

Enc. 1.

February 20, 1944.

Mr. Alexander R. Nininger,
P. O. Box 431,
Lake Wales, Fla.

My dear Mr. Nininger:

I this date received from the Adj. General, U. S. Army, your letter of January 25, 1944, and his authorization to answer the questions concerning your Son, Lt. A. R. Nininger, Jr. which you asked in that letter. I will answer the questions as you asked them.

QUESTION I.

"Please describe in detail: Sandy's action in which he lost his life. What effect his action had on the situation at that time?"

ANSWER - The date, January 12, 1942 which I retain in my memory as the date he was killed was the day of a continuing series of attacks made by the Japanese on the 57th Combat Team Sector under my command on the right of the line at Abugay on Bataan. The two Bns of the 57th Inf. were on the main line of resistance; the 1st Bn. on the right, the 3rd Bn. on the left. The first attacks made by the Japanese on Bataan were made against this Sector. Eleven Japanese attacks were made on this position principally on the 3rd Bn. of the 57th Inf. in an endeavor to rupture the line between it and the junction with the 41st Division on its left. The Japanese attacked in a series of suicidal frontal attacks all night long night after night. The first night wave after wave of Japanese threw themselves at our position in a successful attempt to gain two objectives, 1st, to destroy our land mines built by the engineers in front of our position, and, 2nd, to infiltrate snipers into our position. To understand this situation, I should explain that the Japanese attacked all night, night after night, but retired in the day time when we found ourselves pinned to our foxholes during the daylight hours. We estimated that after the first attack the Japanese had successfully placed 1,000 snipers between the regiment's main line of resistance and the RRL 2,000 yards in the rear.

The Japanese constantly attacking at night succeeded on the second night in throwing wave after wave of men on the barb wire in front of our position thereby forming a human bridge of dead Japanese over the wire for use by their men in their 3rd suicidal attempt to take the position.

The first night of the attacks on Bataan, the Japs successfully folded the flanks of our 3rd Bn. and the 41st Division on the left, pushed the snipers mentioned before through our position and occupied some of the foxholes of Co. K., 3rd Bn., 57th Inf. A counter attack by three companies of the 2nd Bn., 57th Inf. successfully retook the lost position. The fourth attack by the Japanese was also successful, they having gained the same objective.

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Mr. Alexander R. Nininger, February 20, 1944.

The Reserves of the 57th Inf. having been committed, two Bns. of the 21st Division P. A. were attached to the 57th Inf. These two Bns. then regardless of snipers made the first and only attack on Bataan under a rolling barrage and reestablished our front line.

Eleven attacks in all were made against this position. Japanese forces in our immediate front withdrew after these attacks and later as you know selected a position in the Mountains where there was no artillery to make their successful break through which caused the entire Abucay-Moron line to retire to the line Pilar BIGAC.

I have given you the above sketchy outline of our situation in order to show you why Sandy's actions followed. It must be remembered that Officers and men though well trained were actually green troops under battle conditions. With the exception of myself no single Officer or man in the entire Combat Team, Inf. artillery, engineers or medical corps had ever been under fire. The bizarre and extraordinary tactics of the Japs confused and amazed us all. Fire-crackers and drums - wild attacks seemingly going nowhere - whole companies of Japanese showing themselves in front of fields of cane merely to draw our fire to establish our machine gun installations. The lack of flares to light up No Man's Land combined with the weird and unearthly screams in the native Filipino language by the snipers who had established themselves in trees inside of our position makes it in retrospect seemly almost impossible that the troops held on as they did.

Your Son was in the First Bn., 57th Inf. and, therefore, to justify his death in the area of Co. K., 3rd Bn., 57th Inf. I must explain the situation of the 1st Bn. In order that the Japanese forces be stopped from attempting to go around the right flank of the Sector by swimming or in boats, companies A. & B. 1st Bn. took up positions along a two mile fish pond dike which extended through the mangrove trees to establish fields of fire in front of the position. As it turned out these two companies on the dikes were never attacked except by a constant strafing by Japanese planes. The dikes were about six feet high and about three feet wide. Individual standing foxholes were built for the men the length of the dike. At this point I might tell you that I visited this position nightly during the construction and I saw no one as happy as your Son, Sandy during this particular time. The difficulties of supplies, food, water and ammunition and lack of sleep apparently agreed with him. His enthusiasm and delight in my praise of his efforts were contagious. At that time his attitude struck me as the attitude of a soldier who at last was doing the job he had been trained to do.

