

MASS FATALITY INCIDENTS (MFI) : THE ROLE OF FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND DMORT IN MFI

Donna C. Boyd, Ph. D., D-ABFA

Radford University , VA

Squad Leader,

DMORT Region III

MFIs defined:

- ▣ “a relative term and hinges upon the capabilities of the local community to administer to the injured and dead” (Steadman 2009);
- ▣ are “when the number of dead exceeds the capacity of local agencies to manage them” (Sledzik and Willcox 2009)
- ▣ All are unique, but share commonalities

FORENSIC
ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND
MASS FATALITY INCIDENTS

The Big Thompson Flood, Colorado (1976)



Hardin Cemetery Flood, Missouri (1993)



Terrorist Attacks



Noble, Georgia Crematorium (2002)



Spring 2005: The crematory site has been cleared, as shown in the photo above.

Hurricane Katrina, 2005



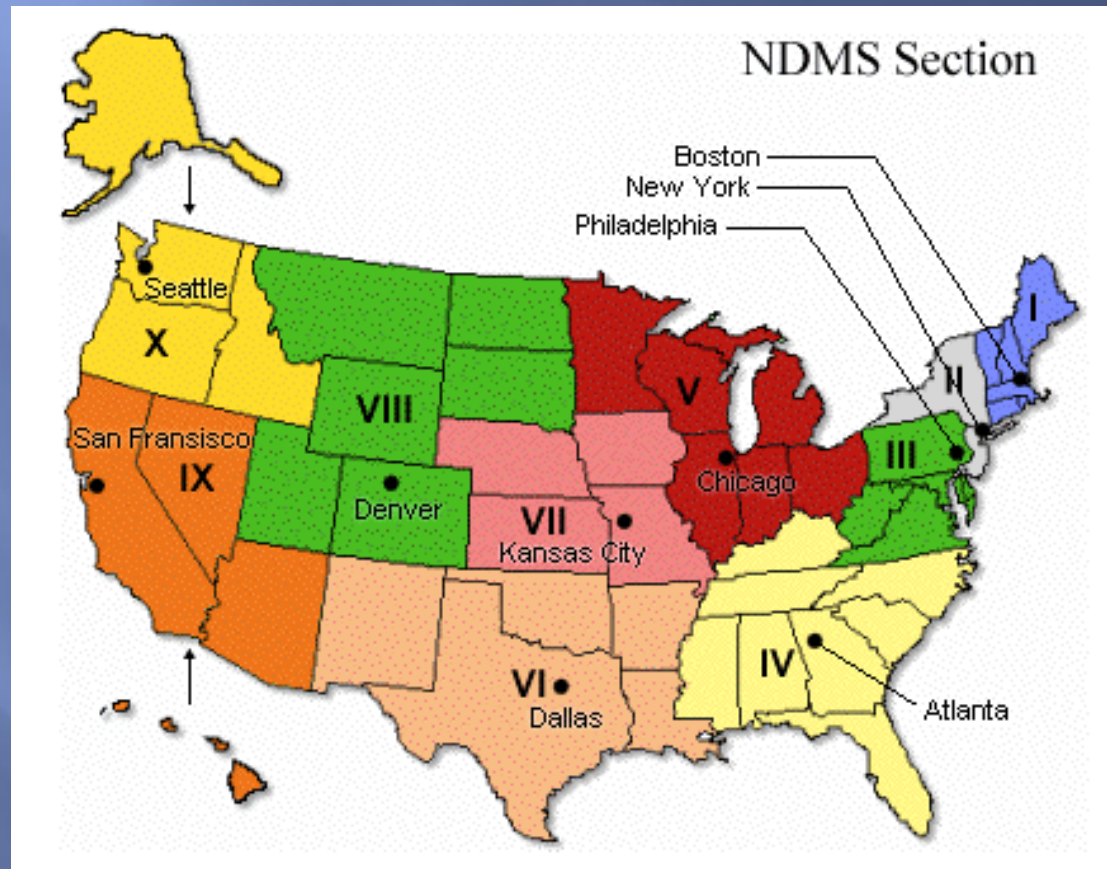
Port-au-Prince, Haiti (February, 2010)



