

# Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Family Member Guide



A resource for family members of U.S. personnel unaccounted for from the Vietnam War, Korean War, Cold War, World War II, and other designated conflicts





## THE DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY

is privileged to provide this guide as a resource for family members of missing DoD personnel. This booklet contains information about topics important to you regarding the government's work to account for your missing loved one.



## DPAA'S VISION

A world-class workforce fulfills the nation's obligation by maximizing the number of DoD personnel accounted for while ensuring timely, accurate information is provided to their families.



## DPAA'S MISSION

Provide the fullest possible accounting for missing personnel to their families and the nation.

As it stands today, there are more than 72,000 missing from World War II, more than 7,500 from the Korean War, 126 missing from the Cold War and more than 1,500 missing from the Vietnam War. We estimate almost 39,000 are recoverable, with the others being mostly deep, at sea losses.

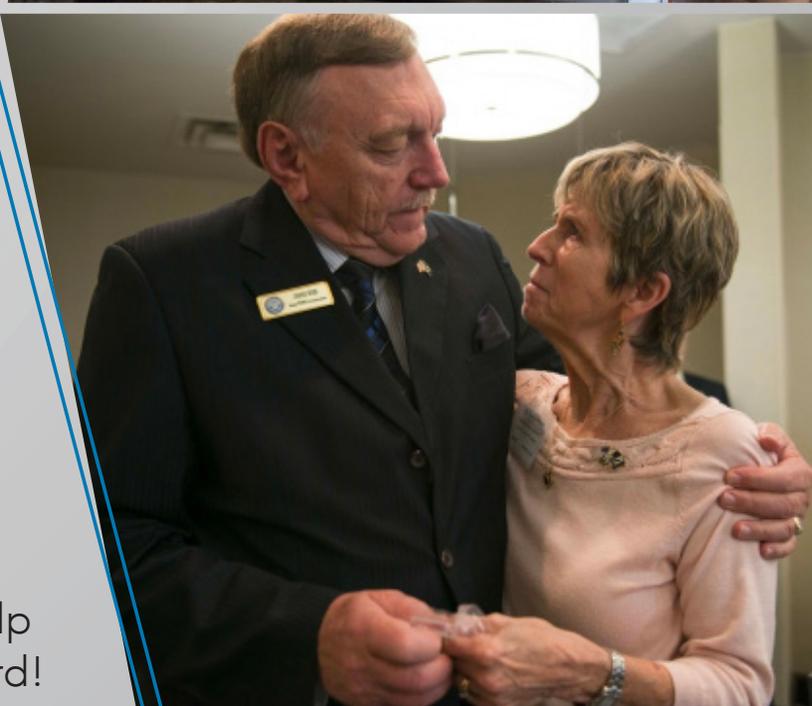
DPAA is dedicated to the fullest possible accounting of the missing, and when possible, bringing their remains home.

We are equally dedicated to providing a voice to their stories of service and sacrifice, and sharing that information with you, their families, and the nation.

This guide strives to provide you with insights and a better understanding of DPAA's commitment and resolve.

Although we are currently communicating with 18,000 active family members, we continue to explore innovative ways to reach new families.

Your help is essential; please help to spread the word!



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# SERVICE CASUALTY OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Each branch of the military maintains Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Offices to help family members with any questions or needs relating to the status of their missing loved one. The State Department and Central Intelligence Agency perform casualty affairs functions for civilian personnel from their respective organizations. If family members have questions or need assistance, your loved one's branch of service has a representative to serve as your primary point of contact with the Department of Defense (DoD). These offices serve four major functions:

## **1. Your Primary Interface With The DoD**

Your service casualty office (SCO) maintains a database of family members and their complete contact information. SCOs are the single point of contact for you registering as a family member for your loved one's case. Representatives can provide you both current information about your case and copies of records. The SCOs may not be able to answer all questions related to search, recovery, and identification, but they do obtain the information you seek through working with DPAA and other DoD partners.

## **2. Conduct Identification Report Briefings**

If your loved one is accounted for, your respective SCO representative will contact you to present the DPAA identification report. This report contains a review of your case, and explains the evidence used to account for your loved one.

## **3. Gather Family Reference Samples**

One of our greatest challenges is locating family members whose DNA can be compared with the remains of missing DoD personnel to determine a match or provide an exclusion. The SCOs conduct research, often working with professional forensic genealogists, to locate family members of the missing. This enables the DoD's DNA laboratory to develop a DNA reference database to be used during forensic analysis.

## **4. Provide Mortuary Services**

When an identification has been made, the SCO will contact the Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) to make arrangements for reuniting your family with your loved one, and help the PNOK arrange for a military honors funeral and burial. The SCO can advise who the PNOK is for your loved one.

# HOW TO CONTACT YOUR SERVICE CASUALTY OFFICE



## U.S. Army

Department of the Army  
Attn Past Conflicts AHRC-PDC-R  
1600 Spearhead Div. Ave, Dept.  
450  
Fort Knox, KY 40122-5405  
Tel: 1 (800) 892-2490



## U.S. Department of State

Dept. Of State/CA/OCS/ACS/EAP  
SA 17, 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20007  
Tel: 1 (202) 485-6125



## U.S. Navy

Navy Personnel Command Casualty  
Assistance Division (PERS-13)  
5720 Integrity Drive  
Millington, TN 38055-0000  
Tel: 1 (800) 443-9298



## U.S. Coast Guard

Personnel Services Division  
Casualty Matters  
US Coast Guard Stop 7200  
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20593-7200  
Tel: 1 (202) 795-6637



## U.S. Air Force

Headquarters Air Force Personnel  
Center/Missing Persons Branch  
550 C Street West  
JBSA-Randolph, TX 78150-4716  
Tel: 1 (800) 531-5501  
Air Force Mortuary Affairs  
Operations  
116 Purple Heart Drive  
Dover AFB, DE 19902  
Tel: 1 (800) 531-5803



## Central Intelligence Agency

CIA Casualty  
Room 4A40, DD4  
Washington, DC 20505  
Tel: 1 (703) 874-4270



## U.S. Marine Corps

Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps  
Manpower and Reserve Affairs  
(MFPC) Personal and Family  
Readiness Division  
2008 Elliot Road  
Quantico, MCB 22134-5103  
Tel: 1 (866) 210-3421, Ext 1

# STAYING INFORMED

The U.S. Government has conducted family-oriented update programs since 1995, reaching thousands of family members for face-to-face discussions about DPAA's work to account for missing DoD personnel. These events are designed to keep family members informed of DPAA's worldwide mission and to discuss in detail the available information about their particular cases. Speakers at these events include senior government officials and subject matter experts who perform the wide range of duties associated with the POW/ MIA mission. During the meetings, there are formal presentations, question and answer sessions, and one-on-one discussions between government officials and family members. The two forms of events are: regional family member updates and annual meetings.

