



Anthropology Section - 2016

A100 Transformation of the Department of Defense's (DoD's) Central Identification Laboratory (CIL): A Historical Review of Its Scientific Personnel and Primary Architects as It Embraces the Tides of Change

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be provided with a pertinent example of the Academy's 2016 Meeting theme of "Transformation: Embracing Change." The DoD parent organization of the CIL has again reorganized to streamline efforts in its noble mission. After this presentation, attendees will better understand the history of the CIL, its primary architects, and scientific personnel.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by illustrating how the history of the CIL, with respect to its practitioners and research, has influenced forensic science. This historical review of the CIL may encourage attendees to pay greater attention to changes made by the DoD as to how it chooses to integrate forensic anthropologists to contribute to identification, since this precedent may influence how forensic anthropology is applied in other medicolegal settings worldwide.

The mission of the DoD's Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is to search, recover, and identify service personnel still missing from past United States conflicts. The DPAA represents the January 2015 merger of three federal organizations (the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, and Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory). The DPAA's Laboratory is the scientific nucleus of the mission, as its anthropologists regularly direct archaeological recovery operations, analyze skeletal material accessioned from these global recoveries and disinterments, and conduct analyses on incident artifacts, all for the goal of positive forensic identification and casualty resolution of our missing service personnel.

The recent merger and transformation of the DoD's accounting effort is nothing new to the Laboratory, as its history includes various transitions and names, although the terms Central Identification Laboratory have been at its core since 1948. This history includes the CIL at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, the Central Identification Unit in Japan, laboratory presence in various mortuaries in the Philippines and Vietnam, the CIL-Thai in Thailand, the CILHI in Hawaii, and the JPAC-CIL (at Joint Base, Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii and Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska). Most recently, the CIL has become the DPAA-Laboratory. As such, the transformational history of the CIL's participation in the DoD's efforts to identify missing service personnel reflects the history of forensic anthropology itself. The CIL's chief architects and influential scientific staff include Mildred Trotter, T. Dale Stewart, Ellis Kerley, Thomas McKern, and Thomas Holland (among many others). Hundreds of forensic anthropologists (including many Diplomates of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA), forensic odontologists, and forensic archaeologists have worked at the CIL. The subsequent global influence of the CIL throughout forensic science is unquestionable.

The CIL has never been autonomous, as it has functioned under the roof of federal organizations, including the United States Army and Navy; however, the CIL's primary obligations have always been to science itself, by practicing and maintaining excellence in the field. While sometimes incongruent priorities and laypeople's good intentions pull the Laboratory in disparate ways, the CIL's commitment to the best practices of forensic anthropology and forensic archaeology is unwavering. Its international accreditation in crime scene processing, forensic biology, and trace evidence analysis has paved the way for other laboratories to do the same. The CIL was integral in responding to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2010 National Academy of Sciences' call for improvements in forensic science by co-founding, with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Scientific Working Group in Anthropology (that formulates best practices for forensic anthropologists), which subsequently transformed into the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Department of Justice Organization of Scientific Committees Anthropology Subcommittee. Additionally, its regular activities in many foreign countries have helped shape the global growth of forensic science.

For the DPAA Laboratory to embrace this most recent parental change to its structure, it is therapeutic to acknowledge the historical legacy of its predecessor organizations, as well as acknowledge the contributions that former CIL scientists have made to many subfields in the forensic sciences. This presentation provides a visual representation of the past, so that we may be better prepared to embrace the future. Additionally, given the heavy involvement of federal lawmakers in the transition of the CIL to the DPAA Laboratory and the scrutiny on the forensic sciences in the United States, it is important that practitioners are aware of this transition process and how its ramifications can affect the discipline.

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