

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHINA PROVIDES WORLD WAR II U. S. AIRCRAFT CRASH SITES

The Department of Defense announced today that it has received preliminary information from the Peoples Republic of China on two U.S. World War II aircraft crashes in Tibet.

During his delegation's meeting with Chinese officials in fall 2000, Robert L. Jones, the deputy assistant secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs, was informed by the Chinese that they were developing more information regarding these crashes. Last month, Chinese officials forwarded updated information through the U.S. Embassy to the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO).

The first of the two crash sites in Milin County, Lang Gong Region, may be that of a U.S. C-46, lost on March 27, 1944, with a crew of four aboard. It was on a flight from Kunming, China to Scokarating, India. The names of the crew are among those listed as missing in action. Attempts to locate their families are now underway.

Information on the second aircraft is still under development by the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii (CILHI). Specialists at CILHI will seek to verify, from World War II records, more information that might match the known mission profiles of missing U.S. aircraft. DPMO will seek Chinese approval to send a CILHI survey team to the two sites to gather information that may lead to a full-scale excavation.

The Chinese government has previously provided generous assistance to the United States in recovery operations of World War II aircraft. In 1994, they notified the United States of a crash site discovered on Tibet's Ruo Guo Glacier from which CILHI specialists recovered and identified five remains of American crewmembers. Also, during 1997-99, the Chinese assisted U.S. specialists in the recovery of American remains from a World War II B-24 bomber crash site in southern China. All ten of those crewmembers have been identified, returned home and buried with full military honors.