



## News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### THREE MISSING WWII SAILORS ARE IDENTIFIED

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

They are Ensign Irvin A.R. Thompson, of Hudson County, N.J.; Ensign Eldon P. Wyman, of Portland, Ore.; and Fireman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Lawrence A. Boxrucker, of Dorchester, Wis.; all U.S. Navy. Boxrucker will be buried on Sept. 6 in Dorchester, and the funerals for Thompson and Wyman are being set by their families.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, the battleship *USS Oklahoma* suffered multiple torpedo hits and capsized. As a result, 429 sailors and Marines died. Following the attack, 36 of these servicemen were identified and the remaining 393 were buried as Unknowns in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In 2003, an independent researcher contacted the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) with information he believed indicated that one of the *USS Oklahoma* casualties who was buried as an unknown could be positively identified. After reviewing the case, JPAC exhumed the casket, and discovered that it contained what is believed to be the remains of at least 28 other men in addition to the three identified.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA and dental comparisons in the identification of remains for Thompson, Wyman and Boxrucker. Additional remains that could not be attributed to these servicemen will undergo further analysis.

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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