



ROLLING THUNDER[®], INC
CHAPTER 2 OF ILLINOIS
Wauconda, Illinois



“MISSION COMPLETE”

19 DECEMBER 2019

U.S. Navy Fire Control Mate 3d Class Adolph Loebach Adolph Loebach was born on August 24, 1919 in LaSalle to Henry and Veronica (Gorski) Loebach. He had graduated from St. Mary Parochial School and later attended LaSalle-Peru High School. Prior to enlisting in the Navy in 1939, he was employed at National Sheet Metal in Peru.

MISSING: On Dec. 7, 1941, Adolph Loebach 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 Loebach.



After the attack, St. Mary's Catholic Church in Peru did hold a memorial Mass, but the family never was able to go to a local graveside to pay respects to their loved one.

RECOVERY: 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 Loebach.

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

To identify Loebach's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial and material evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and Y-chromosome DNA (Y-STR) analysis.

Next – of – Kin Jim Loebach, retired teacher and Oglesby resident, said he was only 3 when his brother died, so he doesn't have memories of his second-oldest brother other than family stories and photos.

He said he was surprised in 2012 to receive a call from the agency and again in 2015, that advancements could make the identification possible. Jim, 83 now, received the calls, as his two sisters and all five brothers have passed away.

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INTERMENT: A Mass of Christian burial for Adolph was held at 11:00 AM on Thursday, December 19, 2019 at St. Anthony Church of the Nativity of Our Lord Parish at 510 Mautino Drive in Spring Valley. The Rev. Scott Potthoff officiated. Burial followed at St. Vincent Cemetery in LaSalle, where full military honors were provided by the United States Navy. Visitation for Adolph was held at the church from 10:00 AM until time of funeral services. Very professional, and dignified services were coordinated by Barto Funeral Home, Spring Valley, IL.



Adolph is survived by his brother, James (Mary Ann) Loebach of Oglesby and nieces and nephews.

He had been preceded in death by his mother in 1939. In the years following his death, his father and six of his siblings, Richard, Ted, Eugene, Gerald, Veronica and Ruth, have all passed away.

James Loebach is relieved that his family was finally able to put up a grave marker in St. Vincent's Cemetery — provided by the U.S. Navy — and a quiet funeral service. He said the family was glad that Adolph's final resting place is near the graves of his parents Henry and Veronica Loebach.

More than 200 people attended the Christian Mass for FMC3 Loebach at St. Anthony Church followed by interment at St. Vincent Cemetery with full military honors for his sacrifice in WWII.

A military honor guard stood at attention as a 21-gun salute was fired and the bugler played taps before FMC3 Loebach's relatives received the folded American flag that rested on the coffin.

Despite decades of time, the ceremony brought a sense of closure to the family, comfort to his friends, warmth to his fellow Americans, and pride to his Veteran brothers and sisters.

CHAPTER COIN and POW/MIA FLAG: A National POW/MIA Flag and Chapter 2, IL challenge coin was presented to FMC3 Loebach's surviving brother by Jim Murray, President, Chapter 1 and Rich Lanute, President, Chapter 2, Rolling Thunder, Inc. The coin symbolizes a "test of our metal" in supporting the on-going efforts to ensure the remaining 80,000 plus servicemen, servicewomen, and civilians, unaccounted for, are returned to our Country and to their loved ones.



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Rolling Thunder Participants:

Funeral

19 December 2019



ATTENDEES (24) Bill Atkinson, Ron Carpenter, Larry Clucas, John Cummings, Del Del Peral, Lara Del Peral, Frank Gampetro, Rich Hampton, Andy Haszlkiewicz, John Heaton, Paul Hebein, Rick Herr, Wayne Kirkpatrick, Jeff Koszuta, Rich Lanute, Ted Makarewicz, Al Miller, Jim Murray, Jim Purcell, Dennis Reiter, Dan Salazar, Bill Sharpness, Mick Singer, Gary Vandenbos.

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