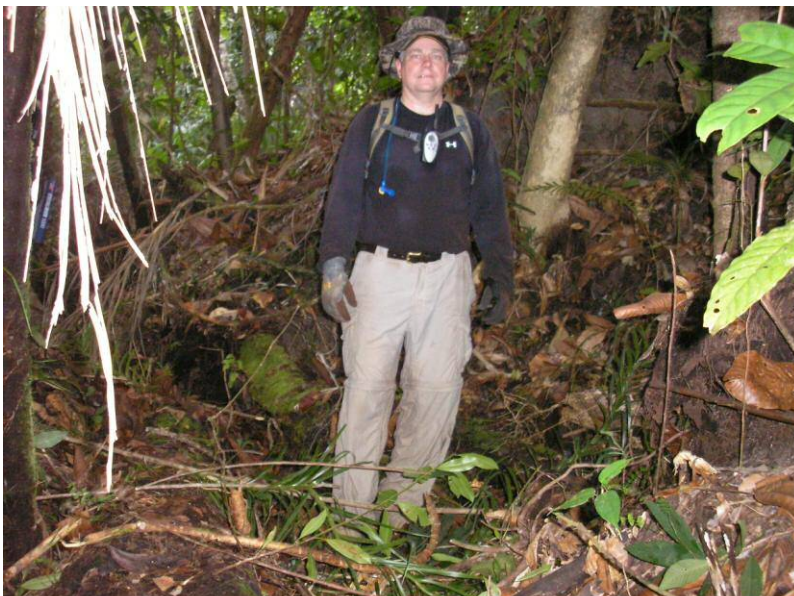


Beyond meeting with the BAC, courtesy calls were made with Chief of Staff Soaladaob in the Office of the President, Airai State Office, Ngatpang State Office, Koror State Office, and the US Civic Action Team. The BentProp Team Leader had the privilege also to meet with the President of Palau at the end of the mission.

Attachments:

1. REVISIT/NEW FINDINGS (For P-MAN XI): Return Target-1 (RT-1, MIA/POWs grave sites, Ngatpang): INTRODUCTION: Mark Swank has been a member of the BentProp Project for several years now. Living in the DC area, he has up to P-MAN XI been a very active member concentrating on assisting the field teams through archival research at NARA and related archives.

About three years ago, Mark decided that a fresh look was needed in our search, already ten years in progress, for the USAAF POWs known to be executed in the Ngatpang State area in September 1944 just before the Peleliu invasion. Although a great deal of effort had been placed into the review of war crimes records and photographs, Mark became convinced that we had not correctly analyzed the available data. We listened. Over the past two years, Mark built up a case that we needed to look considerably south of where we had seriously searched in the past. Although BentProp teams had been in some of the areas of his new interest during prior missions, he felt that we needed a new mission to confirm his analysis. Mark took leadership of this land mission. We followed. Mark's briefing once we were in Palau would have made any leader proud – it was an amazingly detailed summary of what we needed to do and why: a truly remarkable presentation. And that was only the beginning. The BentProp Project team, having considered all the resultant data from archival sources and our field search, supports Mark and his conclusions that we have very likely located the area where the three POWs were re-buried after their cremation. It's all about data: here is Mark's report, which has been modified for sharing non-confidentially on BentProp website.



Mark Swank – a very happy guy truly in his element. I suspect few people back home figure Mark to be a jungle kind of guy, but the denser and the muddier it got, the more he seemed to like it. Almost always deep in thought, this was a hard picture to get - Katie caught him here in one of his cleaner moments.
© K. Rasdorf, 2009

P-MAN XI

POW Mission Report

Analysis To Support An Official Recovery Operation
Non-confidential version

Mission Dates: February 19, 2009 thru March 3, 2009

Mark A. Swank
October 31, 2009



BENTPROP PROJECT
www.BentProp.org

Includes a compilation of historical background data and research documents used to produce a theory for developing a mission plan to locate the execution and final burial location of American POWs on the island of Babelthup, Republic of Palau.

Preface

Co-workers, friends and family may not fully understand what drives a person to commit their time and resources to such a task as searching for Americans lost during our nation's past wars. No words can possibly express the sense of purpose one feels when you are standing in the middle of a jungle in a foreign country, and you know why you are there. While almost 65 years have passed since the end of World War II, family, friends, and comrades in arms continue to remember and wait patiently for the return of lost loved ones.

In preparing this report, the author has made every attempt to provide as much information as possible used during the research phase in preparing for P-MAN XI. While the primary intent of this report is to document the POW Mission portion of P-MAN XI from each of the phases (research, planning and implementation), it is also intended to detail the factual information and compelling evidence so that it might be incorporated by the Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) in their Investigation and Analysis to ultimately justify a Recovery Mission to Palau.

"The mission of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of the nation's past conflicts."

Acknowledgements

This report could not have been completed without the full support of all BentProp team members, support staff and archivists at the US National Archives, the various agencies of the Palauan Government and most certainly the kind and generous people of Palau who were always willing to provide support and historical background data. It also goes without saying that this report could not have been written without the many years of research, investigative and on-ground work by previous P-MAN missions. Lastly, I'd like to recognize the following BentProp team members and guests who participated either directly or indirectly in P-MAN XI and the POW Mission.

Warren Bruce	CA	Captain, U.S. Marines, VMF-121
Flip Colmer	MI	Airline Captain
Wil Hylton	VA	Author
Reid Joyce	Valencia, PA	Aeronautical and Human-Factors Consultant
Jon Klukas	Honolulu, HI	Master Diver, U.S. Navy, MDSU-1
Jolie Liston	Koror, Palau	Archeologist
Joe Maldangesang	Koror, Palau	Master Guide
Molly A. Osborne	Tucson, AZ	Renal Dietitian
Katherine Rasdorf	VA	V.P. Cashwell Technologies
Patrick Scannon	San Francisco, CA	Chief Medical Officer, XOMA, Ltd.
Paul Schwimmer	MI	Surveyor
Rick Smith	WA	Manager, Microsoft Corporation
James Woomer	PA	CRNA, Researcher
Paul C. Wotus	Honolulu, HI	1 Class Diver, U.S. Navy, MDSU-1

NOTE: Cited references are left in within this text to provide an understanding of the thoroughness of the background research. All such references are available at the Nationals Archives and Record Administration, College Station, MD.

Historical Background Information

On 7 September 1945, after the surrender of Japanese forces on Palau, Marine Brigadier General Ford O. ROGERS, Commanding Officer, American Forces, Peleliu, prepared and delivered a message¹ to Commanding Officer, Japanese Forces, Palaus. In that message, General ROGERS directed Japanese officials to prepare a detailed list of all American, British, Dutch, New Zealand, Chinese and Australian prisoners that had been in the Palaus since the 14th (TERU) Division arrived in April 1944 to include those in trans-shipment status from outlying areas. On 19 September 1945, Japanese officials responded with a report (Official Japanese POW Report)² that included the requested information and acknowledged that ten US Prisoners of War were captured by the Japanese on both Yap and Palau.

In the case of each of the prisoners, Japanese officials stated that after interrogations were completed, the prisoners were placed on transport ships with the intent of being sent to Philippine Prisoner of War camps. Other than personal statements by those involved in the guarding or transporting of the prisoners, no documented evidence was ever discovered by American investigators that could verify that the POWs had actually been transported off of Palau. Having exhausted all means of searching for the POWs, American authorities closed the cases in 1948.

In a sworn statement³ given on 25 September 1947 by Lieutenant Colonel Toshihiko YAJIMA, a Staff Intelligence Officer for the 14th Division, it became known that many, if not all of the captured POWs were never transported off of the Palau Islands and in several of the cases it was acknowledged by YAJIMA that the POWs were indeed executed. A plan was put in place by Japanese authorities to conceal these executions by falsely stating that the POWs had been transported off of Palau with a final destination being the Philippines. Other than three American aviators known to have been executed, no evidence has been found to date that would indicate that American authorities investigated the possible execution of all of the remaining POWs by the Japanese.

The story of these executed POWs would remain only a footnote in the history of World War II until in April 1999 when Dr. Donald Shuster, University of Guam, discovered the Guam War Crimes trial transcripts at the US National Archives and Records Administration. Dr. Shuster started a dialogue with Father Felix Yaoch, S.J. Superior of the Koror Sacred Heart Church and Mission and Dr Patrick Scannon, BentProp Project, that has led to over 10 years of research in finding those executed by the Japanese.

Beginning in October 2000, BentProp has worked closely with Dr. Shuster and members of U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI) in searching for the missing POWs. Through the Guam War Crimes trial transcripts it was known that at least fourteen individuals were executed by members of the Japanese Kempei-tai in the Gasupan area of Babelthuap Island. In 2000 there was limited documentary evidence available to identify the location of the executions. With only the Guam War Crimes trial transcripts and personal interviews with local Palauan's to work with, Dr. Shuster produced enough evidence to justify a CILHI recovery mission. Based on two key hand-drawn maps that were part of the trial transcripts, excavations were performed by CILHI in October 2000 at five different sites on Gasupan Hill, with negative results.

During War Crimes testimony it became known that on the last day of the war, August 15, 1945, Japanese soldiers dug up the remains of those executed, burned them and subsequently reburied the remaining bones nearby⁴. Based on additional information gathered by Dr. Shuster during an interview with

¹ 450907_Palaus_Commander.pdf

² 450919_Japanese_Report.pdf

³ 470925_Yajima_Statement.pdf

⁴ 471209_Iwamoto_Statement2.pdf, Undated_Kokubo_Statement.pdf

Katarina Katosang, a local Palauan whose memory closely matched that of the War Crimes Testimony, CILHI made a second search on Gasupan Hill in November 2001 and located an area that appeared to be consistent with the exhumation site of the executed prisoners. At that time, members of CILHI performed only a surface search of the targeted area leaving open the possibility for further exploration should new leads become available.

Then, in 2004 CILHI (now known as JPAC) returned to Palau to investigate two new crash sites discovered by BentProp in addition to completing another search of the Gasupan Hill area for the execution site of American POWs. An area was identified and scraped to search for depressions indicative of man-made graves. That search proved negative as well.

BentProp continued to investigate these executions over the next 4 years through local Palauan interviews, researching the Japanese National Archives and continued research at NARA. Then, in November 2008, members of BentProp were able to identify and locate at the U.S. National Archives (NARA) located in College Park, Maryland, the evidence files for each of the War Crimes Cases. This find produced over 250 records of interviews, statements and over 20 new hand-drawn maps of Kempei-tai headquarters, the Gasupan area road infrastructure and execution site details. BentProp spent the next three months exhaustively reviewing these documents and comparing period photos (July 1944) to current photos (Google Earth) to formulate theories on where the executions occurred. Plans were developed on how to investigate the new documentary evidence with the intention of executing those plans during the upcoming P-MAN XI mission. Based on this newly found evidence, a specific portion of the P-MAN XI mission was dedicated strictly to the search for the execution site of the POWs. This report covers that portion of the P-MAN XI mission.

Details of Known Captured POWs

In the official Japanese documented response to Brigadier General F.O. ROGERS request for information on POWs, the Japanese reported the capture of ten American POWs and provided detailed information on each of these POWs based on their interrogations. It is worth noting that the subject of the American translation of the Japanese response to General ROGERS was titled "EXCERPTS FROM JAPANESE REPORT DATED 19 SEPTEMBER 1945". The Japanese titled one section of the response "7 US Prisoners of War" while they actually provided details on ten POWs. The last three POWs mentioned were not given their own "Supplement" as the previous seven had, but rather appeared to be tacked onto the end of the previous group of POWs with paragraph numbering being out of sequence.

To date, the original initial record of communications between the Japanese Forces on Palau and the American Forces on Peleliu have not yet been found which could explain this discrepancy. Further investigation and the locating of these original documents could provide additional details about the capture of American POWs.

The following details combine both Japanese-provided as well as US-known details from U.S. Army Air Force (AAF) and Navy Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) submarine mission reports for each of the four groups of acknowledged captured POWs.

I. Captured AAF Crew of B-24-J Liberator #44-40571

According SCAP report No. 2580⁵, on 10 August 1944 at approximately 1225K a B-24-J Liberator bomber (#44-40571) was shot down while on a bombing mission of enemy targets near Yaptown, on the island of Yap within the Caroline Islands group. The aircraft had apparently broken up from an explosion or fire within the bomb bay area. Two parachutes were seen by members of other aircraft in the formation as landing in enemy waters near the crash site.

