



News Release

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (Public Affairs)
Washington, DC 20301-2900

Phone: (703) 699-1169

Fax (703) 602-4375

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRMAN 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 will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is Sgt. John P. Bonnassiolle, U.S. Army, of Oakland, Calif. He will be buried Tuesday in San Francisco.

On April 29, 1944, he was aboard a B-24J Liberator with nine other crewmen. They failed to return following a bombing mission over Berlin. German documents captured after the war established the aircraft had crashed near the town of East Meitze, Germany, north of Hannover. German forces removed the remains of three crewmen from the site and buried them in a cemetery in Hannover.

In 1946, The U.S. Army's Graves Registration Command located the remains of the men buried in Hannover and reburied them at the U.S. Military Cemetery at Neuville-en-Condroz, Belgium, after confirming the identities of two of the three.

In 2003, a German citizen began excavating the East Meitze crash site and turned over human remains to U.S. officials. A Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command team traveled to excavate the crash site in 2005 and 2007, recovering additional remains and crew-related equipment—including identification tags for Bonnassiolle and three other crew members.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial DNA – which matched that of Bonnassiolle's sister -- in the identification of his remains.

More than 400,000 of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II died. At the end of the war, the U.S. government was unable to recover, identify and bury approximately 79,000 as known persons. Today, more than 72,000 Americans 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) 699-1169.

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