CHAPTER 25

DECEDENT AFFAIRS

INTRODUCTION

The Navy's Decedent Affairs Program consists of search, recovery, identification, care, and disposition of the remains of deceased personnel for whom the Department of the Navy is responsible. The Decedent Affairs Program is considered a highly visible and extremely sensitive program. Arrangements for the burial of the deceased should be conducted in an expedient but dignified manner, and survivors of the deceased should be given the greatest possible amount of support and assistance.

ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify military activities that are responsible for the management of the Navy and Marine Corps Decedent Affairs Program.

The overall manager of the Navy and Marine Corps Decedent Affairs Program is Navy Casualty, Navy Mortuary Affairs, located in Millington, TN. At the local level, decedent affairs officers assigned to various naval hospitals and other naval activities are responsible for inspecting remains, briefing escorts, making travel arrangements, selecting locations, and coordinating the burial at sea of casketed and cremated remains via Navy vessels.

Naval hospitals manage deaths that occur within the hospital and in their local area of responsibility. At small independent operational units and on board naval vessels, the responsibility for managing the Decedent Affairs Program falls on the Commanding Officer or Officer-in-Charge, Medical Service Corps Officer, and the senior corpsman under the guidance of Navy Mortuary Affairs.

For this reason, Hospital Corpsmen (HMs) should have a working knowledge of decedent affairs procedures, which are outlined in OPNAVINST 5360.1 series, Decedent Affairs Manual.

PROGRAMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify the purpose of the Current Death Program, Graves Registration Program, Concurrent Return Program, Return of Remains Program, and the Casualty Assistance Calls Program.

To carry out the various responsibilities of the Decedent Affairs Program, five programs have been established:

- Current Death Program
- Graves Registration Program
- Concurrent Return Program
- Return of Remains Program
- Casualty Assistance Calls Program

CURRENT DEATH PROGRAM

The Current Death Program provides professional mortuary services, supplies, and related services incident to the care and disposition of remains of persons eligible for these services. Under this program, remains are shipped to a place designated by the primary next of kin also known as the Person Authorized Direct Disposition (PADD), such as a spouse or parents, for permanent disposition. The PADD serves as the person who directs all activities having to do with the deceased. The decedent's personal effects will be shipped to the legal recipient.
The Current Death Program is normally operational on a worldwide basis during peacetime, but may also be used during major conflicts.

GRAVES REGISTRATION PROGRAM

The Graves Registration Program (GR or GRREG) provides for the search, recovery, evacuation to a temporary cemetery or a mortuary, initial identification, disposition of personal effects found, and burial in the temporary cemeteries. This program is only operational when authorized by the responsible commander during major military operations. When necessary, the GR program includes the establishment and maintenance of temporary burial sites. Detailed guidance on graves registration procedures are contained in the Mortuary Affairs Joint Operations 4-06, 05JUN06, and Navy and Marine Corps publication NAVMED P-5016/NAVMC 2509A, Handling of Deceased Personnel in Theaters of Operation.

CONCURRENT RETURN PROGRAM

The Concurrent Return Program combines the Current Death Program and Graves Registration Program. The program provides for the search, recovery, and evacuation of remains to a processing point; identification and preparation of remains in a mortuary; and shipment, for permanent disposition to a final destination designated by the PADD. The Concurrent Return Program normally becomes operational when large numbers of military personnel are committed to a strategic area. Remains buried in temporary cemeteries (under the GR program or in emergencies) will normally be disinterred and evacuated under the Concurrent Return Program if conditions and capabilities permit.

RETURN OF REMAINS PROGRAM

The Return of Remains Program provides for permanent disposition of remains of persons buried in temporary cemeteries who could not be evacuated under the Concurrent Return Program.

The Return of Remains Program is activated only upon the enactment of special legislation. This special legislation may authorize the establishment of one or more permanent American cemeteries in the overseas area and may give PADD the option of having the remains buried therein or shipped to another place of their choosing. When the Return of Remains Program becomes activated, the Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), is responsible for notifying field activities of its activation.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE CALLS PROGRAM

The Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP) is administered by the Chief of Naval Operations Personnel Command, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC). Although integrally related, the CACP is not part of the Decedent Affairs Program. The CACP details a Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO), a commissioned officer or senior enlisted personnel, to personally contact the PADD. The CACO helps the PADD and SNOK (secondary next of kin) with problems surrounding the death and provides information regarding:

- Disposition of remains, to include funeral planning
- Death gratuity and unpaid pay and allowances
- Shipment of service member’s personal effects, household goods, POV, etc.
- Claim documents to aid in the movement and/or settlement of the decedent’s estate (wills, bank accounts, property, savings bonds, commercial insurance, etc.)
- Servicemen’s Group Life Insurance (SGLI), and travel of all eligible dependents to grave site funeral services and final move to permanent residence
The Navy and Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Programs are operated differently. The individual service instructions noted below should be consulted for specifics.

- NAVPERS 15560, Naval Military Personnel Manual (MILPERSMAN)
- BUPERSINST 1770.1 series, The Navy Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP) Manual
- MCO P3040.4 series, Marine Corps Casualty Procedures Manual (MARCORCASPROC MAN)

ELIGIBILITY FOR DECEDENT AFFAIRS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify individuals who are eligible for decedent affairs benefits.

