

# **DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY**

## **Europe-Mediterranean Directorate: Disinterments**



**Fulfilling Our Nation's Promise**

# Essential Definitions

---

## What is an Unknown?

- A believed-to-be U.S. Service member recovered during or after past conflicts determined to be “unidentifiable”
- A group/set of remains that, for a variety of reasons, was unidentifiable at the time of recovery

## What is an X-File?

- The file of documentation for each Unknown

## What is a Disinterment?

- Exhumation of an Unknown from a U.S.-controlled military cemetery.

## What is the AGRS/C?

- Acronym of the American Graves Registration Service/Command
- Branch of the Quartermaster Corps of the U.S. Army
- Started in World War I to recover, identify, and bury the remains of U.S. war dead

*An Unknown can consist of as little as a single bone fragment from one person, or many hundreds of bones from multiple individuals*

# World War II Unknowns

---



Suresnes American Cemetery (Photo Credit: ABMC)



Florence American Cemetery



# World War II Unknowns

---



The gravesite of an Unknown service member at Lorraine American Cemetery in France

# World War II Recoveries

---



U.S. Graves Registration personnel and German POWs collect and catalog remains of American service members in Normandy, France.

# World War II Temporary Cemeteries

---



Soldiers pay their respects at a temporary cemetery for deceased members of the 29th Infantry Division, Normandy, France; July 1944. (Photo Credit: RG 111, NARA)