## FAMILY MEMBER UPDATE BRIEFINGS

As many as seven times a year, DoD officials meet with family members of unaccounted for personnel who live within a 350-mile radius of a chosen major metropolitan area. These meetings are designed to make access more available for family

members. Government officials do meet one-on-one with family members to discuss historical information about the loss incident, recovery efforts immediately after the conflict, and the current status of their loved one's case. On average, 150-300 family members and 30 government officials attend each meeting.

Visit [www.dpaa.mil](http://www.dpaa.mil) or contact your Service Casualty Office to find out when DPAA will host an event in your area.



A family reviews the information provided about their loved one's loss while attending the DPAA Family Member Update in Green Bay, Wis. (Photo by Sgt. Eric M. LaClair/U.S. Marine Corps)



DoD representatives speak to nearly 280 family members during the Family Member Update in Los Angeles, Calif. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Erik Cardenas/U.S. Air Force)

## ANNUAL MEETINGS

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Each year, the Vietnam War, and Korea and Cold War families meet in the Washington, D.C. area, which makes it possible for U.S. Government officials to brief them. Family members of unaccounted-for DoD personnel from the Vietnam War era usually receive their briefings in June, in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the National League of POW/MIA Families. The Annual Government Briefings for families of unaccounted-for DoD personnel from the Korean

and Cold Wars is hosted by DPAA and is typically held in late summer. At these annual meetings, family members have the opportunity to meet with numerous civilian and military specialists whose expertises include: foreign government negotiations, formulation of national policy, remains recovery and identification, DNA science, archival research, and investigation analysis.

## ASSISTANCE TO ATTEND ANNUAL GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

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The SCOs are authorized to provide travel assistance for family members to attend the respective Vietnam War and Korea-Cold War annual briefings. The program, also known as “Coincidental Assistance” or “COIN Assist” covers the cost of roundtrip airline tickets for two family members for each unaccounted-for individual, for the purpose of attending the annual briefings. Families should contact their SCO to see if they qualify. COIN Assist applies only to the annual meetings in the Washington, D.C. area, and is not available for regional Family Member Updates.

## REGISTER TO ATTEND A FAMILY MEMBER MEETING

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Visit [www.dpaa.mil](http://www.dpaa.mil) or contact your SCO for dates and locations of upcoming Family Member Updates and annual meeting schedules, and how to register.

## TOUR A LABORATORY FACILITY

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DPAA’s headquarters in Arlington, Virginia has oversight of offices and laboratories at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii; Offutt AFB, Nebraska; and Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio. Family members wishing

to visit one of DPAA’s laboratory facilities should contact their SCO to coordinate their visit with DPAA’s Outreach & Communications Directorate. If you do not have base access, DPAA personnel will coordinate access with the security forces that guard the military base.

DPAA also maintains detachments in Southeast Asia and Europe that provide coordination and logistics support, among other things, during investigation and recovery operations. Visits to our detachments are dependent upon availability of personnel at each office. Since detachment personnel are exclusively focused on supporting teams in the field, visit requests must be coordinated well in advance and cannot be guaranteed.



Dr. Laurel Freas, DPAA anthropologist, consoles Amy House, wife of the late U.S. Marine Corps Capt. John A. House II, after a chain of custody ceremony held at DPAA on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Leah Ferrante)

## VISITING A LOSS INCIDENT SITE

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DPAA is keenly aware of family member and private citizen interest in the past conflict personnel accounting mission and of their desire to be present during fieldwork to search for DoD personnel missing from designated past conflicts. However, visitors at field operations during an on-going investigation or excavation, regardless of how well-intentioned, potentially place themselves at physical risk, can jeopardize operations or partner nation permissions, compromise scientific integrity of the work, and slow resolution of the case. DPAA strives to avoid conferring preferential treatment to any individual or group, so will not provide sponsorship, government intervention, or

diplomatic resources for family members who want to visit a site. DPAA discourages any persons or entities not involved in the DPAA-led operation to visit loss sites, but should such persons arrive at a DPAA-sponsored investigation or excavation site or other field operation, they will be made aware of the risks of their continued presence to the successful completion of the mission. The U.S. Government is not liable for the actions of non-official personnel at the site and is not responsible in any way for their safety, transportation, lodging, guides, medical treatment, or any other services or expenses incurred in reaching or visiting the site.



U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Ethan Shrader, DPAA Explosive Ordinance Disposal technician, searches for unexploded ordnance and possible signs of life support during a survey mission in Lao People's Democratic Republic. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jamarius Fortson)

# WHO ARE UNACCOUNTED-FOR?

Unaccounted for U.S. personnel are those who went missing during a designated conflict and who have not yet been accounted for.

## A

U.S. military personnel, civilian employees of the DoD components, and civilian employees of contractors to the DoD components.

## B

Civilian employees and contractors of other U.S. Government departments and agencies (e.g., Air America employees under contract to the Central Intelligence Agency during the Indochina War)

## C

Employees of humanitarian agencies accredited to the Military Services (e.g., the American Red Cross and the United Service Organizations).

## D

Members of civilian organizations credited with active military service by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to Public Law 95-202 such as the Merchant Marine during World War II and the American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers).

## E

U.S. citizens and other persons as directed by the Secretary of Defense.

## 10 U.S. Code Section 1509

Unless directed by the Secretary of Defense, DPAA does not pursue other operational losses including training accidents and aircraft losses outside combatant theaters. DPAA also does not recover those officially buried at sea.

