

Biden receives the bodies of soldiers killed in the Kabul bombing.



By Jim Tankersley

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A gray C-17 transport plane landed in Delaware shortly after 8 a.m. on Sunday. It carried the remains of 11 Marines, a Navy medic and an Army staff sergeant, who collectively could be the last Americans to die in the war in Afghanistan.

Just before 8:40, a second plane, a white-and-blue Boeing jetliner, parked next to the transport. It carried the president who had given the orders to end that war after nearly 20 years, prompting the mass evacuation effort that those 13 service members were carrying out when a bomber from the Islamic State Khorasan group detonated his charges at the Kabul airport last week.

President Biden's first trip in office to witness the transfer of remains at Dover was a reminder of the length and cost of the Afghanistan war, and of his unique attachment to it as a legislator, a vice president and now a commander in chief.

Mr. Biden made an unannounced flight to Delaware for a rare presidential appearance at a transfer of remains of service members killed overseas. They were on their way from Afghanistan, via Kuwait and Germany, to final rest in communities across the nation that have supplied sons and daughters to fight two decades of what was once called the war on terror.

The transfers began in the late morning and stretched nearly 40 minutes, finishing after noon. Time and again, service members in varying shades of green fatigues carried flag-draped transfer cases down the ramp of the transport, which faced Air Force One on the runway.

First came the Army, then the Marines, then the Navy. The carry teams, as they are called, worked in three-minute cycles, marching before a host of dignitaries including the president, the secretaries of state and defense, and several top military brass. They

carried the remains from the transport and lifted them through the back cargo doors of four gray vans.