

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
SAN ANTONIO DIVISION

JOHN A. PATTERSON, et al.,	)	
	)	
Plaintiffs,	)	
	)	
v.	)	No. 5:17-CV-00467
	)	
DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING	)	
AGENCY, et al.,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

**FOURTH DECLARATION OF GREGORY J. KUPSKY**

I, Dr. Gregory J. Kupsy, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, declare as follows:

1. I am currently a historian in the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency’s (DPAA) Indo-Pacific Directorate, and have served in that position since January 2017. Among other things, I am responsible for coordinating Directorate manning and case file preparation for Family Update conferences, and I am the lead historian for all research and casework on missing servicemembers from the Philippines. I also conduct archival research in the Washington, D.C. area to support DPAA’s Hawaii-based operations.

2. In this declaration I will address issues raised in Plaintiffs’ Appendix filed on May 10, 2019, and factual developments subsequent to my declaration dated April 19, 2019.

3. The statements contained in this declaration are based on my personal knowledge and DPAA records and information made available to me in my official capacity.

**Processing Disinterment Requests**

4. DPAA’s Administrative Instruction 2310.01, DPAA Disinterment Process (Feb.

10, 2017) establishes DPAA's process for developing its disinterment recommendations.

5. For recommendations regarding external disinterment requests, the researcher initially assigned is to complete historical analysis and a draft recommendation within 30 days; the draft is then assigned to another researcher for peer review who has 15 days to complete that process. *See* AI 2310.01, Section 3, Phase II. The Regional Director then reviews the draft recommendation and if accepted, forwards it to the Scientific Analysis Directorate for the scientific review process, which has a similar timetable. *See id.*, Phase III. Under both phases, the timetable can be extended if factors make that necessary. DPAA's goal is to finalize its recommendations within 150 days of receipt of a request. *See id.*, Preface § 3(d).

6. As noted in AI 2310.01, the Scientific Analysis Directorate must "acquire required scientific documents, such as AFDIL's letter concerning the availability of Family Reference Samples (FRS)" before the scientific review process can be completed. *See id.*, Section 3, Phase III ¶ 5. Because the availability of sufficient FRS depends on the service casualty offices' efforts to locate cooperative servicemember families and ensure that eligible family members have returned FRS kits to AFDIL, completion of this step is out of DPAA's control. Accordingly, DPAA places such recommendations into a temporary deferral until it receives notice that AFDIL has received sufficient FRS and AFDIL submits a letter confirming the availability of FRS relevant to the case.

7. DPAA prioritizes family disinterment requests over other requests or recommendations. *See* AI 2310.01 Preface § 3(e) (giving such requests "high priority"). This means that the regional directorate will stop working on an internally generated memorandum to process a new family request. Among family requests, the requests are processed in the order they are received. However, many family requests must be placed in a temporary deferral until

sufficient FRS are received.

8. The historical analysis processing times for the requests at issue in this case are as follows: (1) the draft recommendation for unknowns associated with Cabanatuan Common Grave 704 was completed on May 11, 2017, well before Plaintiffs' December 11, 2017 request; (2) the draft recommendation for unknowns associated with Cabanatuan Common Grave 407 was completed on July 24, 2017, well before Plaintiffs' November 2017 request; (3) the draft recommendation for X-3629 Manila #2 was completed on January 3, 2018, just over one month after I was assigned Plaintiffs' request on November 30, 2017 request; and (4) the draft recommendation for X-618 and X-619 Leyte #1 was completed on January 23, 2018, just over one month after Plaintiffs' December 19, 2017 request.

9. As discussed below, the recommendations for unknowns associated with Cabanatuan Common Grave 407 and for X-3629 Manila #2 spent significant time in temporary deferral pending receipt of sufficient FRS.

### **Cabanatuan Common Graves**

10. My April 19, 2019 declaration discussed Captain Robert Conn's "Death Report, Cabanatuan," the primary record regarding the original burials at Camp Cabanatuan. Plaintiffs have attached certain additional documents about Cabanatuan deaths, including hospital rosters, death certificates, and daily death reports. These records are generally consistent with each other, though discrepancies do occur. Collectively, they provide an association between a servicemember and a particular common grave. But they do not ensure that the servicemember will be found among the remains recovered from that common grave, nor do they guarantee which set—or sets—of remains will contain a particular servicemember's remains, for all the reasons I previously discussed.

11. On April 18, 2019, DPAA received written confirmation from AFDIL that sufficient family reference samples had been received for Cabanatuan Common Grave 407. On June 4, 2019, DPAA finalized its recommendation for disinterment of the unknowns associated with Cabanatuan Common Grave 407 and the recommendation package has now been submitted for review under the process specified in DTM-16-003. Within the next several months, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs will likely reach a final decision on the request.

12. DPAA finalized its disinterment recommendation for unknowns associated with Cabanatuan Common Grave 822 on January 23, 2018, without receiving a family request for a servicemember associated with that grave. See Exhibit 1. The recommendation was approved by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs on August 8, 2018. See Exhibit 2.

13. DPAA finalized its disinterment recommendation for unknowns associated with Cabanatuan Common Grave 704 on March 2, 2018. See Exhibit 3. The recommendation was approved by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs on July 6, 2018. See Exhibit 4.

#### **1LT Cheaney's IDPF**

14. In my analysis of remains from the Abucay area in early 2017, I learned of a file folder titled 293, Cheaney, Ira. B, CLASSIFIED, 51 md. This file came from Box 34, in a collection of declassified Army IDPFs that were, at the time, in the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland.

15. A single page in 1LT Nininger's IDPF states "For additional information on this case see classified 293 file for Cheaney, Ira B. Jr., 1st Lt. O-23965." [IDPF p. 155]

16. On June 29, 1985, after receiving a copy of 1LT Nininger's IDPF from the Army, John Patterson wrote a letter to the Army's Memorial Affairs and Casualty Support Division, stating "Please send me a copy of the pertinent part of the classified 293 file for Cheaney, Ira. B., Jr., O-23965 which contains 'additional information' on my uncle."

17. On July 26, 1985, the Army's Memorial Affairs and Casualty Support Division wrote back, explaining that it had requested and received 1LT Cheaney's IDPF from the Washington National Records Center. A copy of the IDPF was attached to the letter. The letter explained that the IDPF contained "no classified portions relating to your uncle."

18. It appears that the 1985 letter did not make an intentional misstatement. 1LT Cheaney's IDPF does not contain classified portions because the classified files were maintained separately. The Army's request to the Washington National Records Center may not have triggered a search for the separate classified file, or the Washington National Records Center may simply not have located the file when they searched for 1LT Cheaney's files.

19. JPAC did not have a copy of the classified addendum to 1LT Cheaney's IDPF when reviewing 1LT Nininger's case in the 1980s and 1990s. Nor did my then-colleague, Justin Crick, reference it in his September 25, 2015 memorandum analyzing the evidence regarding 1LT Nininger and X-1130. A large batch of classified IDPFs was declassified in 2012 at DPMO's request. They were not readily accessible until an indexing and scanning project for the declassified IDPFs from 2012-2016 was completed. To my knowledge, no one in DPAA or its predecessor organizations reviewed the file before that project.

20. I first learned of the declassified 1LT Cheaney file in the spring of 2017. I incorporated the file into my own analysis beginning in March 2017, referencing it in the case summary for 1LT Nininger updated in December 2017, and in my statements filed in this

lawsuit. See Exhibit 5.

### **Search for 1LT Nininger**

21. Plaintiffs' assertion that Master Sergeant Abie Abraham drew a connection between the remains designated X-1130 Manila #2 and 1LT Nininger lacks any support in the historical record. As I previously discussed, the disinterment records to which the association with 1LT Nininger was later added were not signed by M Sgt. Abraham.

22. DPAA also maintains copies of two books written by M Sgt. Abraham, *Ghost of Bataan Speaks* (1971) and *O, God, Where Are You*, (1997), both published by Vantage Press. In neither book does M Sgt. Abraham say anything about the recovery of remains believed to be those of 1LT Nininger, although in both books he describes the circumstances of 1LT Nininger's death that resulted in award of the Medal of Honor. Given his continual mention in these books of individuals he believed he recovered, it would be unusual for M Sgt. Abraham to omit the name of 1LT Nininger if he believed he had made such a recovery.

### **Disinterment Recommendation for X-3629**

23. As I explained in my April 19, 2019 declaration, in response to a family disinterment request, DPAA carefully examined the potential connection between X-3629 and COL Stewart and other servicemembers who may have died in the area the remains were recovered. Of the 21 officers who were plausible candidates based on historical analysis, 19 were excluded after analysis by DPAA's forensic anthropologist and odontologist. DPAA deferred finalization of its disinterment recommendation while awaiting sufficient family reference samples for the two final candidates.

24. On April 18, 2019, DPAA received written confirmation from AFDIL that sufficient family reference samples had been received. On June 5, 2019, DPAA finalized its

recommendation and the recommendation package has now been submitted it for review under the process specified in DTM-16-003. Within the next several months, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs will likely reach a final decision on the request.

\* \* \* \* \*

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 5th day of June, 2019.

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JAMES.139438274**  
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Gregory J. Kupsy, Ph.D.  
Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency



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

JAN 18 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: DISINTERMENT RECOMMENDATION FOR CABANATUAN COMMON  
GRAVE 822

This memorandum is submitted in accordance with Department of Defense Directive 5110.10, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), dated January 13, 2017, Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum, dated April 14, 2015, and Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness DTM-16-003, dated May 5, 2016.

This is a DPAA-initiated disinterment request for four World War II Unknowns separately interred in the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) and associated with Common Grave (CG) 822, Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery. As outlined in the enclosed Exhumation Memo (TAB A), my staff reviewed the relevant historical and biological evidence and found sufficient grounds to make an association. Historical and anthropological analyses reduced the number of unresolved casualties associated with CG 822 to four. Three of these candidates have a Family Reference Sample (FRS) on file for DNA analysis. Based on the totality of the historical and scientific evidence, it is more likely than not that an identification will be made as the result of disinterment.

From our comprehensive assessment of the existing anthropological and historical records and the current state of identification technology, DPAA assesses that this case meets the 60% threshold established for group unknown remains. It is highly likely the Unknowns associated with CG 822 can be identified using existing technology and the DoD can identify the remains within 24 months of disinterment. DPAA has received positive feedback from the Department of the Army (TAB C), supporting the DPAA recommendation to disinter. The Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) has provided a memorandum listing the applicable FRS (TAB D).

Based on my review of the relevant information, to include input from AFDIL and the respective service, I have concluded the standards in the stated references have been met. Accordingly, I recommend the Unknowns associated with CG 822 be exhumed from MACM. Upon approval, DPAA will coordinate the disinterment with the MACM.

My point of contact in this matter is Ms. Wendy Coble, at telephone (571) 882-4630, or email address: wendy.m.coble.civ@mail.mil.

  
Kelly McKeague  
Director

Attachments:  
As stated

DPAA0004353





## DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY

2300 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2000

28 November 2017

### MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

From: Camillia Rodgers, Historian, Asia-Pacific Operations; Paul Emanovsky, Anthropologist; Laboratory, DPAA

To: Science Director and Asia-Pacific Director, DPAA

Subj: DISINTERMENT OF FOUR UNKNOWNNS ASSOCIATED WITH COMMON GRAVE  
822 CABANATUAN CAMP #1 CEMETERY

#### 1. Executive Summary

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is recommending the disinterment of four unknowns associated with individuals purportedly buried in Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery, Common Grave (CG) 822, for comparison with the four unresolved U.S. casualties associated with this grave (Table 1). The four unknowns proposed in this memorandum include United States Armed Forces (USAF) Cemetery Manila #2 Unknowns X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473. According to the reports of death, each of the unresolved casualties, potentially associated with these unknowns, died in the Philippine Islands as a Prisoner of War (POW) on 1 January 1942. The “Cabanatuan Death Report” indicated that based on the casualties’ recorded dates and times of death, they were buried in CG 822.<sup>1</sup> At this time, it is recommended that the initial casualty associations be limited to those unresolved casualties correlated with CG 822 (Table 1). There are no resolved casualties associated with this common grave (Table 2). This case exceeds the 60% threshold for group remains, supporting the conclusion that it is more likely than not that the DOD can identify the unknown remains associated with CG 822, if exhumed.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is recommended that the unknowns associated with CG 822 be exhumed from the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) for transport to the DPAA Laboratory for forensic analysis.