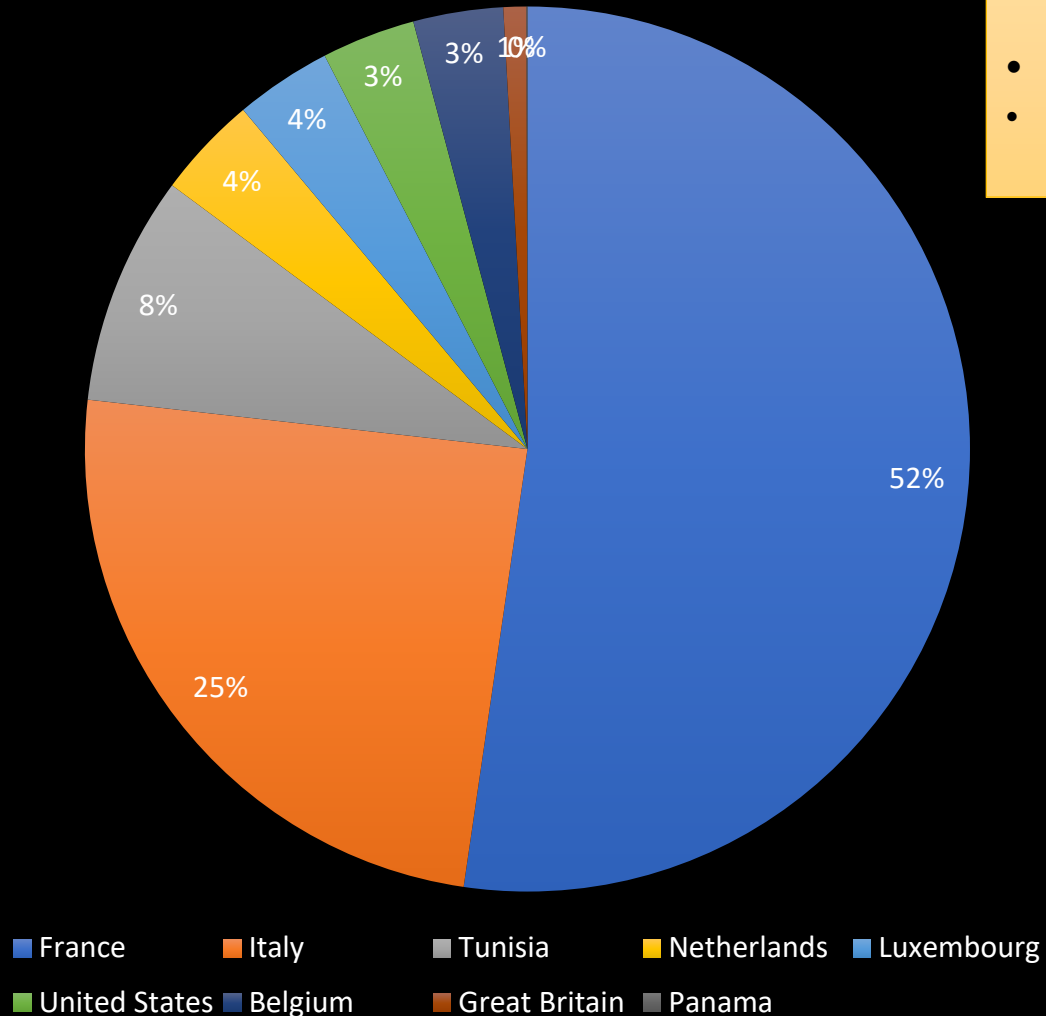
# Temporary Cemeteries





# World War II Permanent Cemeteries

Cemetery	# of Graves	# of Unknowns
Ardennes, Belgium	771	789
Brittany, France	94	97
Cambridge, Great Britain	24	24
Corozal, Panama	1	1
Epinal, France	69	70
Florence, Italy	207	211
Golden Gate, US – CA	33	33
Henri-Chapelle, Belgium	94	94
Long Island, US – NY	60	60
Lorraine, France	151	151
Luxembourg	101	101
Netherlands	106	107
Normandy, France	307	307
North Africa, Tunisia	240	240
Rhone, France	60	60
Sicily-Rome, Italy	488	490
Sitka, US – AK	5	5
Suresnes, France	24	24



## Europe-Mediterranean

- ~2,800 WWII Unknowns
- 18 cemeteries (ABMC & VA)



# World War II Identification Efforts

Central  
Identification Point  
(CIP)  
Strasbourg, France



Examining the body with a fluoroscope. The fluoroscope detects any part of metal that might be in the remains. Many identification tags are recovered in this manner. Teeth that have been filled and become dislodged are recovered by this means, also bone fractures show up readily. All of these points are clues that may lead to positive identification.

