



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AVIATOR MISSING FROM WORLD WAR II 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, were recently identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Navy Radioman 1st Class Harry C. Scribner, 20, of Seattle, will be buried June 29, in Minneapolis, Minn. On Aug. 2, 1943, Scribner and two other men were aboard a TBF-1 Avenger aircraft that crashed on the island of Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides—now known as Vanuatu—while on a routine calibration flight. Sixteen days after the crash, one crewman was rescued from the jungle but was unable to assist recovery teams with locating the crash site. Shortly thereafter, personnel from the Army Graves Registration were unsuccessful in locating the site as well, and the two men were deemed unrecoverable.

In 1999, a U.S. recovery team investigated several World War II aircraft crash sites on Vanuatu. In addition to human remains, at one location the team located aircraft wreckage which correlated with Scribner's aircraft.

From 2000 to 2011, additional U.S. recovery teams from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) excavated the crash site three times, recovering additional human remains and military equipment.

Scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, including dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA—which matched that of Scribner's cousin—in the identification of his remains.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, call (703) 699-1420 or visit the DPMO website at www.dtic.mil/dpmo.

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