



DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY

2300 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2300

MISIDENTIFICATION MEMO

DPAA Number:	DPAA17-0008
Case Number:	CIL 2014-123
Name:	GUTIERREZ, Juan, F.
Date of Birth:	29 September 1916
Service Number:	20843125
Rank/Service:	Private first class (Pfc)
Unit:	200th Coastal Artillery AntiAircraft
Location of Loss:	Cabanatuan, Luzon, Philippines
Date of Loss:	19 November 1942
Date of Original Identification:	29 October 1946
Date of Report:	17 January 2017

BACKGROUND

On 8 December 1941 Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands and intense fighting continued until 6 May 1942 when Corregidor fell. Thousands of U.S. and Filipino soldiers were taken prisoner, including many that were forced to endure the infamous Bataan Death March en route to the Japanese-operated POW camp at Cabanatuan on the island of Luzon, Philippines. Almost 2,800 of these POWs perished in this camp. On 19 November 1942, thirteen American servicemen and one American civilian died from malnutrition and medical neglect while in the camp hospital. These men were buried in Common Grave 717 (CG 717) in the camp cemetery. Records indicate that among these 14 men was Pfc Juan F. GUTIERREZ.

Following the war, American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) personnel exhumed the Cabanatuan cemetery and relocated the remains to a temporary U.S. military cemetery that had been established near Manila to affect identifications. This process included multiple exhumations and disinternments of the CG 717 group, resulting in commingling of the individuals such that most could not be identified. However, four of the fourteen men originally buried in CG 717 were identified (Pfcs Bain, GUTIERREZ, Nichols and Sgt Hanscom) and the remains returned to their respective next of kin.

On 29 October 1946 the Office of the Quartermaster General identified skeletal remains as Pfc Juan F. GUTIERREZ, based primarily on dental comparison. These remains were subsequently buried in Grave 203, Section Q of Santa Fe National Cemetery, Santa Fe, New Mexico, in April of 1950. The remains included a "perfect" dentition; unfortunately, the buried skeletal elements are not detailed in the historic records. This identification was not conducted using the methods or techniques standard for current scientific rigor.

The remains that were not identified were ultimately reburied as Unknown Remains at the permanent American Battle Monuments Commission cemetery at Fort McKinley in Manila. Among these Unknown Remains were the remaining ten individuals originally buried in the Cabanatuan cemetery in CG 717.

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Starting in the early 2010s, repeated external inquiries and legal action initiated by a family member possibly related to one of the Unknowns from CG 717 resulted in several scientific and historical reviews of the assemblage to evaluate the identification potential of the remaining ten Unknowns. In this process, it was noted that there was a high likelihood of misidentification of some or all of the original identifications from CG 717 due to commingling (REFS: Historical Research Concerning Grave 717, Cabanatuan Camp #3 Cemetery [Philippines JPAC Incident 425] by Heather Harris, dtd 7 September 2010; and MFR, PHILIPPINES JPAC INCIDENT 425, by Mike Dolski, dtd 15 January 2015).

In 2014 the Secretary of the Army granted permission to exhume the ten graves associated with the Cabanatuan Common Grave 717. On 28 August 2014 the remains were accessioned into the laboratory as CIL 2014-122 through CIL 2014-131. To date, DNA analyses have shown that each casket contains the remains of an average of three different individuals, with a range of 1-7. One casket had no reportable data from any DNA sample thus far, leaving the skeletal number of individuals as one. Of the four individuals previously identified, three of them, Pfc Nichols and Bain, and Sgt Hanscom, have now been rescinded due to documented commingling within the remains buried as those men.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

DNA Analysis:

The Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) reports that mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) testing of elements from three different CG 717 accessions yielded results with a Native American/Asian haplogroup (Haplogroup M). This unassigned sequence (labeled sequence #9 for administrative purposes) has not been observed previously in the comparison database used by AFDIL (0/10428). Private Juan GUTIERREZ's mother, Isidora Gutierrez, was believed to be born in Colorado or New Mexico around 1887, and likely has some Native American ancestry (most 19th century Hispanic individuals are a mixture of Native American or Asian dna types). Given the rarity of the sequence data (0/10428 matches in the AFDIL database), and that there are no other DNA haplogroups of Hispanic background in the CG 717 assemblage, it is likely that this unassigned sequence is Pfc Juan F. GUTIERREZ. Unfortunately, exhaustive genological research has been unable to locate any living biological relatives or descendants for Pfc GUTIERREZ; therefore, no DNA comparisons can be made.

Anthropology Analysis:

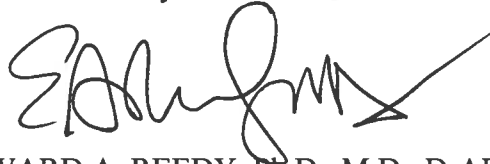
Genetic testing of the CG 717 caskets associated four elements, a right humerus, ulna, radius and tibia of sequence #9, together. These elements, while incomplete, contain some basic biological information suggesting that the decedent was an adult male. Juan F. GUTIERREZ was 26 years old and 65 inches at the time of his death.

OPINION

Mitochondrial DNA analysis assigns four elements from three different CG 717 accessions into one sequence (#9). Sequence #9 is Haplogroup M, a Native American/Asian haplogroup. Only

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one out of 16 sequences found in the 10 caskets from the CG 717 has a haplogroup that likely matches Pfc GUTIERREZ biological history, and that is sequence #9. Further, the entirety of the CG 717 accession group has been shown to be highly commingled. Three of the previous identifications from the 1940's have been shown to be in err. The likelihood that Pfc GUTIERREZ was correctly identified in 1946 given the documented degree of commingling of the original remains, the current DNA evidence, and the substandard techniques employed at that time is exceedingly unlikely. In my opinion, the remains located in Grave 203, Section Q, Santa Fe National Cemetery, Santa Fe, New Mexico are not demonstrably Pfc Juan F. GUTIERREZ and they require exhumation and analysis for proper identification. It is most plausible that the remains of Pfc GUTIERREZ are presently in the DPAA Laboratory. The identification of Pfc Juan F. GUTIERREZ from 1946 is hereby rescinded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. A. Reedy', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

EDWARD A. REEDY, Ph.D., M.D., D-ABP
Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Navy
Science Director
Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency