

Gregory James Kupsky

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Education

- 2010 Ph.D. in Modern U.S. History, The Ohio State University
Dissertation: “‘The True Spirit of the German People’: German-Americans and National Socialism, 1919-1955”
Advisor: Professor Kevin Boyle
Committee: Professor Alan Beyerchen
Professor Peter Hahn
- 2004 M.A. in U.S. History, The University of Tennessee – Knoxville
Thesis: “Making the Most of a Bad Situation: Coddling, Fraternization, and Total War in Camp Crossville, Tennessee”
Advisor: Associate Professor G. Kurt Piehler
- 2002 B.A. with Honors in History, Cum Laude, Knox College
Thesis: “Wartime America: A Case Study in Oral History”

Professional Experience

- Jan 2017 – Present Historian, Research Support Division, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), Arlington, VA
- Oversee all research support for Family Update conferences
- Conduct research and casework on missing servicemembers in the Philippines and other Pacific countries
- Conduct archival research in the Washington DC area to support research projects in Honolulu, HI
- Oct 2015 – Dec 2016 Case Support Manager, DPAA, Honolulu, HI
- Set and enforced research standards, processes, and formats for multidisciplinary teams
- Conducted recruitment and mentoring of postdoctoral fellows
- Coordinated researcher participation in Family Update conferences
- Oversaw a disinterment program aimed at identifying unknowns from the Pacific and China-Burma-India Theaters of World War II
- Jul 2014 – Oct 2015 WWII Division Supervisor, DPAA (previously the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command), Honolulu, HI
- Acted as supervisor and rater for a team of 24 civilian and military personnel
- Oversaw research, interviews, field investigations, and reporting on the search for over 73,000 missing World War II service members worldwide

- May 2011 – Jul 2014 Historian, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), Honolulu, HI
- As Philippines research lead, made eight trips to the Philippines to coordinate with government officials, conduct research and witness interviews, and survey possible burials and aircraft crash sites
- Made four trips to Germany, two to the Netherlands, and one to Indonesia to conduct research and investigations related to missing U.S. service members
- Apr 2010 – May 2011 ORISE Fellow, JPAC, Honolulu, HI
- Set up research tools for compiling information on World War II air losses
- Wrote an in-depth study of the Philippines and proposed strategies for recovering remains of missing U.S. service members from World War II
- Sep 2004 – Mar 2010 Graduate Associate, The Ohio State University, Columbus
- Led discussion sections; designed and taught nine survey courses
- 2006 - 2008 Research Project with Professor Lewis Gould, University of Texas - Austin
- Collected resources for *The William Howard Taft Presidency* (University of Kansas Press, 2009) and for an edition of William McKinley's letters
- 2006 Research for the Opper Project, Goldberg Center, The Ohio State University
- Compiled turn-of-the-century political cartoons for secondary education
- Aug 2002 – May 2004 Assistant Director, Center for the Study of War and Society, University of Tennessee - Knoxville
- Managed the Veterans' Oral History Project
- Staff member at the Society for Military History Meeting, May 1-4, 2003

Courses Taught

- American Civilization to 1877 (Ten Weeks) – Spring 2007; Fall 2007; Winter 2009
American Civilization from 1877 (Ten Weeks) – Fall 2006; Winter 2007; Winter 2008;
Spring 2009; Winter 2010
American Civilization from 1877 (Five Weeks) – Summer 2007

Awards Received

- February 2010 Research Fellowship to Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education
- May 2009 Humanities Summer Fellowship, The Ohio State University
- Fall 2008 Doctoral Fellowship, German Historical Institute, Bonn / Washington, DC
- August 2008 Humanities Research Small Grant, The Ohio State University
- May 2008 Humanities Summer Fellowship, The Ohio State University
- April 2008 Balch Institute Fellowship, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
- April 2008 Lubin-Winant Research Fellowship, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute

April 2008 Horner Library Fellowship, German Historical Institute, Bonn / Washington, DC
August 2007 Richard S. Brownlee Grant, The State Historical Society of Missouri
June 2007 Humanities Research Small Grant, The Ohio State University
May 2003 Bernadotte Schmitt Research Grant, The University of Tennessee – Knoxville
May 2002 Szold Prize for Excellence in the Field of History, Knox College
May 2002 David R. Arnold Prize for Outstanding Honors Research, Knox College

Peer-Reviewed Publications

“Gustav Oberlaender.” *Immigrant Entrepreneurship: German-American Business Biographies, Vol. 4: The Age of the World Wars, 1918-1945*. Washington: German Historical Institute: <http://www.immigrantentrepreneurship.org>, 2012.

“Germanness and Jewishness: Samuel Untermyer, Felix Warburg, and National Socialism, 1914-1938.” *American Jewish Archives Journal*, Vol. 63 No. 2 (December 2011), 24-42.

“‘We, Too, Are Still Here’: German-Americans in St. Louis, 1919-1941.” *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. 103 No. 4 (July 2009), 212-225.

Professional Presentations

“Policing Spheres: Japan-U.S. Prisoner Exchanges during World War II.” Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, June 24, 2017.

“‘Too Many Unknowns’: The Search for the Missing of Bataan.” Society for Military History Annual Meeting, Montgomery, Alabama, April 11, 2015. Panel Organizer.

“Until They Come Home: Historians and the U.S. Military’s Search for the Missing.” Binalot Talks Series, University of the Philippines - Diliman, February 29, 2012.

“The Bataan Death March and Public Perception.” American Popular Culture Association Meeting, Honolulu, HI, May 27, 2011.

“‘Self-Defense and Self-Expression’: The Steuben Society and Assimilation, 1919-1970.” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, April 7-10, 2010. Panel Organizer.

“Against All Fascist Tendencies: The German-American Left, 1933-1945.” Ohio Academy of History Annual Meeting, Columbus, OH, March 26, 2010. Presented by Hunter Price.

“‘To Unify German-Americans on American Principles’: The Steuben Society, Nazism, and Ethnic Politics, 1919-1955.” Ohio Academy of History Annual Meeting, Akron, Ohio, April 3-4, 2009.

“German-Americans and National Socialism, 1933-1945.” German Historical Institute Research Seminar, Washington, DC, October 8, 2008.

- “George Sylvester Viereck and the Struggle against British Re-Colonization, 1914-1945.” Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Annual Meeting, Columbus, Ohio, June 28, 2008.
- “German-Americans and National Socialism.” German Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 20, 2008.
- “To Even Old Scores: George Sylvester Viereck and the Battle for the Past, 1914-1947.” Paul Lucas Conference in Cultural History, Indiana University – Bloomington, March 1, 2008.
- “What, No Swimming Pool?: ‘Coddling’ and the German POW.” Society for Military History Annual Meeting, Bethesda, Maryland, May 20-23, 2004. Panel Organizer.
- “Denazification and the German POW.” Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference, Cleveland, Tennessee, February 2004.
- “‘To Win Our War with Butter and Beefsteaks’: Camp Crossville and the Treatment of Axis Prisoners of War.” TRACES Conference on Prisoners of War, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, May 31, 2003.

Other Scholarship

- “Fear and Loathing around the World: The Rise of the New Populism,” co-authored with Marc Horger and Zoltan Adam, *Origins*, August 15, 2018, <http://origins.osu.edu>.
- “A Sea of Troubles: The Philippines and Pacific Geopolitics,” *Origins*, July 15, 2015, <http://origins.osu.edu>.
- “Milestones: The Battle for Manila,” *Origins*, February 2015, <http://origins.osu.edu>.
- “Geneva Conventions,” in G. Kurt Piehler, ed., *Encyclopedia of Military Science*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013.
- “Responses to Immigration.” Multimedia Project for eHistory, The Ohio State University, Spring 2007, <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/mmh/response>.
- Review of Kuklick, Bruce. *Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. Reviewed for eHistory, The Ohio State University, May 2006, <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/reviews/reviewview.cfm?id=21>.
- “Prisoners of War, U.S.,” in John P. Resch, ed. *Americans at War: Society, Culture, and the Homefront*. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005.

Professional Affiliations

Organization of American Historians
Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations
Society for Military History

Research Languages

German: Good reading and speaking.

Tagalog/Filipino: Basic reading and speaking.

Training

Asia-Pacific Orientation Course, Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies,
September 2016.

Academic Service

Mentor for Post-Doctoral Fellows, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education

- Dr. Maureen Justiniano, 2017
- Dr. Brian Price, 2017
- Dr. Dawn Berry, 2016-2017
- Dr. Eric Klinek, 2016-2017

Special Skills and Qualifications

Top Secret (SCI) security clearance.



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Historical Report

U.S. Casualties and Burials at Cabanatuan POW Camp #1

I. Introduction

Thousands of United States soldiers, sailors, Marines, and civilians were taken prisoners of war (POW) by the Japanese in the Philippine Islands between 7 December 1941 and 8 May 1942. The saga of the battle for the Philippines and the horrible treatment the survivors received in Japanese POW camps is the subject of numerous books and articles, but there are few resources that articulate graves registration operations, especially those focused on recovering and identifying the remains of U.S. servicemen who perished at the Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camps. The details concerning the circumstances under which U.S. prisoners held at Cabanatuan lived and died were difficult and complicated, as were the attempts to disinter and identify their remains after the war's end. As a result of these complications, when the Cabanatuan Project ended in 1951, 1,007 service members and civilians remained unidentified from among the 2,764 burials at the Camps.¹

When Filipino and American Military Forces surrendered on the Bataan Peninsula on 8 April 1942, they had been fighting a defensive retreat across the Philippine Island of Luzon (see figure 1). For over four months they held off the advancing Japanese troops all the while suffering from a lack of food, medicine, ammunition, and hope. On 1 January 1942, all Filipino and American forces had been placed on half rations, and the amount of rationed food only decreased as time passed. Because of the poor quality of their diet, many suffered from night blindness and a variety of jungle illnesses, including malaria, dengue, dysentery, and hookworm. It has been estimated that over seventy percent of the men on Bataan suffered from malaria due to the lack of adequate medical supplies to treat them.²

Compounding the food and medical issues, the Japanese seriously underestimated the number of prisoners they would encounter on Bataan. Almost 75,000 (65,000 Filipino and 10,000 American) surrendered. The Japanese also expected the men to be in good physical condition—not sick and starved. However, Japanese interest lay in what was beyond Bataan—Corregidor

¹ **NOTE:** Several studies of the campaigns of the Philippines and the experiences of U.S. forces who surrendered to the Japanese are cited in the footnotes of this memorandum, but they represent only a tiny fraction of the total volume of the histories and memoirs written. Readers interested in more extensive study of this history can find a wealth of resources at the website, “Center for Research: Allied POWs Under the Japanese,” <http://www.mansell.com/>. A list of more than 500 titles specifically concerning the WWII history of Luzon Island can be found in the POW resources section of the website. The casualty figures cited in the introduction are based upon the current casualty status of the individuals as tracked by the accounting community. As will become clear within this memorandum, several of those currently carried as identified cannot be verified.

² Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, vol. 1 of *The War in the Pacific*, vol. 4 of sub series *United States Army in World War II* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), 245, 254, 257, 355; John W. Whitman, *Bataan: Our Last Ditch, The Bataan Campaign, 1942* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1990), 380-83; Calvin G. Jackson, *Diary of Col. Calvin G. Jackson, M.D.: Kept during World War II, 1941-1945* (Ada: Ohio Northern University, 1992), ii; and John E. Olson, *O'Donnell: Andersonville of the Pacific* (Self-published: John E. Olson, 1985), 14-15.

Island—not the physical condition of their new prisoners of war. Corregidor Island was situated in Manila Bay and because the fortress had not surrendered with Bataan, it posed a serious problem to the Japanese (see figure 2). They were, therefore, in a big hurry to move the surrendered Bataan soldiers and sailors out of the way in order to begin the assault on Corregidor.

The vast majority of Filipino and American forces surrendered while located on the southern tip of the Bataan Peninsula. Depending upon where the men were captured, they either waited in temporary camps or were immediately moved to concentration points. The Japanese transported some small groups of prisoners, such as the Luzon Force Headquarters and some of the patients from field hospitals on Luzon directly to Camp O'Donnell. Those who were able among the early arrivals at Camp O'Donnell began to ready the camp for the arrival of the rest of the prisoners.³

The men not taken directly to Camp O'Donnell were sorted into groups of one hundred and started on an arduous forced march. When they began the long walk (the “Death March”), they were in a horrible physical state. For eleven days the POWs were forced to walk sixty-five miles to San Fernando, enduring abuse by Japanese guards and watching the deaths of thousands of fellow soldiers. At San Fernando the Japanese stuffed hundreds of men into steel-sided boxcars for a twenty-five mile train trip to Capas. The boxcars were packed so tightly the men could not sit down. They traveled at night, but also under a sun so fierce it made the sides of the boxcars too hot to touch. Finally, the train arrived at Capas and the POWs off-loaded to march a final nine miles to Camp O'Donnell (see figure 3).⁴

II. Camp O'Donnell

Camp O'Donnell was located approximately nine miles from Capas, astride the Capas-O'Donnell Road. The main road bisected the American and Filipino sections of the camp, with the Americans occupying the smaller northern portion. The first exhausted prisoners entered O'Donnell on 11 April 1942, and by 30 April 1942, the last new groups of prisoners arrived. From this point until the Camp's closure, movement into and out of the camp would be related to prisoners leaving and returning on work details rather than new arrivals.⁵ Once inside the camp

³ No author, “Historical and Statistical Record of Camp Cabanatuan, 9 Apr 42 to 15 Nov 42; 14 pages,” Historical Statistical Records of Cabanatuan, Maps of Corregidor, and Miscellaneous, Philippine Archives Collection, RG 407: Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives, College Park, MD.

⁴ It has been estimated that as many as 62,000 Filipinos and 10,000 Americans endured the ordeal. Estimates of the death toll range from 7,000 to 10,000 Filipinos and approximately 600 Americans. Most were needless deaths, caused by heatstroke, exhaustion, and disease. E. Bartlett Kerr, *Surrender and Survival: The Experience of American POWs in the Pacific* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1985), 52-60; Donald Knox, *The Death March: The Survivors of Bataan* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 151; Gavan Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese: POWs of World War II in the Pacific* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1994), 18-9, 74-90; James A. Cox, “The Infamous Bataan Death March,” *Marine Corps League*, 58, (Spring 2002): 36; Jesse L. Miller, *Prisoner of Hope* (Englewood, CO: Jesse L. Miller, 1988), 41-2; Hampton Sides, *Ghost Soldiers: The Forgotten Epic Story of World War II's Most Dramatic Mission* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 91; Meirion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* (New York: Random House, 1991), 315; and Lester I. Tenney, *My Hitch in Hell: The Bataan Death March* (Washington: Brassey's, 1995), 44-5.

