



## News Release

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (Public Affairs)  
Washington, DC 20301-2400

Phone: (703) 699-1169

Fax (703) 602-4375

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2006

### MISSING WWII MARINE IS IDENTIFIED

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that a Marine missing in action from World War II has been identified and is being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is Sergeant John H. Branic, U.S. Marine Corps, of Madera, Pa. He is to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. on Wednesday.

Branic was a platoon leader for L Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division on Aug. 19, 1942 when a Japanese force overran his defensive position on Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. During the attack, Branic was killed, but the Marines of L Company counterattacked and succeeded in driving the Japanese back. The location of Branic's remains was not reported to headquarters, as the L Company Executive Officer was also killed.

In February 1992, the U.S. Embassy, Solomon Islands, reported to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) that remains believed to be those of an American had been recovered at a construction site on Guadalcanal. JPAC took possession of those remains the following month, and excavated the site where they found additional remains. In the same general area, they found World War II-era ammunition, but no additional remains.

In 2004, an American researcher with the First Marine Division association reported to JPAC that a Solomon Islander had possession of a ring with the inscription "JHB" on the inside. The ring was found at the initial burial site.

JPAC scientists and Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory specialists used mitochondrial DNA as one of the forensic tools to help identify the remains. Laboratory analysis of dental remains also confirmed the identification.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at [www.dtic.mil/dpmo](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo) or call (703) 699-1169.

- End -