



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

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WASHINGTON— The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that brothers Navy Seaman 2nd Class Calvin H. Palmer, 23, and Navy Seaman 2nd Class Wilferd D. Palmer, 21, of Minot, North Dakota, killed during World War II, were accounted for on [March 19, 2019](#).

On Dec. 7, 1941, the Palmers were 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 the Palmer brothers.

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

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

To identify the Palmers' remains, scientists from DPAA used anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial and material evidence. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and analysis.

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

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died during the war. Currently there are 72,729 (approximately 26,000 are assessed as possibly-recoverable) still unaccounted for from World War II. The Palmers' names are recorded on the Walls of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to their names to indicate they have been accounted for.

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

For future funeral information, visit <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/1794148/uss-oklahoma-brothers-accounted-for-from-world-war-ii-palmer-c-palmer-w/>

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 call (703) 699-1420/1169.

Calvin Palmer's personnel profile can be viewed at <https://dpaa.secure.force.com/dpaaProfile?id=a0Jt0000000XhSaEAK>

Wilferd Palmer's personnel profile can be viewed at <https://dpaa.secure.force.com/dpaaProfile?id=a0Jt0000000XhSVEAO>