

ADDRESS YOUR REPLY TO
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY
NAVY DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

AND REFER TO No.
BUMED-2142-EK

26 Jul 1948



WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



Mr. Clarence Allen DeMoss
Maudina Avenue
Nashville 9, Tennessee

Dear Mr. DeMoss:

The Veterans Administration, Washington, D. C., has referred to this Bureau your letter of May 15th, requesting information regarding return to the United States of the remains of your son, Ensign Harold Patrick DeMoss, U. S. Naval Reserve.

The Bureau's records show that while your son was participating in a night division tactics training flight, which took off from the Naval Air Station, Barber's Point, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, at 1:05 a.m. on June 23, 1945, his plane became separated from the flight in clouds near Kahuku Point, Oahu. A search was begun immediately, and at 10 a.m. a burning plane was observed in the mountains approximately seven miles from Kahuku Point. Three days later a land party reached the scene of the crash (Longitude 157° 57' 50" West, Latitude 21° 35' 25" North) and found near the remnants of the still-smoking plane the burned and decomposed remains of a person who could not be identified. These remains were buried at the site of the crash. On July 2nd the same land party returned to the scene and the plane was identified as the one which your son had been piloting.

Upon receipt in the Bureau of report that your son's remains had been buried where his plane crashed, inquiry was made of the Senior Medical Officer, Naval Air Station, Barber's Point, as to the possibility of removing the remains and making reinterment in the Halawa Naval Cemetery, Oahu. The Bureau was informed that an attempt to recover the remains was considered impracticable, as the mountain peak where the crash occurred is approximately seven miles from a travelled highway, and the terrain ranges in height from 1700 to 1800 feet. There are no trails leading into the mountains, and the locality can be reached only by travelling on foot over rocky ledges, through heavy undergrowth and over extremely rugged and dangerous ground. The officers leading the land party described their trip as both difficult and trying, and the area

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adjacent to the site of the crash as covered with scrub timber, dense underbrush, vines and other tropical vegetation. It was the opinion of the Senior Medical Officer that due to the fast decomposition in that climate, it was questionable that the remains could be found.

All available information regarding burial of your son's remains has been furnished to American Graves Registration authorities in Hawaii, with request that an investigation be made. In the event notification of recovery of the remains is submitted, the Bureau will communicate with you immediately.

It is deeply regretted that such a distressing report must be furnished you.

Sincerely yours,

C. A. SWANSON
Rear Admiral (MC)
Surgeon General, U. S. Navy

H. E. Gibbs
H. E. GIBBS
By direction