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## Remains of WWII soldiers found in sunken bomber are buried at Arlington

By Edward Colimore, The Philadelphia Inquirer  
Stars and Stripes online edition, Friday, April 30, 2010

ARLINGTON, Va. — At the end of the ceremony Thursday, a military honor guard carried the flag-covered coffin past sun-dappled stained-glass windows to the front of the chapel.

As an Army band played "Amazing Grace," soldiers of the Army's 3rd Infantry Regiment — the Old Guard — placed it on a horse-drawn caisson for the final one-mile journey to Section 60 of Arlington National Cemetery.

The casket contained remains of several crew members of a B-24 bomber shot down during World War II over a remote South Pacific island but discovered only a few years ago.

Among the dead was Charles Goulding Sr.

On Thursday, his son Charles Jr., 66, of Buckingham, Pa., and widow, Diane Corrado, 86, of Marlboro, N.Y., sat near his coffin at graveside, finally able to say goodbye after more than 65 years.

Goulding Sr. saw his son only once, shortly after his birth in 1943.

The Army Air Corps sergeant came home on furlough during the war, flying thousands of miles to hold Charles Jr. in his arms and spend time with his wife.

It was the only time they ever spent together as a family.

The emotional homecoming followed the 2004 discovery of Goulding's plane wreckage in 70 feet of water off Palau, several hundred miles southeast of the Philippines, and later recovery of crew remains.

"It's almost surreal ... really amazing," said Charles Goulding Jr., an architect who knew his father only from photos and family stories. "No one ever thought the plane would be found. The closure for my mother is the most important thing."

For Corrado, who remarried 12 years after her husband's disappearance, the experience "is bittersweet. I still cry after all these years," she said. "It's like it was yesterday. I think he should be home with me."

The elder Goulding and seven fellow airmen were honored during a solemn, standing-room-only service at Old Post Chapel at Fort Myer, Va., attended by more than 200 people, including the president of Palau.

"Those who were lost have been found," Army chaplain Andrew Lawrence said as he stood near a casket of commingled remains, representing all eight crew members.

"The bones may be there, but his soul is in heaven," said Corrado, recalling a romantic big band song she and her husband once loved, "Deep Purple."

"He was my first love," Corrado said Thursday as she sat in a pew at the chapel. "And you never forget your first love. ... I knew someday God would do this for us."

Tech. Sgt. Charles Goulding Sr., a native of Westbury, N.Y., was one of about 78,000 listed as missing in action from World War II.

A radioman and gunner, he was stationed on Wakde Island, north of New Guinea, about 700 miles from Palau.



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On Sept. 1, 1944, he was part of an 11-man crew of a B-24 in the 307th Bomb Group that had been ordered to soften up the enemy on Palau before a Marine invasion.

After dropping its payload on Japanese positions, the plane headed south when it was raked by antiaircraft fire that heavily damaged a wing and sent it plunging toward the Pacific.

Back home, Goulding's wife got a telegram that month, saying her husband was missing. In March 1946, he was declared dead.

More than a half-century later, she learned of a startling find.

The algae-covered wreckage of what turned out to be Goulding's plane was located six years ago by the members of the BentProp Project, a California-based nonprofit group that has been investigating crash sites at Palau since 1994.

"I was the first to see the plane," Jennifer Powers said this week, recalling the excitement she felt when she glimpsed an aircraft propeller submerged on a coral reef. "I didn't want to let it go."

Ten years of searching was worth the work, said expedition leader Pat Scannon, who started the project in the early 1990s to help locate a munitions-carrying Japanese trawler sunk during the war by a Navy pilot named George H.W. Bush.

More than 200 U.S. aircraft went down in the area in less than a year as the U.S. military advanced on Japan in 1944 — and Goulding's B-24 was one of them.

Locating the bomber "was like finding a needle in a haystack," said Daniel O'Brien. "It was a very proud moment knowing we could bring servicemen back home and bring closure to their families."

The group has helped locate about 30 U.S. aircraft and the remains of up to 20 MIAs on land and in the water. Planes were riddled with holes from antiaircraft fire — and some held personal effects, including dog tags.

"The families have been waiting since Sept. 1, 1944, for this homecoming," said Powers. "The phrase 'once in a lifetime' is thrown around far too casually. ... But this has the feel of being truly once in a lifetime."

What does the funeral service 65 years later mean? "Too much for words," said Powers, who attended Thursday's ceremony in Arlington.

In 1944, Sgt. Goulding's words on a steady stream of postcards were a lifeline to his family. His wife — married less than 18 months — was waiting out the war at her parents' Marlboro home where a card arrived.

"Well, here I am again. How are you and the family? I am feeling just fine and dandy but I am getting kind of restless waiting to go home. It sure sounds funny to hear myself say that when I've only been here for three months and other fellows have been over here 20 and 22 months.

Goulding had skipped R&R in Australia and began taking on extra missions that would allow him to return home sooner. In one of his last missives, he wrote:

"I've got to get missions in. I fly when I know I should be grounded. It won't hurt me."

Charles Jr., who was about a year old when his father died, treasures his military medals, postcards, and crew photo, as well as a painting of a B-24, scrapbook, and flag given to his mother. "I never got to know him."

At the grave site Thursday, a jet fighter cut across the bright-blue sky in salute to the airmen; American flags were given to Corrado, Goulding, and other family members; and the Palau president thanked each one for their loved one's sacrifice. Three rifle volleys were shot before a bugler played "Taps."

Two caskets were interred. One contained commingled remains representing the crew including Goulding. The other casket carried the individual remains of another crew member.

Scientists in the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command helped establish the identifications through the use of mitochondrial DNA analysis from the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory; and the biological profile of the remains, dental records, material evidence including machine gun serial numbers and identification tags of some crewmen.

"It's amazing to feel something so strongly after all these years," said Corrado. "I have to stop thinking of what might have been and think of what is. But this means a lot to me. It will make my heart settle down."

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