



**JOINT MORTUARY AFFAIRS CENTER  
COMMAND & STAFF GUIDE**

## **PREFACE**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1. Unit Duties and Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Staff responsibilities.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Pre-Deployment Information and Training .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Mortuary Affairs Operations in a Theater .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. I've lost a Soldier. What do I do? .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. Fragmented Remains Recovery.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7. Handling Non-US Remains .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8. MA Related Stress .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>9. Summary.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>11</b>

## Unit Duties and Responsibilities

- a. Commanders at all levels have the responsibility to care for deceased personnel within their AO. The immediate responsibility includes:
  - 1) Recovery and evacuation of human remains (HR) to the nearest MACP.
  - 2) Timely and accurate submissions of the DA form 1156 *Casualty Feeder Card*.
  - 3) Safeguard any personal effects (PE) in the unit area until appointment of a Summary Courts Martial Officer (SCMO).
- b. Often the MA mission is not thought about until it is too late. Commanders must ensure that adequate planning, training and support is in place to prevent an MA mission failure. Several vital military and political objectives hinge upon the success of the MA mission. A failure within the MA mission or disrespectful handling of remains can have a negative impact on one of the following key areas:
  - Troop morale within the losing unit.
  - National public support.
  - Coalition support.
  - Local national support.
  - Enemy treatment of remains and/or prisoners.
- c. Soldiers will respond to any situation according to the training they receive. Commanders need to ensure training is conducted in the area of Mortuary Affairs. The following individual and collective tasks should be added to the unit training plan.
  - 1) All personnel should be trained in the basic Mortuary Affairs tasks included in STP 21-1 SMCT Warrior Skills Level 1.
    - 101-515-1999 Recover Isolated Remains
    - 101-515-1998 Evacuate Isolated Remains
  - 2) BSB MA NCOs are responsible for the identifying and training a unit recovery team. This team will assist supported units when recovery and evacuation is beyond their operational capability. Refer to Ch 5, FM 4-20.64 for training guidance. This training is conducted at least semiannually.
- d. Health and Sanitation
  - 1) One of the intrinsic dangers of MA recovery is the sustained contact with human remains. Proper personal health and sanitation practices are vitally important as handling remains in various stages of decomposition can result in both medical and biological hazards. The necessary handling of remains during recovery operations may cause organisms to spread to those physically handling the remains.
  - 2) To prevent the spread of infection, personnel handling remains should adhere to the following health and sanitation guidelines:
    - Always wear disposable surgical gloves when handling remains. Discard the gloves after each use.
    - Wear a protective oral-nasal mask designed to protect inhalation of infectious organisms.
    - Scrub hands, forearms, and any other body portion that came into contact with the remains or the bodily fluids of the remains. Use a medicated or disinfectant soap.
    - Shower, cleansing the entire body, including the hair at the end of the duty day in which remains were handled.

- Dispose of all contaminated protective equipment in the proper manner. Dispose of items by either incinerating them or turning them over to the proper biological hazard collection facility.
  - Thoroughly disinfect all equipment that came into contact with the remains or fluids of the remains.
- 3) Additional guidelines for the protection of personnel handling remains can be found in USACHPPM TG 195.
- e. Contact with the family will occur following a death of a unit member. Always convey sympathy and condolence. Procedures for Condolence Letters and contact with the family are outlined in AR 600-8-1 para 2-14

## 2. Staff responsibilities

### a. S1/G1

- 1) The Adjutant will, upon receipt of a DA Form 1156, ensure accuracy and completeness of the casualty report and forward it to the appropriate level headquarters without delay or as the battlefield permits. IAW AR 600-8-1 the BN CDR of field grade designee will verify the accuracy and completeness of the DA form 1156 for a fatality or DUSTWUN before submission. It should be noted that information concerning deceased personnel is sensitive in nature; because of this, access to Casualty / Fatality reporting systems is highly regulated.
- 2) SCMO activities should be monitored by the S1/G1. SCMO are appointed on orders by the first O-6 in the chain of command for the deceased. SCMO activities and inventory timelines will vary based on location and operation; refer to Part II AR 638-2, Part II DA PAM 638-2 and the servicing Casualty Area Command (CAC) for specific guidance. Coordinate with the S4 for footlockers, padlocks and seals and the S3 for movement of the sealed containers.

### b. S3/SPO

- 1) A unit fatality collection point should be identified separate to a casualty collection point.
- 2) In most cases, after the losing unit contacts the S3, a Hero Flight request is submitted. However, operations and battle space distribution may make this difficult at times. In the event, air evacuation is not feasible an alternate evacuation plan must be developed. Determine who has the responsibility for coordinating evacuation of HR from the unit fatality collection point to the nearest MACP.
- 3) BN S-3s will request assistance through the BSB SPO when recovery is outside of unit capabilities. Example are air crashes, friendly fire and host nation incidents that may require Armed Forces Medical Examiner / Medicolegal Death investigation. In some instances it will be best to cover and guard the location until the arrival of forensic investigators.