<b>Table 1. Casualties Associated with Common Grave 822. Summary of Analytical Options for the Individuals.</b>				
<b>Name</b>	<b>Historical Analysis</b>	<b>Anthropological Analysis</b>	<b>Dental Analysis</b>	<b>Chest Radiograph</b>
Morgan, Robert R.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Pruitt, Blanchard E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Schopp, Erwin H.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Walker, James M.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A

Green shade = line of testing has evidence present to support possible association, yellow shade = line of testing may become possible and/or may be probative.



**Figure 1. Map of Cabanatuan Camp No. 1 Cemetery created by the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon in August 1945, with CG 822 circled in red.**

2. Cabanatuan Camp #1

Cabanatuan Prison Camp—which was actually three separate camps—was located sixty miles north of Manila and several miles east of the city of Cabanatuan. Camp #1 was the largest camp for American POWs during the war.<sup>3</sup> Initially, Cabanatuan burial details interred all POWs who died within a given twenty-four-hour period in one mass grave. Between 3 June 1942 and 25 September 1942, one burial day was defined as occurring from noon on one day until the following noon. Between 26 September and 19 October 1942, a burial day occurred from 5:00 PM on one day to 5:00 PM the following day. Eventually, from 19 October 1942 until

the camp closed, a burial day occurred from midnight to midnight. Japanese guards at Cabanatuan did not initially allow POW burial details to erect markers on the shallow graves, nor did the captive Americans inter remains in any organized plot structure or particular order. Burial details were unable to record numerous deaths, burials, and graves during the camp's early months.<sup>4</sup>

Captain Robert E. Conn, a POW who served as Graves Registration Officer at Cabanatuan from November 1942 until 16 October 1944, created what is now known as the "Death Report, Cabanatuan." After August 1942, Japanese guards allowed the Americans to bury their dead in a systematic order; they also permitted them to erect grave markers. Record-keeping seemed to improve thereafter. Captain Conn interviewed POWs who had served on earlier burial details in an effort to obtain information about previous grave locations and burials. Successive investigations, both by POWs during the war and the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) after the Japanese surrender, had a difficult time locating and delineating the boundaries and burial dates of specific plots. Attempts to associate individuals reported to have died within a twenty-four-hour burial period with a specific grave revealed numerous inconsistencies and errors. Captain Conn believed that he could somewhat confidently confirm burial reports only from August 1942 onwards.<sup>5</sup> The numerous discrepancies in the documentary record have encouraged the DPAA to pursue disinterment of all Cabanatuan unknowns, as was done in the USS *Oklahoma* case.

When the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon disinterred Cabanatuan between December 1945 and March 1946, it discovered that the camp cemetery was situated in an area with a high water table. The condition of the remains, consequently, was extremely poor. Platoon members examined remains upon disinterment and created tooth charts. All remains were then moved to Manila #2, which was located twelve miles north of Manila.<sup>6</sup> From Manila #2, remains were transferred to the Manila Mausoleum and Central Identification Point (CIP) at Nichols Field, where AGRS personnel conducted further analyses and processed remains for a more permanent burial. There was evidence of some commingling among the remains, and investigators noted discrepancies between the graves from which resolved individuals had been identified and the graves in which they expected them to be interred based on the reported time of death.<sup>7</sup> When the Memorial Division rejected proposed identifications, or the AGRS concluded that the remains were unidentifiable, the AGRS permanently interred the unidentified Cabanatuan remains as unknowns in the MACM.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Common Grave 822

The "Cabanatuan Roster of Burials" noted that four remains were buried in CG 822 at the Cabanatuan POW Camp Cemetery, however, the "Cabanatuan Death Report" recorded that five remains were buried in CG 822.<sup>9</sup> According to both the "Roster of Burials U.S. Military Cemeteries Overseas" and the "Cabanatuan Death Report," five individuals died in Camp #1 on 1 January 1943, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM.<sup>10</sup> On that date, a burial day should have lasted from 12:00 AM one day, until 12:00 AM the next day. Accordingly, the five casualties' dates and times of death would associate them with CG 822. However, American Graves Registration Service officials recovered only four unknown remains from CG 822, Unknowns X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473.<sup>11</sup> The fifth set of remains buried on 1 January 1943, was reportedly buried in, and recovered from, CG 836 and identified as Private First Class (Pfc) Allen W. Wood.<sup>12</sup> The four unidentified casualties associated with CG 822 are as follows:

Private (Pvt) Robert R. Morgan, Pvt Blanchard E. Pruitt, Pvt Erwin H. Schopp, and Corporal (Cpl) James M. Walker.<sup>13</sup>

The four unknowns recovered from CG 822 were originally recommended for group identification as the remains of the unidentified casualties, however the recommendation was disapproved because of discrepancies between the Army dental records of the deceased and the dental charts for the unknowns.<sup>14</sup> The AGRS personnel concluded from the dental record comparisons that the remains of Cpl James M. Walker, Pfc Blanchard E. Pruitt, and Pvt Erwin H. Schopp were not in the group. Private Robert Morgan’s name was not specifically mentioned like the other three. The AGRS was not able to associate these casualties with any other remains recovered from the Cabanatuan POW Camp Cemetery.<sup>15</sup>

On 31 December 1945, the AGRS interred the four associated unknowns from CG 822 in the USAF Cemetery Manila #2, and assigned them Manila #2 unknown numbers X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473 (Table 3 below indicates the original Manila #2 X-numbers and subsequent Manila Mausoleum X-numbers).<sup>16</sup> American Graves Registration Service personnel disinterred the remains from the USAF Cemetery Manila #2 on 17 December 1947. The AGRS personnel processed, examined, stored, and completed dental and skeletal charts at the Manila Mausoleum CIP for the four unknowns.<sup>17</sup> In the “Report of Interment,” AGRS personnel noted that the unknowns could possibly be any one of the four casualties listed above.<sup>18</sup> The AGRS examined the remains again in 1949, but individual or group identifications could not be made. Correspondence dated 18 October 1949, from the headquarters of AGRS, noted that X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473 were being processed as unidentifiable. The AGRS personnel recommended that the associated casualties be considered non-recoverable.<sup>19</sup> Between 20 and 21 Feb 1950, cemetery personnel interred X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473 at the MACM.<sup>20</sup>

4. Present Investigation

Current research has reviewed the unknown files believed to be associated with CG 822, which include personnel records of the four unidentified casualties believed to be associated with CG 822, and archival documents providing a historical background for the burial and processing of remains from Cabanatuan. This research indicates that the four individuals in Table 2 should be considered as casualties potentially associated with CG 822. At this time, it is recommended that the initial casualty associations be limited to those correlated with CG 822, as the research does not directly suggest other casualty or grave associations for the four unresolved casualties other than CG 822.

Name	Service Number	Rank	Service	Common Grave	Status
Morgan, Robert R.	18025313	Pvt	USAAF	822	Unresolved
Pruitt, Blanchard E.	18060257	Pvt	USA	822	Unresolved
Schopp, Erwin H.	17012216	Pvt	USA	822	Unresolved
Walker, James M.	R-2368077	Cpl	USA	822	Unresolved

Current research supports that there are four unknowns associated with Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery, CG 822, which are interred under their Manila #2 unknown number in the MACM (Table 3). Review of the biological and dental evidence purported to be associated with

these unknowns show that there is a significant amount of potentially probative material available for anthropological and dental analyses.

**Table 3. Present Burial Location of CG 822 Unknowns in the MACM.<sup>22</sup>**

<b>Current Unknown Number</b>	<b>Unknown Number at Manila Mausoleum</b>	<b>Current Burial Location at MACM</b>
X-470 Manila #2	X-4094	Plot C, Row 12, Grave 83
X-471 Manila #2	X-4095	Plot N, Row 6, Grave 187
X-472 Manila #2	X-4096	Plot N, Row 11, Grave 65
X-473 Manila #2	X-4097	Plot N, Row 13, Grave 187

5. Summary and Conclusions

The DPAA has copies of all the IDPFs for the unresolved individuals. Based on the aforementioned historical and scientific information, to include FRS collection, this case exceeds the 60% threshold for group remains, supporting the conclusion that it is more likely than not that the DOD can identify the unknown remains associated with CG 822, if exhumed. It is recommended that the unknowns associated with CG 822 be exhumed from the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) for transport to the DPAA Laboratory for forensic analysis.

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 Historian

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 Anthropologist

Regional Director Recommendation:

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Science Director Recommendation:

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> “Roster of Burials U.S. Cemeteries Overseas,” 84. Folder Title: 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan), Chronological Listing of Graves; “Cabanatuan Death Reports, Prison Camps,” 45. Folder Title: 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan) Death Reports, Prison Camps (B). Record Group (RG 92): Entry 1894A, Box 619, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA II) College Park, Maryland.

<sup>3</sup> Heather Harris and Lisa Beckenbaugh, Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), “Casualties of Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp #1 and the history of their burials,” 13 October 2005 (Revised 20 February 2014), 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 8-9.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>9</sup> “Cabanatuan Death Reports, Prison Camps,”45.

<sup>10</sup> “Roster of Burials U.S. Cemeteries Overseas,” 83-84.

<sup>11</sup> R.C. Barrett, WD QMC 1042, “Report of Interment,” 29 January 1946, in Unknown X-471 Manila #2 File. RG 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center (WNRC) Suitland, MD. Headquarters, American Graves Registration Service, PHILCOM Zone, APO 900, “Case History for Remains Considered Non-Recoverable,” 19 October 1949, in Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) for Blanchard Pruitt.

<sup>12</sup> T.H. Metz, QMGMT 293 “Subject: Identification of World War II Deceased,” 26 May 1949; L.S. Panopio, “Identification Data,” 30 March 1948, in IDPF for Allen Wood. RG 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center (WNRC) Suitland, MD.

<sup>13</sup> “Roster of Burials U.S. Cemeteries Overseas,” 84, and “Cabanatuan Death Reports, Prison Camps,” 45. T.H. Metz, QMGMT 293 “Subject: Identification of World War II Deceased,” 26 May 1949. R.C. Barrett, WD QMC 1042, “Report of Interment,” 29 January 1946, in Manila #2 X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473 files.

<sup>14</sup> Wilbur Hobbs, Harold B. McNemar, and John Shypula, Headquarters, American Graves Registration Service, PHILCOM Zone, APO 900, “Case History for Remains Considered Non-Recoverable,” 19 October 1949, in Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) for Blanchard Pruitt. T.H. Metz, Department of the Army, Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington 25, D.C., “Subject: Identification of World War II Deceased,” 26 May 1949.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., T.H. Metz, QMGMT 293, “Subject: Identification of World War II Deceased,” 26 May 1949, IDPF for James M. Walker.

<sup>16</sup> R.C. Barrett, WD QMC Form 1042, “Report of Interment,” 29 January 1946, in Manila #2 X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473 files.

<sup>17</sup> L.S. Panopio, OQMC Form 1044, “Identification Data,” 30 March 1948, in Manila #2 X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473 files. Paul R. Nichols, OQMC Form 1044, “Identification Data,” 20 October 1949, in Manila #2 X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473.

<sup>18</sup> V.C. Aquino, WD QMC Form 1042, “Report of Interment,” 7 April 1948, in Manila #2 X-473 file.

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<sup>19</sup> Harold B. McNemar Headquarters, American Graves Registration Service, PHILCOM Zone, "Subject: Unidentifiable Remains," 18 October 1949; in Manila #2 X-473 file.

