

WORLD NEWS

S T O R Y P A G E

Japan's WWII 'no surrender' soldier dies

Hid in jungle until 1972

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TOKYO (CNN) -- A Japanese soldier who became an instant national hero after it was discovered that he stayed in the jungles of **Guam** for 26 years after the end of World War II, has died of a heart attack at age 82, hospital officials said Tuesday.



82-year-old Yokoi

(CNN)

Shoichi Yokoi died Monday at a hospital in the central city of Nagoya.

He became a national hero on his return to Japan in 1972 for his dramatic tale of survival and his adherence to the former Imperial Army's code of never surrender.

His first words upon arriving in Tokyo -- "It is with much embarrassment that I return" -- were broadcast nationally and instantly became a popular saying.

Yokoi's exploits in the jungle fascinated the nation. The Japanese, in the throes of the post-war industrial boom, were intrigued by his bare diet of nuts, berries, frogs, snails and rats, and how he wove materials from tree bark.

His return triggered a search for other Japanese soldiers left from the war, and turned up another straggler in 1974, this time in the Philippines.