### c. S4/G4

- 1) Maintain the following MA equipment stocks.
  - a) Human remains pouches (HRP) – stock HRP's at a quantity equal to 5% of the personnel strength.
  - b) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Latex gloves and surgical masks for recovery operations.
  - c) Footlockers (Gorilla / Tuff boxes), padlocks and railroad seals for SCMO inventories.

- 2) Develop an issue system to account for and track MA stocks. Some units have include HPPs and PPE as par of vehicle BII, others have created MA kits that are issued for convoy and patrol operations.

d. Rear Detachment

- 1) Secure and safeguard any PE that remains in the unit area until the appointment of a SCMO.
- 2) Seek guidance and maintain contact with the servicing CAC. Upon evacuation from the unit area, the CAC will provide the most current information concerning the evacuation of remains and PE.
- 3) The CAC will provide direct assistance to the family via the Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO). It is natural to want to assist the family during this trying time; however this is the role of the CAO. Promising the family something that is not authorized is very detrimental to the casualty process. The CAC will give you guidance on contacting the family and sending a Unit Representative to the funeral.

### 3. Pre-Deployment Information and Training

- 1) Coordinate with the CAC for information briefs to the unit on Casualty Operations. If a CAC representative is unavailable, deployment briefs may be found online at <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/DCS/TRAINING.ASP> .
- 2) As diverse as your soldiers are, so are the family structures represented in the command. Soldiers with unique family situations should be identified and counseled to seek guidance from the JAG office.
- 3) Train all leaders and soldiers in the command on the two following tasks.

#### **101-515-1999 Recover Isolated Remains**

**Conditions:** In a tactical situation given JP 4-06, DD Form 565 (*Statement of Recognition of Deceased*), DD Form 567 (*Record of Search and Recovery*), and DD Form 1074 (*Questionnaire of Local Inhabitants*), a recovery site, compass, paper, pen and pencil, global positioning system (GPS), shrouding material or human remains pouch, personal effects bag and/or zip lock bag, litter, a military map, and a vehicle.

**Standards:** Recover isolated remains according to JP 4-06.

#### **Performance Steps**

1. Prepare for movement to the recovery site.
  - a. Obtain a briefing from the team leader or noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC).
  - b. Perform preventative maintenance checks and services (PMCS) on vehicle(s) prior to movement.
  - c. Load the vehicle according to the load plan.
  - d. Perform a map reconnaissance of the route to the recovery site.
  - e. Determine the azimuth from your location to the recovery site.
  - f. Convert grid azimuth to a magnetic azimuth.
2. Move to the recovery site.
3. Search for and locate the human remains.
  - a. Search during daylight hours only.
  - b. Search with other team members
  - c. Question local inhabitants to gain information relevant to the loss using DD Form 1074 or a blank piece of paper.

- d. Search open areas at double-arm intervals and heavily vegetated areas at single-arm or close intervals.
- e. Mark the location of the human remains with a stake and cloth streamer.
- f. Search a 100-meter area in each direction around the human remains in an attempt to locate additional human remains.
- 4. Recover the human remains.
  - a. Check the human remains for booby-traps and unexploded ordnance.
  - b. Establish tentative identification of the remains by reviewing identification media found on the human remains.
  - c. Interview anyone in the area that can visually identify the human remains and record information on DD Form 565 or a blank piece of paper.
  - d. Place personal effects and identification media found on the human remains in a personal effects bag or sealed container and place the personal effects bag or sealed container securely on the remains.
  - e. Record the believed-to-be (BTB) name of the deceased and other pertinent information regarding the recovery site on DD Form 567 or a blank piece of paper.
  - f. Gather all portions of human remains, dental appliances, teeth, and loose articles. Place each item in a separate container and write a sequential "P" number for each portion or "E" number for each personal effect on the container.
  - g. Place the remains in a human remains pouch or shroud, such as a poncho, or other suitable material.
  - h. Place all portions of human remains and disassociated personal effects in the human remains pouch or shroud.
  - i. Unload all weapons and remove explosive ordnance from the human remains.  
**Note:** Weapons are to be returned to the unit armorer.  
**Note:** Record all serial numbers on DD Form 567 or annotate on a blank piece of paper.
  - j. Transport all equipment (except weapons) with the human remains.
  - k. Notify the team leader or NCOIC that the human remains are ready for evacuation.

