



## 'To What Remains': New documentary focuses on team bringing home MIAs - Entertainment - Military Families



["To What Remains,"](#) a documentary produced by Imperative Entertainment, is being released in theaters Dec. 7 in honor of Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. The film doesn't cover the horrors of that attack, but it wouldn't exist without it.

"It not only signifies a very dark hour in the history of our country but the initiation of a multi-year conflict," said Dr. Pat Scannon, founder of Project Recovery, the film's subject. "We're dealing with the consequences of that conflict."

[Project Recover](#), formerly the BentProp Project, searches for war wreckage in hopes of finding service members who were declared missing in action. It's the result of Scannon finding a 65-foot wing of what turned out to be an American B-24 while on a 1993 dive trip to Palau, an archipelago 550 miles east of the Philippines. He had been part of a group invited to the island nation to look for the Japanese trawler that Ensign George H.W. Bush shot down in 1944—Palau's leaders hoped the then-President would return for the 50th anniversary, Scannon said. He knew that if the wing was by itself, it couldn't be good.

"It was sort of a catalyst, something in me that was ready to receive this information because once I saw it, that was it," Scannon said.

Scannon's background is science — he has a doctorate in chemistry, and served in the Army as a doctor — and he started researching the World War II battles over Palau, carefully documenting his findings. He slowly got help exploring the sea for debris, getting some

skydivers interested. Marcus Luttrell, the Navy SEAL who was the lone survivor of a 2005 fight in Afghanistan, was introduced to the group by former Texas governor Rick Perry.

"He was MIA for a period of time, so there was that direct connection to it," said Derek Abbey, Project Recover's current president and CEO, a 23-year Marine veteran.

Abbey met Scannon at a WWII reunion, one of the team's favorite ways to gather information. At Abbey's first, near Indianapolis, "it was like the clock rewound, and they were all 20-something again." He helped set up another the following year, in San Diego.

"Pat, at the time, was going around to these reunions and providing updates to the members and interviewing former service members," Abbey said. "We quickly became friends, and he invited me to be part of this group and hasn't been able to get rid of me ever since."



Dr. Pat Scannon shares a find with teammates during an archaeology dig deep in the jungles of Palau. This potential MIA site was more than 10 kilometers in the jungle leaving limited time while on site. Photo: Harry Parker

Board member Dan Friedkin, who owns Imperative Entertainment, commissioned the documentary in 2014. The film crew followed Project Recover for six years, interviewing survivors of the fallen. They also used archival footage of many of the mentioned battles and footage from the underwater robots that enabled Project Recover to cover more ground than they could as divers. The technological upgrade is thanks, in part, to their partnerships with Scripps Institution

of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, and the University of Delaware.

Scannon said he appreciated the lengths the film crew went to, as there were no guarantees they would make any positive identifications. "They could have just documented the search, but they chose to put the documentary on hold until recovery occurred at some of the sites."

When the team does find remains, they notify the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, which handles the identification process. Project Recover doesn't reach out to families until after remains are identified. The process can take years.

"There's no reason to open a wound," Scannon said.



A beach flag ceremony for a B-24 crew found in the Solomon Islands by Project Recover. When an MIA crash site is located, a flag ceremony is held for each crew member Missing In Action. Photo: Harry Parker

Abbey said that the filmmakers did an incredible job of highlighting their work's impact on military families.



"When these communities come together for these memorials and celebrations, they connect, and sometimes it's people who have never

connected before. To include family," Abbey said.

Scannon added, "I think people don't think about the consequences to military families when there's an absence of knowledge. And so when remains are recovered and repatriated with families, it's multiple generations that come together to honor that individual."

Both said that the stories didn't end with the film's credits.

"We have colleagues that just got back from missions across the world," Abbey said. "And so the work continues, and there are a lot more answers to be found."



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