⁵ “Historical and Statistical Record of Camp Cabanatuan, 9 Apr 42 to 15 Nov 42; 14 pages,” National Archives.

the Japanese confiscated any personal items the men may have been able to retain during the march. Sometimes this confiscation included identification tags.⁶

Concerns over how and where to bury dying prisoners surfaced immediately. Initially the Japanese wanted to cremate any casualties, but because of pleas from American chaplains the Japanese agreed to allow the dead to be buried just outside the main gate north of the road to Capas. As the death toll increased another cemetery was added. The first deaths occurred on 14 April 1942. Throughout this entire time, the Japanese were selecting and transporting men on “work details” around the islands. This ranged from clearing bomb damage, to loading ships, to working on farm plots. Many times men would not return from the details, having died and been buried in proximity to the location of their death rather than in the camp cemeteries. So the numbers of men in O’Donnell fluctuated daily from work details, new arrivals, and deaths. By 31 May 1942 there were 5,679 men in the American camp and the death rate had soared to forty-four per day. On 29 May 1942, the death rate reached a pinnacle with the deaths of fifty American prisoners.⁷

Captain A. L. Fullerton, a U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps officer trained in graves registration, assumed charge of the burial activities at Camp O’Donnell. He established a morgue for receiving, checking and holding the dead until the next burial detail arrived. Processing a body consisted of inventorying the deceased’s possessions. If the body had two identification tags, one was retained by the graves registration section, and the other was later put on the crude wooden cross that marked the graves. The name, rank and serial number, organization, place of death, date of death, cause of death, method of identification, name and address of nearest kin, place of burial (including plot, row, and grave), date of burial, age, race, remarks, and home addresses were, if known, recorded in a report of death. In many cases, very little was known of the deceased, particularly in the early days at the camp. Three copies of the death report were made, two for graves registration and one for the camp adjutant. Then the burial details would carry the bodies to the cemetery, where a previously dispatched detail would have already dug the gravesite. Ideally, the graves were ten feet by six feet and four feet deep, in order to hold multiple bodies in a common grave, but in actual practice many of the graves were much shallower. During the dry season the soft clay was easy to work, but digging during the rainy season was problematic. Often the water would rise almost to the edge of the grave and the bodies would have to be weighted down with stones. Sometimes the digging details would encounter hard, dry, rocky soil in which they could barely scratch out a shallow grave. Prisoner Nicholas Fryzuik recalled that, “people were buried in mass graves and you could see legs, hands, or feet sticking out of the little dirt used to cover them.”⁸

Over 1,500 Americans and 26,000 Filipinos died during the seventy-one days of O’Donnell’s operation. One out of every six Americans who entered O’Donnell died. Because of the high death rates the Japanese ordered the camp closed on 16 May 1942. In early June, the senior

⁶ **NOTE:** This confiscation of valuables and personal items of interest to the Japanese occurred from the very beginning of captivity and continued as the prisoners encountered new groups of Japanese guards. An individual prisoner might have items taken from him several times over the course of his years of imprisonment.

⁷ Olson, *O’Donnell*, 43, 63, and 235. **NOTE:** The daily death rates soared even higher in the Filipino section of Camp O’Donnell.

⁸ Olson, *O’Donnell*, 174-75, 181-85. **NOTE:** One set of the Death Reports was buried in the Camp O’Donnell cemetery before the move to Cabanatuan.

officers relocated to Tarlac and the rest of the men moved to Cabanatuan or were assigned to work details around the islands. Camp O'Donnell, "Camp O'Death" to the men living there, finally closed on 20 January 1943. The 1,547 Americans who perished there remained in the camp cemetery until U.S. Graves Registration personnel disinterred them after Allied forces regained control of Luzon.⁹

III. Camp Cabanatuan

While the men died at high rates in O'Donnell, Allied forces that had not surrendered on Luzon continued to fight the Japanese from Corregidor Island. They too fought a losing battle and surrendered on 6 May 1942. After Corregidor capitulated, the Japanese took over the island and forced the men to clear debris for two weeks. They finally left by ship, but unlike the men on Bataan, the Japanese allowed them to retain their personal effects. The nine thousand captives from Corregidor entered Bilibid Prison, where they were able to purchase supplies. They had adequate water and even showers—much different from the conditions at Camp O'Donnell. From Bilibid, the men marched three miles to the railhead, and were stuffed into those same steel-sided cars that had transported the Bataan survivors. Finally, they marched ten miles to Cabanatuan, about ninety-five kilometers north of Manila (see figure 4).¹⁰

The three Camps making up the Cabanatuan POW Camp system had been barracks and a training facility used by the Philippine Army prior to the outbreak of war. Camp #1 sat approximately nine kilometers east of the city of Cabanatuan. Situated six kilometers further east of Camp #1, Camp #2 only briefly held prisoners before they were transferred to Camp #1 due to the lack of available water. Camp #3, a further six kilometers from Camp #2, functioned from the end of May 1942 until October of the same year, when the remaining prisoners were also transferred to Camp #1. Cabanatuan Camp #1 consistently served as the single largest camp for U.S. prisoners for the duration of the war, housing as many as 10,000 prisoners on days when few groups left on work details.¹¹ By the middle of June 1942, the camp was divided into a regular area which was further subdivided into three groups and a hospital area, though as one doctor imprisoned there noted, "the hospital served to only to segregate the very ill from the less ill."¹²

⁹ Edward W. Weiss, *Under the Rising Sun: War, Captivity and Survival 1941-1945* (Erie, PA: Edward W. Weiss, 1992), 233; Kerr, *Surrender and Survival*, 65, 80-1; Knox, *The Death March*, 198; and Olson, *O'Donnell*, xiii, 110, 163-72; Abraham, Abie, *Ghost of Bataan Speaks* (New York: Vantage Press, 1971), 91, 156-160. **NOTE:** The Filipino prisoners at Camp O'Donnell did not make the move to Cabanatuan. Most of them were granted amnesty by the Japanese in exchange for signing agreements that they would not take up arms against the occupying forces.

¹⁰ Kerr, *Surrender and Survival*, 52-3, 76-8; Richard M. Gordon and Benjamin S. Llamzon, *Horyo: Memoirs of an American POW* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1999), xii, xxvii; William R. Evans, *Soochow and the 4th Marines* (Rouge River, OR: Atwood Publishing Company, 1987), 85; Donald LeRoy Versaw, *Mikado no Kyaku* (Lakewood, CA: Donald L. Versaw, 1998), 7; and Knox, *The Death March*, 199-200.

¹¹ Captain P. L. Smith, 17 September 1945, "Report on Cabanatuan Camp #1," Legal Section, Manila Branch, Administrative Division, Miscellaneous (1945-1948); Supreme Commander for Allied Powers; Record Group 331: Records of Allied Operational and Occupational Headquarters, World War II; National Archives, College Park, MD; see also, "Historical and Statistical Record of Camp Cabanatuan, 9 Apr 42 to 15 Nov 42; 14 pages," RG 407, National Archives.

¹² John R. Bumgarner, *Parade of the Dead: A U.S. Army Physician's Memoir of Imprisonment by the Japanese, 1942-1945* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 1995), 88.

In June of 1942, prisoners from Camp O'Donnell began to stream into Camp #1, joining the men from Corregidor and increasing the number of prisoners to over 7,300 men. Because of the poor health of the men from O'Donnell, the death rate at Camp #1 soared. By the end of the year 2,642 had perished, compared to sixty-nine in Camp #3. It was not until 15 December 1942 that Cabanatuan Camp #1 celebrated its first "zero death" day. By the end of 1942, the death rate in all of the camps slowed. The weak and wounded had not survived. The death rate continued at a much lower pace over the next two years (see figure 5). The Death March and life at O'Donnell took a heavy toll on the captives of Bataan. Former POW Lester Tenney estimated that one out of every three prisoners from Corregidor died, while two out of every three taken captive on Bataan expired. While the death rates at Cabanatuan Camp #1 soared, men were continuously moving in and out of the camp on work details. This makes it difficult to estimate the number of men in Camp #1 on any particular day, but estimates show that in 1942 and 1943 the population ranged from five to more than eight thousand prisoners.¹³

The work details varied in scope and length. The two largest were the farm detail and the Cabanatuan airport detail. The five hundred acre farm grew food for the prisoners and the Japanese. At the Cabanatuan airport, men worked to repair and enlarge the runway for Japanese planes. The smaller, and sometimes seasonal, work details included gathering firewood, digging latrines, preparing military defenses, and digging foxholes. Men were also transported to various other parts of the island to work on other airports, bridge-building, or repairing buildings. In October 1942, about one thousand men moved permanently to Davao Penal Colony for additional farm work.¹⁴

This was not the only movement for work details the prisoners faced. In 1942 the Japanese experienced a serious labor shortage. Prime Minister General Hideki Tojo declared that all prisoners, including officers, were to work as laborers in Japanese industries. He ordered all prisoners shipped to Japan in every available returning vessel. The Japanese military subsequently transferred large numbers of POWs to industrial sites throughout their empire—Formosa, Korea, Manchuria, China, Burma, and Siam—but most of the prisoners were sent to the one-hundred-and-sixty camps within the Japanese home islands. The conditions on these ships were so bad that they were aptly nick-named "hellships." Death due to extreme heat, thirst, or hunger was not the only problem faced on the voyage to Japan. Death due to Allied action became a major source of concern. Men aboard the hellships suffered some of the worst casualties of the war. For example, on February 25, 1944, Allied bombs sank the *Tango Maru* killing 3,000 men. On September 18, 1944, Allied planes sank the *Junyo Maru*, killing 5,640 prisoners. Of the 68,000 Allied prisoners-of-war moved to industrial camps, over 22,000 died on hellships. American deaths on the hellships totaled more than 3,800. With all the movement out of Cabanatuan, there were only about eight hundred men left there by October of 1944. Several

¹³ "Historical and Statistical Record of Camp Cabanatuan, 9 Apr 42 to 15 Nov 42; 14 pages," RG 407, National Archives; Captain P. L. Smith, "Report on Cabanatuan Camp #1," 17 September 1945, RG 331, National Archives; Knox, *The Death March*, 198-367; Sides, *Ghost Soldiers*, 135; Gordon, *Horyo*, 104, 107; William Paul Skelton, *The American ex-Prisoner of War*, 15th ed. (Tampa: University of South Florida College of Medicine and James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, 1999), 14; Charles G. Roland, "Stripping Away the Veneer: P.O.W. Survival in the Far East as an Index of Cultural Atavism" *Journal of Military History*, 53 (January 1989): 92; and Kerr, *Surrender and Survival*, 79-81, 102-04.

¹⁴ Captain P. L. Smith, "Report on Cabanatuan Camp #1," RG 331, National Archives.

hundred of these were transported to Fort McKinley near the end of the year and the remaining POWs in the camp were liberated on 30 January 1945.¹⁵

IV. Deaths and Burials at Cabanatuan Camp #1

From the first arrivals at Cabanatuan Camp #1 until its closing men continued to perish. The first official burials in the Cabanatuan Camp #1 cemetery occurred on 3 June 1942.¹⁶ After this date, and through the end of 1942, the death rate remained high. In July 1942, the deadliest month, 799 U.S. prisoners died (see figure 5). The rates of death soared in the early months due to lack of medicine, inadequate food, and the general deteriorated state of the prisoners as the result of all that they had thus far endured. Situated in a rainy climate and on land formerly used for rice paddies, the camp proved to be a breeding ground for flies and mosquitos, further contributing to the spread of disease among the prisoners. John R. Bumgarner, an Army physician and Cabanatuan POW described the deplorable situation:

I could have easily predicted the rise of the death rate in view of the deficient diet and the lack of medication. For the first week or ten days at Cabanatuan there were about ten deaths per day. By the middle of June the grisly procession of dead had grown alarmingly to average 20 deaths per day - 20 men who had endured the terrible ordeal of Bataan, who were 10,000 miles from home, and who then died in the most miserable circumstances. For me, as a doctor, the most distressing thought was that they could have been saved, almost without exception, by proper diet and medical care.¹⁷

Captain Bumgarner's observation concerning proper medical care was also supported by the drop in the numbers of deaths after the arrival of Red Cross packages, additional medicines, and additional medical and dental staff in December 1942. In February 1943, U.S. dental corps personnel set up a dental clinic. Prior to opening it, they made a survey of all the prisoners not in the hospital or on work details, examining 2,725 men, 67% of whom needed dental care.¹⁸

As with other aspects of camp administration, such as the hospital and dental clinic, the organization of a system for registering and tracking the deaths of prisoners was left up to American officers within the camp. The three groups of prisoners in the main part of the camp each had a Graves Registration Officer assigned to track and report deaths from within their

¹⁵ Captain P. L. Smith, "Report on Cabanatuan Camp #1," RG 331, National Archives; Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, 284-87; Kerr, *Surrender and Survival*, 112-13, 117, 237; S. P. MacKenzie, "The Treatment of Prisoners of War in World War II," *Journal of Modern History* 66 (September 1994): 514, 517, 519; Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, 18; Waterford, *Prisoners of the Japanese in World War II*, 37, 143-44, 167-68, 173; Linda Goetz Holmes, *Unjust Enrichment: How Japan's Companies Built Postwar Fortunes Using American POWs* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2001), 22; and Skelton, *The American ex-Prisoner of War*, 16-18. **NOTE:** The rest of the prisoners on the hellships were British, Australian, Indian, or Dutch.

¹⁶ **NOTE:** One death on 2 June was reported buried in the vicinity of the cemetery, and those who died at Cabanatuan in May 1942 were buried in isolated graves or in the Camp #3 Cemetery.

¹⁷ Bumgarner, *Parade of the Dead*, 93.

¹⁸ Virginia W. Lee, "Subject: Cabanatuan Project, Interim Report 22 November 1950 - 20 February 1951, Inclusive," 21 February 1951, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

group on a daily basis. In the hospital section, medical personnel kept records documenting the cause, time, and date of death, as well as information for contacting the next of kin of the casualties. If the casualty had an identification tag, it was placed in his mouth. Otherwise, a piece of paper containing his name was placed there. Prisoners moved the dead to the morgue to await a burial detail to convey them to the cemetery.¹⁹

A Camp Graves Registration Officer collected the information from the group officers and the hospital and reconciled it into one master list. All of the officers in charge of details concerning graves registration rotated duties from time to time, and especially in the early months in camp, they, like almost everyone else, often fell ill. Due to the changes in duties and to sometimes severe illnesses, graves and deaths occasionally went unregistered until months after their occurrence. In November 1942, Captain Robert Conn became the Camp Graves Registration Officer and remained in that position until his departure from Cabanatuan on 16 October 1944. As conditions in the camp improved, Captain Conn went back over early, incomplete records and conducted interviews to enable corrections or additions to the master list. As a result of this work, he created the most complete record available. His work formed the cornerstone of subsequent identification efforts. Still, he carefully noted that “due to the lack of organization, which can be attributed to many causes such as, sick and disheartened Americans, lack of materials to carry on record keeping, and a decided lack of spirit of co-operation on the part of our hosts, the records for the early days were incomplete and in some instances inaccurate.”²⁰

Because so many men were dying, burial parties worked every day. Each morning, the men would gather at the morgue and organize into teams to begin the march to the cemetery. The camp adopted a mass internment system, burying all that died in one day in one common grave. The day consisted of a period of twenty-four hours which ran from 12:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m. (during the period 3 June through 25 September 1942), 5:00 pm to 5:00 pm (during the period 26 September 1942 through 19 October), or 12:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. (during the period 19 October 1942 until Cabanatuan’s closure). The burial party would deliver the dead to the cemetery and then dig the mass grave for the next day.²¹

¹⁹ Captain J. F. Vogl et al., “Transcript Outgoing Telephone Call,” 29 September 1950; Virginia W. Lee, “Subject: Cabanatuan Project, Interim Report 21 September-21 November 1950, Inclusive,” 1 December 1950; R. E. Conn, Jr., letter to Captain J. F. Vogl, 3 October 1950, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD. **NOTE:** Practices in the morgue were not without problems. Captain Conn, the Camp Graves Registration Officer noted that two U.S. enlisted men working in the morgue were caught removing gold fillings from the teeth of the dead.