#### **101-515-1998 Evacuate Isolated Remains**

**Conditions:** In a tactical situation given JP 4-06, transportation (vehicle or aircraft), tiedown straps, location of isolated remains to evacuate, a predetermined location to bring the remains, global positioning system (GPS), area map, human remains pouch, personal effects bag, litter, and any recovery documentation.

**Standards:** Evacuate isolated remains according to JP 4-06.

#### **Performance Steps**

1. Establish the assembly area.
  - a. Record the grid coordinates of the assembly area using a GPS, if available.
  - b. Secure the assembly area.
  - c. Move the human remains (feet first) to the assembly area to await transportation.
  - d. Contact higher headquarters for transportation assets to evacuate the remains.

**Note:** The request for transportation to evacuate the remains should contain the number of remains and the location of the recovery site. Any available covered transportation assets may be used to evacuate the remains. However, fixed or rotary-wing aircraft are the preferred method to evacuate human remains.

e. Guard the area to prevent loss of personal effects and equipment, and to keep unauthorized personnel away.

f. Mark the landing zone if air evacuation is used.

2. Evacuate the remains or portions of remains and personal effects.

- a. Secure the remains in a vehicle or an aircraft.

**Note:** Remains are usually carried feet first. On vehicles and rotary-wing aircraft, load human remains feet first. However, on fixed-wing aircraft, load human remains head first with the head towards the front of the aircraft.

b. Evacuate the remains to the nearest mortuary affairs facility.

#### 4. Mortuary Affairs Operations in a Theater

- a. The only authorized MA position within a Maneuver Brigade is the MA NCO in the BSB SPO. Too often this individual is used in capacities other than MA. The reality of “do more with less” will naturally lead to multiple duties for the MA NCO. However, those additional duties can overshadow their MA responsibilities. The BSB MA NCO should review all internal MA plans and policies and train MA for the brigade. MA operations within the BCT are.
  - 1) Immediately following a death event, the losing unit recovers and evacuates the remains to the nearest MACP.
  - 2) When the recovery is beyond the losing units capabilities, coordination is made with the BSB SPO MA NCO to conduct recovery operations.
- b. MACPs are distributed throughout a battle space to provide general support to geographic regions. The MACP is authorized six (6) personnel to support 24 hour operations. The MACP mission is:
  - Receive, refrigerate and safeguard HR from all supported units.
  - Process the HR for tentative ID, and inventory accompanying military equipment and personal effects.
  - Coordinate evacuation of HR to TMEP / Dover Mortuary.
- c. The official escort will be assigned by the Casualty and Memorial Affairs Office (CMAOC) upon arrival of the remains to the Dover Mortuary. For current operations, CENTCOM REG 638-1 prohibits units from assigning escorts from theater to Dover. “USCENTCOM will not authorize escorts from the USCENTCOM AOR. Escorts will accompany remains from the preparing port mortuary to the funeral site. The escort will be selected IAW the deceased member’s service policy and sent to the preparing mortuary to perform the mission. Requests for an escort from the AOR to Dover port mortuary will not be considered.”
- d. Dignified transfers, memorial services and fallen soldier ceremonies are coordinated through the unit chaplaincy. It is part of military tradition to honor the fallen; however, do not delay evacuation of remains for memorial activities. For current operations CENTCOM REG 638-1 states “Departure (Ramp) Ceremonies are strictly discouraged and the evacuation of remains will not be delayed so a unit can hold a departure ceremony in theater. Departure ceremonies, Fallen Soldier Details, or other ceremonies with remains present are not authorized in theater unless specifically approved in writing by the first General Officer in the Chain of Command. Requests may only be approved if they do not delay the scheduled evacuation of the deceased’s remains. Memorial ceremonies without remains present are not affected by this policy and are encouraged for the morale and well being of units dealing with personnel losses.”

#### 5. I’ve lost a Soldier. What do I do?

- a. Insure the remains are recovered and evacuated IAW STP 21-1 SMCT MA tasks. While awaiting evacuation follow these steps:
  - 1) Mission essential equipment (weapons, NVGs, GPSs) may be removed from the remains. **DO NOT** remove any other military equipment or personal effects.
  - 2) The IBA and ballistic helmet may be removed during first aid. They should be bagged separately and accompany the remains to the nearest MACP.
  - 3) Limit the number of personnel that handle the remains. Working with the remains of a fellow soldier may cause psychological trauma.

