives at their prophet's behest. The answer can only lie in another, deeper jungle of the human mind.

We are left with the facts, imperfect messengers. They portray a gathering crescendo which some had foreseen and even predicted before it culminated in a pact with Chaos, the god of disorder, at Jonestown, Guyana, on November 18, in the year of our Lord, 1978.

Across the field a curious neighbor watched little Jimmy Jones at play with his friends in a barn. He was prodding them into marching with blows from a stick.

"You know," the man said to his wife, "he's either gonna do a lot of good, or he's gonna end up like Hitler."

That was in Lynn, Ind., home of 900 souls guarded by that old-time religion in its neat white churches. Klan country, too. Black folk were nervous about showing their faces after sundown.

A porched white frame house with a backyard of pets and fowl was the Jones place. Father: James Sr., disabled vet, part-time rail hand, quiet, often absent. And a Klansman. Mother: Lynette, factory worker, devoted Democrat and Methodist, fiery in defense of her only

son. And he, depression-born in 1930? In cracked and clouded photos, a choir boy in one. In another, Peck's Bad Boy, grinning, olive-skinned, high cheekbones, straight black hair. Lynette was part Cherokee.

Don't omit Myrtle Kennedy, a neighbor who cared for Jimmy while his mother was working. She saw to it that he regularly attended the Church of the Nazarene. Jimmy Jones was to call her his spiritual mother.

School record: "Very reserved," recalled a schoolmate. "Jim's six-syllable vocabulary astounds us all," said the yearbook of the high school he attended in nearby Richmond.

College: "Weird, maladjusted and plain unfriendly," said Ken Lemons, a roommate at Indiana University. He'd poke Lemons with hatpins through his mattress.

Jones eventually dropped out and got his degree — years later — in education from Butler University.

Career prognosis: Religion, probably in the Bible Belt.

Helpmate: a new wife, Marceline Baldwin, a nurse four years older than he. He had met her while working off-hours as an orderly during his high school days.

The couple moved to Indianapolis in 1949. Jimmy had a flair for down-home preaching. With a difference; his preaching was interracial. He and Marceline began adopting children of different races. Eight, ultimately.

There were rocks and jeers. Marceline was spat on. Jimmy endured. Prospered, even, with his message of equality, brotherhood and socialism.

For his first church he raised money by selling imported monkeys door to door for \$29 apiece. His sermons began to fall on more fruitful soil. Converts opened their hearts and their wallets.

In 1955 Jim Jones opened the Peoples Temple. It had a soup kitchen, clothes for the needy. Jimmy started two nursing homes. He led in desegregating several restaurants and a theater. This brought hate from some, admiration from others.

Six years later, Indianapolis named

Jim Jones head of its human rights commission. He swapped his old Ford for a Cadillac, black. He began swapping real estate.

And Jones' Peoples Temple grew. Edward Mueller's mother, Esther, was among those who joined. Later, she confided to her son, "He just wanted money and power. His hands were too good for work."

Harbingers: church members were expected to turn over their property to the Temple. Many did. Mueller's mother gave Jones \$25,000 and the profits from the sale of her furniture. Nursing home patients were expected to turn over their Social Security checks. Dorothea Hindman once visited her mother in one of Jones' nursing homes.

"My mother was tied to a chair and eight old women were sleeping in one room. No wonder neighbors heard women screaming at night," she said.

But the Temple was in thrall. Jones

said he was a prophet of God, then Christ Himself. To prove it, he performed miracles. Cured cancers, he said.

His sidekicks would say they had cancer, Mueller recalled. "They'd go to the bathroom and come back with this glob. Actually raw chicken liver. Everybody cheered."

But no miracles could cure troubles he was getting into with the Internal Revenue Service over two of his Temple properties. Jones' world darkened, and he became convinced that the larger world, too, faced disaster, atomic holocaust.

Then he read a magazine article listing nine of the world's safest places from nuclear fallout. One was in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The other, Ukiah, Calif. Jones sent a friend to scout Ukiah. Jones went to Brazil. That was in 1961. He stayed there two years, a missionary in the jungle. Once he made a side trip to Guyana.

