



**CIL 2018-061-I-01**  
**Pharmacist's Mate Second Class**  
**Merle Chester Joseph HILLMAN**  
**U.S. Navy**

**Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency**  
**Laboratory**  
**2300 Defense Pentagon**  
**Washington, D.C. 20301-2300**

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DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY  
2300 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2300

Ser: 156-23  
20 October 2023

MEMORANDUM

From: DPAA Laboratory  
To: Commander, Navy Casualty Affairs (N135C)  
Casualty Assistance Division  
POW/MIA Branch, Bldg 768  
5720 Integrity Drive  
Millington, TN 38055-6210

Subj: Identification of CIL 2018-061-I-01

Encl: (1) Case File CIL 2018-061-I-01, DPAA 2023-0150

1. Forwarded is the DPAA Laboratory case file establishing the following identification:

***Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Merle Chester Joseph HILLMAN, 2124685, U.S. Navy***

2. Enclosed reports and documents in the DPAA Laboratory case file have been checked for accuracy and completeness and represent those documents deemed relevant and probative. One copy is for your retention and the other is for the casualty individual's family. All presentations are marked appropriately on the inside cover of the booklet. For administrative questions, please contact (b)(6).

3. The identified casualty is currently at the DPAA Hickam Laboratory. Please provide this office with disposition instructions. Point of contact for the identification process is

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Lieutenant Colonel, USAF, MC  
DPAA Medical Examiner  
Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

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20 October 2023

The remains designated CIL 2018-061-I-01, DPAA 2023-0150 are identified as those of

***Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Merle Chester Joseph HILLMAN, 2124685, U.S. Navy***

(b)(6)

Lieutenant Colonel, USAF, MC  
DPAA Medical Examiner  
Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

Enclosures (7):

1. Historical Report: MERLE CHESTER JOSEPH HILLMAN, Pharmacist's Mate Second Class, United States Navy; dtd 29 December 2022
2. Forensic Anthropology Report: CIL 2018-061-I-01; dtd 28 September 2023
3. Biological Profile Comparison Report: CIL 2018-061-I-01; dtd 29 September 2023
4. Defense Health Agency; Armed Forces Medical Examiner System; HILLMAN, Merle C.J. (BTB); CIL Case No. 2018-061; AFDIL Case No. 2018H-0667; dtd 6 June 2023
5. Forensic Odontology Report: CIL 2018-061-I-01; dtd 3 February 2023
6. Relevant Personnel Records
7. DD Form 2064, Certificate of Death (*Overseas*); HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph; dtd 20 October 2023

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DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY  
2300 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2300

**MEDICAL EXAMINER SUMMARY REPORT**

**DPAA Number:** DPAA 2023-0150  
**Accession Number:** CIL 2018-061-I-01  
**Name:** HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph  
**Date of Birth:** 7 February 1916  
**Service Number:** 2124685  
**Rank/Service:** Pharmacist's Mate Second Class/U.S. Navy  
**Unit:** USS *California*  
**Location of Loss:** Pearl Harbor, Oahu Island, Territory of Hawaii  
**Date of Loss:** 7 December 1941  
**Date of Report:** 20 October 2023

**BACKGROUND**

Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Merle Chester Joseph HILLMAN, service number 2124685, served aboard the USS *California* during the Second World War. Historians at the DPAA report that on 7 December 1941 Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN was killed in action aboard his ship during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Oahu Island, Territory of Hawaii. His remains were not accounted for during or after the war. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, remains were collected from the wreckage of the USS *California* and were interred at Halawa Naval Cemetery and Nu'uauu Naval Cemetery on Oahu. Remains that could not be identified were ultimately transferred to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP). In 2018, 25 sets of Unknown Remains associated with the USS *California* were disinterred from the NMCP for analysis. Based on their research, the DPAA Indo-Pacific Directorate concludes that an association between the remains accessioned as CIL 2018-061-I-01 recovered from the USS *California* and Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN is historically supportable.

**SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION**

**Anthropology Analysis:**

The skeletal remains, examined by (b)(6) consist of a partial skeleton in fair to good condition. Elements present, in whole or in part, include: the cranium, mandible, first through seventh cervical vertebrae, first and second thoracic vertebrae, and the left and right humeri, ossa coxae, and femora. Dentition is present in the cranium and mandible, as well as a dental appliance. The remains were previously segregated from a larger assemblage based on a shared mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) sequence among sampled elements, pair matching, articulation, morphology, and accession.

The remains represent a single individual based on a shared mtDNA sequence among sampled elements, sound anatomical articulation, refitting fragments, similar growth and development of

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HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph  
DPAA 2023-0150; CIL 2018-061-I-01

epiphyses, consistencies in size and morphology of comparable elements, and a lack of duplicating or overlapping elements.

### Evidence of Injury and Observations:

There are perimortem fractures of the cranium, sixth and seventh cervical vertebrae, first and second thoracic vertebrae, and the left and right ossa coxae and femora. There are possible perimortem fractures of the mandible and both humeri. The presence of postmortem damage on the mandible and humeri precludes further assessment. There is extensive thermal alteration observed on the majority of skeletal elements present.

### Biological Profile:

The remains represent a male individual, 18 years of age or greater, with an estimated stature between 59.52–69.88 inches for Black males and 58.74–68.34 inches for White males. On the date of loss, Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN was a 25-year-old White male, with a reported height of either 66 or 67.25 inches, depending on the historical reference.

### **DNA Analysis:**

DNA testing was performed at the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL), Armed Forces Medical Examiner System, Dover Air Force Base, DE. Testing included mtDNA, which traces the maternal (mother's) line; DNA from the Y chromosome (Y-STR), which traces the paternal (father's) line; and autosomal DNA (auSTR), which is individual specific.

### Mitochondrial DNA:

The cranium, left humerus, right femur, and left os coxa were tested for mtDNA. The mtDNA sequence obtained from the remains was compared to all completed family reference samples associated with missing Service Members from the USS *California* in the AFDIL Family Reference Database. This sequence was found to be consistent with a maternal reference associated with only one missing Service Member from this incident, Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN.