²⁰ Captain Robert E. Conn, Jr., 7 January 1944, “Following is a history in chronological outline form of the Graves Registration work at Military Prison Camp No I of the Philippine Islands, Cabanatuan, Province of Nueva Ecija, Philippine Islands,” 558-2 Death Report, Cabanatuan, Testimonies and Investigation File, 1945-48; Legal Section, Manila Branch, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers; Record Group 331: Records of Allied Operational and Occupational Headquarters, World War II; National Archives, College Park, MD. This chronological outline is appended to the end of the Cabanatuan Death Report compiled by Robert Conn. A more legible copy of the outline can be found in the following file: Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

²¹ Mildred Trotter, “Notes: Historical in so far as the Cabanatuan burials and disposition has been made,” 24 October 1951, Mildred Trotter Papers, Special Collections of the Bernard Becker Medical Library, Washington University, St. Louis, MO; and John A. Glusman, *Conduct Under Fire: Four American Doctors and Their Fight for Life as Prisoners of the Japanese, 1941-1945*, (New York: Viking Press, 2005) 258; “1942,” undated, POWs, General Records-Cabanatuan, Philippine Archives Collection, Office of the Adjutant General; Record Group 407;

In June and July 1942, the two highest mortality months at the camp, the Japanese did not permit markers or a specific organization for the placement of the graves. After a few graves had been put in a section or plot, the odor would become so offensive that the Japanese sentry would select a new section and the burial details would dig at that location. The digging of large deep graves was impossible due to the high number of daily deaths plus the weakened condition of the men on the burial details. Heavy rains with no drainage facilities also hampered digging. Many shallow graves were dug during the early period, some so shallow that it was not uncommon for the rain to reveal portions of the buried bodies.²²

On 3 August 1942, Captain Willibald Bianchi became the officer in charge of grave digging.²³ He instituted and maintained order in the placement of the graves. By the end of August, Japanese prison administrators had granted permission to the Chaplains to hold brief ceremonies in the cemetery and also agreed to allow for the use of grave markers. It is unclear, based both on the details available for August and on the reports of activities surrounding the beautification of the cemetery described below, exactly how the graves were marked from 27 August forward. It might be that individual graves had markers, or this may simply be a reference to being allowed to mark off areas used for a particular day's common burial. The latter seems more likely, given that no records describe a process in which known individuals were placed into annotated graves during this period. After January 1943, rates of death among the prisoners slowed enough that the burial practices changed. From this point forward, the digging teams still dug a common trench grave, but they did not fill it in any single day. Instead, once the dead for the day had been placed into the trench, they marked the end of the burials with a baffle board, returning upon the next death to resume burials in the trench at that spot.²⁴

After many requests from the American officers administering the Graves Registration and burial process, the Japanese agreed to allow improvements in the cemetery and on 2 February 1943, they requested a plan for beautification, which they approved on 18 March. The prisoners completed beautification of the cemetery in time for a ceremony on Memorial Day in May 1943. In between the approval of the plan and the celebration, Graves Registration Officers worked with prisoners to mound graves, place crosses, create walkways, plant flower beds and erect a cement monument.²⁵

During the process of beautification, Captain Conn worked with men who had participated in earlier burial details to determine the boundaries of the older graves. He interviewed them for

National Archives, College Park, MD; and J. F. Vogl, et al, "Transcript Outgoing Telephone Call," Record Group 92, National Archives.

²² Captain P. L. Smith, "Report on Cabanatuan Camp #1" 17 September 1945, RG 331, National Archives.

²³ **NOTE:** Captain Bianchi later died aboard the Japanese hellship *Enoura Maru*. Today, he numbers among our unaccounted-for casualties.

²⁴ Captain Robert E. Conn, Jr., "Following is a history in chronological outline form of the Graves Registration work at Military Prison Camp No I of the Philippine Islands, Cabanatuan, Province of Nueva Ecija, Philippine Islands," 7 January 1944; and Virginia W. Lee, "Subject: Cabanatuan Project, Interim Report 21 September- 21 November 1950, Inclusive," 1 December 1950, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

²⁵ **NOTE:** In the source records for this information, the holiday is referred to as Decoration Day. Today Decoration Day is celebrated as Memorial Day.

details about specific placement and the dates on which they had done the work. Through this method, he felt able to securely establish grave locations for burials from August 1942 forward. In some instances, in trying to locate the boundaries of the grave, digging revealed the presence of bodies and Captain Conn adjusted the boundaries to encompass them. Captain Conn then drew a map of the cemetery to scale, along with sketches of each of the individual plots (see figure 6). He numbered the graves, noted the numbers on the map, and also added them to the master list of deaths he had created, today labeled "558-2, Death Report, Cabanatuan." He did not number the plots to correspond with dates of death, so that the earliest deaths were in plot one, later deaths in plot two, etc., in part because the original burials did not lend themselves to this kind of order. Instead, starting at the bottom of the cemetery and continuing counter-clockwise, Captain Conn numbered the plots from one to eleven, then assigning numbers to the grave within each plot. Unfortunately, due to the many circumstances outlined above, Captain Conn could not obtain reliable information concerning burials from 3 June through 29 July 1942, a period covering 1,263 deaths (45.7% of total deaths), and he did not annotate burial location numbers next to the names of these individuals in the death report for the camp.²⁶

After the cemetery had been beautified, and until the liberation of Cabanatuan Camp #1 in January 1945, deaths among the prisoners decreased dramatically, as did the overall population in the camp. In that period, in addition to refining and clarifying the information on the "558-2, Death Report, Cabanatuan," Captain Conn collected and organized the death records for Camp O'Donnell, and also interviewed prisoners about deaths they saw both during combat and along the route of the death march. When he felt the information had veracity, he typed up an affidavit for the prisoner's signature. In the post-war years, the records created and refined by Captain Conn were used to search for missing U.S. service members and as exhibits in the trials of Japanese war criminals.²⁷

IV. Post-War Disinterment of Cabanatuan POW Camp Cemeteries

In August 1945, the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon visited the Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery. The team cut back the encroaching vegetation that obscured the graves and replaced the crosses, adding information from identification tags, where available, and stenciling grave numbers on the back. In addition, one member of the Platoon created a sketch map for the cemetery (see figure 7). Second Lieutenant Beard noted, in his report of their activities: "The cemetery is situated in a low area, and water stands between the mounded graves after each rain. The lower end of the cemetery is under water a great share of the time."²⁸

In December 1945 and continuing into the early months of 1946, the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon returned to disinter the Cabanatuan Camp #1 and Camp #3 cemeteries, as well as isolated burials in the area that they had documented during their August

²⁶ Captain J. F. Vogl, et al, "Transcript Outgoing Telephone Call," RG 92, National Archives.

²⁷ Major David M. Lynch, letter to Major Robert E. Conn, Jr., 23 July 1946, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD. **NOTE:** After his release from captivity, Robert Conn received a promotion from Captain to Major.

²⁸ Second Lieutenant Maurice S. Beard, memorandum to Quartermaster, PHIBSEC, 30 August 1945, "Subject: Report on POW Interments and Restoration of Graves," Continuing File, 1946-52, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

visit to the former prison camps. The members of the platoon examined the remains as they disinterred them. In the process, they charted the teeth present with the remains, though they did not have dental records for the deceased with them and did not make graveside assessments to match the teeth present to dental charts and records for the deceased men. The team did, however, make almost one thousand identifications based upon the presence of identification media in the form of cards or metal tags. The remains were moved to U.S. Armed Forces Manila #2 Cemetery (twelve miles north of Manila). Those with identification tags moved with a designated name. All others received unknown numbers for tracking purposes.²⁹

Graves Registration personnel stationed in the Philippines sent copies of the dental records made by the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon to the Memorial Division, which was situated within the U.S. Army's Office of the Quartermaster General. The Memorial Division had responsibility for coordinating with graves registration offices in the field, collecting and maintaining records about casualties and also records concerning searches for those casualties. It served as a liaison with other offices which had responsibility for issues concerning deceased military personnel, such as the Adjutant General's Office. Memorial Division personnel also served as the conduit for casualty information concerning Marine Corps and Navy losses, given that the Army, and more specifically, the Office of the Quartermaster General, had received executive agency over all WWII battle deaths, regardless of the service member's branch of service. The Identification Branch of the Memorial Division had two dental corps officers placed with them on temporary duty. Starting in December 1946, Colonel Kennebeck and Major Shenberger compared the dental records of men who had been buried in the Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery against the dental charts created for the remains. Where the charts matched, the dentists stapled a certification of the comparison to the tooth chart from the disinterred remains. On 27 March 1947, the Memorial Division approved the identifications of 284 individuals who had been buried in the Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery and 2 from the Cabanatuan Camp #3 Cemetery.³⁰

V. American Graves Registration Service Activities

²⁹ Lenora Rowinski, "Telephone Inquiry," 13 September 1951, Memoranda and Reports, and "Alphabetical Roster," 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD. **NOTE:** Ms. Rowinski conducted a phone interview with Mr. Gilbert Zehner who had supervised the disinterment of the Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery as a graves registration officer in 1945-46. The "Alphabetical Roster," was created as part of the Cabanatuan Project in 1950. It includes succinct information about how individuals were identified and was used to tally the number of identifications made using ID tags or cards. This document was also used as one of the foundational sources of the accounting community's current dataset concerning Cabanatuan casualties.

³⁰ Fisher, "Background Information Relating to the Identification of Remains from the Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp and the Reasons Why the Current Project was not Instigated at an Earlier Date," Continuing File, 1946-52, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD. **NOTE:** One individual was also identified from remains disinterred from the cemetery at Camp O'Donnell. The Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPF) for all 287 individuals proposed for identification contains a list of their names and more specifics about the identifications. See, for example, the IDPF for Sgt David A. Ahlberg, 6584381. Out of the sixty-nine burials in the Camp #3 Cemetery, only four remain unidentified today. Fifty-eight of the identifications from this cemetery were made on the basis of identification media (paper, a burial bottle, or tags) found in the cemetery. Two identifications, as discussed above, occurred as the result of dental review. Five others were approved during the period of identifications proposed by field boards of review.

In 1947, in response to the passage by the U.S. Congress of legislation to fund “The Return of the World War II Dead Program,” practices for making and processing identifications changed. Graves Registration Personnel working on the issue were reorganized under the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS). Still headquartered in Washington D.C. and managed through the Memorial Division of the Office of the Quartermaster General, the reorganization resulted in the creation of zones of responsibility for search and recovery operations for still unrecovered casualties and for the disinterment and consolidation of cemeteries across the globe. Once identified and disinterred from a temporary cemetery, a casualty’s remains would be buried in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin, either in a permanent overseas American military cemetery or shipped to the United States for burial in a stateside military or private cemetery. In the Philippines, these changes resulted in the establishment of the AGRS Manila Mausoleum to serve as a collecting point for casualties from a broad zone including all of the islands of the Philippines. The mausoleum also contained a Central Identification Point where AGRS personnel examined unidentified remains, comparing them against records of casualties to effect identification of the remains. For Cabanatuan casualties, these changes resulted in a shift of analysis for identification from the Memorial Division to the Manila Mausoleum. Memorial Division personnel shifted to reviewing proposed identifications from the field office.³¹

Beginning in the fall of 1947 and continuing through July 1948, Manila #2 Cemetery was disinterred and moved to the AGRS Mausoleum at Nichols Field. The remains moved through the Central Identification Point where civilian embalmers and military graves registration personnel processed them for identification. In addition to creating new dental charts for the remains, they measured long bones to produce stature estimates, and examined the remains for evidence of malformations or fractures that might have been documented during life and could serve as an additional clue to their identity. A skeletal chart showing the elements present for each set of remains was also prepared. Staff of the Memorial Division’s Identification Branch documented only twenty-nine casualties approved in this phase of the identification process for Cabanatuan: nineteen individual identifications and an additional ten individuals represented in group burials.³² Many of the recommended identifications put forward to the Memorial Division for review were disapproved with the request that further study be completed on the remains. The grounds for disapproval were based upon differences in, and/or a lack of dental data for the unknown remains from the graves in which the casualties were reportedly buried. Comments from the Memorial Division to the field office regularly noted, in requesting further study or disapproving a proposal, that the Army dental records of the decedents involved were “meager and incomplete” and presented a “marked similarity which would probably compare equally well with any cross-section of remains recovered from the Cabanatuan Cemetery.” The

³¹ Edward Steere and Thayer M. Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead, 1945-51* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch Office of the Quartermaster General, 1957), 635-636; Fisher, “Background Information Relating to the Identification of Remains from the Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp and the Reasons Why the Current Project was not Instigated at an Earlier Date,” National Archives.

³² **NOTE:** The figures for identifications made at different phases of the study of Cabanatuan remains are based on the “Alphabetical Roster” cited in footnote 27. Study of the Individual Deceased Personnel Files for some of these casualties suggests that the basis of their identification sometimes changed prior to the end of the attempt to identify Cabanatuan remains. For example, PFC Clayton L. Holland, Jr., 290553, was originally noted as identified as the result of an approved field board of review, but his IDPF indicates ultimate identification from remains which had been designated unknown X-2551 Manila #2, with an approval date of 2 November 1951, placing this last identification after the end of the field board submissions and suggesting that the final phase, the “Cabanatuan Project,” overturned his field board identification. Further study of the IDPFs of Cabanatuan casualties is likely to reveal more changes of this type.

Field Boards of Review continued to take the lead on identification until June 1950. If identification could not be determined, the remains were reburied as unknowns in Fort McKinley Cemetery in Manila. Maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission, this cemetery is now known as Manila American Cemetery.³³

VI. Cabanatuan Project

In May 1950, a member of the Memorial Division staff proposed that the remains from the Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery should be reviewed in a focused project. This proposal arose from concerns about the poor quality of the comparisons and suggested identifications arriving from the field boards of review. After detailing the circumstances presented in the case of common grave 316, from which ten individuals had been identified based upon the presence of identification tags, two additional men had been identified during later remains processing, and fifteen men remained unidentified with fifteen unknown remains associated, the Memorial Division staff member proposed that a sustained and detailed study of this grave and the others from Cabanatuan had the possibility of producing several hundred more identifications. The Chief of the Memorial Division approved the proposal.³⁴

In June 1950, L. V. Monzel outlined the procedures to be followed in setting up and completing the Cabanatuan Project. The team, located in Washington, D.C., would create three rosters to be used to capture the circumstantial, physical, and dental information necessary to make associations between unidentified remains and unaccounted-for casualties. First, the team would screen all the 293 files for decedents listed on the Cabanatuan Roster.³⁵ In conducting the screening, investigators would make a sheet containing available physical, dental, and casualty

³³ Steere and Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead*, 547; Fisher, "Background Information Relating to the Identification of Remains from the Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp and the Reasons Why the Current Project was not Instigated at an Earlier Date," National Archives; Mildred Trotter, "Notes Historical," Mildred Trotter Papers. See also field board proceedings and correspondence from the Memorial Division regarding the results in many of the IDPFs of Cabanatuan casualties (for examples see the IDPFs of Pvt Dean E. Cederblom, 20900696 or Pvt Harold S. Hirschi, 19038407). **NOTE:** By this point in the multiple processings of remains, each set of unknown remains had received at least three different unknown numbers. The earliest, a "C-number" was assigned either at the graveside or shortly after transport to Manila #2 Cemetery. The second designation, an "X-number" was assigned at Manila #2, and a third designation, also an "X-number" was assigned at the Manila Mausoleum. Today, the unknowns files associated with these remains are stored under the "X-number" assigned at Manila #2. Information about the specific numbers used for remains associated with particular common graves from the Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery may be found in the more detailed analysis of that particular grave or in the case summaries written to explain the circumstances of loss of a particular unaccounted-for service member who died at the camp.

