



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRMAN MISSING IN ACTION FROM WWII IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from World War II have been identified to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is 1st Lt. Ray F. Fletcher, U.S. Army Air Forces, of Westborough, Mass. He will be buried Friday in Burlington, Vt.

On May 10, 1944, he and four others aboard a B-25C Mitchell bomber took off from Ajaccio, Corsica, on a routine courier mission to Ghisonaccia, Corsica. They failed to reach the destination and were officially reported missing on May 13, 1944. Two days later French police reported finding aircraft wreckage on the island's Mount Cagna.

The U.S. Army's Graves Registration Command visited the crash site in 1944 and reported remains were not recoverable.

In May 1989, Corsican authorities notified U.S. Army Memorial Affairs Activity-Europe that they had found wreckage of an American WWII-era aircraft and turned over human remains collected at the mountainous location. They sent a survey team to the site and determined the terrain was too rugged to support a recovery effort. In 2003 and 2004, two French nationals provided U.S. authorities crew-related equipment recovered from the crash site.

A Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Accounting Command team excavated the location in September 2005 and recovered additional human remains as well as more crew-related equipment.

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 Fletcher's remains.

This month marks the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II. More than 400,000 of the 16 million Americans who served during the war died. At the end of the conflict, the U.S. government was unable to recover, identify and bury approximately 79,000 as known persons. Today, more than 72,000 World War II Americans remain unaccounted-for.

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.

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