

**RESTRICTED
AIRMAIL**

EXHIBIT

14

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.**

IN REPLY REFER TO QMGMT 293
GRS Far East

28 November 1949

SUBJECT: Identification of World War II Deceased

**TO : Commanding Officer
American Graves Registration Service
Philcom Zone
APO 900, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California**

1. Reference is made to Board Proceedings, your headquarters, dated 8 February and 26 April 1949, recommending the following individual identifications:

Unknown X-1572 as 1st Lt Kenneth L. Wilson O 398 233
" X-4685 " 2d Lt Alexander R. Nininger O-23761

2. Unknown X-1752 was recovered from an isolated grave in Hermosa, Bataan, P.I., and recommended for identification on the basis of information furnished by Mr. Jose Yondoc, a Philippine citizen. The next of kin of Lt Wilson were provided with the facts of this case, however, they were in possession of certain information which they believe, and which contradicts the statement of Mr. Yondoc. This information is forwarded to your headquarters in Inclosure #3 and is an extract of a statement by Mr. Lee C. Brooks, formerly Lt Brooks and later Major Brooks, who was a close personal friend of Lt Wilson and was at Abucay at the time Lt Wilson was killed.

3. Unknown X-4685 was recovered from Grave #9, Soldiers Row, Abucay Cemetery, Abucay, P.I. A letter from the father of Lt David W. Maynard, O-38762, indicates that Lieutenants Maynard, Wilson, Compton, Green and Nininger, and Capt Meyer were interred in the churchyard at Abucay. Burials of these men were under the supervision of a Chaplain Secina.

4. This Office has succeeded in contacting Lt Col John W. Raulston, M.C., who was in command of the medical collecting station located in the Catholic Church at Abucay. He has furnished a diagram showing the approximate location of burials performed by Chaplain Secina. An extract of his statement and diagram are also attached.

**HAN
File**

2 Aug 50
Stat. W. L. Lavin
Identification Branch

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QMGMT 293

28 November 1949

GRS Far East

SUBJECT: Identification of World War II Deceased

5. In view of the evidence presented the subject Board Proceedings have been disapproved and are returned herewith. It is requested that your headquarters reinvestigate the facts in this case and submit to this Office a report of your investigation.

FOR THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL:

T. H. METZ
Lt. Colonel, QMC
Memorial Division

7 Incls

- 1. Bd Proc (Nininger, A.J., Jr)
- 2. " " (" , A.R., Jr)
- 3. " " (Wilson, K.L.)
- 4. Extract cpy info 1st ind
dtd 11/5/49
- 5. Extract cpy info obtained
telephone conversation be-
tween Capt Vogel & Mr Brooks
- 6. Map of Abucay, Bataan
- 7. OQMG Form 371 (in dup) for
Wilson, Kenneth L.

Faint handwritten notes and stamps

**NAV
File**
2 Aug 50
W. H. McArthur
Identification Branch

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EXHIBIT
15

GRPZ 293 1st Ind
(28 November 1949)
SUBJECT: Identification of World War II Deceased.

HEADQUARTERS, AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE, PHILCOM ZONE
APO 900 7 MAR 1950

TO: The Quartermaster General, Department of the Army, Washington
25, D. C., ATTN: Memorial Division

1. The following are the reinvestigation findings pertinent to the cases of 1st Lt. Kenneth L. Wilson and 2nd Lt. Alexander R. Nininger:

a. Case of Lt. Wilson:

(1) A thorough check of all Abucay recoveries does not reveal any Unknown which could be associated with the deceased on the basis of favorable comparisons of physical and dental characteristics.

(2) The information furnished by Mr. Lee C. Brooks definitely precludes the possibility of associating Unknown X-1572 with Lt. Wilson. The statement of Mr. Jose Yondoc may be discounted since he recalls the name of the deceased only as "1st Lt. Wilson" and the first name is unknown. The previous association, however, was established on the basis of information furnished by your office to the effect that Lt. Kenneth L. Wilson is the only Wilson listed as killed in action in the area where the Unknown was recovered and within the dates indicated as the approximate date of death of the Unknown.

(3) In view of the negative findings, the case of Lt. Wilson is currently under process as Non-recoverable and Unknown X-1572 is being considered as Unidentifiable.

b. Case of Lt. Nininger:

(1) After a re-study of this case, it was determined that no other Unknown could be positively associated with Lt. Nininger aside from Unknown X-4685. The identification data for all the other Abucay Unknowns, most particularly those recovered from the immediate vicinity of the Abucay church, were carefully screened with unfavorable results.

(2) The information that Lts. Nininger, Wilson, Maynard, Compton, Green and Capt. Meyer were interred in the churchyard at Abucay has been found to be inconsistent with the fact that the remains of Capt. Adolph E. Meier (correct name of Capt. Meyer) were disinterred from US Army Cemetery No. 3, Mariveles, Bataan.

293. 878 Star Post

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2 Aug 50
1st Lt. Wilson
Identification Branch

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GRPZ 293

(28 November 1949)

SUBJECT: Identification of World War II Deceased Cont'd

A check made by your Office does not show a casualty listed as Capt. Meyer who was killed in action in Bataan.

(3) The information furnished by Lt. Col. John W. Raulston, MC, and Mr. Lee C. Brooks does not positively establish the fact that either Lt. Nininger or Lt. Wilson was buried in the spot shown on enclosed diagram since neither of the two informants was present personally when the burials were made under the supervision of Chaplain Secina.

(4) The foregoing findings, therefore, give way to the probability that the body of Lt. Nininger was buried in Grave 9 of the Abucay Cemetery from where Unknown X-4685 was disinterred. On the other hand, it is also probable that the team which made the recovery of Unknown X-4685 might have arbitrarily named the place of recovery as "Abucay Cemetery". It is believed that the agreement in the grave number is sufficient basis to establish the association of this Unknown with Lt. Nininger since two probabilities clearly exist with regards to the exact place of burial of the deceased.

(5) Moreover, available records in this Headquarters show that fourteen (14) remains were recovered from Abucay churchyard, only two (2) of which are Americans - Capt. H. A. McCurdy, O-28378 (identified by tag) and Unknown X-1671, AGRS Mausoleum (formerly X-3431, Manila #2). The rest are those of PS soldiers. No other recoveries are carried on our records as recovered from the churchyard. According to the next of kin of Lt. Nininger an officer personally saw the decedent's grave sometime in 1945. Several searches have since been conducted in that area and there is no doubt that the remains of subject deceased have been recovered as an Unknown and there is very little possibility for our search teams to overlook that grave located in such a very prominent place.

(6) In view of the above, it is the opinion of this Headquarters that the remains of Unknown X-4685 are in reality those of Lt. Nininger. The Board Proceedings are being returned herewith for a reconsideration.

2. In the event that the resubmittal of our previous recommendation in the case of Lt. Nininger is not acceptable to your Office, it is requested

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- 2 -

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2 Aug 50
[Signature]
Identification Branch

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GRPZ 293

(28 November 1949)

SUBJECT: Identification of World War II Deceased Cont'd

that this Headquarters be so advised as soon as practicable to allow an early resolution of the case as Non-recoverable.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

John Shypula
JOHN SHYPULA
1st Lt., Infantry
Adjutant

7 Incls:

- 1 & 2: n/c
- 3: w/d
- 4 - 6: n/c
- 7: w/d

Added:

- 8: Cy, Report of Disinterment
re: Capt. McCURDY
- 9: Cy, Report of Disinterment
re: X-3431, Manila #2

NAN
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2 Aug 50
Walter G. Quinn
Identification Branch

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**EXHIBIT
16**

QMGMT 293
GRS Far East
SUBJECT: Identification of World War II Deceased

2d Ind

Dept. of the Army, OQMG, Washington 25, D. C., 24 March 1950

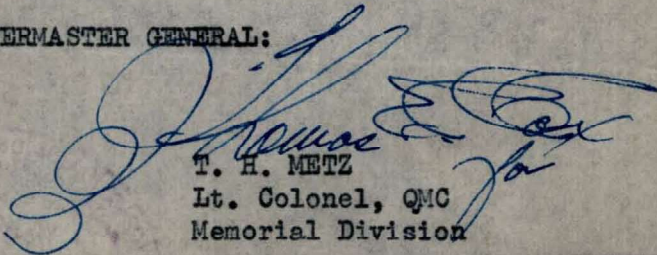
TO: Commanding Officer, American Graves Registration Service, Philcom Zone, APO 900, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, California

1. The reinvestigation recently conducted by your headquarters, as narrated in your 1st indorsement, has been carefully considered, however, a question of a complete and comprehensive search and recovery operation in the exact area indicated on the drawing of the Abucay Churchyard, (Incl #1), remains doubtful. The statement and drawing submitted to this Office by Lt Col John W. Raulston are clear and unquestionable. He states that Chaplain Secina "established a little graveyard in a plot of ground within the five foot wall around the church". This information agrees in every detail with statements received from other persons who were present at Abucay and who are now in the U. S. Paragraph 1, sub-paragraph 5 of 1st indorsement states that "(14) remains were recovered from Abucay Churchyard". These fourteen graves containing 2 Americans and 12 Philippine Scouts were located outside of the five foot wall around the churchyard and therefore were not within the churchyard. The difference between these two locations is clear and they cannot be collectively designated within the churchyard.