³⁴ Author's name illegible, note to Captain Cox, 19 May 1950, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD. **NOTE:** The Cabanatuan Project personnel did not successfully resolve the cases of the 15 men then unidentified from common grave 316. They remain unaccounted-for today.

³⁵ **NOTE:** The term "293 file" in this context refers to extracts of the physical, medical, and dental information pulled from the service records of deceased individuals and compiled into a single file. Today, the "293 file" is synonymous with the Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF). The reference here is to a subset of the documents that make up today's IDPF.

status information for each individual. Kept alphabetically after completion, these sheets could form the alphabetical roster for the project (see figure 8).³⁶ Second, and concurrently with the creation of the screening sheets, project personnel would develop a chronological roster of deaths using “information currently in this Office. Such a roster does not now exist and is a necessity for the chronological study which will be [the] primary means through which associations will be made.” Third, the project team would create screening sheets for all the unidentifiable remains associated with Cabanatuan. Also within this phase of the project, a “special grave index should be set up reflecting the identified and unidentified remains according to the Cabanatuan grave from which they were recovered.” Finally, upon completion of the rosters and screening sheets, the team would establish associations to the unknown remains through study of the rosters and circumstantial, physical, and dental comparisons.³⁷ In concluding the recommendations for structuring the project, Monzel made the following observation: “It is obvious that errors in some of the identifications established through ID tags will seem apparent in the course of the study. However, because of the lack of processing information for the remains prior to their permanent burial, it is believed that those identified remains interred in Fort McKinley should not be disturbed unless a misidentification appears definite and th[r]ough the disinterment of the remains additional identifications can be made after processing.”³⁸

Mrs. Virginia Lee, a civilian employee of the Identification Branch, Memorial Division, submitted the first interim report for the Cabanatuan Project on 26 September 1950. She noted that the first three phases of L.V. Monzel’s proposal had been completed and she anticipated that comparisons of the records for deceased personnel against the records for remains would begin within two weeks of her submission of the report. The proposal going forward was to study, in particular, the chronological roster of burials that the Memorial Division had recreated from Major Conn’s burial report, noting: “A preliminary study is now being made in order to ascertain the relationship between the accountable burial periods and the dates and hours of death as shown on the roster” (see figures 9 and 10). At this point, Cabanatuan Project personnel assumed a correlation between the hour of death noted in “558-2, Death Report, Cabanatuan” and the order in which burials had been made within each of the graves.³⁹

Shortly after the submission of the first interim report, Cabanatuan Project personnel encountered several problems with their attempts to associate casualties to remains using the documentation they had gathered and created. Trying to line up deaths for the months of June and July 1942 with burials in accordance with dates and times of death revealed “overlaps” in the burials. In other words, some individuals who died on a particular day at an earlier hour were associated with burials that the Cabanatuan Project staff felt should have been made on a

³⁶ **NOTE:** As the project evolved, the screening sheets proved to be in too high of a demand among the project staff and could not serve as the alphabetical roster. Consequently, a separate alphabetical roster was produced.

³⁷ **NOTE:** This team made dental and physical comparisons with the remains based solely upon paperwork provided from the field. Their suggestions for associations between “unknown” remains and unidentified service members were not made based upon a study of the remains themselves.

³⁸ L. V. Monzel, memorandum to Captain Cox, June 1950, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

³⁹ Virginia W. Lee, “Subject: Cabanatuan Project, Interim Report 21 June-21 September 1950, Inclusive,” 26 September 1950, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

subsequent day, while other, later deaths were associated with burials they thought had occurred earlier. Further, their analysis of graves and the numbers of remains removed from those graves suggested that several numbered burials, specifically 304, 313, 413, 414, 1012, 1013, and 1108 appeared not to have been recovered by the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon when they disinterred the cemetery. With these difficulties in mind, project staff contacted Robert Conn, now a civilian living in Minnesota, and worked through some of the problems via telephone, written correspondence, and a trip by Mr. Conn to Washington, D.C. to be interviewed by Memorial Division staff.⁴⁰

The conversations with Mr. Conn clarified several points of confusion for the Cabanatuan Project personnel. First, in determining who should have been buried in a particular grave, the accountable burial period, that is, the 24 hour period in which remains were collected at the morgue for burial, should be the primary consideration rather than the specific hour and date of death. Men from any particular accountable burial period would be buried together, but not systematically by their time of death. In many instances, the time of death reported on the roster represented an approximation, since many of the casualties died in the night, unattended by fellow prisoners. With this understanding in mind, the team drew up a new chronological roster, this time using the accountable burial period to group the casualties. They used information concerning identified personnel to group together unidentified individuals who should have been buried with the identified personnel along with the unknown remains recovered from the same grave (see figure 10). This new roster formed the basis for all the subsequent work of the project.⁴¹

Mr. Conn, when explaining the possibility of unrecovered graves, noted that all the graves in question would have been placed in the June-July 1942 timeframe. He found it quite possible that they had failed to actually locate the graves when marking the boundaries within the cemetery in the spring of 1943:

Let's say this – that when we went out to finally try to put the cemetery in order, I took a large number of boys out who had been on previous work details to try to locate where graves had been put in and the dates they were put in, and it is just possible that the ones you mention would have given the appearance of being a grave but in reality was nothing but a mass of ground which would look like a grave.⁴²

He stated that these very concerns were among those that led him not to specify grave numbers for those early burials.⁴³

⁴⁰ J. F. Vogl et al., “Transcript Outgoing Telephone Call,” 29 September 1950; Virginia W. Lee, “Subject: Cabanatuan Project, Interim Report 21 September-21 November 1950, Inclusive,” 1 December 1950; R. E. Conn, Jr., letter to Captain J. F. Vogl, 3 October 1950, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

⁴¹ Virginia W. Lee, “Subject: Cabanatuan Project, Interim Report 21 September-21 November 1950, Inclusive,” RG 92, National Archives.

⁴² J. F. Vogl et al., “Transcript Outgoing Telephone Call,” 29 September 1950; Virginia W. Lee, “Subject: Cabanatuan Project, Interim Report 21 September-21 November 1950, Inclusive,” RG 92, National Archives.

⁴³ R. E. Conn, Jr., letter to Captain J. F. Vogl, RG 92, National Archives.

Mr. Conn also cautioned Cabanatuan Project staff about relying on identifications that had been made solely on the basis of the presence of identification media. The team had discovered several incidents where, based upon the date of death, a particular individual should have been buried in a grave other than the one from which they were subsequently identified. To illustrate the problem, Memorial Division personnel gave as an example, the death, burial, and identification of Sgt Barnes Olmstead, 38011833. Sergeant Olmstead's death had been reported on 10 October 1942. The "558-2, Death Report, Cabanatuan" gave his burial location as grave 512. Instead, 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon members had identified remains from grave 719 as Sgt Olmstead's based upon the presence of an identification tag. Other men recovered from grave 719 had dates of death of 17 November 1942. In explaining what might have happened, Mr. Conn proposed the following scenario:

Well now, let me tell you how it could happen. Let us say that this man passes away. The doctors or the corpsmen taking the body out of the ward ask who it is, and this man next to him positively identifies him as being Olmstead. Then, let us say that Olmstead, before he died, had given his wallet or some other means of identification to this man lying next to him. Let us say a month later this man lying next to Olmstead passes away. The wardman asks who he is and the boys say "We don't know. Let's see what he's got." They examine him and find that his identification indicates that he's Olmstead because it is the identification which Olmstead had given to him.⁴⁴

When Mr. Conn visited the Memorial Division staff on 6 and 7 November 1950, he cautioned them that identifications made on the basis of tags were "not worth anything."⁴⁵

With these clarifications in mind, Cabanatuan Project staff divided up the cases by grave numbers and set about analyzing the rosters they had created to match up unknown remains with unidentified casualties. In December 1950, they sent an initial request for the field to reprocess thirty-one identified remains that were then buried in Fort McKinley cemetery. The request covered burials originally made at Cabanatuan from 3 June through 6 July 1942, and asked that Central Identification Point field staff simultaneously process previously identified individuals with unknown remains in an effort to associate some of the still unidentified individuals with either mistakenly identified remains or remains currently designated as unknown.

The Central Identification Point could not consider remains that had already been identified but shipped to the U.S. for burial, so each of the reprocessing requests necessarily dealt with only a fraction of the total number of remains thought to have come from any particular grave. This request, like others that would follow, also asked the field office to consolidate any extra skeletal parts found into either the identified or the unknown remains from the grave. In this way, and from a great distance, the Cabanatuan Project staff directed the field office to make the numbers of sets of remains add up to the number of individuals originally reported buried in a particular grave. While this request was likely made in good faith, and in an effort to sort out remains presumed to be commingled due to their having been buried in common graves, it had the

⁴⁴ Captain J. F. Vogl, et al, "Transcript Outgoing Telephone Call," RG 92, National Archives.

⁴⁵ "Notes on Conversation in Washington Office with Mr. Robert E. Conn, 6 & 7 November 1950," Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

potential unintended consequence of losing some of the individuals who may have been mistakenly documented as coming from a particular numbered grave at the time of initial disinterment. Cabanatuan Project staff seem not to have considered the possibility that some of the remains they documented as unrecovered might instead have been recovered, but noted by the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon as having come from a different grave than that listed in the "558-2, Death Report, Cabanatuan."⁴⁶

The Identification Branch continued to assign the Cabanatuan cases in chronological order and to make requests to the field for reprocessing of remains. This work resulted in some additional identifications, but it did not proceed in an uncomplicated way or at the pace originally predicted by Memorial Division staff. Misidentifications based on the presence of identification media continued to be a major concern, and as project staff reviewed common graves, they found that these misidentifications caused cascading problems both within and between graves. A misidentified set of remains incorrectly excluded the named individual from consideration when reviewing other sets of remains. In circumstances where many deceased individuals had similar physical and dental characteristics, and the staff trying to make identifications had limited tools for discriminating particular features or circumstantial evidence to establish identity, a series of misidentifications could affect all of the subsequent efforts to identify the unknowns. These issues created, and still create, additional uncertainty and doubt about the entire project.⁴⁷

The interim report of the project filed on 13 April 1951 included with it a "Major Discrepancies" roster noting that, among the graves reviewed to that point, Cabanatuan Project staff suspected 110 misidentifications from 148 graves. These misidentifications, occurring as they did from common graves containing both identified and unidentified casualties, impacted a total of 1,319 remains. The report, being interim, represented an assessment of approximately 49% of the total number of remains to be examined in the course of the project. Of the cases tagged as potential misidentifications, forty-three were noted to have already been sent to the United States, all but two having been delivered for burial. The interim report was accompanied by a recommendation

⁴⁶ Virginia W. Lee, with concurrence from Captain Wasson, QMC, "Subject: List of Required Reprocessings as of 21 November 1950 (Cabanatuan Project)," 8 December 1950, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD. **NOTE:** In his phone conversation with Lenora Rowinski of the Identification Branch, Mr. Gilbert Zehner, who had overseen the disinterment of the Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery, reported to her that the number of remains found in any particular grave did not always correspond with the information they had concerning what they should expect to find in each location. See footnote 27. In reference to requests from Cabanatuan Project personnel regarding reprocessing of remains in Manila, it is also worth noting that none of the personnel making the requests understood the condition of the remains. Not until Dr. Trotter visited Manila to assess the project (see page 19 below) did anyone in Washington, D.C. learn that the remains were degraded and eroded to such an extent that they could not be segregated into discrete individuals.

⁴⁷ **NOTE:** As an example of these potential ramifications, Cabanatuan Project staff continued to have difficulty sorting out and associating groups of deceased individuals with the common graves as they had been numbered in the Camp #1 Cemetery. In particular, for the period 7-14 June, the project staff had difficulty aligning the resolved individuals with the grave numbers from which they assumed they should have been recovered. Rather than concluding that misidentifications might be playing a role in the problem, the staff concluded that the grave details had not adhered to their own burial practices. In an attempt to sort out the graves and the remains originally contained within, they sent a request to the field dated 14 September 1958 asking that all the unknowns from this period be considered and processed together. This request had the effect of combining for identification processing cases concerning 156 individuals, seventy-one of whom were not identified. They did not request inclusion of graves 1009, 1015, 1016, or 1101, which represented an additional thirty individuals. These graves were excluded from comparison because project staff considered them "cleared," meaning that no unidentified individuals continued to be associated with the grave numbers.

not to disturb those forty cases, but to only attempt to fix the problems of identification where the remains were still in the custody of the AGRS.⁴⁸

By this time, the Central Identification Point of the Manila Mausoleum had employed anthropologists to help with the processing and identification of remains. Mr. Robert Fox, then the curator of anthropology for the Philippine National Museum, processed remains at the Central Identification Point until May 1951 when Mr. Charles Warren replaced him. Mr. Fox returned to the University of Chicago to complete his doctorate. The anthropologists worked strictly at the request of the records division in the field or the Identification Branch of the Memorial Division. They did not have access to the records themselves, and so did not make associations between unknowns and unidentified personnel. Rather, they responded to the requests for specific examinations of the remains, either to check for a particular trait, fracture, or malformation, or to reprocess and segregate commingled remains. They produced a report documenting their work, but as Mr. Warren would later note: “Unfortunately, there was no feedback; I never learned the results of my anthropological findings or related work nor did I experience any satisfaction from an awareness of positive contributions leading to the identification of any of the unknowns.”⁴⁹

With concern growing over the complications of the project, the Memorial Division sent three Cabanatuan Project personnel, Mrs. Virginia Lee, Mrs. Marie Holden, and Major Robert Lay to Manila to work from within the Manila Mausoleum. They began work on 17 September 1951, and quickly reported finding additional records concerning Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery casualties available in the Records Division of the field office.⁵⁰ All three worked directly with the AGRS field staff to approve identifications and “clear” graves, by identifying either individually or in groups, all the remains associated with a particular grave number. In her report from the field, Mrs. Lee noted that the additional information available sometimes “changed the picture of the graves completely, as a result of which we are now convinced that no associations should be made unless all the data for the identified remains is available.” Major Lay noted that 31 October 1952 might be best regarded as the target date for completion of the Cabanatuan Project, though it is not clear whether he was taking into account the imminent arrival of Dr. Mildred Trotter to help with reprocessing Cabanatuan cases.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Chief, Identification Branch, memorandum to the Chief, Memorial Division, “Subject: Cabanatuan Project – Interim Report,” 13 April 1951, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

⁴⁹ Charles P. Warren, “Forensic Anthropology in a Military Setting,” *Human Organization* 40, no. 2 (1981), 173.

⁵⁰ **NOTE:** The additional documentation located consisted of summary forms reporting the physical and dental characteristics for some of the remains that had already been identified and that same information from some of the service records of the casualties. Until finding the records in Manila, and based upon an inability to obtain them from the records center in St. Louis, Cabanatuan Project staff had assumed they would not have these details for every case.

⁵¹ Virginia W. Lee, letter to Colonel King, 13 October 1951; Colonel James Clearwater, letter to Major Robert Lay, 19 October 1951, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD. **NOTE:** In his response back to Major Lay, Colonel Clearwater remarked that he was “somewhat mystified” by the proposal that the Cabanatuan Project would end in October 1952, a date which extended the project ten months beyond the possibility of using Congressionally allocated funds to complete it. He reiterated that 31 December 1951 should be the date at which project personnel aimed to have things wrapped up.

