



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MISSING WWII AIRMAN IDENTIFIED

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

The funeral for U.S. Army Air Forces Sgt. Martin A. Gill, 26, of Linden, Calif., will be held Sunday in his hometown. On March 12, 1945, Gill and five crew members aboard a C-47A Skytrain departed Tanauan Airfield on Leyte, Philippines, on a resupply mission to guerilla troops. Once cleared for takeoff there was no further communication between the aircrew and airfield operators. When the aircraft failed to return, a thorough search of an area ten miles on either side of the intended route was initiated. No evidence of the aircraft was found and the six men were presumed killed in action. Their remains were determined to be non-recoverable in 1949.

In 1989, a Philippine National Police officer contacted U.S. officials regarding a possible World War II-era aircraft crash near Leyte. Human remains, aircraft parts and artifacts were turned over to the local police, then to U.S. officials at the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command.

From 1989 to 2009, JPAC sought permission to send teams to the crash site but unrest in the Burauen region precluded on-scene investigations or recovery operations. Meanwhile, JPAC scientists continued the forensic process, analyzing the remains and physical evidence already in hand.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial DNA—which matched that of Gill's cousin—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 73,000 are unaccounted-for from the conflict.

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

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