Navy and Marine Corps members who die while serving on active duty or active and inactive duties for training are entitled to Decedent Affairs Program benefits. Generally, the following persons under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Navy are entitled to some decedent affair benefits: dependents, retirees, and civilian employees. Refer to OPNAVINST 5360.1 series, Decedent Affairs Manual and U.S. Code, Title 10, Subtitle A, Part II, Chapter 75, Subchapter II, 1481, for detailed guidance.

NOTIFICATION OF DEATH

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify forms used to report casualties, deaths, and personnel missing or missing in action.

Within four hours after it is determined that a casualty has occurred, submit a casualty report in accordance with MILPERSMAN 1770-030, Personal Casualty Report Procedures.

PERSONNEL CASUALTY REPORT

A personnel casualty report must be completed for the following category incidents:

- Active Duty Navy
- Retired Navy personnel while inpatient at Military Treatment Facilities
- Certain former service members, while inpatient at Military Treatment Facilities
- All active duty and reserve military dependents
- All active duty members of other Armed Forces
- Civilians, to include contract employees, serving with or attached to Navy commands
- Others deaths occurring aboard Military Sealift Command vessels

When a member becomes a casualty, the service member’s Commanding Officer (CO) must submit a personnel casualty report. If a service member becomes a casualty while away from his or her command, the command or activity that learns of the casualty occurring should submit the personnel casualty report. The member’s command should supplement the personnel casualty report that was previously submitted by another command. If a service member has detached and was en route to the next command, the gaining command is responsible for generating the personnel casualty report.

METHOD OF REPORTING CASUALTIES

Personnel casualty reports should be sent by priority message.

Action Addressees on Personnel Casualty Reports

The following activities should be action addresses on personnel casualty reports:

- Commander, Naval Personnel Command, MILL_navycasualty@navy.mil
- Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
The appropriate Navy Regional Casualty Office will be notified concerning a casualty or death in the coverage area. The Casualty Assistance Calls Officer/Funeral Honors Support (CAC/FHS) Program oversees family notification in the area in which the PADD and SNOK reside, or the appropriate overseas CAC/FHS program coordinators.

**NOTIFICATION OF NEXT OF KIN**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:**

Explain notification of the next of kin procedures.

In cases of death, PADD are personally notified by a uniformed Navy or Marine Corps representative as appropriate. Personal notification of the PADD will normally be made between 0500 and 2400, except under unusual circumstances (e.g., the news media is expected to make a press release; or the member has been hospitalized in serious or very serious condition within CONUS, and the NOK is already aware of the prognosis).

When a death occurs within CONUS, it is the responsibility of the member’s CO to make sure that personal notification is made. Outside CONUS, individual commands shall follow standard procedures when reporting a casualty. Navy Personnel Command (NAVPERSCOM) duty watch personnel are available 24 hours a day to receive message traffic, phone calls, and email traffic from OCONUS commands when a death occurs. NAVPERSCOM will forward the personnel casualty report to the designated CACP regional headquarters, where CACOs will proceed with notification assignment, and support. CACOs are assigned for a period of 90 days to 9 months depending on the needs of the families.

**CONFIRMATION OF THE CASUALTY**

In all cases, notification shall be made in person. Due to modern technology, casualty reports are forwarded through the region headquarters locations. An initial notification is made by the CACO who schedules a follow-up notification to take place within 24 hours. The purpose of the follow-up notification is to complete the paperwork associated with a death.

**CONDOLENCE LETTER**

COs are required to write a letter to the appropriate NOK within 48 hours of a casualty. The letter, in addition to expressions of condolence, should contain appropriate details of how the casualty died unless the cause is under investigation (i.e. suicide). No details should be included that are likely to distress the NOK. A copy of the letter is sent to NAVPERSCOM and Office of the Judge Advocate General (OJAG) Investigations Division. Example formats for condolence letters can be found in the Decedent Affairs Manual.

**AUTOPSY**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:**

Identify which circumstances require an autopsy to be performed.

An autopsy will be performed on the remains of active duty or active duty for training personnel. It will be performed if the death is considered accidental, intentional, suicide, homicide, or absent care of a physician. Individuals that are involved in motorcycle accidents, automobile accidents, or under the care of a physician, autopsies are at the discretion of the local medical examiner; it is not a requirement. An autopsy may be requested when the CO deems it necessary. The CO’s request may be self-initiated or based upon the recommendation of an investigating officer, other fact-finding body, or a medical officer.
An autopsy may be necessary to determine the true cause of death, to get information for completing military records, or to protect the welfare of the military community.

AIRCREW AUTOPSY

The Manual of the Medical Department (MANMED), NAVMED P-117, states that when an aircrew member dies while serving as an aircrew member on a military aircraft, the medical officer will recommend to the CO that an autopsy be performed to determine the cause of death. The cause of death in these cases is interpreted to mean any correlation between pathological evidence and the accident cause factor.

REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR AUTOPSY

When an autopsy is desired but not mandatory, the following sentence will be incorporated in the casualty notification message that requests disposition instructions from the PADD:

"In the interest of medical science and to confirm medical diagnosis, it is requested that your telegram include whether or not permission is granted to accomplish mortem examination."

NONMILITARY AND RETIRED PERSONNEL AUTOPSY

When an autopsy is deemed necessary for retired personnel or non-military persons who die at a naval treatment facility or on a Navy installation, written authorization from the NOK must be obtained before performing the autopsy. The request for permission to perform an autopsy should be incorporated into the casualty notification message as noted above.

