



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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POLICY

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (M&RA)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (M&RA)
DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF

SUBJECT: Department of Defense (DoD) Policy: Identification of the Remains of the Unknowns from the USS *Oklahoma* (BB37)

This policy guidance on the identification of the remains of the unknowns from the USS *Oklahoma* is effective immediately. Representatives of the Army, Navy, and USPACOM Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command have requested this guidance.

The disinterment of one casket of the remains of unknowns from the *Oklahoma* has raised a number of complex issues that must be addressed before additional caskets will be disinterred. Therefore, it is DoD policy that in prioritizing efforts to recover and identify remains, and balance competing demands for resources for cases across all service components, the personnel accounting community's first priority is to recover and identify the remains of Americans that still lie in the foreign countries in which they fell. Identifying the remains of unknowns already recovered and buried with honor in U.S. national cemeteries at home and abroad must take a lower priority.

Specific actions for the personnel accounting community are,

- JPAC will seek the approval of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs before requesting disinterment of any remains buried as unknowns.
- JPAC will continue work on the remains from the single casket of *Oklahoma* remains already disinterred consistent with the priority established above.
- JPAC will continue to collect all relevant case, medical, and dental records for the entire casualty list of the *Oklahoma*.
- Service Casualty Offices will continue to pursue collection of DNA family reference samples for the entire casualty list of the *Oklahoma*.
- AFDIL and JPAC will continue to pursue scientific research into DNA analysis techniques and other scientific advances that can enable unique



identifications for remains that are currently non-identifiable and/or non-diagnostic.

Disinterment of additional caskets of Oklahoma remains will not occur until preparations are completed for identifying a large number of extensively comingled remains in a relatively timely manner.



Robert J. Newberry
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
POW/Missing Personnel Affairs

Attachment:
None