



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRCREW MISSING IN ACTION FROM WWII IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of 10 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 2nd Lt. Robert R. Bishop, 24, of Joliet, Ill.; 2nd Lt. Thomas Digman, Jr., 24, of Pittsburgh; 2nd Lt. Donald W. Hess, 28, of Sioux City, Iowa; 2nd Lt. Arthur W. Luce, 24, of Fort Bragg, Calif.; Staff Sgt. Joseph J. Karaso, 21, of Philadelphia; Staff Sgt. Ralph L. McDonald, 22, of East Point, Ga.; Sgt. John P. Bonnassiolle, 20, of Oakland, Calif.; Sgt. James T. Blong, 19, of Port Washington, Wis.; Sgt. Michael A. Chiodo, 22, of Cleveland; and Sgt. John J. Harringer, Jr., 20, of South Bend, Ind., will be buried as a group, in a single casket representing the entire crew, on Oct. 26, in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. Hess and Karaso will be interred individually at the same ceremony in Arlington.

On April 29, 1944, the 10 airmen were ordered to carry out a bombing mission over Berlin, Germany, in their B-24J Liberator aircraft, piloted by Bishop and Luce. German documents captured after the war noted that the aircraft crashed near the town of East Meitze, Germany, and there were no survivors. German forces buried the remains of Digman, Blong, and one unknown airman in a cemetery near Hannover, Germany, around the time of the crash. In 1946, the Army Graves Registration Service exhumed the remains of the three individuals for identification and reburied them in a U.S. Military Cemetery in Condroz, Belgium.

In 2003, a German national located the site of the crash and recovered human remains, which were turned over to U.S. officials. In 2005, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) team excavated the crash site and gathered additional human remains, military equipment, and metal identification tags for Bishop, Blong, Bonnassiolle, and Harringer. The team also recovered a class ring with the initials AWL – presumably belonging to Luce. In 2007, a JPAC team completed the site excavation and found additional evidence that helped to confirm the identity of the crew.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used dental analysis and mitochondrial DNA—which matched that of some of the crewmembers' families—in the identification of their 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.