DMORT (Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team)



DMORT Regions



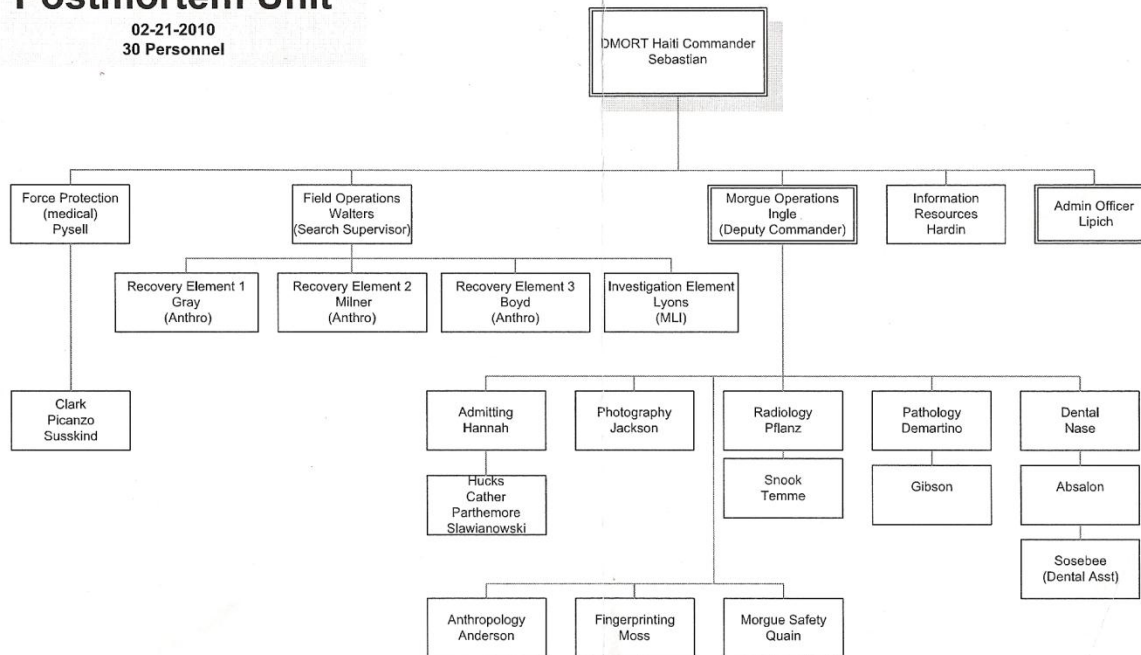
DMORT OPERATIONAL PROTOCOL:

Incident Command System

The DPMU

DMORT Haiti Postmortem Unit

02-21-2010
30 Personnel







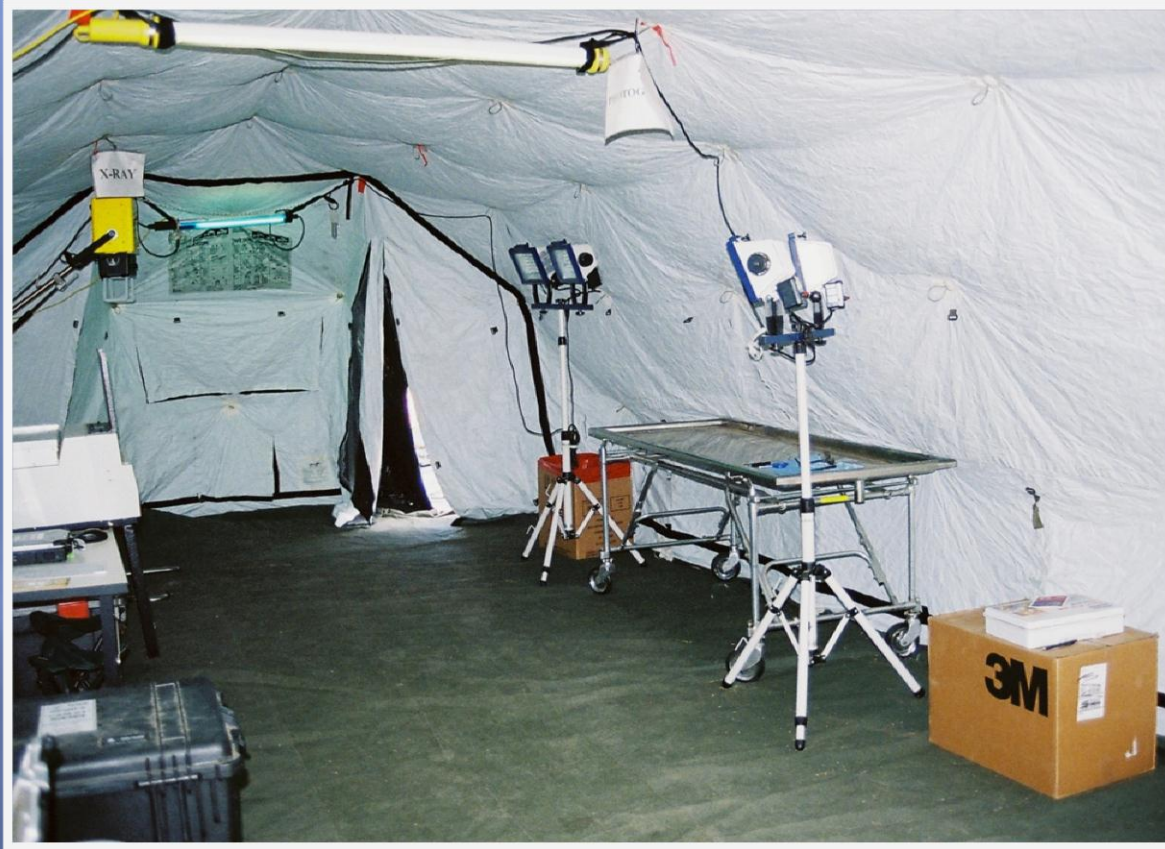




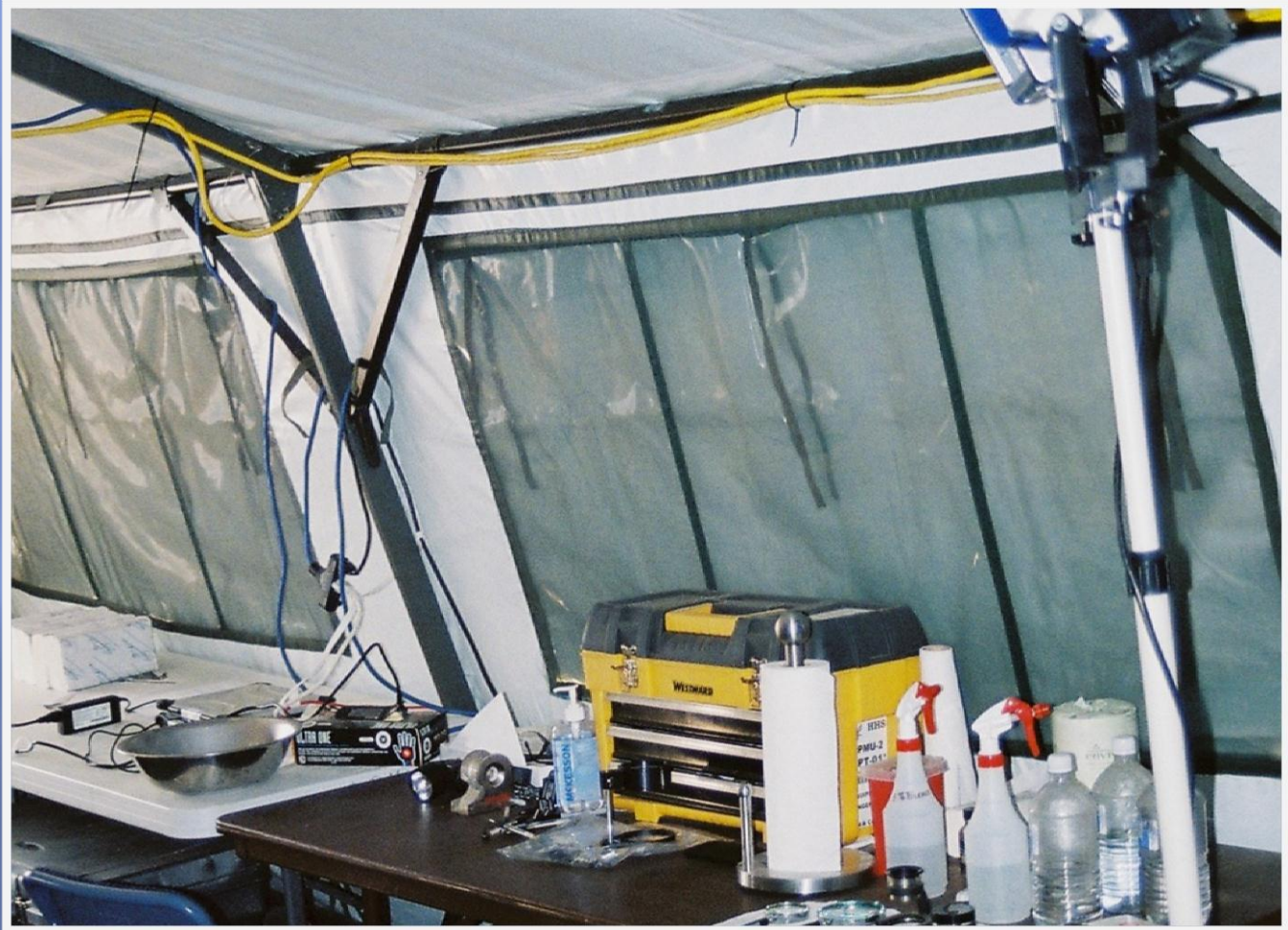
DMORT Specialists

- ▣ Medical Examiners
- ▣ Medicolegal Death Investigators
- ▣ Forensic Anthropologists
- ▣ Forensic Dentists
- ▣ X Ray Technicians
- ▣ Funeral Home Personnel
- ▣ Photographers
- ▣ Fingerprint Specialists
- ▣ Family Assistance Center
















