

(d) PRIVILEGED INFORMATION.—(1) The Secretary concerned shall withhold from personnel files under this section, as privileged information, debriefing reports provided by missing persons returned to United States control which are obtained under a promise of confidentiality made for the purpose of ensuring the fullest possible disclosure of information.

(2) The Secretary concerned shall withhold from personnel files under this section, as privileged information, any survival, evasion, resistance, and escape debriefing report provided by a person described in section 1501(c) of this title who is returned to United States control which is obtained under a promise of confidentiality made for the purpose of ensuring the fullest possible disclosure of information.

(3) If a debriefing report contains non-derogatory information about the status and whereabouts of a missing person other than the source of the debriefing report or about unnamed missing persons, the Secretary concerned shall prepare an extract of the non-derogatory information. That extract, following a review by the source of the debriefing report, shall be placed in the personnel file of each missing person named in the debriefing report in such a manner as to protect the identity of the source providing the information. Any information contained in the extract of the debriefing report that pertains to unnamed missing persons shall be made reasonably accessible to the primary next of kin, members of the immediate family, and the previously designated person.

(4) Whenever the Secretary concerned withholds a debriefing report, or part of a debriefing report, from a personnel file under this subsection, the Secretary shall ensure that the file contains a notice that withheld information exists.

(e) AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary concerned shall, upon request, make available the contents of the personnel file of a missing person to the primary next of kin, the other members of the immediate family, or any other previously designated person of the person.

(f) NONDISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN INFORMATION.—A record of the content of a debriefing of a missing person returned to United States control during the period beginning on July 8, 1959, and ending on February 10, 1996, that was conducted by an official of the United States authorized to conduct the debriefing is privileged information and, notwithstanding sections 552 and 552a of title 5, may not be disclosed, in whole or in part, under either such section. However, this subsection does not limit the responsibility of the Secretary concerned under paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (d) to place extracts of non-derogatory information, or a notice of the existence of such information, in the personnel file of a missing person.

(Added Pub. L. 104-106, div. A, title V, §569(b)(1), Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 346; amended Pub. L. 104-201, div. A, title V, §578(d), Sept. 23, 1996, 110 Stat. 2537; Pub. L. 105-85, div. A, title V, §599(f), (g), Nov. 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 1770; Pub. L. 106-65, div. A, title V, §575, Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 624; Pub. L. 107-107, div. A, title V, §573, Dec. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 1122; Pub. L. 113-66, div. A, title V, §582(a), Dec. 26, 2013, 127 Stat. 776.)

AMENDMENTS

2013—Subsec. (d)(2) to (4). Pub. L. 113-66, §582(a)(1), added par. (2) and redesignated former pars. (2) and (3) as (3) and (4), respectively.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 113-66, §582(a)(2), substituted “paragraphs (3) and (4)” for “paragraphs (2) and (3)”.

2001—Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 107-107 designated existing provisions as subpar. (A), inserted “of all missing persons from the conflict or period of war to which the classified information pertains” before period at end, and added subpar. (B).

1999—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 106-65 added subsec. (f).

1997—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 105-85, §599(f), designated existing provisions as par. (1), redesignated former pars. (1) and (2) as subpars. (A) and (B), respectively, of par. (1), and added par. (2).

Subsec. (d)(2). Pub. L. 105-85, §599(g)(1), inserted “or about unnamed missing persons” after “the debriefing report” in first sentence, substituted “each missing person named in the debriefing report” for “the missing person” in second sentence, and inserted at end “Any information contained in the extract of the debriefing report that pertains to unnamed missing persons shall be made reasonably accessible to the primary next of kin, members of the immediate family, and the previously designated person.”

Subsec. (d)(3). Pub. L. 105-85, §599(g)(2), inserted “, or part of a debriefing report,” after “a debriefing report”.

1996—Subsecs. (e), (f). Pub. L. 104-201 redesignated subsec. (f) as (e) and struck out former subsec. (e) which read as follows: “WRONGFUL WITHHOLDING.—Except as provided in subsections (a) through (d), any person who knowingly and willfully withholds from the personnel file of a missing person any information relating to the disappearance or whereabouts and status of a missing person shall be fined as provided in title 18 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.”

§ 1507. Recommendation of status of death

(a) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO RECOMMENDATION.—A board appointed under section 1503, 1504, or 1505 of this title may not recommend that a person be declared dead unless—

(1) credible evidence exists to suggest that the person is dead;

(2) the United States possesses no credible evidence that suggests that the person is alive; and

(3) representatives of the United States—

(A) have made a complete search of the area where the person was last seen (unless, after making a good faith effort to obtain access to such area, such representatives are not granted such access); and

(B) have examined the records of the government or entity having control over the area where the person was last seen (unless, after making a good faith effort to obtain access to such records, such representatives are not granted such access).