2. The resolution of this case is further dependent upon the information furnished to the next of kin of the officers involved. Fellow officers who survived and have returned to the U.S. have presented to the NOK a clear picture of interment in the Abucay Churchyard.

3. In view of the above, it is requested that a search and recovery team be dispatched to the Abucay Churchyard and that an extensive excavation of the location marked on inclosure 6 be undertaken. It is further requested that an accurate drawing be made of the churchyard and that the area excavated be accurately marked. In view of the numerous requests made to this Office by NOK, it is also requested that every attempt be made to expedite the above, and forward to this Office the results of your investigation.

FOR THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL:



T. H. METZ
Lt. Colonel, OMC
Memorial Division

7 Incls: n/c

NAN
File

2 Aug 50
Chas. W. Lurie
Identification Branch

-6-

**RESTRICTED
AIRMAIL**

EXHIBIT

17

CH #11

HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE
PHILCOM ZONE

APO 928
12 Sept 1950

CASE HISTORY FOR REMAINS CONSIDERED NON-RECOVERABLE

NININGER, Alexander J. Jr.
1st Lt., O-23 761

BASIS FOR DECLARING REMAINS NON-RECOVERABLE

1. According to attached OQMG Form 371, 1st Lt Alexander J. Nininger Jr., was killed in action on 12 January 1942 at Bataan, Luzon, Philippine Islands.
2. No report of burial is on file for subject deceased.
3. Information obtained from A. R. Nininger, next of kin, states that subject officer was buried on 13 Jan 1942 in the churchyard of Abucay, Bataan, Philippine Islands in a grave marked No. 9. Investigation reveals that 14 remains were recovered from behind the south wall of the Abucay churchyard, only two of which were Americans, the balance being those of Philippine Scouts. A cross-comparison of the processing data of these remains with the army records for subject officer reveals unfavorable results.
4. Further investigation indicates the feasibility of associating Unknown X-4685, AGRS Mausoleum, Manila, P. I., a recovery from Grave #9, Soldier's row, Abucay Cemetery, Abucay, Bataan, Philippine Islands, with Lt Nininger, on the basis of favorable dental comparison. Board Proceedings recommending this identification, however, were not favorably acted upon by OQMG in view of the preponderance of evidence showing that subject officer was buried at Abucay churchyard, among which is a statement signed by Lt. Col. John W. Raulston, MC, who was in command of the medical collecting station located in the Catholic church at Abucay. Col. Raulston's statement reads in part:

"In regard to the burials, when it became necessary for the burial units to take care of that function, a chaplain by the name of Secina supervised it. He kept records, but he lost his life in 1944 on a Jap transport which was torpedoed. I do not know whether his records were left in the Philippines or not. He established a little graveyard in the plot of the ground within the five foot wall around the church. I cannot recall

Inf #3

CASE HISTORY FOR NON-RECOVERABLE REMAINS: (Cont'd)

NININGER, Alexander J. Jr.
1st Lt., O-23 761

definitely the exact spot where the graves were located, but I have indicated on the map the general area to the best of my recollection, and have also added some building structures to the drawing of the church. I estimate that about six burials were made and the burials were done under cover of darkness. I was not present at the burials." (*Italics supplied.*)

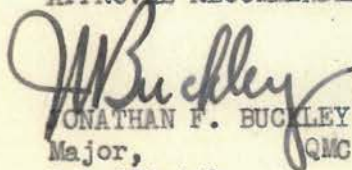
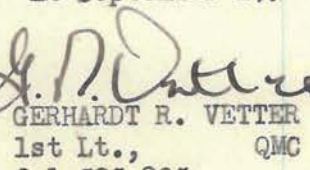
5. In view of the above information and the fact that the remains recovered by this headquarters from the Abucay churchyard were located outside of the five foot wall around the churchyard, a search team was dispatched on 9 May 1950 to undertake an extensive excavation of the area within the five foot wall around the church. The excavation yielded several remains. These were examined at the Central Identification Laboratory with the result that all of the recoveries were found to be Mongoloid.

6. All other applicable recoveries from Bataan were checked for possible association with Lt. Nininger but results were negative.

7. No information is at hand on which to continue the search for Lt Nininger's remains.

8. It is therefore recommended that the remains of 1st Lt Alexander J. NININGER Jr., O-23 761, be considered non-recoverable and that all records pertaining to search for and recovery of his remains be closed.

APPROVAL RECOMMENDED: 12 September 1950

		
ONATHAN F. BUCKLEY Major, QMC O-1 579 441 President	GERHARDT R. VETTER 1st Lt., QMC O-1 595 235 Member	CHARLES R. WHAYLEN 2d Lt., QMC O-2 014 511 Recorder

AIRMAIL

EXHIBIT

18

5
OIGET 293
OIS Far East *Ident*

26 September 1950

SUBJECT: Identification of World War II Deceased

TO : Commanding Officer
American Graves Registration Service
Philcom Zone
APO 938, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

1. Reference is made to Certificates of Unidentifiability for the following Unknown Deceased:

Unknown X-4585, AGRS Mausoleum Manila (formerly X-1130 USAF Cemetery Manila #2) Unit 1, Page 8

Unknown X-5074, AGRS Mausoleum Manila, Unit 2, Page 25

2. Subject cases have been reviewed and this Office approves the classification of the above Unknown remains as Unidentifiable.

FOR THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL:

THOMAS H. COX
CAPT QMC
Memorial Division

cc: Adm Section

G. Reynolds:dal
C. C. Salser

Copy furnished: CINCPAC, APO 500

new class 293-Manila #2
293 White/Manila
X-1130
X-5074

AIRMAIL

5 October 1950

RESUME OF THE RECORD

Lt Nininger is reported by The Adjutant General as having been killed in action 12 January 1942.

Col George S. Clarke, under date of 20 February 1944, wrote to the father of Lt Nininger. His letter described in great detail the ferocity of the fighting and the extent to which the U. S. forces were hardpressed by the Japanese. He gave the following account of the burial of Lt Nininger:

"Sandy's remains were carefully brought to the church in the town of Abucay, Province of Bataan, The Philippines. Captain Cecine, Chaplain, 57th Inf. held a reverent and beautiful service for him. He is buried in grave No. 9 behind the South wall of the Abucay Church beside many of my fine brave young officers who also died in that same action. Men of his Company carefully placed the exotic flowers of the Philippines upon the wooden cross that marks his last resting place. I was present personally for your son's funeral services. It was beautiful and reverent, honoring a man that I loved, one of my fine young officers and a brave man. I may say that his men loved him too, and his memory will live with them as long as they live." (See Tab A)

Major Harold M. Imerman, MD, in a letter to this office on 10 October 1949, stated that Lt Nininger was brought into the hospital at Abucay and was found to be dead on admission; that if he can recall correctly Lt Nininger was buried in the immediate vicinity of the church of Abucay, probably in the church yard; that Father Secina officiated; and that he does not think Lt Nininger was buried in the Abucay cemetery. (See Tab B)

Lt Col John W. Raulston, MC, in a letter to this office on 5 November 1949, stated that he was in command of a medical collecting station located in the Catholic church at Abucay in the early part of the Bataan campaign; that he has personal knowledge concerning the death of several officers at Abucay but the only one he can remember is McCurdy; that there were one or two who were killed in their foxholes by snipers whose bodies could not be retrieved for awhile; that he was not sure now that they were ever recovered; that if not recovered they were buried on the spot; that Chaplain Secina, who later lost his life on a Japanese transport, performed the burials which were done under cover of darkness; and that the Chaplain established a little graveyard in the plot of ground within the five foot wall around the church. Col Raulston marked an overlay with his idea of the location of the graves.

RESUME OF THE RECORD (Cont'd)

5 Oct 1950

Mr William P. Cain, formerly Captain, in a letter to this office on 2 November 1949 stated Lt Nininger was killed about 3/4 of a mile west of Mabatang while assisting Company K in retaking its lost ground; that he knows nothing concerning the burial of the remains of Lt Nininger; that he removed a West Point class ring from Lt Nininger's body; and that it may be that Lt Nininger was buried where he was killed. (See Tab D)

Within a short time after the Philippines were retaken from the Japanese recovery of remains from isolated burial locations was undertaken. Among the early recoveries were fourteen remains from graves just south of the south wall of the Abucay church yard. Two of these remains were found to be American and the remainder Philippine Scouts. Of the two American remains one was identified as those of Capt McCurdy and the other has not been identified. The dental features of the remains recovered as an Unknown American (X-166) do not compare in any way with the dental information available for Lt Nininger. (See Tab E)

Remains which were interred in Abucay Cemetery at about the time Lt Nininger met his death were recovered also soon after the Japanese were driven out of the Philippines. This cemetery is located less than a mile south of the Abucay Catholic Church. The field has recommended on several occasions that the remains recovered from Grave 9 of the Soldiers' Row in this cemetery be identified as those of Lt Nininger. This recommendation has not been approved because the height of that individual in life was between eight and ten inches less than the height of Lt Nininger.