### Nuclear DNA:

The cranium, left humerus, and right femur were tested for Y-STR. The left humerus and right femur failed to yield sufficient data for comparison. The cranium yielded sufficient data for comparison and generated a profile consistent with the Y-STR data obtained from Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN's paternal cousin, at the overlapping loci.

The cranium, left humerus, and right femur were tested for auSTR. The left humerus and right femur failed to yield sufficient data for comparison. The cranium yielded sufficient data for comparison; however, an appropriate auSTR family reference was not available for Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN to make the comparison.

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DPAA 2023-0150; CIL 2018-061-I-01

### Statistical Probability:

Based on the tested element yielding the most combined data, the genetic data (mtDNA and Y-STR) are 176 thousand times more likely to be under the scenario that the remains originated from a maternal relative of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN's maternal niece (mtDNA) and a paternal relative of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN's paternal cousin (Y-STR), as opposed to the remains originating from an unrelated individual from the Caucasian population.

### Exclusions:

All other Service Members from the USS *California* with DNA family references available are excluded as candidates for these remains after comparison of mtDNA or Y-STR data.

### **Dental Analysis:**

The dental remains, examined by (b)(6) consist of a loose maxillary (upper jaw) fragment, a right mandible (lower jaw) fragment, and a removable dental prosthesis (i.e., upper partial denture) with two natural tooth crowns in the clasps. Specific dental characteristics include the following: articulated teeth #2 and #31; loose crowns of teeth #5 and #12, which are held in dental prosthesis clasps; and healed bone and/or closed spaces in the areas typically occupied by teeth #1, #3, #30, and #32, which would suggest they were missing antemortem (i.e., prior to death).

The antemortem dental record for Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN documents planned treatment for a partial upper and partial lower denture. Only a partial upper denture was recovered with the remains, for which no denture teeth are present to determine which antemortem missing teeth were replaced. The denture clasps present on the crowns of teeth #5 and #12 are consistent with the expected denture design in Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN's record and strengthens his association to the remains.

The DPAA Odontology Application is a computer program that compares the dental characteristics of the remains to the available records of individuals lost in an associated incident; the product of these comparisons is a list of possible candidates. Comparison of the remains to the incident dental database (USS *California*) resulted in Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN receiving the most matches and makes him the strongest candidate for association with the remains.

Odontosearch is a web-based computer application that compares certain dental characteristics to a population database, thereby producing a frequency that the pattern would be expected within the general population. Characteristics found in the concordant teeth #2, #3, #5, #12, and #30 were input and compared to the database. There were eight pattern matches out of a comparison of 107,002 records, which suggests the shared pattern would occur in 0.00841% of the population.

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HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph  
DPAA 2023-0150; CIL 2018-061-I-01

The examined remains correspond to the antemortem evidence of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN with no unexplainable discrepancies. Based upon the correlations (including explainable discrepancies) between the antemortem and postmortem dental evidence, the dental remains are probably those of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN.

**ADDITIONAL REMARKS**

1. The case was coordinated by (b)(6) Forensic Anthropologist and Pearl Harbor Ships Project Lead.
2. DPAA anthropologists, odontologists, and other scientific staff performed the examinations, and provided quality control, photography, radiology, and sampling for scientific identification purposes, unless otherwise stated.
3. Any identified material evidence and remains are released via the appropriate Service Casualty Office with instructions of the next of kin.

**OPINION**

The laboratory analyses and the totality of the circumstantial evidence available establish the remains as those of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Merle Chester Joseph HILLMAN, service number 2124685, U.S. Navy.

Based upon their research and expertise, historians at the DPAA concluded that Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN was a historical candidate for these remains recovered from the USS *California*. After laboratory analyses, it was determined that the skeletal remains share both mtDNA and Y-STR profiles with the available family references for Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN, align in biological profile, and exhibit points of concordance with no unexplainable discrepancies on dental comparison with antemortem records.

The date of loss for Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN was previously established by the U.S. Navy as 7 December 1941, with the cause of death stated as "killed in action during enemy bombing raid." Based on the available evidence, the cause of death is best certified as "Multiple Injuries" sustained during an engagement with enemy forces. The manner of death is "Homicide." The date of death is consistent with the date of the incident.

If additional remains of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN are recovered and identified, disposition of those remains will be in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin.

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Lieutenant Colonel, USAF, MC  
DPAA Medical Examiner  
Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency



## Historical Report

### MERLE CHESTER JOSEPH HILLMAN Pharmacist's Mate Second Class, United States Navy

#### Indo-Pacific Directorate Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

29 December 2022

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION<sup>1</sup>

Pharmacist's Mate Second Class (PhM2c) Merle Chester Joseph HILLMAN was born on 7 February 1916 in Chicopee, Massachusetts, and enlisted in the U.S. Navy on 17 February 1937 in Springfield, Massachusetts. He reported for duty aboard the USS *California* on 29 October 1939.<sup>2</sup> On 7 December 1941, PhM2c HILLMAN was killed in action as a result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Oahu Island, Territory of Hawaii, and his remains were not recovered or identified in the immediate aftermath of the attack. Today, PhM2c HILLMAN is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP) in Honolulu, Hawaii.<sup>3</sup>

#### INDIVIDUAL ASSOCIATED

Name	Rank	Service Number	Branch of Service	Date of Loss	Status
HILLMAN, Merle C. J.	PhM2c	2124685	U.S. Navy	7 December 1941	KIA/BNR*

\* Killed in Action/Body Not Recovered

<sup>1</sup> This report comprises information owned and published by the Department of Defense, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> Casualty Card for "Hillman, Merle Chester Joseph, PhM2c, USN 2124685," Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) for HILLMAN, Merle Chester, Pharmacist's Mate Second Class (PhM2c), 2124685; Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Record Group (RG) 92; National Archives at St. Louis, St. Louis, MO; and "Muster Roll of the Crew of the U.S.S. *California* for the quarter ending 30 September 1941," U.S. Navy World War II Muster Rolls, 1938-49; Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, RG 24; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>3</sup> "Merle C. J. Hillman," PhM2c, 2124685, American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), accessed 14 November 2022, <http://abmc.gov>.



