



# Department of Defense **DIRECTIVE**

**NUMBER** 1300.22

October 30, 2015

Incorporating Change 2, September 2, 2021

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USD(P&R)

SUBJECT: Mortuary Affairs Policy

References: See Enclosure 1

1. PURPOSE. This directive:

a. Reissues DoD Directive (DoDD) 1300.22E (Reference (a)) to establish policy and assign responsibilities for DoD mortuary affairs.

b. Cancels the Secretary of the Army designation as the DoD Executive Agent for the Contingency Fatality Operations portion of Mortuary Affairs, in accordance with the criteria established for designation of an Executive Agent in DoDD 5101.01 (Reference (b)).

c. Cancels the March 28, 2003 Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum (Reference (c)).

d. Establishes the Central Joint Mortuary Affairs Board (CJMAB) as a permanent standing DoD board to develop recommendations for DoD mortuary affairs policy, procedures, mobilization planning, and mortuary services.

e. Provides overarching policy for DoD's development of tactics, techniques, and procedures for mortuary affairs, including for joint operations.

f. Authorizes cremation of biologically or chemically contaminated remains in a DoD or Department of Homeland Security-contracted or -operated crematory in accordance with the DoD Contaminated Human Remains Cremation Deep Dive: Phase IIB – Technical Burn Demonstration (Reference (j)) if requested by the person authorized to direct disposition of human remains (PADD). Cremation of radiological contaminated remains is not authorized.

2. APPLICABILITY. This directive applies to OSD, the Military Departments (including the Coast Guard at all times, including when it is a Service in the Department of Homeland Security by agreement with that Department), the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other

organizational entities within the DoD (referred to collectively in this directive as the “DoD Components”).

3. POLICY. It is DoD policy that:

a. The remains of deceased DoD-affiliated or -covered persons, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, who die in military operations, training accidents, or other DoD-related fatality incidents will be recovered, identified, and returned to their families as expeditiously as possible while maintaining the dignity, respect, and care of the deceased to the extent possible and protecting the safety of the living.

b. Mortuary services will be provided on a non-reimbursable or reimbursable basis for eligible personnel pursuant to sections 1481 to 1488 and 1490 of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.) (Reference (d)) and section 5742 of Title 5, U.S.C. (Reference (e)).

c. The transportation of deceased Service members and other DoD-affiliated personnel is recognized as a very sensitive matter and the movement of the deceased’s remains will be handled with the reverence, care, priority, and dignity befitting them and the circumstances.

d. The remains of deceased Service members will be continuously escorted by a Service member of appropriate grade, as determined by the Military Service concerned, or by a special escort if one is approved by the Military Service concerned, from the preparing mortuary to the funeral home or other location requested by the PADD.

e. The preservation of remains will be given the highest priority. Every effort will be made to preserve the condition of remains, including those recovered from past conflicts and other designated conflicts.

f. If remains are contaminated with biological, chemical, or radioactive agents, all efforts will be made to mitigate the contaminant and return the remains through routine mortuary channels. However, for remains that cannot be decontaminated to a safe transportation level, protecting the health of Service members and the public must take precedence over the rapid repatriation of remains.

(1) Temporary interment or temporary storage of those contaminated remains that pose a threat to public health is the recommended method of disposition until safe handling procedures and materials can be identified. Temporary interment should be considered only after exploring all other courses of action. Authority for temporary interment in a theater outside of the United States resides with the Combatant Commanders with geographic areas of responsibility (GCCs).

(2) DoD directing the cremation of remains is not authorized. The PADD retains the right to select cremation or burial at sea as a disposition option when these are viable options.

g. Disposition instructions for a deceased Service member, obtained from the PADD during mortuary affairs processing at a land-based facility, may include burial at sea.

(1) A ship's captain may authorize burial at sea without the knowledge or consent of the deceased's family only when remains pose a health hazard due to lack of preservation capability and when transfer to shore is operationally impossible or inadvisable.