### Section 1509 provides that the designated conflicts are:

- World War II during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946
- Cold War during the period beginning on September 2, 1945, and ending on August 21, 1991.
- Korean War during the period beginning on June 27, 1950, and ending on January 31, 1955.
- The Indochina War (also known as the Vietnam War) era during the period beginning on July 8, 1959, and ending on May 15, 1975.
- The Persian Gulf War during the period beginning on August 2, 1990, and ending on February 28, 1991.
- Such other conflicts in which members of the armed forces served as the Secretary of Defense may designate.

## BEGINNING THE SEARCH FOR A MISSING INDIVIDUAL

A critical first step for all unaccounted for cases is to gather and organize historical records and information. Archival research allows DPAA personnel to determine the official post-conflict status of an individual or group of individuals, and better understand any circumstances surrounding secondary burials or other subsequent movement of remains that could affect DPAA's search for remains. DPAA evaluates records from multiple sources, including several U.S. national archives facilities, various online repositories and sources, and foreign archives, in search of important records about the fate of missing personnel. Although historical research can help DPAA determine

whether a field investigation is warranted, sometimes environmental or human activity factors may lead to the conclusion that there is little to no possibility physical remains would be found during field work. For cases where no field activity is possible, DPAA will monitor new information or evidence for its potential to produce new leads or point to other activities that might help advance the case.

### Copies of Records

If DPAA has an electronic copy of your loved one's record, we can share it with you through your SCO free of charge. You can also access your loved one's military personnel file from the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Mo. The NPRC maintains the file of every military member who has served in the US military. Visit their website at <https://www.archives.gov/> for more information.



Dr. Camillia Rodgers, DPAA historian, uses the DPAA library at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, to gather historical information. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Seth Coulter)

## ANALYTICAL CASE CATEGORIES

Over the history of the past conflict personnel accounting effort, numerous terms have been used to describe the status of unaccounted-for personnel. In 2015, DPAA established four analytical categories and reviews the available information for unaccounted-for personnel, then determines a category for each one. This case categorization helps DPAA to better communicate with families and other stakeholders and to optimize resource allocation. Analytical categories are not permanent and can change based upon re-analysis or receipt of new leads or information.

These categories are:

### **| Active Pursuit**

Cases for which there exists sufficient information to compel research, investigation, disinterment, or recovery operations in the field. These cases are the priority for operational planning and allocation of resources.

### **| Deferred**

Cases for which there are no new or viable leads, or access to the site is restricted.

### **| Non-Recoverable**

Cases for which there is a low potential for recovery, such as when an individual's remains are lost at sea (but not buried at sea), or lost due to fire, including cremation or an explosion. This assessment is based on historical research, scientific analysis, and the limits of current technology. To classify a case as non-recoverable does not mean that the case is closed. Should new information be discovered that indicates it may be possible to recover the remains, the case will be re-categorized.

### **| Under Review**

Cases actively undergoing review for categorization as Active Pursuit, Deferred, or Non-Recoverable. When circumstances and/or new evidence are presented that cause a previously categorized case to be re-evaluated, the case will be categorized as Under Review until a new category determination can be made.

## PARTNER NATION ACCESS APPROVAL

DPAA's mission is a global one. DPAA maintains contact with both U.S. and local government officials in 46 countries who support, coordinate, and facilitate DPAA conducting any field work in their country. In some cases, although field work is warranted for a case, DPAA may be unable to send personnel to a foreign country because of access restrictions. However, the Agency maintains contact with counterparts or partners recognized by the host nation to garner access as situations permit.



A Vietnamese official uses a shovel to aid in recovery efforts in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Julian Temblador)



Rain falls on graves of unknown service members buried in the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines. DPAA conducts disinterments in an effort to identify Unknowns lost during past conflicts. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Leah Ferrante)

### American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC)



Established by Congress in 1923, the ABMC commemorates the service, achievements, and sacrifice of U.S. armed forces. More than 218,000 Americans are buried or memorialized overseas by the ABMC. If you are a direct next-of-kin of those buried or memorialized at ABMC sites, you can order a lithograph of a headstone or Tablet Of The Missing. Visit their website at <https://www.abmc.gov>

# FIELD OPERATIONS

## INVESTIGATION

Although not possible with all losses, the field investigation effort helps validate sites with recovery potential to proceed to the excavation phase. An investigation can uncover valuable new information that could only be obtained through on-site visit and/or local interviews. It aims to provide either a determination

to a recovery mission or definitive information that sheds light on a new conclusion for the case. The outcome of the latter might be that further research is needed, or a confirmation that the post-conflict finding of non-recoverability should be upheld.



Master Sgt. Ji Young Chang, an investigator with the Ministry of National Defense's Killed in Action Recovery and Identification (MAKRI), briefs DPAA and MAKRI personnel as part of an investigation mission near the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Korea. DPAA was conducting an investigation into possible locations of U.S. service members lost during the Korean War. (Photo by Marine Cpl. Jack A. E. Rigsby)



DPAA team members set up a screening station in the early morning during a recovery mission near Bebra, Germany. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Luke Kitterman)

## RECOVERY

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An excavation may be planned when all available information indicates remains are possibly located at a particular site. The goal of a field recovery is to find physical evidence that results in an identification of an unaccounted-for DoD member, not to determine the cause of a crash or conduct salvage of military wreckage. Reports created during the field recovery process will become part of the final identification packet DPAA prepares for the family. Any personal effects that can be attributed to a specific service member will be returned to the designated family member through the SCO. Laboratory analysis of recovered evidence associated with a casualty or crash site can take anywhere from several months to a few years.

### What Other Factors May Affect Recovery & Identification of Remains

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Several factors may affect the possibility or timeline of locating remains and making an identification. Sites can be degraded or lost due to urbanization, environmental, regulatory, or political factors beyond the control of DPAA.

If remains are highly fragmentary, it may not be possible to make any determinations, even with the most advanced DNA technology. When DNA analysis is possible, there may not be sufficient DNA references on file for remains comparisons. Every case must be evaluated and analyzed based on its own merit with the goal of achieving identification.

## WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG TO PLAN & CONDUCT A RECOVERY?

Many factors affect how recovery sites are prioritized and scheduled. Weather, partner-nation access approval, terrain challenges, site characteristics, and various logistical and operational concerns affect the planning and staging of recoveries. DPAA conducts technical negotiations and talks with representatives of partner nation governments in order to ensure productive and safe operations in-country for DoD personnel.

During these interactions, DPAA also discusses scheduling of field operations, obtains information from the host government as to any permitting or other requirements, and coordinates logistics such as how to move a team within the country. DPAA typically asks for support from national, provincial, or local officials.

A mission may last from approximately 30-65 days, with teams working 8-10 hours daily to remove soil from the recovery site, run soil through screens to uncover evidence, recover and package evidence for transport to a DPAA lab, and document the entire process. A recovery site ranges in size from an individual burial site to a football field. It may take more than one mission to complete an excavation, since the recovery teams only have a set time period in which to work. Sometimes the recovery team finds nothing at a site, despite DPAA's best analytical and investigative efforts. There are many explanations as to why remains might not be found at a recovery site. The remains could have been buried elsewhere by individuals who witnessed the incident, they may have degraded due to environmental



conditions, or they may have been recovered in the post-war period by U.S. search and recovery personnel who could not identify them. In this last instance, those remains are buried today as "Unknowns."

DPAA performs excavation operations in Vietnam in search of three missing U.S. service members lost during the Vietnam War (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Clifford)

## WHO ARE “UNKNOWN?”

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Remains recovered in the immediate post-war period but not identified were buried under headstones marked “Unknown” in ABMC cemeteries overseas or in U.S. cemeteries managed by the Department of the Army or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration. These remains may be comprised of a single individual or of many individuals who died in similar circumstances and were buried together in a group.

## WHY WEREN'T UNKNOWN IDENTIFIED?

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There are a number of reasons why remains were not identified when they were originally recovered. After both World War II and the Korean War, graves registration personnel from the U.S. Army conducted sweeping efforts to recover and identify the dead from those wars. They utilized the best methods of the time, employing professional investigators, morticians, dentists, and anthropologists to aid their efforts, and deploying scientific techniques that were state-of-the-art for the time period.

However, the remains of several thousand recovered casualties could not be identified. Sometimes the remains recovered were too sparse or fragmented for the techniques

employed. In other instances, the available records were too limited to suggest an association of the remains with a missing service member. Finally, when groups of men died and were buried together, whether as a result of mass casualties incurred on a battlefield, the sudden sinking of a ship, or from a common burial of prisoners of war, their circumstances of death and burial were too complicated to be untangled by the analysis at the time.

Today, advances in forensic sciences (such as the use of DNA, odontological analysis, and cranial or skeletal superimposition), along with an improved ability to compile and compare more detailed and complete historical records, make it possible for DPAA to reassess unidentified remains buried as Unknowns, and, where merited by research, to propose the remains be disinterred from their current burial locations in order to conduct new forensic analyses, which may lead to their identification.

## DISINTERRING UNKNOWN

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DPAA is actively working to identify unknown remains from the Korean War and World War II, currently interred in cemeteries administered by the VA in the United States and ABMC around the world.

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DISINTERMENT POLICY TODAY

Although DPAA's primary focus has traditionally been on field operations, DoD continues to compile information in an attempt to identify those buried as Unknowns. Since the mid-1980s, when evidence was sufficient to justify a disinterment, DoD would authorize an exhumation for potential identification. Recently, advances in cutting-edge forensic and analytical techniques are improving DPAA's ability to identify and account for Unknowns. In May 2016, DoD established policy to govern disinterment of Unknowns for the purpose of identification. The policy requires that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve

Affairs (ASD (M&RA)) determine whether a DPAA request proposed for disinterment meets the DoD-mandated thresholds.

### Disinterment Thresholds

- For cases with commingled remains interred as a group, DPAA must have DNA or other medical means of identification for at least 60% of the DoD personnel associated with the case.
- For cases of individual unknown remains, the medical means of identification for at least 50% of the associated DoD personnel must be on-hand.



ABMC staff and DPAA personnel disinter a casket at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in Manila, Philippines. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Kathrine Dodd)

