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News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Burial Ceremony for Remains of Area Soldier Killed in WWI to be Held at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, Annville

After 92 years in an unmarked grave in France, the remains of Army Pvt. Henry A. Weikel will return to his native Schuylkill County next week for a religious service and burial. Weikel was killed in action in World War I on September 16, 1918, at the age of 28, in the Battle of Saint-Mihiel, which is in northeastern France. The battle lasted from September 12 to 19, with the American Expeditionary Force reclaiming the area from German forces.

During a 2006 Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) recovery mission in Europe, a local French resident, Elisabeth Gozzo, told the team about possible remains of American soldiers that had been found. The JPAC team visited the site and found the remains of three soldiers, including Weikel.

According to a report from JPAC, the other soldiers who were found were Pvt. Carl H. Willig and Pvt. Thomas D. Costello. A fourth soldier listed as "missing in action" at the battlefield was Sgt. William Wood, but his remains were not found.

There were 29 soldiers killed September 16, with the four MIAs unaccounted for, the JPAC report stated. Battles in the area lasted about four weeks, with three American units engaging the enemy in the same area, which apparently resulted in the loss of the burial marker due to continued shelling and digging for fighting positions. There were subsequent searches of the area after the war, but no remains were found.

According to the JPAC report, some records indicated that Weikel was born and raised in Lavelle, the son of Henry and Eliza Weikel. The report also noted, however, that Weikel "hailed from Mount Carmel," citing World War I Selective Service System draft registration cards from Northumberland County.

A public viewing will be held from 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday December 8, 2010, at the Truskowsky Funeral Home, Mahanoy City, and the funeral service will be held at 11 a.m., December 9, at the funeral home, with the Rev. Dr. John Reid, pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Mahanoy City, officiating. A burial ceremony with full military

honors, along with an escort by the Patriot Guard and State Police, will be held at 1 p.m., December 9, at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, Annville.

Weikel will posthumously receive the Purple Heart, World War I Victory Medal with France Service Clasp, Mihiel Battle Crest with Bronze Service Star, and the World War I Victory Button in Silver. Debra Coleman, Weikel's niece will accept the medals and the American flag at the cemetery.

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