## OVERVIEW

PhM2c HILLMAN was stationed aboard *California* (BB-44) at the time of the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Records indicate that he went missing during the attack. Despite a search for survivors within the ship in the immediate aftermath of the bombing, PhM2c HILLMAN was not found and was subsequently declared dead; he was later placed into “non-recoverable” status. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, remains were collected from the wreckage of *California* and were interred at Halawa Naval Cemetery (Halawa) and Nu’uanu Naval Cemetery (Nu’uanu) on Oahu. Remains that could not be identified were ultimately transferred to the NMCP (the “Punchbowl”). In 2018, the 25 Unknowns associated with *California* were disinterred for analysis. Historical records suggest that PhM2c HILLMAN’s remains could reasonably be among those disinterred.

## CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS

As part of the effort to check rising Japanese aggression in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the U.S. Pacific Fleet, which included the battleship *California*, conducted exercises in the waters off of Hawaii beginning in May 1940. During those maneuvers, the fleet was stationed in Pearl Harbor to provide more of a forward presence than was possible from the U.S. west coast (Figure 1).<sup>4</sup> In early December 1941, *California* occupied berth F-3 in “Battleship Row.”<sup>5</sup>

On the morning of 7 December 1941, a fleet of Japanese aircraft carriers launched formations of dive bombers, torpedo planes, and fighters against the ships moored in the shallows of Pearl Harbor. The attack decimated the fleet and thrust the United States into World War II. *California* was hit by several torpedoes on its port side and several bombs from above, suffering severe damage. By mid-morning, oil fires on the water’s surface had enveloped the ship. At 10:02 a.m. the order was given to abandon the ship because of the extent of the fire, only to be rescinded less than 15 minutes later, and personnel and other service members returned to the ship from shore to continue firefighting.<sup>6</sup> While counter-flooding efforts kept *California* upright, the ship slowly sank over the next three days. Several months later, *California* was raised and floated to dry dock for repair and salvage operations.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Homer N. Wallin, *Pearl Harbor: Why, How, Fleet Salvage and Final Appraisal* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Naval History Division, 1968), 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (DANFS), s.v. “California V,” Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC), accessed 10 December 2020, <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/c/california-v.html>.

<sup>6</sup> J. W. Bunkley, “Report of Raid, December 7, 1941,” 13 December 1941, NHHC, accessed 10 December 2020, <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/research/archives/digital-exhibits-highlights/action-reports/wwii-pearl-harbor-attack/ships-a-c/uss-california-bb-44-action-report.html>; and “U.S.S. California, Torpedo and Bomb Damage, December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor” (War Damage Report No. 21), 28 November 1942, Pearl Harbor Navy Yard General Correspondence Files, 1941–45; Records of Naval Districts and Shore Establishments, RG 181; National Archives at San Francisco, San Bruno, CA.

<sup>7</sup> (b)(6) “Disinterment Plan for the USS *California* Unknowns,” 31 August 2017, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) internal files.

PhM2c HILLMAN was among the 103 service members who died in the attack on *California*. The exact circumstances of his loss are unknown, and historic records do not indicate that his remains were recovered or identified.<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 1. Aerial view of the Naval Operating Base, Pearl Harbor, looking southwest on 30 October 1941. Ford Island Naval Air Station is in the center, with the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard just beyond it, across the channel. The airfield in the upper left-center is the U.S. Army's Hickam Field.<sup>9</sup>**

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<sup>8</sup> Casualty Card for “HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph, PhM2c, USN, 2124685”; and Data on Remains Not Yet Recovered or Identified (OQMG FORM 371), 21 October 1949, IDPF for HILLMAN.

<sup>9</sup> Photograph, “80-G-182874 Pearl Harbor,” 30 October 1941, NHHC, accessed 20 December 2022, <https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/wars-and-events/world-war-ii/pearl-harbor-raid/pearl-harbor-in-1940-1941/80-G-182874.html>.

## PAST ACCOUNTING EFFORTS

The recovery details for the *California* are not included in the historical records related to Unknowns—unidentified service members—interred in U.S. cemeteries. However, as with other casualties from the attack at Pearl Harbor, remains from *California* were interred in both the Nu'uauu and Halawa cemeteries. Initial interment reports suggest that about one-third of *California* Unknowns were collected and buried, principally at Nu'uauu, within about a week of the attack. The remaining *California* Unknowns, based on their date of interment, appear to have been recovered during salvage operations for the ship in March and April 1942.<sup>10</sup> All of the Unknowns recovered during salvage operations of ships sunk in Pearl Harbor, including those of *California*, were interred at Halawa.<sup>11</sup>

After World War II ended, the War Department assigned the American Graves Registration Service the responsibility of recovering and identifying fallen U.S. service personnel in the Pacific Theater. The disinterment of Pearl Harbor casualties buried at Nu'uauu began on 28 August 1947 and ended on 10 September 1947.<sup>12</sup> Originally a civilian cemetery with a small section for Navy personnel, Nu'uauu was rapidly enlarged in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor to try to accommodate additional graves. The combination of civilian and military remains challenged disinterment operations. Operations became further complicated by the fact that newer additions to the cemetery had become littered with debris or subjected to beautification processes that sometimes moved grave markers without maintaining an association with the graves they were supposedly marking. Nevertheless, approximately 339 sets of remains were removed from Nu'uauu and transferred to the Military Mausoleum at Schofield Barracks for storage while awaiting final casketing.<sup>13</sup>

The disinterment of 1,516 remains buried at Halawa, including the majority of the Unknowns recovered from *California*, began in September 1947.<sup>14</sup> Following exhumation, which drew to a close on 20 September 1947, the Unknowns from Halawa were transferred to U.S. Army Mausoleum No. 2 for processing at the Central Identification Lab (CIL) at Schofield Barracks.<sup>13</sup> The laboratory staff worked to confirm the identities of those who had been buried as Unknowns. After processing at the CIL, the *California* Unknowns that were still unidentified were transferred to U.S. Army Mausoleum No. 3, where they underwent final preparation for casketing and interment at the NMCP in February and April 1949.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> (b)(6) "Disinterment Plan."

<sup>11</sup> (b)(6) "Disinterment Plan."

<sup>12</sup> Edward Steere and Thayer M. Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead 1945-51*, U.S. Army, Quartermaster Corps, QMC Historical Studies, Series II, No. 4 (Washington, DC: Historical Branch Office of the Quartermaster General, 1957), 525.