PRIVATE AUTOPSY

If the federal government or local jurisdiction has determined that an autopsy is not necessary, the PADD may elect a private autopsy. Families must be made aware that they are financially responsible for the movement of the remains and the pathologist’s autopsy fees. A private autopsy costs thousands of dollars. Families can seek professional assistance through the CACO prior to pursuing a private autopsy.

SEARCH, RECOVERY, AND IDENTIFICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify procedures used to search, recover, and identify remains.

The search, recovery, and identification of remains shall be accomplished as soon as possible and must be coordinated with an administrative fact-finding body. The need for these operations results from acts of violence, such as an aircraft accident, fire, explosion, or natural disaster. The JAGINST 5800.7 series, Manual of the Judge Advocate General (JAGMAN), requires the convening of an administrative fact-finding body when incidents of this nature occur. This responsibility is usually delegated to a naval activity with necessary capabilities at or near the scene of disaster. In establishing identification of remains, search and recovery operations are part of the fact-finding functions with technical assistance furnished by appropriate medical authorities.

SEARCH AND RECOVERY

Every effort should be made to recover all remains. Disasters such as aircraft accidents, fires, and explosions that result in the death of naval members and members of other services must be reported to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) and Navy Mortuary Affairs by priority message.
This assures immediate interdepartmental cooperation and the early dispatch of necessary supplies, equipment, medical and dental records, and technical personnel. The priority message should include the following information:

- Name, grade or rate, and social security number of all personnel believed dead or missing
- Names of those personnel already identified and method of identification
- Names of those personnel tentatively already positively identified, and whether remains are anatomically intact
- Type and quantity of mortuary supplies, transfer cases, chemicals, and other equipment required
- Whether technical help is desired

Do not release information to the NOK, family, or news media unless specific instructions are received fromBUMED and the Navy Casualty Office to do so.

When search, recovery, and identification operations continue for more than 36 hours, chronological progress reports should be dispatched every 24 hours to BUMED and Navy Casualty Office, with the appropriate information addressed directed by OPNAVINST 5360.1 series.

IDENTIFICATION

When the CO is satisfied that identification has been established beyond doubt and documented accordingly, the remains may be considered identified. A minimum of two statements of recognition, substantiated by dental and/or fingerprint comparison of intact remains will substantiate identification requirements.

Navy Mortuary Affairs will establish final conclusions and take action required for final disposition of these remains if shipped from outside CONUS to CONUS.

Disposition of unidentified remains will be directed by Navy Mortuary Affairs for Navy personnel or CMC for Marine Corps personnel. After thorough study of all evidence, final conclusions made by Navy Mortuary Affairs will result in one of the following determinations:

- Identification of the remains
- Unidentified, but believed to be a specific individual
- Unidentified, unknown
- Group remains, known individuals
- Group remains, unknown individuals

When an autopsy of remains is required or requested, the identification specialist should schedule the autopsy to be performed during the identification process or immediately following. This will preclude any delays in releasing the body for burial and make sure that methods of identification are included in the autopsy report.

Personal effects found on or with remains, after having served all identification purposes, will be disposed of in accordance with current instructions contained in the Naval Supply Manual, NAVSUP P-485, or the MARCORCASPROCMAN, MCO P3040.4.

IDENTIFICATION PROBLEMS

Currently, all active duty service members have DNA samples on file with the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, Gaithersburg, Maryland. When a service member passes away and is not easily identifiable, there are numerous avenues utilized to determine positive identification. This includes fingerprint analysis, forensic odontology review of complete or partial dental remains, and DNA. Except for those portions of remains that have been positively identified, the Armed Forces Medical Examiner and or state agencies will pursue DNA identification methods. This style of identification is costly and not always available.
For those cases that are pending identification, the personnel casualty report status shall categorize the service member as Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN). With advances in science and technology, active duty service members that are killed in theater are identified in short periods of time. There will be exceptions to this case.

Families will be provided the opportunity to receive partially identified remains, primarily for funeral purposes. Families that grieve need something they can see, feel, and touch. This is a healthy part of the funeral process and basic concepts of death and dying. Remains identified at a later date (days/weeks/months) will be delicately processed with services coordinated through the CACO as directed by the family. The CACO will be contacted by the Navy Casualty Office, Navy Mortuary Affairs for the coordination and return of the partial remains. All elections (choices) will be determined by the PADD.

The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) and or local medical examiners may be requested to provide an identification specialist to make a complete review to ensure that all possible techniques, methods, and procedures have been used to provide a positive identification.

PROCURING MORTUARY SERVICES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify mortuary services procurement methods and recognize both primary and secondary burial expenses.

Mortuary services for the remains of individuals eligible for Decedent Affairs Program benefits outside CONUS are specified in local instructions. Mortuary services within CONUS are provided by naval activities through annual contracts, individual purchase orders, or by private arrangements.

ANNUAL CONTRACTS

Annual contracts are awarded to funeral directors serving the local area of activities anticipating three or more deaths per year.

ONE-TIME CONTRACTS

One-time contracts (individual purchase orders) are created through Navy Casualty Office, Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) to a funeral home when an annual contract is not in effect.

PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS

Private arrangements are made by the PADD. The PADD should be advised of services, supplies, and reimbursement funding available through Navy Mortuary Affairs or the local Naval Hospital Decedent Affairs Office. Private arrangements are coordinated between the PADD, CACO, Navy Mortuary Affairs, and the funeral home. When choosing this option the Statement of Disposition, CJMAB 5360/1, is thoroughly briefed by the CACO to the PADD. Selection of Option 5A or 5B authorizes the release of funds to reimburse funeral providers engaged in the responsibility of removing, preparing, embalming, dressing, casketing, and preparing for the funeral. Financial limits are updated biannually, where the services set the allowances. All mortuary billing questions shall be forwarded to Navy Casualty Office, Navy Mortuary Affairs.

AUTHORIZED SERVICES

Annual contracts and one-time contracts cover primary funeral expenses but do not include secondary expenses. NOK should be tactfully encouraged to allow the Navy to make all primary-care arrangements, since greater benefits can be furnished. For more information concerning procedures and authorized items, consult OPNAVINST 5360.1 series.
Primary Expenses

Primary expenses are expenses incurred in connection with the recovery, preparation, encasement, and burial of the remains. Primary expenses include:

- Embalming
- Autopsy preparation
- Dressing
- Casketing
- Cosmetics
- Hair styling
- Cremation
- Uniform

Secondary Expenses

Secondary expenses are expenses incurred in connection with the funeral and burial of remains. Secondary expenses include:

- Primary services of funeral director and staff
- Funeral service, visitation, graveside service
- Limousine
- Single grave plot
- Vault
- Honorarium
- Opening and closing the grave
- Flowers
- Obituary notices
- Memory folders
- Prayer cards
- Cemetery equipment, tent and chairs
- Soloist
- Organist

Transportation Expenses

Transportation expenses are expenses incurred when an active duty member, eligible retiree, or eligible dependent are moved. Transportation expenses include:

- Recovery of remains from crime scene/accident scene
- Removal from home, hospital or medical examiner’s office
- Delivery of the remains to a common-carrier terminal
- Delivery to mortuary, local cemetery, or crematorium
- Transportation of authorized retirees, and dependent remains of those that pass away in a Military Treatment Facility, or authorized civilian facilities:
  - Includes from place of death to funeral home
  - To church or offsite location
  - Air fare from shipping mortuary
  - Delivery of remains to airport
  - Air tray for casket
  - Receiving funeral home pick up from airport
  - Delivery of remains to cemetery
PREPARATION AND PROCESSING REMAINS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:
Identify procedures for preparing and processing remains.

It is imperative that preservative treatment be initiated as soon as possible after death. The naval authority with decedent affairs responsibility should maintain close coordination with appropriate military or civilian authorities to ensure the prompt release and delivery of remains to the mortuary facility. Remains must be prepared under approved high standards of the mortuary profession and returned to the final destination in their most normal and life-like appearance.

INITIAL PREPARATION

Remains may be refrigerated for short periods pending arrival of a transportation vessel or arrival of the government embalmer. To minimize cellular deterioration, remains should be refrigerated above the freezing point at 36°F to 40°F (2.2°C to 4.4°C).

OVERSEAS FACILITIES

Government mortuary facilities are located in various overseas areas and have the responsibility to furnish mortuary services for all eligible categories of military and civilian personnel. The geographical areas of responsibility are outlined in the CINCPACINST 5360.1 series, Geographic Responsibilities for Mortuary Operations. Also consult OPNAVINST 5360.1 series for locations of overseas mortuaries.

When death occurs in overseas areas not served by one of the designated facilities listed, request assistance from the senior naval command. In some areas, Department of State sources may have the capability to render advice or assistance. The senior naval command may also be able to arrange airlift of remains from the place of death to a point where a government mortuary or a commercial facility is available or arrange for emergency dispatch of a qualified embalmer from an overseas government mortuary to the place of death.

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH (OVERSEAS)

When remains are transferred from an overseas activity to a CONUS point of entry, three signed copies of DD Form 2064, Certificate of Death (Overseas), must accompany the remains. Failure to include the DD Form 2064 may cause delays in providing further transfer within CONUS. Additionally, at least two DD Form 565, Statement of Recognition, should be included.

BURIAL CLOTHING

The service dress blue uniform or (if this uniform is not available for deceased personnel) the appropriate service dress uniform, with authorized insignia, devices, badges, decorations, underwear, and hose are the only approved items for burial, unless other items are specifically requested by the PADD. Shoes and headgear are not authorized and thus unfunded. It is recommended to obtain these items from the deceased’s personal effects. If unavailable, contact Navy Mortuary Affairs to obtain through Uniform Support Services, Navy Exchange, Navy Retail Clothing Store, or Marine Corps Exchange. When suitable items are not available for personnel who die outside the 48 contiguous United States, the U.S. port of entry should be contacted and given estimated uniform sizes, as soon as possible, so burial clothing can be obtained.

When requested by the PADD, remains may be attired in a white uniform or civilian clothing consisting of appropriate outer clothing, underwear, hose, and, if specifically requested, shoes. Items of clothing in the individual’s possession at the time of death may be used if available and in satisfactory condition.
PLACEMENT OF REMAINS IN CASKET OR TRANSFER CASE

Normally, remains are placed in a specified casket or transfer case in a manner that will create an appearance of rest and composure. Precautions should be taken to ensure maintenance of position during transit. The remains will be returned in a transfer case and will be wrapped in a white cotton sheet plus a second wrapping in a polyethylene cover. They will be sealed with pressure-sensitive tape or heat sealed.

