



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

Oct. 20, 2010

SOLDIER 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.

Army Staff Sgt. John R. Simonetti, 26, of Jackson Heights, N.Y., will be buried on Oct. 25 in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. Following the Normandy invasion, allied troops began the deadly task of engaging regrouped German forces in the pastures, hedgerows and villages of France. On June 16, 1944, Simonetti was among the advancing infantrymen of the 9th Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division. The soldiers were met with heavy automatic weapons and mortar fire and were forced to stop and take cover before they reached the French town of St. Germain-d'Elle. During the battle, the Americans sustained heavy losses, including Simonetti. Two members of his unit later gave conflicting information on the location and disposition of his remains. In the first account the witness stated his body could not be recovered due to enemy activity, and the second said his body was evacuated to the battalion aid station. Two post-war investigations failed to recover his remains and he was declared non-recoverable by a military review board in 1950.

In May 2009, a French construction crew uncovered human remains and military equipment—including Simonetti's identifications tags—when excavating a site in St. Germain-d'Elle. French police turned over the remains and artifacts to U.S. officials for analysis.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command used dental comparisons in the identification of his 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.

-end-