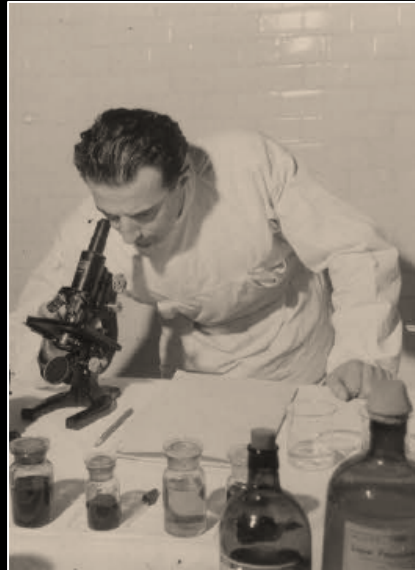


# World War II Identification Efforts

---



Disinterment  
& Analysis

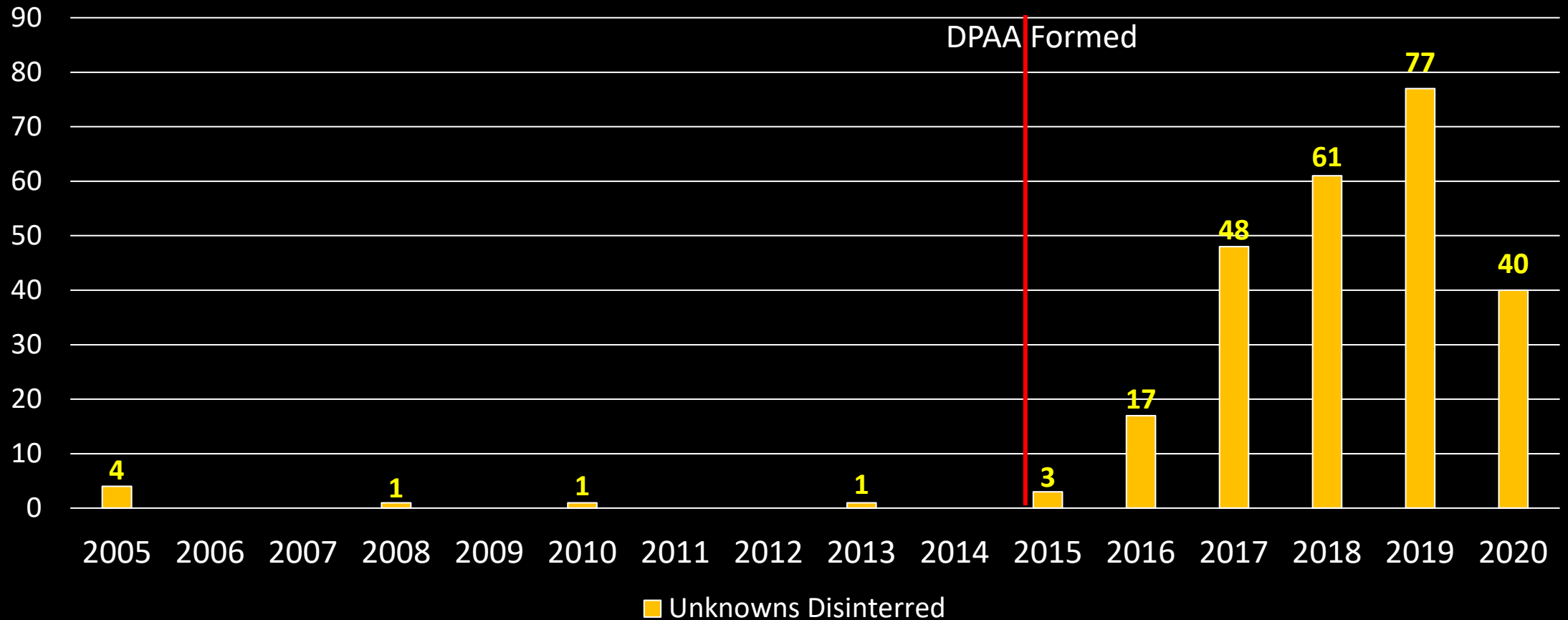


Central ID Point  
Analysis