In the Official Japanese POW Report, SSgt. MOONEY, Reynold B. and Sgt. GILBERT, Hilary Jr. were said to have bailed out of their B-24 aircraft near the mouth of the Yap Harbor and were picked up by an

⁵ 470612_Gilbert_Mooney_SCAP_Report.pdf

Army unit. They were subsequently placed on Special Submarine Chaser #27 on 11 August 1944 at YAP for transfer to Palau. The POWs arrived on Palau 13 August 1944 and were sent for interrogations to the South Seas Kempei-tai located in Gasupan on the island of Babelthuap. On 19 August 1944 the two prisoners were placed on the Cruiser KINU for transport to Manila via Cebu.

Table 1 POW Crew of B-24-J Liberator #44-40571

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Serial #</u>	<u>Position</u>
MOONEY, Reynold B.	SSGT	33427402	Gunner
GILBERT, Hilary Jr.	SGT	33525524	Photographer

In Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA's statement dated 25 September 1947, he states in Paragraph (4) that two American aviators, along with three submarine crewmembers, were sent from YAP to Palau around July 1944 (assuming this refers to MOONEY and GILBERT, the actual date would have been in August 1944) and placed under the direction of the South Seas Kempei-tai. YAJIMA was ordered by Chief of Staff Colonel TADA to go to the Gasupan Kempei-tai headquarters to perform an interrogation of the POWs. After completing the investigation he stated that he believed that the prisoners were handed over to the Navy. In Paragraph 8(E) of his statement YAJIMA states the following:

"Chief of Staff TADA decided that we would testify falsely concerning the incidents related in Paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) to the effect that they were all sent to Davao and make frank admissions concerning Paragraph (7). He gave orders to Kempeitai Commander MIYAZAKI and myself to make up those reports. These were the same as the documents presented to the American forces."

This clearly indicates that Colonel TADA wanted nearly all original testimony to American forces to be falsified concerning the incidents related to the events in Paragraphs (3), (4) and (5) of YAJIMA's statement. Knowing this, a strong case could be made that MOONEY and GILBERT were never transferred off of Palau and were executed either by the Kempei-tai or by members of the 45th Naval Guard Unit.

In Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP) Investigation Division Report No. 2580⁶, dated 28 May 1948, and completed by Capt. TRACY, Norman S., Infantry, the case for the search for survivors of the #44-40571 crash, SSgt MOONEY and Sgt GILBERT, was officially closed based on a previous SCAP report from Capt. GILL, William R., Infantry, dated 12 June 1947. The foundation for Capt. GILL's report was based on an investigation conducted by Commander Marianas in which no records of the Cruiser KINU could be found. Evidence has yet to be found that Capt GILL knew of YAJIMA's statement concerning the false statement of prisoner transfers off of Palau.

No record of MOONEY and GILBERT can be found after 2 September 1944.

//. Captured Crew of Navy Underwater Demolition Team 10

According to mission report⁷ of the USS BURRFISH, on 18 August 1944 at approximately 2006 hrs five Navy Underwater Demolition Team 10 members were launched via a rubber raft from the submarine USS BURRFISH for a reconnaissance mission of the Tomil Harbor area of Yap. On 19 August 1944 at 0300 the submarine resurfaced and picked up only two members of the team. Missing and presumed captured were CGM Howard L. ROEDER, SPA1 John C. MACMAHON and QM1 Robert A BLACK Jr.

⁶ 480528_Gilbert_Mooney_SCAP_Report.pdf

⁷ 440824_USS_Burrfish_Report.pdf



UDT-10 Members at Peleliu, August 1944 L-R:
CPO Howard "Red" Roeder (KIA), Emmet L. Carpenter,
Bob Black (KIA), John MacMahon (KIA) and CPO Ball.
Source: <http://www.mividaloca.biz/photoalbum.htm>

According to the Official Japanese POW Report, ROEDER, MACMAHON and BLACK were captured by Army personnel near the TOMIRU Lighthouse after being unable to locate their submarine. On 23 August 1944 the three prisoners were placed on Special Subchaser #27 at Yap for transfer to Palau. On 2 September 1944 the three prisoners were placed on the Special Submarine Chaser URUPPU MARU for transport to Davao.

Table 2 POW Crew of Underwater Demolition Team 10

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Serial #</u>
ROEDER, Howard L.	CGM	6801060
MACMAHON, John C.	SPA1	4027186
BLACK, Robert A. Jr.	QM1	8114404

In Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA's statement dated 25 September 1947, he states in Paragraph 4 of his statement that the three submarine men along with two aviators were sent from Yap to Palau around July 1944 (the actual date would have been in August 1944) and placed under the direction of the South Seas Kempei Tai. YAJIMA was ordered by Chief of Staff Colonel TADA to go to the Gasupan Kempei Tai to make an investigation of the five POWs. After completing the investigation he believed that the prisoners were handed over to the Navy. In Paragraph 8(E) of his statement YAJIMA acknowledges that Colonel TADA decided they would testify falsely concerning the incidents related to the events in Paragraphs (3), (4) and (5) of YAJIMA's statement. In response to the Americans, the Japanese would state that prisoners were sent to Davao. A strong case could be made that ROEDER, MACMAHON and BLACK had never been transferred off of Palau and were either executed by the Kempei-tai or members of the 45th Naval Guard Unit.

In the SCAP Investigation Division Navy Cases Folder of the War Crimes Evidence Files located at NARA was found a document⁸ detailing the contents of the folder and all investigation reports. In that document it states the following:

"Three members of a submarine crew were also reported to have been kept prisoner by the 45th Guard Unit. Investigation as to the final disposition of these prisoners was continued by this office but we were unable to trace them beyond the Philippines nor able to discover whether or not they were disposed of in the Philippines. Therefore, the case was closed."

No record of ROEDER, MACMAHON and BLACK can be found after 2 September 1944.

⁸ Navy Case Folder Details.pdf

III. Captured AAF Crew of B-24-J Liberator #44-40596

On 25 August 1944 a B-24-J Liberator bomber (#44-40596) was shot down while on a bombing mission of enemy targets near the town of Koror, Republic of Palau. Two crewmen were seen parachuting from the aircraft by other aircraft in the bombing formation. These two were identified as the co-pilot and right waist gunner.

According to the Official Japanese POW Report, 1Lt ROY (REA), Grant and Sgt CURRY, Earl bailed out of their aircraft and landed near GADARAKU Anchorage. Sgt. CURRY was picked up by a Navy landing craft and 1Lt REA was picked up by Sub Chaser #12. Sgt CURRY was wounded in the right arm and on the right side of his back. He was cared for by a medical officer of the 45th Guard Unit. He was subsequently lodged in an air raid shelter of the South Seas Government Offices (highly likely the Kempei Tai headquarter area) along with 1Lt REA until his departure from Palau. On 2 September 1944 1Lt REA and Sgt CURRY were placed on the Special Submarine Chaser URUPPU MARU (along with prisoners ROEDER, MACMAHON and BLACK) for transport to Davao.

Table 3 POW Crew of B-24-J Liberator #44-40596

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Serial #</u>	<u>Position</u>
REA, Grant M.	1LT	0-684047	Co-pilot
CURRY, Earl R.	SSgt	36014451	Gunner

In Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA's statement dated 25 September 1947, he makes no reference to two prisoners being captured near Koror Island and the final disposition of those prisoners. However, YAJIMA does recognize that the transfer of ROEDER, MACMAHON and BLACK was falsely reported. An assumption could easily be made that if the report of ROEDER, MACMAHON and BLACK's transfer on 2 September 1944 was falsely reported, then the report of REA and CURRY being transferred on the same vessel on 2 September 1944 was probably also falsely reported. If that assumption is true, then it is highly likely that MOONEY and GILBERT were never transferred off of Palau and were either executed by the Kempei-tai or members of the 45th Naval Guard Unit.

In Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP) Investigation Division Report No. 2581⁹, dated 13 July 1948, and completed by Capt. TRACY, Norman S., Infantry, the case for the search for survivors 1LT REA and Sgt CURRY was officially closed based on a previous SCAP report from Capt. GILL, William R., Infantry, dated 12 June 1947. The conclusion for this report was that an investigation was conducted by Commander Marianas and that the prisoners were placed onboard the URUPPU MARU on 2 September 1944 and all efforts to trace the fliers from that point have met with negative results. Since TRACY's report was based on GILL's report – which concluded that the prisoners were transferred - GILL was apparently never made aware of the statements made by YAJIMA concerning the falsified prisoner transfers.

In the SCAP Investigation Division Navy Cases Folder of the War Crimes Evidence Files located at NARA was found a document detailing the contents of the folder and all investigation reports. In that document it states the following:

"As a result of one airplane crash on Yap Island and one airplane crash off Koror Island, four aviators were captured by the Japanese Navy and held at the 45th Naval Guard Unit, Palau Islands. The four prisoners were escorted to the Kempei-tai headquarters where they were interrogated by the staff intelligence officer of the 14th Division, Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA, and three or four other persons from division headquarters. According to members of the Kempei-tai they were returned to the navy base. Investigation as to the final disposition of these prisoners was continued by this office but we were unable to trace them beyond the Philippines nor able to discover whether or not they were disposed of in the Philippines. Therefore, the case was closed."

⁹ 480713_Rea_Curry_SCAP_Report.pdf

Neither the aircraft nor any of the crewmembers have ever been located. No record of REA and CURRY can be found after 4 September 1944.

IV.

V. Captured AAF Crew of B-24-J Liberator #42-73453

On 1 September 1944 a B-24-J Liberator bomber (#42-73453) was shot down while on a bombing reconnaissance mission of enemy targets near the town of Koror, Republic of Palau. Although only two parachutes were observed by other aircraft in the bombing formation, it is known that three of the eleven crewmen on the manifest survived the crash and were subsequently captured by the Japanese. The loss of the aircraft was designated as Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) 8641, with all eleven crewmen being declared Killed In Action.



#42-73453 Coorssen Crew with John Moore and Arthur Schumacher
Back: Robert J. Stinson (E), Charles T. Goulding (RO), Jimmie Doyle (AE), John Moore (RO), Leland J. Price (ARM), Earl E. Yoh (ball) and Camposa (photographer)
Front: Coorssen (P), Arthur J. Schumacher (N) and Frank J. Arhar (B).
Source: Bentprop Project

According to the Official Japanese POW Report, Second Lieutenant Arthur J. SCHUMAKER [SCHUMACHER]; Staff Sergeant John MOORE and Sergeant Alexander R. BICK [VICK] bailed out of their aircraft and were picked up by units of the KOROR and MIZUHO sectors in the sea northeast of Koror. That night they were sent to the Group Headquarters located on the island of Babelthuap. During American bombing missions the prisoners were kept in the air raid shelter of the Group Headquarters along with officers of that headquarters. On 5 September 1944, SCHUMACHER, MOORE and VICK were transported to Malakal Maritime Products Wharf where they were transferred to the NANSHIN MARU around 2200 hrs for transport to Davao.

Table 4 POW Crew of B-24-J Liberator #42-73453

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Serial #</u>	<u>Position</u>
SCHUMACHER, Arthur J.	2LT	0-762989	Bombardier
MOORE, John	SSgt	38512637	Asst Radio Operator
VICK, Alexander R.	Sgt	6563144	Photographer

In Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA's statement dated 25 September 1947, he states in Paragraph 5 of his statement states that in the early part of September 1944 one B24 which was in the air raid on the antiaircraft positions in AIRAI and KOROR was shot down. He states that three members of the crew came down in parachutes where they were captured and sent to headquarters as prisoners. He and YAMADA of the South Seas Government interrogated them. However, as the air raids were frequent, the interrogation did not go as expected. During one of these air raids he overheard Chief of Staff TADA make direct demands to Kempei-tai Commander MIYAZAKI to execute the three prisoners. That evening after the air raids were over YAJIMA had a vehicle prepared to transfer the three prisoners to the Kempei-tai. From documentary reports he later learned that the prisoners were executed that same night. In Paragraph 8(E) of his statement YAJIMA acknowledges that Colonel TADA decided they would testify falsely concerning the incidents related to the events in Paragraphs (3), (4) and (5) of YAJIMA's statement. In response to the Americans, the Japanese would state that prisoners were sent to Davao. A strong case could be made that SCHUMACHER, MOORE and VICK had never been transferred off of Palau and that they were indeed the three aviators executed in the jungle area on Gasupan Hill where the Jesuit Missionaries, Hondonero Family and British National Charlie Smith were also executed.