<sup>13</sup> Steere and Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead*, 524.

<sup>14</sup> Steere and Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead*, 525.

<sup>15</sup> (b)(6) "Disinterment Plan."

Of the approximately 103 casualties from *California*, the remains of 42 were initially identified after the attack. During the identification process at the CIL, 39 individuals from *California* were identified, which left 22 sets of remains unidentified, two of which were later resolved. The number of unidentified has since been reduced to 20. PhM2c HILLMAN has not been among those identified. Officials determined that service members whose remains could not be identified would be classified as “non-recoverable.” PhM2c HILLMAN was determined to be “non-recoverable” on 6 October 1949.<sup>16</sup>

## RESEARCH EFFORTS

In 2003, efforts by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) to begin disinterring Pearl Harbor Unknowns from USS *Oklahoma* revealed the complexity of identifying commingled remains from multiple individuals. The *Oklahoma* project proceeded only after years of negotiations between the Department of Defense, the Service Secretaries, and the agencies responsible for accounting for service members from past conflicts.<sup>17</sup> Responding to inquiries from surviving family members and third-party researchers, JPAC and the wider personnel accounting community contended that extensive commingling required that all of the unidentified remains from *Oklahoma* be disinterred and processed as a group. This, they argued, would be the most efficient and scientifically sound method of identification. In 2015, the Deputy Secretary of Defense agreed and issued a policy memorandum directing the disinterment of Unknowns associated with *Oklahoma* and establishing thresholds to be met in pursuit of other disinterments of Unknowns from World War II and the Korean War currently buried in national memorial cemeteries.<sup>18</sup>

Building on the disinterment of the Unknowns associated with *Oklahoma*, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) recommended the disinterment of the 25 Unknowns associated with *California* as a group, even though the historical estimate for the number of individuals represented in the group was greater than the approximately 20 unresolved casualties from the ship’s crew. There are many possible reasons for this discrepancy; one, notably, is the possibility that crew members exited and then reboarded the ship during the chaos of the 7 December firefight. The Unknowns associated with *California* were not reported to have undergone the same type of post-recovery processing that may have contributed to the extensive commingling of Unknowns associated with *Oklahoma*. However, the nature of the incident leading to *California*’s 103 casualties and the recovery of the remains occurring several months

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<sup>16</sup> W. E. Marsden, “Sub: Non-Recoverable Remains of HILLMAN, Merle C. J., 2124685 PhM2c USN,” 12 October 1949, IDPF for HILLMAN.

<sup>17</sup> In January 2015, three elements of the accounting community—the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, and the Life Science Equipment Laboratory—were combined into one agency, the DPAA.

<sup>18</sup> Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert O. Work, Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments, et al., 14 April 2015, Subject: Disinterment of Unknowns from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, DPAA internal files.

after the incident supported the reassessment of all 25 Unknowns as a group in order to best assess any possibility of commingling.<sup>19</sup>

In 2018, DPAA personnel, in cooperation with cemetery officials, exhumed the caskets containing Unknowns reported to be associated with *California* from the NMCP and transferred the remains to the DPAA Laboratory at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

## ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

The attack on Pearl Harbor took the lives of approximately 103 Sailors and Marines assigned to *California*. Remains were removed from the ship in the weeks following the attack and during U.S. Navy salvage operations in early 1942. Although some were identified, many were later buried as Unknowns at the NMCP. In 2018, DPAA personnel exhumed 25 Unknowns and, as a result of advances in forensic and scientific analytical capabilities, are now able to identify additional remains from *California*. PhM2c HILLMAN was believed to have been aboard *California* at the time of the surprise attack on 7 December 1941; therefore, an association of the disinterred remains with PhM2c HILLMAN is supported by the available historical evidence.

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Historian  
Indo-Pacific Directorate, DPAA

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<sup>19</sup> (b)(6) "Disinterment Plan."

**FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY REPORT:  
CIL 2018-061-I-01**

**DPAA LABORATORY**

**28 September 2023**

**DESCRIPTION OF REMAINS**

The remains designated CIL 2018-061-I-01 consist of a partial skeleton in fair to good condition (Figures 1–2). Elements present, in whole or in part, include: the cranium, mandible, first through seventh cervical vertebrae, first and second thoracic vertebrae, and the left and right humeri, ossa coxae, and femora. Dentition is present in the cranium and mandible, as well as a dental appliance (see Forensic Odontology Report: CIL 2018-061-I-01). Portions of the cranium and left femur were reconstructed using acetone soluble adhesive to facilitate analysis. Additionally, the left and right ossa coxae were temporarily reconstructed using tape. Samples were taken from the right temporal, left humerus, left os coxa, and right femur for DNA analysis. The remains designated CIL 2018-061-I-01 were previously segregated from a larger assemblage based on a shared mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) sequence among sampled elements, pair matching, articulation, morphology, and accession.

**MINIMUM NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS**

The remains represent a minimum of one individual based on a shared mtDNA sequence among sampled elements, sound anatomical articulation, refitting fragments, similar growth and development of epiphyses, consistencies in size and morphology of comparable elements, and a lack of duplicating or overlapping elements.