(2) Burial at sea should be conducted only after consultation with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner (AFME) and the military criminal investigative organization that has investigative jurisdiction, as appropriate, in accordance with section 1471 of Reference (d) and DoD Instruction (DoDI) 5505.10 (Reference (f)) unless under the rare circumstance when mission security must absolutely prohibit communications of all types or communications ability is nonexistent.

h. Mortuary affairs support and transportation will be provided on a reimbursable basis for the recovery, identification, and disposition of remains and personal effects of contractor personnel authorized to accompany the force (CAAF). DoDI 3020.41 (Reference (g)) provides conditions when contractor personnel may accompany U.S. military personnel in austere, uncertain, or hostile environments.

i. The disposition of non-CAAF contractors (local nationals and third-country nationals) may be provided on a reimbursable basis for the recovering, identification, and disposition of remains and personal effects at the request of the Department of State (DOS) and in accordance with Reference (g), host nation agreements, and applicable contract provisions.

j. Mortuary affairs support and transportation may be provided on a reimbursable basis for the recovery, identification, and disposition of remains and personal effects of U.S. citizens and employees of other government agencies who die outside of the United States, upon the specific request of the DOS or other government agency and in accordance with section 1486 of Reference (d), section 5741 of Reference (e), and section 1535 of Title 31, U.S.C. (Reference (h)).

k. Mortuary affairs support and transportation may be provided for civilian remains in the United States through Defense Support of Civil Authorities assistance, when such assistance is approved and directed in accordance with DoDD 3025.18 (Reference (i)).

l. The remains of combatant or non-combatant host nation or third country nationals will be given the same level of dignity and respect afforded U.S. personnel.

(1) Coordination for hand-over to the host nation will reside with the GCC, in conjunction with the DOS and other Federal agencies, through host nation embassies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as appropriate.

(2) All efforts will be made to return host nation or third country national remains when feasible.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES. See Enclosure 2.

5. RELEASABILITY. **Cleared for public release.** This directive is available on the Directives Division Website at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.

6. SUMMARY OF CHANGE 2. The changes to this issuance are a result of Reference (j). Responsibilities of the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard have been amended to authorize cremation of biologically or chemically contaminated remains in a DoD or Department of Homeland Defense-contracted or -operated crematory in accordance with Reference (j) if the PADD so requests. Administrative changes have also been made to update organizational titles and references.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This directive is effective October 30, 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Work', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert O. Work  
Deputy Secretary of Defense

Enclosures

1. References
2. Responsibilities

Glossary

ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES

- (a) DoD Directive 1300.22E, "Mortuary Affairs Policy," May 25, 2011 (hereby cancelled)
- (b) DoD Directive 5101.01, "DoD Executive Agent," September 3, 2002, as amended
- (c) Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Policy on Contaminated Human Remains," March 28, 2003 (hereby cancelled)
- (d) Title 10, United States Code
- (e) Title 5, United States Code
- (f) DoD Instruction 5505.10, "Criminal Investigations of Noncombat Deaths," August 15, 2013, as amended
- (g) DoD Instruction 3020.41, "Operational Contract Support (OCS)," December 20, 2011, as amended
- (h) Section 1535 of Title 31, United States Code
- (i) DoD Directive 3025.18, "Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA)," December 29, 2010, as amended
- (j) U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Chemical Biological Center, "DoD Contaminated Human Remains Cremation Deep Dive: Phase IIB – Technical Burn Demonstration," August 2019<sup>1</sup>
- (k) DoD Directive 5136.01, "Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD(HA))," September 30, 2013, as amended
- (l) Title 50, United States Code
- (m) DoD Directive 5160.05E, "Roles and Responsibilities Associated with the Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP)," September 8, 2017, as amended
- (n) DoD Instruction 5158.06, "Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise (JDDE)," April 7, 2020
- (o) Title 37, United States Code
- (p) DoD Instruction 1344.08, "Interment Allowance for Deceased Military Personnel," March 11, 2009, as amended
- (q) DoD Instruction 1300.18, "Department of Defense (DoD) Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies, and Procedures," January 8, 2008, as amended

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<sup>1</sup> Available through the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy

ENCLOSURE 2

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS (USD(P&R)). The USD(P&R):

