



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAILOR MISSING FROM WWII IS IDENTIFIED

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

He is Ensign Robert G. Tills, U.S. Navy, of Manitowoc, Wis. He will be buried on March 23, 2009 in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

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

On Dec. 8, 1941, two PBV-4 Catalina Flying Boats moored in Malagal Bay, in eastern Mindanao, Philippine Commonwealth, were strafed and sunk by Japanese aircraft. All of the crew on board the PBVs escaped the aircraft with the exception of Tills, who was seen by another crewman to have been hit and killed by machine gun bullets. Tills was the first Navy officer to be lost in defense of the Philippine Islands. His body was not recovered.

In October 2007, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) was notified by U.S. authorities in the Philippines that aircraft wreckage had been discovered in Malagal Bay. A fragment of the wreckage bore the markings "PBV-4."

In November 2007, a JPAC team, along with the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group-Philippines and the Philippines Coast Guard (PCG), surveyed the site and recovered human remains and non-biological evidence. Later that month, the PCG recovered additional remains from the site.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC also used dental comparisons in the identification of Tills' 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) 699-1420.

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