



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRMAN LOST IN 1942 CRASH IS IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. Army Air Forces airman, missing since 1942, have been identified and will soon be returned to his family for burial.

He is Aviation Cadet Leo Mustonen, 22, of Brainard, Minn. The family has not set a date for his burial.

Mustonen was one of four men aboard a routine navigation training flight which departed Mather Field, Calif., on November 18, 1942. Their AT-7 Navigator aircraft carried about five hours of fuel, and when the plane did not return to base, a search was initiated. It was suspended about a month later with no results.

In 1947, several hikers on Darwin Glacier in the Sierra Nevada mountain range discovered the aircraft wreckage. Human remains of three of the crew found at the site were buried in the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, Calif.

Several other hikers on Mendel Glacier (adjacent to Darwin Glacier) discovered frozen human remains, circumstantial evidence and personal effects in October 2005. Park rangers from Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and a forensic anthropologist from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) recovered the remains, which were later shipped to the JPAC laboratory in Hawaii.

Scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) also used mitochondrial DNA as one of the forensic tools in the process. U.S. Army Casualty and Mortuary officials located and briefed representatives of the families of all four crewmen.

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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