During May 1950 a Recovery Party disinterred the entire area within the walls of the Abucay Church yard not occupied by buildings or concrete memorials. The area where Col Raulston believed American graves were located was included in the operation. In that area many native caskets were found, many of which contained the remains of children. During the operation 18 remains were recovered which the search party decided should be taken to the laboratory for examination since there was a possibility that they could be American. Upon examination by the Anthropologist it was found that all 18 were individuals of Mongoloid ancestry. (See Tab F)

Many remains have been recovered in the Mabatang-Abucay area which have not been identified. A majority of these are without identifying features and those with such features do not match the recorded dental information for Lt Nininger.

The information furnished Mr Nininger and this office by various persons who were on duty in the Philippines at the time Lt Nininger was killed, is conflicting in many instances. That furnished to the father of Lt Nininger appears to have been composed with the idea of consoling him in his great loss.

RESUME OF THE RECORD (Cont'd)

5 Oct 50

A study of this entire case indicates that the remains of Lt Nininger were not removed from the place of death but were interred hastily at that place; and that his remains have not been recovered or they have been recovered near where he was killed but are unidentifiable because of the lack of identifying features.



ROBERT G. LAY
Capt QMC
Memorial Division

EXHIBIT
20

QMMP 293
Nininger, Alexander R., Jr.
SN 023 761

13 August 1951

Mr. Alexander R. Nininger, Sr.
222 Southeast 10th Street
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Dear Mr. Nininger:

This Office desires to furnish you information concerning the results of the investigations which have been conducted in an effort to recover and/or identify the remains of your son, the late First Lieutenant Alexander R. Nininger, Jr.

The records of the Department of the Army indicate that your son was killed in action, 12 January 1942, in the vicinity of Mabatang and Abucay, Philippine Islands. The records further indicate that you have been informed that the remains of your son were brought to the churchyard in the town of Abucay where they were buried.

The Graves Registration Service of the Army conducted extensive investigations in the vicinity of Mabatang and Abucay in an attempt to recover and identify the remains of your son. The most recent investigation in the Abucay Churchyard was conducted during May 1950. At that time, a recovery party disinterred the entire area within the walls of the Abucay Churchyard not occupied by buildings or concrete memorials. No American remains were discovered during this most recent investigation. During previous investigations in this area, a row of graves established during the war were disinterred. These graves contained the remains of two Americans and twelve Philippine Scouts. Each of these remains has been identified. It is believed that these graves which were located just outside the south wall of the Abucay Churchyard between the wall and the river bank are the graves which were reported as having been seen by American personnel on the death march.

In an attempt to resolve the conflicting information concerning the reported burial of your son's remains at Abucay, the persons reported to have witnessed the interments or believed to have any information concerning them were contacted either by letter or by telephone. While some

QMGHP 293
Hiningar, Alexander R., Jr.
SN 023 761

13 August 1951

Information was obtained from some of these persons, it did not lead to the recovery of the remains. During the course of telephone conversations with some of the survivors, it was brought out that considerable enemy action had taken place in the vicinity of the Abucay Church and that the building and surrounding area were subjected to heavy artillery firing both during the time it was in the hands of our forces and after its capture by the Japanese. It was also brought out that in many instances the Japanese Forces desecrated the graves of American soldiers and particularly those who had been actively engaged in the defense of American positions. Graves were also opened in the hopes of finding American equipment and ammunition which might have been buried with the remains.

The death roster prepared by Chaplain Secina has been studied; however, it does not contain the burial location of the remains of any of the individuals whose service he is reported to have conducted.

All unknowns recovered from the general area of Matatang and Abucay have been processed by accredited technicians utilizing advanced scientific and technical procedures to obtain the most accurate information possible concerning these unknowns. The information obtained as a result of this processing was compared with the information on file with the Department of the Army for your son. However, no association was possible between any of these unknowns and your son because of the difference in dental and physical information.

Having considered all the factors in this case: the contradiction with regard to the actual place of interment, the shelling of the church and surrounding areas, the desecration and opening of graves by Japanese Forces, the intensive investigations conducted in the area, and inability of Graves Registration Service of the Army to locate the remains of your son, it has been determined that his remains are nonrecoverable.

Realizing the extent of your great loss, it is regretted that there is no grave at which to pay homage. May the knowledge of your son's honorable service to his country be a source of sustaining comfort to you.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES B. CLEARWATER
Colonel, QMG
Chief, Memorial Division



ep/rb
cc: DFRB
cc: Rec Sec

15 AUG 14 11 47 AM '51
O Q M G
MAIL & RECORDS BRANCH

March 17, 1986



Mr. John F. Manning
Assistant Chief
Memorial Affairs and Casualty Support Division
U.S. Army Military Personnel Center
2461 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22331

Dear Mr. Manning:

This letter is to formally request

- (1) that the case with respect to the remains of my uncle, Alexander Ramsey Nininger, Jr. (O-23761), be reopened based on information previously not available to the U.S. Army
- (2) that, as a result, my uncle's remains be returned from Bataan, Republic of the Philippines, for reburial at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.

As you know, my uncle was awarded the first Medal of Honor of World War II for his exploits in the Philippines. Both my mother and I (and my grandfather before us) have always wanted his remains returned home. I trust you will find the attached material is sufficient to pursue the matter:

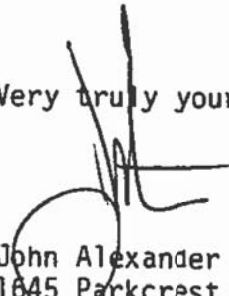
- Tab A is a "Summary of the Record (Correspondence and Events)" by me dated March 15, 1986.
- Tab B is a compilation of "Questions, Observations and Recommendations" by me dated March 15, 1986.

It is important for me to note and acknowledge the assistance that your office has provided in my efforts to arrive at this point -- a point that is the accumulation of several years of research, discussion, interviews and analysis. I know the difficulties that lie ahead but under the circumstances I trust you will agree that it is worth the effort.

It goes without saying that I stand ready at any time to be of assistance even to the point of travelling to the Philippines to be of help.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


John Alexander Patterson
1645 Parkcrest Circle, #201
Reston, Va. 22090

2-2-10-1986
MANNING
CHECKED
7 APR
209 sent

John Alexander Patterson
March 15, 1986

SUMMARY OF THE RECORD (CORRESPONDENCE AND EVENTS) SURROUNDING
ATTEMPTS TO LOCATE THE GRAVE OF
1ST LIEUT. ALEXANDER RAMSEY NININGER, JR.
KILLED ON BATAAN, JANUARY 12, 1942

- 2/20/44: Col. G. Clarke (X-CO 57th) to A.R. Nininger, Sr., responding to latter's questions, states that ARN, Jr. was brought to the Abucay church where a service was held by Captain Secina (sic), 57th Chaplain. According to Clarke N was then (1/13/42?) buried in grave No.9 behind the south wall of the church. (Comment: see below regarding issue of Clarke's veracity and the question of the "church wall".)
- 2/5/46: ARN., Sr., to Mrs. Cole, notes that Maj. H.M. Immerman and Capt. Wm. P. Cain verified Clarke's account. A Lt. Moore is supposedly in charge of the cemetery. N also notes receiving letters from Maj. Yeager, General Wainwright and Maj. Calkins (Mrs. Cole's grandson).
- 9/3/46: ARN. to The Adjutant General quotes Clarke and Cole. The latter recounts her grandson's remark that a skull with teeth were sent to Washington for proper identification. ARN asks for an investigation and that his son's remains be brought home for burial at West Point.
- 10/4/46: Capt. Thomas F. Lewin, QMC to ARN, notes that remains recovered and interred in Cemetery #2 in Manila may be ARN, Jr.
- 12/8/48: "Case History for Remains Considered Identifiable" Headquarters PhilCom Zone, American Graves Registration Service. "Unknown X-4685 (from Grave No.9 of Abucay Cemetery?) indicated on ROI are in agreement with those of 2nd Lt. Alexander J. (sic) Nininger, Jr." Also notes that remains formerly interred in Cen. Manila #2 were known as Unknown X-1130. Dental chart compares favorably. (Comment: There is a question regarding height which comes up later over and over again).
- 12/27/48: Philcom Zone Board of Review recommends approval of 12/8/48 Case History.
- 2/17/49: Lt. Col. T.H. Metz, QMC notes height of X-1130 inconsistent with records although dental records comparison "not unfavorable". Investigation of "area behind south wall of the

Abucay Church is requested. (Comment: Metz refers to information from ARN, Sr. on Grave No.9 which was received from Clarke and thus suspect. Also is there an inconsistency regarding the dental records?)

