



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SOLDIER MISSING IN ACTION FROM WWII IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Pfc. Robert B. Bayne, 26, of Dundalk, Md., will be buried on May 7 in his hometown. On March 28, 1945, while patrolling the Rhine River in an inflatable raft, Bayne, a lieutenant and two other enlisted men were attacked near Schwegenheim, Germany. Bayne and the officer were wounded, forcing all four men into the swift waters of the river. The lieutenant was rescued but the enlisted men were not found.

Between 1945 and 1946, Army Graves Registration personnel exhumed remains of three men from two different locations when German citizens reported the graves contained remains of American soldiers recovered from the river in March 1945. Among items found with the remains were military identification tags. Two of the men were identified as enlisted men from the raft—Pvt. Edward Kulback and Pfc. William Gaffney—but due to limited forensic science of the time, the remains of the other individual could not be identified and were interred at the U.S. Military Cemetery in St. Avold, France as “unknown.”

In 1948, the remains of the unknown soldier were exhumed to compare them to available records for Bayne. After several years of analysis the remains could not be identified and were reinterred as unknown at the Rhone American Cemetery and Memorial in Draguignan, France, in 1951.

More than 60 years later, analysts from DPMO and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) developed case leads, evaluated records and determined that modern forensic technology could offer methods to identify the remains. In 2010, the remains were exhumed once again for analysis.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC used dental comparisons and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial DNA—which matched that of Bayne’s brothers—in the identification of his remains.

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died. At the end of the war, the U.S. government was unable to recover and identify approximately 79,000 Americans. Today, more than 74,000 are unaccounted-for from the conflict.

For additional information on the Defense Department’s mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1169.