<sup>20</sup> L.W. Richardson, "Disinterment Directive," 9 February 1950, in Unknown files X-470, X-471, X-472, and X-473 files.

<sup>21</sup> "Chronological Listing of Cabanatuan Graves," 84. The FRS status was checked using the DPAA Family Reference Sample Tracker on 12 August 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Burial information derived from Manila #2 X-Files and "Department of the Army Office of the Quartermaster General: Electronic Accounting Machine Report," 15 August 1952.





PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

**OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

AUG - 6 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY, HEADQUARTERS OPERATIONS,  
AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

SUBJECT: Disinterment Request for Common Grave 822, Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery

Request your approval for disinterring Common Grave 822, Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery interred in the four graves listed below. These graves are located at the Manila American Cemetery in Taguig City, Philippines.

Current Unknown Number	Unknown Number at Manila Mausoleum	Burial Location
X-470 Manila #2	X-4094	Plot C, Row 12, Grave 83
X-471 Manila #2	X-4095	Plot N, Row 6, Grave 187
X-472 Manila #2	X-4096	Plot N, Row 11, Grave 65
X-473 Manila #2	X-4097	Plot N, Row 13, Grave 187

After reviewing the attached information provided with this request, I believe the Department of Defense threshold standard for disinterment is met and provide my consent to this request.

My point of contact for this request is Ms. Lisiane Valentine at (571) 372-5319 or lisiane.m.valentine.civ@mail.mil.

Stephanie Barna  
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of  
Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Attachment:  
As stated

cc:  
Director, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency  
Director, Joint Staff  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army  
for Military Personnel and Quality of Life

DPAA0004351



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

JAN 18 2018

**MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS**

**SUBJECT: DISINTERMENT RECOMMENDATION FOR CABANATUAN COMMON  
GRAVE 822**

This memorandum is submitted in accordance with Department of Defense Directive 5110.10, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), dated January 13, 2017, Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum, dated April 14, 2015, and Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness DTM-16-003, dated May 5, 2016.

This is a DPAA-initiated disinterment request for four World War II Unknowns separately interred in the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) and associated with Common Grave (CG) 822, Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery. As outlined in the enclosed Exhumation Memo (TAB A), my staff reviewed the relevant historical and biological evidence and found sufficient grounds to make an association. Historical and anthropological analyses reduced the number of unresolved casualties associated with CG 822 to four. Three of these candidates have a Family Reference Sample (FRS) on file for DNA analysis. Based on the totality of the historical and scientific evidence, it is more likely than not that an identification will be made as the result of disinterment.

From our comprehensive assessment of the existing anthropological and historical records and the current state of identification technology, DPAA assesses that this case meets the 60% threshold established for group unknown remains. It is highly likely the Unknowns associated with CG 822 can be identified using existing technology and the DoD can identify the remains within 24 months of disinterment. DPAA has received positive feedback from the Department of the Army (TAB C), supporting the DPAA recommendation to disinter. The Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) has provided a memorandum listing the applicable FRS (TAB D).

Based on my review of the relevant information, to include input from AFDIL and the respective service, I have concluded the standards in the stated references have been met. Accordingly, I recommend the Unknowns associated with CG 822 be exhumed from MACM. Upon approval, DPAA will coordinate the disinterment with the MACM.

My point of contact in this matter is Ms. Wendy Coble, at telephone (571) 882-4630, or email address: [wendy.m.coble.civ@mail.mil](mailto:wendy.m.coble.civ@mail.mil).

  
Kelly McKeague  
Director

Attachments:  
As stated

DPAA0004352



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

MAR - 2 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: DISINTERMENT RECOMMENDATION FOR CABANATUAN COMMON  
GRAVE 704


This memorandum is submitted in accordance with Department of Defense Directive 5110.10, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), dated January 13, 2017, Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum, dated April 14, 2015, and Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness DTM-16-003, dated May 5, 2016.

This is a DPAA-initiated disinterment request for eight World War II Unknowns separately interred in the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) and associated with Common Grave (CG) 704, Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery. As outlined in the enclosed Exhumation Memo (TAB A), my staff reviewed the relevant historical and biological evidence and found sufficient grounds to make an association. Historical and anthropological analyses reduced the number of unresolved casualties associated with CG 704 to eight. Six of these candidates have a Family Reference Sample (FRS) on file for DNA analysis. Based on the totality of the historical and scientific evidence, it is more likely than not that an identification will be made as the result of disinterment.

From our comprehensive assessment of existing historical, anthropological, and dental records, and the current state of identification technology, DPAA assesses this case meets the threshold established for requesting disinterment of group unknown remains. It is more likely than not CG 704 can be identified using existing technology, and the DoD can identify the remains within 24 months of disinterment. The DPAA has received positive feedback from both the Department of the Navy (TAB B) and the Department of the Army (TAB C), supporting the DPAA recommendation to disinter. The Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) has provided a memorandum listing all applicable FRS (TAB D).

Based on my review of the relevant information, to include input from AFDIL and the respective services, I have concluded the standards in the stated references have been met. Accordingly, I recommend the Unknowns associated with CG 704 be exhumed from the MACM. Upon approval, DPAA will coordinate the disinterment with the American Battle Monuments Commission.

My point of contact in this matter is Ms. Wendy Coble, at telephone (571) 882-4630, or email address: wendy.m.coble.civ@mail.mil.

  
Kelly McKeague  
Director

Attachments:  
As stated

DPAA0004320



## DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY

2300 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2000

28 November 2017

### MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

From: Camillia Rodgers, Historian, Asia-Pacific Operations; Paul Emanovsky, Anthropologist; Laboratory, DPAA

To: Science Director and Asia-Pacific Director, DPAA

Subj: DISINTERMENT OF EIGHT UNKNOWNNS ASSOCIATED WITH COMMON GRAVE 704 CABANATUAN CAMP #1 CEMETERY

#### 1. Executive Summary

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is recommending the disinterment of eight unknowns, United States Armed Forces (USAF) Cemetery Manila #2 Unknowns X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, X-678, and X-3156, associated with individuals purportedly buried in Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery, Common Grave (CG) 704, for comparison with the eight unresolved individuals associated with this grave (Table 1). According to the reports of death, each of the unresolved casualties died in the Philippine Islands as a Prisoner of War (POW) on 1 November 1942. The “Cabanatuan Death Report” indicated that based on the casualties’ recorded dates and times of death, they were buried in CG 704.<sup>1</sup> At this time, it is recommended that the initial casualty associations be limited to those unresolved casualties correlated with CG 704 (Table 1). The FRS has been requested for the remaining two unresolved casualties associated with this common grave. This case exceeds the 60% threshold for group remains, supporting the conclusion that it is more likely than not that the DOD can identify the unknown remains associated with CG 704, if exhumed.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is recommended that the unknowns associated with CG 704 be exhumed from the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) for transport to the DPAA Laboratory for forensic analysis.

<b>Table 1. Final List of Unresolved U.S. Casualties Associated with Common Grave 704 Summary of Analytical Options for the Individuals</b>				
<b>Name</b>	<b>Historical Analysis</b>	<b>Anthropological Analysis</b>	<b>Dental Analysis</b>	<b>Chest Radiograph*</b>
Bruntmyer, Lloyd R.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Calkins, William E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Clark, Walter L.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Doyash, Harold W.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Erwin, Kenneth G.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Hennessey, Harland J.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Smith, Henry J.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Winters, Charles B.	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A

Green shade = line of testing has evidence present to support possible association, yellow shade = line of testing may become possible and/or may be probative. \*Although copies of chest radiographs are sometimes included in personnel records, these findings have been rare in World War II casualties.

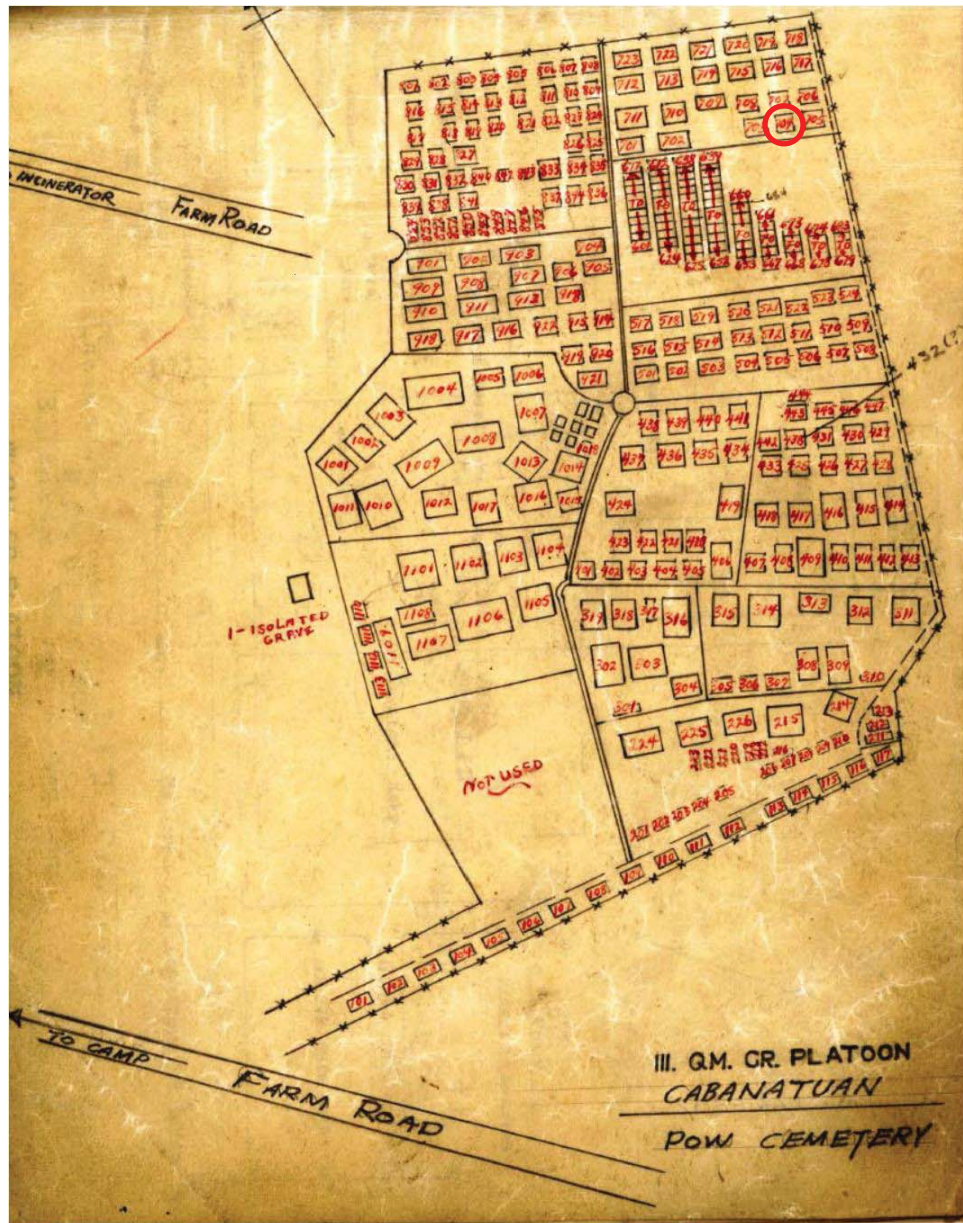


Figure 1. Map of Cabanatuan Camp No. 1 Cemetery created by the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon in August 1945, with CG 704 circled in red.