- 4/26/49: "Supplemental Case History for Remains Considered Identifiable" notes letter from Herbert B. Maynard of 9/10/46 stating that ARN Jr., Maynard, Wilson, Compton, Green and Meyer were buried "behind the south wall in Abucay Churchyard." However, it goes on to state that ARN dental record not comparable with remains recovered "behind the south wall" and that Maynard, Wilson and Meyer (sic?) remains all were recommended for identification at other locales. (Comment: later their remains are determined as "non-recoverable"). "Original ROI for X4685 indicates the remains were disinterred from Grave 9, Soldiers Row, Abucay Cemetery (emphasis added) and that remains in Grave 9 beyond the south wall of the Church were identified as those of PFC T. Beles. "In view of above it is believed that X-4685 from Grave 9, Abucay Cemetery are those of Lt. Nininger."
- 8/12/49: Metz asks Clarke about circumstances surrounding ARN's burial.
- 8/19/49: Clarke refers Metz to his 2/20/44 letter to A.R. Nininger, Sr.
- 9/28/49: Metz writes similar letter to William P. Cain.
- 10/10/49: Harold M. Immerman, M.D., notes ARN, Jr. was brought into "the hospital at Abucay ... and was found to be dead on admission." I. was not present at ARN's burial but states that he may have been buried in the "immediate vicinity of the Church of Abucay, probably in the Church yard." "Father Secina officiated." I. states that he does not believe ARN was buried in the Abucay cemetery. (Comment: See later 1985 remarks from Francis).
- 10/26/49 Metz writes a letter to John W. Raulston that is similar to those he wrote to Clarke and Cain.
- 11/2/49: Cain states that he was not at ARN's burial nor can he provide any information.
- 11/5/49: Raulston remembers only McCurdy, a dental officer. He notes an officer shot in the head by a Jap sniper. He states that Secina "established a little graveyard in the plot of ground within the five foot walk around the Church". (Comment: is this the church building or church wall?)
- 11/28/49: "Identification of World War II Deceased" 1st Lt. John Shypula "For the Commanding Officer" opines that X-4685 is ARN.

- 11/28/49: Metz requests another investigation.
- 3/7/50: Re-Investigation Findings from John Shypula: (1) X-4685 most likely (Comment: Patterson's words) ARN; (2) Other information on Churchyard is inconsistent; (3) Raulston was not present at the burial; (4) Given above, ARN most probably X-4685 (5) the Abucay Church was checked out thoroughly. (Comment: See later - 1985 - comments regarding the Army's "thoroughness" on investigating Cheaney case).
- 3/24/50: Metz pursues the question of outside the five foot wall around the churchyard versus churchyard itself. Asks that a team go to the "Abucay Churchyard". (Comment: See later commentary about the Abucay river just south of the church).
- 5/19/50: "Report of Investigation, Headquarters, American Graves Registration Service, Philcom Zone, Otto H. Kaufman. Eighteen partial remains found in Plot 2 next to bell tower (see 5/5/50 map). Remains in Plot 3 were all mongoloid. (Comment: Plot Number 2 is where some accounts have Nininger, Compton, et al buried).
- 5/23/50: Central Identification Point, Manila, Robert B. Fox. Anthropologist states that 18 remains are mongoloid.
- 12/12/50: "Case History for Remains Considered Non-Recoverable" Philcom Zone. Fourteen remains behind south wall yielded unfavorable results. X-4685 from Grave No.9 of Abucay Cemetery has favorable dental comparison in view of evidence that he was buried in the Churchyard. (Comment: This primarily from Clarke and Raulston. The former's comments are suspect and the latter was not at the burial.)
- 10/5/50: "Resume of the Record" notes accounts of Clarke (2/20/44), Immerman (10/10/49), Raulston (11/5/49), Cain (11/2/49); discovery of remains of Americans outside south wall of the Church but not ARN; and that Grave No. 9 of Abucay Cemetery contained remains of an individual ... 8 to 10 inches shorter than ARN (Comment: this means 5'1" to 5'3", i.e., very short). The resume also notes that the May 1950 Recovery Team did not find any remains of an American. Resume concludes that ARN probably was buried hastily in place, or that his remains have not been recovered or that if recovered they are unidentifiable. (Comment: it is known from other sources, e.g., Reynolds, Olson, Yeager, that casualties at this time were brought to the 57th aid station at the Abucay Church).
- 6/28/51: QMC finds that remains of Compton, Green, Maynard, Nininger and Wilson are non-recoverable - noting that "for detailed information on these cases - see classified file on 1/Lt Ira B. Cheaney Jr. SN O-2396 (S-MEM. 523). (Comment: It is

curious that so many remains are "non-recoverable" especially since all of the individuals were killed at about the same time and in the same general area. See later Francis entry and commentary on Cheaney situation).

- 8/13/51: QMC (Col James B. Clearwater) notifies ARN, Sr. of non-recoverable finding.
- 8/21/51: ARN rebuts noting Clarke's 2/20/44 letter, the Cain and Immerman visits in 1945, Calkins comments of 9/3/46 regarding remains being sent to Washington for identification; the desirability of contacting H.K. Johnson and John E. Olson (Comment: they were never contacted nor were others such as R. Reynolds the 1st Battalion Commander, Yeager ARN's Company CO or G. Francis the Deputy CO of the 57th Medical Detachment), photos of Grave No.9 and the Church taken by Calkins. ARN believes that ARN, Jr. was moved from Grave No.9 to Cemetery No.2 in Manila with the number 2836 recorded as "probably Nininger". (Comment: after so much time it may have been that ARN, Sr. wanted the Army to make some assumptions, and have these remains brought home).
- 9/21/51: ARN to Colonel Clearwater acknowledging visit of Col. Edward M. Brown who explained efforts made to find his son's remains. ARN says he will not give up hope.
- 9/21/51: Brown's report of his visit.
- 7/17/68: Oren Womack repeats 1951 findings to ARN's grandmother (Myrtle C. Willard) noting also that Abucay was under heavy shelling and that the Japanese were known to desecrate graves. (Comment: this is the first time this point shows up in print).
- 7/19/68: Willard acknowledges 7/17/68 noting that Major Arthur Wermouth said he helped bury ARN.
- 4/23/84: John Alexander Patterson (ARN, Jr's nephew) writes to
and American Battle Monuments Commission
5/31/84 for copies of the file.
- 7/24/84: ABMC (Martha R. Sell) sends standard letter to next of kin (NOK).
- 10/22/84: ABMC (Col. William E. Ryan, Jr) sends partial file on ARN.
- 10/25/84: Patterson writes Sell indicating that there may be new information regarding the site of ARN's grave.
- October 1984: Patterson begins to send letters to ARN's 57th comrades-in-arms, superiors and medical personnel (not contacted by the Army after WWII) concerning the site of ARN's grave.

- 1/7/85: Patterson asks Ryan to consider new information, e.g., the possibility of ARN's remains being moved to Cemetery No.3 which might be at the north end of a new (and unused?) airfield off the West Road north of Mariveles. Patterson also asks for complete file. (Comment: the point concerning the airfield near Mariveles was mentioned by Olson, but it does not appear to have been possible - see Francis commentary below).
- 1/14/85: Patterson writes Howard Price, Director of the VA Regional Office in Manila about ARN's grave. (2/5/85: Acting Director writes to say Price has had a stroke).
- 1/14/85: On the advice of Dr. Alex Kelly, former 57th surgeon, Patterson writes a similar letter to Mr. Rufus H. Wilson, Minority Counsel and Staff Director, House Committee in Veterans Affairs.
- 2/8/85: William J. Gaulty, Superintendent of the Manila American Cemetery, writes and suggests introducing the topic to BG S. Dugue, Philippine Army, who is the Director of Philippine Veterans Affairs.
- 2/15/85: Wilson writes that he has no information.
- 3/15/85: Ryan writes noting that Patterson's 1/7/85 request for ARN's file has been referred to the Department of the Army, DAPC-CM, Room 984, Hoffman Building, 2461 Eisenhower Ave, Alexandria, VA 22331.
- 4/29/85: John F. Manning, Assistant Chief, Memorial Affairs and Casualty Support Division, U.S. Army Military Personnel Center, 2461 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Va 27331-0400 sends the complete file. (Note: the file's most relevant items are included in the 2/20/44 to 7/19/68 entries noted above).
- 5/28/85: During a telephone conversation Ryan suggests that the subject be pursued with Manning.
- 7/1/85: Patterson writes to ask Manning for the classified Cheaney file and if there is one, the classified file for ARN as well.
- 7/26/85: Manning sends the Cheaney file (Patterson reviewed the file after the 8/1/85 phone conversation noted below) for which no classified material is included, however. The file indicates that as a result of Colonel Clarke's account, the Army reported the disinterment of the Cheaney remains after the war from the Abucay Church cemetery. However, this was not possible since C. was killed at the end of January 1942, when Abucay was in Japanese hands. (Comment: Whether because of

Congressional interest, i.e., then Congressman Richard Milhous Nixon, or not, this news, of course, tends to cast doubt upon previous accounts of the efforts made to find Nininger's remains).

