



After 70 Years, WWII Soldier Buried at Quantico

Seven decades after his death, a soldier is finally at rest in Virginia.

At 24-years-old, Army Sgt. Richard Bean went off to fight in World War II. He never returned, dying July 7, 1944, in the Battle of Saipan.

But 70 years later, his remains are back in the United States.

Last year, a team of Japanese researchers made the discovery while exploring mass graves of Japanese soldiers. When they uncovered a single grave, they found the remains along with American dog-tags carrying the name Richard Bean.

"We were digging on site, removing the earth," said Yukari Akatsuka. "It was emotional, really emotional."

The researchers were determined to return the remains to the fallen's family. They tracked down Sgt. Bean's nephew in Prince William County, Virginia.

"It's really shocking. But it's a good shocking," said Richard Bean, who shares his uncle's name. "They actually came to my house."

Akatsuka and her colleagues flew 7,000 miles to deliver the news, but she was unsure as to how Bean would receive it.

"We were really nervous because we are Japanese and we don't know how the people would react to this finding," Akatsuka said. "Maybe people [would get] mad at us, yelling, 'You're Japanese, you killed my uncle.' So we were so nervous."

But Sgt. Bean's family had the opposite reaction.

"[I] was thrilled to death, and I thought about my grandmother and how thrilled she'd be," said Sgt. Bean's niece, Rosie White. "And I'm hoping that she's up there knowing and maybe they're together now that he's back home."

DNA testing confirmed the remains belonged to Sgt. Bean

"Seventy years later we're bringing him back home where he belongs," Bean said tearfully.

Akatsuka said there are more remains to be returned and she's determined to make it happen.

"This is just the beginning. We have more remains still missing. All the families must have this kind of funeral," she said.

Sgt. Bean was buried Friday with full military honors at Quantico National Cemetery.