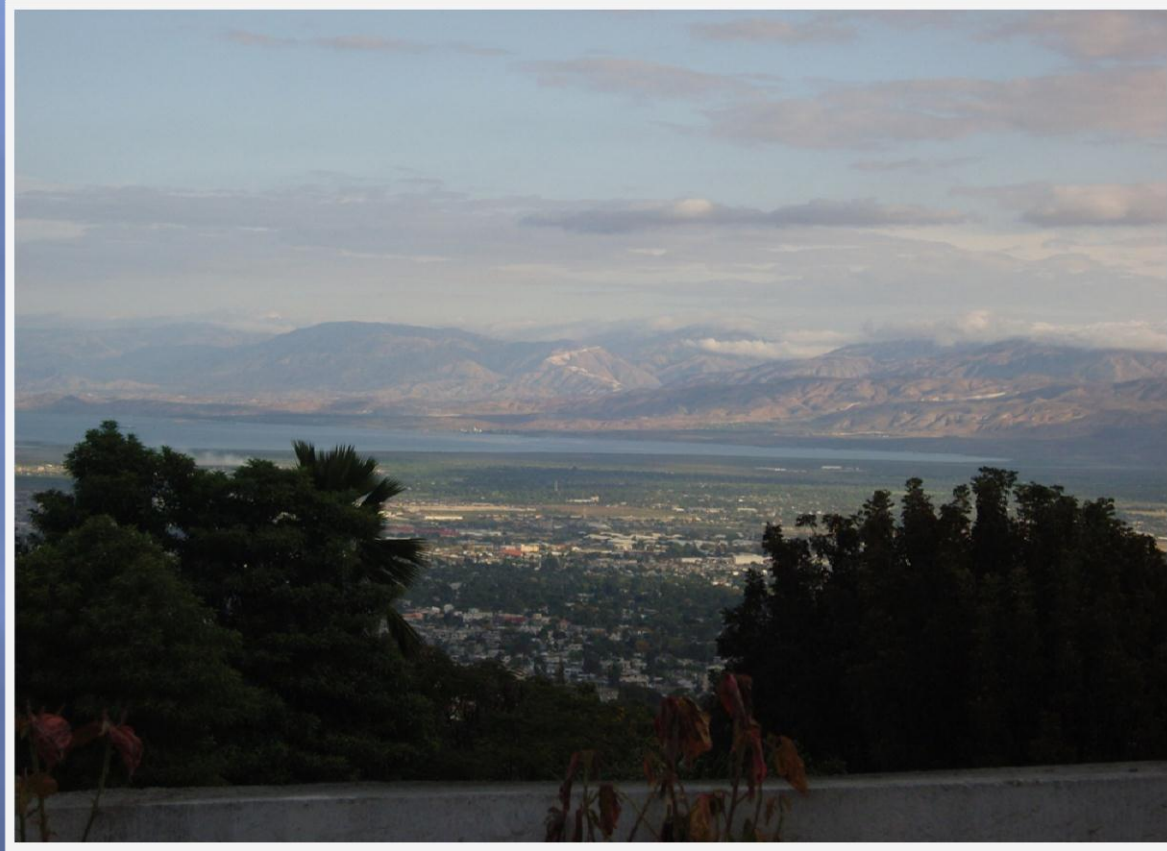
Morgue Data Sheets

	Site Recovery # _____	VIP/DMORT Victim	Incident _____ Incident Date _____
Put N/A in all unused fields.		Site Recovery Form Morgue Reference No. _____	
Date: _____ <small>MM/DD/YYYY</small>	Description of Remains: _____		
Time: _____ <small>24 hour (00:00)</small>	Recovery Grid #: _____	GPS of Recovery: _____	
Place / Address of Recovery: _____			
Condition: select all that apply			
<input type="checkbox"/> Autopsied Previously	<input type="checkbox"/> Decomposed	<input type="checkbox"/> Mummified	<input type="checkbox"/> Skel
<input type="checkbox"/> Burned-Partial Thickness	<input type="checkbox"/> Embalmed	<input type="checkbox"/> Saponified	<input type="checkbox"/> Skel
<input type="checkbox"/> Burned-Full Thickness	<input type="checkbox"/> Fragmented	<input type="checkbox"/> Scavenged	<input type="checkbox"/> Wet
<input type="checkbox"/> Remains	<input type="checkbox"/> Fresh	<input type="checkbox"/> Skin Slippage	
			Position Remains Found In: _____
Estimated Age: <input type="radio"/> Baby/Child <input type="radio"/> Adolescent <input type="radio"/> Young Adult <input type="radio"/> Middle Aged <input type="radio"/> Elderly <input type="radio"/> No Estimate			
Estimated Sex: <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Not Assessed			
Estimated Race: _____			
Clothing on Remains: (brief description)	_____		
Personal Effects on Remains: (brief description)	_____		
Other Items with Remains: (specify + describe)	_____		
Medical Records Recovered: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No			
Recovery Comments: _____			
Presumptive FIELD ID:	Last _____	First _____	Middle _____
ID Based On:	DOB (MM/DD/YYYY) _____	SSN _____	ID# / Drivers license # / State _____
			# Photos _____ Photo File Name: _____
Found By: _____	Name and Agency (if applies) _____	Phone # _____	Date Found _____ Time Found _____
Reported By: _____	Name and Agency (if applies) _____	Phone # _____	Date Reported _____ Time Reported _____
Reported To: _____	Name and Agency (if applies) _____	Phone # _____	
Recovered by: _____	Agency _____	Phone # _____	
Team Leader: _____	_____		
Team Members:	_____		
Barcode # _____	Place Barcode Sticker Here		

Difficulties in MFIs

- ▣ Safety and security
- ▣ Loss of infrastructure
- ▣ Organizational chaos
- ▣ Miscommunication between agencies
- ▣ Leadership questions/issues
- ▣ Collection and retention of evidence
- ▣ Chain of custody
- ▣ Safe and humane recovery of deceased
- ▣ Family counseling and communication

