

**BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY
OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE MISSION DIRECTIVE 16

26 DECEMBER 2023



Personnel

**AIR FORCE MORTUARY
AFFAIRS OPERATIONS (AFMAO)**

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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This directive states the mission, defines the command structure, and establishes responsibilities for Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations (AFMAO). Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route DAF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command. Ensure all records generated as a result of processes prescribed in this publication adhere to Air Force Instruction 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, and are disposed in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule, which is located in the Air Force Records Information Management System.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This publication has been revised and must be completely reviewed. Major changes include the expanded applicability to the United States Space Force and updated reference citations throughout the directive.

1. Mission. AFMAO executes and integrates the Department of the Air Force mortuary programs to care for fallen service members and their families while meeting field commanders' needs, supporting both present and past conflicts. On behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force, AFMAO operates and maintains a port-of-entry mortuary within the continental United States (CONUS) and, as required, establishes other CONUS port-of-entry mortuaries in support of all the Military Services. Serves as the Department of Defense (DoD) activity with operational oversight of the Dignified Transfer Process and related Media Access Policy in accordance with DoD Directive (DoDD) 1300.22, *Mortuary Affairs Policy*, in support of all Military Services.

2. Command.

2.1. AFMAO is a field operating agency (FOA) reporting to Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services (AF/A1). The AFMAO Commander reports directly to Headquarters Air Force (HAF) Director of Air Force Services (AF/A1S).

2.2. AF/A1 provides technical direction and guidance on mortuary affairs and casualty processing. Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive 1-32, *Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Manpower, Personnel, and Services*, designates A1/A1S as having responsibility for programs and policies, including mortuary affairs.

3. Responsibilities. AFMAO is specifically responsible for:

3.1. Executing mortuary policy by developing, coordinating, and implementing standards, systems, programs, and procedures for military and civilian mortuary operations in coordination with AF/A1S, as well as providing care, service, and support to surviving families pursuant to Title 10, United States Code, Sections 1482 and 1482a.

3.1.1. Providing mortuary case management oversight for all DAF deaths.

3.1.2. Reviewing mortuary entitlement claims.

3.1.3. Making adjudication recommendations for funeral, interment and transportation expenses. 3.1.4. Ensuring return of personal property/effects.

3.2. Serving as the DoD activity for Dignified Transfers and related media policy at Dover Air Force Base, in accordance with DoDD 1300.22 and DoD Instruction 1300.29, *Mortuary Affairs Program*.

3.3. Immediately reporting to AF/A1S incidents involving loss of accountability, contaminated or contagious remains, serious hazards to AFMAO personnel, explosive devices, or any other anomalies in the mortuary process.

3.4. Working closely with host wing or delta, Armed Forces Medical Examiner System, Joint Personal Effects Depot, all Military Services' leadership, and union leadership (when bargaining unit employees are affected) to provide an environment of collaboration and cooperation.

3.5. Providing subject matter expertise to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) and all Military Services' mortuary affairs counterparts at the Central Joint Mortuary Affairs Board to further refine and codify mortuary guidance, training, practices, and procedures in accordance with DoDD 1300.22.

3.6. Maintaining a self-inspection program in compliance with Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 90-302, *The Inspection System of the Department of the Air Force*, to evaluate mission execution and ensure process standardization with 100 percent accountability of remains.

3.7. Ensuring AFMAO personnel and facility provide the mission capabilities to meet the mortuary affairs and operational mortuary needs of the Air Force and Space Force, the DoD, and other entitled personnel pursuant to governing rules and statutes.

3.7.1. Maintaining an education and training program that provides licensed professionals with the educational opportunities and means necessary to maintain state licensure.

3.7.2. Identifying manpower and budgeting requirements as an element of the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution process.

3.7.3. In conjunction with AF/A1 Readiness Program, ensure contingency plans are developed to respond to mass fatality incidents and capability is appropriately postured for wartime operational plans.

3.8. Continuing to refine and codify operating instructions to ensure consistency of operations.

3.9. Serving as the Military Funeral Honors and Installation Honor Guard Program functional manager for the Air Force and Space Force.

3.9.1. Developing Base Honor Guard procedures, techniques and processes.

3.9.2. Serving as the primary DAF point of contact for Base Honor Guard Programs, Military Funeral Honors.

3.9.3. Coordinating Military Funeral Honors support from Veteran Service Organizations.

3.10. Overseeing and executing the Air Force Past Conflict Mortuary Program in accordance with all applicable laws, directives, and policies. Exercising operational control over recover efforts not under Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Accounting Agency cognizance.

3.11. Providing support and guidance for Air Force aircraft incidents resulting in loss of life, mass fatality incidents and national emergencies.

3.12. Serving as pertinent oversight authority for all guidance found in DAFI 34-160, *Mortuary Affairs Program*, to include DAF cemetery management and conducting continuous evaluation of installation mortuary offices in accordance with DAFI 90-302.

4. Delegation of Authority. Pursuant to DAFI 34-160, the Secretary of the Air Force delegates the AFMAO Commander authority to approve travel beyond primary next of kin plus two for Air Force and Space Force families traveling to witness a Dignified Transfer. This authority cannot be re-delegated.

ALEX WAGNER
Assistant Secretary
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

Title 10, United States Code, Section 1482, *Expenses Incident to Death*

Title 10, United States Code, Section 1482a, *Expenses Incident to Death: Civilian Employees Serving with an Armed Force*

Title 38, United States Code Section 14.628, *Recognition of Organizations*

Title 38, United States Code Section 5902, *Recognition of Representatives of Organizations*

DoDI 1300.29, *Mortuary Affairs Program*, 28 June 2021

DoDD 1300.22, *Mortuary Affairs Policy*, 30 October 2015

DAFI 34-160, *Mortuary Affairs Program*, 3 March 2022

DAFI 90-302, *The Inspection System of the Department of the Air Force*, 15 March 2023

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 23 March 2020

HAFMD 1-32, *Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Manpower, Personnel, and Services*, 13 September 2019

Prescribed Forms

None

Adopted Forms

DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF—Air Force

AFMAO—Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations

CONUS—Continental United States

DAF—Department of the Air Force

DAFI—Department of the Air Force Instruction

DoD—Department of Defense

DoDD—Department of Defense Directive

FOA—Field Operating Agency

HAF—Headquarters Air Force

OPR—Office of Primary Responsibility

POW/MIA—Prisoner of War/Missing in Action

Office Symbols

AF/A1—Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services

AF/A1S—Director of Air Force Services

AF/A1SA—Airman and Family Care

Terms

Veteran Service Organizations—Organizations recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in accordance with Title 38, United States Code Section 14.628, *Recognition of Organizations* and Title 38, United States Code Section 5902, *Recognition of Representatives of Organizations*.