

Past Conflict Repatriation: The Role of Genealogists and Methodology in Fulfilling our Nation's Promise

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"The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's mission is to provide the fullest possible accounting for our missing personnel from past conflicts to their families and the nation.."¹

Unaccounted from Past Conflicts: 82,465²

WWII	73,004
Korean War	7,727
Vietnam War	1,602
Cold War	126
Iraq & Other Conflicts	6



<http://www.fg-a.com/pow-mia.shtml>

The mission of the United States Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operation Center (CMAOC), Past Conflict Repatriations Branch (PCRB), located in Fort Knox, Kentucky is to identify and complete repatriation of American Soldiers who remain unidentified from our nation's past conflicts. PCRB contracts with companies and genealogists to conduct genealogical research that will assist in the identification of remains.

The United States Department of Defense (DOD) established a DNA database to support identification of our unaccounted for servicemen and women. The goal is to obtain DNA Family Reference Samples (FRS) from the relatives of each of the unidentified. The DNA information may be required to confirm or exclude identification through comparison with DNA sequences from other missing and their relatives.

Missing with Some FRS (as of January 2015)³

WWII	4 percent [collected on an as-needed basis]
Korean War	89 percent
Vietnam War	81 percent
Cold War	83 percent

¹ DPAA, "Our Missing: Past Conflicts," <http://www.dpaa.mil/Our-Missing/Past-Conflicts/>: accessed 2 October 2017.

² Ibid.

³ DPAA, "Armed Forces Medical Examiner System, DNA Identification Laboratory: DNA FAQs," <http://www.dpaa.mil/Resources/Fact-Sheets/Article-View/Article/590581/dna//> : accessed 2 October 2017.

GENEALOGY RESEARCH PROGRAM

Identify and Confirm Family Reference Sample (FRS): used for inclusion and exclusion

Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)—through the mother; female line

Y-STR (“Y” DNA)—through the father, paternal relative

auSTR (nuclear DNA)—parent, sibling, child

Identify and Confirm Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of Remains (PADD): Only one person at a time can be PADD

Pass legal scrutiny if challenged

Order of succession of PADD

Unremarried surviving spouse

Designated blood relative

Surviving children in order of seniority (age)

Parents in order of seniority unless granted to another person

Individual granted legal custody

Eldest sibling

Eldest half-sibling. Step-siblings are not eligible

Grandparents

Other blood relative by seniority

Remarried surviving spouse

Person in loco parentis

Legal representative of estate

Personal friend

RESEARCH

Limitations

90 days

30 days for priority cases

32 hours

Methodology

Begin with case-file information

Determine goal of research: FRS & PADD

Develop research plan

Track results of research

Refine research plan

Contact family member: confirm relationship, contact information, and date of birth

Close case

Case File

Name, Rank, Service Number

Military Organization: company, regiment, battalion

Date of birth: does not include place of birth

County/State at time of induction

MIA/Death Dates

Race (usually)

Religion (occasionally)

Notification sent to name, address, relationship.

Goal

Phase 1: 3 mtDNA; 1 "Y" DNA, 1 Autosomal (nuclear) DNA

Phase 2: Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) and Secondary Next of Kin (SNOK)

Research Plan

Censuses

Search by last name + or - 1 year of birth

Think phonetically

Nicknames

Immigrants might change names

Might live with extended family

Death and Records

Social Security Death Index (SSDI)

Online death indexes

Cemeteries

Obituaries

Probates and wills

Death certificates

Funeral homes

Vital Records

Record keeping varies

Not always recorded

Delayed birth records

Can be separate marriage indexes for African-Americans

Errors in index

City or Rural Directories

Substitute for censuses

Street address directory = Establish family relationships

Identify nearest church and school

Other Useful Records

World War I & World War II Draft Registrations

Naturalization records

Newspapers

Church records

School records

Selective Service Registrations

Voter registrations

Applications for Social Security Numbers (SS-5)

Research Context and Challenges

RESOURCES

[All sites accessed 2 October 2017.]

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), "DNA." <http://www.dpaa.mil/portals/85/Images/DNA.jpg>.

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