



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAVY AIRMEN MISSING IN ACTION FROM WORLD WAR II ARE IDENTIFIED

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

The are Ensign Leland L. Davis, Jackson, Miss.; Ensign Robert F. Keller, Wichita, Kan.; Seaman 2nd Class Elwin Alford, Bogalusa, La.; Seaman 2nd Class Dee Hall, Syria, Okla.; Aviation Machinist Mate John H. Hathaway, Lafayette, Ind.; Aviation Radioman 2nd Class Robert A. Smith, Glen Dive, Mont.; and Aviation Pilot 3rd Class Albert J. Gyorfi, Wilbur, Wash.; all U.S. Navy.

The group remains of all seven are to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, as are the individually-identified remains of Davis, Alford and Hathaway. Hall has already been buried in Oklahoma, and individual burials for the others are being set by the families.

The seven man crew was aboard a U.S. Navy PBY-5 Catalina which took off from Kodiak Island, Alaska, on June 14, 1942, to attack Japanese targets in Kiska Harbor.

They encountered inclement weather near the target, as well as heavy Japanese anti-aircraft fire. Their plane crashed on the Japanese-held island of Kiska with all seven aboard.

In August 1943, the U.S. retook Kiska Island from the Japanese. Wreckage of the PBY-5 was found on the side of Kiska Volcano. The remains of the crew were buried in a common grave marked "Seven U.S.N. Airmen" with a wooden marker. Following the war, attempts to locate the common grave were unsuccessful and the remains of all seven were declared to be non-recoverable.

In 2002, a wildlife biologist notified DPMO that he had found the wreckage of a WWII aircraft on the slope of Kiska Volcano. Using that information, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) excavated the crash site in August 2003 where they found debris from the PBY-5 as well as crew-related items. The JPAC team also located the wooden marker as well as the remains buried nearby. Subsequent JPAC laboratory analysis led to the individual identifications of all seven crewmembers.

Approximately 78,000 servicemembers are unaccounted-for from World War II War. 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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