Again this position was never attacked and the Officers from the very first attack were constantly volunteering for all sort of missions which would help the 3rd Bn. and their own Co. C. on the mainland which was also under constant attack. Capt. A. W. Wernuth, commanding the machine gun Co., Co. D., 1st Bn. was the first available Officer since his Co. was attached to the companies on the front line. Sandy received permission to go sniper hunting on the 10th and 11th of January. Please picture the situation again in his organization. No sleep for nights on end - only a standing foxhole in which to rest during the day. The tired, worn feeling

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Mr. A. R. Mininger, February 20, 1944.

and under constant anxious strain, and with the news on the morning of January 12th that our lines as described above in Co. K's Sector were ruptured, and that more Japanese snipers had infiltrated into our position.

You have, of course, read of the marvelous ability of the Japanese to construct sniper nests in trees. I have personally walked up to a bole of a tree, looked up into the branches and seen absolutely nothing, yet in that same tree six Japs were killed while I was still in that vicinity. Three members of the 57th Inf. also sniper hunting walked into and stepped upon a group of fifty Japanese soldiers magnificently camouflaged lying prone upon the ground. They killed all fifty without one moving a muscle while they were alive.

Sandy received my permission to go forward in the 3rd En. Sector with two of his men. He was loaded down with grenades and with a Garand rifle slung over his shoulders. He carried under his arm a Japanese "Tommy Gun". Instead of concentrating on snipers in his own area, he evidently decided that there were more Japs in the area behind Co. K. Many reports of his action and the action for which I recommended him for the Congressional Medal of Honor were reported to me by the Company Commanders of L. and M. Companies as well as other corroborating reports from men in Co. K.

To the best of my remembrance of those reports, Sandy shot his first Jap out of a tree and as the Jap's body fell at his feet he was so excited he stood up in the face of terrific rifle fire and yelled like a school boy. He apparently was wounded at that time since his leg was apparently bandaged. From then on Sandy apparently went berserk. He threw grenade after grenade. Men of Co. K. counted some 20 Japs killed by his grenades. Our counter attack was succeeding and their artillery laid down a fearful barrage. Many reports of further action by Sandy were then made by the 2nd in command of the 2nd En. 57th Inf. making the counter attack to regain Co. K's position. Sandy apparently had used up all of his Jap ammunition and was now using his bayonet and leaping from one shell hole to another. At this time he was wounded a second time since a first aid man crawled to his assistance. Sandy must have had a premonition that he was going to die because the first aid man could not hold him in that shell hole. His final action as described by this same officer was when he saw Sandy wounded again and when he seemed to be staggering from loss of blood, three Japs charged toward him with bayonets. He killed all three of them and apparently fell from exhaustion and weakness. From the reports of the first aid man when they crawled to him, he was dead and a dead Jap Officer lay across his legs. I cannot tell you how many of the enemy Sandy accounted for but this I will say, his personal actions at this particular time cannot possibly be evaluated. Suffice to say his action acted like a tonic on the men around him and added greatly to the success of our counter attack.

Your Son died a real hero. He was recklessly brave, and the action in which he gave his life to his country proved. Posthumous medals or honors which you receive can never make up to you the loss of your dear Son. The fact that he was so brave and fine and that he received the first Congressional Medal of Honor awarded in this war must in some measure help to heal the wound of his passing.

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Mr. Alexander R. Nininger, Feb. 20, 1944.

QUESTION 2.

"Describe his funeral and location of grave. Full name of Chaplain, and is Chaplain known to be alive now?"

ANSWER - Sandy's remains were carefully brought to the church in the town of Abucay, Province of Bataan, The Philippines. Captain Cecina, 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.

QUESTION 3.

"You said that you had promoted him to 1st Lt. in December, 1941. I have never received official notice of this promotion and published information carries his rank as 2nd Lt."