In 2005, 2007, and 2008 members of the Joint POW Accounting Command (JPAC) successfully excavated a crash site located off the southern coast of Babelthuap Island and were able to positively identify the aircraft as being the one from which SCHUMACHER, MOORE and VICK parachuted. Eight sets of remains were located within the wreckage.

In Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP) Investigation Division Report No. 2582¹⁰, dated 13 July 1948, and completed by Capt. TRACY, Norman S., Infantry, the case for the search for survivors 2Lt SCHUMACHER, SSgt MOORE and Sgt VICK was officially closed based on a previous SCAP report from Capt. GILL, William R., Infantry, dated 12 June 1947. The conclusion for this report was that an investigation was conducted by Commander Marianas and that the prisoners were placed onboard the NANSHIN MARU on 5 September 1944 and all efforts to trace the fliers from that point have met with negative results.

No record of SCHUMACHER, MOORE and VICK can be found after 4 September 1944.

Details of the Guam War Crimes Trials

Of all of the Guam War Crimes Trials, five pertained specifically to executions on the islands of Palau. Case 41 dealt with the execution of American B24 pilot Wallace F. KAUFMAN, the only POW whose remains have ever been recovered on Palau. Case 42 dealt with execution of British National Charlie SMITH. Case 43 dealt with the execution of three American aviators (names unknown, but highly suspected to be SCHUMACHER, MOORE and VICK). Case 44 dealt with the execution of six Jesuit missionaries and four members of the Yapese Hondonero-Untalan family. Case 51 dealt with the command responsibility of Lieutenant General INOUE and Colonel TADA for all of the executions that occurred in the Palaus.

Additional testimony during the Guam War Crimes Trials indicates that as many as ten Koreans, ten Indonesians, a few Japanese Gunzuko's and an entire Palauan leper colony were also executed at the direction of the Commanding Officer of the South Seas Kempei-tai, Colonel Artisune MIYAZAKI. While this information is not pertinent to the search for American POWs, it does provide an insight into the atrocities committed by the South Seas Kempei-tai.

The following is a short synopsis of the three related Guam War Crimes Trials that pertain to the unaccounted-for POWs:

¹⁰ 480713_Schumacher_Moore_Vick_SCAP_Report.pdf

VI. Case 42 – Execution of Charlie Smith

Charlie SMITH was a British National who was born in Hong Kong and lived in the Palaus for the majority of his life. He spoke four different languages: English, Spanish, Chamorrón and Palauan. He married his wife, Rita Borgia SMITH, in 1923. Father MARINO, a Catholic Jesuit priest who was executed three months before Charlie SMITH, performed their marriage ceremony.

After the Americans declared war on the Japanese in late 1941, Charlie SMITH was placed under arrest and closely guarded by the South Seas Kempei-tai. On three occasions while her husband was not under guard, Rita SMITH was able to sneak food to him. She last saw her husband alive in October 1944. Sometime around the 20th of December 1944 he was moved to the Gasupan Detachment of the South Seas Kempei-tai.

A few days prior to 29 December 1944, a hole had been dug in the middle of a jungle on Gasupan Hill on the island of Babelthuap for the execution of Charlie SMITH. The hole was to be dug in the same jungle where the missionaries, Hondonero family and American aviators were previously executed. On the day of his execution the hole could not be found and so what appeared to be a former air raid shelter was used for the execution scene.

Guam War Crimes testimony states that on 15 August 1945, Kempei-tai Detachment Commander Captain NAKAMURA had a group of some 30 Kempei's met at the execution scene and directed them to dig up the remains of Charlie SMITH and the others. A stretcher was made and the corpses were moved to one location where they were cremated. Then a hole was dug approximately 100 meters away and the bones were buried in that hole.

VII. Case 43 – Execution of Three Unknown American Aviators

On or about 4 September 1944, three American aviators were executed in the middle of a jungle on Gasupan Hill on the island of Babelthuap. During the investigation of these executions the identity of the aviators could not be definitively determined because no bodies were ever recovered and all interviewed Japanese military conveniently could not remember any of the aviators' names. However, the following key points clearly make a strong case that the three aviators were SCHUMACHER, MOORE and VICK.

- 1) On 1 September 1944 a B-24J Liberator bomber (#42-73453) was shot down while on a bombing reconnaissance mission of enemy targets near the town of Koror, Republic of Palau. On board were 2Lt SCHUMACHER, SSgt MOORE and Sgt VICK.
- 2) According to the Official Japanese POW Report, 2Lt SCHUMACHER, SSgt MOORE and Sgt VICK bailed out of their B24 aircraft on 1 September 1944 over Koror and were picked up by units of the KOROR and MIZUHO sectors in the sea northeast of Koror. That night they were housed in the Group Headquarters building located on the island of Babelthuap. During American bombing missions the prisoners were kept in the air raid shelter of the Group Headquarters along with Japanese officers of that headquarters.
- 3) 14th Division (Group Headquarters) Intelligence Officer Lieutenant Colonel Toshihiko YAJIMA clearly gives information about these three aviators in his two statements to SCAP investigators that indicate it could not be any other POWs other than SCHUMACHER, MOORE and VICK.

In his first statement¹¹, dated June 27th, 1947, YAJIMA states the following:

¹¹ 470627_Yajima_Interview_Report.pdf

"Latter part of August 1944 three aviators (one officer and two enlisted) who crashed and were captured on KOROR Island were brought to Division Headquarters. After the interrogation they were killed by the Kempei-tai."

In his second statement¹² dated September 25th, 1947, YAJIMA states in Paragraph 5 the following:

"One B-24 which was in the air raid on the antiaircraft positions on Airai and Koror in the early part of September 1944 was shot down. Three members of the crew came down in parachutes and the unit at that place sent them directly to headquarters as prisoners. Therefore, I investigated them. However, as First Lieutenant HAMANO, the language officer was sick in the hospital; I summoned Mr. YAMADA from the South Seas Government and had him take over the interpreting. But, as the air raids were frequent the investigation did not go as was expected. In the air raid shelter during the air raid I, who was also present, heard Chief of Staff TADA make direct demands concerning the killing of the three prisoners to Kempeitai Commander MIYAZAKI who had come by chance to Chief of Staff TADA's place on other business during the investigation. Thereupon, I had a headquarters vehicle prepared in the evening when the air raid was over and sent them to the Kempei-tai. At this time one officer was ordered to take charge but I do not remember who he was. From the documentary reports of the Kempeitai I later learned that they killed the prisoners at the Kempeitai the same night."

In both statements YAJIMA notes that the three aviators were executed by the Kempei-tai. In his first statement he indicated that there was one officer and two enlisted. SCHUMACHER was a Second Lieutenant and both MOORE and VICK were enlisted. There were no other known B-24 crashes in late August or the early part of September of 1944 in the vicinity of KOROR in which three crewmembers, let alone one officer and two enlisted, were known or acknowledged by the Japanese to have successfully parachuted to safety. As the Intelligence Officer of the 14th Division, YAJIMA would have been the one person who would have access to all of the interrogation reports. Lastly, it is worth noting that Lt. Col YAJIMA was a witness for the prosecution in the case against those responsible for the execution of the three American aviators.

VIII. Case 44 – Execution of Six Jesuit Missionaries and Four Hondonero-Untalan Family Members

In early September 1944 as the impending American invasion of the Palau Islands was nearing, the Japanese consolidated all foreigners and brought them to Babelthuap Island where they were placed under guard. They were housed in a building of the South Seas Development Corporation (Nantaku) located in the Gasupan area. The following foreigners were kept at that location:

Table 5 Jesuit Missionaries and Hondonero/Untalan Family POWs

- 1) Father Elias FERNANDEZ, Palau Mission, 65 years old
- 2) Father Marino de la HOZ, Palau Mission, 59 years old
- 3) Brother Emillio VILIAR, Palau Mission, 52 years old
- 4) Father Bernardo de la ESPIRELLA, Yap Mission, 55 years old
- 5) Father Luis BLANCO, Yap Mission, 49 years old
- 6) Brother Francisco HERNANDEZ, Yap Mission, 58 years old
- 7) Agapito C. HONDONERO, Filipino, 40 years old
- 8) Filimina Untalan HONDONERO, Filipino, 30 years old

¹² 470925_Yajima_Statement.pdf

- 9) Baltazar C. Untalan HONDONERO, Filipino, 5 years old
- 10) Caroline C. Untalan HONDONERO, Filipino, 3 years old

On or about 18 September 1944, at approximately 1830 hrs the above ten foreigners were placed into two waiting trucks and driven to the top of Gasupan Hill where they were taken to a specific jungle area and executed.

In February 1946, Vincent UNTALAN, nephew to Filimina Untalan HONDONERO, came to the US Military Government Unit, Yap Islands, and gave a statement¹³ about the suspected execution of the HONDONERO family and Jesuit missionaries. An investigator, Lt(jg) HALLER, was assigned the case and performed the initial investigation of the execution of the missionaries and HONDONERO family.

The Impending U.S. Invasion and POW Timeline Analysis

Sometime prior to Sept 1944, Lieutenant General OBATA, Commanding Officer, 31st Army, clearly indicated his intentions¹⁴ to Lieutenant General INOUE and Colonel TADA that no POWs were to survive the war as noted in the following statement of Lieutenant General OBATA to Colonel TADA:

"When you expect a landing to be made by the enemy, dispose of the prisoners in a hurry"

That statement clearly indicates that the Japanese were not only capable of executing prisoners, but that they were not willing to let prisoners be rescued by American forces as they approached the islands of Palau.

After the capture of the Admiralty Islands, the U.S. Thirteenth Air Force bombed the Palaus nearly every day from 8-28 August 1944. Other Thirteenth Air Force planes based out of Wakde Island bombed the Palaus from 25 August through 5 September. A total of 885 tons of ordnance was dropped on the islands of Palau during this bombing siege. To the Japanese, this heavy bombing could only mean that the Americans were preparing for a landing.

The following POW timeline, combined with Lieutenant General OBATA's directive to dispose of prisoners, helps support Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA's assertion in his September 25, 1947 statement that Japanese claims of prisoner transfers were false.

Table 6 POW Timeline

Note: Dates in black are US confirmed. Dates in red are Japanese alleged.

DATE	EVENT
10 August 1944	SSgt Mooney and Sgt Gilbert shot down over Yap
13 August 1944	SSgt Mooney and Sgt Gilbert transferred to Palau
19 August 1944	CGM Roeder, SP1C MacMahon and QM1C Black captured on Yap
19 August 1944	SSgt Mooney and Sgt Gilbert allegedly transferred to Cruiser KINU for transport to Manila via Cebu
23 August 1944	CGM Roeder, SP1C MacMahon and QM1C Black transferred to Palau
25 August 1944	1LT Rea and SSgt Curry shot down over Koror
1 September 1944	2LT Schumacher, SSgt Moore and Sgt Vick shot down over Palau
2 September 1944	CGM Roeder, SP1C MacMahon, QM1C Black, 1LT Rea and SSgt Curry allegedly transferred to URUPPU MARU for transport to Manila via Davao

¹³ 460223_Vincent_Untalan_Testimony.pdf

¹⁴ 470925_Tada_Statement.pdf

4 September 1944	3 American Aviators executed
5 September 1944	Jesuit missionaries, Hondonero family, 2LT Schumacher, SSgt Moore and Sgt Vick were allegedly transferred on NANSHIN MARU to Davao
18 September 1944	Missionaries and Hondonero's executed
29 December 1944	Charlie Smith executed
15 August 1945	Japanese surrender, bodies dug up, burned and the bones buried nearby

Analysis of Japanese Kempei Tai Commander MIYAZAKI and Colonel TADA

Throughout the testimonial statements and SCAP reports are numerous references to both Colonel TADA and Lieutenant Colonel MIYAZAKI and their involvement in the executions that occurred on PALAU. When analyzed as a whole, these statements build a case that indicates that MIYAZAKI commanded a military police organization much like the German Gestapo. Orders were given by Colonel TADA and executed by members of the South Seas Kempei Tai at the direction of MIYAZAKI. A probably accurate description of MIYAZAKI's character is best described in the statement¹⁵ of Colonel TADA, dated July 28, 1947, in which he describes the Lieutenant Colonel MIYAZAKI as follows:

"1. Lieutenant Colonel MIYAZAKI, who was graduated from the Military Academy a year before me, was indeed an old-timer. He went to PALAU long before our division went there and knew conditions well. Although our meeting at PALAU was the first one, he gave me the impression of being a very aggressive officer. Because of his long experience in the Military Police, he appeared to have studied legal matters, but he occasionally aired his own assertions on law. In a conversation after the war, he insisted that prisoners of war at PALAU need not be treated according to International Law. His argument was based on a War Ministry Secret Order (RIKUGUN SHO NO HIMITSU MEIREI) (abbreviated and referred to as "RIKUMITSU") which ordered that enemy airmen who employ methods of attack violating International Law need not be treated as prisoners of war. I asked him in return whether he had considered the fact that although such an order had been issued, it was only a unilateral Japanese declaration, but he maintained his own view obstinately. I consider such behavior as typical of a part of a peculiar character. After demobilization, I met old friends of his in Tokyo and when his name was mentioned in our conversation, they all agreed unanimously that he had always been a man who would do more daring things than the average man. If you should inquire of his old acquaintances (you will find them among his Military Academy classmates) about his character and conduct, I am sure that they will verify my statement.