CASKETS

There are two sizes of caskets. Each is an 18-gauge silver tone metal sealer with a cut top. The standard size casket has internal dimensions of 23 x 78 inches (58.4 cm x 1.98 m), while the oversize casket has internal dimensions of 25 x 81 inches (63.5 cm x 2.06 m).

INSPECTION OF REMAINS

After preparation of remains but prior to shipment, all remains should be inspected in accordance with OPNAVINST 5360.1 series. The Decedent Affairs Officer (DAO) or designated official is responsible for coordinating transportation arrangements for the remains with the local Navy Personnel Transportation Office (NAVPTO) or SATO travel office. Navy Mortuary Affairs must be kept apprised of transportation details so that the appropriate line of accounting is made available. Personnel should be available at all times, including Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, to perform inspections and arrange travel. Before acceptance, the inspector must make sure that all services and supplies meet current specifications.

CREMATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify guidelines for requesting cremation of remains.

When requested in writing, cremation can be authorized. It is subject to compliance with civil regulations. No overt action by naval authorities should be made to encourage the NOK to elect cremation. Cremation will not be permitted if any member of the deceased’s PADD or SNOK objects.

AT-SEA DISPOSITION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify burial at sea procedures.

Commanding Officers who receive requests for at-sea disposition of remains or cremains (cremated remains) will forward the request to the appropriate fleet commander-in-chief (CINC) and requested port of embarkation. Fleet CINCs are authorized to designate activities to accept remains or cremains on a "not-to-interfere basis." The port of embarkation will coordinate the arrangements. Upon receipt of authorization, the date of committal or dispersion will be determined by the availability of resources. Except under unusual circumstances, civilian personnel are not authorized to attend services aboard naval ships at sea or aboard naval aircraft. Exceptions that cannot be resolved at the delegated authority level will be referred to the CNO for final determination.

PUTREFIED REMAINS

When the mortician is unable to arrest the odor of the remains, they will not be accepted for burial at sea. The odor generated for such remains will detract from the dignity of the ceremony and will have a detrimental effect on the crew of the vessel. Cremated putrefied remains may be accepted.
CEREMONY RECORDS

Civilians are not normally allowed to attend ceremonies aboard naval ships or aircrafts. Photographs and or video of the ceremony will be taken. A letter describing the ceremony, photographs and or video will be sent at the command’s discretion to the NOK.

CONSIGNMENT AND TRANSPORTATION OF REMAINS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify consignment policies and authorized methods of transportation of remains.

Activities that arrange transportation for remains have the responsibility to provide expeditious transportation and a confirmed schedule as soon as possible by whatever methods meet the requirements. Consideration should be given to any special desires of the NOK including releasing the remains for transportation that they may wish to provide.

CONSIGNMENT

Remains may only be consigned (turned over) to a funeral director, the director or superintendent of a national cemetery, or the consignee (receiver) designated by the Navy Mortuary Affairs for unclaimed remains. In addition to the above consignees, cremains may be consigned to the PADD or person designated by the PADD.

AUTHORIZED METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Authorized methods of transportation within the United States include government air, commercial air, chartered air taxi, and funeral coach.

Government Air

Government air is not authorized within CONUS without approval of the CNO (OP-414). If the circumstances indicate government air, Navy Mortuary Affairs should be contacted for guidance and assistance.

Commercial Air

Commercial air may be supplemented by either rail or funeral coach transportation. An escort must travel with the remains. If delays en route or changes in schedule occur, the escort must notify the installation arranging the transportation and the consignee.

Chartered Air Taxi

Chartered air taxi service may be authorized when commercial air is not available to the destination and the use of a funeral vehicle or rail would cause undue delay.

Funeral Coach

The funeral coach method of transportation may be used under any of the following circumstances:

- To transfer remains from the place of preparation to another local funeral home, to a local cemetery, or to a common-carrier terminal
- When common-carrier service is not available
- When a common-carrier is available only part of the way to the place designated by the PADD
  - Funeral coach service may be used for the remaining portion of the transportation authorized
  - When the cost is not in excess of the common-carrier cost
- When the cemetery cannot provide transportation from the terminal to the cemetery, a funeral coach may be used as a continuation of common-carrier service when remains are consigned directly to a national cemetery, a Navy cemetery, or a Navy plot.

- To transfer remains from the common-carrier terminal at destination to the funeral establishment and to deliver remains to the local cemetery or crematory.

- When requested by the NOK, and the family member defrays costs in excess of the method that would have been used by the government.

- When the use of a common-carrier service will involve extended layover and this method will expedite the arrival.

**TRANSPORTATION OF CREMATED REMAINS**

Cremated remains (cremains) of active duty personnel will be handled by an escort, and transported using commercial air, rail, a funeral director’s vehicle, or other appropriate vehicle. When an escort is not authorized, cremains may be transported by registered mail (preferred method), air, or surface transportation to the PADD or to a specified individual designated by the PADD.

**TRANSPORTATION OF REMAINS OF CONTAGIOUS OR COMMUNICABLE DISEASE VICTIMS**

When death is the result of a contagious or communicable disease, remains, after embalming, must be placed immediately in a transfer case or casket. The transfer case or casket must be closed immediately and a gummed 2” x 4” label marked “CONTAGIOUS” will be affixed to the outside of the receptacle at the head end. Information concerning diseases considered contagious may be obtained from local or state health officials.