ANSWER - I am not prepared to make a sworn statement to the effect that Lt. Nininger actually accepted his promotion to a 1st Lt. by actually taking the oath of office, but the following facts are true statements: I visited all command posts in the 1st Bn., 57th Inf. on December 31, 1941, when I informed all concerned personally, including Lt. Nininger, that Headquarters, USAFFE had told me over the telephone that my promotion recommendations had been approved and that I might so inform all concerned. I was told also that actual mimeographed orders would be delayed on account of the volume of such orders throughout the Command and because of lack of facilities for printing such orders. I can further state though the actual date evades my memory, that the promotion order containing his name was received at my command post prior to his death. I have described the situation on Bataan prior to this death and it is possible that he either did not take the oath of office or that his oath of office might well have been destroyed by enemy fire or through some inadvertence have failed to reach USAFFE Headquarters on Corregidor for recording. The order I refer to promoted him to 1st Lt. as of December 19, 1941. To the best of my remembrance it was officially reported to me and I am sure that I remember correctly when I say that accepted oaths of office for all Officers in the regiment for promotion were forwarded to higher headquarters. Further when I wrote his citation I might easily have been thinking of this very young man who had joined my regiment direct from U.S.M.A. as a 2nd Lt. instead of properly noting his increased rank. I regret the error if it was mine.

There is little that I can add to the very carefully chosen words of his citation except to say that from the time he joined my regiment until the day he gave his life for his country, he was an outstanding Officer in every respect. He exemplified duty, honor, country and reflected great credit on his regiment, his Alma Mater, the Army and his country.

Very truly yours,

R. Parker

"AT EASE"
WEST 1735 WEST POINT ROAD
SPOKANE 12, WASHINGTON

1st IND

19 August 1949.

To: Lt. Col. T. H. McKay, G.M.C. Memorial Division
Office Quartermaster General THRU The
Adjutant General Department of the Army.

1. all of the information requested in basic communication is on file in the office of The Adjutant General of the Army.
2. I enclose a copy of a letter dated Feb. 20, 1944 written by me to Mr. Alexander R. Muninger a copy of which is also on file in the office of The Adjutant General of the Army.
3. I can add nothing further in this endorsement

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Muninger, Alexander R. G. (023761) JP

George S. Burke.
Col. Inf. U.S.A. Ret.

1 Enc.
Copy letter to Mr. Muninger.



MAN
File

25 Aug. 1949

E. A. Kayser
Identification Branch

Declassified Per E.O. 13526 dtd 5 Jan 2019

A TRUE COPY:

EXHIBIT

12

PXQMX-GRS-325-B

REPORT OF DISINTERMENT

GOLDEN J FRAME
1st Lt., QMC

Unknown American
 (Last Name) (First) (Initial) (Serial No.) (Rank) (Organization)

Abucay, Bataan Jan 1942 Unk.
 (Place of Death) (Date of Death) (Cause of Death)

Unk. 27.6 - 80.5 Map Ref. Abucay P.I. Bataan Prov.
 Abucay N 1430 E 120 30/10 Scale 1 x 50,000
 (Time and date of burial) (Name of Cemetery) (Co-ord. of location)

9 Soldiers Cross
 (Grave No.) (Row No.) (Plot No.) (Type of Marker)

Disposition of Identification Tags:

Religion: Unk. None

Remarks: Statement made by Gregorio Cunanan, Abucay, Bataan attached

Next of Kin: Unk.

Signature of person disinterring: /s/t/ S/Sgt THOMAS CORBETT

Time of Disinterment: 1610: 8 Jan 1946
 Disinterment by QM Graves Registration Co.

REPORT OF INTERMENT

Possibly Nininger
 Unknown X-1130
 (Last Name) (First) (Initial) (Serial No.) (Rank) (Organization)

Jan 1942
 (Place of Death) (Date of Death) (Cause of Death)

0900 18 Jan 1946 Manila #2
 (Time and date of Burial) (Name of Cemetery) (Co-ord of location)

2836 22 2 C/R
 (Grave No.) (Row No.) (Plot No.) (Type of Marker)

Disposition of Identification Tags: Buried with Body: YES NO

Attached to Marker: YES NO

RELIGION: _____ Tooth chart taken number from RID & shipping tag.

