



NEWS RELEASE

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fulfilling Our Nation's Promise USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II

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WASHINGTON—The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Navy Fireman 1st Class Wesley J. Brown, 25, of Helena, Montana, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Dec. 22, 2020.

On Dec. 7, 1941, Brown was assigned to the battleship USS *Oklahoma*, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS *Oklahoma* sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Brown.

From December 1941 to June 1944, Navy personnel recovered the remains of the deceased crew, which were subsequently interred in the Halawa and Nu'uano Cemeteries.

In September 1947, tasked with recovering and identifying fallen U.S. personnel in the Pacific Theater, members of the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) disinterred the remains of U.S. casualties from the two cemeteries and transferred them to the Central Identification Laboratory at Schofield Barracks. The laboratory staff was only able to confirm the identifications of 35 men from the USS *Oklahoma* at that time. The AGRS subsequently buried the unidentified remains in 46 plots at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP), known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu. In October 1949, a military board classified those who could not be identified as non-recoverable, including Brown.

Between June and November 2015, DPAA personnel exhumed the USS *Oklahoma* Unknowns from the Punchbowl for analysis.

To identify Brown's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and Y chromosome (Y-STR) analysis.

Brown's name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Brown will be buried on Aug. 28, 2021, in Smithland, Iowa.

For family and funeral information, contact the Navy Service Casualty office at (800) 443-9298.

DPAA is grateful to the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of the Navy for their partnership in this mission.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil, find us on social media at www.facebook.com/dodpaa or <https://www.linkedin.com/company/defense-pow-mia-accounting-agency>.

Brown's personnel profile can be viewed at <https://dpaa.secure.force.com/dpaaProfile?id=a0Jt0000000XeKWEA0>.