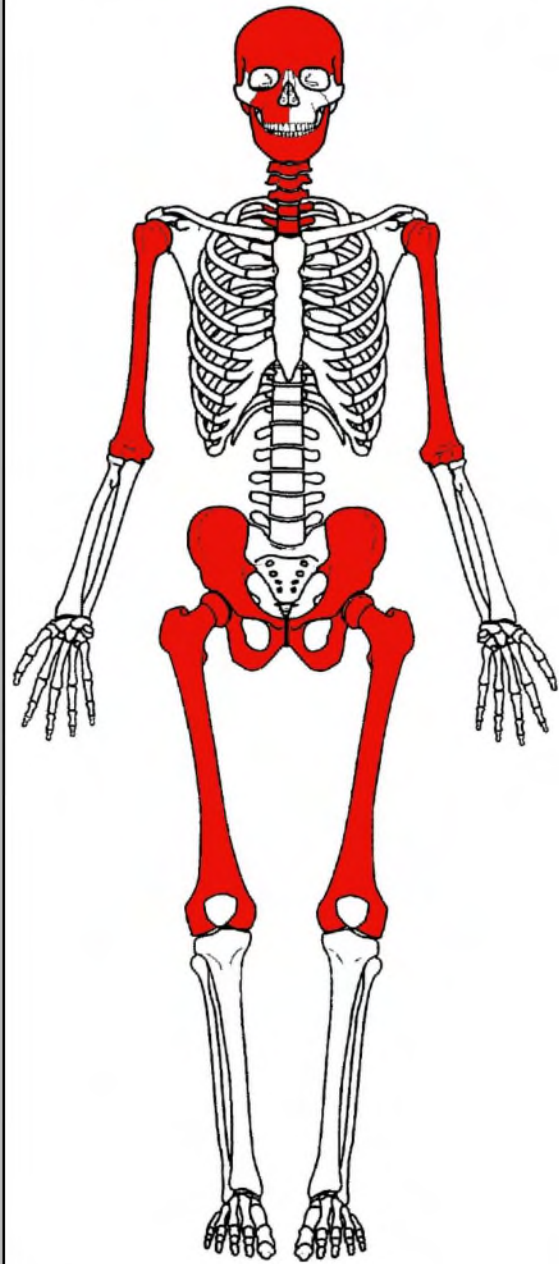
**SEX**

Male. Biological sex was assessed using morphological assessment of the pelvis and postcranial metric assessment. The greater sciatic notch of the left and right ossa coxae are relatively narrow and are consistent with a score of 3 following Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994). Walker (2005) reported that individuals with greater sciatic notch scores of 3 have an 88% probability of being male.

Maximum diameter of the femoral head was assessed for the left and right femora (45 mm) following Spradley and Jantz (2011). Univariate analysis for American Black and American White individuals provided mixed results. The remains classified as male when compared against the sectioning point for American Black individuals (sectioning point = 44 mm,



**Figure 1.** CIL 2018-061-I-01, skeletal layout. Petri dish contains non-diagnostic bone fragments. Scale is in decimeters.



**Figure 2.** CIL 2018-061-I-01, skeletal inventory diagram. Elements in red are present. Dentition, fragmentation, completeness, and contents of Petri dish are not depicted.

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*Forensic Anthropology Report: CIL 2018-061-I-01*

86% correct classification rate) and indeterminate when compared against the sectioning point for American White individuals (sectioning point = 45 mm, 88% correct classification rate). Results from the metric assessment require cautious interpretation given the conflicting results of the metric assessment and the inability to use population-specific methods (Spradley and Jantz 2011). Results from the most reliable indicator for biological sex, morphological traits of the pelvic girdle, indicate the remains are consistent with a male individual.

## AGE

≥ 18 years. Age was assessed using the epiphyseal union rates of the proximal humeri and left femur. The proximal epiphyses of the humeri and femora were scored following criteria outlined in McKern and Stewart (1957). All observable epiphyses exhibited complete union and are consistent with Stage 4. Complete fusion observed in the proximal humeri is consistent with an individual ≥ 18 years according to studies presented in Cunningham *et al.* (2016), while complete fusion of the proximal left femur and the lesser trochanter are consistent with an individual ≥ 16 year according to studies presented in Cunningham *et al.* (2016).

Collectively, these age indicators establish this individual was greater or equal to 18 years of age at the time of death. The lower boundary was provided by the epiphyseal union rates of the proximal humeri. An upper boundary could not be established due to the paucity of available remains.

## STATURE

64.70 ± 5.18 inches (Black males); 63.54 ± 4.8 inches (White Males). Due to the paucity and fragmentary nature of the remains, stature estimation is based on the proximal femur. Simmons *et al.* (1990) outlines formulae for Black and White males using the upper breadth of the femur (VHA). The results from both formulae are presented given that ancestry could not be determined. The VHA for the right femur (92 mm) was used, resulting in a point estimate of 64.70 ± 5.18 (59.52–69.88) inches with a 95% prediction interval for Black males and a point estimate of 63.54 ± 4.80 (58.74–68.34) inches with a 95% prediction interval for White males.

## TRAUMA

Perimortem trauma evident through sharp fracture margins and lack of remodeling is present on multiple skeletal elements including the cranium, sixth and seventh cervical vertebrae, first and second thoracic vertebrae, ossa coxae, and femora. Possible perimortem trauma is present on the mandible and both humeri. The presence of postmortem damage on the mandible and humeri precludes further assessment. In addition to perimortem trauma there is extensive thermal alteration observed on the majority of skeletal elements present.

The cranium exhibits a linear fracture that extends transversely along the occipital bone superior to the foramen magnum (Figure 3). The right occiptomastoid suture exhibits a possible



diastatic fracture that is likely associated with the linear fracture located on the occipital bone. There is no clear defect associated with the linear fracture, and the condition and paucity of available remains precludes further assessment. Complete oblique fractures are present on the distal diaphysis of the left and right humeri. Further assessment of the trauma cannot be conducted due to the absence of the distal portions and associated diagnostic fragments.

Perimortem trauma is visible on the sixth and seventh cervical vertebrae, as well as the first and second thoracic vertebrae. The sixth cervical vertebra exhibits an incomplete linear fracture on the lamina, and the seventh cervical vertebra exhibits an incomplete linear fracture on the spinous process. The absence of defects associated with the trauma on the sixth and seventh cervical vertebrae is consistent with indirect blunt force trauma.

The left and right ossa coxae exhibit comminuted acetabular fractures. Following criteria outlined in Galloway (2014), the acetabular fracture of the left os coxa is most consistent with a posterior wall and transverse fracture, which is likely the result of corresponding trauma to the left femur. According to Galloway (2014), fractures of the acetabular region are often associated with high-energy events such as, but not limited to, motor vehicle crashes, vehicle, and pedestrian collisions, and falls.

A complete intertrochanteric fracture with detachment of the lesser trochanter is located on the proximal left femur (Figure 4). The fracture separates the proximal portion of the femur from the diaphysis inferior to the lesser trochanter. According to Galloway (2014), fractures of the intertrochanteric region are often associated with high-energy events such as, but not limited to, motor vehicle accidents, vehicle and pedestrian collisions, plane crashes, and falls from great heights. Additionally, the left and right femora exhibit complete perimortem fractures near the midshaft.

