



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

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**MEMORANDUM FOR:** SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

**SUBJECT:** Policy for Implementing Instructions for Early Destruction of Individual Remains Identification Reference Specimen Samples

**Reference:** Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) Memorandum, "Policy Refinements for the Armed Forces Repository of Specimen Samples for the Identification of Remains," April 2, 1996.

Specimen Samples in the Armed Forces Repository of Specimen Samples for the Identification of Remains (AFRSSIR) are normally destroyed fifty (50) years from the date of collection. Individuals may request early destruction of their individual remains identification specimen samples following the conclusion of the donor's complete military service or other applicable relationship to DoD. For this purpose, complete military service is not limited to active duty service; it includes all service as a member of the Selected Reserves, Individual Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve or Retired Reserve. In the case of civilians, early destruction is allowed when the civilian donor is no longer employed by DoD in a geographic area which requires the maintenance of such samples.

Requests for destruction must be made in writing to AFRSSIR and include name, social security number, date of birth, branch of service or civilian status (if applicable), and mailing address.

Verification that the donor's complete military service has concluded is required prior to early destruction of specimen samples. This verification shall be accomplished by confirmation of status in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment and Records System (DEERS).

AFRSSIR is responsible for destruction of specimen samples upon verification of eligibility for early destruction. Specimen samples shall be destroyed within 180 days of a valid request for destruction. AFRSSIR will send a notice of destruction to the donor to confirm the requested early destruction of his or her specimen sample after such has been accomplished.

A new specimen sample, if not on file in the Armed Forces Repository of Specimen Samples for the Identification of Remains, shall be collected upon reentry into military service, entry into the Reserves or National Guard, or prior to deployment as a DoD civilian/contractor into a geographic area which requires the maintenance of such specimen samples.

Services shall designate a point of contact for the AFRSSIR for the purposes of verification of military or civilian eligibility status within 120 days.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen C. Joseph", with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Stephen C. Joseph, M.D., M.P.H.