2. As for his service at PALAU, he had a great tendency to dispose of work on his own discretion without any hesitation or restraint because of the prestige he enjoyed as an old-timer and as the leading authority on legal matters through PALAU; also because of the prestige stemming from the special nature of the Military Police (as stated before) an organization directly under the War Ministry), from the fact that he had subordinates of the military police disposed throughout the SOUTH SEA ISLANDS, not to mention PALAU, and from the fact that he had come to PALAU long before anyone in the division even after Lieutenant General INOUE assumed command in the latter part of December, 1944, or about January of the following year, this tendency remained the same by habit and character.

3. Lieutenant MIYAZAKI was a man who, once he made up his mind, would carry out his intentions no matter what others might say in the way of advice or criticism. I surmised that his men were mostly less experienced and educated than he was; therefore, they were in no position to oppose or present opinions against his intention or orders and merely did as he said."

¹⁵ 470728_Tada_Statement.pdf

While it is known that Lieutenant Colonel MIYAZAKI committed suicide on 27 January 1947 and that Colonel TADA's statement was given some 6 months later, there is significant other evidence to corroborate TADA's analysis of MIYAZAKI as well as evidence to indicate that TADA was directly involved in the issuing the orders for the executions. For example, in Lieutenant NAKAMURA's undated statement¹⁶ regarding the execution of the missionaries, he describes Lieutenant Colonel MIYAZAKI as follows:

"The unit commander by nature had an admirable character which never deviated from its original intention and he was especially strict in his requirements concerning orders. As he was firm and turned a deaf ear this time also, there was nothing that could be done about it."

In Staff Intelligence Officer Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA's undated statement¹⁷ he clearly indicated the issuance of execution orders from Colonel TADA to Lieutenant Colonel MIYAZAKI as follows:

"4. Around first part of July, 1944, from Yap, Garrison Unit brought three prisoners; the aviator and the submarine crew, to the Navy Headquarters on Palau and later they were incarcerated at Kempei tai. There, by the order of the Chief of Staff, I interrogated these prisoners (MIYAZAKI, Lieutenant SANO, and an interpreter (name unknown) were also present.) In regard to their disposition it seemed TADA gave the order to MIYAZAKI. However, although written reports were later made to the Headquarters it is not in my memory in regard to the details. On the other hand, there is a possibility that these prisoners were handed over to the Navy."

Evidence Concerning Possible 45th Naval Guard Unit Executions

While the Guam War Crimes trial testimony identifies only 3 specific execution events occurring on Palau (Case 42, Case 43 and Case 44), it is highly likely that all American POWs were executed. In the SCAP War Crimes Evidence File folder labeled "Palau Navy Cases" investigators compiled all of the information related to three distinct groups of unaccounted POWs. Those POWs were:

- 1) SSgt MOONEY and Sgt GILBERT
- 2) Sgm ROEDER, Spa1 MACMAHON and Qm1 BLACK
- 3) 1Lt REA and SSgt CURRY

Prior to closing the cases, SCAP placed in each of the case folders a document describing the contents of the folder as well as a synopsis of their investigation. For the Navy Case, the following statement was entered:

"As a result of one airplane crash on Yap Island and one airplane crash off Koror Island, four aviators were captured by the Japanese Navy and held at the 45th Naval Guard Unit, Palau Islands. The four prisoners were escorted to the Kempei-tai headquarters where they were interrogated by the staff intelligence officer of the 14th Division, Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA, and three or four other persons from division headquarters. According to members of the Kempei-tai they were then returned to the navy base. Three members of a submarine crew were also reported to have been kept prisoners at the 45th Guard Unit.

"According to members of the 45th Guard Unit the two prisoners from Yap were later sent to Manila on the cruiser KINU-MARU. The three members of the submarine crew and the other two aviators were also allegedly sent to Manila on the special sub-chaser URUPPU-MARU. The captain of the URUPPU-MARU was FUJIMURA, Shisuo. According to FUJIMURA the five prisoners sent to Manila on the URUPPU-MARU were allegedly turned over to NOJIMA, Mutsui, the commanding officer of the ZUIYO-MARU, at Davao. According to Lieutenant Commander TASHIMA, Nobutoshi, IJN, who was the executive officer aboard the cruiser KINU, the two

¹⁶ Undated_Nakamura_Statement.pdf

¹⁷ Undated_Yajima_Statement.pdf

sergeants were handed over to him by the commanding officer of the Palau Kempei-tai and he was instructed to take them to Cebu aboard KINU. Upon reaching Cebu he claims to have placed them in the custody of the commander of the Cebu Kempei-tai.

"Investigation as to the final disposition of these prisoners was continued by this office but we were never able to trace them beyond the Philippines nor able to discover whether or not they were disposed of in the Philippines. Therefore, the case was closed."

While it is not clear as to why the investigators never mention Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA's statement and the possibility that the Kempei-tai or 45th Naval Guard Unit had actually executed the prisoners themselves, the above statement does clearly indicate that SCAP focused on the belief that the prisoners were transported off of Palau. While SCAP had taken YAJIMA's statement on 25 September 1947, long before closing out the cases, a copy of YAJIMA's statement was not included in the "Navy Cases" folder while copies of other documents that pertained to multiple executions were included in all related case folders.

In reviewing the case statement files it is evident that the investigators started their investigation process with the names of those Japanese personnel that were provided in the official response to Brigadier General F.O. ROGERS request for information pertaining to the American POWs. For example, in the case of MOONEY and GILBERT, the following text was submitted by the Japanese:

"On 19 August, the POWs were entrusted to the care of Lt(jg) TAKEUCHI Yushi, CO of the shore patrol of the 45th Guard Unit; were transported by automobile to the cruiser KINU in command of Capt. KAWASAKI Kiyomi, Japanese Navy, which was lying along the MALAKAL pier; and were definitely turned over to the executive officer of the same cruiser in order that they might be transported via CEBU to the Third Southern Expeditionary Fleet Headquarters at MANILA. The same vessel left here at 1200 on the same day and proceeded to MANILA via CEBU. NB: The KINU was sent here for the evacuation and transportation of Japanese civilians."

In this case, the investigators clearly interviewed the Commanding Officer of the Cruiser KINU, Capt KAWASAKI and his executive officer, TASHIMA, Nobutoshi. While KAWASAKI did not recall having any prisoners on his ship, he did refer investigators to his executive officer. TASHIMA clearly remembers taking two prisoners (both sergeants) and delivering them to CEBU. While TASHIMA's statement seems convincing, a case could be made that TASHIMA was merely a player in the Japanese plan to deceive the Americans on the final disposition of American POWs.

A case could also be made that the commander of the URUPPU-MARU, which supposedly transported ROEDER, MACMAHON, BLACK, REA and CURRY was involved in the cover-up of executions. To support that case and to give credibility to Lieutenant Colonel YAJIMA's statement, a statement¹⁸ was taken of Colonel NAKAGAWA, Kiyoshi on 15 July 1947 by SCAP investigators. In that statement Colonel NAKAGAWA states the following:

"2. Matters Concerning Foreigners on Palau.

A) Case in which First Lieutenant KATSUYAMA dealt with the American first lieutenant (B-29 crew member).

When headquarters was at SHISUIZAN an American first lieutenant was taken prisoner and brought in. After he was put in protective custody and investigated at headquarters, he was put in protective custody at the Kempei-tai. Upon orders from commanding officer he was moved to Koror Island and I recall that First Lieutenant KATSUYAMA dealt with him.

¹⁸ 470715_Nakagawa_Statement.pdf

I heard this American first lieutenant was a man of very great insight and thought it was deplorable to kill him.

B) Case in which the Kempeitai dealt with the three B-29 aviators.

I think it was when headquarters was at the Tropical Industries Research Laboratories that there were three prisoners from a B-29. I recall the fact that they were dealt with at the Kempeitai but that it was a matter which was decided between the chief of staff and the Kempeitai commander when the air raids of June-July, 1944, were at their peak.

C) Cases in which the Missionaries were dealt with.

I do not remember exactly but I heard that seven (7) Spanish people (including those sent by ship from Yap Island) were dealt with by the Kempeitai. I recall that this happened in either September or October, 1944. It was a long time afterwards before I learned of this.

D) Case in which the navy dealt with prisoners.

I vaguely remember the information that in July, 1944, American submariners and two American aviators were dealt with. I remember this because I recall the investigation of those was made at the army intelligence office.

E) The Indians and Indonesians were executed at the OKAMURA Unit of the army automotive unit. I learned that Captain OKAMURA, Captain GOZAWA and others were sent to Hong Kong and have already been dealt with by the British forces."

An analysis of testimony and interview reports indicates that the South Seas Kempei-tai handled the executions of civilians and American Army Air Force POWs while members of the Japanese Naval 45th Guard Unit on Palau performed the executions of American Navy POWs. This is evident in the case of the three U.S. Navy UDT members captured on Yap and transferred to Palau.

For example, there exists the investigative statement¹⁹ taken by U.S. Marine Corps Captain MORIARTY of Japanese Army First Lieutenant HAMANO in which in one sentence he infers to a possible execution site near where the three aviators were killed. The text of that statement is as follows:

"27. Q. There is another thing that I want to ask you. Do you remember three navy people being brought up from Yap Island?

A. Yes

28. Q. Now what happened to them?

*A. They were captured by the navy and sent from Yap Island to Koror Island and that was just soon after we moved to Babelthuap. **The location was where these other three were killed.** At that time I was in headquarters and Mr. YAJIMA and I went then, too, because there were in the jurisdiction of the navy.*

29. Q. The navy commander was Admiral ITO KIMZO. Continue with your story.

A. And we went there and Colonel YAJIMA interrogated these three navy men. After that finished the only thing we did was interrogate them to try to get information; general information and after we finished they were left to the navy. We went back to our headquarters. I don't know what happened to them."

¹⁹ 470623_Hamano_Statement.pdf

It's clear in HAMANO's statement that he was not a participant in an execution and that he was merely brought in to perform interrogations. However, when Captain MORIARTY specifically asks him "what happened to them", it's possible that HAMANO knew they were killed after his interrogation because he states "The location was where these other three were killed." If he were referring to the interrogation place he more than likely would have stated that they occurred at the Kempei-tai or that they occurred "near" the location where the other three were killed. It is highly unlikely that the interrogations would have taken place in the woods on the top of Gasupan Hill when the Kempei-tai had buildings suitable for interrogations nearby. It is more likely that HAMANO knew that the three Navy men were executed by the 45th Naval Guard in the same woods as the three AAF aviators some time after he had interrogated them.

It is also worth noting in each paragraph of Colonel NAKAGAWA's statement that he uses the term "dealt with" clearly to indicate an execution. Analyzing the statements of these three Staff and Intelligence officers (NAGAKAWA, YAJIMA and HAMANO) it is clear that they are all consistent in their testimony and that one could make a case that the Navy did indeed perform executions of American Navy personnel and that not a single prisoner ever left Palau alive.

