



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRMAN MISSING FROM WWII IDENTIFIED

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

Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Stephen L. Pascal, 20, of Hollywood, Calif., will be buried on Nov. 30, in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On April 7, 1945, Pascal was flying a photo reconnaissance mission between Gottingen and Alfeld, Germany, when his P-38 Lightning aircraft, fitted for reconnaissance, went missing. An investigation conducted after the war determined Pascal's aircraft exploded over the town of Gottingen. Nearby, on the same day, 1st Lt. Newell F. Mills Jr., and his wingman, went missing in their P-51D aircraft.

In 1947, the U.S. Army Graves Registration Service (AGRS) exhumed remains of an American pilot, buried by local residents, from a village cemetery in Varrigsen, Germany. The circumstantial evidence led AGRS to believe the remains belonged to be Mills since his aircraft was closer to that village, when it went missing, than Pascal's. The remains were buried in the Ardennes American Cemetery near Neuville-en-Condroz, Belgium.

In 2004, a German civilian began excavating the crash site associated with the airman buried in Varrigsen. Aircraft parts recovered from the location were from a P-38 Lightning—Pascal's aircraft—not the P-51D flown by Mills. In 2007, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) excavated the crash site and recovered human remains, P-38 aircraft parts and military equipment. In 2008, JPAC exhumed the remains thought to be Mills and examined them with the remains recovered in 2007. It was determined that the remains were all Pascal's.

Among forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC used mitochondrial DNA—which matched that of Pascal's cousin—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 73,000 remain 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) 699-1420.