- 4) Remove the remains the view of the general public. Insure that someone maintains a direct line view on the HRP; unattended remains may fall prey to animal scavengers.
  - 5) Place the remains out of direct sunlight. In hot environments it will become necessary to cool the remains If evacuation will not occur within four (4) hours. Prior planning can identify the need for MA refrigeration assets at remote locations. If not refrigeration capability exists, cool the remains by placing bagged ice or cooling packs on the exterior of the HRP. **DO NOT** place loose ice inside the HRP.
- b. JP4-06 states that an individual, that can visually identify the deceased, will accompany the remains to the MACP. This is not feasible in some instances due to current operations or battle space distribution. In this event, a DD form 565 *Statement of Recognition of Deceased* should be prepared and accompany each remains to the MACP.
  - c. Prepare and submit a DA form 1156 *Casualty Feeder Card* for each loss. Example and instructions for preparing this form are found in AR 600-8-1 para 4-5.
  - d. Secure the room or area containing any personal effects of the deceased within the unit. No one, other than an appointed SCMO, is authorized to handle these effects. It may be necessary to make alternate sleeping / living arrangements for roommates during the inventory period. If required, soldiers must be escorted to get personal hygiene items and clothing.

## 6. Fragmented Remains Recovery

- a. High energy events, such as explosions, will likely result in remains fragmenting into numerous disassociated portions. Because of this, tentative identification of the deceased may be impossible. It is likely that identification will be by DNA analysis. Care must be given to document all pertinent data associated with the event.
- b. At no time should anyone attempt to "piece" portions together. Portions are recovered and individually bagged in the following manner.
  - 1) Any portion or fragment of the body with the head attached will be placed in a HRP.
  - 2) Any other portion may be placed in an appropriately sized plastic bag. Smaller portions may be placed in Ziploc bags; whereas arms and legs are placed in heavy mil black plastic bags and sealed.
  - 3) Several individual bagged portions may be placed in a HRP to facilitate evacuation.
- c. During explosions or crashes, portions of several individuals may be commingled. **DO NOT** separate these portions. Recover and bag the commingled remains / portions in mass and evacuate to the nearest MACP.

## 7. Handling Non-US Remains

- a. All remains will be handled in the same manner; with dignity, reverence and respect.
- b. Allied / Coalition forces and local civilians should be encouraged to recover their dead. If this is not possible, recover and evacuate to the nearest MACP. MACP personnel will coordinate turn-over of remains to the respective nations.
- c. Combatant enemy dead should be processed for information and military equipment; **DO NOT** remove any personal effects. Evacuate the remains to the nearest MACP.

- d. Enemy Prisoner of War and Civilian Detainee deaths should be reported immediately to the supporting criminal investigative agency (CID, NCIS). The investigative agency, in conjunction with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner will determine if the remains are evacuated to the nearest MACP. If not, coordinate with the S5/G5 for return to local authorities.

**8. MA Related Stress**

Handling remains involves a direct exposure to death. Each person will react differently to this stress. It is difficult to predict the kinds of psychological problems that any individual will have, however, the following management plan can help minimize later difficulties:

Stressor	Coping Strategy
<b>Before Exposure (Pre-Event)</b>	
Lack of Information	Training, Drills & Briefings
Anticipation of Reaction	Gradual Exposure
Anticipation of Separation	Family & Organization support Systems
<b>Exposure (During Event)</b>	
Sensory Overload	Avoid / Diminish Strong Stimuli
Appearance of Bodies Handling PE	Non-attachment / Distance Role Recognition
Fatigue / Over-dedication	Breaks, Food, Sleep, Supervision
Intense Personal Feelings	Pair w/ Experienced Soldier Supervision (Talking & Humor)
<b>After Exposure (Post-Event)</b>	
Need for Information	Event Debriefing & Education
Intense Personal Feelings	Family Support Group Unit Support Systems Role Recognition CMH Debriefing

**9. Summary**

MA is a systematic process beginning with unit recovery and ending when the family has laid their loved on to rest. To this end, it is imperative that Commanders at every level stress the importance of MA.

## References

JP 4-06	Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations
AR 600-8-1	Army Casualty Program
AR 638-2	Care and Disposition of Remains and Disposition of Personal Effects
DA PAM 638-2	Procedures for the Care and Disposition of Remains and Disposition of Personal Effects
FM 4-20.64	Mortuary Affairs Operations
FM 4-20.65	Identification of Deceased Personnel
CENTCOM REG 638-1	Deceased Personnel: Mortuary Affairs Support
ALARACT 139/2006	Policies and Procedures for The Handling Of Personal Effects (PE) and Government Property
ALARACT 224/2007	Revised Policies for Certifying and Reporting Theater Summary Court Martial Officers (SCMO) In the CENTCOM AOR
ALARACT 235/2007	SCMO Checklist for Current CENTCOM Theater Only
ALARACT 006/2009	Policies and Procedures for the Handling of Personal Effects for Medically Evacuated Soldiers
ALARACT 026/2009	DCS Checklist Requirement & Release of: Taking Care of Business: A Personal Readiness Video & Checklist for Soldiers & Families