



Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office

USS California

World War II Fact Sheet

- At the onset of Pearl Harbor attack, *USS California* occupied berth F-3 on “battleship row” along the shore of Ford Island. The *California* received two torpedo hits and one bomb hit. The attack caused massive damage to the ship but it did not capsize. It sank over a period of three days, coming to rest upright on the harbor floor.
- 102 crew members of *California* died during the attack; 20 sailors from the battleship remain unresolved today
- The sailors and marines who died aboard the *California* were initially buried in Halawa Naval Cemetery and Nuuanu Cemetery, both located on the island of Oahu. The burials took place between Dec. 7, 1941 and March 9, 1943.
 - The burials in Halawa and Nuuanu consisted of individual burials of single sets of remains.
 - 50 men were initially buried as known remains
 - In 1947, the Pearl Harbor casualties were disinterred and removed to the Schofield Barracks Central Identification Laboratory. Identification processing by the laboratory resulted in an additional 32 positive identifications made from among remains initially buried as “unknown.”
- Today there are 23 burials of unknowns, associated with the *USS California* in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.
 - This number is higher than the number of unresolved cases for the ship, making it likely that crew members from other ships in the area died aboard the *California*.
 - Unknown files pertaining to these burials indicate the presence of dentition in the majority of cases, and also of skeletal remains from which stature, race, and age determinations might be made, should they be considered for current day disinterment and identification.
 - Recent consideration of these unknowns indicates that further work to collect and assess medical records of the missing individuals would need to be done to make progress on identifying these unknowns, and initial comparisons of the records at hand show that the process of matching up those still missing with those buried as unknowns is neither straightforward nor simple.
 - Files for these unknowns do not indicate the severe commingling of remains to be found among the unknowns of *USS Oklahoma*.