- 8/1/85: Manning spends considerable time on the phone explaining the role of his division and some of the problems regarding records (many of which have been lost or destroyed, e.g., during the St. Louis fire in the 1960's) and the finding of bodies in the tropics after so many years. Manning indicates that if new and detailed information can be provided, the Army will reconsider reopening Nininger's case. Manning also provides the names of other individuals and offices that might be contacted concerning Nininger's actions, death and burial. (On 12/10/85 Patterson calls Manning to brief him on the status of his efforts -- see Francis entries below -- and that he is nearly ready to submit materials as a backdrop to asking that Nininger's case be reopened).
- 8/22/85: As a result of contacts made at the first reunion of the 57th Infantry (PS) held in Grand Junction, Colorado between 6/26/85 and 6/29/85, Garnet Francis' letter of 7/20/85 awaits Patterson when he returns to Zambia after his TDY in the U.S. Francis was the Deputy CO of the 57th Medical Detachment at the time of Nininger's death. He confirmed that Colonel Clarke was a poor source of information and enclosed a map showing Nininger's grave and those of several others (perhaps Wilson, Compton, Maynard and Green who were killed at the same time and in the same area as Nininger, but whose remains were also declared "non-recoverable" after the war - see 6/28/51 entry above) buried south of the Abucay River south of the Catholic Church and not north of the river as reported by Colonel Clarke and others. Francis indicates that the Chaplain responsible for burials (Father Secina) personally picked the burial site for these individuals. Francis also states that no remains were removed for reburial since in his capacity he would have been aware of such activity. On 9/27/85 and 11/8/85 Francis repeats the above in response to letters from Patterson asking for more details and confirmation.

As of 1/1/86, the above and numerous discussions with former 57th officers indicate the following:

1. Apparently a number of individuals in the 57th with information were not contacted by the Army regarding the site of Nininger's grave. Most contacts after the War emanated from Colonel George Clarke's 2/20/44 letter to Nininger's father and discussions with individuals who obviously wanted to spare his feelings.

2. For medical reasons Clarke was not in a position to comment authoritatively on Nininger's death, recovery and burial yet his erroneous account of Nininger's death and burial is the major lead followed by the Army.
3. Because of this lack of contact with certain 57th personnel and perhaps other pressures (see for example the 7/26/85 entry above on Ira B. Cheaney) the Army was misled in its efforts to find Nininger's remains.
4. Based on the most creditable source still living, Garnet P. Francis, Deputy Commander of the 57th's Medical Detachment, (who was never contacted by the Army), it seems apparent that Nininger was buried south of the Abucay River and not north of it as recounted by Colonel Clarke and others.

John Alexander Patterson
March 15, 1986

•
QUESTIONS, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING
ALEXANDER RAMSEY NININGER, JR.*

Observations

- Many of the most pertinent 57th officers and medical staff were not contacted about Nininger's death and burial. Only those individuals noted in Col. Clarke's 2/20/44 letter or pursued by Nininger's father were contacted. Of these, Cain professed having no information and Immerman did not see the burial. Clarke, for medical reasons was not a reliable source, yet he is the major one utilized by the Army concerning the site of Nininger's burial.
- Garnet P. Francis is a very creditable source (yet he was not contacted after the War) because of his role as Deputy Commanding Officer of the 57th Medical Detachment which was responsible for and handled all Regimental casualties at the time of Nininger's death.

General Questions

- Why would a classified file on Ira Cheaney contain information on Nininger? This is mentioned in the latter's official Army file.
- Were any remains sent to Washington for investigation as mentioned in the Army's file?
- Why were Nininger's dog tags never mentioned throughout the documents yet one of which according to various sources was always placed with a body?
- What happened to Maynard, Wilson, Compton, and Green who were reported to be buried with Nininger (yet whose remains were also declared "non-recoverable") and who were killed at about the same time in about the same place? Were they, in fact, buried together south of the river as noted by Francis? This area was never mentioned in any of the reports or correspondence.

* See "Summary of the Record (Correspondence and Events) Surrounding Attempts to Locate the Grave of 1st Lieut. Alexander Ramsey Nininger, Jr, killed on Bataan, January 12, 1942" by John Alexander Patterson, ~~January~~ March 15, 1986.

- 2 -

Comment

It must be noted that after World War II the Army faced a massive task throughout the world in finding the remains of thousands of servicemen. In addition to the magnitude of the effort there was considerable pressure brought to bear from friends and relatives. Through the political process this pressure to find the remains of loved ones may have led to hasty judgements. All of this was complicated by an era in which communications and information flow and availability were not what they are today. The disastrous fire at the National Personal Records Center in St. Louis did not help.

In this particular case, regrettably, even tragically, the Army was misled by an individual who was not in a position to know any of the relevant details yet because of his own incapacity he was evacuated to the United States before Corregidor fell where with erroneous information he contacted the families of a number of individuals who were killed on Bataan.

If at all possible this unfortunate situation must be corrected. Hopefully, in the case of Alexander Ramsey Nininger, Jr, the attached March 15, 1986 "Summary of the Record" will help do so.

Recommendations

1. That the U.S. Army reopen the case of Alexander Ramsey Nininger, Jr. based on the new information provided.
2. That his remains be returned from Bataan for reburial at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York.

EXHIBIT

22

John Alexander Patterson
October 1, 1992

Notes on Visits to Bataan
Concerning Alexander Ramsey Nininger, Jr.

4/24/91: Lillian and John Alexander Patterson visited the Catholic Church in Abucay, Bataan, to ascertain generally the location of his uncle's grave and those of four other American officers buried at about the same time in the same place within the cemetery next to the church. After meeting with the parish priest, Father Antonio S. Dumauual, the Pattersons found the general location of the grave site utilizing a map provided by Franklin O. Anders who had been the regimental intelligence officer (S-2) for Nininger's unit, the 57th Infantry Regiment (Philippine Scouts). Anders had first hand knowledge of Nininger's burial but was never approached by the U.S. Army after World War II. Instead, the Army had followed the erroneous accounts of Colonel George Clark, the regimental commander, who had had a nervous breakdown and was medevaced at the time of Nininger's death. (See earlier notes).

Father Dumauual agreed that he would ask the families of the above-ground tombs if there were any objections to excavating below the tombs. There were none although the families, understandably, did not want the cement around the tombs and the tombs themselves damaged. (Note: During an earlier visit Patterson fell on one of the tombs, causing a gash that took seven stitches to close. This was done at the U.S. Naval Base Hospital at Subic Bay. The base itself is to close in November 1992).

3/14/92: Patterson, William Reynolds (archaeologist by training and experience and employee of the U.S. Agency for International Development) and David Nelson (avid military historian by avocation and USAID employee) visited the Abucay Church to more clearly identify the Nininger burial site. With tape measures they ascertained more precisely where Nininger was reported to have been buried. Father Dumauual agreed that Patterson could return with archaeologists from the Philippine National Museum to begin taking core samples to determine subsoil conditions.

- 2 -

9/26/92: Patterson, Reynolds and Nelson returned to Abucay with three National Museum archaeologists to take core samples. The team was led by Melchor L. Aguilera and included Amalia dela Torre and Vincent Secuya. Using a set of auger drills, several samples were taken around the above ground tombs. It became evident that the team needed to break through the cement flooring surrounding the four tombs covering the general area of the grave site. Father Dumauual has been asked if he would seek permission from the families to do so with the promise, of course, that the floors will be replaced as before.

While work was going on, the former caretaker of the church (Felicisimo Tria whose father fought during World War II and is buried nearby in the cemetery) visited and informed us that four years before, while enlarging a subsurface canal in the immediate vicinity, a number of remains were found and placed behind the church where they have been encased in the wall. Father Dumauual has been asked if the skeletal remains can be removed for analysis. Another interesting point is that Tria (and others before him) indicated that the Americans had never looked after the war in the vicinity of the cemetery off to the side where Nininger and the others were buried but rather had done their digging close to the south wall of the church itself as recommended originally and erroneously by Colonel Clark.



DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY

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



DEC 01 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MP)


SUBJECT: DISINTERMENT REQUEST FOR UNKNOWN X-1130 Manila #2

This memorandum is submitted in accordance with Department of Defense Directive 5110.10, Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) and Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum dated April 14, 2015 (TAB C).

On 3 February 2015, a family member requested that DPAA disinter X-1130 Manila #2 for potential identification as 1st Lt Alexander R. Nininger, a casualty from World War II. Research and analysis of existing dental, anthropological, and historical records (TAB B) led to the conclusion that X-1130 Manila #2 interred in Plot J, Row 7, Grave 20, Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM), Manila, Luzon, the Philippines, does not meet the 50 percent threshold for likelihood of individual identification established for disinterment of unknown remains. Historical research cannot associate the remains with 1st Lt Nininger. Based on comprehensive assessment of the available information, DPAA assesses a low likelihood that disinterment would lead to identification of the interred remains as this individual.

Based on my review of the information at TABs B, C, and D, I have concluded that the standards prescribed in the referenced Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum have not been met, and that there is less than fifty percent likelihood that an identification would result. Accordingly, I recommend X-1130 Manila #2 remain honorably interred at the MACM. Should future research and analysis change our recommendation for this case, we will submit a new request for approval and, if approved, notify the requestor.

My point of contact in this matter is Ms Wenona Lavin, at telephone (808) 448-4500 ext. 3255 or email address: wenona.s.lavin.civ@mail.mil.