Back home again in Indiana he was ordained by the Disciples of Christ in 1964. His healings and dealings began inspiring catcalls instead of faith. Rev. Jones sensed the omens and preached that the end of the world was coming on July 15, 1967. He would not be in Indianapolis to meet it. He would go to that place in California the magazine had said was safe.

And he did.

The world didn't end after Jones and 150 of his faithful settled into the hamlet of Redwood Valley outside of Ukiah, 150 miles north of San Francisco. But, amid the vineyards, orchards and coastal forests a new world opened up.

Pouring his old-time religion into new bottles, Jones flourished. By the early 1970s the Temple claimed 5,000 members. The Indianapolis techniques were repeated with one difference: In a county with a thin population, Jones could deliver a disciplined 15 percent of

the turnout in an off-year election.

Temple members now were businessmen, community figures. They built themselves a new church, redwood with stained glass windows. And a swimming pool.

Rev. Jones took his message nationwide, crossing the country in bus caravans. He even stopped off in Indianapolis and performed some more cancer cures. He was a Pied Piper to the restless, the rootless, the reckless.

Dr. Norman Egger, a California psychologist, was to say that the appeal of a man like Jim Jones is a silent call to those who are "seeking an escape from freedom. They are people in search of a return to the comfort of childhood, escape from adult responsibility, a search for security in an individual who relieves them of making decisions. They seek a charismatic leader who can make cosmos out of chaos."

"All of us want to be children again but are not willing to give up that much freedom." Such rare leaders as Jesus and even Hitler, Egger said, represent an all-embracing certitude and escape from chaos.

Rhoda Johnson, only 16, left Indianapolis in 1970 in heed of Jones' message. "I was like a single ant in the whole world. I was nothing going nowhere. I was bored and unhappy at

home," she said. "The Joneses made me feel like I was someone. Just the sound of his voice made you feel like you had power."

And, slowly, that was what Rev. Jones began to exercise over his flock: power.

Rhoda Johnson was whipped with a belt three times for such sins as phoning her parents. There was no reason to call, Jones explained; he was God. What else did anyone need?

Tommy Kice, 4, wouldn't eat all his food on a camping trip. Jones flayed him with a belt and ordered him to eat. Tommy threw up. Jones made him eat the vomit.

A Ukiah woman refused to join the Temple when her husband did. He would turn over his \$300 paycheck. She objected.

"Jones wanted my mind, and I wouldn't give it," she recalled. "He wanted my kids for someone else to raise, and I wouldn't give them up. He said we should be willing to die for him, and I'm not dying for anyone."

Jones forbade her husband to have sex with her and assigned him a new partner. The marriage dissolved.

Elmer Mertle quit his job in the Bay area, turned over the proceeds from the sale of his house to Jones and moved to Ukiah with his wife, Jeannie. They had signed powers of attorney to Jones. At one point, Jeannie Mertle said, "My husband and I would have been willing to kill for Jones."

Kill?

As his flock multiplied, Jones looked

for greener pastures in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Grace Stoen, a woman whose husband, Tim, became an assistant district attorney in San Francisco, said Jones told her that establishing a church in Los Angeles "was worth \$15,000-\$20,000 a weekend."

A bus would drive south from Ukiah every weekend, stopping off for five-hour services in the two cities and returning with Jones sealed with the collection in an armored compartment in the rear of the bus.

Jones moved his headquarters in 1971 to a black section of San Francisco where he lived simply. To raise funds the church sold pens and prayer cloths with pictures of Jones on them. A big seller at \$5 was a locket with a picture of Jones on one side and Marcelline on the other.

On a grander stage, Jones raised his sights.

The church established an impressive array of benefits: a free clinic, a legal aid office, a free dining hall, a drug

rehabilitation program. All without any government or foundation assistance.

Jones' activism reached beyond the church community. Members demonstrated against the jailing of reporters in Los Angeles and Fresno, donating \$4,000 for the defense of one. They set up a fund for widows of slain policemen, even gave \$2,000 to keep an animal clinic from closing.

