

Dr. John F. Dowd is an Emeritus Professor of Geology at the University of Georgia, where his academic career focused on hydrogeology and groundwater systems. He holds a B.S. from the University of Maine and a Master of Forest Science and a Ph.D. from Yale University.

Before his academic career, Dr. Dowd served on active duty in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1972. Following Officer Candidate School, he was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division as a platoon leader. After advisor training, he served with the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) as Assistant Senior Advisor to the 52nd Vietnamese Ranger Battalion (Biệt Động Quân), operating throughout III Corps and participating in the Cambodian Incursion alongside the 5th ARVN Armored Cavalry. Following recovery from combat-related injuries, he served with the 10th Special Forces Group as an A-Team XO, A-Team Commander, and B-Team S-4 before leaving active duty as a Captain to pursue graduate studies.

Today, Dr. Dowd is a member of the Human Remains Recovery Working Group at the University of Georgia, a multidisciplinary team that brings together experts in geology, geography, anthropology, archaeology, biology, engineering, and artificial intelligence. The group collaborates with organizations including the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), the Vietnamese government, and Project Recover to locate and recover the remains of missing U.S. and Vietnamese personnel. Their work integrates advanced technologies such as ground-penetrating radar, electrical conductivity surveys, drone-based remote sensing, environmental DNA analysis, and innovative applications of artificial intelligence. Recently, the team hosted a senior Vietnamese delegation at UGA to demonstrate these technologies and has conducted field demonstrations in Vietnam, laying the groundwork for continued collaboration and training initiatives.

Dr. Dowd's unique combination of military service, scientific expertise, and international humanitarian work provides a distinctive perspective on the intersection of technology, history, and the ongoing mission to account for those missing from past conflicts.