



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, DC

12 MAR 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

FROM: HQ USAF/SGO
110 Luke Avenue, Room 400
Bolling AFB, DC 20032-7050

SUBJECT: The Armed Forces Repository of Specimen Samples for the Identification of Remains
(AFRSSIR) Staff Assistance Program

The Department of Defense (DoD) DNA Registry, and the AFRSSIR program established collecting DNA reference blood samples in 1992. This program mandated in DoD Dir 5154.24, required collection of DNA samples from current military personnel and new accessions. Active forces were directed to meet this requirement by the end of calendar year 1999. Guard and Reserve forces were to complete specimen collection by the end of calendar year 2002.

Air Force compliance with these requirements is very high. However, monthly statistics from AFRSSIR indicate the potential for non-compliance with this program due to a variety of factors (improper collection method, transport issues and personnel compliance). Recently, this has impacted the DoD's ability to identify service members killed during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Furthermore, there were errors identified in the collection process. Fortunately, these errors did not result in misidentifications, but they did jeopardize timely release of the remains to families of deceased service members. I ask you to reemphasize the importance of this program with all of your medical facility commanders to ensure they meet the guidelines in the attached DNA specimen collection instructions.

Additionally, the AFRSSIR has established staff assistance visits to aid MTF Commanders in the DNA collection program at a few of our Air Force installations. The AFRSSIR will coordinate with the MTF Commanders to schedule these visits. Information on the scheduled visits and dates can be found in attachment 2. My POC for this issue is Lt Col Dennis Fay, AFMSA/SGPP, 110 Luke Avenue, Room 405, Bolling AFB, DC 20032-7050, DSN 297-4330, dennis.fay@pentagon.af.mil.


JOSEPH E. KELLEY
Major General/USAF, MC, CFS
Assistant Surgeon General, Health Care Operations
Office of the Surgeon General

Attachments:

1. DNA Specimen Collection Instructions
2. USA/SG Memorandum, 24 Nov 2003

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