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## Forensic Odontology Report Identification of a POW/MIA WWII soldier Pvt. Arthur H. Kelder, 36016623, United States Army

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### Introduction

In November, 2011 I was contacted by John Eakin, 9865 Tower View, Helotes, Texas regarding the possibility of assisting with the identification of a member of his family, a soldier that reportedly died in 1942 in a WWII Japanese prisoner of war camp in the Philippines.

### Background

The soldier, Pvt. Arthur H. Kelder, 36016623 was a soldier in the U.S. Army and had been assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital, Bataan, Philippines. He reportedly died of an un-named disease while a prisoner at Cabanatuan Camp # 1. He was reported to have been one of a group of fourteen Americans interred on 19 November 1942. He was listed on an extract for a Cabanatuan POW Camp Cemetery burial roster for grave 717. This document listed Pvt. Kelder as having a date of birth of 6/18/16 and having died at 4:35 PM , 11/19/42. The burial roster was maintained by the POWs and was recovered after the war.

The fourteen sets of remains from grave 717 were disinterred on 8 January 1946. The remains, including those of Pvt. Kelder were assigned names or numbers then re-interred in Manila Cemetery #2 on 7 February 1946. Four of the soldiers were identified at that time, one by dog tags and three by dental

records. The remaining unidentified soldiers were reburied then once more disinterred and transferred first to the Manila Mausoleum and later to what is now known as the American Battle Monuments Cemetery in Manila. A 12 December 1946 document, E.O. 13526, an Executive Order transferring the operation of the cemetery to the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) chronicles the reports of deaths and disinterment/re-interment records of Cabanatuan Camps 1, 2, and 3 and includes statements of verification for the records including a letter from an American Captain Conn who was directly responsible for compiling death records in Cabanatuan. This document was the basis for the identifications of Hanscom, Nichols, and Gutierrez and authenticates the burial record which places Pvt. Kelder in grave 717.

### **Identification of US Military wartime decedents**

In 1949 and again in 1950, Headquarters, American Graves Registration Service, Philcom Zone reported that the ten remaining unidentified recovered from Cabanatuan grave 717 were unidentifiable due to lack of sufficient identifying data.

The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) conducts global search, recovery, and laboratory operations to identify unaccounted-for Americans from past conflicts in order to support the Department of Defense's personnel accounting efforts. The activities of JPAC involve coordination with U.S. agencies involved in the POW/MIA issue, including the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, the Armed Forces mortuary affairs offices, U. S. Pacific Command, Department of State, the Joint Staff, Defense Intelligence Agency, the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory and the U.S. Air Force's Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory. The stated mission of JPAC is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of the nation's past conflicts.

<http://www.jpac.pacom.mil>

Dental Identification is one of the key methodologies for human identification laboratories including JPAC. There is information indicating that dental identification was used to identify three soldiers from Cabanatuan grave 717. There is however no information indicating that any attempt was made to obtain civilian antemortem dental records for Pvt. Kelder. Pvt. Kelder's older brother, Herman P. Kelder, III, DDS, was his dentist and had completed treatment for Pvt. Kelder prior to his brother's induction into military service. Antemortem dental records for Pvt. Kelder would very likely have been readily available in 1946. In 1994 Dr. Kelder prepared a taped account of his dental treatment for his brother, Pvt. Arthur H. Kelder. In that account he detailed the replacement of silver fillings with gold inlays.

Only one dental charting of the remains still listed as unidentified from Cabanatuan grave 717 indicates the presence of gold inlays. That set of remains, X816(Manila #2 Cemetery) was somehow associated with Cpl. Frederick. G. Collins, Jr., 6578818. The method of that association is not fully explained and the association is likely incorrect. Cpl. Collins died on the same day as Pvt. Kelder. Based on the

antemortem dental information that is now available, the remains associated with Cpl Collins, X816 (Manila #2 Cemetery), are more likely to be the remains of Pvt. Arthur H. Kelder.

Family reference samples for Pvt. Kelder are on file with the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory. (AFDIL) There is a strong possibility that either nuclear DNA (DNA) or mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) or both could be recovered from the various remains in grave 717. There is the possibility of both exclusionary and inclusionary findings for those remains. The likelihood of making positive associations for those remains from grave 717 is high.

### **Opinion**

The information in the condensed summary above indicates a very strong possibility that the remains characterized as X816 (Manila #2 Cemetery) are the remains of Pvt. Arthur H. Kelder. It is my opinion that following exhumation, comprehensive examination and testing of the remains from that Cabanatuan grave could very likely result in the positive identification of some of those remains including those of Pvt. Kelder.

Respectfully submitted,

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