2. Cabanatuan Camp #1

Cabanatuan Prison Camp—which was actually three separate camps—was located sixty miles north of Manila and several miles east of the city of Cabanatuan. Camp #1 was the largest camp for American POWs during the war.<sup>3</sup> Initially, Cabanatuan burial details interred all POWs who died within a given twenty-four-hour period in one mass grave. Between 3 June 1942 and 25 September 1942, one burial day was defined as occurring from noon on one day until the following noon. Between 26 September and 19 October 1942, a burial day occurred

from 5:00 PM to 5:00 PM, and from 19 October 1942 until the camp closed, a burial day occurred from midnight to midnight. Japanese guards at Cabanatuan did not initially allow POW burial details to erect markers on the shallow graves, nor did the captive Americans inter remains in any organized plot structure or particular order. Burial details were unable to record numerous deaths, burials, and graves during the camp's early months.<sup>4</sup>

Captain Robert E. Conn, a POW who served as Graves Registration Officer at Cabanatuan from November 1942 until 16 October 1944, created what is now known as the "Cabanatuan Death Report." After August 1942, Japanese guards allowed the Americans to bury their dead in a systematic order; they also permitted them to erect grave markers. Record-keeping seemed to improve thereafter. Captain Conn interviewed POWs who had served on earlier burial details in an effort to obtain information about previous grave locations and burials. Successive investigations, both by POWs during the war and the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) after the Japanese surrender, had a difficult time locating and delineating the boundaries and burial dates of specific plots. Attempts to associate individuals who died within a twenty-four-hour burial period with a specific grave revealed numerous inconsistencies and errors with this interment practice. Captain Conn believed that he could somewhat confidently confirm burial reports only from August 1942 onwards.<sup>5</sup> The numerous discrepancies in the documentary record have encouraged DPAA to pursue disinterment of all Cabanatuan unknowns, as was done in the USS *Oklahoma* case.

When the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon disinterred Cabanatuan between December 1945 and March 1946, it discovered that the camp cemetery was situated in an area with a high water table. The condition of the remains, consequently, were extremely poor. Platoon members examined remains upon disinterment and created tooth charts. All remains then moved to Manila #2, which was located twelve miles north of Manila.<sup>6</sup> From Manila #2, remains went to the Manila Mausoleum and Central Identification Point (CIP) at Nichols Field, where AGRS personnel processed them. There was evidence of some commingling among the remains, and investigators noted discrepancies between the graves from which resolved individuals had been identified and the graves in which they expected them to be interred based on the reported temporal burial periods.<sup>7</sup> When the Memorial Division rejected proposed identifications, the AGRS permanently interred the unidentified Cabanatuan remains as unknowns in the MACM.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Common Grave 704

The "Cabanatuan Death Report" noted that ten casualties were buried in CG 704 at the Cabanatuan POW Camp Cemetery.<sup>9</sup> American Graves Registration Service officials identified two casualties from this common grave, and eight were unidentified and classified as Unknowns X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, X-678, and X-3156. Unknown X-3156 was initially reported as X-694 Manila #2 due to a reporting or clerical error which was later corrected.<sup>10</sup> According to both the "Roster of Burials U.S. Military Cemeteries Overseas" and the "Cabanatuan Death Report," ten individuals died in Camp #1 on 1 November 1942, between the hours of 8:30 AM and 10:00 PM, and were reportedly buried in CG 704.<sup>11</sup> On that date, a burial day should have lasted from 12:00 AM one day until 12:00 AM the next day. All of the ten casualties' dates and times of death would associate them with CG 704.

The two individuals identified from CG 704 were Corporal (Cpl) Paul Blaho and Private (Pvt) Thomas O'Hara. They were identified by their identification tags.<sup>12</sup> The eight unidentified casualties from CG 704 are as follows: Private First Class (Pfc) Lloyd R. Bruntmyer, Pfc Harold W. Doyash, Pfc Charles B. Winters, Private (Pvt) Harland Hennessey, Pvt William E. Calkins, Pvt Henry J. Smith, Cpl Kenneth G. Erwin, and Cpl Walter Clark.<sup>13</sup> Attempts were made to associate these individuals with unknowns recovered from CG 704, in addition to comparing them with unidentified remains recovered from other common graves. Nevertheless, the AGRS was not able to associate these casualties with any other remains recovered from the Cabanatuan POW Camp Cemetery.

In their 1946 review of the remains, graves registration personnel believed the eight unknowns recovered from CG 704 to be associated with the following eight individuals also associated with the same common grave: X-605 was believed to be Pfc Charles B. Winters, X-672 was believed to be Pvt William E. Calkins, X-673 was believed to be Pfc Lloyd R. Bruntmyer, X-675 was believed to be Cpl Walter L. Clark, X-676 was believed to be Pfc Harold W. Doyash, X-677 was believed to be Pvt Henry J. Smith, X-678 was believed to be Pvt Harland J. Hennessey, and X-3156 was believed to be Pvt Kenneth G. Erwin.<sup>14</sup> However, the remains were not individually identifiable.<sup>15</sup> In processing X-3156, AGRS personnel found extra skeletal elements that were separated into a series of Central Identification Laboratory (CIL) portion designations.<sup>16</sup> Initially, the remains were segregated into two unknown designations with Manila Mausoleum numbers.<sup>17</sup> The extra elements were initially assigned Manila Mausoleum number X-2454-B, before later being designated CIL #320, while the rest of the remains were assigned Manila Mausoleum number X-2454-A. However, the remains re-designated as X-2454-A were buried under the Manila #2 designation X-3156 (see Table 3).<sup>18</sup> The unknown file for X-3156 also indicates that while processing X-2454, additional skeletal elements that could not be properly associated were removed and assigned CIL #542.<sup>19</sup> Another form stated the eight unidentified remains from CG 704 were examined, and the improperly associated remains were assigned CIL #522.<sup>20</sup> It is unclear what happened to CIL #522, CIL #542, and CIL #320, as the records do not indicate their whereabouts.<sup>21</sup> However, "All CIL remains from different USAF cemeteries, including from the AGRS Mausoleum, were reprocessed simultaneously during the final resolution of the CIL project," and reportedly buried together.<sup>22</sup>

On 9 January 1946, the AGRS interred the eight unknowns associated with CG 704 in the United States Armed Forces (USAF) Cemetery Manila #2, and assigned them Manila #2 unknown numbers X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, X-678, and X-3156 (Table 3 below indicates the original Manila #2 X-numbers and subsequent Manila Mausoleum X-numbers).<sup>23</sup> The remains were disinterred in 1947 from the USAF Cemetery Manila #2, and processed and examined at the Manila Mausoleum CIP. On 4 December 1947, the AGRS stored X-3156 at the Mausoleum.<sup>24</sup> On 3 June 1948, the AGRS stored the remains associated with X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, and X-678, at the Manila Mausoleum.<sup>25</sup> The AGRS personnel completed dental and skeletal charts at the Manila Mausoleum CIP for the eight unknowns.<sup>26</sup> The AGRS examined the remains again in the subsequent years, but individual identifications could not be made. Between 4 and 5 December 1951, cemetery personnel interred X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, X-678, and X-3156 for permanent burial at the MACM.<sup>27</sup>

Correspondence dated 10 January 1952 from the chief of Memorial Division recommended that the deceased listed in "Exhibit A," which included the names of the eight unresolved

casualties in Table 2, be declared nonrecoverable.<sup>28</sup> This decision was made because they concluded that the possibility of sustaining positive identifications of individuals and/or groups could not be defended due to the “paucity of skeletal remains available” and the badly eroded state of the remains.<sup>29</sup>

4. Present Investigation

Current research has reviewed the unknown files believed to be associated with CG 704, which include personnel records of the unidentified casualties believed to be associated with CG 704, archival documents providing a historical background for the burial and processing of remains from Cabanatuan. This research indicates that the ten individuals in Table 2 should be considered as casualties potentially associated with CG 704. At this time, it is recommended that the initial casualty associations be limited to those correlated with CG 704, as the research does not directly suggest other casualty or grave associations other than CG 704. If commingling exists within the remains recovered from CG 704, requests have been submitted for FRS for both resolved and unresolved casualties associated with CG 704. However, it is recommended that the initial casualty associations be limited to those unresolved casualties correlated with CG 704 (Table 1).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Service Number</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Common Grave</b>	<b>Status</b>
Blaho, Paul	7022718	Cpl	USA	704	Resolved
Bruntmyer, Lloyd R.	19048974	T/4	USAAF	704	Unresolved
Calkins, William E.	19020998	Pvt	USA	704	Unresolved
Clark, Walter L.	19053642	Cpl	USAAF	704	Unresolved
Doyash, Harold W.	281424	Pfc	USMC	704	Unresolved
Erwin, Kenneth G.	18049796	Cpl	USA	704	Unresolved
Hennessey, Harland J.	32092573	Pvt	USA	704	Unresolved
O’Hara, Thomas W.	32115031	Pvt	USA	704	Resolved
Smith, Henry J.	6671009	Pvt	USA	704	Unresolved
Winters, Charles B.	6664117	Pfc	USA	704	Unresolved

Current research supports that there are eight unknowns associated with Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery, CG 704, which are interred under their Manila #2 unknown number in the MACM (Table 3). Review of the biological and dental evidence purported to be associated with these unknowns show that there is a significant amount of potentially probative material available for anthropological and dental analyses.

<b>Current Unknown Number</b>	<b>Unknown Number at Manila Mausoleum</b>	<b>Current Burial Location at MACM</b>
X-605 Manila #2	X-4551	Plot H, Row 12, Grave 110
X-672 Manila #2	X-4552	Plot H, Row 11, Grave 147



<b>Current Unknown Number</b>	<b>Unknown Number at Manila Mausoleum</b>	<b>Current Burial Location at MACM</b>
X-673 Manila #2	X-4553	Plot H, Row 11, Grave 146
X-675 Manila #2	X-4554	Plot H, Row 11, Grave 144
X-676 Manila #2	X-4555	Plot H, Row 11, Grave 134
X-677 Manila #2	X-4556	Plot H, Row 10, Grave 129
X-678 Manila #2	X-4557	Plot H, Row 10, Grave 130
X-3156 Manila #2	X-2454-A	Plot H, Row 8, Grave 146

5. Summary and Conclusions

The DPAA has copies of all the IDPFs for the unresolved individuals. Based on the aforementioned historical and scientific information, to include FRS collection, this case exceeds the 60% threshold for group remains, supporting the conclusion that it is more likely than not that the DOD can identify the unknown remains associated with CG 704, if exhumed.<sup>32</sup> The DPAA recommends that CG 704 be disinterred from the MACM for transport to the DPAA laboratory for forensic analysis and comparison with the associated unresolved casualties.

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**LIA.Z.1410576895** RODGERS.CAMILLIA.Z.1410576895  
 Date: 2017.11.28 14:24:05 -10'00'  
 Camillia Rodgers, PhD  
 Historian

**EMANOVSKY.PAUL** Digitally signed by  
**.D.1270233542** EMANOVSKY.PAUL.D.1270233542  
 Date: 2017.11.28 14:43:50 -10'00'  
 Paul D. Emanovsky, PhD D-ABFA  
 Anthropologist

Regional Director Recommendation:

**GANN.MICHAEL** Digitally signed by  
**J.II.1150475011** GANN.MICHAEL.J.II.1150475011  
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\_\_\_\_\_ Other  
 (Explanation Attached)

Science Director Recommendation:

**BERRAN.PHILIP.JO** Digitally signed by  
**SEPH.1022745197** BERRAN.PHILIP.JOSEPH.1022745197  
 Date: 2017.12.01 15:52:39 -10'00' Disinter

\_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Disinter

\_\_\_\_\_ Other  
 (Explanation Attached)

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> “Roster of Burials U.S. Cemeteries Overseas,” 66-67. Folder Title: 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan), Chronological Listing of Graves; “Cabanatuan Death Reports, Prison Camps,” 37. Folder Title: 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan) Death Reports, Prison Camps (B). Record Group (RG 92): Entry 1894A, Box 619, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA II) College Park, Maryland.