## WHAT IS THE DISINTERMENT PROCESS?

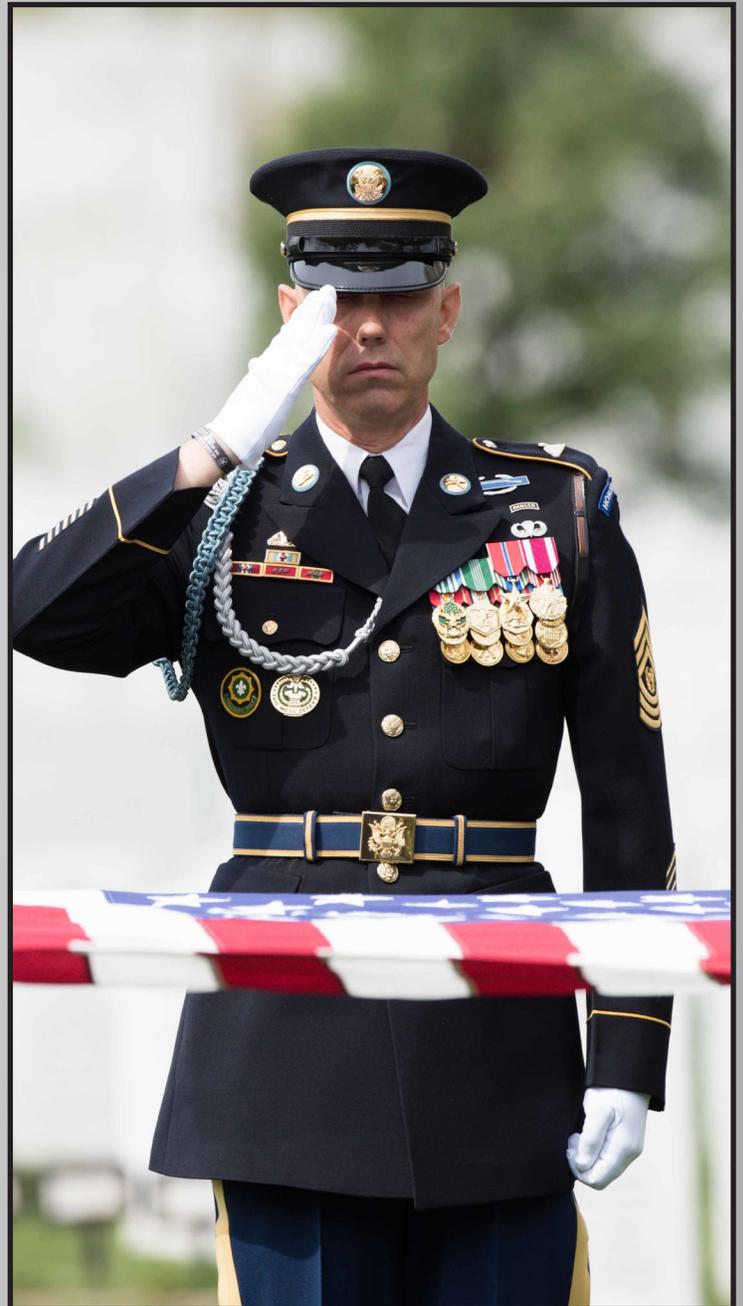
DPAA does not have the authority to independently undertake disinterments, but works with other federal agencies to obtain authorization. After the historical and forensic analyses are complete, DPAA requests approval to disinter. This request is then reviewed by a number of offices including the relevant SCO, Armed Forces Medical Examiner System-Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFMES-AFDIL), and VA or ABMC. If these offices concur with DPAA's request, a packet then goes to the ASD(M&RA) for final decision. If the request is approved, DPAA coordinates with the cemetery to schedule and conduct the disinterment of the Unknown(s).

## VIETNAM WAR UNKNOWN

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery is dedicated to DoD personnel whose remains were not identifiable or who were not recovered.

The Vietnam War Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is currently empty. The remains of Air Force First Lieutenant Michael Joseph Blassie had been interred in the Tomb's crypt in 1986, then disinterred in 1998, when it was determined that newly developed science and DNA technology could be used to identify him. DPAA has

many remains from the Vietnam War, continues to identify and account for them, and there are no plans to inter any Vietnam War remains in the crypt as Unknown.



The Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 3rd United States Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), perform an Army Full Honor Funeral for Sgt. Wilson Meckley in Section 60, Arlington National Cemetery, Va. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Cody W. Torkelson)

## KOREAN WAR UNKNOWNNS

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After the Korean War, 866 sets of remains that could not be identified were buried as Unknowns at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP), also known as the "Punchbowl," in Honolulu. In 1999, two Korean War Unknowns were disinterred from this group for purposes of scientific analysis and testing. During this effort, it was discovered that when remains were processed in the 1950s, they were treated with a powder that degraded their DNA in a way that prevented successful identification by DNA analysis.

By 2009, DPAA scientists had developed a chest radiograph technique that offered a new avenue

for identification. Clavicles (collar bone) superimposition, is another line of evidence that assists in making identifications. Scientists are able to use antemortem (before death) chest X-rays from the serviceman's induction into military service to match the clavicles of Unknowns.

In 2016, DoD DNA scientists developed a revolutionary method for sequencing damaged DNA, and continue to refine the research and methods with which to overcome the challenges posed by the damaged DNA from these Korean War Unknowns.

DPAA service members participate in a disinterment ceremony held at the NMCP, Honolulu, Hawaii. DPAA has been disinterring remains of Korean War Unknowns in a phased plan. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Leah Ferrante)



## WORLD WAR II UNKNOWNNS

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In the case of World War II, advanced historical research and forensic analyses, including DNA, are important tools in DPAA's effort to identify Unknowns from this war. These cases vary widely. Some involve mass casualty incidents, such as the losses that occurred during the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and others involve a very small number of remains from a single aircraft or ground

vehicle whose occupants could not be identified with technology available in the 1950s. Close collaboration between historical researchers and forensic analysts is critical to making an identification from poor records and, often, fragmentary remains. Several large-scale disinterment projects are underway and more are planned for the future.



A member of the U.S. Army Honor Guard, 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) paces in front of the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kristina Truluck)

# OTHER FEDERAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

## U.S. RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIAS

The U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs (USRJC) was established on March 26, 1992, by Presidents George H.W. Bush and Boris Yeltsin, as a forum through which both nations seek information to aid in determining the fates of service personnel who are missing as a result of past conflicts from World War II forward. Activities of the USRJC since 1992 have fostered support of DPAA's humanitarian efforts, and have increased DPAA's access to documents housed in former Soviet archives, and to locate and interview Russian veterans who participated in conflicts from which U.S. personnel remain unaccounted

for. The U.S. Side of the USRJC is led by a Chairman designated by the President. The Commissioners for the U.S. Side include two U.S. Senators and two U.S. Representatives, as well as representatives from DoD, the Department of State, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Through its Joint Commission Support Division (JCSD), DPAA provides administrative and analytic support to the U.S. side of the USRJC, including the conduct of research in Russia on unaccounted-for U.S. personnel. JCSD also assists the government of Russia with efforts to account for its missing.



The USRJC on POW/MIAs Working Group met in Moscow on December 12, 2019 to conduct Technical Talks regarding POW/MIA cases from the Cold War and Korean War. DPAA supports the USRJC through the JCSD.

## DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) maintains a program dedicated solely to Vietnam War accounting, designated as “Stony Beach.” This team of experts provides direct support to DPAA by conducting interviews in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. One of the Stony Beach team’s priorities is to investigate both “last known alive” cases and first-hand “live sighting” reports.

## ARMED FORCES MEDICAL EXAMINER SYSTEM

The Armed Forces Medical Examiner System’s (AFMES) DoD DNA Operations Section provides the DoD and other federal agencies with DNA mission support through the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL). Established in 1991, AFDIL is tasked with current and past conflicts human remains DNA testing used in the identification of fallen service members. AFDIL’s present day accounting and past accounting sections provide the DoD with human identification DNA testing support in the areas of personnel accounting, national security, law enforcement, humanitarian missions, and defense.