Michael S. Linnington
Director

Attachments:
As stated

cc: Director, Joint Staff
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Community and Family Policy)

TAB A

**DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY**2300 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2300

25 September 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

From: CW2 Justin K. Crick, Analyst, Asia-Pacific Directorate, DPAA
To: Science Director; Asia-Pacific Director, DPAA

Subj: FAMILY DISINTERMENT REQUEST OF UNKNOWN X-1130 MANILA #2 FOR
COMPARISON WITH FIRST LIEUTENANT ALEXANDER R. NININGER

1. Initial Recovery and Assessment

On 8 January 1946, authorities disinterred a set of remains from Abucay Churchyard, Soldier's Row, Grave #9 in Abucay, Bataan Province, Luzon Island, in the Philippines.¹ This initial recovery was apparently based on information that five Americans had been killed in the town of Abucay, Philippines, in January 1942 and buried in the Abucay Cemetery.² Historic documentation in the unknown file, however, suggests that the Abucay Churchyard and Abucay Cemetery were two separate sites of burial (See Figure 1.) On 18 January 1946, these remains were reinterred in Plot 2, Row 22, Grave 2836 in the U.S. Armed Forces Cemetery No. 2 in Manila, Philippines (Manila #2) and designated Unknown X-1130 Manila #2 (X-1130).³ Two copies of a 13 February 1946 Report of Interment each contain a different dental chart for X-1130.⁴ There is no record of any processing of non-dental remains.

2. Disinterment and Reprocessing

Manila #2 became the last of the PHILYRCOM cemeteries to be disinterred as a part of AGRS concentration efforts in 1947 and 1948, with the last of remains buried there transferred to the mausoleum at Nichols Field on 20 July 1948.⁵ Unknown X-1130 was disinterred on an undisclosed date, but was reportedly sent to the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) Mausoleum, Manila, Philippines (Manila Mausoleum) for storage on 24 July 1948.⁶ There is no report of anthropological processing or dental charting at this time.⁷ A 29 January 1949 assessment states that the processor was unable to determine the weight or race of the remains, but did estimate the stature to be 62 1/8 inches. The remains were reportedly not burned but were mangled. A dental chart was completed and the examiner noted, "Maxilla missing, loose teeth found with remains[.] L16 Horizontally impacted."⁸ When analysts were unable to make a positive identification of remains at the Manila Mausoleum, they processed the remains for storage, sometimes returning to re-examine a set of remains several different times.⁹ Unknown X-1130 underwent a second examination reported from the Manila Mausoleum in September 1950, estimating the height at 61 inches and age at 20-30 years. The examiner was unable to determine the weight or race, but assessed the remains as "probably mongoloid."¹⁰ A dental

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Subj: X-1130 MANILA #2 **FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

chart was completed.¹¹ The remains were returned to storage at the Manila Mausoleum on 11 September 1950.¹²



Figure 1. Map of Abucay Churchyard and Cemetery.¹³

3. 1940s Investigations and Name Associations

Unknown X-1130 was initially associated with First Lieutenant (1st Lt) Alexander R. Nininger based on the testimony of Colonel (Col) George S. Clarke of the 57th Infantry, who stated that 1st Lt Nininger was buried at Abucay Churchyard in Grave #9 outside the churchyard wall in a ceremony presided over by a Chaplain Scecina.¹⁴ However, both X-1130 and a set of remains later identified as Philippine Scout Tranquilino Beles were both reported in association with Grave #9 – despite current research having found no documentation stating that two sets of remains were ever interred in Grave #9.¹⁵ Colonel Clarke also apparently wrote to Mr. Herbert B. Maynard, father of Lt. Maynard, informing him that his son was buried in Grave #6, but remains recovered from Grave #6 were identified as Philippine Scout Pedro Obsioma.¹⁶

According to Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) John W. Raulston, the Medical Corps officer in charge of the medical collecting station at the Catholic Church in Abucay, Chaplain Thomas Scecina, “established a little graveyard in a plot of ground within the five foot wall around the church.”¹⁷ The approximate recovery location for X-1130, however, was listed as Soldier’s Row, which was located outside of this wall.¹⁸ Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) Raulston did not recall the name Nininger from the burial. The only officer buried at Abucay Churchyard named by Lt Col Raulston was Captain H.A. McCurdy, who was recovered from the Abucay Churchyard and identified because of the presence of an identification tag recovered with the remains.¹⁹

In a 10 September 1946 letter, Major (Maj) Franklin O. Anders of the 57th Infantry stated that 1st Lt Nininger, 1st Lt Kenneth L. Wilson, 1st Lt David W. Maynard, 1st Lt John C. Compton, 1st Lt Arthur W. Green, and “Capt. Meyer” were buried in the Abucay Churchyard.²⁰ A close friend of 1st Lt Wilson, Lee Culver Brooks, concurred by stating in an undated phone

Subj: X-1130 MANILA #2 **FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

call between Mr. Brooks and Captain (Capt) Vogl of the Repatriation branch that he “feels that the burial was made in the church...cemetery at Abucay.”²¹ Neither Lt Col Raulston nor Mr. Brooks were present at the burial. Of those reported buried at the Abucay Churchyard by Maj Anders, none were recovered and identified from the Abucay Churchyard.²² Captain Adolph Meier, likely the Captain Meyer listed above as no Meyer was reported as killed in Bataan, was recovered from Mariveles Cemetery #3, some 30 km away.

In 1945, while attempting to locate graves for U.S. servicepersons, Master Sergeant (M Sgt) Abie Abraham located one of the original grave diggers, Greggorio Cunanan. Mr. Cunanan claimed that he was hired by American officials to inter five Americans in the Abucay Cemetery prior to the surrender of Bataan (9 April 1942).²³ The Abucay Cemetery is separate from the Abucay Churchyard and its attached cemetery. The Abucay Cemetery lies across a river and 650 m to the southwest of the church (Figure 1) and is not the location from which X-1130 was recovered. This distinction between the churchyard cemetery and Abucay Cemetery was one that investigators in the 1940s and early 1950s struggled to reconcile.²⁴

On 28 November 1949, a memo from HQ AGRS PHILCOM explained the basis for associating X-1130 with 1st Lt Nininger.²⁵ The memo appears to contradict itself throughout. The memo references the burial records of Chaplain Seccina as having buried 1st Lts Nininger, Maynard, Compton, Green, and Captain Adolph Meier within Abucay Churchyard. However, as previously discussed, Captain Meier was identified after his remains were disinterred from a cemetery some 30 km away. The records cited in this memo state that of the fourteen sets of remains recovered from the churchyard, only two were believed to be American (Figure 2). Of the two potentially American sets of recovered remains, one was identified as Capt H.A. McCurdy, O-28378, and one was designated X-1671 Manila Mausoleum.²⁶ Unknown X-1671 was never identified but some records indicate that the remains may be associated with a Philippine Scout.²⁷ The other twelve sets of recovered remains were determined to be Philippine Scouts. The presence of so many Philippine Scouts in this burial location weakens the argument that the unidentified remains belong to an American. The memo then discredits the information provided by Lt Col Raulston and Mr. Brooks, pointing out that neither was present at the burial conducted by Chaplain Seccina. It then calls into question the validity of the disinterment location as Abucay Churchyard, but goes on to reason that since the grave numbers match, they must be the same.²⁸ Despite appearing to present evidence that X-1130 is not associated with 1st Lt Nininger, the summary of the memo concludes that X-1130 is likely the serviceman.²⁹

