



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 16, 2023**

**Contact: Lisa Ambrose, [lambros2@ramapo.edu](mailto:lambros2@ramapo.edu) 201-684-7141**

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## **Remains of U.S. Marine Captain Identified Using Investigative Genetic Genealogy**

*Youngest person reportedly known to contribute to an IGG case assisted Ramapo College IGG Center in "Rock Collection John Doe" case*

Mahwah, NJ- U.S. Marine Corps Captain Everett Leland Yager died in a military training exercise in July of 1951. All of his remains were recovered in the Riverside County, California area and buried in Palmyra, Missouri, or at least thought to have been. Fast forward years later to a child who wanted to build a rock collection, and increased said collection by one during a scavenging exploration, presumably in Arizona. But it was not a rock; it was a human jaw bone. For the time being, the bone belonged to Rock Collection John Doe.

That was until January 2023 when the [Yavapai County Sheriff's Office](#) (YCSO) and Yavapai County Medical Examiner referred the case to the [Ramapo College Investigative Genetic Genealogy Center](#). In May, the North Texas Center for Human Identification sent the extract from Rock Collection John Doe to Intermountain Forensics in Salt Lake City, Utah, where whole genome sequencing and bioinformatics were performed. A profile was developed and uploaded to GEDmatch Pro and FamilyTreeDNA.

In July, students in the [Ramapo College IGG Bootcamp](#) worked on the case. It took them, along with IGG Center intern Ethan Schwartz, fewer than 2 days to produce a candidate lead which was then handed over to YCSO. The following month, a DNA sample was taken from the daughter of Capt. Yager to directly compare to the jaw bone profile.

It was not until March 2024 that the DNA sample from Capt. Yager's daughter confirmed a parent/child relationship, resolving the case and confirming that Rock Collection John Doe was indeed Capt. Everett Leland Yager.

No one is quite sure how the jaw bone ended up in Arizona since the accident took place in the air over California. One theory is that a scavenger, such as a bird, picked it up and eventually deposited it during its travels over Arizona. Plans are being made to reunite the remains with the family.



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This is the first case resolution performed by the IGG's summer bootcamp student cohort, and New York resident and Suffern High School student Ethan Schwartz is reportedly the youngest person to ever contribute to an investigative genetic genealogy case resolution.

"This case was a lesson in expecting the unexpected, and a testament to the power of IGG education at Ramapo College of New Jersey," said Cairenn Binder, assistant director of the Ramapo College IGG Center. "The team that worked on this case at our IGG bootcamp included some truly outstanding researchers, and we are so proud of them for helping to repatriate Captain Yager's remains and return them to his family."

For more information about Ramapo College, the IGG Center and its offerings, visit [ramapo.edu/igg](http://ramapo.edu/igg).

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**ABOUT RAMAPO COLLEGE**

Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The comprehensive college is situated among the beautiful Ramapo Mountains, is within commuting distance to New York City, was named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondéNast Traveler*, and boasts the best on-campus housing in New Jersey per Niche.com. Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master's degrees in Accounting, Applied Mathematics, Business Administration, Contemporary Instructional Design, Computer Science, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a Doctor of Nursing Practice.