

FACT SHEET: SECRETARY HAGEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON PERSONNEL ACCOUNTING MISSION REORGANIZATION

On February 20, 2014 Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel directed the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Michael Lumpkin, to provide him with recommendations on how to reorganize the Joint Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Command (JPAC) and Defense Prisoners of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) so that DoD could more effectively account for our missing personnel and ensure their families receive timely and accurate information.

Based on his recommendations, and those of past reviews, Secretary Hagel announced on March 31, 2014, the actions he has directed the Department to undertake to reorganize the mission of accounting for our personnel from previous wars into a single, accountable organization that has complete oversight of personnel accounting resources, research, and operations.

Actions to Reorganize DoD's Accounting Mission

1. DoD will establish a new Defense Agency that combines the Defense Prisoners of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), JPAC, and select functions of the U.S. Air Forces' Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory. This agency will be led by a presidentially appointed official with a General officer deputy, and will be overseen by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. All communications with family members of the missing from past conflicts will be managed and organized by this new agency. DoD will provide proposed changes to existing legislation needed to support this decision for consideration in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act.
2. To streamline the identification process, an Armed Forces Medical Examiner working for the new agency will be the single DoD identification authority for past conflict identifications. They will oversee the scientific operations of the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, the satellite laboratory in Omaha, Nebraska, and the Life Science Equipment Laboratory in Dayton, Ohio.
3. DoD will work with Congress to realign its appropriations for this mission into a single budget line, allowing for greater execution flexibility in the accounting mission with the ability to align resources to respond more effectively.
4. To improve the search, recovery, and identification process, the Department will implement a centralized database and case management system containing all missing service members' information.
5. Secretary Hagel has directed the Department to develop proposals for expanding public-private partnerships in identifying our missing. The goal is to leverage the capabilities and efforts of organizations outside of government that responsibly work to account for our missing.

Implementation of these steps will help improve the accounting mission, increase the number of identifications of our missing, provide greater transparency for their families, and expand our case file system to include all missing personnel. DoD will continue to do everything possible to account for and bring home our missing and fallen service personnel.