On Memorial Day 1977 they marched onto the Golden Gate Bridge, from which some 600 persons have leaped to their deaths. Jones demanded that an anti-suicide fence be built.

As they were at Ukiah, Jones and his followers were a potent political force. In the 1975 mayor's election Jones sent 150 members to work the precincts for George Moscone. Moscone won by 4,000 votes and did not forget. Said state assemblyman Willie Brown:

"In a tight race, forget it without Jones."

Moscone appointed Jones to the San Francisco Housing Authority, and Jones became chairman in 1976.

The Peoples Temple became a base that politicians felt they had best touch. Gov. Edmund Brown Jr. attended a Martin Luther King memorial service there. District Attorney Josh Freitas Jr. was a visitor. In exchange, Jones turned out the faithful to swell the attendance at a rally for Rosalynn Carter in 1976. His bodyguards were stationed outside with their beefy arms crossed, and "gave the Secret Service fits."

But the president's wife didn't forget either.

What the politicians did not see was what went on behind double locked doors at the Peoples Temple. Members were expected to attend three or four services a week. Some lasted until dawn. Jones wanted the parishioners to

call him "Dad." To him they were "my children." He began treating them as such, ordering them paddled with a 4-foot-long "board of education" for such minor sins as smoking or leaving a stove burning.

"He began to punish in the beatings," said a source who was expected to say, "thank you, Father," after their

punishment. Jones then would embrace them and say: "Father loves you. You're a stronger person now. I can trust you."

Miscreants were told to box with opponents whom Jones had selected to pummel them. Nurses stood by to attend injuries. At "catharsis" sessions members were humbled verbally and harangued over their shortcomings.

Beatings increased in severity. One girl who embraced a woman she had not seen for a long while was struck 75 times by the "board of education" because Jones thought the woman was a lesbian. The girl's buttocks "looked like hamburger," the girl's father, who watched the beating, said later.

Jones resumed his cancer cures for an awed congregation.

Other undertones were becoming themes. Wanda Johnson, a Temple member for four years, remembers the first suicide drill in 1973 after eight people defected. Jones lined up his congregation in San Francisco and issued wine in cups.

"You have just drunk poison, and all of you will be dead in 30 minutes," he said. Then he said it was just a test. Of what, he didn't say. But death was increasingly on his mind.

"If they ever put me in jail," Jones once told Linda Mertle, "or if I'm killed, we're all to commit suicide, killing the children first, then ourselves."

Such words can leak, even through double-locked doors. In August 1977 New West magazine carried an article describing Jones' political clout but also reporting defectors' stories of beatings, heavy tithing, forced donations of members' homes and property, forced confessions from parents to molesting their own children. The magazine demanded an investigation.

Moscone declined to investigate, citing absence of proof that laws had been broken. Freitas put his staff to work and reached the same conclusion. But Freitas said months later that activities at the Temple were "at least un savory and raise substantial moral and non-criminal legal questions."

The matter did not rest. Sam Houston,

a photographer for The Associated Press, had a son who had belonged to the Temple and died under ambiguous circumstances after he left the church. Houston also had two grandchildren in the Temple's new community in distant Guyana.

Houston had cancer and hoped to correct what he felt was a tragic wrong before he died. He surmised the potential for violence in the church community, symbolized by the 12 bodyguards Jones kept with him. Houston gave his story to the San Francisco Examiner.

Houston hoped it would catch the eye of his congressman, Leo Ryan, a former high school teacher he knew through his children. Ryan called.

Early explorers hacked through the 300-foot-high triple-canopy jungle in a search for El Dorado, a city, they were told, made of gold.

Parts of "Lost Horizon" were filmed there. Guyana is a hot, wet nation of nearly a million blacks and Asians presided over by the socialist government of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham.

In 1972 the Peoples Temple came to seek its own El Dorado, taking advantage of the government's offer to let foreign groups farm the virgin forests, forests so thick that fewer than half of the 81 U.S. warplanes that crashed there during World War II were ever found.