Shortly after the arrival of the Cabanatuan Project staff in Manila, Captain John Shypula, an AGRS field officer stationed there, traveled to the site of the former Cabanatuan POW Camps to conduct a final field investigation in the hopes of recommending that a team return to the cemetery to disinter graves that might have been overlooked by the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon. On 25 September 1951, Captain Shypula visited the site of the cemetery with Cabanatuan City Mayor, Mr. O'Campo, but nothing could be definitively established as the entire area had been converted into rice paddies and flooded with water. Captain Shypula then contacted Mr. Alejo Malcber who had been employed as a gravedigger at the cemetery during disinterment operations, but Mr. Malcber had no additional information. On the following day, Captain Shypula returned to the cemetery and determined that the former landmarks within the cemetery had been obliterated and could not be reestablished. Since no test digging could be conducted nor anything further determined, Captain Shypula departed.⁵²

Meanwhile, Colonel Clearwater, chief of the Memorial Division, had retained Dr. Trotter, a professor at Washington University, St. Louis, as an expert anthropologist with prior experience identifying World War II dead. She first traveled to Hawaii, departing St. Louis on 8 October 1951. She worked in Hawaii for a few days at the Central Identification Laboratory (CIL) at Schofield Barracks before traveling on to Manila with Lieutenant Colonel Abel, an AGRS officer then stationed at the CIL in Hawaii.⁵³

Lieutenant Colonel Abel and Dr. Trotter, both of whom had extensive prior experience in the identification laboratories of the Pacific theater, reviewed the Cabanatuan remains available in Hawaii and then moved on to the Philippines where they found that the identifications being put forward to the Memorial Division could not be further substantiated by studying the remains and the accompanying paperwork at the same time. Dr. Trotter was dismayed to learn the history of burials, disinterments, identifications, and reburials of the Cabanatuan casualties. She wrote:

During this entire period, I have learned some of the details of the history of these remains since they were first buried in 1942. This history includes a record of burial, disinterment, reburial, etc., etc., a series of processings with resultant papers for three or four or perhaps more successive years; signatures on the papers which do not carry weight scientifically; identifications made and the next of kin notified; questioning of the identification with recommendations for correction by personnel who study the papers at a distance of more than 8,000 miles from the remains.⁵⁴

Dr. Trotter found the remains to be in a terribly eroded state, first from being buried and left in ground sodden with water for several years, and then from being handled too often during processing. She emphatically reported the remains to be “jumbled beyond belief,” “eroded much beyond a state that [could] be illustrated on a black-out chart,” and in “such a state of deterioration that evidence on which identification depends had been largely obliterated.” She

⁵² Captain John Shypula, “Disposition Form re: Cabanatuan Project,” 27 September 1941, Declassified Classified Miscellaneous Files; Graves Registration Service; Office of the Quartermaster General; Record Group 92; National Archives, College Park, MD.

⁵³ Mildred Trotter, letter to Col James Clearwater, 1 November 1951; Mildred Trotter, draft report, “Subject: Report of Official Travel,” 27 December 1951; Mildred Trotter Papers, Special Collections of the Bernard Becker Medical Library, Washington University, St. Louis.

⁵⁴ Mildred Trotter, letter to Col James Clearwater, 1 November 1951, Mildred Trotter Papers, Special Collections of the Bernard Becker Medical Library, Washington University, St. Louis.

saw no way to substantiate the identifications being proposed by Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Holden, and noted that she and Mr. Warren “came to odds when he wanted to make identifications to please the two women clerks who had been sent to Manila to shuffle and sort earlier records and who had made identifications from these earlier records.”⁵⁵

Lieutenant Colonel Abel, Dr. Trotter, and Major Lay assembled a package documenting the problems of the Cabanatuan Project for Colonel Clearwater’s consideration. Lieutenant Colonel Abel seconded Dr. Trotter’s concerns about the lack of ability to prove any proposed segregations of commingled remains and noted “much evidence” of exchanges of remains in prior processings, particularly in the swapping of skulls with post-cranial remains. In addressing the attempts to have anthropologists make the identifications that Memorial Division staff assumed possible when looking only at their project rosters and associated paperwork for the remains and casualties, Lt Col Abel noted that the comparisons were impossible because estimates for stature and age could not be made from the remains present, and the dentition available with the remains did not match the available records for individuals who should be associated. Major Lay, for his part, emphasized that any attempts to “clear” graves were partial at best because too many remains had already been shipped to the U.S. He added concerns arising in working with the contractor who was attempting to finalize burials at Fort McKinley cemetery so it could be handed over to the American Battle Monuments Commission for care and maintenance, and noted that the project could not be fully completed on the timeline desired by Memorial Division leadership.⁵⁶

Based upon the package put forward by Lt Col Abel, Dr. Trotter, Major Lay, and Captain Shypula, Col Clearwater “reluctantly concluded that the continuance of this project under such conditions would be neither productive or advisable.” Those families who had already been notified that the remains of their loved one had been recovered received remains for burial, and cases already in processing continued until finished. As for the rest, on 3 January 1951, Col Clearwater rendered a decision to declare the rest of the unknowns associated with the Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery unidentifiable. The remains were then permanently interred in the Manila American Cemetery.⁵⁷

VI. Current Research on Unidentified Casualties from the Cabanatuan POW Camps

Initial work by historians of the former Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (now part of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency) reconstruct the history of the casualties of the Cabanatuan POW Camps began in 2004 with a request from a family member of an

⁵⁵ Mildred Trotter, letter to Colonel James Clearwater, Mildred Trotter Papers; Mildred Trotter, letter to T. Dale Stewart, 10 November 1954, Mildred Trotter Papers; Mildred Trotter, letter to Charles Warren, 13 July 1982, T. Dale Stewart Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Museum Support Center, Suitland, MD.

⁵⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Stewart Abel, letter to Colonel James Clearwater and Colonel Chester Elmes, 1 November 1951, with enclosures from Captain John Shypula, Dr. Mildred Trotter, and Major Robert Lay, Cabanatuan Project; General Correspondence, Classified Miscellaneous file, 1946-52; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

⁵⁷ Chief, Memorial Division to Chief Identification Branch, “Intraoffice Reference Sheet,” OQMG Form 638, 6 November 1951, Cabanatuan Project; General Correspondence, Classified Miscellaneous file, 1946-52; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD; “Memorandum for Record: (Salser 72947), Subject: Cabanatuan Project,” 3 January 1952, Memoranda and Reports, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD.

unaccounted-for serviceman who had died in Cabanatuan Camp #1. That early research resulted, in 2005, in the first draft of this memorandum. Additional archival research, study of the memoirs of survivors, and of the histories of the war in the Philippines has continued to expand our understanding of the specific circumstances of death and burial of the casualties from these camps. Work to develop data concerning deaths in Cabanatuan, reconstruct the Cabanatuan Project, and assess the identifications made from 1946-1951 is ongoing. Documents reviewed so far confirm and reinforce the concerns expressed at the end of the Cabanatuan Project and show the impact of early misidentifications to be more widespread than Cabanatuan Project staff understood. Ongoing reviews of the Individual Deceased Personnel Files of casualties identified at the graveside by the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon reveal many discrepancies between the physical and dental information available for the service member when compared against the physical and dental description of the remains. Further, documentation available concerning the multiple processings for identification show that, among both identified casualties and unknown remains, the teeth represented as present in 1946 at initial disinterment are often not the teeth represented as present when the remains moved through final processing.

A review of cases reprocessed during the Cabanatuan Project yields further difficulties. These cases show that Memorial Division personnel sometimes corrected misidentifications and notified family members, but that they also sometimes left them in place. In one instance, paperwork showing a reprocessing of the remains associated with grave 419 appears in archival documents found at the National Archives, but does not appear in the Individual Deceased Personnel Files or the Unknown Files for the associated individual remains. This is problematic, in that it calls into question our ability to adequately reconstruct all of the attempts at identification any particular set of remains may have gone through, and, given that it is the last processing that is not present, it also suggests that the remains present in the casket might not be the remains suggested to be present by the paperwork included in the IDPF or Unknown file, making it difficult to offer assessments concerning the feasibility of current or future identifications of unknowns based on the records available. These difficulties do not preclude attempts to disinter and identify unknowns associated with the Cabanatuan POW Camp Cemeteries, but they do point to a complex set of burials, identifications, and misidentifications that make it difficult, based upon historical documentation alone, to set boundaries for disinterment projects focused on individual cases or even upon clustered groupings of cases.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Individual Deceased Personnel File for Pvt Earl L. Charles, 35001419, Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD; Unknown file X-1755 Manila #2, Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD; Mildred Trotter, letter to Colonel James Clearwater, 3 December 1951, Continuing File, 1946-52, 293 GRS Pacific (Cabanatuan); General Correspondence, Miscellaneous File, 1939-54; Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives, College Park, MD. **NOTE:** For an example of a case where the family did receive notification of a misidentification, see the IDPF for Pvt Dean E. Cederblom, 20900696.



Figure 1. Map showing location of the Republic of the Philippines relative to Southeast Asia.

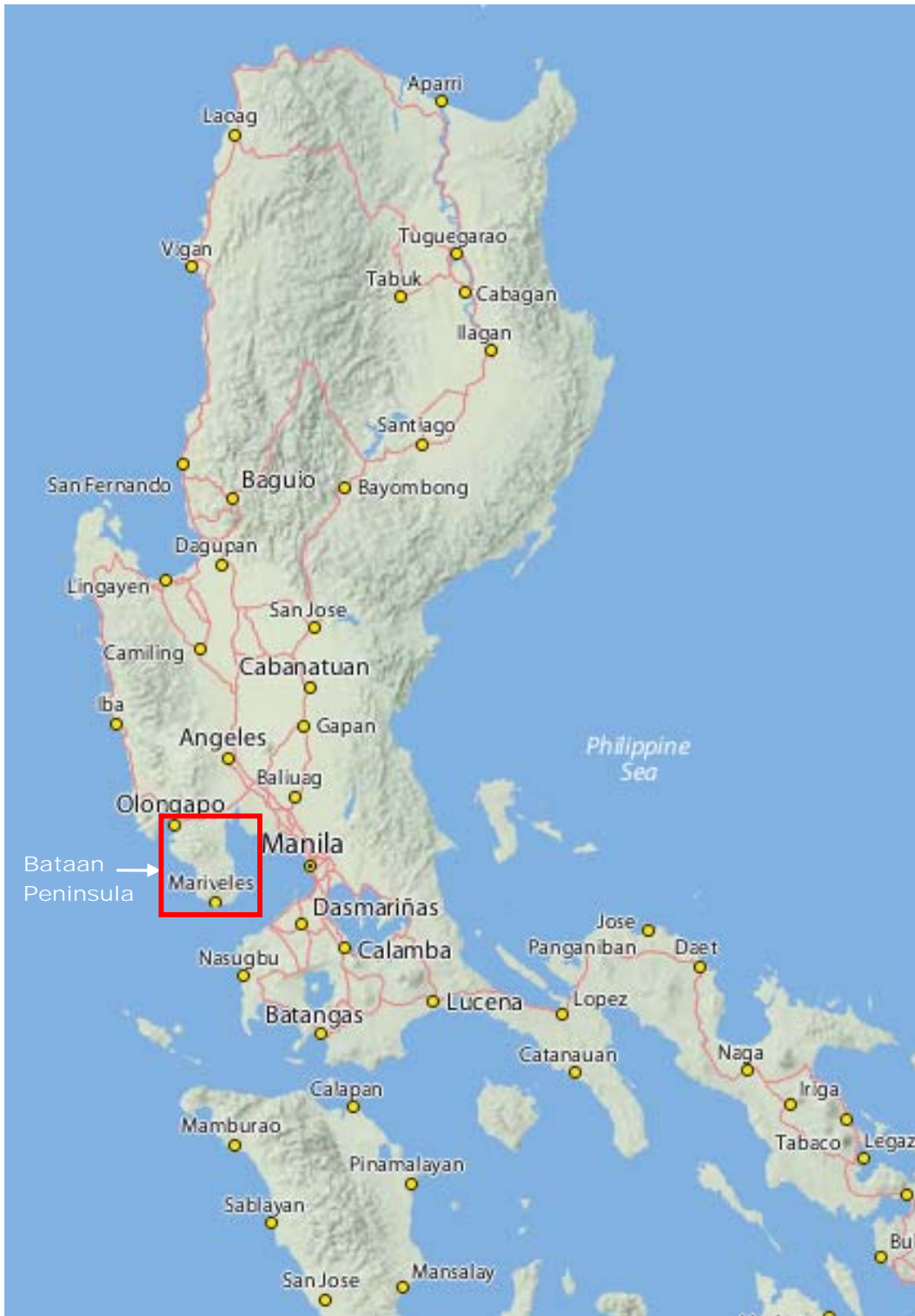


Figure 2. Map of Luzon Island. U.S. and Filipino forces had been distributed throughout the island at the outbreak of war. By December 1941 and until surrender, they were concentrated on the Bataan Peninsula.

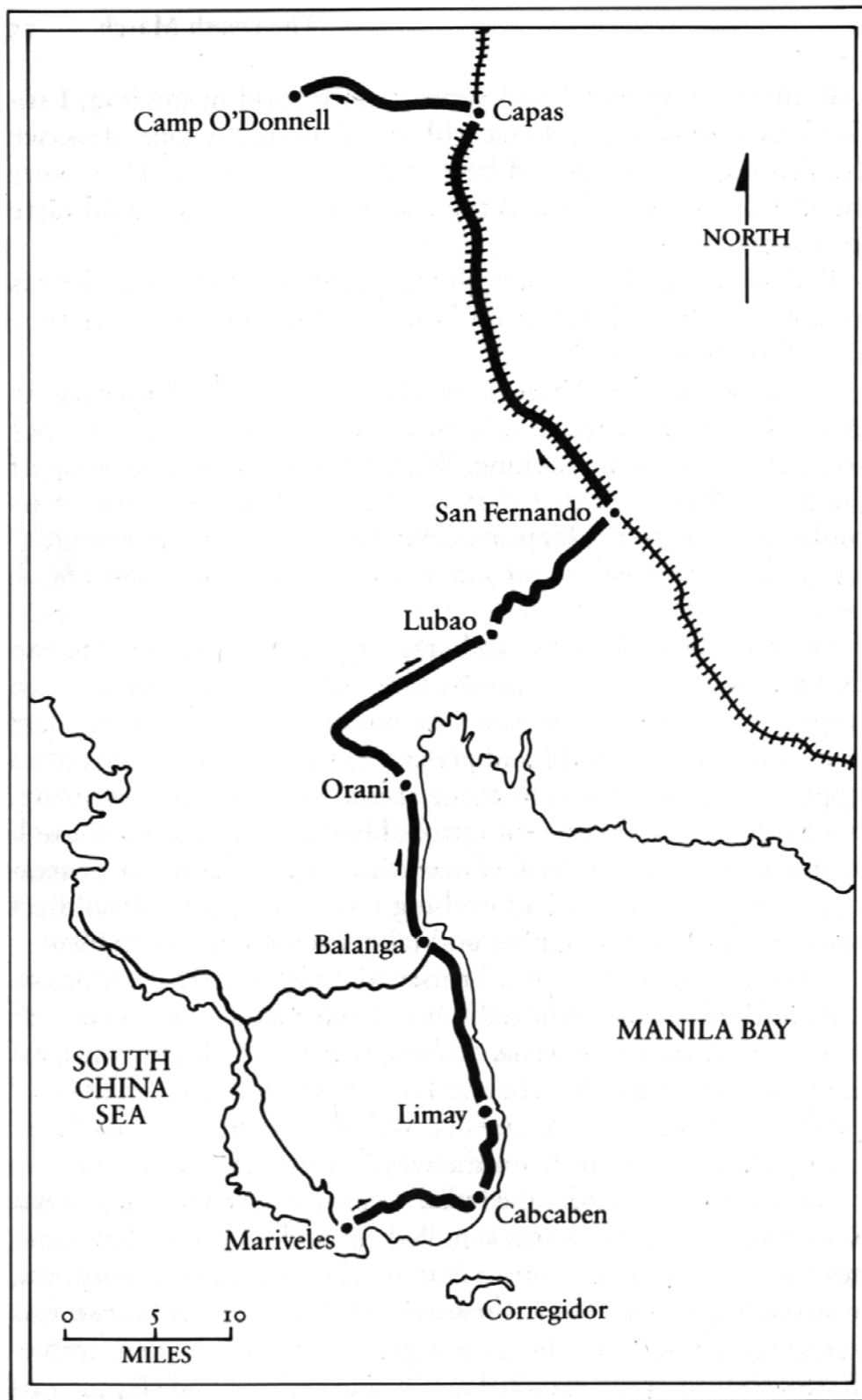


Figure 3. The route of the Bataan Death March. (Source: Lawton, *Some Survived*, 184.)