Development of a POW Mission Plan

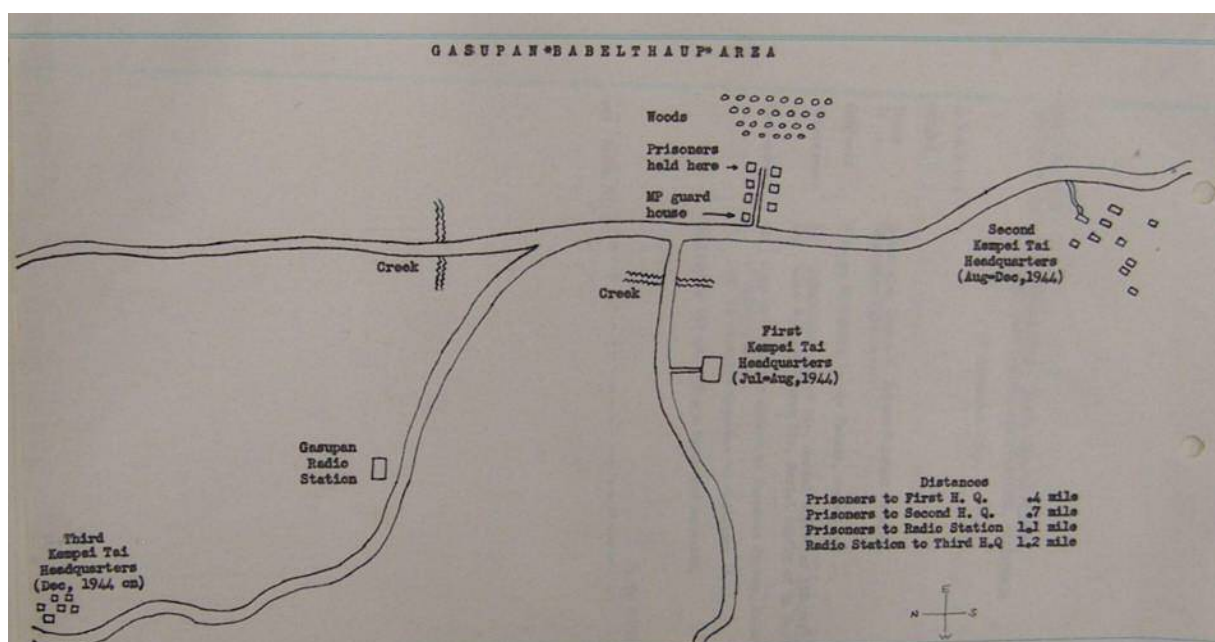
With the discovery of the Guam War Crimes Trial evidence files, new theories could now be developed that would hopefully lead us to the discovery of the area where American POWs were executed in 1944 on Palau. After analyzing the newly found documents and hand-drawn maps, we noted that if the location of the Kempei-tai Headquarters could be established, then there was a high probability of also locating the execution area. This was based on the fact that according to two hand-drawn maps, drawn by two different IJA soldiers, the execution site was clearly shown as being on the east side of the ridge road and directly across from where the Kempei-tai Headquarters were located in July-September 1944.

IX. Locating the Kempei-tai Headquarters

Probably the most significant document found that led BentProp to a theory on the location of the executions on Gasupan Hill was a memo²⁰ drafted by the initial war crimes investigator, a Commander Marianas, U.S. Naval officer by the name of Lt(jg) J.C. HALLER.

With that memo to Captain MURPHY, Director War Crimes Pacific Oceans Area, Lt(jg) HALLER included a hand-drawn map that detailed some of his initial investigation in the Gasupan Babelthuap Area. That map is shown below:

²⁰ 461016_Haller_Memo_to_Murphy.pdf



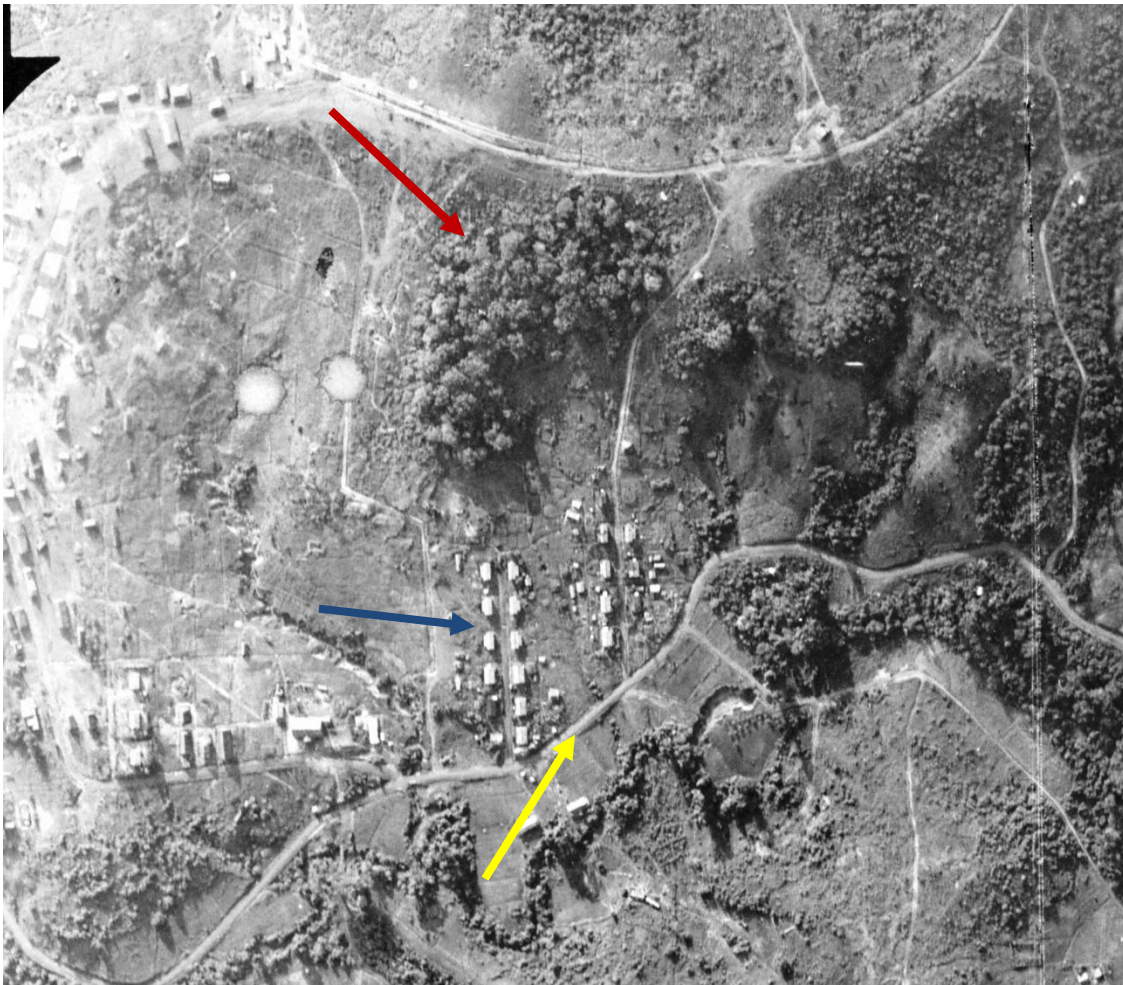
Lt(jg) HALLER hand-drawn map of Kempei-tai Headquarters

Statement_Maps\461016_Haller_Memo_to_Murphy.pdf

Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

BentProp had found this unidentified map previously but did not have the associated memo written by Lt(jg) HALLER. After finding the map in 2007, BentProp immediately identified one key feature area that could be directly identifiable to overhead photography from the period and dating to July 1944. That feature was the road and woods that were in the vicinity of a group of buildings where the prisoners (missionaries and HONDONERO family) were supposedly held. These groups of buildings were part of the South Seas Government and were referred to as the NANTAKU buildings.

The photo below was taken by the US Navy on 27 July 1944 and encompasses the Gasupan Hill area of Babelthaupt. In the center of this photo, the road (yellow arrow), buildings (blue arrow) and triangular-shaped woods (red arrow) can be clearly identified.



Photographic Imagery of South Seas Government (NANTAKU) Buildings

1944_Bishop_Imagery\SP 200762.tiff

Source: Bishop Museum

Having only the map and the photo above at the time, BentProp spent several days in February 2008 during P-MAN X (see P-MAN X Mission Summary Report) searching the triangular shaped wooded area behind the buildings for indications of potential graves, all with negative results. It wasn't until the associated memo from Lt(jg) HALLER to Captain MURPHY, dated 16 October 1946, was found prior to P-MAN XI that BentProp was able to finally identify the map as being drawn by Lt(jg) HALLER. Knowing that the map was drawn by an American investigator gave credibility to the content of the map. In his memo, Lt(jg) HALLER stated the following:

"Further investigation of possible witnesses has also been conducted and also a trip made to the three locations of the Kempei Headquarters, the place where the missionaries were held as prisoners, and the spot where they were probably executed; all in the area of Gasupan, Babelthuap."

Haller's reference to the location where the missionaries were probably executed was probably based on the following statement²¹ taken by Rudim Indalecio on 31 July 1946:

Q12: "Where did the execution take place?"

A: "I heard that they were executed on a hill right above the house in which they were confined"

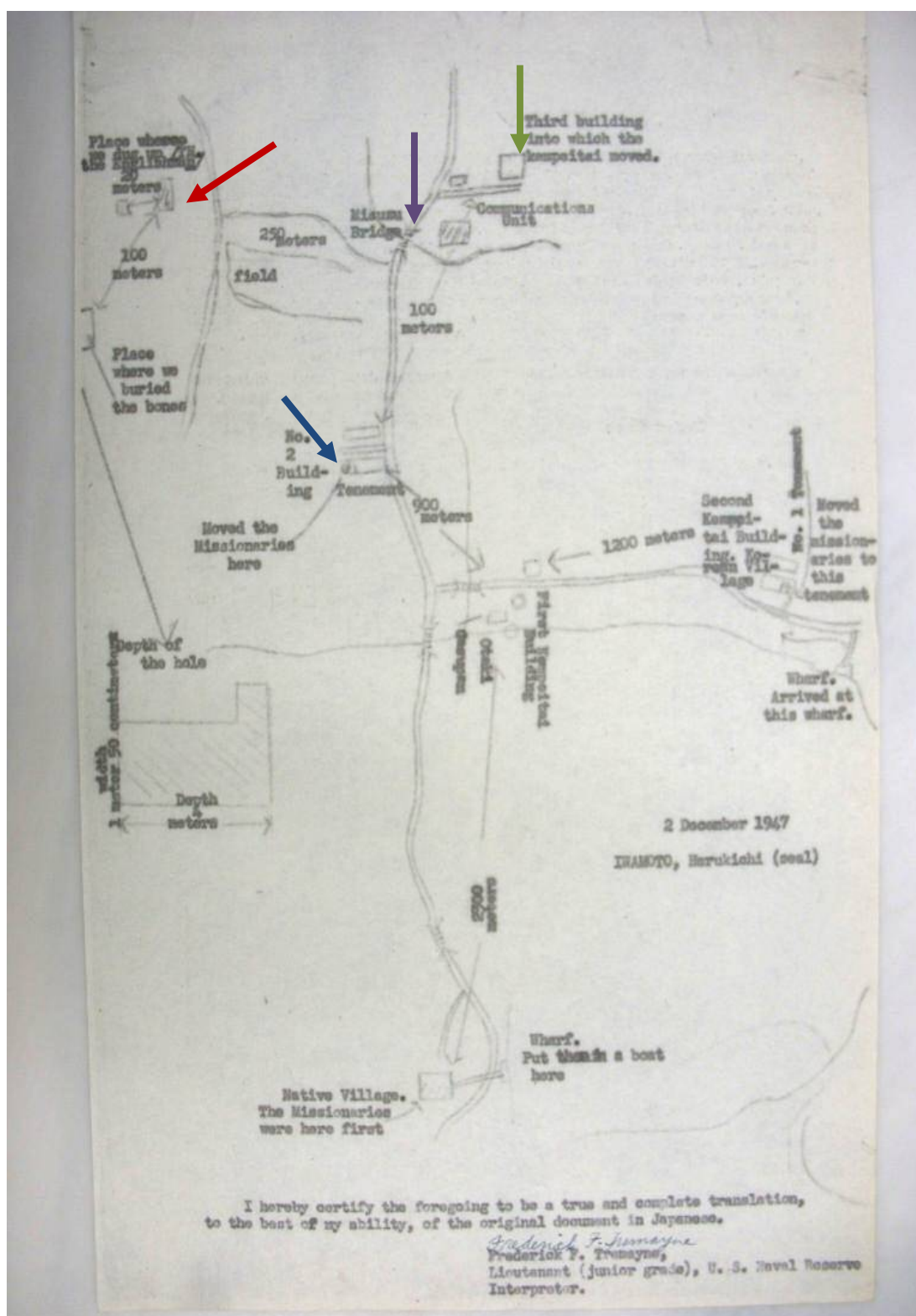
²¹ 460731_Rudim_Indalecio_Testimony.pdf

Because the wooded area behind the building didn't seem to fit any other testimony statements, and there were no indications of graves or depressions in the wooded area when searched by BentProp in 2008, it was determined that Lt(jg) HALLER's assumption that the woods were the execution area was more than likely inaccurate.