- a. Establishes DoD mortuary affairs policy and standards.
- b. Monitors implementation and compliance of all entities (to include non-governmental) with this directive.
- c. Provides a single focal point for the coordination of all matters related to the Mortuary Affairs Program.
- d. Develops DoD issuances to manage the Mortuary Affairs Program and to codify the duties and responsibilities of the CJMAB.
- e. Develops, in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) through the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), those mortuary affairs policies and procedures necessary to support the USD(P) statutory mission of recovering and identifying remains from past conflicts and other designated conflicts pursuant to section 1501 of Reference (d).
- f. Coordinates any requested mortuary affairs support for the disposition of remains and personal effects of U.S. citizens upon request from the DOS on a reimbursable basis or as directed by the President of the United States or Secretary of Defense.
- g. Appoints the Principal Director, Military Community and Family Policy to serve as the chair of the CJMAB.
- h. Appoints the Director, Casualty and Mortuary Affairs and Military Funeral Honors, to serve as a voting member on the CJMAB.
- i. Maintains the official charter and records for the CJMAB.
- j. Provides oversight of the DoD Mortuary Inspection Program.
- k. Publishes specifications and standards for DoD and contracted mortuary service providers.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR HEALTH AFFAIRS (ASD(HA)). Under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(P&R), the ASD(HA):

a. Develops policies, procedures and standards to govern the management of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) in accordance with DoDD 5136.01 (Reference (k)).

b. Provides policy oversight of the AFMES pursuant to Reference (l).

3. DIRECTOR, DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY. Under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(P&R), through the ASD(HA), the Director, Defense Health Agency oversees the AFME, who, pursuant to section 1471 of Reference (d):

a. Serves as the DoD subject matter expert in matters pertaining to forensic medicine disciplines.

b. Serves as the DoD scientific authority for the identification of remains of DoD-affiliated personnel in current deaths and of other deceased individuals for whom a death certificate has not been issued when DoD is providing mortuary services in accordance with section 3 of this directive. Consistent with section 1509 of Reference (d), serves as the DoD scientific authority for the identification of remains of DoD-affiliated personnel in deaths from past conflicts and other designated conflicts.

c. Prescribes forensic medical procedures to support the recovery and identification of remains from past conflicts and other designated conflicts.

d. Supervises and provides consultative and analytic DNA identification services to the DoD.

e. Conducts or reviews forensic pathology investigations, which may include autopsy examinations, of the deaths of active duty Service members or other DoD-affiliated personnel.

f. Serves as a voting member on the CJMAB.

4. USD(P). The USD(P):

a. Coordinates through the DPAA with the USD(P&R) on the development of mortuary affairs policies and procedures to support the recovery and identification of remains from past conflicts and other designated conflicts.

b. Provides the funding for the search, recovery, and identification of remains of unaccounted for persons pursuant to sections 1501 and 1509 of Reference (d).

c. Coordinates with the USD(P&R) on the preparedness and use of DoD mortuary affairs capabilities for Defense Support of Civil Authorities.

d. Provides an O-6 level representative to serve as a CJMAB member, but only voting on topics affecting the DPAA mission. This representative must have daily responsibilities

associated with personnel accounting from past conflicts and other designated conflicts, to include the scientific and historical aspects of such accounting.

e. Facilitates the functions of the AFMES medical examiner assigned to the DPAA, who:

(1) Exercises scientific identification authority as provided in section 1509 of Reference (d).

(2) Establishes identification and laboratory policy consistent with the AFMES.

(3) Advises the DPAA Director on forensic science disciplines.

5. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS AND THE COMMANDANT OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD. The Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard:

a. Maintain an organizational capability to provide for mortuary affairs support of individual Service needs.

b. Provide the funding for:

(1) Search, recovery, identification, preparation, and transportation of remains not covered under paragraph 4.b. of this enclosure.

(2) Funeral or memorial services.

(3) Interment or inurnment.

(4) Burial flags and flag cases.

(5) Travel and per diem for escorts.

(6) Travel and per diem for family members to attend interment or memorial services, unit memorial services, and dignified transfers.

