



## **News Release**

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Soldier Missing From WWII Accounted For**

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

Army Pfc. Bernard Gavrin, 29, of Brooklyn, N.Y., will be buried on Sep. 12, in Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C. On June 15, 1944, as part of an Allied strategic goal to secure the Mariana Islands, U.S. forces were ordered to occupy Saipan. After a month of intense fighting, enemy forces conducted a suicide assault, known as a banzai attack. This was designed to inflict as many casualties as possible against the 105th Infantry Regiment (IR), 27th Infantry Division (ID). During these attacks, elements of the 105th IR sustained heavy losses, with more than 900 soldiers killed or injured. Gavrin was reported missing in action on July 7, 1944.

On July 8, 1945, with no new information concerning Gavrin or 21 other service members of the 105th IR, investigators issued a presumptive finding of death. In November 1948, the American Graves Registration Services (AGRS) reviewed the circumstances of Gavrin's loss and concluded his remains were non-recoverable.

In September 2011, a private archaeological company excavated land near Achugao Village, Saipan, and uncovered human remains of an American serviceman from the July 7, 1944, battle. These remains were identified as Army Pvt. William Yawney, 23, of Freemansburg, Pa.

In September 2013, a Japanese non-governmental organization interested in recovering Japanese soldiers from the battle in Saipan, alongside the same private archaeological company from 2011, recovered human remains and personal effects belonging to American servicemen, from an unmarked burial located a few meters from the 2011 excavation site. The remains were handed over to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC).

In the identification of Gavrin's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools including dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Gavrin's nephew.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans, who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPMO web site at [www.dtic.mil/dpmo](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo) or call (703) 699-1169.

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