<sup>3</sup> Heather Harris and Lisa Beckenbaugh, Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), “Casualties of Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp #1 and the history of their burials,” 13 October 2005 (Revised 20 February 2014), 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 8-9.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>9</sup> “Cabanatuan Death Reports, Prison Camps,” 37.

<sup>10</sup> William Sitnek, SPQYG 293, Army Service Forces, Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington 25, D.C., “Subject: Identification of Unknown Deceased,” 30 April 1946. Paul Dobson, GSQMM 293, Headquarters Base X, United States Army Forces, Western Pacific, APO 358, “2nd Ind.,” 21 May 1946, in Unknown X-694 Manila #2 File. RG 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center (WNRC) Suitland, MD.

<sup>11</sup> “Roster of Burials U.S. Cemeteries Overseas,” 66-67, and “Cabanatuan Death Reports, Prison Camps,” 37.

<sup>12</sup> R.C. Barrett, WD QMC Form 1042, “Report of Interment,” 1 February 1946, in X-678 file.

<sup>13</sup> “Roster of Burials U.S. Cemeteries Overseas,” 66-67, and “Cabanatuan Death Reports, Prison Camps,” 37. H. B. McNemar, “(Extract Copy), Photostat Copy of Cabanatuan POW Camp Death Report, (Extract),” in Unknown X-673 Manila #2 File. RG 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center (WNRC) Suitland, MD. R.C. Barrett, WD QMC Form 1042, “Report of Interment,” 1 February 1946, in Unknown Manila #2 X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, X-678, and X-3156 files.

<sup>14</sup> R.C. Barrett, WD QMC Form 1042, “Report of Interment,” 1 February 1946, in X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, X-678, and X-3156 files.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> The creation of CIL portions was a common AGRS practice for smaller collections or samples of skeletal elements that were determined to be inconsistent with a given set of remains.

<sup>17</sup> L.S. Panopio, “Identification Data,” 2 June 1948, in X-3156 file and CIL #320 file.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Fox, Central Identification Point, AGRS APO 900, Nichols Field, Manila, P.I., “Statement, Reference: UNK X-2454 AGRS Mausoleum,” 12 January 1950, in X-3156 file.

<sup>20</sup> Robert B. Fox, Central Identification Point, AGRS APO 900, Nichols Field, Manila, P.I., “Statement, Reference: UNK X-2354 Mausoleum, UNK’s X-4551 thru X-4557,” 12 December 1949.

<sup>21</sup> Many such CIL portions from Cabanatuan ended up interred in large collections buried in large commingled assemblages under Manila Mausoleum X-5312, but direct references to the CIL portions discussed here were not found in the files associated with X-5312.

<sup>22</sup> GRPZ 293, 1st Ind, Headquarters, American Graves Registration Service, PHILCOM Zone, APO 920, "Subject: Identification of World War II Deceased," 20 November 1950. It is unclear where these CIL portions were buried, and given the complexity of how the CIL portions were processed and buried, the CIL cases cannot currently be pursued.

<sup>23</sup> R.C. Barrett, WD QMC Form 1042, "Report of Interment," 1 February 1946, in X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, X-678, and X-3156 files.

<sup>24</sup> V.C. Aquino, WD QMC Form 1042, "Report of Interment," 13 July 1948, in X-3156 file.

<sup>25</sup> V.C. Aquino, WD QMC Form 1042, "Report of Interment," 15 July 1948, in X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, X-678 files.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Edward L. Berg, QMC Form 1042, "Report of Interment," 6 and 7 December 1951, in Unknown X-605, X-672, X-673, X-675, X-676, X-677, X-678, X-3156 files.

<sup>28</sup> Office of the Quarter Master General of the Army, "Intraoffice Reference Sheet," 10 January 1952; "Case History for Remains Considered Nonrecoverable: Basis for Declaring Remains Nonrecoverable," "Roster to Accompany Board Findings of Nonrecoverability," in Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) for Lloyd R. Bruntmyer. RG 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, WNRC.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> "Chronological Listing of Cabanatuan Graves," 66-67. The FRS status was checked using the DPAA Family Reference Sample Tracker on 17 July 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Burial information derived from Manila #2 X-Files and "Department of the Army Office of the Quartermaster General: Electronic Accounting Machine Report," 15 August 1952.

<sup>32</sup> Following the criterion that "research indicates that it is more likely than not that DoD can identify the remains." Peter Levine, Directive-type Memorandum (DTM)-16-003 – "Policy Guidance for the Disinterment of Unidentified Human Remains," 5 May 2016. Department of Defense, Washington, D.C.



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

**4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000**

JUN 29 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY, HEADQUARTERS OPERATIONS,  
AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

SUBJECT: Disinterment Request for Common Grave 704, Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery

Request your approval for disinterring Common Grave 704, Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery, interred in the eight graves listed in the attached list. These graves are located at the Manila American Cemetery in Taguig City, Philippines.

After reviewing the attached information provided with this request, I believe the Department of Defense threshold standard for disinterment is met and provide my consent to this request.

My point of contact for this request is Ms. Lisiane Valentine at (571) 372-5319 or [lisiane.m.valentine.civ@mail.mil](mailto:lisiane.m.valentine.civ@mail.mil).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert L. Wilkie".

Robert L. Wilkie

Attachment:

As stated

cc:

Director, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

Director, Joint Staff

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army  
for Military Personnel and Quality of Life

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy  
for Military Manpower and Personnel

**COMMON GRAVE 704, CABANATUAN CAMP #1 CEMETERY**

Unknown Graves Proposed for Disinterment

Manila American Cemetery in Taguig City, Philippines

<b>Current Unknown Number</b>	<b>Unknown Number at Manila Mausoleum</b>	<b>Burial Location</b>
X-605 Manila #2	X-4551	Plot H, Row 12, Grave 110
X-672 Manila #2	X-4552	Plot H, Row 11, Grave 147
X-673 Manila #2	X-4553	Plot H, Row 11, Grave 146
X-675 Manila #2	X-4554	Plot H, Row 11, Grave 144
X-676 Manila #2	X-4555	Plot H, Row 11, Grave 134
X-677 Manila #2	X-4556	Plot H, Row 10, Grave 129
X-678 Manila #2	X-4557	Plot H, Row 10, Grave 130
X-3156 Manila #2	X-2454-A	Plot H, Row 8, Grave 146

Encl

DPAA0004319



**ALEXANDER R. NININGER, JR.**  
**First Lieutenant (1st Lt), U.S. Army**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:** First Lieutenant Alexander “Sandy” R. Nininger, Jr., service number O-23761, entered service from Florida. He served in the 1st Battalion, 57th Infantry Regiment, Philippine Scouts, in the Pacific Theater during the Second World War. On 12 January 1942, 1st Lt Nininger died during a ground battle with Japanese forces near Abucay, Bataan Province, Luzon Island, Philippines. For his actions in service, 1st Lt Nininger received the Congressional Medal of Honor, Bronze Star and the Purple Heart with two Oak Leaf Clusters. Today, he is memorialized on the Tablets of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery, Manila, Philippines.<sup>1</sup> Details of 1st Lt Nininger’s loss are recorded in his Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF).<sup>2</sup>

**CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS:** On 8 December 1941, Japanese aircraft bombed and strafed airfields on the island of Luzon, Philippine Islands. They were followed on 10 December by the first Japanese ground forces landing on the northern shores of Luzon. From 8 through 23 December, the Japanese continued to launch air strikes against Naval and Army Air Forces assets on the island and to build up ground forces which came ashore and established bases largely unopposed by U.S. and Filipino troops.<sup>3</sup>

On 23 December 1941, General Douglas MacArthur, commander of U.S. Army Forces in the Far East, ordered the withdrawal of all U.S. and Filipino forces to the Bataan Peninsula.<sup>4</sup> American commanders had quickly realized that their forces were unprepared to keep the Japanese from seizing the Philippines and chose instead to enact a plan that they hoped would buy enough time to withdraw troops from the islands in an organized fashion which minimized overall losses of personnel and equipment. Units in Northern Luzon fought an organized series of retreats until, on 7 January 1942, all had reached the main line of resistance for the U.S. and Filipino forces, and been positioned on or behind it. The line ran from Mabatang and Abucay on the east coast of the Bataan Peninsula to Mauban on the west, with a break in the center in the form of Mount Natib (see figure 2).<sup>5</sup> The 57th Infantry Regiment, Philippine Scouts served in the II Corps under Major General George F. Parker on the easternmost portion of the line. Unlike many of the other units on the main line, the 57th Infantry Regiment had not yet been in battle with the Japanese.<sup>6</sup>

The regimental commander assigned the 1st Battalion, 57th Infantry Regiment to the defense of the barrio of Mabatang, while the 3rd Battalion defended the area immediately west of the 1st

<sup>1</sup> World War II Honor Roll listing for Alexander R. Nininger, Jr., 1st Lt, O-23761, American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), <http://www.abmc.gov.php>.

<sup>2</sup> Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) for Alexander R. Nininger, Jr., 1st Lt, O-23761, Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.

<sup>3</sup> See Louis Morton, *Fall of the Philippines* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1993 (First printed 1953)).

<sup>4</sup> Donald J. Young, *The Battle of Bataan* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M Press, 2009), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Morton, *Fall of the Philippines*, 166-247.

<sup>6</sup> Young, *The Battle of Bataan*, 26.

Battalion.<sup>7</sup> A large sugar cane field occupied the area to the front of the 3rd Battalion, but rather than cutting it, the Battalion commander opted to train artillery fire in that direction to deter Japanese attack. The Japanese commander of the 141st Infantry to the north of the positions of the 57th had already determined that the cane field would be the best route. The results of the attacks left the 57th Infantry Regiment wishing they had cleared the cane field.<sup>8</sup>

Battle along the main line of resistance commenced on the night of 11 January 1942, with the 3rd Battalion, 57th Infantry Regiment experiencing a heavy Banzai charge from the cane field. The 3rd Battalion fought through the night and managed to hold their position and inflict a large number of casualties on the Japanese troops. With daylight on 12 January, they discovered, however, that many Japanese snipers had infiltrated their lines to take up camouflaged positions from which they harassed and killed members of the 3rd Battalion throughout the day. To cope with the problem, the 57th Infantry Regiment organized several sniper hunting parties which flushed out and killed the Japanese infiltrators. First Lieutenant Nininger, whose 1st Battalion had not been involved in the fighting during the night, volunteered to lead one of these parties, and though they successfully silenced several snipers, 1st Lt Nininger died in the process.<sup>9</sup> Officers of the 57th Infantry Regiment reported that he had been killed in action and buried in the vicinity of the Abucay church.<sup>10</sup>

**SEARCH AND RECOVERY:** The parents of 1st Lt Nininger learned of his death via telegram on the same day that the War Department released the news of his award. From that point until the end of the war they would learn very little else, for the men of 1st Lt Nininger's unit who did not die in the ensuing battles became prisoners of the Japanese in April 1942 when the last American forces in the Philippines surrendered. These captured men endured the Bataan Death march and ensuing imprisonment under the harshest of conditions in the Philippines. Once Allied forces moved to retake the islands, their jailors marched them to the shore where they boarded unmarked merchant ships bound for Japan. Many of the prisoners died en route to Japan as U.S. Navy planes and submarines, unaware of the presence of POWs, strafed, bombed, torpedoed and sank several of the ships. Those who survived the voyage would not be released until September 1945. Many of the men who might have provided crucial information about the death of 1st Lt Nininger and the other missing men of the 57th, did not survive captivity.

Colonel George S. Clarke, commander of the 57th Infantry Regiment at the time of 1st Lt Nininger's death, did not share this fate. He left Bataan January 14, 1942.<sup>11</sup> In a letter dated February 20, 1944 he wrote to Mr. Nininger at the behest of the Adjutant General's Office and in response to Mr. Nininger's queries to that office requesting detailed information about his son's death and burial. The information provided by Col Clarke drove all subsequent investigations

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<sup>7</sup> Young, *The Battle of Bataan*, 30.

