



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 23, 2010

MISSING WWII NAVAL AVIATORS IDENTIFIED

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced today that the remains of two U.S. servicemen, missing in action from World War II, have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are Lt. Francis B. McIntyre of Mitchell, S.D., and Aviation Radioman Second Class William L. Russell of Cherokee, Okla., both U.S. Navy. McIntyre will be buried on Wednesday at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington D.C. and Russell will be buried October 1 at Arlington.

On Nov. 10, 1943, the two men took off on a bombing mission from the Solomon Islands in their SBD-5 Dauntless dive bomber. The aircraft was last seen flying at low altitude over an explosion on the enemy airfield on Buka Island, Papua New Guinea, although witnesses did not see the airplane crash.

In 2007, a Papuan national found a World War II crash site near the Buka airport, which was reported to U.S. officials. In May 2008, specialists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, working with the country's national museum, investigated the crash site. Local officials turned over human remains, McIntyre's identification tag and other military-related items which had been recovered earlier. The JPAC team was unable to excavate the site due to adverse weather.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC used dental comparisons for both men and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial DNA which matched a sample from Russell's relatives and DNA extracted from a hat belonging to McIntyre.

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 Americans. Today, more than 72,000 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 www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1420.

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