When the remains carry communicable or contagious disease, make sure that the consignment message specifically states that death was due to a contagious or communicable disease.

**AUTHORIZED TRANSPORTATION TO OR FROM CONUS**

Remains of eligible decedents who die outside the 48 contiguous United States will be transported by the most expeditious U.S. government means; normally, government air (Air Mobility Command (AMC) flights) are used. If such transportation is not available, impractical, or would cause undue delay, commercial air may be authorized by Navy Casualty.

**OUTSIDE CONUS DESTINATIONS**

When persons eligible for decedent affairs benefits are consigned to a destination outside the 48 contiguous United States, the activity responsible for preparation and transportation will contact the nearest consul of the country concerned to ascertain the requirements for entry and assure that all requirements are met before arranging transportation of the remains. Failure to do so could lead to serious delays. Ten certified copies of the civilian certificate of death should accompany the remains.

**ESCORTS**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

*Identify criteria for escort selection.*

*Identify escort duties and responsibilities*

Escorts are provided to accompany remains to ensure prompt, safe delivery; to show respect to the decedent; and as an indication of the Navy’s desire to help the NOK. Only one escort is authorized. More than one may be assigned; however, two escorts may not serve at the same time.
Problems concerning arrangements for a Navy escort that cannot be resolved by the responsible command should be referred to Navy Mortuary Affairs or the area command OCONUS. Problems concerning Marine Corps members should be referred to CMC.

INSIDE CONUS ESCORTS/ OUTSIDE CONUS ESCORTS

Within CONUS, escorts are detailed to accompany the remains or cremains of each Navy and Marine Corps decedent to the final destination. Furnishing escorts is the responsibility of the activity arranging transportation of the remains or cremains. When selecting an escort for the deceased, the activity arranging transportation is encouraged to consult the last duty station of the deceased.

When remains are consigned to a place OCONUS where Armed Forces representatives or other government officials are not available to assist in transportation arrangements, military escorts will be provided.

Unless a special escort is requested by the PADD and approved by Navy Mortuary Affairs, remains transported by AMC aircraft from a point OCONUS to a CONUS port of entry will not be accompanied by an escort; the aircraft commander will act as the escort during the time of transport. The escort detailed by the military activity responsible for transportation arrangements will join the remains at the CONUS port of entry.

SELECTION OF ESCORTS

Any Navy or Marine Corps member on active duty may serve as an escort. Navy and Marine Corps members who volunteer may be accepted if they meet the criteria for selection. Unless a special escort is requested by the NOK, the escort selected should be of the same branch of service, status, and pay grade of the deceased. It is recommended that the escort should be a friend of the deceased, from the same unit, same geographical region, and preferably of the same religion.

SPECIAL ESCORTS

A special escort is defined as a person requested specifically by the PADD or by his representative, or a person assigned by an appropriate command because unusual circumstances prevail and such assignment is considered in the best interest of the naval service. All requests for special escorts must be referred to Navy Mortuary Affairs.

If desired by the PADD, a civilian or member of another service may be assigned as a special escort. An escort in retired or inactive status should be treated as a civilian. All military special escorts are assigned subject to availability as determined by their CO and, unless closely related to the deceased, generally are not authorized OCONUS.

DUTIES OF THE ESCORT

A naval escort is a representative of the Navy who will be required to perform services of a very special and personal nature. It is very important that these duties are thoroughly explained to the escort. Providing instructions to the escort is the responsibility of the command arranging for transportation of the remains. The Manual for Escorts of Deceased Naval Personnel, NAVPERS 15555 series, will assist in this function. For additional information, you should consult OPNAVINST 5360.1 series.
DISPOSITION OF PERSONAL EFFECTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Explain disposition of personal effects policies.

All personal effects of the deceased are to be collected and inventoried, except where the member occupied government or public housing and the spouse requires no assistance. In the event the spouse dies simultaneously with the service member, the CO cooperates with surviving relatives of the deceased and civil authorities by providing protection for the property of the deceased.

The CO appoints an inventory board consisting of two members, of which one member is normally a Commissioned Officer. The inventory should be recorded on an Inventory of Personal Effects Form, NAVSUP Form 29. An original and four copies will be prepared and signed by the board members. The board will send all five copies with the personal effects to the Supply Officer for completion, disposition, and signature. The Supply Officer returns three signed copies. The inventory board sends one copy to NAVPERSCOM, files one in the service record of the deceased, and sends one to the officer who appointed the board.

CIVIL CERTIFICATES OF DEATH

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify when civil certificates are required and where they should be distributed.

A civil certificate of death must be obtained if a death occurs within one of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia. If a death occurs outside these areas, with the exception of Guam, a Certificate of Death (Overseas), DD 2064, should be prepared. This certificate is in addition to the civil certificate of death; however, the civil certificate of death is not required in all overseas areas.

Civil authorities should be consulted to determine local requirements. When a death occurs at a naval activity in any state, territory, or insular possession of the United States, the CO will report the death to civil authorities (usually the coroner or medical examiner). It is a general practice for medical officers to complete a civil certificate of death for all deaths occurring in naval medical treatment facilities.