<sup>8</sup> Young, *The Battle of Bataan*, 30.

<sup>9</sup> Accounts of 1st Lt Nininger's death can be found in both *The Fall of the Philippines* and *The Battle of Bataan*. Both accounts rely heavily upon the information provided in 1st Lt Nininger's citation accompanying the awarding of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Donald Young in *The Battle of Bataan* mistakenly reports 1st Lt Nininger's first name as Arthur rather than Alexander.

<sup>10</sup> "Case History for Remains Considered Non-Recoverable," 12 September 1950, IDPF for 1st Lt Nininger.

<sup>11</sup> "Notebook #19: The Story of the 57<sup>th</sup> Infantry Dec 8, 1941-," Colonel Edmund J. Lilly Jr. P.O.W. Papers, Combined Arms Research Library, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

concerning 1st Lt Nininger's burial. In colorful language, Col Clarke vividly described 1st Lt Nininger's actions in the moments leading up to his death. Much of his description can be found in the Medal of Honor citation, the recommendation for which, according to his letter, had been submitted by him. Col Clarke elaborated that Sandy was so excited that he "yelled like a school boy," that he "went berserk" "throwing grenade after grenade," and that though he died, he was "recklessly brave," his behavior acted "like a tonic on the men around him," adding greatly to their successful counter attack. He continued on, providing a detailed description of 1st Lt Nininger's burial:

Sandy's remains were carefully brought to the church in the town of Abucay, Province of Bataan, The Philippines. Captain Cecina [sic], 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.<sup>12</sup>

Col Clarke followed up his letter to the family with a visit in 1945 in which he reiterated the information quoted above and further embellished his account by reporting that the Governor of Bataan had promised that "his people would always keep flowers on Sandy's grave."<sup>13</sup> Mr. Nininger also reported being visited in 1945 by two officers from 1st Lt Nininger's regiment: Major Imerman and Captain Cain, who, according to Mr. Nininger, "verified" the account of the burial provided to him by Col Clarke.<sup>14</sup>

Following the close of hostilities, the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS), U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, searched for and disinterred the remains of U.S. servicemen in the Pacific Theater as part of the global effort to identify and return fallen servicemen for honored burial in U.S. cemeteries. Through the assistance of a family friend who was still stationed in the Philippines, 1st Lt Nininger's father learned that AGRS teams had transferred all the servicemen who had been buried at Abucay to U.S. Manila Cemetery #2. First Lieutenant Nininger, however, did not have a named burial in that latter cemetery and Major Caulkin, the family friend, suggested that it was possible that he was among the many "unknowns" that AGRS teams had collected. He further suggested that one of the unknowns buried at Manila #2 was "probably Lt Nininger" and that the skull and teeth of that unknown had "been sent to Washington, as that is the only positive identification they will accept."<sup>15</sup> Alarmed by the information he received, Mr. Nininger wrote to the Adjutant General's Office, noting that he had received

<sup>12</sup> Col George S. Clarke to Alexander R. Nininger, Sr., letter dated February 20, 1944, Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) for Alexander Nininger, O-23761, Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.

<sup>13</sup> Alexander R. Nininger, Sr. to Mrs. C.W. Cole, letter dated February 5, 1946, IDPF for Nininger.

<sup>14</sup> Alexander R. Nininger, Sr. to Mrs. C.W. Cole, letter dated February 5, 1946, IDPF for Nininger.

<sup>15</sup> Alexander R. Nininger, Sr. to the Office of the Quartermaster General, letter dated August 21, 1951, IDPF for Nininger; Alexander R. Nininger, Sr. to the Adjutant General, letter dated September 3, 1946, IDPF for 1st Lt Nininger.



communications of a “disturbing nature.” He provided a lengthy quote of Col Clarke’s account of his son’s burial ceremony and emphasized that he had been buried in Grave 9 behind the south wall of Abucay church, and noted the information obtained from Major Caulkin. He asked that the circumstances surrounding the disposition of Sandy’s remains be quickly and thoroughly investigated.

The Adjutant General’s Office referred Mr. Nininger’s letter to the Memorial Division. In reply, the Memorial Division confirmed his fear that something had gone awry in the recovery of his son’s remains:

Although no conclusive information is available as to the recovery and the identification of the remains of your son, remains have been recovered and interred in the United States Armed Forces Cemetery #2, Manila, Philippine Islands, which may be those of your loved one. An investigation is now being conducted in order to determine beyond a shadow of a doubt, the identity of those remains. Upon the conclusion of this investigation, you will be informed of the results.<sup>16</sup>

This letter also noted that it would not be necessary for Mr. Nininger to inquire with them further about his son’s remains, as they would notify him when an identification had been approved and would, at that point, ask him to make a decision about disposition.<sup>17</sup>

On 8 January 1946, an AGRS team conducted an excavation of the Abucay village cemetery, Soldiers’ Row, Grave 9 (a separate cemetery from the Abucay church yard). The team had taken a statement from Gregorio Cunanan, a local resident, who said that he helped to bury five American soldiers at that location in January 1942. The team indicated in its reporting that the remains from Grave 9 were likely Nininger. One assumes that Col Clarke’s mention of Grave 9 was the reason, despite the fact that they were at the village cemetery and not the church.<sup>18</sup> Because they were not officially identified, the remains recovered from Grave 9 of the church yard became Manila #2 X-1130 (subsequently Manila Mausoleum X-4685).

On 8 December 1948, AGRS officials proposed that X-1130 be recommended for identification as the recovered remains of 1st Lt Nininger.<sup>19</sup> This recommendation was made based on favorable comparisons of the place of burial, the time and place of death, branch of service, grade and organization, and pattern of dental work. Lieutenant Colonel Metz of the Quartermaster Corps Memorial Division, however, was not convinced of the correlation and he requested further information about the recommendation. He noted several potential

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<sup>16</sup> Office of the Quartermaster General to Alexander R. Nininger, Sr., letter dated 4 October 1946, IDPF for Nininger.

<sup>17</sup> Office of the Quartermaster General to Alexander R. Nininger, Sr., letter dated 4 October 1946, IDPF for Nininger.

<sup>18</sup> Memorandum, SUBJ: Interrogation, 11 December 1945, Manila #2 X-1130 File; Report of Disinterment, Manila #2 X-1130 File.

<sup>19</sup> These remains had been given the designation X-4685 by Manila Mausoleum staff. Prior to receipt of the remains at the mausoleum, they had been buried in Manila Cemetery #2 where the remains had been designated X-1130. Though the designation X-4685 post dates that of X-1130, today, information about the remains is filed under X-1130 Manila Cemetery #2.

discrepancies between X-1130 and 1st Lt Nininger, including height, dental information, and grave location.<sup>20</sup> Until these issues were clarified, Lt Col Metz suspended board proceedings for the case.<sup>21</sup>

Over the next several years, the Memorial Division and Graves Registration personnel exhaustively tried to trace the disposition of 1st Lt Nininger's remains; pursuing the burial account provided by the family from regimental officers, collecting additional details, tracing previous exhumations from all locations on Bataan, and dispatching a team to the field to excavate potential burial areas within the walls of Abucay churchyard (see Figure 3). All of these avenues produced only more gaps in the collected statements and narratives of the burial with no clear connection emerging between any recovered remains and the body of 1st Lt Nininger. Survivors contacted by the Memorial Division reported that they had not been present at the funeral and could not attest to a specific burial location. The lead provided by Col Clarke, the only witness who continued to insist he had been present, turned out to be problematic at best. Col Clarke had already left Bataan by the time burials took place behind the Abucay churchyard wall.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Graves Registration personnel identified the remains from grave number 9 at the south wall of the church cemetery as those of an enlisted Philippine Scout, Pvt Tranquilino Beles, and they did not report recovering any of the other officers purportedly buried with 1st Lt Nininger from this location (see Figure 4).<sup>23</sup> In fact, all eighteen sets of remains found in the thorough exhumation of the churchyard were examined by an anthropologist, determined to be of mongoloid ancestry, and reburied at the church.

On 13 August 1951, Col Clearwater, Chief of the Memorial Division, notified 1st Lt Nininger's parents that a final determination had been made in their son's case:

All unknowns recovered from the general area of Mabatang 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

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<sup>20</sup> According to 1st Lt Nininger's file, he stood 5'11" tall, but measurements taken of the long bones of the remains of X-4685 indicated that this individual had a living height of 5'1" – 5'3". While the dental records of 1st Lt Nininger compared favorably to the dental information of X-4685, they also compared favorably to several other unknowns recovered from the vicinity of Abucay. Finally, Lt Col Metz was unsure that the location of X-4685 (recovered from grave 9, Soldier's Row, Abucay Cemetery) was the same as that listed as 1st Lt Nininger's burial spot - grave 9, behind the South wall of Abucay Church. T.H. Metz to Commanding General, Philippine Command, memorandum dated 17 February 1949, *Subject: Identification of Unknown Deceased*, IDPF for 1st Lt Nininger.

<sup>21</sup> T.H. Metz to Commanding General, Philippine Command, memorandum dated 17 February 1949, *Subject: Identification of Unknown Deceased*, IDPF for 1st Lt Nininger.

<sup>22</sup> Memorial Division personnel inferred that this inconsistency in Col Clarke's story was the result of the Colonel trying to ease the grieving process of the family, and not an oversight or error on his part.

<sup>23</sup> X-1130, though recovered from a grave number 9, had been exhumed from Abucay *village cemetery*, not Abucay *churchyard*.

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.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. Nininger responded with a final plea to keep his son's case open. Unable to reconcile himself to the possibility that his son's remains would not be returned, he restated the information provided to him by Col Clarke, Maj Imerman, and Capt Cain. He noted that Maj Imerman and Capt Cain had been good friends of his son, that they had both spent three and a half years in Japanese prisons: "Surely none of these would give me any incorrect information."<sup>25</sup> Mr. Nininger once again summarized all of the compelling evidence which pointed to Sandy having been buried in Grave #9 behind the South wall of Abucay church he concluded:

My son won the first Congressional Medal of Honor of World War II. Several memorials have been dedicated to his memory. Many stories have been published about his heroic action. And we receive numerous inquiries as to the resting place of his remains.<sup>26</sup>

Unwilling to state in writing that none of the officers named by Mr. Nininger had been present at the burial of his son, Col Clearwater sent an officer to Mr. and Mrs. Nininger's home in Florida to explain to them in person the difficulties and contradictions of the case. He showed them the letters that officers of Lt Nininger's regiment had written in response to Memorial Division inquiries and pointed out the inconsistencies between those letters and the ones held by Mr. Nininger from those same officers. He explained that Sandy's friends would not have wanted to tell his family anything which would increase their grief at his death.<sup>27</sup>

**MORE RECENT INVESTIGATIONS:** In the 1980s, the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory (CILHI) reviewed and evaluated the case of 1st Lt Nininger, in response to an inquiry from Mr. John A Patterson, the nephew of 1st Lt Nininger.<sup>28</sup> Coming to a similar conclusion as the Memorial Division decades earlier, internal memoranda from CILHI report that the "biggest stumbling block" in the case "is the fact that every investigative narrative in the files gives a different scenario of what happened to [1st] Lt Nininger's remains." With this conclusion, CILHI recommended that no further action be taken on the case.<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Patterson also related a conversation with Col John E. Olson, former S-1 of the 57th Regiment and author of *Camp O'Donnell: Andersonville of the Pacific*. Colonel Olson reportedly stated that, in late January 1942, graves such as 1st Lt Nininger's may have been withdrawn to a new cemetery "at the north end of a new ... airfield off the West Road north of

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<sup>24</sup> James B. Clearwater to Alexander R. Nininger, Sr., letter dated 13 August 1951, IDPF for 1st Lt Nininger.

<sup>25</sup> Alexander R. Nininger, Sr. to the Office of the Quartermaster General, letter dated August 21, 1951.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander R. Nininger, Sr. to the Office of the Quartermaster General, letter dated August 21, 1951.