In addition to perimortem fractures, elements of the cranium, axial skeleton, pelvic girdle, and upper and lower extremities exhibit indicators of differential thermal exposure (see Figures 3 and 4). These indicators include discoloration in the form of charring and calcined bone, heat-altered borders, and heat lines, which are consistent with thermal trauma that occurs while soft tissue is present (Symes *et al.* 2015). This suggests thermal exposure occurred either perimortem or during the early postmortem interval.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

The remains are in fair to good condition and are a general yellowish brown to light tan brown in color. Adhering white powder residue is present on multiple elements. Extensive postmortem damage such as cortical erosion/exfoliation is present on all elements, particularly around epiphyses and areas associated with thermal exposure. The extensive cortical erosion and exfoliation exhibited on the remains is likely contributed to by the continuous wet-dry cycles the remains would have experienced while being interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in conjunction with the thermal exposure.

(b)(6)



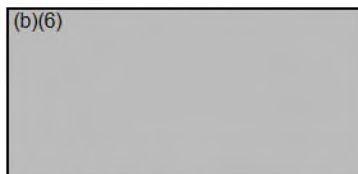
**Figure 3. CIL 2018-061-I-01, reconstructed cranium, posteroinferior view showing perimortem linear fracture (red arrows) and heat altered borders (orange bracket).**



**Figure 4. CIL 2018-061-I-01, reconstructed left femur, posterior view showing perimortem intertrochanteric fracture (red arrows), possible perimortem trauma (red bracket), charring (orange arrow), and heat altered border (orange bracket).**

## CONCLUSIONS

The skeletal remains designated CIL 2018-061-I-01 represent a male individual,  $\geq 18$  years of age at death, with an estimated stature between 59.52–69.88 inches for Black males and 58.74–68.34 inches for White males. Perimortem trauma is present on multiple skeletal elements. Both ossa coxae and the left femur exhibit perimortem trauma consistent with a high-energy event. Possible perimortem trauma is present on the mandible and both humeri. The presence of postmortem damage on the mandible and humeri precludes further assessment. In addition to perimortem trauma, multiple elements exhibit evidence of thermal alteration occurring during either the perimortem or early postmortem interval.



Anthropologist

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UNCLASSIFIED

**BIOLOGICAL PROFILE COMPARISON REPORT:  
CIL 2018-061-I-01**

**DPAA LABORATORY**

**29 September 2023**

Subsequent to the forensic anthropology analysis of the skeletal remains annotated above, a comparison of those remains to Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Merle Chester Joseph HILLMAN, 2124685, U.S. Navy, was conducted. The following known physical characteristics for Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN and CIL 2018-061-I-01 are presented for comparison:

	<b>Forensic Anthropology Report: CIL 2018-061-I-01</b>	<b>Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Merle C. J. HILLMAN</b>
<b>SEX:</b>	Male	Male
<b>AGE:</b>	≥ 18 years	25 years, 10 months <sup>1</sup>
<b>ANCESTRY:</b>	Not assessed	White <sup>2</sup>
<b>STATURE:</b>	59.52–69.88 inches (Black males); 58.74–68.34 inches (White males)	67 1/4 inches; <sup>2</sup> 66 inches <sup>3</sup>
<b>TRAUMA:</b>	Perimortem trauma of multiple elements consistent with a high-energy event. Possible perimortem trauma of the mandible and humeri. Perimortem or early postmortem thermal alteration also present across most elements.	“Killed in action during enemy bombing raid” <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NMS-Form N (CERTIFICATE OF DEATH) labeled *HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph*, stamp dated *FEB 21 1942*. Age based on date of birth *February 7, 1916* and date of death *12-7-41*.

<sup>2</sup>OQMG FORM 371 (DATA ON REMAINS NOT YET RECOVERED OR IDENTIFIED) labeled *HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph*, dated *23 Oct 1947*. Stature reflects most recent medical history.

<sup>3</sup>NRB 18083 (RECORD OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION), labeled *Hillman*, dated *11-30-36*.

The above comparison shows that there is overall good biological agreement between the skeletal remains and the physical characteristics of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Merle C. J. HILLMAN.

(b)(6)



Anthropologist

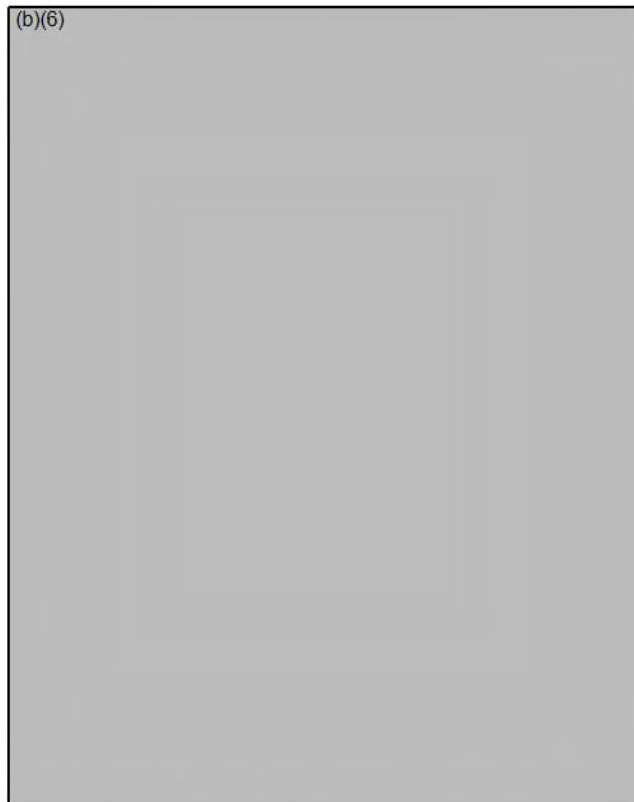
**FORENSIC ODONTOLOGY REPORT:  
CIL 2018-061-I-01**

**DPAA LABORATORY**

**3 February 2023**

**DENTAL REMAINS**

The dental remains of CIL 2018-061-I-01 consist of a loose maxillary (upper jaw) fragment, a right mandible (lower jaw) fragment, and a removable dental prosthesis (i.e., upper partial denture) with two natural tooth crowns in the clasps. Specific dental characteristics include the following: articulated teeth #2 and #31; loose crowns of teeth #5 and #12, which are held in dental prosthesis clasps; and healed bone and/or closed spaces in the areas typically occupied by teeth #1, #3, #30, and #32, which would suggest they were missing antemortem (i.e., prior to death). The dental remains present with brown and black staining on the crowns of teeth and are in a poor state of preservation. Photographs (Figures 1 through 3) and radiographs were taken by a prior analyst.



