



INVESTIGATION
RECOVERY
IDENTIFICATION
CLOSURE

“UNTIL THEY ARE HOME”

JOINT POW/MIA ACCOUNTING COMMAND



ABOUT JPAC

The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command conducts global search, recovery, and laboratory operations to identify unaccounted-for Americans from past conflicts in order to support the Department of Defense's personnel accounting efforts.



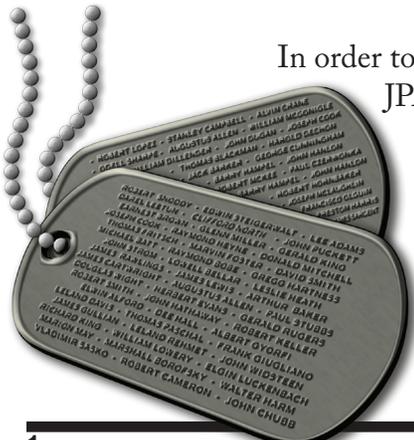
The command is located on the island of Oahu in Hawaii and was activated Oct. 1, 2003. Employing more than 400 joint military and civilian personnel, JPAC continues its search for the more than 83,000 Americans still missing from past conflicts.

The laboratory portion of JPAC, referred to as the Central Identification Laboratory, is the largest and most diverse forensic skeletal laboratory in the world.

The command maintains four permanent detachments to assist with command and control, logistics and in-country support during investigation and recovery operations.

Detachment One is located in Bangkok, Thailand; Detachment Two in Hanoi, Vietnam; Detachment Three in Vientiane, Laos; and Detachment Four, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In order to facilitate logistical support to teams, JPAC maintains storage facilities in Hawaii, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Europe and Papua New Guinea. Having these facilities strategically placed around the world minimizes costs and provides quick access to supplies for teams in remote locations.



ABOUT JPAC



The core of JPAC's day-to-day operations involves researching case files, investigating leads, excavating sites and identifying Americans who were killed in action, but were never brought home.

This process involves close coordination with U.S. agencies involved in the POW/MIA issue, including the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, the Armed Forces mortuary affairs offices, U. S. Pacific Command, Department of State, the Joint Staff, Defense Intelligence Agency, the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory and the U.S. Air Force's Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory.

In order to ensure mission success and the return of unaccounted-for Americans, JPAC routinely engages in technical negotiations and talks with representatives of foreign governments to promote and maintain positive in-country conditions wherever JPAC teams deploy.



ANALYSIS & INVESTIGATION



The accounting process is organized into the following areas: analysis and investigation, recovery operations and identifications.

Working alongside other U.S. and foreign specialists, JPAC personnel investigate, recover and identify remains of Americans unaccounted-for from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Cold War.

The search for unaccounted-for Americans starts with in-depth research by JPAC historians and analysts. These experts gather information from records, archives, interviews and other sources.

In most cases, the search for a missing person will involve outside researchers, the national archives and record depositories maintained by the U.S. and foreign governments. Veterans, external historians, private citizens, families of missing Americans and amateur researchers also routinely provide information about cases.

ANALYSIS & INVESTIGATION

Researchers take this information and create a “loss incident case file” for each unaccounted-for individual. This case file includes historical background, military medical and personnel records, unit histories, official correspondence, maps, photographs and other evidence. This groundwork lays the foundation to locate possible sites where missing Americans may be located.

After evidence and information is gathered, JPAC sends out an investigation team to potential sites. Each team consists of four to nine people including a team leader, analyst, linguist, communication technician and medic. In some instances, an anthropologist, explosive ordnance disposal technician, forensic photographer and life support technician may augment the team. Investigation teams also survey potential recovery sites so that recovery teams have the most up-to-date information for future recoveries.

The analysis and investigation section also provides historical analysis to help with the identification of remains. At any given time, there are more than 1,000 active case files under investigation.



RECOVERY



If enough evidence is found a site will be recommended for recovery. Once the decision has been made to excavate a site, a recovery team is activated.

The command has 18 recovery teams consisting of 10 to 14 people including a forensic anthropologist, team leader and sergeant, linguist, medic, life support technician, communications technician, forensic photographer, explosive ordnance disposal technician and mortuary affairs specialists. Standard recovery missions last 35 to 60 days depending on the location and recovery methods used on site.