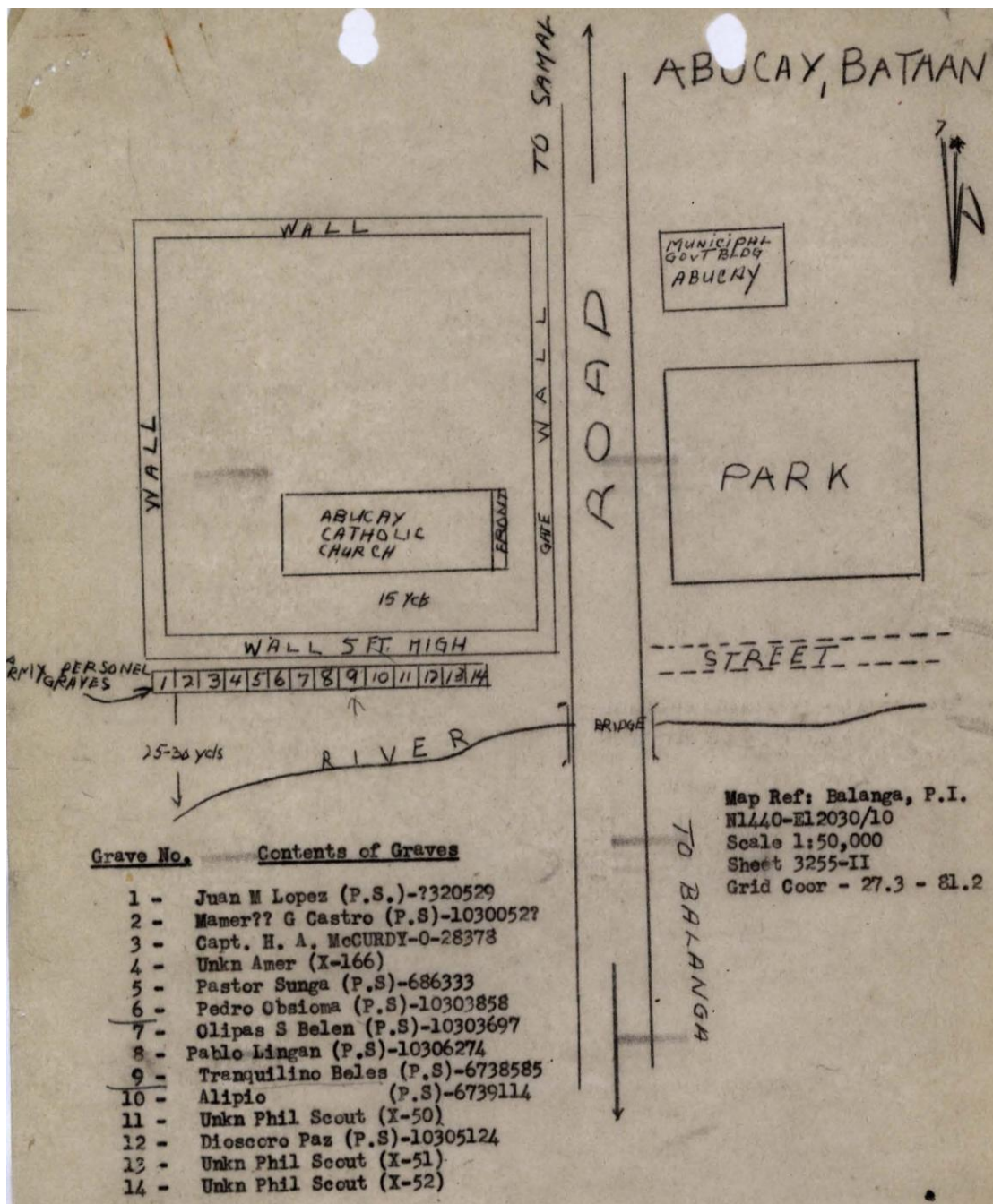


Figure 2. Map of Abucay Churchyard burials. Map not to scale.³⁰

On 28 November 1949, the same day as the previous memo from the same office, HQ AGRS PHILCOM forwarded the casualty case to a Zone Board of Review, citing that all the remains recovered from an “extensive investigation” of the churchyard were “mongoloid” and could therefore not be 1st Lt Nininger.³¹

Subj: X-1130 MANILA #2 **FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

On 24 March 1950, Lt Col T.H. Metz requested that a search and recovery team be sent to the Abucay Churchyard to ensure the interior of the churchyard walls were searched in addition to the already searched exterior.³² The order for this excavation was sent on 5 May 1950 and the excavation occurred on 9 May 1950. The excavation covered the four plots within the walls of the Abucay churchyard. The search and recovery officer encountered remains that were “distinctly Mongoloid” and some of small children.³³ Eighteen sets of remains were examined by an anthropologist and all were determined to be of Filipino descent.³⁴

This excavation brought the total remains recovered from the Abucay Churchyard and the area just outside its walls to 30 remains of Filipino descent, X-1671, the remains later identified as Capt McCurdy, and X-1130 (33 total sets of remains).

4. Unidentifiable

On 30 August 1950, a Board of Review rejected the recommendation that X-1130 be identified as 1st Lt Nininger on the basis of an inconclusive dental comparison and the difference in the estimated height of the remains (61 3/8- 62 1/8 inches) when compared to 1st Lt Nininger’s recorded stature of 71 inches.³⁵ The remains were reinterred at Fort William McKinley Cemetery—now the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial—on 1 March 1950 in Plot J, Row 7, Grave 20.³⁶

On 8 September 1950, X-1130 was re-examined and determined to be unidentifiable due to a lack of sufficient identifying data.³⁷ Interestingly, the memo stating this finding was dated 6 September 1950, 2 days prior to the examination date.

5. Present Investigation

On 3 February 2015, DPAA received a family disinterment request for X-1130 based on the family’s belief that there is a tentative association with 1st Lt Alexander R. Nininger.

To gain a complete understanding of this association for this investigation, the situation on the ground at the time of Lt Nininger’s loss must be understood. According to War Plan Orange, the United States’ plan to defend the Philippines was to consolidate forces on the Bataan Peninsula and defend until reinforcements arrived from the United States. In the days leading up to 12 January 1942, the eastern side of the Mabuan-Abucay main line of resistance, near the Abucay Hacienda, had repulsed eleven attacks. The attacks consisted of waves of frontal assaults at night that left snipers on the battlefield to pin the United States Forces Far East (USAFFE) soldiers to their foxholes in the day. Lieutenant Nininger’s actions leading up to his death allowed the USAFFE forces to push back and retake ground lost during the eleven assaults. Unfortunately, the line was penetrated further west in the following days, threatening to cut off troops from the rear, and the Mabuan-Abucay line had to be abandoned on 22 January 1942. The United States Armed Forces Far East defense fell back to the Bagac-Orion main line of resistance, 8 km to the south. After continuing to defend for months without reinforcement, the exhausted, underfed, and undersupplied forces on Bataan were compelled to surrender on 9 April 1942. The Abucay area fell under Japanese possession until the return of U.S. forces to Luzon in 1945.³⁸ The personnel remaining on Bataan then became Prisoners Of War (POWs). It is unclear

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if there was any attempt to bring temporary graves with them during their retrograde to the Bagac-Orion line. This may explain why Meier, who was reportedly buried at Abucay, was recovered at Mariveles Cemetery #3.³⁹

In an effort to clear Bataan for an assault on Corregidor Island, the Japanese moved the U.S. and Filipino POWs on foot to San Fernando and then by rail to Camp O'Donnell in what later became known as the Bataan Death March. There were far more POWs than the Japanese were able to handle, and stragglers were routinely bayoneted or beheaded along the route. These bodies were left for locals to bury, and they did so typically near where the deceased fell. This route includes the road that passes the Abucay Churchyard. Maintaining and keeping records of those lost along the route or prior to the surrender was impossible as those participating were struggling just to survive and any records discovered by the Japanese were likely to have been destroyed.⁴⁰

Prior to the surrender of Bataan, the AGRS unit on Bataan retrograded to Corregidor Island, which surrendered on 6 May 1942. On the day of the surrender of Corregidor, the AGRS sealed the burial records for Corregidor and Bataan in a gun powder can and hid them behind lateral 20 in Malina Tunnel. Personal effects from of the deceased from both Bataan and Corregidor were stored in a safe in Malinta Tunnel. This safe was quickly looted by the Japanese after the surrender. The lateral walls were destroyed either during the Japanese occupation or when the U.S. recaptured Corregidor in 1945, destroying the records along with it.⁴¹

In September 1992, Mr. Patterson, nephew of 1st Lt Nininger, traveled to the Abucay church cemetery with a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) archaeologist and another colleague, along with three archaeologists from the National Museum of the Philippines. They attempted to conduct test digs in an area believed to hold the remains, but cement flooring hindered their work. The former caretaker of the church, Felicismo Tria, informed them that, while "enlarging a subsurface canal" near the site, workers had found remains, which they encased in a wall of the church. In a June 1993 letter, Patterson concluded that his efforts in the cemetery had "proved fruitless."⁴²

Mr. Patterson resolved to look into the connection to X-1130 instead. On 7 October 1993, CILHI informed Mr. Patterson that it had examined the records and confirmed the conclusion of the AGRS that the dental records were not diagnostic and that there was a significant height discrepancy between the remains and 1st Lt Nininger.⁴³ Using modern estimates, the DPAA Laboratory estimates the stature at 60.9-66.5 inches.⁴⁴

Mr. Patterson was also aware of a letter from Col Garnet Francis, who was reportedly at Lt Nininger's burial. Colonel Francis stated that the burial was 50 ft south of the stream and 150 ft west of the national highway, which raises further discrepancies about the recovery location of the remains. The JPAC 13-1RP (Republic of the Philippines) IT (Investigation Team) visited the Abucay church and confirmed that the grounds are almost entirely paved. The area south of the river is densely developed with residences. There has been no new evidence in recent and current investigations that changes any previous findings that resulted in a negative correlation of X-1130 to Lt Nininger.

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6. Summary and Conclusions

Based on the historical analysis set forth above, the case of X-1130 fails to meet the established threshold of a 50 percent likelihood of being able to make an individual identification and is, therefore, not recommended for disinterment at this time.⁴⁵ It seems possible or maybe even likely that these remains are not American. Even assuming the remains are American, with Col Clarke’s testimony that Lt Nininger and Lt Maynard were buried in Graves #9 and #6 in doubt, these remains could also be Lt Green, Lt Wilson, Lt Compton, Lt Nininger, or Lt Maynard, or someone else entirely. The route of the Bataan Death March passed through Abucay, directly in front of the church. Many died along the route and were buried near their place of death by locals. The initial possible association of X-1130 with Lt Nininger appears to be inconsistent due to Captain Meier, a reported concurrent burial, being recovered from Mariveles Cemetery #3, the incorrect identity of the Grave #6 burial, and the recovery location of X-1130 outside the wall of the church when the statement suggested inside. There exists too much doubt as to the location of the burial and subsequent recovery area for these remains, be it inside the churchyard walls, outside the walls, across the river to the south of the church, or in another area entirely, as in the case of Captain Meier. The historic evidence is not strong enough to overcome the 4.5-inch discrepancy with the highest estimated stature of X-1130. This set of remains does not appear to be a likely candidate for identification as 1st Lt Alexander R. Nininger, Jr. There is no evidence that can establish even a tentative association between X-1130 and 1st Lt Nininger, other than the tentative and problematic reference to the Abucay Churchyard, Soldier’s Row, Grave #9 recovery location.

