



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRCREW MISSING FROM WWII HONORED

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

Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Wilson C. Cater, 24, of Jackson, Miss.; Master Sgt. Donald A. Mackey, 28, of Chambersburg, Pa.; and Staff Sgt. Glenn E. Webb, 20, of Wetumpka, Okla., will be buried as a group, in a single casket representing the entire crew, on Nov. 16, in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On Oct. 16, 1942, Cater, Mackey, and Webb were on a C-47C Skytrain air drop mission to deliver food and supplies to U.S. units. The aircraft crashed into a mountainous location near Kagi, New Guinea. Shortly after the crash, all three men were buried by an Australian Army patrol near the Port Moresby-Kokoda Trail.

In 1944, Army Graves Registration personnel moved the remains of Cater and Mackey to a nearby U.S. cemetery but were unable to locate the remains of Webb, which were declared non-recoverable. In 1949, Cater was buried in Forest, Miss., and Mackey was buried in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In 1982, villagers notified U.S. officials of a location containing aircraft wreckage. A team was sent to excavate the site where human remains were recovered along with remnants of a C-47C Skytrain with a tail number matching that of the crew's aircraft, however given the technology at the time, the remains could not be identified. A second excavation in 1999 recovered additional remains, and advances in technology allowed for identifications of some of the remains.

Among forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used dental analysis and mitochondrial DNA—which matched that of some of the crewmembers' families—in the identification of their 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, visit the DPMO web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1169.

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