The medical officer or Medical Department Representative (MDR) of the ship or station where the deceased was attached will obtain the certificate from the civil authorities. If requested by the authorities, the civil certificate of death may be prepared and signed by a naval officer. If problems arise in getting a certificate, request assistance from Navy Mortuary Affairs. If death occurs abroad and no naval activity is available, the nearest consulate officer should be requested to get a certificate. The medical officer or MDR will prepare and forward a DD 2064 with the civil certificate of death, supporting papers, and the closed health record.

In general (except where the state has retained concurrent jurisdiction with the United States), civil authorities have no jurisdiction over deaths occurring on naval reservations. A transit or burial permit must be obtained from civil authorities to remove the remains from a naval reservation either for shipment or burial. If death of any person for whom the Department of the Navy is responsible occurs outside the limits of a naval reservation, the remains normally will not be moved until permission has been received from civil authorities.

DISTRIBUTION OF DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR DEATHS OCCURRING IN CONUS

When a Navy or Marine Corps death occurs in one of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia, follow local civil requirements.
DISTRIBUTION OF DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR DEATHS OCCURRING OUTSIDE CONUS

When a Navy or Marine Corps death occurs outside the 50 United States or the District of Columbia, follow the local civil requirements. In addition, a DD 2064 is prepared and copies are distributed as outlined in current instructions and local policies.

DEATH CERTIFICATES FOR SHIPMENT OF REMAINS

When death occurs OCONUS, three signed copies of DD 2064 will accompany the remains to CONUS. When death occurs within CONUS, three certified copies of the civil certificate of death will accompany the remains from CONUS to OCONUS, in addition to all other forms required by OPNAVINST 5360.1 series.

NOTE:
A certificate of death should not be prepared for persons listed as missing.

PAYMENTS AND COLLECTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify funeral payment and collection procedures.

Authorized Decedent Affairs Program expenses are chargeable to the special open allotment held by BUMED. These items include primary, transportation, and secondary expenses. In circumstances involving reimbursable transactions, costs may also be initially charged to the open allotment subject to reimbursement. The allotment may be charged by any Navy or Marine Corps activity assigned procurement or payment responsibility. Army and Air Force activities may charge the allotment when arranging for authorized supplies and services at the request of a naval activity.

PRIMARY EXPENSES

If the NOK makes arrangements for disposition of remains, rather than using services of DoD, or completes funeral arrangements before DoD services are offered, the NOK will be reimbursed at the current biannually updated amount approved. Consult the latest OPNAVINST 5360.1 series and or Navy Mortuary Affairs for the authorized allowances.

When an Armed Forces contract or mortuary is available (and services were offered to the NOK) but not used, an amount not to exceed what procurement would have cost the Navy is allowed. This includes costs the Navy would have incurred over and above contract expenses.

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

If the NOK arranges for transportation of remains, reimbursement may be made in an amount not to exceed what transportation would have cost the government. If the Navy has arranged for transportation and the final destination cannot be reached by common-carrier, reasonable costs may be allowed for supplemental transportation by funeral coach or other vehicle.

SECONDARY (INTERMENT) EXPENSES

Secondary expenses will be provided to the NOK whether the remains or cremains are interred in a private cemetery, a national or federal government cemetery, or in a burial at sea.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR NONRECOVERABLE REMAINS

When remains of eligible military personnel, whose determination of death has been made but the remains are non-recoverable, reimbursement to the PADD (or designee) may be made for memorial service expenditures.
A claim for reimbursement may be allowed if presented within the approved time frame after notification of the NOK of the date of death. The PADD must submit receipted invoices or a certified claim to Navy Mortuary Affairs.

**HEADSTONES AND MARKERS**

Personnel serving on active duty at the time of their death are eligible for a headstone or marker provided by the Veterans' Administration (VA). At a national cemetery, the director or superintendent will make the arrangements. In naval plots and cemeteries, the Navy will make the arrangements. In other cemeteries, an application should be submitted to the VA. If a commercial headstone or marker is procured, a limited reimbursement is authorized. A memorial marker may be provided upon request to commemorate the death of a member whose remains were not recovered or were buried at sea.

**REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:**

Identify procedures for reimbursement of funeral costs.

When the Navy has arranged for primary services and transportation, a claim for payment of the supplemental transportation charges may be submitted to Navy Mortuary Affairs by the funeral director at the final destination. DD Form 1375, *Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses*, should be given to the PADD (or PADD’s designee) to claim reimbursement or payment for primary expenses, transportation, and secondary expenses.

**GOVERNMENT SERVICES NOT UTILIZED WITHIN CONUS**

Claims relating to primary expenses and transportation costs to a common-carrier terminal for transportation to the final destination will be forwarded to Navy Mortuary Affairs.

Claims relating to interment (secondary) allowances and supplemental transportation costs will be forwarded to Navy Mortuary Affairs.

**GOVERNMENT SERVICES NOT UTILIZED OCONUS**

Area commanders outside CONUS are authorized to make local payment of expenses incurred in areas under their jurisdiction.

Claims in areas outside the jurisdiction of the activities (area commanders) should be submitted to BUMED for resolution.

**GOVERNMENT SERVICES UTILIZED**

When the Navy has arranged for primary services and transportation, submit claims for payment and reimbursement of interment costs or supplemental transportation expenses to Navy Mortuary Affairs.

**REPORTING EXPENSES**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:**

Identify reporting procedures for funeral expenses.