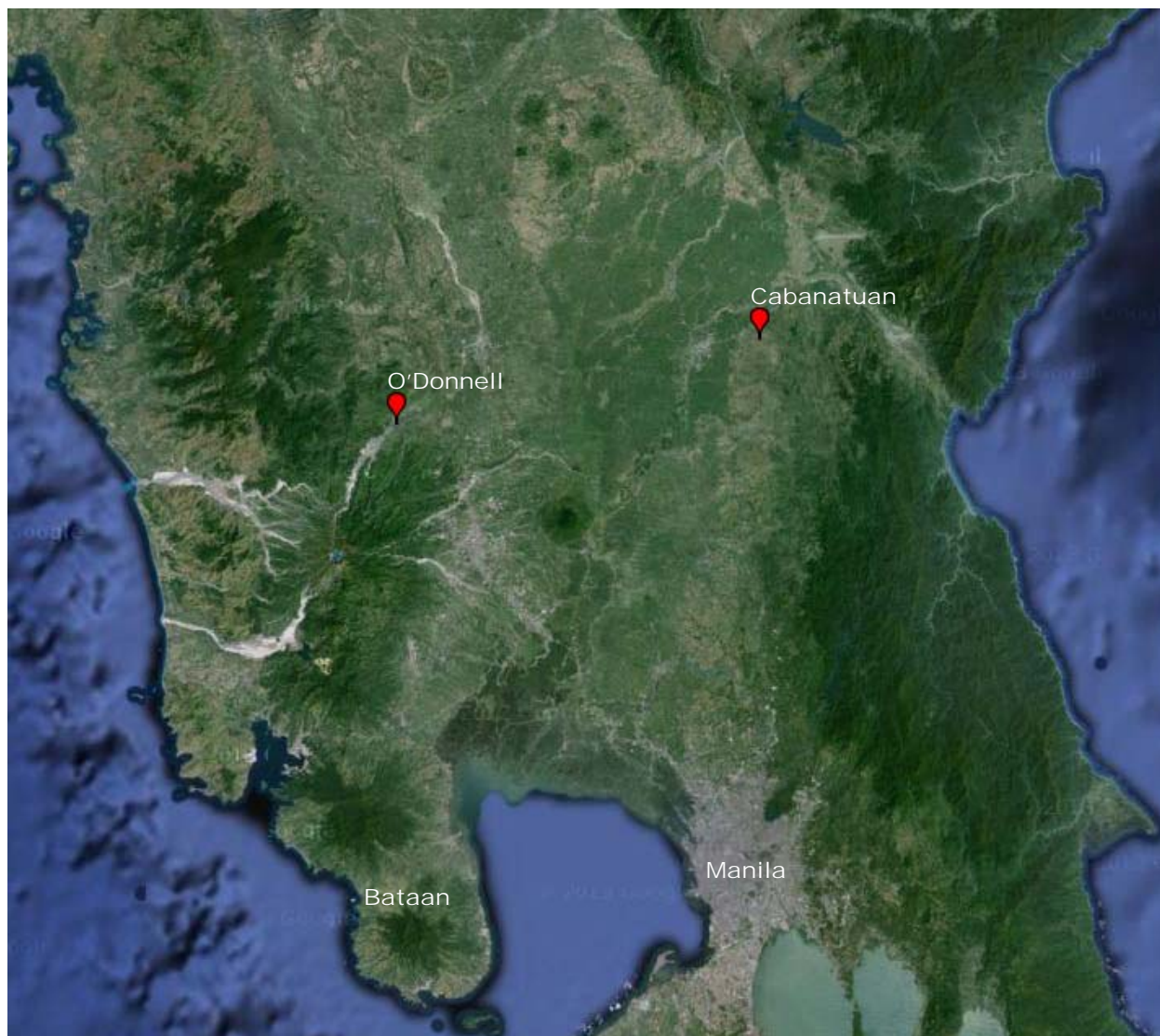


Figure 4. Satellite image of a portion of Luzon Island with the locations of O'Donnell, Cabanatuan, Manila, and the Bataan Peninsula marked. The straight-line distance between O'Donnell and Cabanatuan is 68 kilometers/42 miles.

Month and Year of Death	Number of Individual Identifications	Number of Individuals in Group Identifications	Number Unaccounted-for	Total Casualties for the Month
May 1942	11	0	2	13
June 1942	293	51	197	541
July 1942	365	11	421	797
August 1942	159	28	114	301
September 1942	196	32	49	277
October 1942	190	19	57	266
November 1942	180	16	102	298
December 1942	94	18	37	149
January 1943	57	9	12	78
February 1943	10	0	0	10
March 1943	5	0	4	9
April 1943	2	0	0	2
May 1943	2	0	1	3
June 1943	3	0	0	3
July 1943	2	0	1	3
August 1943	2	0	0	2
September 1943	0	0	1	1
October 1943	0	0	2	2
November 1943	0	0	1	1
December 1943	0	0	1	1
January 1944	0	0	0	0
February 1944	0	0	1	1
March 1944	1	0	0	1
April 1944	0	0	0	0
May 1944	0	0	0	0
June 1944	0	0	0	0
July 1944	0	0	0	0
August 1944	0	0	1	1
September 1944	1	0	1	2
October 1944	0	0	2	2
Totals	1,573	184	1,007	2,764

Figure 5. Listing of casualty figures for the Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camps arranged by month and year of death, as well as current casualty status. The figures include deaths at Camp #1 and Camp #3, as well as isolated graves within the vicinity of the camps.

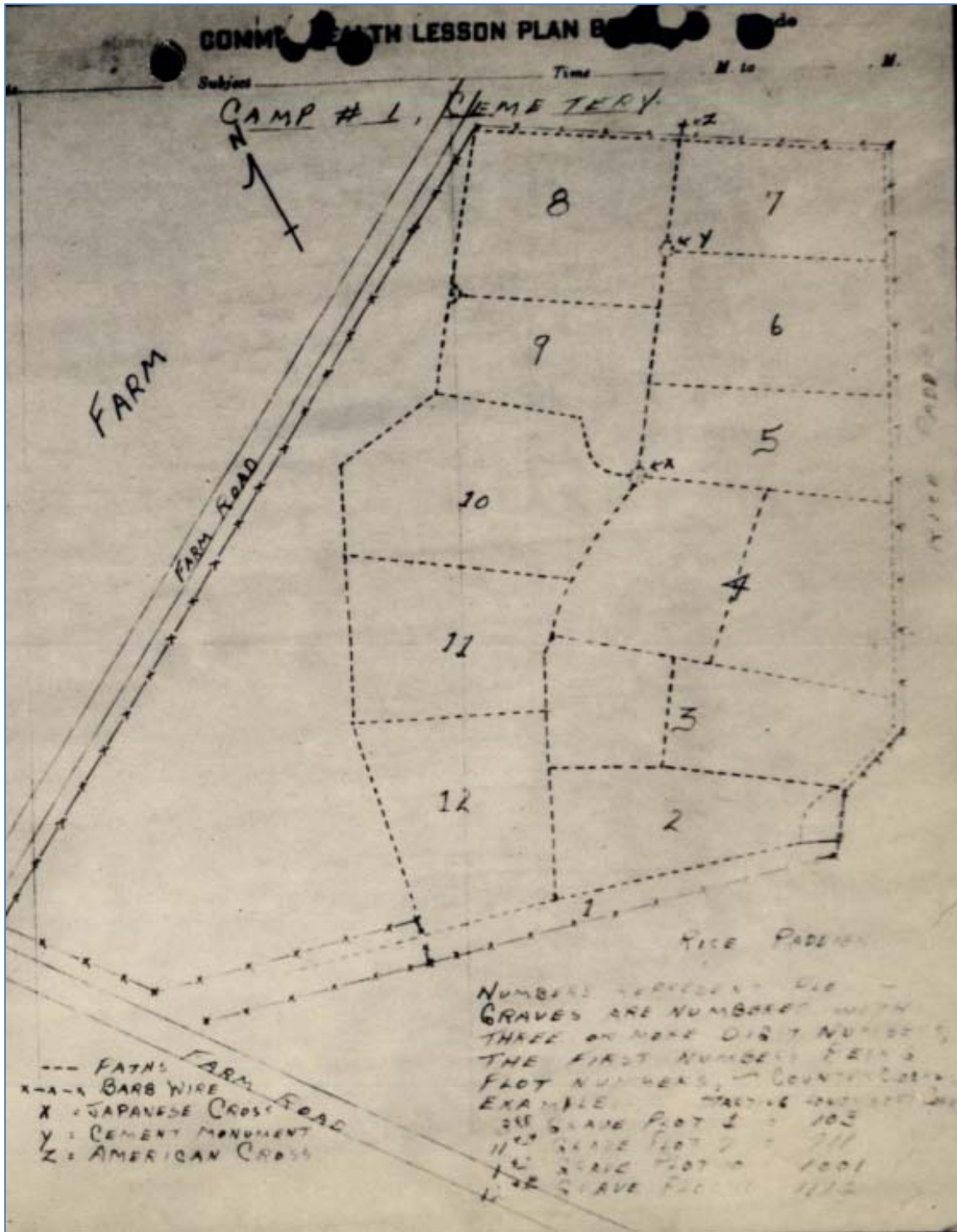


Figure 6. Sketch map of the Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery from Captain Conn’s “558-2 Death Report, Cabanatuan.” This image is taken from a facsimile of the original, but even the original is difficult to read because it was buried at the camp from 1944 until after liberation.



Figure 7. Sketch map of Cabanatuan Camp #1 Cemetery created by the 111th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon in August 1945.

293 FILE		DATA ON REMAINS NOT YET RECOVERED OR IDENTIFIED			REPORTS CONTROL SYMBOL GMO-28
NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) <i>293</i> BABBAIN, Joseph J.		GRADE Sgt		PRESENT SERIAL NUMBER 11 014 157	
ORGANIZATION		RACE W	CREED	FORMER SERIAL NUMBER (If applicable)	
DATE OF DEATH/MIA 11 Jun 42 (5:30PM)	CAUSE OF DEATH		PLACE OF DEATH OR PLACE LAST SEEN IF MIA		
DATE OF FOD					
HEIGHT 5'7"	WEIGHT 125	COLOR EYES	COLOR HAIR BROWN	SHOE SIZE	
DENTAL CHART 25 Sept 40					
UPPER RIGHT X 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1			UPPER LEFT plate)X X 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8		
LOWER RIGHT X X 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9			LOWER LEFT 9 10 11 12 X X X X 13 14 15 16		
X—Extracted		0—Carious		1—Carious Non-Restorable	
FRACTURES AND/OR BREAKS			TATTOOS AND/OR BIRTHMARK		
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION					
Date of Birth: 30 Jan 1915			Associated with grave 420		
Reporting Date: Not reported on Hospital Register			Cabanatuan Roster Line No. 106		
<i>File NAM HARR J.R.W. J.J.G.</i>					
GMOG FORM 371 24 JAN 51		DATE FORWARDED TO FIELD			

Figure 8. Example of a “screening sheet,” or “293 file” created by Cabanatuan Project staff. Excerpted from the IDPF of Sgt Joseph Babbain, 11014157.

1030	Ray, Morris O.	Pvt 93	692458	23	11/29	6100	PM 7/29/42	1030	M.H.	Mrs Elsie G. Brown; 124 LaPalma Ave., Alhambra, Calif.
1031	Reilly, Mary A.	Pvt 21	697274	26	2/27/26	4130	PM 7/29/42	1031	M.H.	G. F. Kable; Pomeroy, Wash.
1032	Reilly, Robert	Pvt 30	698664	21	7/27/29	4130	PM 7/29/42	1032	M.H.	Mrs Nancy Bell; 250 Riverside Ave., West Brighton, N. Y.
1033	Reilly, Harry C.	Corp 41	603697	33	9/2/29	5100	PM 7/29/42	1033	M.H.	J. J. Sloan; 213 Sheridan Ave., Houston, Texas.
1034	Reilly, Edward L.	Pvt 60	471441	19	6/24/22	4120	PM 7/29/42	1034	M.H.	Mrs L. Nelson; 1217 Valley Ave., Baker, Ore.
1035	Reilly, George	Pvt 1st Tank	2272493	23	11/15/20	2115	PM 7/29/42	1035	M.H.	Arthur J. Christy; Rt #6, Box 182, St Joseph, Mo.
1036	Reilly, George	Shic Inf	2874631	21	11/20/20	2145	PM 7/29/42	1036	M.H.	Mrs John Gilliam; Pomeroy, Wash.
1037	Reilly, George	Pvt 31	131111	22	11/20/20	2145	PM 7/29/42	1037	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Kostelko; Rt #2, Hubbard, Ohio.
1038	Reilly, George	Pvt 31	1304379	22	11/20/20	2145	PM 7/29/42	1038	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Kostelko; Rt #2, Hubbard, Ohio.
1039	Reilly, George	Pvt 31	1304386	22	11/20/20	2145	PM 7/29/42	1039	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Kostelko; Rt #2, Hubbard, Ohio.
1040	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1040	M.H.	Mrs O. Simons; Pomeroy, Wash.
1041	Reilly, George	Pvt 31	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1041	M.H.	Mrs Corville Jordan; Pomeroy, Wash.
1042	Reilly, George	Pvt 31	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1042	M.H.	Mrs Claude Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1043	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1043	M.H.	George Durall; Rt #2, Hubbard, Ohio.
1044	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1044	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1045	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1045	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1046	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1046	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1047	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1047	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1048	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1048	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1049	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1049	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1050	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1050	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1051	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1051	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1052	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1052	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1053	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1053	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1054	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1054	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1055	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1055	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1056	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1056	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1057	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1057	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1058	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1058	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1059	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1059	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.
1060	Reilly, George	Corp 40	692111	22	7/2/29	1430	PM 7/29/42	1060	M.H.	Mrs Joseph Stafford; Mrs. W. W. W.

Figure 9. Pages excerpted from Captain Conn's "558-2 Death Report, Cabanatuan. The top page records burials in July 1942, note that, with the exception of one officer buried in a single grave, no grave numbers are listed on the far right side of the sheet. The bottom page, covering burials in August 1942, does contain grave numbers added in after beautification of the cemetery in the spring of 1943.