(7) Other related expenses prescribed by policy and statute.

c. Operate and maintain overseas mortuaries in accordance with force demands and needs of the Military Services and geographic Combatant Commands, ensuring that remains of DoD-affiliated personnel and eligible noncombatants are processed quickly and efficiently.

d. Support the Secretary of the Air Force in conducting the dignified transfer for their respective Service personnel.



e. Provide a representative to serve as voting member of the CJMAB. This representative must be directly responsible for the daily mortuary affairs operations of the Military Department and have frequent interaction with survivors. Accordingly, these officials will be appointed to the CJMAB:

- (1) Army – Director, Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center.
- (2) Marine Corps – Branch Head Military Personnel Services Branch.
- (3) Navy – Director, Navy Casualty, Navy Personnel Command.
- (4) Air Force – Commander, Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations.
- (5) Coast Guard – Chief U.S. Coast Guard Casualty Matters.

f. Cremate biologically or chemically contaminated remains only in a DoD or Department of Homeland Security-contracted or -operated crematory in accordance with Reference (j) if the PADD requests it.

g. Develop plans and procedures for the cremation of biologically or chemically contaminated remains as a deployable capability in support of final disposition requested by the PADD.

h. Use only licensed morticians with a certified crematory operator license to operate the crematory.

6. SECRETARY OF THE ARMY. In addition to the responsibilities in section 5 of this enclosure, the Secretary of the Army:

a. Maintains a mortuary affairs force structure capable of providing general backup support to the other Military Services when requested. Additionally, maintains theater-level mortuary affairs missions to include:

- (1) Operating mortuary affairs collection points.
- (2) Theater mortuary evacuation points.
- (3) Theater personal effects depots.

(4) Mortuary affairs contaminated remains mitigation sites with a capability to cremate biologically or chemically contaminated remains in a DoD-contracted or -operated crematory in accordance with Reference (j).

- b. Develops and coordinates mortuary affairs common materiel for use among the DoD Components. Coordination among the DoD Components may include the formulation of procedures for use of this materiel.
- c. Maintains a permanent personal effects depot in the continental United States (CONUS).
- d. Operates, maintains, and funds the Mortuary Affairs Reporting and Tracking System (MARTS) and administers the MARTS Configuration Control Board (CCB). The MARTS CCB governs change within this system.
- e. As the DoD Executive Agent for the Chemical and Biological Defense Program pursuant to sections 1522 and 1523 of Title 50, U.S.C. (Reference (l)), researches, analyzes, and develops mortuary affairs products and guidelines pertaining to effective management of biological, chemical, and radiological contaminated remains in accordance with DoDD 5160.05E (Reference (m)).

7. SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE. In addition to the responsibilities in section 5 of this enclosure, the Secretary of the Air Force:

- a. Operates and maintains a port-of-entry mortuary within CONUS and, as required, establishes other CONUS port-of-entry mortuaries in support of all the Military Services.
- b. Provides procedural guidance for the Dignified Transfer Process.

8. CJCS. The CJCS:

- a. Coordinates operational implementation of this directive.
- b. Provides for the preparation and review of contingency plans to recover remains, to include chemically or biologically contaminated remains, of DoD-affiliated or -covered persons.
- c. Designates a lead office on the Joint Staff for all mortuary affairs matters within the Joint Staff and Combatant Commands.
- d. Appoints the J-4 Logistic Services Branch Chief to serve as a voting member on the CJMAB to represent the equities of the Joint Staff and the geographic Combatant Commands.

9. GCCs. The GCCs:

- a. Give appropriate authoritative direction and guidance on providing mortuary affairs support to all assigned and attached forces within their areas of responsibility in accordance with section 164(c) of Reference (d), this directive, and CJCS guidance.

b. Authorize temporary interment under the conditions stated in paragraph 3.f.(1) of this directive.

10. COMMANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND. The Commander, United States Transportation Command provides strategic airlift to requesting components to evacuate remains of deceased DoD affiliated personnel (or others as approved) to preparing mortuaries in accordance with DoDI 5158.06 (Reference (n)).