A DIA Stony Beach team member, conducts a presentation for family members of Vietnam War unaccounted-for servicemen during the National League of POW/MIA Families Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. (DPAA Staff photo)



AFMES-AFDIL processes DNA reference samples for DPAA. Based on the relationship of the family member to the missing, they may analyze a specific DNA type from one or more of these:

- Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)
- Y-Chromosome (Y-STR)
- Nuclear/Autosomal (au-STR)

# DEOXIRIBONUCLEIC ACID (DNA) BREAKTHROUGHS

In its multi-year effort to identify Korean War unknown remains which had been chemically treated in the 1950s, AFMES-AFDIL developed Next Generation Sequencing (NGS). This technology provides the ability to obtain very small fragments of viable DNA at ultra-high coverage, which was not feasible with previous DNA processing methods. Additionally, they developed a method that can help to distinguish individuals with common mtDNA sequences.



AFMES-AFDIL DNA analysts place samples into cartridges before loading it into the NGS instrument. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Leidholm)

## DNA FAMILY REFERENCE SAMPLES

A family member of an unaccounted for person may submit DNA for use in comparison for identification purposes if the family member shares a maternal or paternal relationship with the unaccounted for person. AFMES-AFDIL uses nuclear (Y-STR and au-STR) and mtDNA for identifications. Nuclear DNA is found in almost every human cell, is passed down from mother and father, and is unique to an individual. Parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren are the best references for nuclear DNA. For mtDNA which is passed down through the mother and is the most resistant to environmental factors, siblings and relatives with the same maternal lineage share this DNA. Past conflict accounting relies on DNA comparisons using a database of Family Reference Samples (FRS). If there are no viable FRS for your loved one, artifacts from the missing service member such as hairbrushes, baby teeth, or watches may provide suitable DNA reference material. Please coordinate with your SCO to determine suitability and submission. Except for baby teeth, all items will be promptly

returned after processing. The collection and actual laboratory processing of each FRS takes little time, but once the laboratory work is complete, an extensive review of the data is completed before the actual written report is finalized. If the family submits an artifact such as a personal item of clothing, an envelope, or a lock of hair, these types of samples will take longer to process than a cheek swab or a blood reference.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

The best way you can help with the identification of unaccounted-for DoD personnel from past conflicts is to provide a FRS. Photographs of unaccounted-for personnel can also aid in the identification process. If you have one, preferably showing a smile and a forehead, a copy should be provided to your SCO.



John Bower holds up a photo of his loved one, U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. John Bower, as part of a remembrance ceremony during an FMU in San Antonio, Texas. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Amara Timberlake)



Lena Gunn (left), AFMES-AFDIL DNA analyst, swabs the cheek of Damien Rispoli, nephew of missing Army Air Force Sgt Vincent Rispoli. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Leidholm)

**DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY**  
FULFILLING OUR NATION'S PROMISE

HOME FAMILIES OUR MISSING NEWS & STORIES ABOUT RESOURCES CONTACT

**PERSONNEL PROFILE**

Service Member **MAJ WILLIAM ORLAN BARE** CHINA [Return to Service Member Profiles](#)

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

Conflict **VIETNAM WAR**  
Service **UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**  
Status **Unaccounted For**

On July 27, 1967, a RF-4C Phantom II (serial number 64-1042, call sign "Hipster 2") departed Tan Son Nhut Air Base, South Vietnam, on a night reconnaissance mission. While en route to its primary target, the aircraft was diverted to another target in Quang Binh Province. After a final radio transmission from the crew, radar contact was lost, and the aircraft was not seen or heard from again. Aerial searchers flew over the Phantom's flight path but were unable to locate a crash site.

First Lieutenant William Orlan Bare, who joined the U.S. Air Force from Oklahoma, served with the 16th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron. He was the pilot of the Phantom when it disappeared, and his remains were not recovered. After the incident, the Air Force promoted 1st Lt Bare to the rank of Major (Maj). Today, Major Bare is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

Based on all information available, DPAA assessed the individual's case to be in the analytical category of **Active Pursuit**.

If you are a family member of this serviceman, DPAA can provide you with additional information and analysis of your case. **Please contact your casualty office representative.**

Service member profile discrepancy? Please help us ensure the accuracy of each profile by [submitting documentation](#) about a service member profile.

**Maj WILLIAM ORLAN BARE**  
Unit 16 TRS TAN SON NHUT  
Historical Country of Loss  
**VIETNAM**  
Current Country of Loss  
Vietnam  
Home of Record OK

Visit DPAA's website at [www.dpaa.mil](http://www.dpaa.mil) to view Service Member Profiles that honor the brave individuals who served and sacrificed for our country, as well as how to help us locate photographs that we can add to your loved one's page to help tell their story.

# DNA QUICK REFERENCE



Cheek swabs are used to collect DNA material for testing.



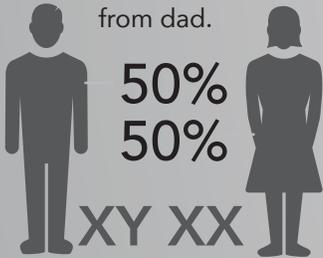
## DNA in Personnel Identification

TYPES found in cells

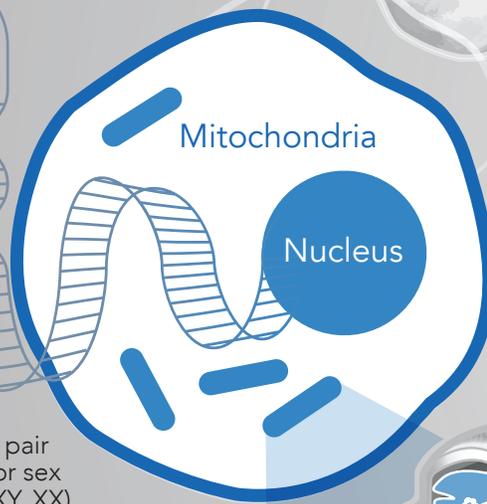
### Nuclear DNA

Nuclear DNA is found in almost every human cell, and is unique to an individual.