BentProp felt that there were other key features in Haller's map that were important. These were the locations of the Kempei-tai Headquarters, along with distances measured from each of the headquarters area to where the prisoners were held. Based on Haller's map, it was known that the Kempei-tai headquarters in July 1944 was located .7 miles south of the building where the missionaries were kept.

SPvt IWAMOTO's Map of Kempei-tai Headquarters, Execution Site and Burial Site

The map below drawn by Superior Private Harukichi IWAMOTO displays the Gasupan area along with the key roads, building location where the Spanish missionaries were held (blue arrow), Kempei-tai headquarters (green arrow), a key bridge known to the Japanese as Misuzu bridge (purple arrow) and the location of where Charlie Smith (Englishman) was executed (red arrow) and eventually dug up. The main North-South road depicted in the map was the main road used by the Japanese military which today's Compact Road closely follows. The smaller road shown in the upper left corner of the map depicts the road that runs along a ridge line at the top Gasupan Hill. Note in the map that the Kempei-tai headquarters is nearly directly across the ridge from the execution site. IWAMOTO also clearly shows "Place where we buried the bones". This statement is very important in that it is the only reference to "bones" as opposed to "ashes".



SPvt IWAMOTO hand-drawn map of Gasupan Area

Statement_Maps\471202_Iwamoto_Map.pdf

Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

Cpl NAKAGAWA's Map of Kempei-tai Headquarters General Area and Execution Jungle

In the top portion of the following map, drawn by Corporal NAKAGAWA, many of the same key features are depicted in the same general area as in IWAMOTO's map. For example, the Kempei-tai headquarters (green arrow and also known as the Kempei-tai Detachment) is shown just south of Misuzu bridge (purple arrow) and near a bend in the road, and the jungle where the missionaries, Charlie Smith and the three American aviators were executed (red arrow) are all shown, again with the Kempei-tai Detachment (green arrow) nearly directly across from the execution jungle.

In the bottom portion of NAKAGAWA's map he detailed the layout of the Kempei-tai Headquarters building and distances between the buildings, with one building being only 15 meters from the main road. The one key feature in this map that stuck out as different was the Air Raid Shelter, which appeared to be a building with a rounded roof. Having seen pictures of another cement Air Raid Shelter used by the 14th Division headquarters, it was felt that during our search for the Kempei-tai Headquarters we would also be looking for a cement Air Raid Shelter.

the road just before the end of the line. That bend also matched both IWAMOTO's and NAKAGAWA's hand-drawn maps of where Misuzu bridge was located.

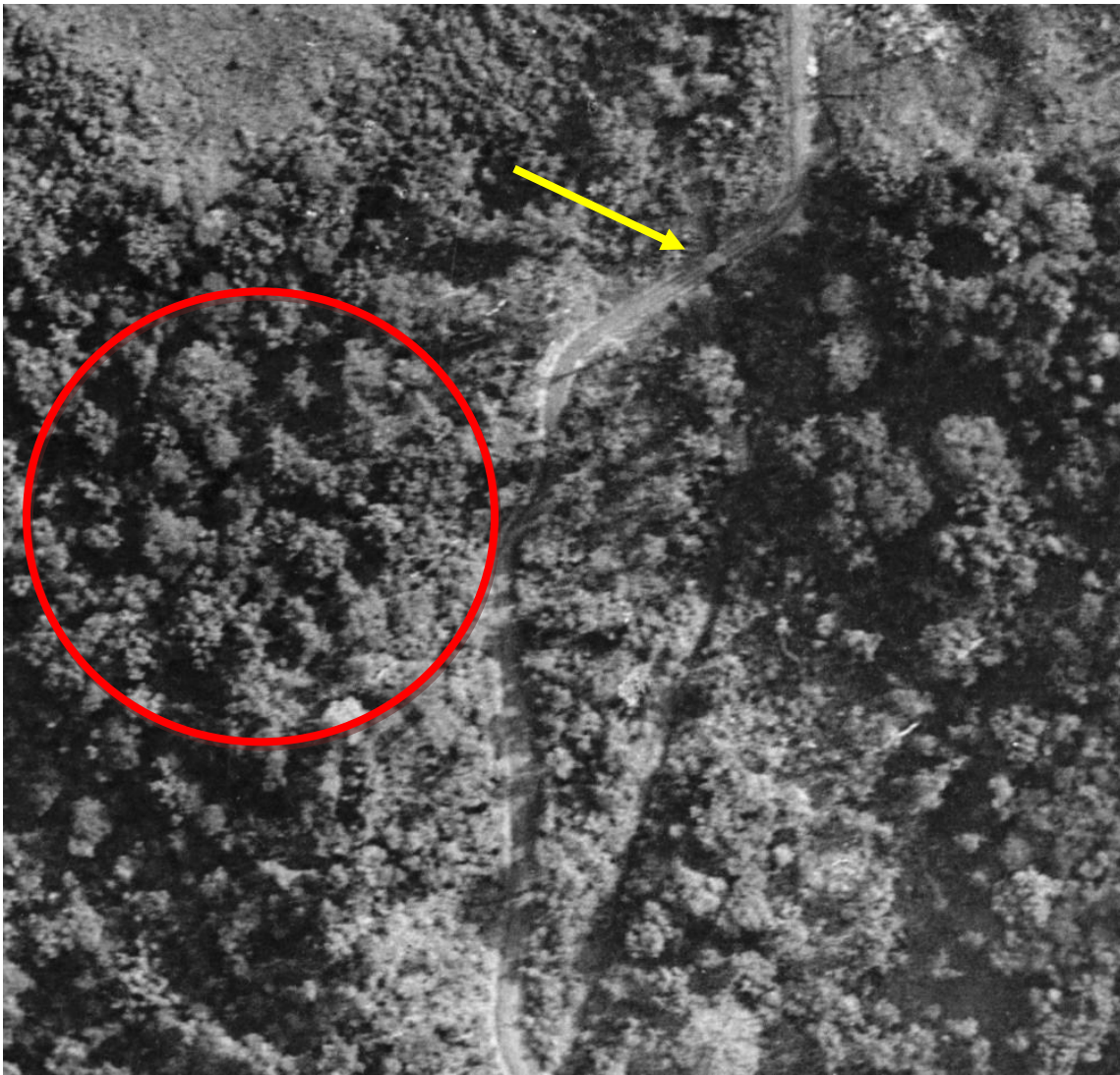


Google Earth with Photographic Overlay of Gasupan Area

Bitmaps\Gasupan_Hill_July_44_Overlay.bmp

Source: Google Earth and Bishop Museum

When we zoomed in on the photograph from 27 July 1944 we could see a bridge just after the bend in the road. This bridge had been previously surveyed by BentProp team members during P-MAN IX (see P-MAN IX Missoin Summary). Through interviews with local Palauan elders it was originally mis-identified as being AIKOKU bridge, a bridge that played an important part in the testimony and hand-drawn maps of several of the Guam War Crimes Trial transcripts. If the Kempei-tai Headquarters could be found just south of this bridge, that would validate that this bridge was indeed Misuzu bridge. And if this was Misuzu Bridge, then the Kempei-tai Headquarters would be on the west side of the road just past the bend in the road. The following image depicts the bridge (yellow arrow) just south of the bend in the road as it appeared in 1944 and the Primary Target Area (red circle) for the Kempei-tai Headquarters.



Photographic Imagery of Kempei-tai Headquarters General Search Area

1944_Bishop_Imagery\SP 200762.tiff

Source: Bishop Museum

X. Locating the Execution Site

With a primary target area for the Kempei-tai Headquarters now identified, the next step was to look for a jungle area along the eastern side of the ridge road and directly across from the Kempei-tai Headquarters Target Area. The following image shows two roads, the main North-South automobile road to Mizuho on the left of the image and the road (purple arrow) running along the Gasupan Hill ridge on the right side of the photo. The bridge (yellow arrow) suspected of being Misuzu Bridge can be seen at the top of the image. On the left side of the image is the proposed Primary Target Area (red circle) for the Kempei-tai Headquarters. In the middle of the image is the general area where the Sumida Unit Dispensary should have been located. And, on the eastern side of the ridge road is a jungle area (green circle) that seemed to fit the testimony map of NAKAGAWA (see Cpt NAKAGAWA map above) that we identified as the Primary Execution Site Area A.

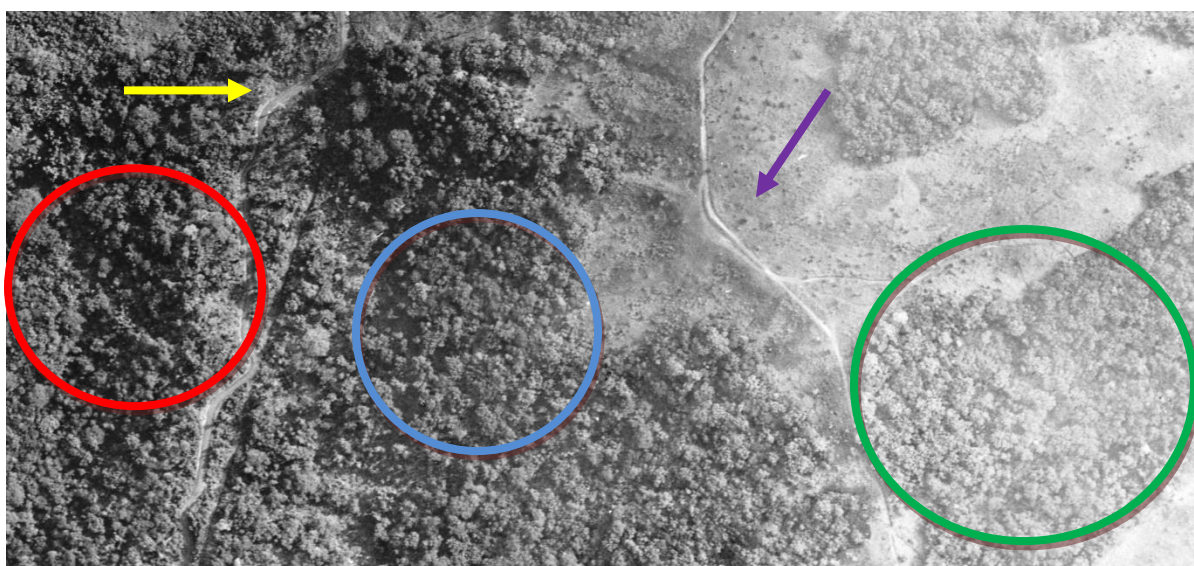
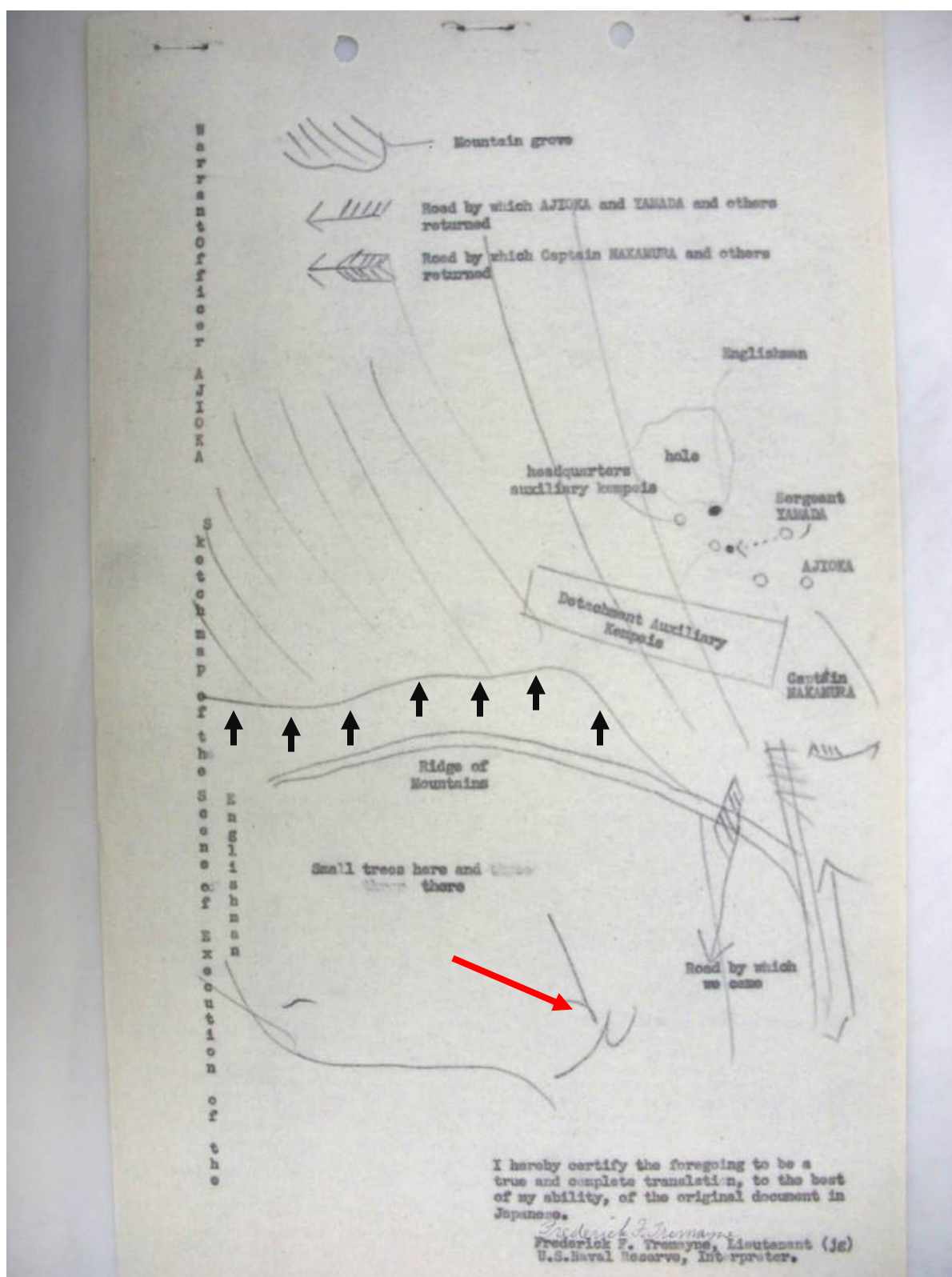