The group leased 824 acres, cleared

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Pact with chaos:

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them and began growing tropical fruit, okra and corn and raising pigs and chickens. The settlement, named Jonestown for Jones, grew to about 30 barracks painted in Caribbean pastels of pink, blue and yellow to house Temple followers.

Jones himself moved there permanently in 1977. He resigned his housing post by dictating a message over the short-wave radio he used to keep in touch with the San Francisco congregation. He was now truly an Emperor Jones, sovereign of all he surveyed, Moses in an unpromising land of tropical deluges, vampire bats, piranhas, and, also, his kind of hope.

His children, a Temple release said in 1977, "enjoy a state of health, well-being and happiness they never would have had."

Jonestown had the blessing of the government in Georgetown, 150 jungle miles distant. Jones had come with the kind of laudatory letters that politicians write by rote. They came from such as Mrs. Carter and Vice President Walter Mondale. He wrote: "... Knowing of your congregation's deep involvement in the major social and constitutional issues of our country is a great inspiration to me."

The government allowed him to ship in supplies without tedious customs red tape and looked the other way when some of the shipments included automatic rifles.

"This is a beautiful jewel," said Charles Garry, the Temple's lawyer in San Francisco and a defender of the Black Panthers and similar groups. "There is no racism, sexism, no ageism (one member said he was 108), no elitism, no hunger."

But there was something else, something in the night beyond the tree line. It began to haunt Jimmy Jones. He spoke of "enemies" allied with the U.S. government, intent on destroying him and his dream.

Jones radioed Garry that he was thinking of a mass suicide. Garry says he talked him out of it. Defectors, the few who said they eluded the armed guards, spoke of a jungle madness beyond the night-dark fiction of Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness."

Deborah Blakey, a defector, said misbehaving children were taken to a well "to see Bigfoot," then lowered head first into the blackness until they screamed, "I'm sorry, Father, I'm sorry," contritely enough for Jones' satisfaction.

Tom Bogue, 17, had been in Jonestown more than two years. The first year was one of freedom. A year ago, he said, Jones began "acting crazy." There were nightly meetings. The residents would be summoned from sleep by a siren, lined up by armed guards and given glasses of red liquid that Jones said was poison.

"We'd drink as we were told," Blakey said. Then, after nothing happened, Jones would say it had been a loyalty test.

Bogue secretly learned survival techniques from visiting jungle Indians and one day he slipped away. He was caught, chained by the legs and put to work chopping logs 18 hours a day. A "punishment box" scarcely larger than a coffin was built for the victims of Jones' displeasure, Bogue said.

The bush telegraph carried ominous tidings to the outside. Jones called them "outrageous lies. We do not brutalize or exploit anyone."

But there was evidence "Father's" health was failing. His stateside physician, Dr. Carlton Goodlet, said Jones had a serious but unspecified illness. Goodlet told lawyer Garry that Jones was "literally burning his brain with drugs."

Afterwards, when Jones was beyond help, Dr. Egger, the San Jose State psychologist, would grope for an explanation: "A person with a serious illness, such as a tubercular, thinks it's unfair that he must die and tries to infect others and take them with him, like the ancient pharaohs taking their loved ones with them into death."

Like a jungle drumbeat, disquiet over Jonestown gained cadence. Last May, 57 "griefstricken parents and relatives" petitioned Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to help, calling Jonestown a "concentration camp" where their loved ones were held captive. They asked that their plea be forwarded to Prime Minister Burnham, and Vance did.

U.S. Embassy officials from Georgetown periodically visited Jonestown to take data on births — 33 babies had been born there without a death — and for Social Security. Numerous pension checks were found eventually at the settlement. The officials said none of the residents complained. Defectors said they were afraid to.

Rep. Ryan decided to go see for himself. It was characteristic. He had once taught for two weeks in the Watts area of Los Angeles to test the effect on children of the riot there. He had spent eight days in Folsom Prison in California to examine conditions firsthand.

While Jones presided over his "children" from a throne — actually a slat-back chair — in the open air pavilion in the center of Jonestown, Ryan held court every Friday in his Washington office, perched in an antique barber chair while his associates sipped wine.