**Figure 1. CIL 2018-061-I-01, facial and occlusal views of the maxillary fragment (top to bottom, respectively).**



**Figure 2. CIL 2018-061-I-01, facial and occlusal views of the right mandible fragment (left to right, respectively).**



**Figure 3. CIL 2018-061-I-01, occlusal view of the removal dental prosthesis. The teeth present are natural crowns of teeth held within the appliance's clasps and not artificial denture teeth.**



**ANTEMORTEM DENTAL INFORMATION**

This incident involves a World War II loss. The available antemortem dental evidence for the associated casualty, Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Merle Chester Joseph HILLMAN, consists of:

1. DENTAL RECORD labeled *HILLMAN? [sic] Merle Chester Joseph*, dated 2-18-37, and is signed by the examiner. The dental treatment side of the form is signed by a dental officer and contains entries dated 3-15-37 through *June 25, 1941*, which are signed by the treatment providers.
2. Black and white copy of DENTAL RECORD labeled *HILLMAN? [sic] Merle Chester Joseph*, dated 2-18-37, and is signed by the examiner. The dental treatment side of the form is signed by a dental officer and contains entries dated 3-15-37 through *June 25, 1941*, which are signed by the treatment providers.
3. N. M. S. Form L (REQUEST FOR PROSTHETIC DENTAL TREATMENT) labeled *HILLMAN, M.C.J.* and dated *April, 28 1941*. The form is signed by the patient, a Dental Officer, a Medical Officer, and the Commanding Officer.
4. Black and white copy of N. M. S. Form L (REQUEST FOR PROSTHETIC DENTAL TREATMENT) labeled *HILLMAN, M.C.J.* and dated *April, 28 1941*. The form is signed by the patient, a Dental Officer, a Medical Officer, and the Commanding Officer. The reverse side of the form contains additional endorsements with signatures from the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and a Dental Officer.
5. RECORD OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION page from NRB Form 10 labeled *Hillman* and dated *11-30-1936*. The form contains an unmarked dental chart, which is signed by a Medical Examiner.
6. OQMG FORM 371 (DATA ON REMAINS NOT YET RECOVERED OR IDENTIFIED) labeled *HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph* with an undated dental chart.
7. OQMG FORM 371 (DATA ON REMAINS NOT YET RECOVERED OR IDENTIFIED) labeled *HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph* with an undated dental chart.
8. OQMG FORM 371 (DATA ON REMAINS NOT YET RECOVERED OR IDENTIFIED) labeled *HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph* with an undated dental chart.

**COMPARISON**

Comparison of the dental remains to the antemortem profile of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN resulted in no unexplainable discrepancies (Table 1). Points of concordance include the following: antemortem missing teeth #1, #3, and #30; restored teeth #2 and #12; and unrestored tooth #5.

<b>Tooth #</b>	<b>Tooth #</b>	<b>CIL 2018-061-I-01</b>	<b>Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN</b>
1	1	X	X
2	2	O-S	O-S
3	3	X (space closed)	X
4	4	/	V
5	5	V	V
6	6	/	F-N
7	7	/	V
8	8	/	V
9	9	/	V
10	10	/	V
11	11	/	X (doc)
12	12	MOD-S	MOD-S (base)
13	13	/	MOD-S
14	14	/	X (doc)
15	15	/	MODF-S
16	16	/	X
32	17	/	F-S
31	18	/	X
30	19	/	X
29	20	/	X
28	21	/	D-S
27	22	/	V
26	23	/	V
25	24	/	V
24	25	/	V
23	26	/	V
22	27	/	V
21	28	/	X
20	29	/	X
19	30	X	X
18	31	V	X
17	32	X	V

**KEY:** Navy dental numbering system circa World War II era (left); Universal numbering system (right); green shade = similar finding; yellow shade = explainable discrepancy; D = distal; doc = documented treatment; F = facial; M = mesial; N = non-metal restoration; O = occlusal; S = silver amalgam restoration; V = unrestored; X = antemortem missing; / = not part of assemblage.

There is one type of explainable discrepancy present in the antemortem/postmortem dental comparison involving the specific molars present or absent in the lower right quadrant. The antemortem dental record for Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN charts the presence of tooth #32 and the absence of tooth #31. This pattern of presence versus absence is reversed in the remains. This difference may be explained since the coronal morphologies of the three types of molars (first, second, and third molars) are similar and they are easily mistaken for one another in their quadrant. While this discrepancy may reflect a difference in opinion between the antemortem and postmortem examiners regarding the specific molar visually present, the general pattern is similar: the presence of one molar in the lower right quadrant.

The antemortem dental record for Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN documents planned treatment for a partial upper and partial lower denture. Only a partial upper denture was recovered with the remains, for which no denture teeth are present to determine which antemortem missing teeth were replaced. The denture clasps present on the crowns of teeth #5 and #12 are consistent with the expected denture design in Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN's dental record and strengthens his association to the remains.

The DPAA Odontology Application is a computer program that compares the dental characteristics of the remains to the available records of individuals lost in an associated incident; the product of these comparisons is a list of possible candidates. Comparison of the remains to the incident dental database (USS *California*) resulted in Pharmacist's Mate Second Class HILLMAN receiving the most matches and makes him the strongest candidate for association with the remains.

Odontosearch is a web-based computer application that compares certain dental characteristics to a population database, thereby producing a frequency that the pattern would be expected within the general population. Characteristics found in the concordant teeth #2, #3, #5, #12, and #30 were input and compared to the database. There were eight pattern matches out of a comparison of 107,002 records, which suggests the shared pattern would occur in 0.00841% of the population.