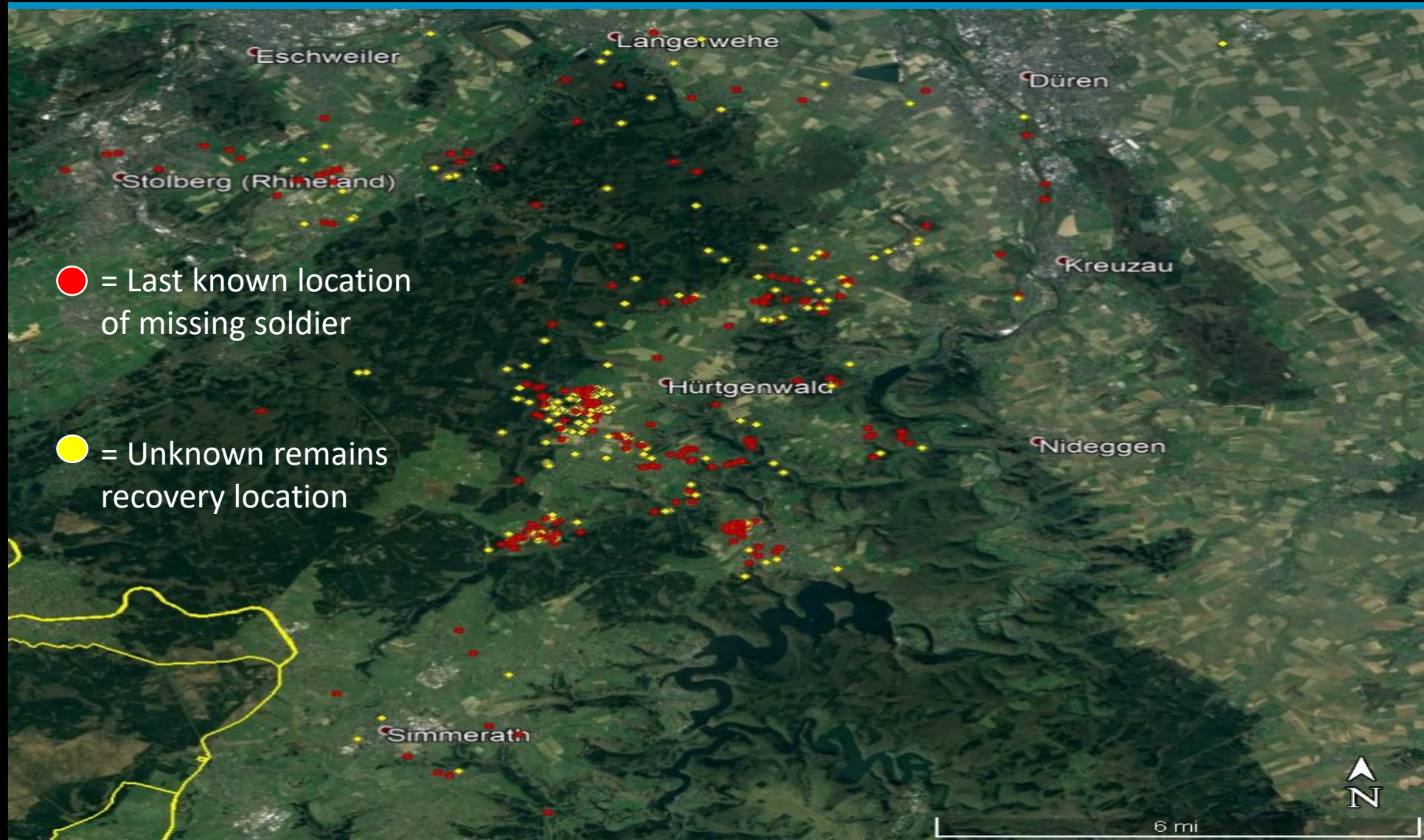
AGRS  
Recommendation

# WWII Europe Disinterments: Very Few Prior to DPAA



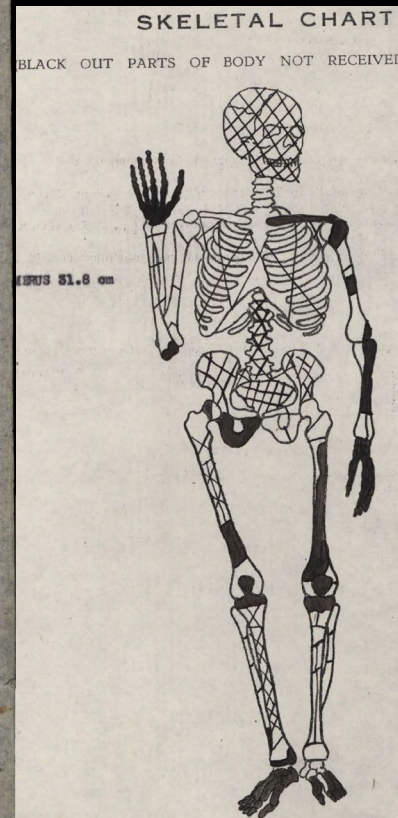
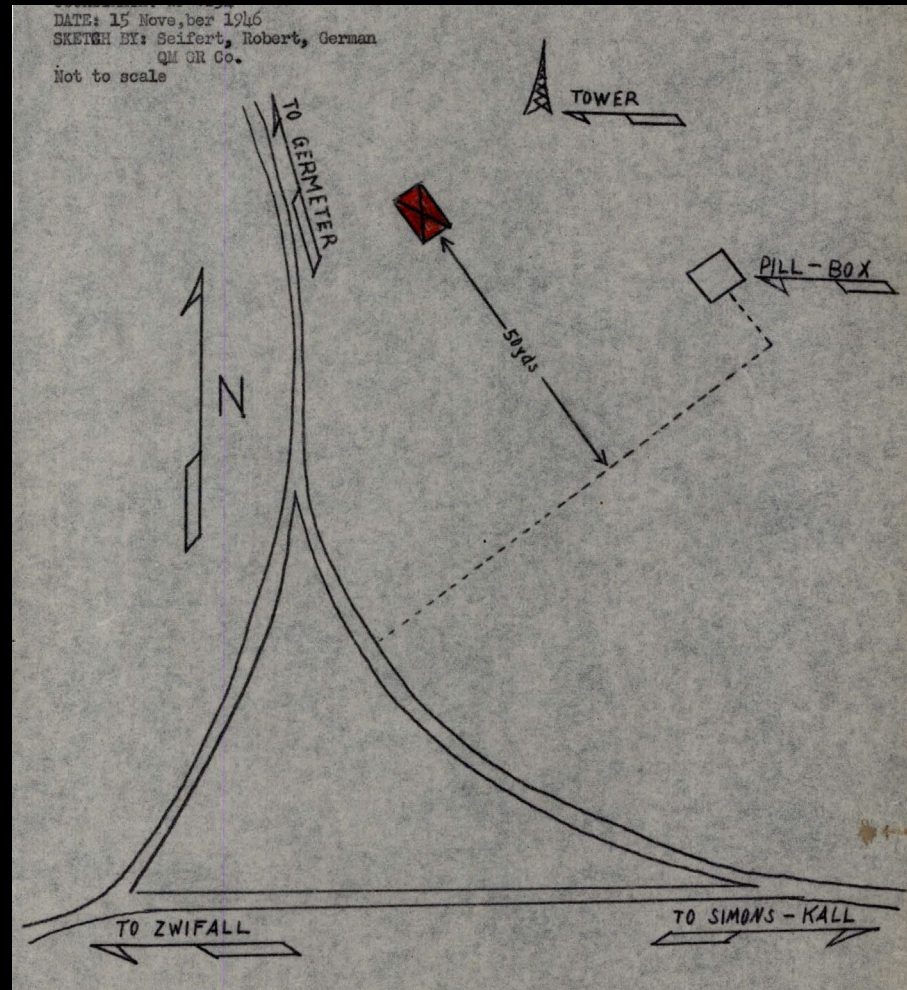