**23 pairs** of chromosomes. One pair from mom, the other from dad.



1 pair for sex (XY, XX)  
22 pairs for everything else



### Mitochondrial DNA



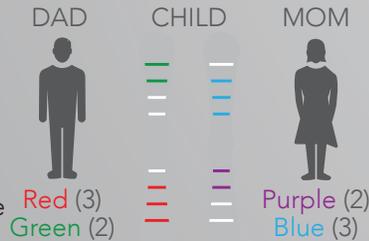
Mitochondrial DNA is passed down through the mother, and is the most resistant to environmental factors.



Siblings and relatives with the same maternal lineage share this DNA.

### Matching

There are repeating patterns inherited from both parents. The combination of these patterns are unique to each person but can be traced to a parent.



#### NUCLEAR DNA FAST FACTS:

1) Law enforcement can use nuclear DNA to either convict or acquit, 2) It breaks down rapidly if exposed to warm, wet environments, and 3) The male Y chromosome is a generationally stable marker across paternal relationships.

### Matching

Instead of looking for repeating patterns, as in nuclear DNA analysis, the composition of the BASE (building block) amounts within a region is analyzed. Although this analysis cannot produce an exact DNA match, it can be used to determine a likely maternal relationship.

#### MITOCHONDRIAL DNA FAST FACTS:

1) Past conflict accounting relies on DNA comparisons using a database of FRS, 2) There are thousands of mitochondrion within every cell, and 3) Preservation of mtDNA is highly affected by its environment, however, the high amounts of mtDNA within each person makes it easier to extract over significant periods of elapsed time.

## AM I ELIGIBLE?

If you share a maternal or paternal relationship with the unaccounted-for service member then you are eligible.

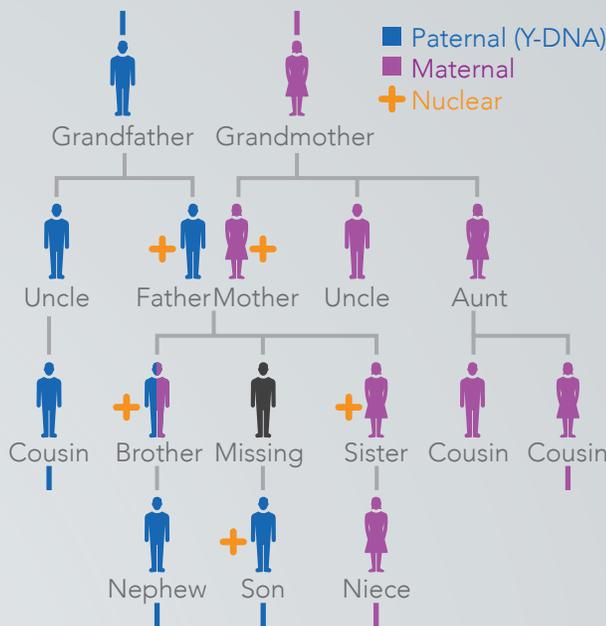
### Nuclear DNA Relationship

Fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters.

Y-DNA (Paternal) Relationship  
Grandfathers, fathers, brothers, sons, uncles, nephews, and male cousins.

Mitochondrial (Maternal) DNA Relationship

Grandmothers, mothers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and female cousins.



## OTHER WAYS TO HELP

If you are a Non-eligible family member, you can help by submitting service member artifacts, such as: hairbrushes, baby teeth, and service covers/hats from service member. These artifacts may help maintain the required DNA reference material. All items will be promptly returned after processing.

## HOW TO DONATE YOUR FAMILY REFERENCE SAMPLE



## YOUR DNA PRIVACY

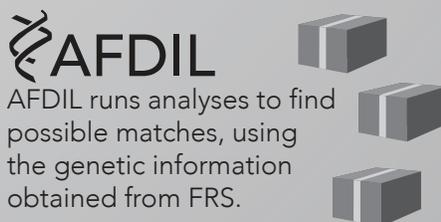
DNA is not sent to the criminal National DNA Index System (NDIS)

DNA is not tested for diseases or genetic disorders

DNA and personal information is assigned to a secure case file

## COMPARISON evidence analysis

In most cases, should DPAA recover a service member's remains, DPAA scientists will cut a small bone sample and send it to the AFDIL for testing and analysis.



PNOKs are contacted by their respective SCO when an identification is made.

# LOCATING RECORDS

Family members are often, understandably, interested in knowing as much as possible about the entire history of their loved one's military service. Researchers within DPAA have a much narrower focus and are focused on locating information that illuminates the circumstances of a missing individual's loss, initial and subsequent burial information, and the history of past attempts to recover and/or identify those remains. DPAA will freely share all the documents collected and analysis produced as a result of that research. However, when asked research questions that extend to an individual's broader military service, DPAA can only offer some suggested on-line resources for family members wishing to conduct this type of research.

While the National Personnel Records Center (NRPC) is where military service records are filed and stored, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the primary U.S. Government repository for general and specific information about a military unit's actions and history. NARA is not resourced to do the research for you,

but will assist you in getting started. To assist researchers in conducting POW/MIA research at its facilities, NARA has published several Reference Information Papers on POW and MIA personnel from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War. You can obtain these directly from NARA for a nominal fee.

Other potential domestic repositories that may contain information related to a loss incident, an individual, or an individual's military unit include the Military Service's History Offices and Museums, and local university and public libraries. Page 34 of this guide provides a list of these and other archive facility contacts that may be helpful as you pursue more information about your loved one.

Networking with other family members whose loved ones were lost in the same incident or area is a valuable way to locate additional information that may not be in the official case files.

# PERSONALLY IDENTIFYABLE INFORMATION (PII) & FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any information pertaining to living persons that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity. PII can be on paper or electronic records stored within databases or other applications on computers, laptops, and personal electronic devices. Examples of PII are addresses, social security numbers or similar information.