Port-au-Prince, Haiti







Loss of Infrastructure







Organization of Chaos







Humane and Timely Recovery of Deceased



Hotel Montana

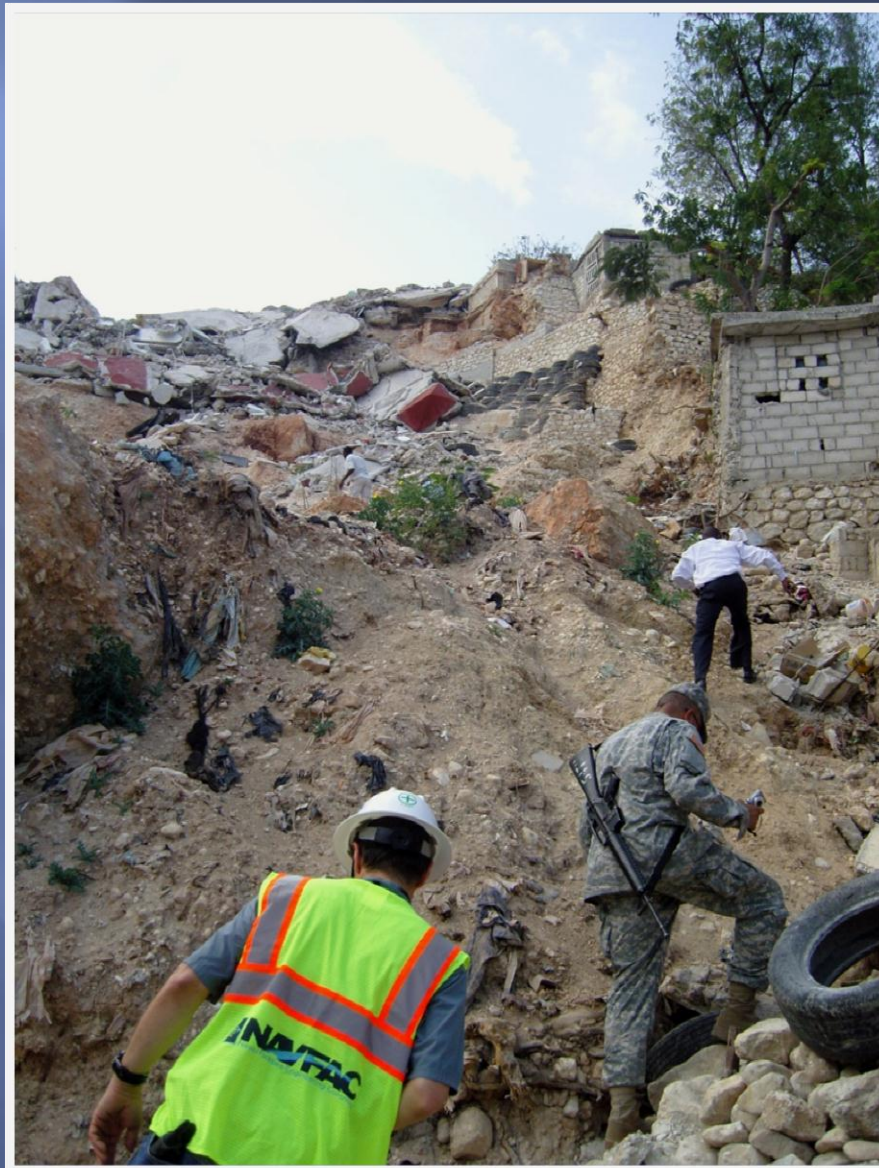


Safe and Accurate Recovery of Deceased















Need for Reconnaissance and Information



Secondary Burials











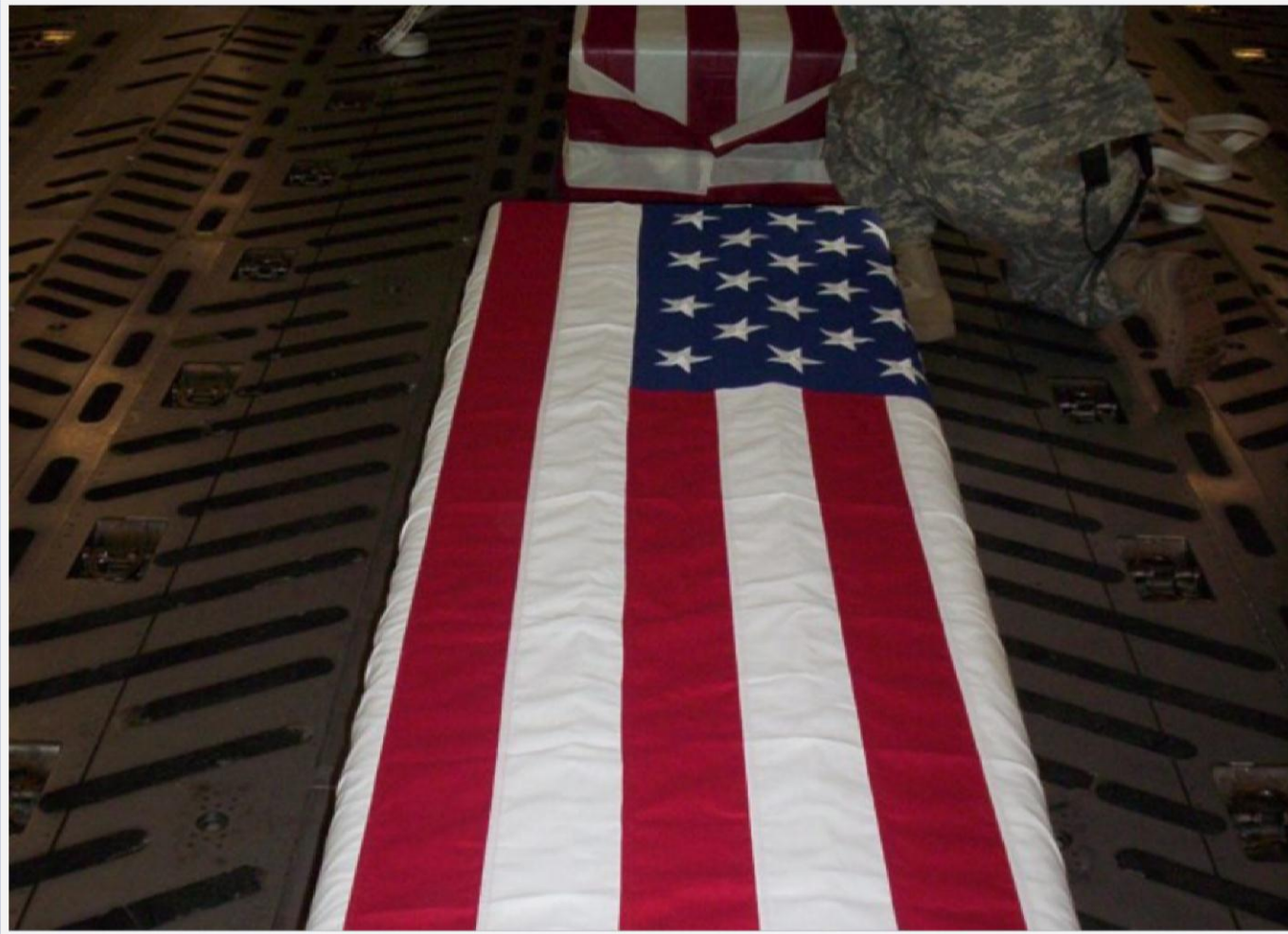


Managing the MFI

- ▣ Recognition of need for external assistance
- ▣ Transition from Search and Rescue to Search and Recovery
- ▣ Protocol for search, recovery, analysis, and identification of human remains and associated evidence
- ▣ Communication with and counseling for families

Forensic Anthropology Skills in MFIs

- ▣ Devise protocol for search and recovery of human remains
- ▣ Locate, recognize, and recover human remains, especially those burned and fragmented
- ▣ Maintain context and chain of custody
- ▣ Train search personnel to recognize fragmented and burned human remains
- ▣ Provide field assessment of condition of remains
- ▣ Assist with morgue analysis of remains and victim identification



Haiti-DMORT (February, 2010)