**OPINION**

Based upon the correlations between the antemortem and postmortem dental evidence, to include antemortem missing teeth #1, #3, and #30; restored teeth #2 and #12; unrestored tooth #5; and an upper removable partial denture, it is my opinion that the dental remains of CIL 2018-061-I-01 are probably those of

*Pharmacist's Mate Second Class Merle Chester Joseph HILLMAN, 2124685, U.S. Navy*

(b)(6)



Odontologist

**CERTIFICATE OF DEATH (OVERSEAS)**  
**Acte de deces (D'Outre-Mer)**

NAME OF DECEASED (Last, First, Middle) Nom du decede (Nom et prenom) <b>HILLMAN, Merle Chester Joseph</b>	GRADE Grade <b>PhM2c</b>	BRANCH OF SERVICE Arme <b>U.S. Navy</b>	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER Numero de l'Assurance Sociale <b>2124685</b>
--	-----------------------------	--	--

ORGANIZATION Organisation <b>USS California</b>	NATION (e.g., United States) Pays <b>United States</b>	DATE OF BIRTH Date de Naissance <b>7 February 1916</b>	SEX Sexe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MALE Masculin <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE Feminin
--	---	---	--

RACE Race		MARITAL STATUS Etat Civil		RELIGION Culte	
American Indian or Alaska Native / Indien Américain ou Natif de l'Alaska	Hispanic or Latino / Hispanique ou latino	SINGLE Celibataire	DIVORCED Divorce	PROTESTANT Protestant	OTHER (Specify) AUTRE (Specifiez)
Asian / Asiatique	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander / Native Hawaiian ou autre Islander du Pacifique	MARRIED Marie	SEPARATED Separe	CATHOLIC Catholique	
Black or African American / Noirs ou Afro-Américains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> White / Blanc	WIDOWED Veuf		JEWISH Juif	

NAME OF NEXT OF KIN Nom du plus proche parent	RELATIONSHIP TO DECEASED Parente du decede avec le susdit
---	---

STREET ADDRESS Domicile a (Rue)	CITY OR TOWN AND STATE (Include ZIP Code) Ville (Code postal compris)
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**MEDICAL STATEMENT Declaration medicale**

CAUSE OF DEATH (Enter only one cause per line) Cause du deces (N'indiquer qu'une cause par ligne)	INTERVAL BETWEEN ONSET AND DEATH Intervalle entre l'attaque et le deces
---	---

DISEASE OR CONDITION DIRECTLY LEADING TO DEATH 1 Maladie ou condition directement responsable de la mort 1	<b>Multiple Injuries</b>
--	--------------------------

ANTECEDENT CAUSES Symtomes precurseurs de la mort	MORBID CONDITION, IF ANY, LEADING TO PRIMARY CAUSE Condition morbide, s'il y a lieu, menant a la cause primaire	UNDERLYING CAUSE, IF ANY, GIVING RISE TO PRIMARY CAUSE Raison fondamentale, s'il y a lieu, ayant suscite la cause primaire
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OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS 2 Autres conditions significatives 2
--

MODE OF DEATH Condition de deces	AUTOPSY PERFORMED Autopsie effectuee <input type="checkbox"/> YES Oui <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO Non	CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING DEATH DUE TO EXTERNAL CAUSES Circonstances de la mort suscitees par des causes exterieures <b>Engagement with enemy forces</b>
NATURAL Mort naturelle	MAJOR FINDINGS OF AUTOPSY Conclusions principales de l'autopsie	
ACCIDENT Mort accidentelle		
SUICIDE Suicide	NAME OF PATHOLOGIST Nom du pathologiste <b>(b)(6)</b>	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HOMICIDE Homicide	SIGNATURE Signature <b>(b)(6)</b>	DATE Date <b>20 October 2023</b>	AVIATION ACCIDENT Accident a Avion <input type="checkbox"/> YES Oui <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO Non
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DATE OF DEATH (Hour, day, month, year) Date de deces (l'heure, le jour, le mois, l'annee) <b>7 December 1941</b>	PLACE OF DEATH Lieu de deces <b>Pearl Harbor, Oahu Island, Territory of Hawaii</b>
---	---

I HAVE VIEWED THE REMAINS OF THE DECEASED AND DEATH OCCURRED AT THE TIME INDICATED AND FROM THE CAUSES AS STATED ABOVE.  
J'ai examine les restes mortels du de funt et je conclus que le deces est survenu a l'heure indiquee et a la suite des causes enumerees ci-dessus.

NAME OF MEDICAL OFFICER Nom du medicin militaire ou du medicin sanitaire <b>(b)(6)</b>	TITLE OR DEGREE Titre ou diplome <b>MD</b>
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GRADE Grade <b>Lt Col / O-5</b>	INSTALLATION OR ADDRESS Installation ou adresse <b>DPAA, JBPHH, HI</b>
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DATE Date <b>20 October 2023</b>	SIGNATURE Signature <b>(b)(6)</b>
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1 State disease, injury or complication which caused death, but not mode of dying such as heart failure, etc.  
2 State conditions contributing to the death, but not related to the disease or condition causing death.  
1 Preciser la nature de la maladie, de la blessure ou de la complication qui a contribue a la mort, mais non la maniere de mourir, telle qu'un arret du coeur, etc.  
2 Preciser la condition qui a contribue a la mort, mais n'ayant aucun rapport avec la maladie ou a la condition qui a provoque la mort.

(REMOVE, REVERSE AND RE-INSERT CARBONS BEFORE COMPLETING THIS SIDE)

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS			
NAME OF MORTICIAN PREPARING REMAINS	GRADE	LICENSE NUMBER AND STATE	OTHER
INSTALLATION OR ADDRESS	DATE	SIGNATURE	
NAME OF CEMETERY OR CREMATORY	LOCATION OF CEMETERY OR CREMATORY		
TYPE OF DISPOSITION <input type="checkbox"/> BURIAL <input type="checkbox"/> CREMATION <input type="checkbox"/> REMOVAL ( <i>Specify</i> )		DATE OF DISPOSITION	
REGISTRATION OF VITAL STATISTICS			
REGISTRY ( <i>Town and Country</i> )	DATE REGISTERED	FILE NUMBER	
		STATE	OTHER
NAME OF FUNERAL DIRECTOR	ADDRESS		
SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED INDIVIDUAL			

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