



## News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MISSING WWII AIRMEN ARE IDENTIFIED

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that nine airmen missing in action from World War II have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

The nine are 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Hugh L. Johnson Jr., Montgomery, Ala.; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Byron L. Stenen, Northridge, Calif.; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. John F. Green, Watertown, N.Y.; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. John M. Meisner, Pembroke, Mass.; Staff Sgt. Walter Knudsen, Sioux City, Iowa; Cpl. John A. DeCarlo, Newark, N.J.; Cpl. Robert E. Raney, Monon, Ind.; Cpl. William G. Mohr, Mt. Wolf, Pa.; and Cpl. Michael J. Pushkar, Mahanoy City, Pa. All were assigned to the U.S. Army Air Forces.

The individually identified remains of Stenen, Green, Meisner, Mohr and Pushkar, as well as the group remains representing all nine crewmen, are being buried today at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. Johnson, Knudsen and Raney will be buried elsewhere.

On the morning of Oct. 9, 1944, the crew took off on a training mission from Nadzab, New Guinea, in their B-24D Liberator. The aircraft was not seen again, and it was speculated that it had encountered bad weather.

In early 2002, the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby reported the discovery of two dog tags by villagers from a World War II crash site in Morobe Province. Specialists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) traveled to Papua, New Guinea, in November 2002 to investigate several World War II aircraft losses. The team interviewed the two villagers who gave them the dog tags, then surveyed the site where aircraft wreckage and human remains were found.

A joint team of JPAC and Papua, New Guinea specialists mounted a full-scale excavation at the site January through February 2003, when they recovered additional human remains and crew-related artifacts from the wreckage field. JPAC scientists and Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory specialists used mitochondrial DNA as one of the forensic tools to help identify the remains. Laboratory analysis of dental remains also confirmed their identification.

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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