

before the Board at this time. In his January 3, 2011 report, Dr. Thomas J. O'Dowd, the referee physician, noted reviewing the operative reports for the acromioclavicular resection in 1997 and based his impairment rating in part on the acromioclavicular joint resection which correlated to a 12 percent impairment rating under the under sixth edition of the A.M.A., *Guides*. An OWCP medical adviser concurred in this determination. OWCP's May 20 and December 19, 2011 schedule award decisions found that Dr. O'Dowd represented the weight of the medical evidence.

The Board has duly considered the matter and notes that the case is not in posture for a decision. As noted, Dr. O'Dowd, an impartial specialist, considered records from file number xxxxxx656 in determining appellant's impairment rating but these records are not presently before the Board. Pursuant to its procedures, OWCP has determined that cases should be combined where correct adjudication depends on cross-referencing between files or when there is more than one claim involving the same part of the body.² In the instant appeal, it appears that, for a full and fair adjudication, OWCP claims pertaining to appellant's upper extremities should be combined pursuant to OWCP procedures. This will allow OWCP to consider all relevant evidence in developing appellant's claim.

The case will be remanded to OWCP to combine case file numbers xxxxxx426 and xxxxxx656. Following this and such other development as deemed necessary, OWCP shall issue an appropriate merit decision on appellant's claim.

² Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8(c) (February 2000).

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the December 19, 2011 decision be set aside and the matter remanded to OWCP for further proceedings consistent with this order.

Issued: November 26, 2012
Washington, DC

Richard J. Daschbach, Chief Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Colleen Duffy Kiko, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Patricia Howard Fitzgerald, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board