

Pétain's Body Found, Police Arrest Suspect

Reuter

PARIS, Feb. 21—The body of ex-Marshal Philippe Pétain, wartime head of the collaborationist Vichy government, has been found and will be returned Thursday to the Atlantic island from where it was taken by right-wing extremists, police said tonight.

The body apparently was found in the Paris area but news of its discovery came from a top police officer handling the case at Angers in western France.

Officials said the body would be returned to Yeu Island at the request of the Pétain family. The marshal died in 1951.

Earlier, police had arrested a right-wing election candidate who claimed he headed the group which stole the body.

Hubert Massol, a member of the Republican Alliance party, had told reporters that other party members were in possession of the coffin.

At a news conference in a Paris cafe, Massol said his group would keep the body until President Pompidou sent a letter pledging formally to allow the body to be placed

temporarily in a crypt at the Les Invalides military shrine in Paris.

This would be followed by final burial at the Douaumont Shrine at Verdun, scene of Pétain's greatest battle, Massol said.

Pétain was hailed as a hero for commanding the successful but bloody defense of the key fortress against the Germans. Today was the anniversary of the start of the German offensive against Verdun.