# Research Links Missing Service Members to an Unknown





# Historical and Scientific Lines of Evidence Support Disinterment Proposals



G. R. & E. DIV.  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF QUARTERMASTER  
HQ. COM. ZONE, ETOUSA

**TOOTH CHART**

29 April 1947 Date

Unknown Unknown

Last Name First Initial Rank Serial No.

Unknown ACP.

Hurtgen Forest, District #21 D BTB; Small arms fire Organization

Place of Death Germany Date of Death 29 November 1944 Cause of Death

Right Left

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
NOTE	P														NOTE
Side views															
TOP															
VIEWS															
Side Views															
16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

UPPER LOWER

This dental chart is very important and should be filled in with great care. There are 32 teeth to be accounted for, as shown by the numbers on the chart. Beginning at the middle line in both upper and lower jaws, the teeth are arranged symmetrically on either side and classed as incisors (cutting teeth), cuspids or canines (tearing teeth), bicuspids (chewing teeth), and molars (principal chewing teeth). An examination should be made and findings charted to cover the following basic conditions: Lost teeth, crowned teeth, bridge work, fillings, caries (cavities of decay), dentures (plates), and any deformity of jaws found. See reverse side for illustrations.

See remarks

1/2

Signature of Officer or other person who prepared Tooth chart

ERNEST C. GADY, CWO, U.S.A., C.I.P. Verified by G. R. S. Officer

GRAVES REGISTRATION FORM NR. 1-A

Estimated Height 5' 3 3/4"

# Candidates on Short Lists have Multiple Lines of Evidence to Meet Thresholds

**Table 1. Final list of unresolved U.S. casualties associated with X-number and summary of analytical options.**

Rank	Name	Historical	Anthropological	Dental	Chest radiograph	FRS on file
1	Name	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes

Disinterment requirements:

- Medical means of identification for more than 50% for single unknowns
- More than 60% for groups of unknowns or commingled remains

# Europe-Mediterranean Unknowns are in 18 Cemeteries in 9 Countries





# Planning and Coordination with Cemetery Partners



DCAA teams work with cemeteries to exhumate Unknowns during appropriate weather windows and minimize damage to cemetery grounds.