<sup>27</sup> E.M. Brown, memorandum dated 21 September 1951, *Subject: Report of Official Travel*, IDPF for Nininger.

<sup>28</sup> In 2003, CILHI became the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC).

<sup>29</sup> Johnie E. Webb, Investigation of World War II Nonrecoverable Remains, 17 December 1986, Philippines JPAC Incident 151, WWII Active Case Files, JPAC, Hickam AFB, HI.

Mariveles.” Mr. Patterson speculated that this might be a description of Mariveles #3.<sup>30</sup> Notably, this contradicted Col Olson’s 1950 statement that he heard 1st Lt Nininger was “in or near” the churchyard.<sup>31</sup>

On 27 September 1985, Col Garnet Francis, formerly of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 57th Infantry, wrote to Mr. Patterson regarding the burials. Colonel Francis believed that the burials of 1st Lt Nininger, and likely the other officers, occurred 150 feet west of the highway, and approximately 50 feet south of the stream that runs along the southern edge of the Abucay church (Figure 5).<sup>32</sup> While this contradicts a 1950 statement by Col Anders that Nininger and Maynard were buried in the church yard, Col Anders had earlier verified that both he and Col Francis were present at the burial.<sup>33</sup>

On 20 May 1986, Mr. Patterson related conversations he had at a 57th Regiment reunion with Col Franklin Anders, former intelligence officer in the 57th Regiment. Col Anders believed that Nininger, Maynard, Wilson, Compton, and Green were indeed buried within the church yard. He provided a map indicating where, he believed, the 57th Infantry officers were buried (Figure 6).<sup>34</sup> Colonel Anders had stated in 1950 that only 1st Lt Nininger and 1st Lt Maynard were for certain buried together.

In 1991, Mr. Patterson began an investigation in the Abucay cemetery in which he attempted to ascertain the location of his uncle’s burial and secure permission for an excavation. In September 1992, Mr. Patterson, an archaeologist colleague, and archaeologists from the National Museum of the Philippines took core samples in the Abucay churchyard. At that time, the former caretaker of the churchyard stated that, around 1988, “while enlarging a subsurface canal in the immediate vicinity, a number of remains were found” which were placed in the wall of the church. Mr. Patterson reported this finding to the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii (CILHI) in October 1992.<sup>35</sup> Having attempted to locate a prospective site in the cemetery, by June 1993 he concluded that this effort had “proved fruitless.”<sup>36</sup>

From his private investigations, Mr. Patterson now concluded that X-1130 must be the remains of his uncle, 1st Lt Nininger. Hoping to prove this through forensic evidence, in June 1993, Mr. Patterson requested that X-4685 Manila Mausoleum be disinterred and thoroughly examined. Responding in October 1993, CILHI declined to conduct a disinterment because dental, race, and height information for the unknown remains was either non-conclusive or at variance with information for 1st Lt Nininger.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> John Patterson to Col William Ryan, 7 January 1985, IDPF for Nininger.

<sup>31</sup> Summary of conversation with Major Olson, Intraoffice Reference Sheet, 24 October 1950, Declassified IDPF for Cheaney.

<sup>32</sup> Garnet Francis to John Patterson, 27 September 1985, Ground Incident 151 Case File.

<sup>33</sup> Summary of conversation with Col Anders, 25 October 1950, Declassified IDPF for Cheaney.

<sup>34</sup> John Patterson to John Manning, 20 May 1986, Ground Incident 151 Case File.

<sup>35</sup> John Patterson, Notes on Visits to Bataan Concerning Alexander Ramsey Nininger, Jr., Ground Incident 151 Case File; John Patterson to Commanding Officer, CILHI, 6 October 1992, Ground Incident 151 Case File.

<sup>36</sup> John Patterson to Colonel William E. Ryan, 10 June 1993, Ground Incident 151 Case File.

<sup>37</sup> Johnnie E. Webb to John A. Patterson, letter dated 7 October 1993, Philippines JPAC Incident 151, WWII Active Case Files, JPAC, Hickam AFB, HI.

In February 2013, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command team conducting investigations in the Philippines visited Abucay, focusing on areas which the historical record suggest as most likely burial locations for 1st Lt Nininger. The team found all areas to be paved or densely populated with residential housing and did not recommend additional field activity.

In February 2016, Mr. Patterson made another formal request to disinter X-1130 for comparison to 1st Lt Nininger. This request was denied due to discrepancies in height and burial location.

In September 2016, the DPAA 16-2RP Investigation Team conducted interviews with the caretaker of Abucay Church Cemetery. He stated that, in 1992, he was instructed to destroy an apartment-style crypt in the churchyard. Finding a stone slab underneath the crypt, he lifted it and found a skeleton without a skull, along with other comingled remains. He believed the bones to be American because they were buried at a lower depth, in the “old style” under the slab, and they were white and longer than other remains he has encountered. The caretaker placed the remains in a sack and removed them to an apartment-style crypt, where “relatives of Lt. Nininger and a group associated with the United States Military Academy” placed a plaque at some point after 2006.<sup>38</sup> In October 2017, a DPAA team opened the crypt but did not observe any remains believed to be American. The team also learned that the original discovery location of the remains is now covered by a new mausoleum belonging to a prominent politician.<sup>39</sup>

**NEXT STEPS:** The details of 1st Lt Nininger’s loss continue to be tracked by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. Researchers at DPAA are undertaking a large-scale project to reconstruct burial plot and recovery data for all major collection points on the Bataan peninsula. The goal is to conduct comparisons of all unknowns from the Abucay area to all potentially-associated individuals, to include 1st Lt Nininger. Researchers will also assess whether any mis-identifications took place, and if so, whether mis-identified remains compare favorably to missing servicemembers, including 1st Lt Nininger.

December 2017  
GJK

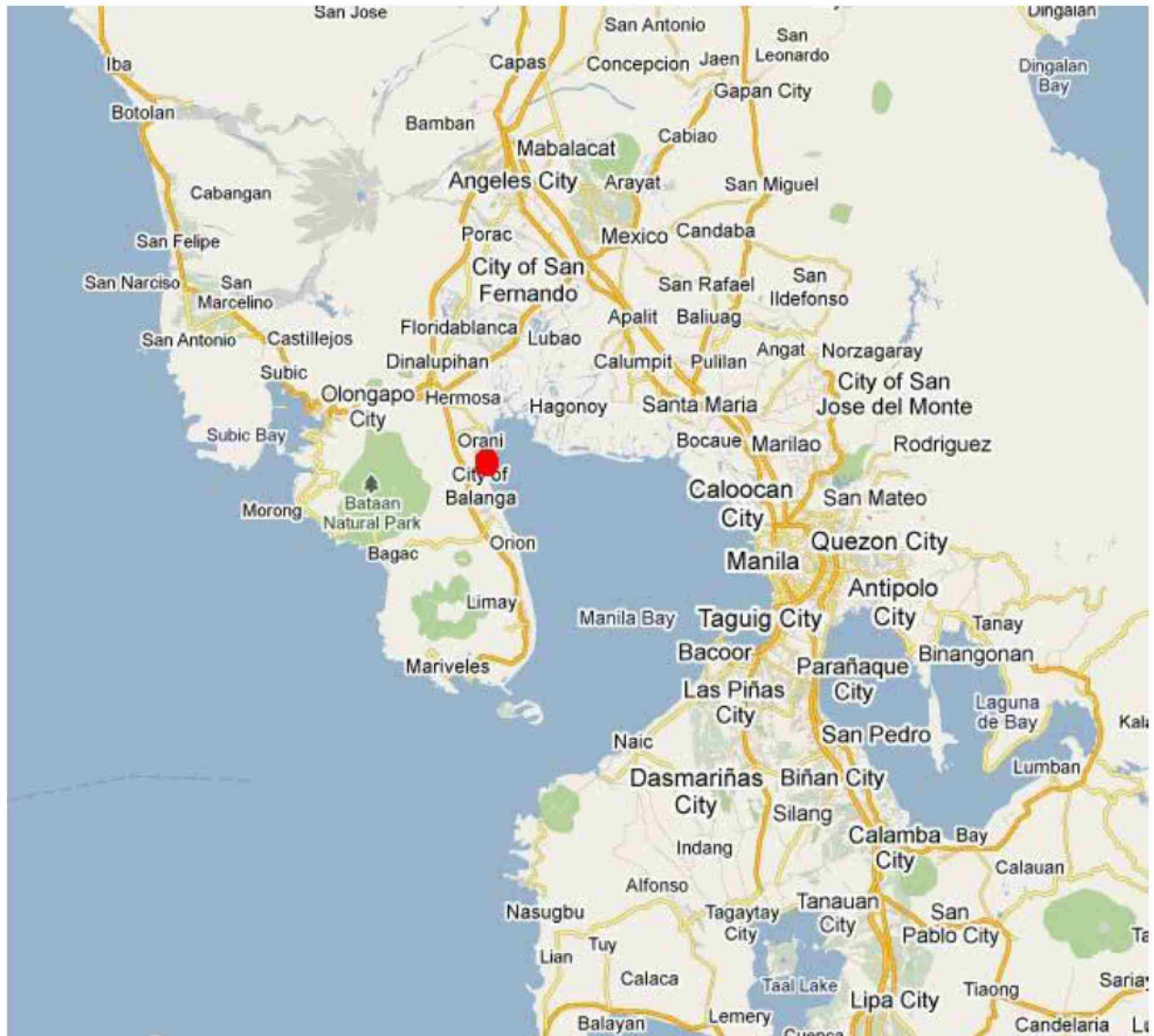
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<sup>38</sup> Additional Information Report for Ground Incident 1800, 16-2RP IT.

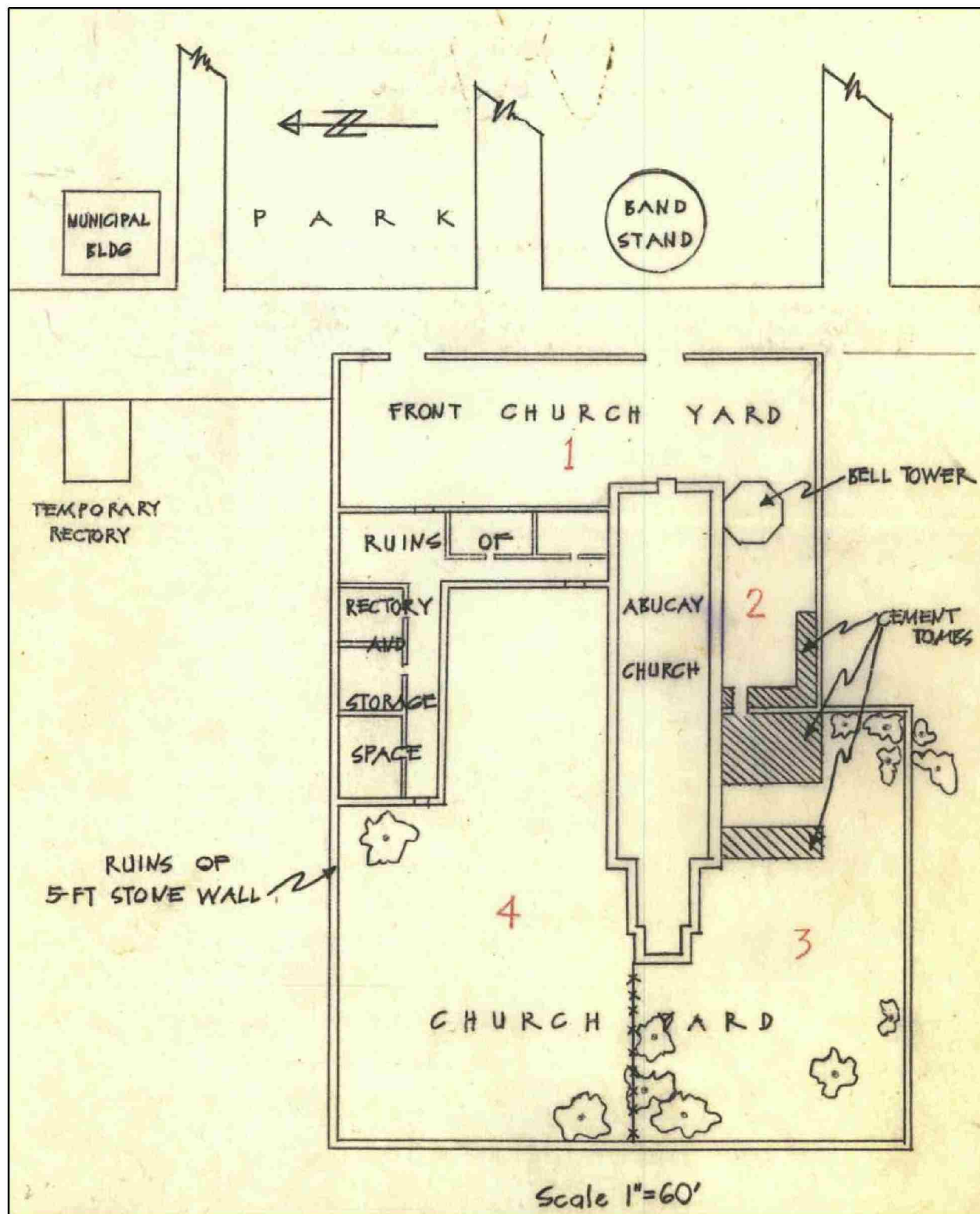
<sup>39</sup> Detailed Report of Investigation and Excavation Summary Report pending.