GLOSSARY

PART I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFME	Armed Forces Medical Examiner
AFMES	Armed Forces Medical Examiner System
ASD(HA)	Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs
CAAF	contractor personnel authorized to accompany the force
CCB	Configuration Control Board
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CJMAB	Central Joint Mortuary Affairs Board
CONUS	continental United States
DPAA	Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency
DoDD	DoD directive
DoDI	DoD instruction
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
DOS	Department of State
GCC	Combatant Commander with a geographic area of responsibility
MARTS	Mortuary Affairs Reporting and Tracking System
PADD	person authorized to direct disposition of human remains
POW/MIA	prisoner of war / missing in action
U.S.C.	United States Code
USD(P)	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
USD(P&R)	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

PART II. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions are for the purposes of this directive.

burial at sea. A formal ceremony for the disposition of remains at sea from a naval vessel or inurned remains from a naval aircraft.

CAAF. Defined in Reference (g).

CJMAB. A functional coordinating group consisting of representatives from the USD(P&R), the Military Services, the CJCS, and the AFME.

covered persons. Defined in section 1501(c) of Reference (d).

dignified transfer. The process by which the remains of deceased Service members are transferred from the aircraft to a waiting vehicle and then to the port mortuary. The dignified transfer is not a ceremony; rather, it is a solemn movement of the transfer case by a carry team of military personnel from the deceased member's Service. A senior grade officer of the deceased member's Service presides over each dignified transfer.

DoD-affiliated personnel. Those personnel eligible for benefits pursuant to sections 1481 to 1490 of Reference (d) and section 5742 of Reference (e).

DoD Mortuary Inspection Program. The assessment used to evaluate DoD mortuaries in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policy and guidance and industry standards. The CJMAB selects the inspection team members and civilian consultants. The assessment is conducted in accordance with the DoD Mortuary Facilities Inspection Standard Operating Procedures approved by the CJMAB.

forensic pathology investigation. An investigation that entails reviewing the circumstances of a death, identifying the deceased, performing an autopsy examination, determining the cause of death and manner of death, and documenting the findings. For the purposes of this issuance, this term is synonymous with a medicolegal death investigation and medicolegal investigation.

interment. The burying of casketed or cremated human remains.

interment service. A service or ceremony that is sensitive to the deceased's faith group and at which the remains are interred.

inurnment. The placing of cremated remains in an urn or other vessel; placement in a niche.

local national. Defined in Reference (g).

MARTS. Provides tracking and accountability for human remains and personal effects in a theater of operations through the mortuary affairs collection point, the theater mortuary evacuation point, theater personal effects depot to the servicing port mortuary or joint personal effects depot, as appropriate. The system provides the operator the ability to generate mortuary affairs tracking and shipping documents. MARTS functional requirements are approved by the MARTS CCB.

memorial service. A service or ceremony that contains elements similar to an interment service, though the remains of the deceased are not present. May be funded in accordance with section 1482 of Reference (d), sections 452 and 453 of Title 37, U.S.C. (Reference (o)), and DoDI

1344.08 (Reference (p)) for eligible persons whose remains are deemed unrecoverable by the Military Service concerned.

mortuary affairs. Provides for the search, recovery, presumptive identification, preparation, and disposition of human remains of persons for whom the Services are responsible by status or executive order.

mortuary affairs common materiel. Materiel used to recover, process, contain, and transport human remains (e.g., human remains transfer cases, human remains pouches) in and from a combat zone, combat theater of operations, or combat support area. This does not include materiel used for chemically, biologically, and radiologically contaminated human remains.

Mortuary Affairs Program. DoD's program for the DoD Components (primarily, the Military Departments) that establishes mortuary affairs policies for past conflicts and other designated conflicts and current operations to be implemented worldwide. The program provides for the search, recovery and evacuation of human remains; interment and disinterment of remains; care and disposition of missing and deceased personnel and the handling of their personal effects; the identification and forensic pathology investigations of deaths; mortuary services at the local level; contract and Service mortuaries; and disposition and mortuary benefits processing.

non-CAAF. Defined in Reference (g).

PADD. Defined in DoDI 1300.18 (Reference (q)).

special escort. The by-name person requested by the PADD to accompany the remains of the deceased.

presumptive identification. Nonscientific identification of remains based on visual identification of the deceased's effects, to include such items as identification cards, identification tags, and visual identification as documented on Department of Defense Form 565, "Statement of Recognition of Deceased." This is not to be confused with positive identification, which is determined by the AFME or other competent medical authorities.

unit memorial service. A ceremonial command program that honors the service of deceased Military Service members and offers support to grieving unit survivors.