



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRMAN 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 are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is 1st Lt. Archibald Kelly, U.S. Army Air Forces, of Detroit, Mich. He will be buried on May 12 in Great Lakes National Cemetery, Holly, Mich.

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

On July 22, 1944, Kelly was the navigator on a B-24J Liberator on a bombing raid of the oil fields at Ploesti, Romania. Returning to Lecce air base in Italy, the plane was struck by enemy anti-aircraft fire and crashed in what is now Croatia, approximately 430 miles southwest of Ploesti. Of the ten crewmen on board, eight survived and bailed out of the aircraft before it crashed. The rear gunner died and his body was later recovered. One of the surviving crewmen saw Kelly bail out before the crash, but said he struck a rocky cliff face when the wind caught his parachute. His body was not found at that time.

After researching information contained in U.S. wartime records, specialists from DPMO's Joint Commission Support Directorate (JCSD) in 2005 interviewed residents from Dubrovnik and Mihanici village who had information related to WWII aircraft losses in the area. One resident recalled a crash in which one of the crewmen landed on a pile of rocks on Mt. Sniježnica after his parachute failed to open. He said locals buried the individual. Based on witness descriptions of the burial location, the team searched the mountaintop, but was unable to locate the burial site.

Additional JCSD archival research in Croatia confirmed the earlier information found in U.S. records. In June 2006, the Dubrovnik resident reported to JCSD that he had continued the search and found the grave site of the American serviceman. He sent pictures of both the site and the remains to DPMO. In September 2006, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) team excavated the burial site, confirming with local villagers that it was the same site photographed by the Dubrovnik resident. The team recovered human remains at the site.

Among other traditional forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC also used dental comparisons in the identification of Kelly's 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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