Team members have to be in top physical condition to reach excavation sites, which are often in very remote places. Teams routinely walk through dense jungles, hike mountains and glaciers and rappel down cliffs to reach a site. Adding to the difficulty, teams travel with up to 10,000 pounds in survival and excavation equipment.

RECOVERY

At any given time, JPAC has a queue of more than 200 sites that have already been investigated, validated and are ready for recovery.

Recovery sites can be as small as a few meters for individual burials to areas exceeding the size of a football field for aircraft crashes.

Recovery teams use standard field archaeology methods in the excavation as directed by the on-site anthropologist.



At a recovery site, the anthropologist, also referred to as the recovery leader, directs the excavation much like a detective oversees a crime scene. Each mission is unique, but there are certain processes each recovery has in common.

The first step for the anthropologist is to define the site or determine the site perimeter. Once a site perimeter has been defined, the anthropologist establishes a grid system and sections the site with stakes and string. Each section is then excavated one grid at a time. Every inch of soil that comes out of the site is screened for any potential remains, life support equipment or material evidence.

When dictated by the environment or soil conditions, wet-screening techniques, where all soil is washed through wire mesh with high-pressure hoses, are used.

THE JOINT POW/MIA ACCOUNTING COMMAND



ACCOUNTING HISTORY

- Our humanitarian mission began in 1973, focusing on Americans still missing in Southeast Asia. In 1976, the search expanded to include the search for missing Americans from all past conflicts.
- On Oct. 1, 2003, the Department of Defense joined together two organizations to form the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command.
- On April 27, 2008, the Central Identification Laboratory became the second federal laboratory to pass the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors'-Laboratory Accreditation Board.



CHAIN OF CUSTODY INVOLVING FAMILIES

Once identifications are established, families are offered the opportunity to accept the remains of their loved one for final disposition. It is during this final meeting that families finally have the answers, are reunited and take their loved ones home.



HOW JPAC SELECTS SITES FOR EXCAVATION

Factors such as weather, terrain, site accessibility, and various other logistical concerns help determine how and when JPAC teams deploy to recover a site. If a site is in jeopardy, a recovery may be launched quickly so the site is not destroyed.



When complete, JPAC's new state-of-the-art building, in Honolulu, Hawaii, will optimize JPAC'S mission by consolidating many functional areas into a single, three-story structure.

ARRIVAL CEREMONY



To help with what can be a massive soil removal effort, JPAC may hire anywhere from a few to more than 100 local workers.

Initial analysis occurs at the site, and the recovered evidence is then packed up for further examination.

Once the recovery effort is completed, the team returns to Hawaii. All remains and artifacts found during the recovery operation are transported to JPAC's Central Identification Laboratory for analysis.

In honor of the sacrifice made by those individuals whose remains were recovered during a recovery mission, JPAC holds an arrival ceremony with a joint service honor guard and senior officers from each service. Veterans, community members and local active-duty military attend the ceremonies to pay their respects as the remains are transported to the lab for analysis and identification.

IDENTIFICATION



Upon arrival at the lab, all remains and artifacts recovered from a site are signed over to an evidence coordinator and stored in a secure area. Forensic anthropologists are responsible for the analysis of human remains and material evidence, such as military uniforms, personal effects and identification tags.

Forensic anthropologists first examine all recovered skeletal remains in order to produce a “biological profile.” This profile includes sex, race, stature and age at death. Anthropologists may also analyze trauma caused at or near the time of death and pathological conditions of bone such as arthritis or previous healed breaks.

The forensic anthropologist assigned the case in the laboratory is not the individual who completed the recovery in the field. This entire procedure is carried out in the “blind,” meaning the anthropologist does not know the suspected identity of the individual under analysis. However, scientists are provided specific

IDENTIFICATION



details that are required to select the appropriate scientific techniques (i.e., the approximate area of the loss incident.) The blind analysis is completed in order to prevent bias from influencing the scientist's analysis.