The congressman missed the Friday wine ritual on Nov. 17. He arrived, instead, in Jonestown that day. With him were several aides, an NBC-TV news team from Los Angeles, several other newsmen plus Garry and another Temple attorney, controversial Kennedy conspiracy theorist Mark Lane. Several dozen friends and relatives of Jonestown residents waited in Georgetown.

Jones was a willing host. He showed Ryan's party his own cottage, reached by a small bridge with a sign: "Watch your steps, boards uneven." Fruit trees grew in his yard. They visited a dormitory, crowded with rows of double bunks. It reminded Lane of a slave ship. In another boarded-up dormitory an elderly lady said, "I feel fine."

James Cobb, an athletic former Temple stalwart, thought his mother and sisters looked undernourished, sunkencheeked.

Jones answered pointed questions from reporter Tim Reiterman, who had written Sam Houston's story. "I have never advocated mass suicide," Jones said. "I only said it's better that we commit suicide than kill."

To Lane, Jones said: "There is great dignity in dying. It is a great protest, a great demonstration for everyone to die."

The next afternoon, as rain clouds darkened over the jungle, the mood changed. Someone had slipped a note to NBC reporter Don Harris.

"Please help us get out of Jonestown," it said.

Ryan then was attacked by a man with a knife. Lane grabbed the assailant, who was wounded by his own knife. The attacker's blood splattered the congressman. Ryan's party, with 16 defectors, climbed aboard a truck. A tractor helped push it out of the mud, and the truck headed for the airstrip where two planes waited.

Larry Layton, 32, one of Jones' close aides, went aboard one plane, posing as a defector. "Watch him," muttered one of the Jonestown residents. Cobb recalled one of the men had a "deep seated stare, like death."

At the airport, Ryan's party left the truck and started walking to the airplanes. As they approached, a tractor, pulling an open trailer, appeared on the runway. Later, television viewers around the world would watch, through the NBC cameraman's last film, as cultists emerged from the trailer and opened fire. Some wounded victims were then shot in the head. The cultists killed Ryan, Harris, NBC News cameraman Robert Brown and Gregory Robinson, a photographer for the San Francisco Examiner. One of the cult members, Patricia Parks, 44, who had tried to leave with the Ryan party, also was killed. Ten others were wounded.

Back at Jonestown, Jones gathered his disciples around the pavilion.

"I have ordered the deaths of the congressman and all other members of his party," he said over the loudspeaker. Then, evidently, he learned there had been survivors of the attack.

"The time has come for us to meet in another place," said Jones. His followers gave a clenched fist salute as their leader said: "To die in revolutionary suicide is to live forever."

Guards with automatic rifles ringed the pavilion.

Dr. Lawrence Schacht, the 30-year-old settlement physician, was a graduate of the University of California. His stateside colleagues remember him as a man much preoccupied with helping the poor and forlorn. But on this day, he began pouring cyanide from bottles marked "M&B Laboratory Chemicals" into the rusting bottom half of an oil drum, made into a large tub. Two nurses stirred in a fruit flavored liquid, its ruby color contrasting with the battleship gray of the drum.

The medical team began squirting the fluid into the mouths of the squirming

children. Adults were next, taking their doses in paper cups.

One woman rebelled. "No! No!" the others cried. "If Father says to do it, you should do it." She drank.

Schacht asked Odell Rhodes, a 38-year-old teacher, to fetch a stethoscope. Rhodes ran to get it, and kept on running, into the jungle. He is one of the few known survivors. Guards turned back others.

The mud around the pavilion became a mass of writhing children, women and men, frothing at the mouth, screaming. One by one, five minutes after they drank, their eyes rolled up and they died. Families died in each other's arms.

An elderly man jabbed a syringe into his neck. It remained as he keeled over. A young woman in purple slacks fell dead in a bush of purple flowers. Eighty died in the pavilion, sprawled over the tables, on the floor and into a set of white leather drums. Overhead swung the sign paraphrasing the philosopher George Santayana: "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it."