



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SOLDIER MISSING IN ACTION FROM WWII IS 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, have been identified and returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is Pvt. Lawrence P. Burkett, U.S. Army, of Jefferson, N.C. He will be buried Saturday in Jefferson.

Representatives from the Army met with Burkett's next-of-kin in their hometown to explain the recovery and identification process and to coordinate interment with military honors on behalf of the Secretary of the Army.

In early December 1944, Burkett was a member of Company A, 357th Infantry Regiment, 90th Infantry Division. The 90th ID had been assigned the task of breaching the southern portion of the enemy's "West Wall" near the German city of Saarbrücken. The 357th was occupying a bridgehead in the Dillingen Forest near the Saar River when the Germans launched a strong counterattack. The 357th suffered many casualties and on Dec. 11, Burkett was among those listed as missing in action.

In May 2006, U.S. officials were notified that a German citizen had found and dug up the remains of a possible American soldier in a wartime fighting trench in the Dillingen Forest near Saarbrücken. The U.S. officials traveled to the site and collected the remains and associated evidence, including Burkett's identification tags and his Social Security card.

In September 2006, a team from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) excavated the burial site in the Dillingen Forest and recovered additional human remains and material evidence.

Among dental records, other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA in the identification of the remains.

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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