



News Release

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (Public Affairs)
Washington, DC 20301-2900

Phone: (703) 699-1169

Fax (703) 602-4375

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRMAN FROM WWII IDENTIFIED

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

Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Meceslaus T. Miaskiewicz, 27, of Salem, Mass. will be buried on Nov. 12, in his hometown. On May 18, 1944, Miaskiewicz and ten other airmen departed Tortorella Air Field, Italy, on a mission to bomb the Ploesti Oil Refinery in Romania, when their B-17G aircraft was shot down over Yugoslavia – what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina. Three of the crew members were detained as Prisoners of War by German forces, and returned to the United States at the end of the war. The rest of the crew was presumed dead.

In 1947, the U.S. Army Graves Registration Service (AGRS) recovered the remains of what was believed to be the missing eight crew members, who had been buried by the villagers of Stubica, near the site of the crash. AGRS identified six of the airmen, and the other two, thought to be Miaskiewicz and one other, were buried as group remains in Farmingdale, N.Y.

In 2011, U.S. government officials were notified that an archeological team from the town of Ljubuski, had disinterred the remains of an American, whose grave had been tended by the villagers of Stubica for more than 65 years. The Armed Forces Regional Medical Examiner's Office in Germany identified the remains as Miaskiewicz.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the Armed Forces Regional Medical Examiner's Office for Europe used dental analysis and mitochondrial DNA — which matched that of Miaskiewicz's sisters — in the identification of his remains.

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died. At the end of the war, the U.S. government was unable to recover and identify approximately 79,000 Americans. Today, more than 73,000 remain unaccounted-for from the conflict.

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.