REMARKS : _____

NEXT OF KIN: _____

Signature of person burying: _____


Declassified Per E.O. 13526 dtd 5 Jan 2010

EXHIBIT

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RESTRICTED

U-3146

WD QMC FORM 4042 (Rev. 1 Apr. 1945) (Supersedes GRS Form 1)		REPORT OF INTERMENT (AR 30-1810 and AR 30-1815)			DATE OF REPORT 13 Feb. 46		
Imprint Identification Tag If Possible. DO NOT TYPE 		Section 1.—IDENTIFICATION.			SERIAL No. JR R. (*) 0-29761		
NAME (Last, first, middle initial) UNKNOWN -X- 1130 (Nininger, Alexander R. *)		GRADE 1st Lt. JR.		ORGANIZATION 57th Inf.		BRANCH OF SERVICE Army	
RACE white		RELIGION		IF OTHER THAN U. S. DEAD, GIVE NAME OF COUNTRY			
PLACE OF DEATH Bataan, Abucay, Luzon, P. I.		CAUSE OF DEATH KIA		DATE OF DEATH 12 Jan 42			
EMERGENCY ADDRESSEE (Name, relationship, and address) Alex R. Nininger Jr. Florida Theater Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. JR							
IDENTIFICATION TAGS FOUND ON BODY (1, 2, or none) None		IF NO TAGS FOUND ON BODY, DESCRIBE MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION (If unidentified, fill in section 3 on reverse)					
WERE SUBSTITUTE TAGS PROVIDED? (Yes or no) Yes (2)		see attached letter.					
LIST PERSONAL EFFECTS FOUND ON BODY AND DISPOSITION OF SAME None							
Section 2.—BURIAL. If other than in established cemetery, furnish sketch and map coordinates on reverse.							
NAME, NUMBER, COORDINATES, AND LOCATION OF CEMETERY USAF Cemetery Manila #2, Luzon, P. I.							
DATE OF BURIAL 18 Jan. 46	HOUR 0900	BURIED IN (Shroud, blanket, or name of other) Shelter Half	TYPE OF GRAVE MARKER Cross	PLOT No. 2	ROW No. 22	GRAVE No. 2836	
WAS THIS A REBURIAL? (Yes or no) Yes	IF A REBURIAL, INDICATE NAME, NUMBER, COORDINATES OF PREVIOUS CEMETERY, AND LOCATION OF GRAVE Abucay Cemetery, 27.6 - 80.5 Map Ref. Abucay P.I. Bataan Prov. N 1430 E 120 3/10 scale 1 x 50,000			PLOT No. Soldiers	ROW No. 9	GRAVE No. 9	
TYPE OF RELIGIOUS CEREMONY	PERSON CONDUCTING BURIAL RITES		IF IDENTIFICATION TAGS NOT USED, DESCRIBE IDENTIFICATION DATA AND CONTAINERS BURIED WITH BODY				
IDENTIFICATION TAG BURIED WITH BODY (Yes or no) Yes	IDENTIFICATION TAG ATTACHED TO MARKER (Yes or no) Yes						
BODY BURIED ON DECEASED LEFT, NAME (Last, first, middle initial) LANGLA, C.		RANK	SERIAL No. 6611148	ORGANIZATION 45th Inf. P.S.	GRAVE No. 2835		
BODY BURIED ON DECEASED RIGHT, NAME (Last, first, middle initial) LOSANTA, Gregorio		RANK	SERIAL No. 10302760	ORGANIZATION	GRAVE No. 2834		
SIGNATURE OF PERSON PREPARING REPORT R. C. BARRETT, S/Sgt. GRS.			SIGNATURE OF GRS OFFICER VERIFYING REPORT E. M. MOORE, 1st Lt. QMC.				
DISTRIBUTION OF REPORT: Signed original for U. S. and allied dead, signed original and one copy for enemy dead, to the Quartermaster General through Headquarters GRS Officer. Copies for retention in theater as prescribed by theater commander.							

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16-43997-1

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9 APR 1948

Section 3.—UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS.

INSTRUCTIONS:






(a) Great care will be taken to record the most minute clues for the future identity of unidentified remains. Fill in anatomical characteristics below, and any other clues under "Other," such as shoe size, social security number; position of body found in airplanes, vehicles, and tanks; and serial numbers of airplanes, vehicles, and tanks.