Photo Imagery of Proposed Kempei-tai HQ, Sumida Unit Dispensary and Execution Area

1944_Bishop_Imagery\SP 200762.tiff

Source: Bishop Museum

One reason why Execution Site Area A seemed to be such a good fit was because of an undated map drawn by Sgt YAMADA in which he drew the area where the Englishman Charlie Smith was executed. At first glance, this map shows the ridge road and the execution site clearly within a jungle area. However, the ridge road runs North-South and the road shown in YAMADA's map runs East-West (see North directional line identified by red line below). The following map is YAMADA's undated hand-drawing of the execution area.



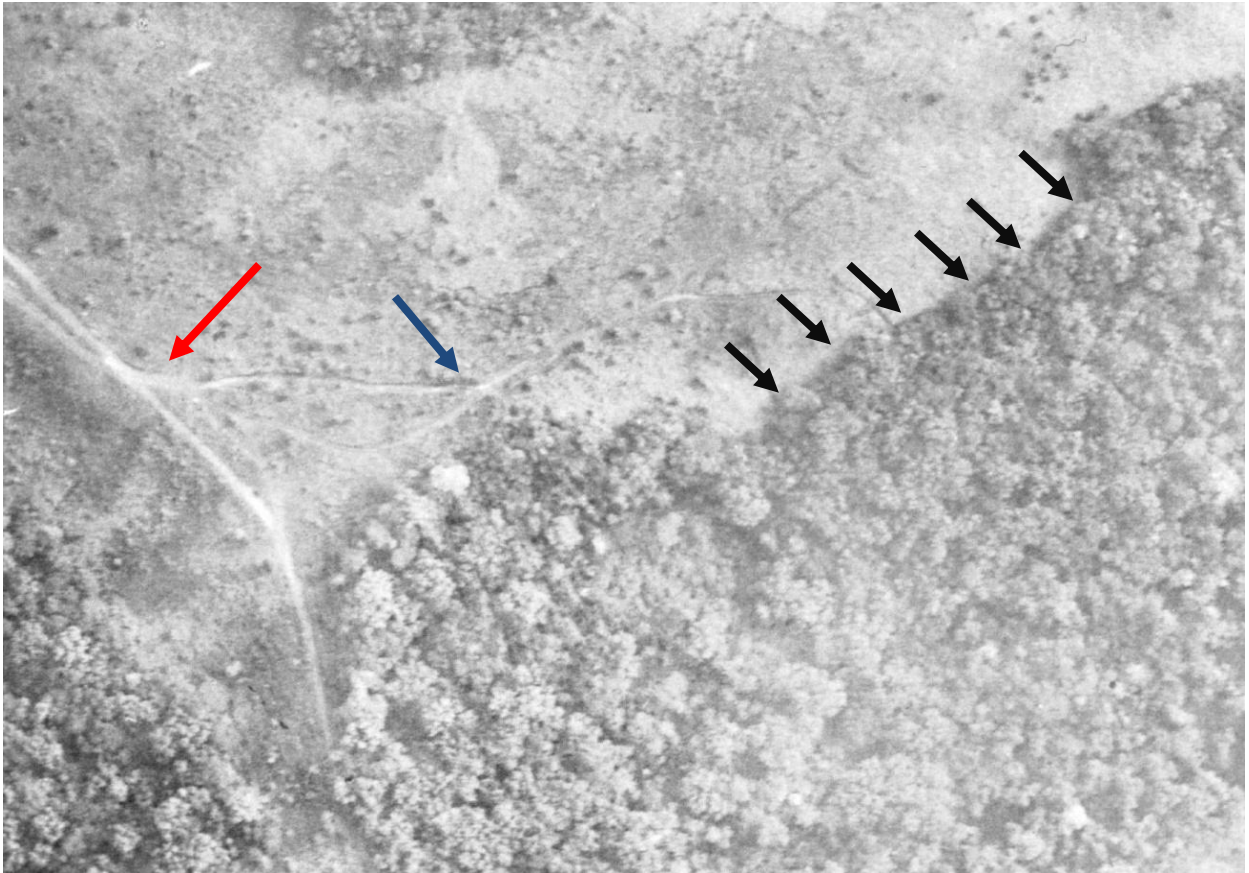
SGT YAMADA hand-drawn map of Charlie Smith Execution Area

Statement_Maps\Undated_Yamada_Ajioka_Map.pdf

Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

Once we realized that the ridge road in YAMADA's drawing was not the main ridge road, we started looking closely at our Primary Execution Site Area A and realized that there was another perpendicular ridge along the north side of Primary Execution Site Area A. We also realized that in YAMADA's drawing

he indicated that the jungle area had a “bump-in” area (black arrows in hand-drawn map above) that exactly matched our Area A. The following 1947 photo of Area A shows the main North-South ridge road (red arrow), the perpendicular ridge road (blue arrow) and the “bump-in” area (black arrows) of the jungle.



Photographic Imagery of Proposed Execution Area A

1944_Bishop_Imagery\SP 200762.tiff

Source: Bishop Museum

Key Testimony Statements Describing the Missionaries' Execution Site

Throughout both the investigative statements taken and the actual War Crimes Trial transcripts there were many key statements made that could help in identifying the actual execution site. If those statements could be verified on the ground, then they would lend credibility to justifying a follow-up JPAC Recovery Mission. The following statement compilations were identified as being critical to confirming the execution area where the missionaries and Hondonero family were executed:

LPvt ANDO Statement:

"Starting with the first man we entered a narrow road, down a hill and into the forest. We went about 50 meters into the forest"

Sgt TAMAMOTO Statement:

"The spot where the missionaries were executed was sort of like a ravine."

Capt NAKAMURA Statement:

"After exiting the trucks we proceeded about 200 meters and entered the woods on the right. A hole had been dug which was 2 meters deep, 5 meters long and 2 meters wide."

Sgt YAMADA Statements:

"After walking a little way they entered into a forest area."

"There was a hill sloping down and also a steep rise."

"The place where they were ordered to halt was an open space like a valley."

LPvt IMAIZUMI Statements:

"Then all advanced but there was one place in the road where the road was very bad And the persons who proceeded first were hesitating at this spot, so the persons who followed after came through another road."

"On the way the road sloped, and therefore two of us stood at the bottom of the road and lowered the missionaries who had lost the free use of their hands in order that they would not fall".

Key Testimony Statements Describing the American Aviators' Execution Site

The following statement compilations were identified as being critical to confirming the execution area where the three American aviators were executed. Based on testimony statements, the hole used for the aviators was also used for the missionaries:

SPvt SEKI Statements:

"After the truck reached the top of Gasupan Hill it came to a stop in front of a wide grassy field where they got out."

"It was about ten meters from where the truck stopped to the forest."

"After entering the forest they turned right and proceeded."

"It was more than twenty meters from the entrance to the forest to the place where the hole had been dug."

"The area surrounding the hole was filled with brushwood."

SPvt HAYASHI Statements:

"We entered the jungle on the right for 40 or 50 meters."

"A hole 3 meters long and 1 ½ meters wide had already been dug there."

Sgt NAGATOME Statements:

"After getting off of the truck, they went twenty or thirty meters ahead into the jungle."

"A hole had been dug about two meters long, one meter and fifty centimeters wide and

one meter fifty centimeters deep."

Key Testimony Statements Describing Charlie Smith's Execution Site

The following statement compilations were identified as being critical to confirming the execution area where the Englishman Charlie Smith was executed. Based on testimony statements, Charlie Smith was executed in the same jungle area as the aviators and missionaries:

Cpl NAKAGAWA Statements:

"The place of execution will be near the place where the Spanish were killed formerly."

"As we all went behind the Sumida Unit into the jungle and I went with them also and I told them when I got there to dig a suitable hole. After I told them this I went to the Sumida Unit for sick call and then I came back."

"In the jungle where the hole was dug, ammunition of the Ordnance Department was piled up in ten or more places."

"The hole where Smith was executed was about ten meters inside the jungle."

Cpt NAKAMURA Statements:

"We waited at the entrance to the jungle. Near the place we were waiting, there was a hole which looked like a fox hole of a size about one and one-half meters or two meters. I told AJIOKA, if the hole cannot be found, let us use this hole."

"The hole looked like an old air raid shelter about two meters square."

Sgt YAMADA Statement:

"They stopped at a place off of the mountain road by turning to the right and then going into the forest grove ten meters."

SPvt IWAMOTO Statement:

"This grave was something like an air raid shelter. It was very moist and his clothes were still on. From this place there was a spring coming up and water was running."

Key Testimony Statements Describing the Final Burial Site

Other than Lt. Wallace KAUFMAN, we know that no remains have ever been found of any of those individuals that were executed by the Japanese Kempei-tai. Because there were several variations of what eventually happened to the corpses after execution, it was felt that a complete analysis of the testimony statements was required in order to make an assessment of where to look for the remains.

On the stand as a witness for the prosecution in the execution of Charlie Smith, Superior Private IWAMOTO stated the following:

Q: What was done with the body of Smith?

A: We made a stretcher and carried all of the corpses to one place and we made a fire and cremated the corpses and then we dug a hole and buried the remains.

This statement clearly acknowledges that the corpses were all cremated together at one location and then buried together in a single hole.

On the stand as a witness for the prosecution in the execution of the missionaries and Hondonero family, Captain NAKAMURA stated the following:

Q: What became of the bodies of these ten people?

A: *After the war, by orders of Commanding Officer MIYAZAKI, on the request from Division Headquarters, they were going to return the ashes to the victorious country, so they were cremated and they were brought back. But when they were brought back Division Headquarters changed its mind and said that we will say that they were sent to the Philippine Islands, so we will not need them anymore. So they were put into a wooden box and buried with the ashes of Smith and the three prisoners of war.*

This statement clearly acknowledges that all of the remains were buried together, possibly with the ashes of the aviators being in a wooden box. This statement also matches closely with that of KOKUBO's undated statement²² about burying the remains in a wooden box in which he states:

"About 15 or 16 August 1945, at the orders of Captain NAKAMURA, at that time detachment commander, Captain NAKAMURA and the members of the unit under him, including myself, dug up the missionaries who had been buried and then for the first time I found out where it had happened and the approximate number of persons. Then the remains were cremated, sealed in a wooden box and buried in the dense forest nearby."