(Photo credits: ABMC)



# Unknowns and Disinterment Efforts by Cemetery



18 Cemeteries, 9 Countries; VA = US, ABMC = Global

VA Cemeteries include Unknowns linked with:

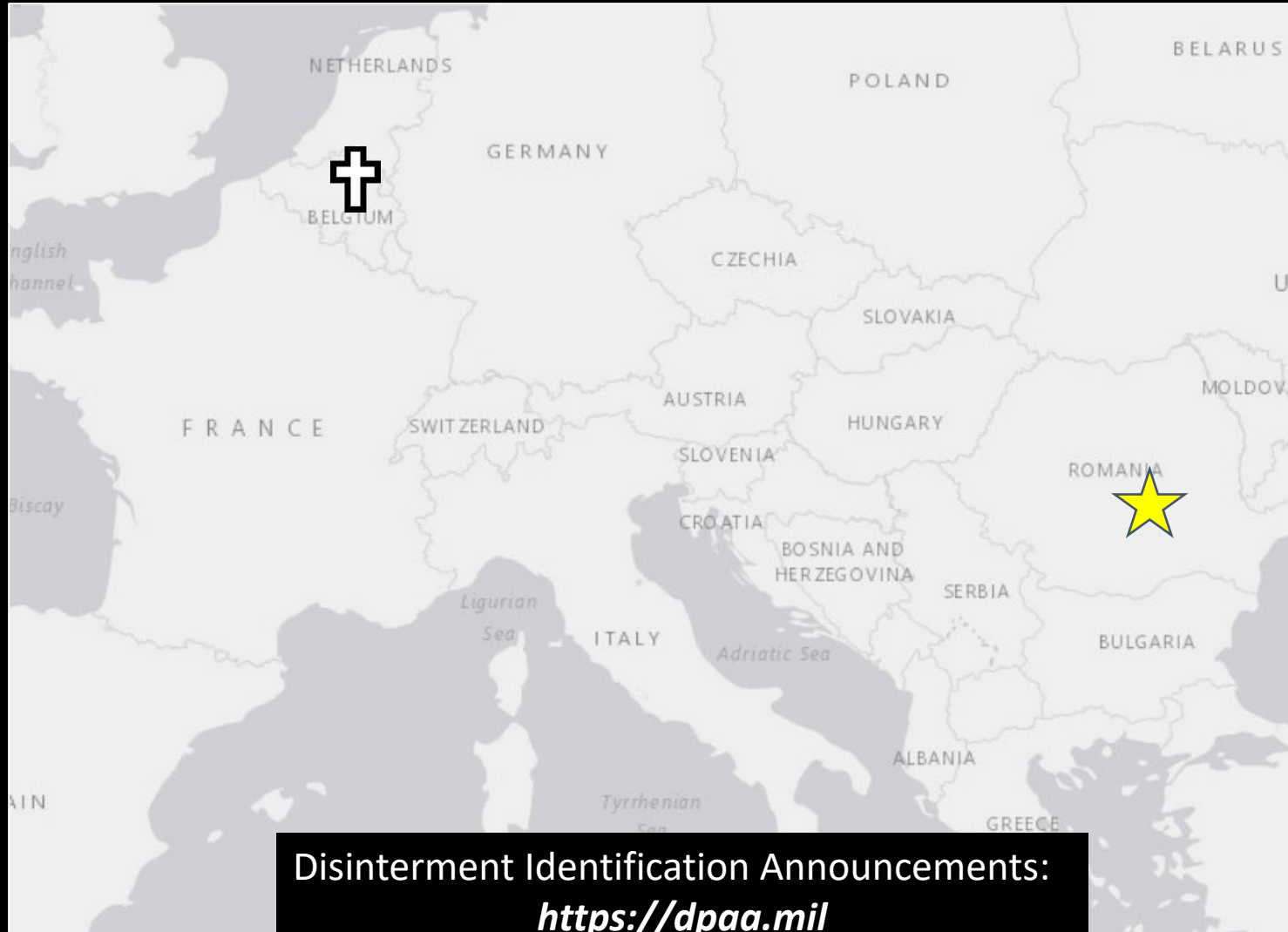
- USS Pollux
- USS Truxtun
- USS Turner

ABMC Cemeteries include Unknowns associated with:

- Operation OVERLORD, France
- Hürtgen Forest, Germany
- Battle of the Bulge, Belgium
- N. Africa Campaign
- Austria Air Losses
- Operation TIDAL WAVE, Romania
- Battle of Anzio, Italy
- Operation MARKET GARDEN, Netherlands
- Gothic Line Campaign, Italy
- Brittany Campaign, France
- Operation HUSKY, Sicily
- Siegfried Line Campaign, Germany



