

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1-1. Purpose

This manual provides guidance for the processing of remains to determine the positive identification of deceased military and civilian personnel. It covers all remains processed through US Army facilities during both peacetime and wartime.

### 1-2. Scope

Because of the complexity of the subject matter, prescribed investigative procedures for the identification processing of each recovered remains cannot be established. However, this manual details the technical processing and investigative procedures used to arrive at a positive identification for each remains processed whether the remains is identifiable or unidentifiable.

### 1-3. Recommended Changes

Users of this publication are encouraged to suggest ways in which it can be improved. Comments should be keyed to the specific page, paragraph, and line of the text in which the change is recommended. Reasons should be given for each comment to insure clarity and complete evaluation. Comments should be submitted on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) and **forwarded direct to the Commandant, US Army Quartermaster school, ATTN: ATSM-CTD-TL, Fort Lee, Virginia 23801.**

### 1-4. Identification

The process of identifying a deceased person begins when a remains is recovered. Information from witnesses, the decedent's unit, and recovery personnel and medical, dental, and fingerprint records are obtained immediately. This information and recorded data are evaluated throughout the recovery, evacuation, and identification processing stages. The remains and associated identifying media and personal effects are examined and the findings documented. The completed documentation makes up a remains case file. If the completed documentation shows that the remains is that of a named individual or an individual of a group and that all reasonable doubts of the identity have been resolved, final disposition is made of the remains. If the completed documentation shows that the remains cannot be positively identified, the case is continued in an active status so that further attempts at successful resolution can be made.

### 1-5. Responsibilities

a. The US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO, under the general staff supervision of the US Army Adjutant General Center, has Army staff responsibility for the care and disposition of remains and personal effects of deceased personnel of the Army, and, as directed, for the Navy and Air Force. The Director, Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO, exercises staff and technical supervision relating to the disposition of personal effects and the final review of individual identification procedures,

b. Commanders of unified and specified commands are responsible for the supervision of the disposition of the remains and their personal effects within their commands, in accordance with policies and procedures established or approved by the US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO.

c. Subordinate commanders at all echelons are responsible for the preservation of all identifying media associated with the remains within their areas of responsibility. Such identifying media must not be removed from association with the remains until properly documented by qualified personnel during the identification process. Personal effects found in association with the remains are considered identifying media.

### 1-6. Policies and Procedures for Identifying Remains

The US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO, has established the following policies and procedures for identifying remains.

#### a. Policies.

(1) Eligible deceased personnel must be positively identified as quickly as possible by employing all available means and scientific resources.

(2) **Commingled remains must not be separated arbitrarily.**

(3) Remains must not be classified as unidentifiable until an identification specialist of the US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO, has made a complete review of the case.

(4) Information used to establish identity must be recorded. When available and applicable,

records must include a visual recognition statement: a description of the effects found on the remains; data on the physical condition of the remains; charts showing dental, fingerprint, and skeletal or anatomical data; the cause of death; the procedures used to recover the remains; and the conclusions reached in the identification process.

(5) All remains from an airplane crash or other major accident must be processed simultaneously.

(6) Information concerning the identification or shipment of remains must not be released to news media before positive identification has been established for all remains and next of kin have been notified. The responsible commander must submit interim progress reports to the Director, US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO.

*b. Procedures.* When a responsible commander is unable to establish the identity of a deceased person, he requests technical assistance from the US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO. When a deceased person cannot be identified, the procedures given below are followed:

(1) Prepare DA Form 2773-R (Statement of Identification) and supporting papers ((DD Form 565 (Statement of Recognition) and DD Forms 890 through 894 (Records of Identification Processing)), if possible. The mortuary officer or identification specialist signs the original DA Form 2773-R and distributes copies as indicated on the form. Appendixes B through G give instructions for completing DA Form 2773-R and DD Forms 890 through 894.

(2) Remove clothing from the remains and examine the clothing for laundry markings, sizes, stenciled names, and other information. Record data on DD Form 890 (Record of Identification Processing) (Effects and Physical Data).

(3) Examine remains for scars, tattoos, or other identifying media. Record data on DD Form 890, DD Form 892 (Record of Identification Processing-Skeletal Chart), and DD Form 893 (Record of Identification Processing-Anatomical Chart) as appropriate.

(4) Prepare a complete, accurate, and detailed dental chart on DD Form 891 (Record of Identification Processing-Dental Chart).

(5) If possible, record fingerprints on DD Form 894 (Record of Identification Processing-Fingerprint Chart) for comparison with existing records. If a comparison cannot be made within US Army Facilities, fingerprint impressions of deceased and fingerprint cards from military personnel files should be forwarded to the Director US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO with the request that the in-

stallation or command be advised of the results of a comparison of the fingerprints by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

(6) Insure that fingerprints, if available, for nonviewable remains are sent to the FBI for verification as indicated below:

(a) *Oversea deaths.* Fingerprints must accompany remains to the CONUS port of entry (POE). At the POE, the fingerprints are forwarded to the Director, US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO, by the most expeditious means for FBI verification before the POE releases the remains for shipment to final destination.

(b) *CONUS deaths.* The installation commander must forward the fingerprints of a decedent direct to the Director, US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO, with the request that the installation or command be advised of the results of a comparison of the fingerprints by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

(7) Request that the Director, US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO, forward any additional data needed to identify the remains by the fastest means of communication available.

(8) Evaluate all identifying media recorded on DD Forms 890 through 893 and compare the media with medical and dental records obtained from the parent unit of each decedent.

(9) Insure that information on DA Form 2773-R and supporting documents (DD Forms 890 through 894) give conclusive evidence that the identity of the decedent is accurate. All supporting documents must accompany remains returned to the United States from overseas.

(10) After a thorough investigation, submit findings and recommendations for approval of the findings to a board of review appointed by the Director, US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO. When the board of review approves the findings, forward them to the US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO, for final approval. Each completed case is placed in one of the following categories:

(a) *Identified remains.* Remains are placed in this category when it is definitely concluded that identifying media compare favorably with a named individual. DA Form 2773-R is completed, including the name, grade, and social security number of the identified decedent.

(b) *Unidentified remains.* Remains are placed in this category if it is concluded that the identifying media do not compare favorably with any individual. An X-number is officially assigned to the remains.

*(c) Group remains—known deceased.*  
This category applies to remains of two or more known deceased personnel that cannot be individually identified.

*(d) Group remains—unknown deceased.*  
Remains of a group of two or more deceased personnel that cannot be associated with any known deceased are placed in this category.

#### **1-7. Records**

The US Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Directorate, TAGO, is the office of record and the control point through which all information is disseminated in the identification of remains processed through Army facilities. All remains case files and personal effects case files must be kept fully documented at all times. Complete information on all actions taken pertinent to the

investigation and resolution of a case must be a matter of record and available for examination. When all actions are completed on identified remains cases, a copy or an extract of the remains case file must be forwarded for inclusion in the casualty personal history file kept at the joint central graves registration office (JCGRO) or equivalent office. When disposition of personal effects is completed, a copy of the personal effects file or an extract of the inventory and disposition of the effects found on the remains are also forwarded to the JCGRO or equivalent office for inclusion in the casualty personal history file. A sample case file for a known remains case is given in appendix H; one for an unknown remains case is given in appendix I.