



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRMAN MISSING FROM WWII TO BE HONORED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, who went missing in November 1946, will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. William S. Cassell, of Mt. Airy, N.C., will be buried on Oct. 28, in Amelia, Va. On Nov. 1, 1946, Cassell and seven other crew members were aboard a B-17G Flying Fortress that went missing after departing from Naples, Italy, bound for Bovington, England. During the months following the loss, search and rescue attempts proved unsuccessful and the remains of the crewmen were declared non-recoverable.

In 1947, a French military unit operating in the French-Italian Alps, near Estellette Glacier, found the wreckage of a U.S. aircraft at an altitude of more than 12,000 feet. The French team recovered human remains from the site which were turned over to U.S. officials. They also reported that much of the ice-covered wreckage would likely not emerge for 30 years, after the glacier descended the slope. Due to the technology limitations of the time, the remains could not be attributed to individuals and were interred as a group, representing the B-17G crew, at Arlington National Cemetery.

From 1983 to 1999, as the glacier descended, additional remains and personal effects were recovered and turned over to U.S. officials.

In 2010, due to advances in technology, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) reevaluated the evidence and used mitochondrial DNA— which matched that of Cassell's mother— in the identification of his remains.

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died. 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) 699-1169.

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