



Identify the Unidentified Soldier

DNA finger print analysis requires a sample of DNA from the person, either living or dead. Often blood, bone, hair, skin, saliva or semen are used to get DNA. The sample of DNA is extracted from the tissue and the amount of DNA is amplified using a process called PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction). The sample is then cut into smaller pieces using restriction enzymes and the segments are separated according to size using electrophoresis. When stained, DNA segments appear as colored bands in a specific order from largest segment to smallest in the gel. These segment bands are the DNA finger print.

After the Vietnam war, soldier's remains were returned after being buried for several years. Often identification was difficult or impossible. Soldiers who could not be identified were interred in the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington Cemetery.