Activities incurring expenses in connection with disposition of remains of Navy and Marine Corps personnel do not report these expenses to BUMED except when indicated on the DD Form 2062, *Record of Preparation and Disposition of Remains (Outside CONUS)*, and DD Form 2063, *Record of Preparation and Disposition of Remains (Within CONUS).*
When arranging for disposition of remains of other services' deceased personnel using commercial sources, the activity should forward a letter report, MED 5360-3, *Report of Disposition and Expenditures Remains of the Dead*, to the service obligated for reimbursement. Costs for which the activity's funds have been cited should be shown on the letter report.

**NATIONAL CEMETERIES**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:**

Identify services that are available at National Cemeteries.

Except for Arlington National Cemetery (which is under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army) and a few other exceptions noted in OPNAVINST 5360.1 series, national cemeteries are under the jurisdiction of the Chief Memorial Affairs Director, Department of Memorial Affairs, Veterans' Administration, Washington, DC.

**NATIONAL CEMETERY CLASSIFICATIONS**

There are three classifications of national cemeteries:

- **Open (Active):** Cemeteries with grave spaces available
- **Closed (Inactive):** Cemeteries without grave spaces available
- **New (Inactive):** Cemeteries planned but not yet opened

**ELIGIBILITY FOR INTERMENT**

Remains of the following naval and former naval members may be buried in any open national cemetery except at the National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia (which has separate criteria for acceptance):

- Navy or Marine Corps member who was serving on active duty at time of death (other than active duty for training)
- Any member of a Navy or Marine Corps Reserve organization whose death occurred under honorable conditions while the individual was in one of the three categories:
  - On active duty for training (including authorized travel to and from active duty training)
  - On inactive duty training (including authorized travel to and from such training)
  - Hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the government for injury or disease incurred or contracted during the period covered by 1 and 2 above
- Former Navy or Marine Corps members who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable
- Members of the Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps whose death occurred under honorable conditions while they were in one of the following situations:
  - Attending an authorized training camp or authorized training cruise
  - Performing authorized travel to and from that camp or cruise
  - Hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the government of the United States for injury or disease incurred or contracted during the period covered by 1 and 2 above
- Surviving spouse and minor children of individuals covered above
At the discretion of the Chief Memorial Affairs Director, unmarried adult children of eligible individuals may be buried in any open national cemetery (except Arlington) if they were totally disabled either physically or mentally before attaining the age of 21. The Chief Memorial Affairs Director may also authorize the burial of unremarried widows or widowers; eligible deceased members whose remains were either lost at sea or buried at sea not at their own volition; or who were officially determined missing or missing in action and subsequently administratively declared dead.

HONORS

Military honors for interment in national cemeteries are the responsibility of the member’s service. Honors for services at Arlington National Cemetery are coordinated by the superintendent of the cemetery with BUPERS or the CMC.

VAULTS

A metal, asphalt, or concrete vault may be procured at the NGK’s expense if it is preferred. If a vault is privately procured, the superintendent or director must be notified of the outside dimensions to ensure the proper preparation of the grave. The contractor furnishing the vault must also provide necessary equipment and personnel for placing the vault in the grave before the funeral service and for placement of the vault lid after the service.

VIEWING REMAINS

National cemeteries no longer have facilities for viewing remains. If the NOK desires a viewing before interment, the remains must be consigned to a local funeral director.

SCHEDULING

Unless extraordinary circumstances exist with respect to the condition of remains, interment in national cemeteries will not be made on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays.

NAVAL PLOTS AND CEMETERIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify the policy for interment at a Naval Cemetery.

With two exceptions, Navy Mortuary Affairs exercises technical direction of naval plots and cemeteries. Presently, there are only a few active naval cemeteries, so plot availability is extremely limited. For this reason, decedents who are eligible for interment in national cemeteries will not normally be authorized interment in a naval plot or cemetery. However, exceptional or unusual circumstances will be referred to BUMED for determination.

GROUP INTERMENTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify guidelines for group interments.

When remains of two or more individuals killed in the same incident cannot be individually identified, a priority message detailing the circumstances should be sent to Navy Mortuary Affairs who will determine if there is a need for an identification specialist to be sent. If remains cannot be individually identified, the collective remains will be interred as a group interment. Group interments should be made in a national cemetery, within the 50 United States, as close to the midpoint of the two most widely separated homes of record of known deceased individuals involved, or as otherwise directed by the program managers. Navy Mortuary Affairs will coordinate with the other services as required.
Procedures followed in group interments are:

1. Unidentified remains should be prepared, wrapped, and placed into the minimum number of caskets possible without overcrowding. Partially segregated but identifiable remains should be wrapped separately.

2. One or more escorts should be provided as long as the number of escorts does not exceed the number of deceased persons.

3. The PADD and two blood relatives of each deceased member in a group interment are authorized round-trip transportation to the place of interment at Government expense.

4. The graveside ceremony should be conducted with full military honors and be in accordance with the religious preference applicable to all denominations represented within the group. Photographs should be provided to the PADD, if desired.

5. The headstone or headstones should be inscribed with the names of all unknown deceased personnel.

SUMMARY

The Decedent Affairs Program consists of the search, recovery, identification, care, and disposition of remains of deceased personnel for whom the Department of the Navy is responsible. Large medical treatment facilities normally manage decedent affairs matters. However, when a death occurs at small independent operational units, senior HMs will be responsible for the proper management of this program. For further guidance refer to OPNAV 5360.1 series, Decedent Affairs Manual or contact the N135C, Navy Mortuary Affairs, Millington, TN.