CW2 JUSTIN K. CRICK
Analyst

Science Director Decision:

_____ Approved
 _____ Disapproved
 _____ Other

Regional Director Decision:

_____ Approved
 _____ Disapproved
 _____ Other



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¹ Golden J. Frame, "Report of Disinterment," undated, X-1130 file, Record Group (RG) 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center (WNRC), Suitland, Maryland. This was before the American Graves Registration Service began systematic search and recovery operations in the PHILRYCOM Zone, which included the Philippine Islands. "History of AGRS-PATA and AGRS-FEZ (Feb 46 to 1 Oct 47)," Inclosure [sic] 21, Headquarters, American Graves Registration Service, PHILRYCOM Sector, To: Commanding Officer, AGRS, PHILRYCOM Sector, APO 707, "Subject: Status of Search and Recovery Operations – 25 July 47," 4–5; "History of American Graves Registration Service Pacific Theater Area Command and Far Eastern Zone (Feb 1946 – Oct 1947)," 15.

² Gregorio Cunanan, "Subject: Interrogation," 11 December 1945, Unknown X-1130 file.

³ Golden J. Frame, "Report of Disinterment," undated, X-1130 file.

⁴ R.C. Barrett, "Report of Interment," 13 February 1946, X-1130 file.

⁵ Edward Steere and Thayer M. Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead 1945-51*, U.S. Army, Quartermaster Corps, QMC Historical Studies, Series II, No. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Historical Branch Office of the Quartermaster General, 1957), 410, 416, 547.

⁶ V. C. Aquino, "Report of Interment," 12 August 1948, X-1130 file. The remains were re-designated as X-4685 Manila Mausoleum during this time. For continuity and readability the remains will continue to be referred to as X-1130 throughout this report.

⁷ V. C. Aquino, "Report of Interment," 12 August 1948, X-1130 file.

⁸ J. J. McDermott, "Identification Data," 24 January 1949, X-1130 file.

⁹ Eric W. Klinek, "Manila American Cemetery and Memorial" (Memorandum for the Record, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, 10 March 2014), 29, Microsoft Word Document.

¹⁰ Robert B. Fox, "Identification Data," 8 September 1950, X-1130 file.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Patrick H. O'Neil, "Report of Interment," 11 September 1950, X-1130 file.

¹³ Abucay, Bataan Map, undated, X-1130 file.

¹⁴ Col. George S. Clarke, Letter to Alexander R. Nininger, Sr., 20 February 1944; Herbert B. Maynard, Letter to Major General T. B. Larkin, Quartermaster General, 10 September 1946, Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) for Nininger, Alexander R., Jr., 1st Lt, O-23761, Record Group (RG) 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center (WNRC), Suitland, Maryland. Original document states "67th" but later states that a Maj. Anders was "also of the 57th Infantry." Chaplain Scecina is spelled Secina in most documents and Cecina in Col. Clarke's letter within the X-1130 file and 1st Lt Nininger's IDPF. Captain (CH) Thomas Scecina, O-384964, died 24 October 1944 as a POW aboard the *Arisan Maru*. Mr. Maynard's letter refers to him as Chaplain Scecina; George S. Clarke, Letter to Alexander R. Nininger, Sr., 20 February 1944, IDPF for Nininger.

¹⁵ K.W. Bohyer, "Memo, Subj: Report of Internment," 10 June 1946, IDPF for Beles, Tranquilino, PFC, 6738585, Record Group (RG) 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center (WNRC), Suitland, Maryland.

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¹⁶ Herbert B. Maynard, Letter to Major General T. B. Larkin, Quartermaster General, 10 September 1946, IDPF for Nininger; Abucay, Bataan Map, undated, X-1130 file.

¹⁷ Underscore in original; As quoted in T.H. Metz, "Memo, Subj: Identification of World War II Deceased," 24 March 1950, X-1130 file.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ John W. Raulston, "Letter to the Office of the Quartermaster General," 5 November 1949, IDPF for Nininger; Lorenzo Hernandez, "Memo, Subj: Interrogation," 21 May 1946, IDPF for McCurdy, Howard A., Capt, O-283789, Record Group (RG) 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center (WNRC), Suitland, Maryland.

²⁰ Herbert B. Maynard, Letter to Major General T. B. Larkin, Quartermaster General, 10 September 1946, IDPF for Nininger. According to current records, there is no Captain Meyer that died in Bataan in this timeframe. There is a Capt Adolph Meier who died at Abucay Hacienda on 12 January 1942 and was assigned to the 57th Infantry along with 1st Lt Nininger. Captain Meier was recovered from Mariveles Cemetery #3.

²¹ J. Windsor, Jr., "Extract Copy of Information Obtained in a Telephone Conversation Between Captain Vogl, Repatriation Branch, Memorial Division and Mr. Lee Culver Brooks," undated, IDPF for Nininger.

²² John Shypula, "Memo, Subj: Identification of World War II Deceased," 28 November 1949, X-1130 file. As previously noted, Capt Adolph Meier, who died at Abucay Hacienda on 12 January 1942 and was also assigned to the 57th Infantry, was recovered from Mariveles Cemetery #3. It is likely this is the "Capt. Meyer" from the list.

²³ Gregorio Cunanan, "Subject: Interrogation," 11 December 1945, X-1130 file.

²⁴ T.H. Metz, "Memo, Subj: Identification of World War II Deceased," 24 March 1950; John Shypula, "Memo, Subj: Identification of World War II Deceased," 28 November 1949, X-1130 file.

²⁵ John Shypula, "Memo, Subj: Identification of World War II Deceased," 28 November 1949, X-1130 file.

²⁶ Ibid. Unknown X-1671 was previously designated as X-3421 Manila #2.

²⁷ John Shypula, "Memo, Subj: Identification of World War II Deceased," 28 November 1949, X-1130 file.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Abucay, Bataan Map, undated, X-1130 file.

³¹ Charles R. Whaylen, "Memo, Subj: Identification of World War II Deceased," 28 November 1949, X-1130 file.

³² T.H. Metz, Memo, "Subj: Identification of World War II Deceased," 24 March 1950, X-1130 file.

³³ Otto H. Kaufmann, "Memo, Subj: Report of Investigation – Abucay Churchyard, Bataan," 19 May 1950, X-1130 file.

³⁴ Robert B. Fox, "Memo, Subj: Statement," 23 May 1950, X-1130 file.

³⁵ Thomas E. Cox, "Subj: Identification of World War II Deceased," 30 August 1950, X-1130 file.

³⁶ Celestino E. Abellar, "Disinterment Directive," 22 September 1950 [amended 29 September 1950], X-1130 file.

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³⁷ Fox, "Identification Data," 8 September 1950, X-1130 file.

³⁸ George S. Clarke, Letter to Mr. Alexander R. Nininger, Sr., 20 February 1944, IDPF for Nininger.

³⁹ These events largely conform with the historical account provided in the official history. See, Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, D.C., 1953).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Joseph Goodman, "Graves Registration Service, Ft. Mills, Corregidor, P.I.," 1947, Box 1160, Entry 427, RG 407: Records of the Adjutant General, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

⁴² George S. Clarke, Letter to Mr. Alexander R. Nininger, Sr., 20 February 1944, IDPF for Nininger.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Emily Wilson, E-mail correspondence to Dr. Michael Dolski, 30 September 2015.

⁴⁵ Robert Work, "Disinterment of Unknowns from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific," 14 April 2015. Department of Defense, Washington, D.C.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING
AGENCY (DPAA), 2000 DEFENSE PENTAGON, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2000

SUBJECT: Exhumation of Unknown Remains

1. References:

a. Memorandum, Deputy Secretary of Defense, 14 April 2015, subject: Disinterment of Unknowns from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

b. Memorandum, Defense Personnel Accounting Agency, 1 December 2015, subject: Disinterment Request for Unknown X-1130 Manila #2.

c. Memorandum, Defense Personnel Accounting Agency, 25 September 2015, subject: Family Disinterment Request of Unknown X-1130 Manila #2 For Comparison With First Lieutenant Alexander R. Nininger.

d. Executive Order 10057 (Transferring to the American Battle Monuments Commission functions pertaining to certain United States Military Cemeteries), 14 May 1949.

2. In accordance with reference 1a., disinterment requests must meet standard thresholds in order to be considered favorably. For individual Unknowns, there must be at least a 50 percent likelihood that an identification will be made.

3. After reviewing the information provided with reference 1b., I am not convinced that this standard has been met. Accordingly, the Army does not concur with the request to exhume unknown remains X-1130 Manila #2 from Plot J, Row 7, Grave 20 in the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial.

4. Point of contact for this action is COL Kelly E. Kyburz, Assistant Deputy for Casualty and Mortuary Affairs, POW and MIA, Arlington National Cemetery Policy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), telephone (703) 614-8208 or email Kelly.e.kyburz.mil@mail.mil.


ANTHONY J. STAMILIO
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Military Personnel & Quality of Life)