



OCHR NEWS

DoD Civilians Help Identify Missing Soldier from WWII

Civilian scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) helped identify the remains of Army Pfc. Bernard Gavrin, a U.S. serviceman missing since World War II. The Brooklyn, New York native will be buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery Sept 12.

On June 15, 1944, as part of an allied strategic goal to secure the Mariana Islands, U.S. forces were ordered to occupy Saipan. After a month of intense fighting, enemy forces conducted a suicide assault, known as a banzai attack. This was designed to inflict as many casualties as possible against the 105th Infantry Regiment (IR), 27th Infantry Division (ID). During these attacks, elements of the 105th IR sustained heavy losses, with more than 900 soldiers killed or injured. Gavrin was reported missing in action on July 7, 1944.

On July 8, 1945, with no new information concerning Gavrin or 21 other service members of the 105th IR, investigators issued a presumptive finding of death. In November 1948, the American Graves Registration Services (AGRS) reviewed the circumstances of Gavrin's loss and concluded his remains were non-recoverable.

In Sept. 2013, several Japanese non-governmental organizations, with oversight from a private archaeological company, recovered human remains and personal effects belonging to American servicemen from an unmarked burial.

In the identification of Gavrin's remains, scientists from JPAC and AFDIL used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools including dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Gavrin's nephew.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans, who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPMO web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call 703-699-1169.