DPAA receives requests for information and updates on missing service members throughout the year from third party researchers, MIA enthusiasts, reporters, former comrades, childhood friends, veterans groups, documentarians, congressional offices, POW/MIA bracelet wearers, etc. In most cases, DPAA provides a brief update to the requestor letting the requestor know if the servicemember is missing or accounted for.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a federal law authorizing public access to non-exempt information possessed by government agencies. When private citizens who are not family members want records or information, they are required to file their request

in accordance with the FOIA and specify the breadth and nature of their request, and in some cases, pay a fee for the information. On the other hand, family members in search of records are not required to use the FOIA process, but are instead directed to their SCO who can request records and provide them to the family member free of charge.

## The McCain Bill

The McCain Bill applies to the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and allows families to document in writing their decision to restrict access to information about treatment, condition, or location of their loved one. Other information may be restricted by law or classification level, and will only be provided in a redacted format so PII and classified information are not provided. Each request is evaluated to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations.



DPAA and base personnel participate in an Honorable Carry Ceremony at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb. of a World War II set of remains prior to accession to the DPAA laboratory. (DoD photo by Bill Dasher)

## IDENTIFICATION REPORT

After an individual is identified, the DPAA Science Director provides the relevant SCO a summary report containing a synopsis of the findings and conclusions that support the individual scientific identification or group remains determination. This report is the basis for notifying the PNOK, other immediate family members, and the person designated pursuant to Section 655 of Title 10, U.S.C., that an individual has been individually identified or included in a group remains determination. An identification book is also developed, which includes the DPAA Science Director's findings and conclusions, alongside scientific reports and analytical reports of non-scientific evidence that support the identification of the remains. Supporting documentation such as the historical report, recovery

### Memorial Service When Remains Have Not Been Returned

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If you would like to discuss the eligibility to hold a memorial service for your loved one, if he or she cannot be accounted for, contact your SCO to inquire about available options.

operation report (including maps), photographs of recovery operations, photographs of remains, personal effects and physical evidence, ante- and postmortem medical and dental records, skeletal charts, and analytical reports may also be included. The SCO is responsible for contacting the PNOK to arrange a meeting in which the SCO will present the identification book on behalf of DPAA. After the family has been briefed on the identification, DPAA completes the personnel accounting process by officially removing that person from the official rolls of the unaccounted for, and makes an official public announcement that the individual has been identified and accounted for.

## BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS

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DPAA is not involved in mortuary or burial arrangements for accounted for personnel. The SCO is the point of contact for all matters related to these affairs. They will explain to the PNOK the entitlements provided and assist with the entire process. The SCO also arranges military burial honors at the time of interment and provides the Gold Star Pin and interment flags for authorized relatives.

## RESPONSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS WITH A GROWING PRIVATE SECTOR NETWORK

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The availability of historical data on the internet has resulted in greater general awareness of the past conflict accounting mission, and has resulted in an increase of private sector research and recovery activities over the past several years. Although DPAA continually emphasizes its desire that the private sector not directly disturb sites without full coordination, DPAA recognizes the need to harness the capacity and capabilities the private sector can bring to locating and recovering the missing. DPAA's Partnerships and Innovations Directorate vigorously works to expand DPAA's effectiveness through a network of formal and informal partnerships. These partnerships have resulted in successful research

and field operations that lead to identifications. DPAA anticipates more partnerships in the future, and will continue to provide familiarization and oversight over all partners.



Divers display the POW/MIA flag over the wreckage of the Tulsamerican, a B-24 Liberator which crashed into the Adriatic Sea during WWII. The recovery, and DPAA's partners in the effort, were highlighted in the PBS science program "NOVA: Last B-24" (National Park Service photo by Brett Seymour)

## NON-FEDERAL ENTITY CONTACTS YOU

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DPAA cannot prevent or restrict private citizens from reaching out to you or working on your loved one's case, but will provide you feedback on any information you ask be reviewed. DPAA will never ask you for money or donations in return for help or information about your loved one, but if you are contacted by a group or individual you are uncertain about, contact your SCO before you send any fees or donations.

# Archive Facility Contacts

## **National Personnel Records Center**

St. Louis, MO 63132-5100  
(314) 801-0800

## **National Archives and Records Administration**

College Park, MD 20740-6001  
(301) 837-3510

## **John F. Kennedy Presidential Library**

Boston, MA 02125-3398  
(617) 514-1600

## **Air Force Historical Research Agency**

Maxwell Air Force Base, AL 36112-6678  
(334) 953-5834

## **Library of Congress**

Washington, DC 20540  
(202) 707-5000

## **Harry S. Truman Presidential Library**

Independence, MO 64050-1789  
(816) 268-8200

## **Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library**

Abilene, KS 67410-2900  
(877) 746-4453

## **Washington National Records Center**

4205 Suitland Road Suitland, MD 20409  
(301) 778-1600

## **Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library**

Austin, TX 78705  
(512) 721-0200

## **Nixon Presidential Materials Staff National Archives at College Park**

College Park, MD 20740-6001  
(301) 837-3290

**Gerald R. Ford  
Presidential Library**  
Ann Arbor, MI 49504-5353  
(734) 205-0555

**Jimmy Carter  
Presidential Library**  
Atlanta, GA 30307-3942  
(404) 865-7100

**U.S. Army Center of Military  
History**  
102 Fourth Avenue, BLDG 35  
Fort Lesley J. McNair, DC 20319-5060

**Ronald Reagan  
Presidential Library**  
Simi Valley, CA 93065-0666  
(805) 577-4000

**U.S. Army Military History  
Institute Reference Branch**  
Carlisle, PA 17013-5008  
(717) 245-4483/3012

**Navy History and Heritage  
Command**  
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5060  
(202) 433.7880

**National Museum of the Marine  
Corps**  
Triangle, VA 22172  
Toll Free: 1.877.635.1775

**George H. Bush  
Presidential Library**  
College Station, TX 77842-0410  
(979) 691-4000



For more information and media content, visit us on  
our social media or at:  
[www.dpaa.mil](http://www.dpaa.mil) and  
[www.dvidshub.net/unit/DPAA](http://www.dvidshub.net/unit/DPAA)

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