ROSTER OF BURIALS
U.S. MILITARY CEMETERIES OVERSEAS

Page 17

CEMETERY CODE	PLOT	ROW	GRAVE	NAME	RANK	TIME	UNKNOWN		UNIDENTIFIED		JULY
							DATE	TIME	DATE	TIME	
R	417	4	417	JONES, Carl W.	3	12:30 PM	X-2367	JACOBS, Arlyn C.			3 - 3:15 PM
	415	4		BUSBIN, Earl J. <i>Craig</i>	3	1:00 PM	2368	WOODS, Nevin K.			3 - 5:00 PM
	414	4		KEENER, John R.	3	1:10 PM	2369	CHRISTENSEN, Stanley E.			3 - 5:50 PM
	413	4		GROWER, Henry F. <i>(DIA - Robert Hitchcock?)</i>	3	2:00 PM	2370	MILLER, Irvin			3 - 8:00 PM
	414	4		BALL, John E.	3	3:00 PM	2371	MEYERS, Ford H. <i>NOK Craig</i>			4 - 1:30 AM
	412	4		Mae DONALD, Frederick W.	3	3:10 PM	2372	CONFORTH, Donald H.			4 - 2:00 AM
	410	4		BOEPPLE, Bernard C.	3	4:00 PM	2373	ALEXANDER, Granville W.			4 - 2:00 AM
	411	4		BAPTISTA, Edward J.	3	11:30 PM	2374	JORDON, Henry E. <i>NOK</i>			4 - 2:00 AM
	416	✓		PARKER, John W. <i>Ab. 6 - Hong Kong - Craig</i>	4	12:30 AM	2375	SKINNER, Edward F. <i>NOK</i>			4 - 2:00 AM
	410	✓		BLEDIGER, David R. <i>Ab. 2 - Craig</i>	4	2:00 AM	2376	MONTGOMERY, Rufus L. <i>NOK</i>			4 - 2:00 AM
	410	✓		STIMINGTON, John F. <i>Ab. 2 - Hong Kong - Craig</i>	4	2:00 AM	2377	SPENCER, Robert D. <i>NOK</i>			4 - 3:00 AM
R	412	✓		WHITE, Clyde J.	4	2:30 AM	2378	EMERSON, Ralph W. <i>NOK</i>			4 - 3:00 AM
	412	✓		NORRIS, Walter R. <i>Ab. 2 - Hong Kong - Craig</i>	4	2:30 AM	2379	CHENEY, Oral B. <i>NOK</i>			4 - 4:00 AM
	410	✓		STAHLMAN, Paul W. <i>NOK</i>	4	4:00 AM	2380	MAYHEW, Allen E. <i>NOK</i>			4 - 5:00 AM
R	413	✓		HARRIS, CLYDE L. <i>NOK</i>	4	9:15 AM	2381	CHRISTENSEN, Albert R.			4 - 7:30 AM
R	412	✓		UNES, Donovan L.	4	10:00 AM					
							<i>15 Unknowns = 15 Unidentified</i>				
R	409	5	409	SMITH, Roy L.	4	2:00 PM	2155	THOMPSON, Donald V.			4 - 1:00 PM
R	411	5		LOONEY, Robert K. Jr.	4	3:30 PM	2156	DuBois, Robert E.			4 - 1:30 PM
R	412	5		De MARBY, Ralph F.	4	10:00 PM	2157	BROZOVICH, George			4 - 2:00 PM
R	416	✓		LOFTON, Woodrow P.	5	12:30 AM	2158	COULTER, Adrian J.			4 - 3:00 PM
R	413	✓		FITZGERALD, David F.	5	2:00 AM	2159	MORRIS, Mamie <i>DIA</i>			4 - 4:00 PM
R	410	✓		DONDICH, Alexander	5	2:00 AM	2160	MUNDAY, James C.			4 - 4:10 PM
R	412	✓		LAVIGNE, Richard F. <i>Ab. 2 - Hong Kong - Craig</i>	5	3:00 AM	2161	BUELL, Corbin E.			4 - 4:30 PM
R	411	✓		MISLAY, Michael A.	5	4:00 AM	2162	WILLIAMS, Edwin V.			4 - 4:30 PM
	410	✓		BENNER, Charles A.	5	4:00 AM	2163	BUCKMAN, Oscar A.			4 - 6:00 PM
	416	✓		ZEMBO, Henry J.	5	7:30 AM	2164	MC DERMOTT, BERNARD			4 - 6:00 PM

Figure 10. Page extracted from the Memorial Division Cabanatuan Project’s “Chronological Listing of Deceased by Accountable Burial Period and Grave.” On the left hand side, Cabanatuan Project personnel have associated Cabanatuan deceased buried from 3-5 July 1942 with graves 417 and 409. This association is based upon remains recovered and identified from this grave through the presence of ID media. On the right hand side, the team has listed the unknowns associated with the grave along with the individuals not identified from that grave. Note that they have assigned the unidentified individuals to the unknowns based upon the day and hour of their death. Project personnel would later learn that the burials did not occur in the cemetery on this basis, but rather on the basis of a 24 hour accountable burial period.

Authors: Heather Harris and Lisa Beckinbaugh

HEADQUARTERS
DET "A" 3045TH QUARTERMASTER
GRAVES REGISTRATION COMPANY
APO 75

A TRUE COPY

GEORGE D REDDEN JR
Captain, Infantry

Date: 11 Dec 1945

SUBJECT: Interrogation.

1. Name of deceased: Five (5) Unknown Americans
2. Location of Burial:
 - a. Name of Locality: Abucay Cemetery, Abucay, Bataan
 - b. Coordinates: N 27.4 E 76.3
 - c. Map Reference: Abucay, Bataan Prov N 1420 E 12020/10
Scale 1:50,000 Sheet No 3254 1

3. Method of determining identity:

NONE.

4. Other Information:

These five (5) Unknown Americans were killed in the town of Abucay, Province of Bataan, sometime in January 1942.

I know that the deceased Soldiers buried in the Abucay cemetery, Abucay, Bataan are Americans because I was one of the grave diggers hired by the Americans before the surrender of Bataan.

5. Grave marked with regulation cross: (~~YES~~) ~~XXXXXX~~ NONE

I certify that the foregoing information is true and correct to my best knowledge and belief.

/s/t/ GREGORIO CUNANAN

ABUCAY, BATAAN

Interrogator /s/ ABIE ABRAHAM Address: _____

M/Sgt Abie Abraham

HEADQUARTERS
4TH PLAT 609TH QM GRAVES REGISTRATION CO
APO 75

21 May 1946

SUBJECT: Interrogation.

- 1. Name of Deceased: UNKNOWN AMERICAN (X-166)
- 2. Location of burial:
 - a. Name of Locality: Abucay Churchyard, Abucay, Bataan, Luzon, P.I.
 - b. Coordinates: 27.3 - 81.2
Balanga, P.I., N1440-E12030/10 Scale 1:50,000
 - c. Map Reference: Sheet No. 3255-II
- 3. Method of determining identity:

All these soldiers were brought here and buried in this row sometime in January 1942. All of them were Philippine Scouts, except two, who were American soldiers. The American soldiers who were with those who buried the deceased told me that these soldiers were killed at Abucay Hacienda, where the Americans and Filipinos were holding against the Japanese.

NOTE: This unknown American is one of two American soldiers recovered from the Abucay Churchyard. One of them was identified by dog tag as Capt H. A. McCurdy. Found with this unknown American were one insignia with inscriptions "Verus Et Fidelis Semper", and 1 pistol holster.

- 4. Other information:
 - a. Date of Death: January 1942
 - b. Cause of death: KIA
 - c. Persons who buried remains: American and Filipino soldiers
- 5. Grave marked with regulation cross: (~~Y~~) (No)

I certify that the foregoing information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

/s/ Lorenzo Hernandez
/t/ LORENZO HERNANDEZ
(Signature of Informant)
Abucay, Bataan, Luzon, P.I.
(Address)

/s/ Abie Abraham
/t/ ABIE ABRAHAM M/Sgt USA
(Signature of Interrogator)
4th Plat 609th QM Graves Regis Co, APO 75
(Address)

TRUE COPY:
C H Dorman
C H DORMAN
1st Lt. QMC

Incl #12

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INTRAOFFICE REFERENCE SHEET

DUE, HOUR AND DATE _____

1 NO.	2 FROM—	3 TO—	4 DATE	5 MESSAGE
1	Capt Vogl Repat Br Mem Div	Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div (Info cy furnished Liaison)	16 Oct 50	<p>SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt 0-23761</p> <p>1. Phoned Colonel Clark who was Nininger's commanding officer, concerning Nininger's burial place in the Philippines. Colonel Clark has written that he had personally attended the burial services.</p> <p>2. In Colonel Clark's conversation with me, he said that the remains of Nininger were buried a few feet from the church. This, of course, implied that the remains were buried in the church yard. When I told Colonel Clark that a thorough search, both in and outside of the church yard failed to recover Nininger's remains, he said that it was very possible that the remains had been removed by the Japanese. While Colonel Clark could not give me positive assurance that this occurred, he cited two possible reasons for such a removal. Nininger battled the Japanese heroically, killing quite a number of them before he himself was killed. The Japanese may have decided to dispose of his remains rather than have the Americans use Nininger as an example for heroic action. The other possible reason cited by Colonel Clark, is that when the Japanese captured the area, finding a new grave, they may have decided to search the grave not only to ascertain the casualty but to search for any secret papers or documents which may have been hidden. Colonel Clark emphasized that these were only possibilities since we have been unable to locate the remains. He suggested that we notify Mr. Nininger of their non-recoverability after we have checked all other unknowns recovered from Abucay.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>23 Oct 50</p> <p>1. Phoned Mr. Franklin O. Anders (Lt. Col.) and located him at his residence in Leamington, Ontario, Canada, Phone: 608RL4. I told Colonel Anders that I was phoning him as a result of a quotation in the file of the late Lt. Maynard. I referred to his letter to the father of Lt. Maynard in which he wrote: "In the first four (4) days, we lost your son, Lt. D. Maynard, Lt. Kenneth Wilson, Lt. Compton, Lt. Green, Lt. Nininger and Capt. Meyer (Meier). Father Scecina conducted services at the graves of American officers, killed at Mabatang in the Abucay Church Yard".</p> <p>2. I also advised Colonel Anders that I had phoned Colonel Clark who was commanding officer of the 57th Infantry Regiment at the time Nininger and his fellow officers were killed. Before going into detail concerning the death of Nininger and his fellow officers, Colonel Anders asked me if I knew the story on Colonel Clark. I told him that the only information I knew of Colonel Clark was what appeared in the files of the decedents and that this implied that Colonel Clark departed before the Japanese captured the entire Philippines. He suggested that I look into his 201 File. I asked Colonel Anders why he thought this was necessary. Colonel Anders said Colonel Clark was relieved of his command shortly after the engagement at Mabatang in which Lt. Nininger and his fellow officers lost their lives. He further stated that Colonel Clark did not attend the burial services conducted by Father Scecina in the Abucay Church Yard.</p>

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DUE, HOUR AND DATE _____

1 NO.	2 FROM—	3 TO—	4 DATE	5 MESSAGE
1 Contd	Capt Vogl Repat Br Mem Div	Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div (Info cy furnished Liaison)	23 Oct 50	<p>SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt 0-23761</p> <p>3. The following is in substance, the information furnished by Colonel Anders of incidents and events which transpired during the engagement at Mabatang. Colonel Anders said that Japanese artillery had shelled the entire area and a considerable number of their infantry had infiltrated close to positions held by the 57th Infantry Regiment. The shelling severely damaged some of the buildings in the Abucay Church Yard. The Abucay Church and its adjoining buildings were used as headquarters of the 57th Infantry Regiment. It was during this infiltration and shelling that Lieutenants Nininger, Compton, Green, Wilson and Maynard, lost their lives. The remains of these officers were brought into the church yard cemetery as soon as the action quieted. Father Scecina had graves dug and conducted a brief burial service. Colonel Anders as well as several other officers, were present at the services.</p> <p>4. Colonel Anders believes that one or more of the officers were buried in boxes furnished by the Quartermaster and that the rest were laid in the ground with only a blanket around them. He also remembers that where identification tags were found on a decedent, one had been removed and turned over to the medics; the other was inserted into the mouth of the decedent. Colonel Anders does not know whether burial reports were prepared. All matters pertaining to the burial were left in the hands of Father Scecina who died while a prisoner of the Japanese.</p> <p>5. Colonel Anders brought up the fact that the church yard was shelled by both Japanese and American forces. Particularly heavy shelling was given the church and its surrounding area by the Americans after the location was abandoned to the Japanese. Information was received that the Japanese were using it as their headquarters and Anders believes that as a result of shelling by American forces, some of the graves may have been destroyed and the remains scattered.</p> <p>6. Colonel Anders also brought up the matter of a searching of the graves after the Japanese had captured Abucay. He said that our own forces many times searched mounds in graveyards since the Japanese in a number of instances stored arms and ammunition in grave sites. He said that perhaps the Japanese believed that we may have used graves as a storage place for ammunition and decided to dig grave sites and through such an operation, the remains became lost.</p> <p>7. I told Colonel Anders of the fourteen (14) graves we found on the outside of the church wall and that an examination of these remains indicated two (2) were Americans and twelve (12) Filipinos. I told him one grave was that of Lt. McCurdy, the other American having no identifying characteristics, was still designated as an unknown. Colonel Anders asked me to read him the names of the Filipinos we identified we found outside the wall. I read the names to him and he said he knew them all. He told me that the individual listed as Castro should be Castro Mania.</p>

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1 NO.	2 FROM—	3 TO—	4 DATE	5 MESSAGE
1	Capt Vogl Contd Repat Br Mem Div	Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div (Info cy furnished Liaison)	23 Oct 50	SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt 0-23761 8. I asked whether it was possible that these five (5) officer whose remains have not been recovered could have been buried on the outside of the church yard wall. He said to the best of his memory, the men were buried in the church yard proper; however,
				if a re-burial during Japanese occupation occurred, the remains may have been re-interred outside of the church yard. Colonel Anders said this was merely a supposition and should not be accepted as a fact. it was very apparent that he knew and recalled more about the events subsequent to the death of these officers than did Colonel Clark. Colonel Clark appeared hesitant in giving information, always referring me to letters he sent the AG or next of kin. On the other hand, Colonel Anders tried to assist in every way possible by voluntary information so that we could have a complete understanding of what transpired immediately after these officers were killed. He said he will make himself available to furnish any additional information which we may not have discussed at this time. In addition, he suggested that I communicate with Lt. Colonel Johnson and Lt. Colonel Olson for their version of the events which took place after Lt. Nininger and his fellow officers were killed.
			24 Oct	*** 1. Major John E. Olson, 022125, 5025 Student Detachment, Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas (Phone 23234), confirmed to a general extent the information furnished by Lt. Colonel Anders. However, he was more specific on the battle action which took the lives of Lt. Nininger and his fellow officers.
				2. Major Olson said he did not attend the interment service for Nininger or any other officers killed in the Mabatang engagement. He said he remembers Nininger's death and that he was informed that Nininger's as well as several other officer's remains were recovered and buried in or near the Abucay Church Yard. He never had time to visit any graves but he heard that Anders and Captain Garnet P. Francis, dental officer, were with Chaplain Scecina when the remains were buried.
				3. Major Olson asked me what remains we recovered nearby or in the church yard at Abucay. He said he desired this information to refresh his memory on the various officers who were killed in the Matabang engagement. I started off by giving him the name of Lt. McCurdy and then mentioned Lt. Cheney. Here Major Olson interrupted. He said that Cheney could not have been interred in or nearby the Abucay Church Yard since he was killed long after the town of Abucay was abandoned to the Japanese.