(b) SUBMITTAL OF INFORMATION ON DEATH.—If a board appointed under section 1503, 1504, or 1505 of this title makes a recommendation that a missing person be declared dead, the board shall include in the report of the board with respect to the person under that section the following:

(1) A detailed description of the location where the death occurred.

(2) A statement of the date on which the death occurred.

(3) A description of the location of the body, if recovered.

(4) If the body has been recovered and is not identifiable through visual means, a certifi-

cation by a forensic pathologist that the body recovered is that of the missing person. In determining whether to make such a certification, the forensic pathologist shall consider, as determined necessary by the Secretary of the military department concerned, additional evidence and information provided by appropriate specialists in forensic medicine or other appropriate medical sciences.

(Added Pub. L. 104–106, div. A, title V, §569(b)(1), Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 347; amended Pub. L. 104–201, div. A, title V, §578(e), Sept. 23, 1996, 110 Stat. 2537; Pub. L. 105–85, div. A, title V, §599(c), Nov. 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 1768.)

AMENDMENTS

1997—Subsec. (b)(3), (4). Pub. L. 105–85 added pars. (3) and (4).

1996—Subsec. (b)(3), (4). Pub. L. 104–201 struck out pars. (3) and (4) which read as follows:

“(3) A description of the location of the body, if recovered.

“(4) If the body has been recovered and is not identifiable through visual means, a certification by a practitioner of an appropriate forensic science that the body recovered is that of the missing person.”

§ 1508. Judicial review

(a) RIGHT OF REVIEW.—A person who is the primary next of kin (or the previously designated person) of a person who is the subject of a finding described in subsection (b) may obtain judicial review in a United States district court of that finding, but only on the basis of a claim that there is information that could affect the status of the missing person's case that was not adequately considered during the administrative review process under this chapter. Any such review shall be as provided in section 706 of title 5.

(b) FINDINGS FOR WHICH JUDICIAL REVIEW MAY BE SOUGHT.—Subsection (a) applies to the following findings:

(1) A finding by a board appointed under section 1504 or 1505 of this title that a missing person is dead.

(2) A finding by a board appointed under section 1509 of this title that confirms that a missing person formerly declared dead is in fact dead.

(c) SUBSEQUENT REVIEW.—Appeals from a decision of the district court shall be taken to the appropriate United States court of appeals and to the Supreme Court as provided by law.

(Added Pub. L. 104–106, div. A, title V, §569(b)(1), Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 348.)

§ 1509. Program to resolve missing person cases

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED; COVERED CONFLICTS.—The Secretary of Defense shall implement a comprehensive, coordinated, integrated, and fully resourced program to account for persons described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of section 1513(1) of this title who are unaccounted for from the following conflicts:

(1) World War II during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946, including members of the armed forces who were lost during flight operations in the Pacific theater of operations covered by

section 576 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106–65; 10 U.S.C. 1501 note).

(2) The Cold War during the period beginning on September 2, 1945, and ending on August 21, 1991.

(3) The Korean War during the period beginning on June 27, 1950, and ending on January 31, 1955.

(4) The Indochina War era during the period beginning on July 8, 1959, and ending on May 15, 1975.

(5) The Persian Gulf War during the period beginning on August 2, 1990, and ending on February 28, 1991.

(6) Such other conflicts in which members of the armed forces served as the Secretary of Defense may designate.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall implement the program within the Department of Defense through the designated Agency Director.

(2)(A) The Secretary shall assign or detail to the designated Defense Agency on a full-time basis a senior medical examiner from the personnel of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System. The primary duties of the medical examiner so assigned or detailed shall include the identification of remains in support of the function of the designated Agency Director to account for unaccounted for persons covered by subsection (a).

(B) In carrying out functions under this chapter, the medical examiner so assigned or detailed shall report to the designated Agency Director.

(C) The medical examiner so assigned or detailed shall—

(i) exercise scientific identification authority;

(ii) establish identification and laboratory policy consistent with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System; and

(iii) advise the designated Agency Director on forensic science disciplines.

(D) Nothing in this chapter shall be interpreted as affecting the authority of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner under section 1471 of this title.

(c) TREATMENT AS MISSING PERSONS.—Each unaccounted for person covered by subsection (a) shall be considered to be a missing person for purposes of the applicability of other provisions of this chapter to the person.

(d) ESTABLISHMENT OF PERSONNEL FILES; CENTRALIZED DATABASE.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that a personnel file is established and maintained for each person covered by subsection (a) if the Secretary—

(A) possesses any information relevant to the status of the person; or

(B) receives any new information regarding the missing person as provided in subsection (e).

(2) The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that each file established under this subsection contains all relevant information pertaining to a person covered by subsection (a) and is readily accessible to all elements of the department, the combatant commands, and the armed forces involved in the effort to account for the person.