**Figure 1.** Broad view of Philippines region. Red box delineates scope of map in Figure 2.

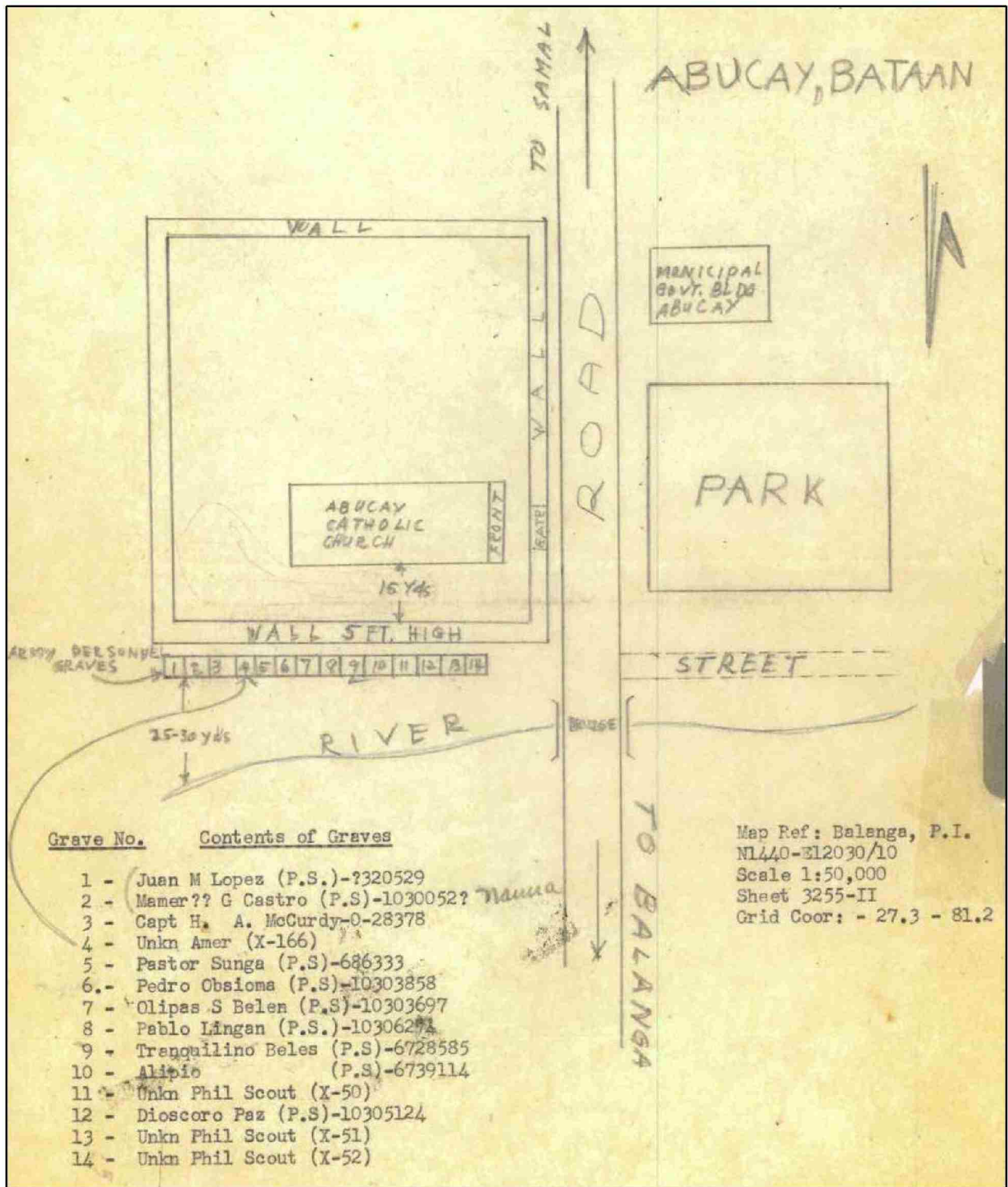


**Figure 2.** Red dot indicates location of Abucay, Bataan Province, Philippines.



**Figure 3.** Sketch map showing the locations where AGRS conducted extensive excavations of the areas numbered above as 2 and 3 within the walls of the Abucay churchyard in 1950. Source: IDPF for 1st Lt Nininger.





**Figure 4.** Sketch map of Abucay churchyard and vicinity showing the list of graves recovered from outside the churchwall and the names of the individuals identified from remains found in those graves. Source: IDPF for 1st Lt Nininger.

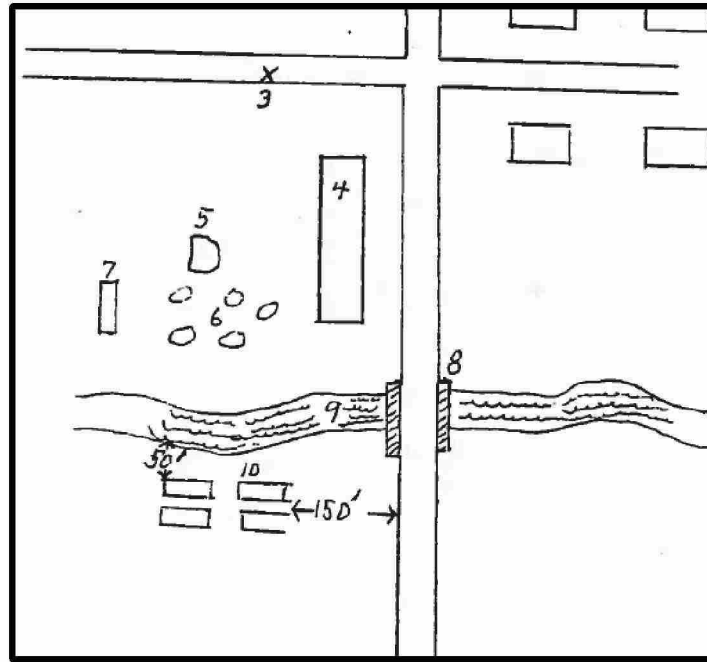


Figure 5. Map drawn by Col Garnet Francis indicating the location of graves to the south of the church (#4) and the stream (#9). Source: Ground Incident 151 File.

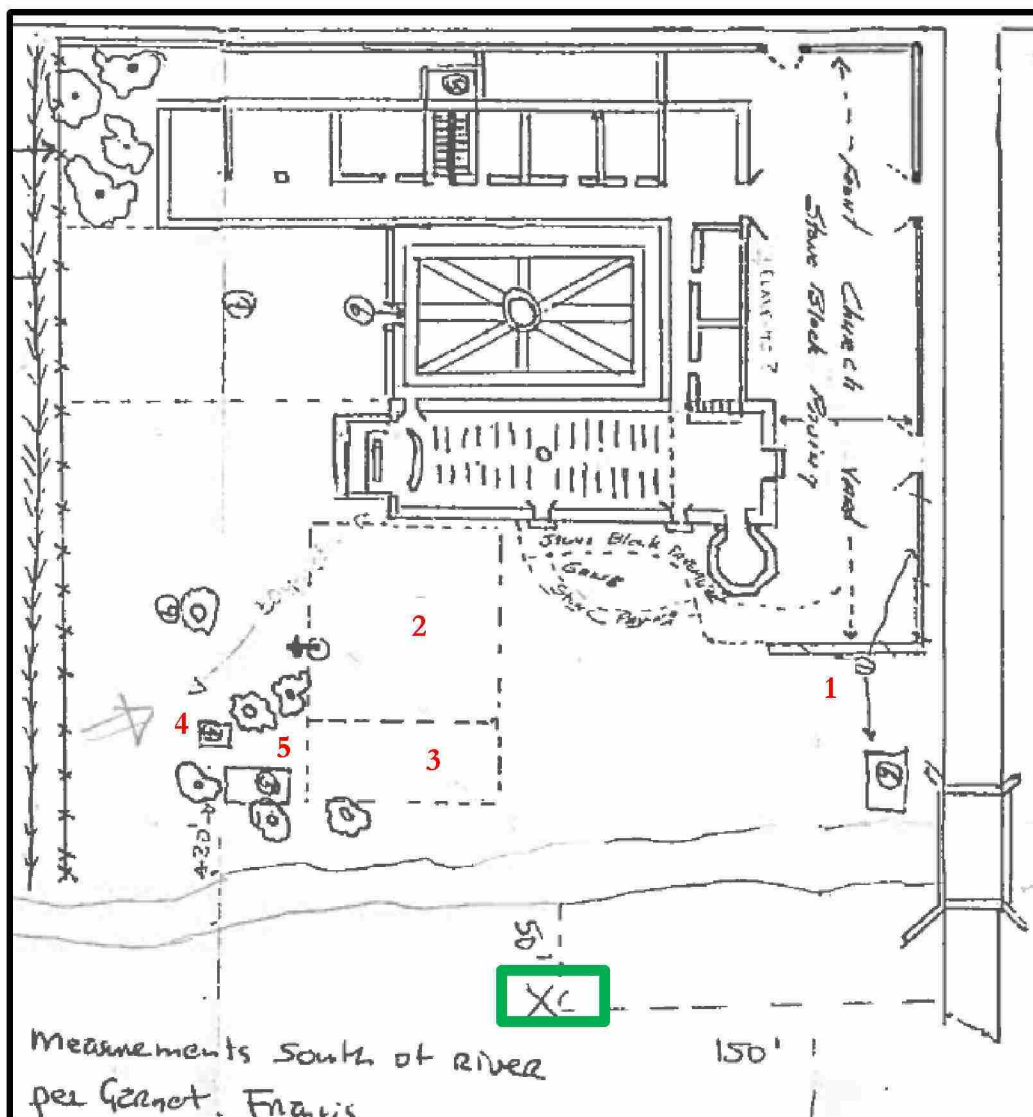


Figure 6. Map indicating key landmarks in the Abucay cemetery according to Col Anders. His descriptions are:

1. 5-foot stone wall along southeast corner, removed between 1945-1950
  2. Church Cemetery;
  3. Church Cemetery (Potters Field);
  4. Graves of 57th Infantry, 11-13 Jan 1942;
  5. Grave of Capt McCurdy, one unknown American and 12 enlisted Philippine Scouts.
- NOTE: The green square marks Col Francis's location of the graves south of the river.