

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Remains of World War II Veteran to Return to East Tennessee Greene County Native to be Laid to Rest After More than 70 Years

NASHVILLE – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and Department of Veterans Services Commissioner Many-Bears Grinder recognize the service and sacrifice of United States Army Private First Class Reece Gass of Greeneville who was presumably killed on January 14, 1945, but was not identified until 2016. Gass was serving with Company E, 33rd Armored Regiment, 3rd Armored Division in Belgium during World War II when he was killed in action when enemy fire destroyed his tank.

An American investigator recovered the remains of a soldier from a tank in Belgium in 1947, but repeated attempts to identify the remains were unsuccessful. The Greene County native was buried in a grave marked Unknown X-5867 Neuville in the U.S. Military Cemetery Hamm, Luxembourg with a headstone that read "Here Rests in Honored Glory a Comrade in Arms Known but to God."

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency exhumed Gass in 2016 and was able to confirm his identity using DNA tests which matched a surviving niece.

"Reece was only 20 years old when he went off to war to fight for his state and country," Haslam said. "We are grateful he will finally be laid to rest under a headstone that will bear his name in a community and state committed to honor his memory."

"Private First Class Gass is an American and Tennessee hero who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom." Grinder said. "We are relieved this his family will finally get closure after waiting for more than 70 years."

Gass' remains will arrive at the Tri-Cities Airport at 2525 TN-25 in Blountville on Thursday, June 8 at 8:15 p.m. (EDT). Media planning to attend the dignified transfer of remains at the airport will need to meet the Tri-Cities Airport Public Safety Officer at the Air Services Counter by 7:55 p.m. (EDT). Further instructions will be provided at the Air Services Counter. Interviews with family members will not be provided during the dignified transfer of remains.

Haslam has declared a day of mourning and ordered flags at half-staff from sunrise to sunset on Saturday, June 10 in honor of Private First Class Reece's ultimate sacrifice. Visitation will be from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EDT) at Doughty-Stevens Funeral Home, 1125 Tusculum Boulevard, Greeneville, TN 37841 on June 9. Funeral service will be at Doughty-Stevens Funeral Home, 1125 Tusculum Boulevard, Greeneville, TN 37841 on June 10 at 2:00 p.m. (EDT). Graveside service will follow the funeral service on June 10 at Cross Anchor Cemetery, 560 Old Baileyton Road, Greeneville, TN at 3:00 p.m. (EDT).

Gass is survived by his nieces Roberta Gass, Jo Ann Jones, Betty Lou McAmis and Michelle Schofield of Greeneville, TN.

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