



News Release
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 9, 2011

AIRMEN MISSING IN ACTION FROM WWII IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of 11 U.S. servicemen, missing in action from World War II, have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

Army Air Forces Technical Sgt. Charles A. Bode, 23, Baltimore, will be buried on Feb. 11 in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On Nov. 20, 1943, Bode, along with 10 other B-24D Liberator crew members, took off from Jackson Airfield, Port Moresby, New Guinea, on an overwater mission near the northern coast of the country. During the mission, the only radio transmission from the crew indicated they were 20 miles northwest of Port Moresby but they did not return to Jackson Airfield. Subsequent searches failed to uncover any evidence of either the crew or the aircraft.

Following World War II, the Army Graves Registration Service conducted investigations and searches for 43 missing airmen including Bode and the other 10 airmen, but concluded in June 1949 that all were unrecoverable.

In 1984, the government of Papua New Guinea notified U.S. officials of a World War II crash site in a ravine in Morobe Province. A U.S. search and recovery team investigated the crash site in late 1984 and located B-24 aircraft wreckage. They also recovered human remains but were unable to complete the mission due to time constraints and the threat of landslides. From that time until 2004 multiple teams from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) attempted to access and excavate the location but the threat of landslides made recovery too dangerous to continue. During a site visit in 2004, local villagers turned over human remains they had previously removed from the area.

In addition to Bode's burial, the crew of 11 men will be buried as a group on March 24 at Arlington National Cemetery. They are: 1st Lt. Richard T. Heuss, 23, Berkley, Mich.; 2nd Lt. Robert A. Miller, 22, Memphis, Tenn.; 2nd Lt. Edward R. French, 23, Erie, Pa.; 2nd Lt. Robert R. Streckenbach, Jr., 21, Green Bay, Wis.; Tech. Sgt. Charles A. Bode; Tech. Sgt. Lucian I. Oliver, Jr., 23 Memphis, Tenn.; Staff Sgt. Ivan O. Kirkpatrick, 36, Whittier, Calif.; Staff Sgt. William K. Musgrave, 24, Hutsonville, Ill.; Staff Sgt. James T. Moran, 21, Sloatsburg, N.Y.; Staff Sgt. James B. Moore, 21, Woburn, Mass.; and Staff Sgt. Roy Surabian, 24, Medford, Mass.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial DNA in the identification of Bode's 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.