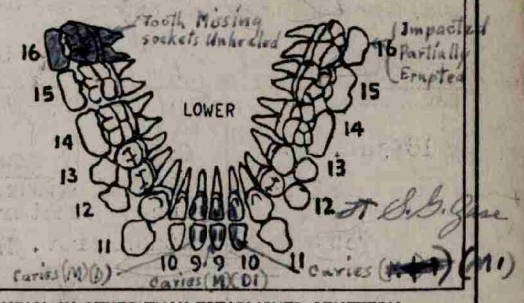
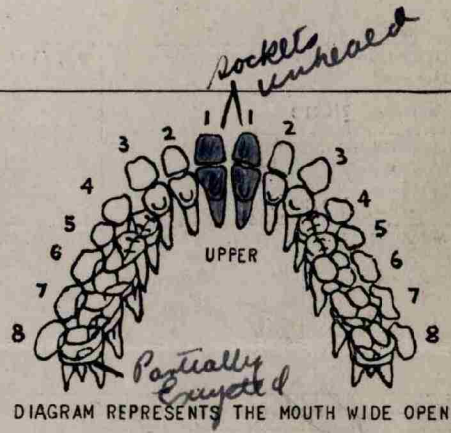
(b) A fingerprint, or prints, are the most valuable of all clues. Imprint all fingers and thumbs in the chart at left, or as many as possible. If no fingerprint or prints can be secured, the condition of each and every tooth will be indicated on the tooth chart in accordance with diagram below. Tooth chart will not be accomplished if one or more fingerprints are secured.

HEIGHT	WEIGHT	COLOR OF EYES	COLOR OF HAIR	BIRTHMARKS, SCARS, OR TATTOOS
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WEAPON AND SERIAL NO.	LAUNDRY MARKS	WHERE BODY WAS BURIED OR FOUND
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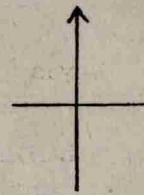
OTHER IDENTIFICATION CLUES

FILLINGS	 SILVER FILLING GOLD FILLING
CAVITIES	 CAVITY DECAYED
MISSING TEETH	 TOOTH MISSING
CROWNED TEETH	 PORCELAIN CROWN GOLD CROWN
BRIDGE WORK	 GOLD BRIDGE



FURNISH SKETCH AND MAP REFERENCE AND COORDINATES FOR BURIAL IN OTHER THAN ESTABLISHED CEMETERY

Occlusion Normal S.G.



REMARKS:

RESTRICTED

EXHIBIT

14

A. R. NININGER
22 S. E. 10th street
Pt. Lauderdale, Fla.

Feb. 5, 1946

Dear Mrs. Cole :-

We were very glad to get your letter, and we appreciate so much the efforts of your grandson Maj. Galkin, to secure a photograph of Sandy's grave at Abucay, Pataán, and the information he secured. We did not know that the graves at the church yard at Abucay had been moved as yet, though we knew that plans were under way to properly arrange the American cemeteries.

In explanation of the difficulty he had in securing information, I will explain that we were advised that as the Japanese would violate the graves of officers or any soldiers who were recorded as having injured them in their efforts, the graves of such soldiers were simply numbered and marked "unknown". However, the exact location and number was given to us and is so recorded in Washington. Sandy was buried on Jan. 13th, 1942, with full military honors, in the church yard at Abucay, and his grave marked No. 9.

The eight others buried there at that time, and those subsequently, were officers of the 57th Inf. some of them Sandy's pals.

A full description of the burial ceremonies was first given to us by letter, then by Col. George S. Clarke, commander of the 57th Inf. who had escaped from the Philippines, and who called on us. He was present at the burial. The Chaplain's name was Cecina.

This description was also verified to us recently, by two officers of Sandy's regiment, who were released from Japanese prison camps, and who came to see us; Maj. H. M. Jerman and Capt. Wm. P. Cain.

We also were notified that the Governor of Pataán, had promised that his people would always keep flowers on Sandy's grave, and that the Philippine Memorial Commission were planning to erect a monument to Sandy. About six months ago, a staff officer who I met in Palm Beach where he gave a lecture, told of a recent inspection trip of the Philippines, and how they paused at Abucay to see Sandy's grave, and it was covered with beautiful flowers, called Cadena d' Amor (chain of love).

Those at Manila in charge of the new cemetery, probably did not have all the information, but names will be used on the graves when they are properly arranged. We are glad to know that Lt. Moore is in charge of the cemetery and will look after Sandy's grave.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter we received from Maj. Yeager. He was Sandy's captain. We recently received a fine letter from General Wainwright. Am returning herewith the letter from Maj. Galkin.

I gave Jack your message. He has a new boat; "Amigo II" and is very busy as the fishing season is in full swing. He sends his regards. Glad to hear that you are feeling well.

Mrs. Nininger sends her love.

Sincerely,

(sgd) A. R. NININGER

A TRUE COPY

E. M. Moore
E. M. MOORE,
1st Lt. QMC.