Scientists use a variety of techniques to establish the identification of unaccounted-for individuals, including analysis of skeletal remains and sampling mitochondrial DNA. They also analyze material evidence, personal effects and life support equipment. The JPAC scientific director evaluates these overlapping lines of evidence in an effort to identify the remains.

Dental remains are extremely important to the identification process; they offer the best means of positive identification, are durable and may contain surviving mitochondrial DNA.

An individual's dental records are often the best way to identify remains as they have unique individual characteristics and may contain surviving mtDNA. Ideally, JPAC's forensic odontologists will have antemortem (before death) X-rays to use for comparison,

IDENTIFICATION

but even handwritten charts and treatment notes can be critical to the research and identification process.

Unlike nuclear DNA, which is unique to each person, mtDNA is passed directly from a person's mother. Generally, all persons of the same maternal line have the same mtDNA sequences. Since these sequences are rare but not unique within the general population, they cannot stand alone as evidence for identification.

The lab uses mtDNA in about three-quarters of its cases. Samples taken from bones and teeth are analyzed at the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, where they extract and amplify the surviving mtDNA to determine the genetic sequence. This sequence is compared with sequences from family reference samples provided by living individuals who are maternally related to unidentified Americans. These family reference samples are collected as needed by the casualty and mortuary offices.



The laboratory is the most scientifically diverse skeletal identification laboratory in the world and is staffed by more than 30 scientists. In 2008, the lab became the second federal laboratory to pass the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors'-Laboratory Accreditation Board.

CLOSURE



In addition to the factors previously mentioned, each separate line of evidence must be examined at the lab (i.e. remains, life support equipment, personal items) and correlated with all historical evidence. All reports must undergo a thorough peer review process that includes an external review by independent experts. Additionally, if mtDNA is part of the process, the search for family reference samples for DNA comparison can add a significant amount of time to the identification process.

Once a case is complete, the information is transferred to the appropriate service mortuary affairs office who personally notifies the family of the identification.

While JPAC identifies an American about every four days, the recovery and identification process may take years. Since 2003, JPAC has identified more than 560 Americans. More than 1,800 Americans have been identified since the accounting effort began in the 1970's.

FORENSIC SCIENCE ACADEMY

In 2008, the Central Identification Laboratory opened the Forensic Science Academy, an advanced and highly competitive forensic anthropology program consisting of five courses taught under the auspices of the Department of Defense. Students (Fellows) are accepted into the program each fall, and receive a one-time \$12,000 stipend and up to 15 semester hours of credit through their university.

In the lab, Fellows receive training in anthropology, archaeology, and odontology. They're trained on various techniques and identification methods in a unique and technologically advanced laboratory. Fellows also receive specialized training in establishing a biological profile, cause and manner of death, remote sensing, soils and more.

In the field, Fellows receive unique training during a 35-day mission to Laos, assisting in an archaeological excavation. Fellows study at Khon Kaen University, Thailand, honing their skills in human variation, bone disease and innovative identification methods. Additionally, Fellows are trained in land and underwater archaeological equipment and methods.





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FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON A MISSING AMERICAN
OR TO REQUEST A DNA KIT, WRITE OR CALL:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY.....(800) 892-2490
U.S. ARMY HUMAN RESOURCES COMMAND
ATTN: PCRB (AHRC-PDC-R)
1600 SPEARHEAD DIVISION AVE, DEPARTMENT 450
FT. KNOX, KY 40122-5405

HEADQUARTERS U.S. MARINE CORPS.....(800) 847-1597
MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS (MFPC)
PERSONNEL AND FAMILY READINESS DIVISION
3280 RUSSELL ROAD
QUANTICO, VA 22134-5103

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.....(800) 443-9298
CASUALTY ASSISTANCE DIVISION (OPNAV N135C)
POW/MIA BRANCH
5720 INTEGRITY DRIVE
MILLINGTON, TN 38055-6210

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE.....(800) 531-5803
HQ AIR FORCE/MORTUARY AFFAIRS OPERATIONS
PAST CONFLICTS BRANCH
116 PURPLE HEART DRIVE
DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, DE 19902

DEPARTMENT OF STATE.....(202) 647-5470
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CA/OCS/ACS/EAP SA29
2201 C ST. NORTH WEST
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