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1 NO.	2 FROM—	3 TO—	4 DATE	5 MESSAGE
1 Contd	Capt Vogl Repat Br Mem Div	Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div (Info cy furnished Liaison)	24 Oct 50	<p>SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt 0-23761</p> <p>4. I told Major Olson that I was referring to the names of all officers reported as buried and was not limiting myself to those interred in or near the church yard.</p> <p>5. Major Olson said that Cheaney was not killed in the Matabang engagement but was KIA off the west coast near the town of Agloloma. This occurred 30 January 1942, at least ten (10) days after Abucay had been evacuated. He said Lt. Cheaney's platoon had been withdrawn on or about 20 January 1942, to be attached to the 3rd Battalion. This battalion was endeavoring to confine the Japanese who had landed on the west coast.</p> <p>6. He said it was during an assault on Japanese positions at Quinauan Pt. when Lt. Cheaney was killed and his remains were taken to Mariveles Cemetery for interment. Major Olson continued that the arrangements for burial in Mariveles was made or supervised by Capt. Anthony who was Cheaney's Commanding Officer.</p> <p>7. The rest of the discussion related to positions of the 57th Regiment after the fall of Abucay. Olson said that they fell back to a line about one mile, south of Balanga. This was on or about 22 January 1942. On or about 30 January 1942, the 57th Regiment was somewhat broken up and many of its units were sent to west coastal areas to support troops endeavoring to prevent Japanese landings.</p> <p>8. He suggested, I communicate with Major Sanders, Regimental Personnel Officer as well as Capt. Anthony.</p> <p>NOTE: The comment of Major Olson concerning Lt. Cheaney, first brought out the possibility that the remains now interred in the cemetery at West Point, may not be those of this decedent. The 293 file of Lt. Cheaney, indicates his remains were recovered from the Abucay Church Yard twelve paces to the right of the south center door of this church. The location of the alleged grave was obtained from a copy of a letter Mr. Cheaney, the father, wrote to Congressman Nixon on 4 January 1948. In this letter, Mr. Cheaney said he met Colonel Clark, and after much talking Colonel Clark said Cheaney was buried "twelve steps right from the south center door".</p> <p>On the basis of this information, a cable was sent the overseas Command, requesting them to investigate. The overseas Command located remains twelve steps from the door and the remains were designated as those of Lt. Cheaney. The report indicates: No identifying clue recovered with remains.</p> <p>Since Lt. Cheaney was killed on 30 January 1942, approximately 30 miles away from Abucay, it is evident that the remains of Lt. Cheaney could not have been buried in the Abucay Church Yard, which had been lost to the Japanese on or about 21 January 1942.</p>

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1 NO.	2 FROM—	3 TO—	4 DATE	5 MESSAGE
Continued				
1	Capt Vogl Repat Br Mem Div	Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div (Info cy furnished Liaison)	25 Oct 50	SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt O-23761 1. Phoned Major Cecil M. Sanders and located him in Fort Benning, Georgia, where he is assigned as an instructor at the Infantry School (he can be reached at Fort Benning 3462). 2. Major Sanders' report on events which transpired during and subsequent to the engagement in Matabang varies to a certain degree with the information furnished by Colonel Anders. Sanders was regimental S-1 and as such had direct charge of the personnel records. In the course of the Matabang engagement he performed actual combat duty since the casualties among officers were unusually heavy and he was called to direct the activities of detached companies and platoons. 3. The following, in substance, is the information I obtained from Major Sanders. The Abucay Church and its adjoining building had not been selected nor had been in use as regimental headquarters before the start of the Matabang battle. It was after the Japanese had infiltrated near American positions on the outskirts of Abucay that headquarters was set up at Abucay Church. Lts. Nininger, Compton, Green, Wilson and Maynard were holding positions on the outskirts of Abucay when the Japanese penetrated to a point where they either had to be driven out or the town of Abucay evacuated. Lt. Nininger was killed after he routed the Japanese who had infiltrated close to the battle ^{Abucay Church} area. His heroic effort won for him the first Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II. The remains of Lt. Nininger were brought back to the Church Yard and turned over to Father Scecina who had assumed charge of burying all remains. Lt. Nininger had been killed on 12 January 1942 about nine o'clock in the morning. 4. Lt. Green was killed while in a fox hole as a result of Japanese mortar shells. Lt. Compton, who was in the fox hole with Lt. Green, managed to get out and assume command of the platoon. Fifteen minutes later Lt. Compton was killed as he was leading the platoon in an attack on Japanese positions in an endeavor to silence the Japanese mortar batteries. 5. Major Sanders said that he was quite certain "that the remains of Compton were never recovered." With respect to Lt. Green he made the following remark, "Although I know that the body was badly cut up, I believe someone told me that they took the body out of the fox hole and delivered it to the Church Yard. However, my memory is not clear on this and I don't want you to look upon this as official." Compton and Green had been killed in the afternoon of 12 January 1942. 6. Lt. Wilson was killed late in the afternoon of 12 Jan 42 while endeavoring to bring some wounded back to the temporary hospital set up in Abucay. He evidently had taken a jeep and managed to load a couple of wounded boys when he himself was hit. The Japanese machine gun almost severed his body at his waist. This statement by Maj. Sanders confirms the previous information which was obtained on Wilson from a sergeant in Wilson's platoon.

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Continued				
1	Capt Vogl Repat Br Mem Div	Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div (Info cy furnished Liaison)	25 Oct 50	SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt O-23761
				<p>7. With respect to Lt. Maynard, Maj. Sanders did not recall exactly how he was killed but he remembers that Maynard's body was brought to a place near the Abucay Church and turned over to Father Scecina. Maynard was also killed on 12 Jan 42. In connection</p>
				<p>with the above information Maj. Sanders said that it is possible that after so many years he may have incidents pertaining to one or more of these officers confused with what happened to another; however, he feels reasonable sure that in general the information he gave me reflects the events which happened on 12 Jan 42.</p>
				<p>8. Maj. Sanders then asked me if we had recovered the remains of Lts. McCurdy and Cheaney. I told him that Lt. McCurdy's remains had been found on the outskirts of the south wall of the Church Yard. Realizing that there was a question on the recovery of Cheaney's remains, I told him that I did not have the file at hand but believed that the remains had been recovered. Maj. Sanders then asked me whether I knew where Cheaney had been killed. I told him that I believed it was at Agloloma Point. He said this was correct and it was either the 30th or 31st of Jan 42. He then suggested that, in the event we did not recovery Cheaney's remains, we communicate with Capt. Eugene H. Anthony who was Cheaney's commander. He told me that Capt. Anthony had developed tuberculosis while a prisoner of war and has been retired for physical disability. I told Maj. Sanders that I would communicate with Capt. Anthony not only to discuss Cheaney, but also for any other information he may have concerning the burial of Nininger, Compton, Green, Wilson and Maynard. Maj. Sanders asked me about Capt. Meier. I told him we had recovered the remains which were buried in Mariveles Cemetery approximately 25 miles from Abucay.</p>
				<p>9. Maj. Sanders said that we should communicate with ^{both} either Lt. Col. Ernest Wermitz ^{NIG} regimental surgeon, and Maj. Garnet P. Francis, a dental officer. He said that actually Maj. Francis knew more about burials than Col. Wermitz ^{and} since the surgeon seemed to develop "battle fatigue" after the first Japanese shell hit in Abucay. It was Maj. Francis who more or less performed the emergency surgical work in the field. Maj. Francis also assisted in recovering remains and helping Father Scecina. Maj. Sanders feels quite certain that Maj. Francis attended the interments in Abucay Church Yard.</p>
				<p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p>
				<p>1. In order to clarify certain discrepancies ^{among} the information furnished by Col. Anders, Maj. Sanders and Maj. Olsen, I again phoned Col. Anders to ascertain whether he was certain that the remains of all five officers (Nininger, Compton, Green, Wilson and Maynard) were buried side by side in the Church Yard at Abucay. Col. Anders said that after a review of what he had previously told me he expressed concern lest I believe that they were all buried side by side. He said that, if he had given me that impression, it was not correct. He definitely remembers that Nininger and Maynard were buried close together. He is not sure whether Compton's remains were recovered but remembers hearing a report that there wasn't much of him left. He feels reasonably sure that Wilson was buried in or near the Church Yard and that Green's body was recovered.</p>

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1 NO.	2 FROM—	3 TO—	4 DATE	5 MESSAGE
Continued				
1	Capt Vogl Repat Br Mem Div	Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div (Info cy furnished Liaison)	25 Oct 50	<p>SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt O-23761</p> <p>2. Col. Anders made this final statement: "I was present at the interment of Lt. Nininger's remains. With me at the time was Maj. Francis, the dental officer. The Blessing of the grave was conducted by Father Scecina. I also believe I saw or attended the interment of Lt. Maynard. I did not attend any interments of Lt. Wilson, Lt. Green or Lt. Compton although I believe that Lt. Wilson and Lt. Green were buried in or near the Church Yard since we had definite information of the recovery of those remains. Information on Lt. Compton was only hearsay and I wish to correct any erroneous impression given by me previously which may have indicated that Lt. Compton was buried at Abucay.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>1. Phoned Capt. Eugene H. Anthony and located him at 1374 St. Paul Street, Apartment 5, Denver, Colorado (telephone Florida 0466). Capt. Anthony was Lt. Cheaney's immediate commanding officer and was in the engagements at Matabang and Agloloma Point.</p> <p>2. I asked Capt. Anthony numerous questions concerning the engagement at Matabang. The Captain confirmed, in substance, what has been previously furnished by Col. Anders, Maj. Olson and Maj. Sanders. He remembers hearing of the deaths of Nininger, Compton, Green, Wilson and Maynard but did not know where their remains were interred. He had only hearsay information on burials at Abucay.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">was</p> <p>3. Capt. Anthony said that withdrawal from Abucay/on or about 20 Jan 42 and that the regiment moved to its second line of defense about a mile south of the town of Balanga. His company was withdrawn on or about 25 Jan from the positions south of Balanga and transferred by truck to the area near Agloloma Point to reinforce the third Platoon ^{Platoon} which was trying to confine the Japanese landings at Quinauan Point. On or about the 30th of Jan, Lt. Cheaney, one of Capt. Anthony's officers, led an attack on Japanese positions and was killed after he had gone forward approximately 100 yards. The Japanese counterattacked and drove the Americans back several hundred yards. It was approximately 7 or 8 days later when the Americans again recovered the lost ground and also the remains of Lt. Cheaney.</p> <p>4. Capt. Anthony saw Lt. Cheaney's body which ^{now bloated,} was blown up, Standing ^{NEAR THE BODY} with him was a 2d Lt. who was a GRO. He asked the Lt. where the remains of his men would be taken and the Lt. replied that Lt. Cheaney and all the rest would be interred in Mariveles Cemetery.</p> <p>5. Capt. Anthony said that he never visited Mariveles Cemetery since his unit was continually in action until the surrender. I brought to his attention a statement by Col. Clark to the effect that he had written the parents of Lt. Cheaney that his remains were buried in Abucay Church Yard. Capt. Anthony said that this could not be possible since the recovery of Cheaney's remains was made in the early part of February and that Abucay had long since been occupied by the Japanese forces.</p> <p>6. Capt. Anthony said he would be very happy to provide additional information should we need his services. He told me that he did not write the family of Lt. Cheaney</p>

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REV 1 APR 48~~CONFIDENTIAL SECRET~~OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL OF THE ARMY
INTRAOFFICE REFERENCE SHEET

DUE, HOUR AND DATE _____

1 NO.	2 FROM—	3 TO—	4 DATE	5 MESSAGE
Continued				
1	Capt Vogl Repat Br Mem Div	Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div (Info cy furnished Liaison)	25 Oct 50	SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt O-23761
				since he felt any letter of his would only cause additional grief to the next of kin.

			27 Oct 50	1. Phoned Colonel Edmund J. Lilly, Jr. who was Executive Officer of the 57th Infantry Regiment at the time Nininger and his fellow officers were killed. Colonel Lilly is presently stationed at Headquarters, 4th Army, Ft. Sam Houston, Texas.
Compton, Green,	Wilson and Maynard			2. Colonel Lilly recalled the death of Nininger, but had no recollection of attending any burial services for these men. He also recalled circumstances in connection with the death of Lt. Cheaney and suggested, I get in touch with Graves Registration Officer, Lt. Fred W. Koenig. It was Koenig, accompanied by Captain Anthony who recovered the remains of Lt. Cheaney about seven (7) days after Cheaney was killed near Agloloma.
and suggested,	I get in touch with			3. Colonel Lilly said he would send me a letter, giving me whatever information he can gather from the few records he was able to maintain.
was Koenig,	accompanied by			NOTE: Letter from Colonel Lilly was received, 30 October 1950 and is attached hereto.
seven (7) days	after Cheaney was			***
			30 Oct 50	1. Phoned Mr. Fred W. Koenig who was a Graves Registration Officer, assigned to the 45th Infantry Regiment during the battle at Quinauan Point, Providence of Bataan, Philippine Islands in 1942. Lt. Koenig recovered the remains of Lt. Ira B. Cheaney on or about 7 February 1942.
information. Lt. Cheaney	was killed on or about			2. Mr. Koenig gave me in substance the following information. Lt. Cheaney was killed on or about 30 January 1942, while leading his platoon in an assault on Japanese positions near Quinauan Point. Japanese fire prevented the recovery of his body until about 7 February 1942. When Koenig found the remains of Lt. Cheaney, he called Cheaney's immediate superior, Capt. Eugene H. Anthony and they both viewed his bloated body. Capt. Anthony wanted to know where the remains were to be interred. Lt. Koenig told him that Cheaney as well as others killed in this engagement, would be taken to Mariveles Cemetery.
Cemetery where	he supervised the			3. Lt. Koenig took the remains to Mariveles Cemetery where he supervised the interment of Lt. Cheaney on or about 8 February 1942. Mr. Koenig told me there were several hundred buried in Mariveles Cemetery from the

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1 NO.	2 FROM—	3 TO—	4 DATE	5 MESSAGE
1 contd	Capt Vogl Repat Br Mem Div	Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div (Info cy furnished Liaison)	30 Oct 50	<p>SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt 0-23761</p> <p>beginning of the war up until the surrender of Bataan. Mr. Koenig also informed me that he supervised the burials in the cemetery near hospital #2 and after his capture by the Japanese, was in charge of burials at O'Donnell Cemetery.</p> <p>4. Mr. Koenig said he would be available for whatever further need we may have of his services. He can be reached in Ashgrove, Missouri, Phone: 76.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>log</i> VOGL 54276</p>
2	Capt Vogl Repat Br Mem Div	Chief Mem Div Thru: Ident Br Ident Sec Mem Div	31 Oct 50	<p>SUBJECT: Nininger, Alexander R. 2/Lt 0-23761</p> <p>1. The above reports of telephone conversations with Colonel Clark, Lt. Colonel Anders, Major Olson, Major Sanders, Captain Anthony, Major Yeager, Colonel Lilly and Lt. Koenig, are submitted as information in connection with original interments in Abucay and Mariveles Cemeteries, Providence of Bataan, Philippine Islands.</p> <p>2. It is concluded from information obtained in these phone conversations, that the remains of Lt. Cheaney were interred in the cemetery at Mariveles and not at Abucay. It is also, the opinion of the undersigned that the remains of Nininger, Compton, Green, and Wilson may have been lost as a result of the shelling of Abucay.</p> <p>3. In view of the information furnished next of kin of Nininger, Compton, Green, Wilson, Maynard and Cheaney, by Colonel Clark, it is believed advisable that a personal visit be made to those next of kin in cases where the remains are determined non-recoverable. It is also deemed advisable to personally contact Colonel Lilly, Captain Anthony, Colonel Clark and Major Olson, to explain our findings of "non-recoverability" so that they can guide themselves in future correspondence they may have with next of kin.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>log</i> VOGL 54276</p>

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