# Ploesti Research and Disinterments



Disinterment Identification Announcements:  
<https://dpaa.mil>

# Reipertswiller (France) Disinterments

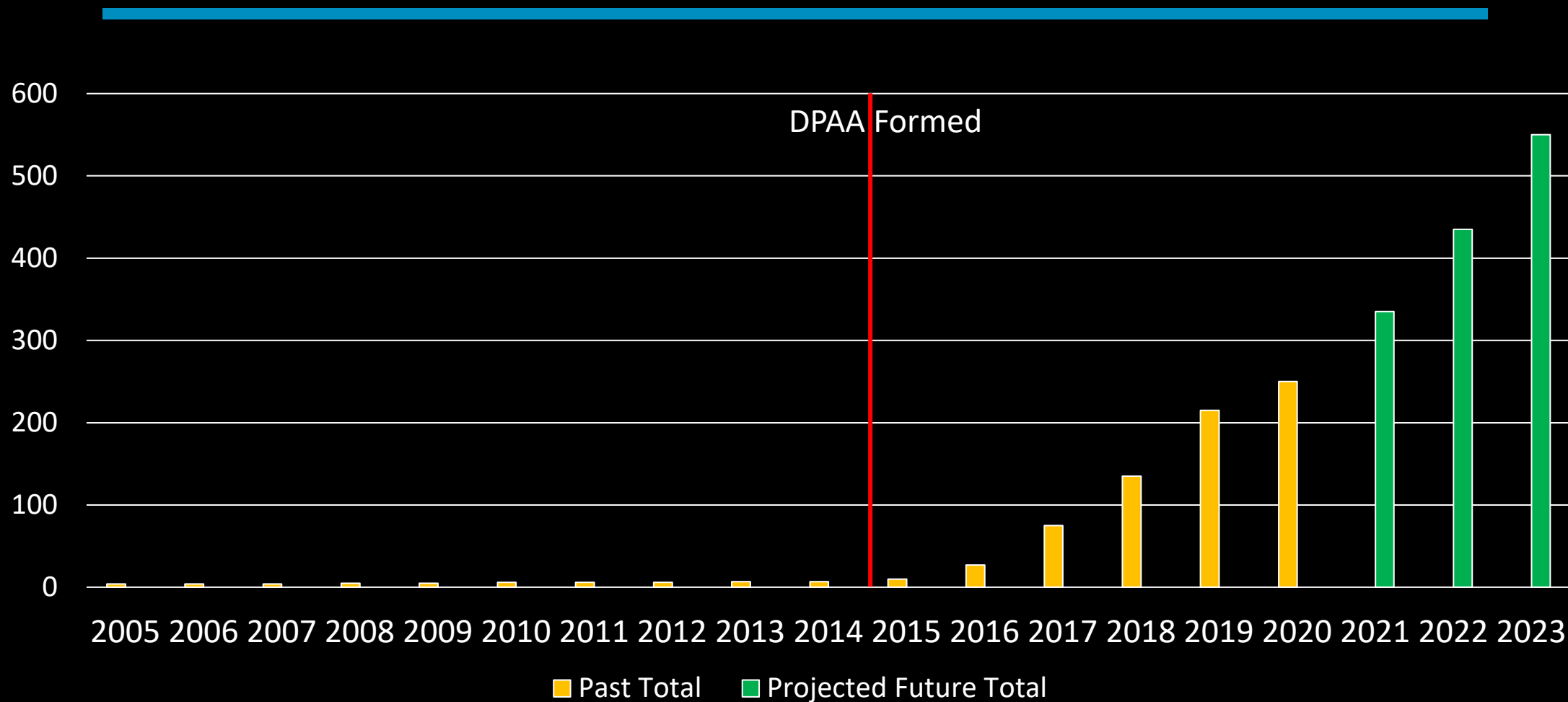


# Hürtgen Forest Disinterments





# Disinterments: Historical Total and Projected Future Growth



Disinterment Identification Announcements:  
<https://dpaa.mil>

# Disinterments are a Pillar of the Identification Effort



Offutt Air Force Base personnel perform an honorable carry to the DPAA laboratory of disinterred remains from Europe, 21 July 2020.

(Photo credit: U.S. Air Force / Zachary Hada)

Disinterment Identification Announcements:  
<https://dpaa.mil>