



## **News Release**

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **AIRMAN MISSING IN ACTION FROM WWII IS IDENTIFIED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from World War II, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Ray D. Packard, U.S. Army Air Forces, of Atwood, Calif. He will be buried on Oct. 22 in Prescott, Ariz.

Representatives from the Army met with Packard's next-of-kin to explain the recovery and identification process and to coordinate interment with military honors on behalf of the Secretary of the Army.

On Aug. 25, 1944, Packard was a pilot in a flight of 22 P-38 Lightning fighter aircraft that left the allied airfield at St. Lambert, France, to attack enemy airfields near Laon-Chambry, France. Enroute to their target, the fighter group was intercepted by more than 80 German fighters near Beauvais, France. During the ensuing dogfight, 11 P-38s were shot down, including Packard's which crashed 15 miles south of Beauvais near the town of Angy. Five of the pilots escaped and evaded enemy capture and two were taken as prisoners of war. Of the four men who were missing in action, three were later recovered and identified, but Packard remained unaccounted-for.

In 1951, a U.S. Army Graves Registration Command team investigated the incident and interviewed a French citizen who said he recovered human remains from a P-38 crash site in Angy. The team also interviewed the mayor of Angy who said that the remains had been buried in a local cemetery, but had later been exhumed and he didn't know what happened after the disinterment. The team went to the crash site, but only found small pieces of aircraft wreckage.

In 2006, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) team traveled to Angy to investigate the incident. The team interviewed the son of the French citizen interviewed in 1951. He turned over to the team human remains and other non-biological evidence recovered from the crash site. The team interviewed another French citizen, an aircraft wreckage hunter, who turned over remains and other evidence from an excavation that he conducted at the site.

In 2006 and 2007, JPAC teams conducted two excavations and recovered more human remains, aircraft wreckage, and material evidence including Packard's identification tag.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC used dental comparisons in the identification of Packard's remains.

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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