If the statement from IWAMOTO above in which he states that all of the corpses were cremated together at a single location is to be believed, then it is highly unlikely that the ashes of the aviators were separated with the intent of returning them to the Americans. It is more likely that this portion of the statement was merely a fabrication of NAKAMURA in an attempt to show honor to the aviators by returning their remains to the Americans. However, that does not mean that the remaining portion of NAKAMURA's statement is also fabricated. Rather, it is highly plausible that all of the remains were placed into a wooden box and buried nearby. If that were the case, then it is also highly probable that a wooden box could have been acquired from the Ammunition Storage area in the jungle in which the executions occurred. If the remains were placed into multiple wooden boxes, then this might explain why IWAMOTO's hand-drawn map of the final burial hole shows it as being L-shaped (i.e. two wooden boxes making the L-shape). And, one could also assume that the remains of those buried in the wooden boxes would remain more intact over a period of time rather than if they were simply buried in the ground without any protection against the elements. Lastly, one could also assume that if the theory of wooden boxes is true, then there is the possibility that the boxes were held together with some metallic object such as a hinge, nail or screw.

XI.

XII. Other Possible Execution Site Search Areas

Although Area A seemed to be a very good match for the hand-drawn maps and was nearly directly across the ridge from the proposed Kempei-tai HQ search area, the team felt that it was important to have alternate plans for searching for the execution site in the event that Area A did not match any testimony statements about the actual execution site. We also felt that there was enough consistent evidence in nearly all of the hand-drawn maps to indicate that the execution site was on the east side of the Gasupan Hill ridge road. With that assumption, there were only three other jungle areas on the east side of the ridge road between the jungle area behind the NANTAKU Buildings and Area A. We appropriately labeled those search areas B, C and D. During P-MAN VII and P-MAN XIII preliminary surveys of all of these search areas was completed by BentProp. The following picture indicates the four search areas we planned on searching during P-MAN XI.

²² Undated_Kokubo_Statement.pdf



Photographic Imagery of Search Areas A thru E
1944_Bishop_Imagery\SP 200762.tiff
Source: Bishop Museum

Implementing and Validating the Plan

The P-MAN XI team arrived on Palau beginning around 15 February, 2009. An advance team arrived early to coordinate both water and land mission needs. Within a few days the entire team would be positioned on Palau and ready to get started. The proposed POW Mission plan was briefed to the entire team and finalized. The plan included multiple search areas for both the Kempei-tai Headquarters area and the execution site area. Search areas were prioritized and the team was briefed before every mission on that day's planning as well as a review of key testimony statements and land features that team members would be looking for in each of the search areas.

XIII. Evidence of the Kempei-tai Headquarters

Based on the photography dating to July 1944 the team knew exactly where the South Seas Government (NANTAKU) buildings were located. On a previous day, the team met with representatives of the Governor of Ngatpang. Ngatpang is the district in which Gasupan Hill is located. On the drive back from the Governor's office the team measured the .7 miles distance from the NANTAKU area. At nearly .7 miles there was a small paved area off the road that extended about 20 feet. We chose that area to be our starting point. Located immediately north of the parking area was a cement water run-off that directed the water down the hill and into to stream that ran underneath the bridge we hoped would be confirmed to be Misuzu Bridge. The team decided to start by following the cement run-off about 50 meters north and then fan out as a team for about 50 meters and start walking South along the west side of the main Compact Road.

Foxholes Forming an Area Perimeter

Shortly after entering the jungle area team members began finding indications of military occupation. The general area was located on the side of a hill. A total of 24 foxholes were found and positioned in what appeared to be a 75 meter perimeter area circling the hill.

The following Google Earth image displays the location of the 24 foxholes. We used the prefix "QK" to identify all GPS waypoints (see Appendix A) in the vicinity of the Kempei-tai Headquarters. It is highly probable that the foxholes are grouped in areas to protect specific targets. For example, Foxholes A-G could have been used to protect the Communications Unit that is indicated in NAKAGAWA's map.



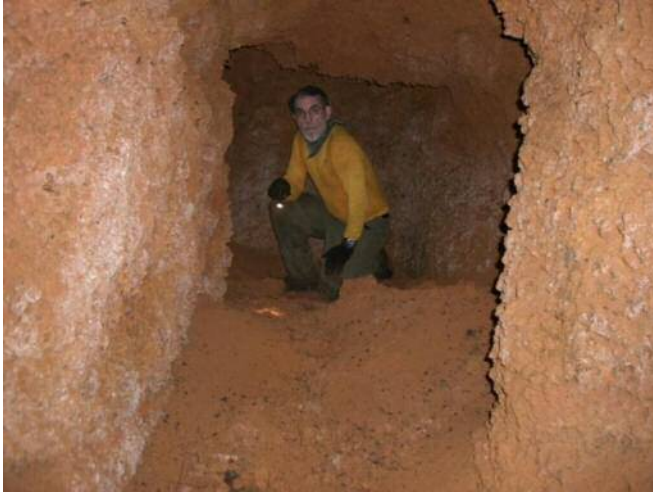
Google Earth with Waypoints for Kempei-Tai Foxholes

Bitmaps\Kempei-tai_Foxholes.bmp

Source: Bentprop Project

Caves Identified as Air Raid Shelters

Within the general perimeter area were found two very distinct cave-like features. The largest of the two (Waypoint Name: QK D SHAPE CAVE), built into the side of the hill and located near the center of the occupied area, had two entrances (east and west) and was estimated to hold 20 or more people. The following picture shows the west entrance to the cave with Dr. Scannon indicating the approximate size of the internal part of the cave.



Photograph of West Entrance to Air Raid Shelter

Document_Images/AirRaidShelter.jpeg

Team Member: P. Scannon

© W. Bruce 2009

The east entrance was located about 15 feet away and was nearly identical to the west entrance with the overall cave being D-shaped. A deep slit trench, approximately 5 feet deep, formed the flat side of the D-shaped entrances to the cave. Leading up to the cave was another long and narrow trench approximately 2 feet in width, 4 feet in depth and 20 feet in length. The following image displays the trench entrance with some vegetation overgrowth.

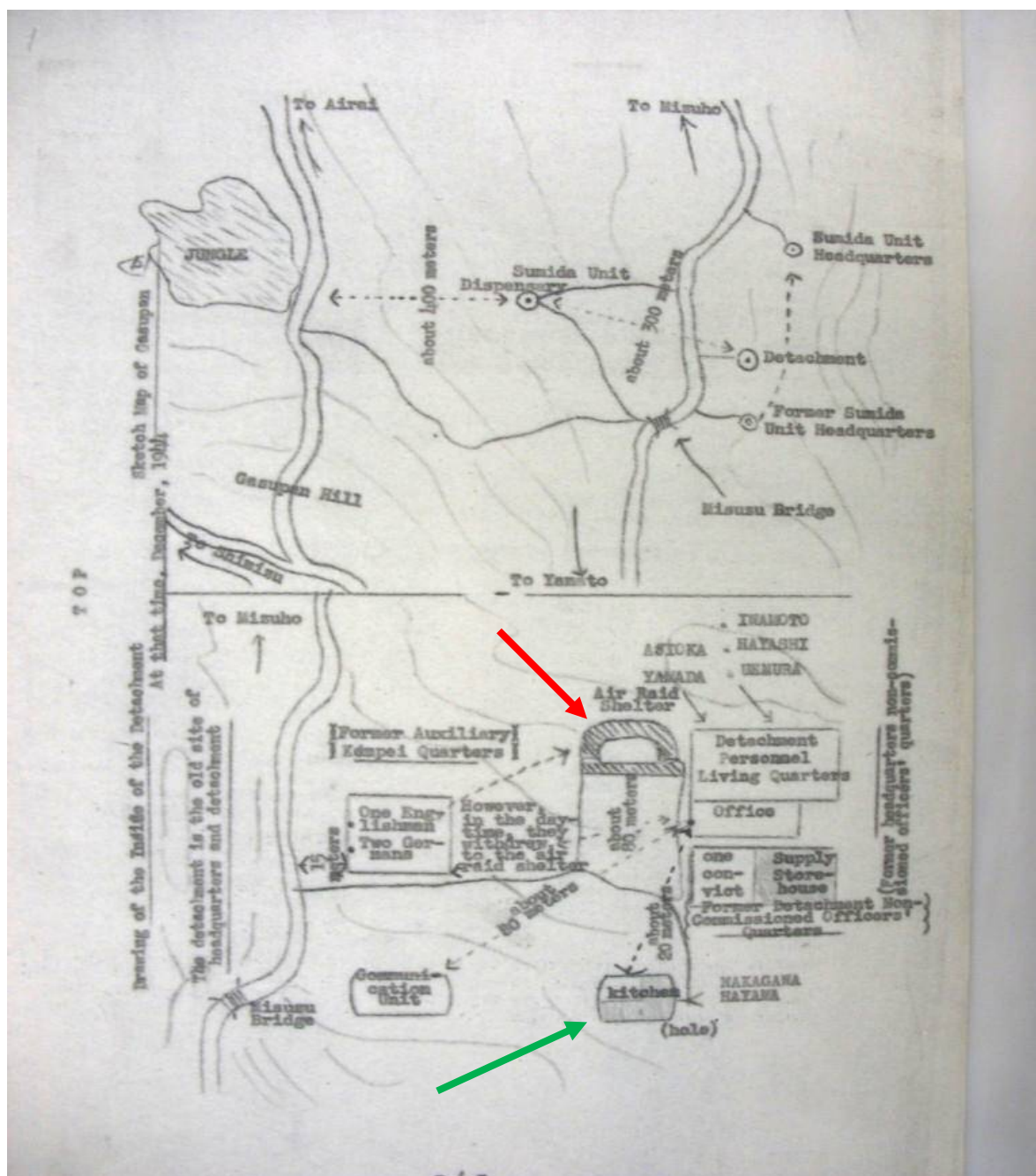


Photograph of Trench Leading to Air Raid Shelter

Document/Images/AirRaidShelterTrench.jpeg

© F. Colmer 2009

Surprisingly, caves, foxholes and trenches are nearly perfectly intact after 65 years. Members of the team immediately recognized the shape of the cave as being the same as the Air Raid Shelter (red arrow) in Cpl Nakagawa's map shown below.



CPL NAKAGAWA hand-drawn map showing Air Raid Shelter

Statement_Maps\471204_Nakagawa_Map.pdf

Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

The second cave (Waypoint Name: QK CAVE A) was located below the first cave and near the bottom of the hill. It too was built into the side of the hill and in all appearances was similar to the first cave. After comparing NAKAGAWA's map (above) it was determined that the second cave was highly likely the "kitchen" area (green arrow) and probably also used by lower enlisted as an air raid shelter. This cave was U-shaped with one major difference being that there was a six-foot-high clearance at the center of the cave allowing for easily upright standing.

Insulators Indicate Communications to the Area

Near the entrance to the Air Raid Shelter was found multiple ceramic insulators. Some were still attached to trees at a height of about 8-10'. Some were also found lying on the ground indicating that either the tree had fallen or the insulator had come unattached from the tree. This next image shows the type of insulators, with wiring still attached, that we found in the area of the Kempei-tai.



Photograph of Communications Insulator near Air Raid Shelter

Document/Images/Insulator.jpeg

© M. Osborne 2009

Personnel Quarters Areas

Near the top of the hill were located five flat man-made cleared areas that were determined to be the quarters, or billeting, area for the Kempei-tai personnel. Each of these areas was approximately 12' X 12' in size, built into the side of the hill and flat with what appeared to be distinct flattened paths leading to each of these areas. The following Google Earth image displays the location of the five billeting (blue) areas and the nearby Air Raid Shelters (red) along with the foxhole placements.

Analysis of Kempei-tai Headquarters Area

When the team exited the jungle straight toward the Compact Road we came out just 30 feet from where the vehicles were parked. Later, after discussing the Compact Road with Jolie Liston, an archeologist who has worked under contract for the Palauan Government, we learned that the paved area we had parked on was actually paved to indicate where war-era roads were still visible when the Compact Road was built. This indicates that this paved area was almost certainly the entrance to the Kempei-tai Headquarters during the war.

Locating the foxholes, billeting areas and the two caves in the middle of the jungle area proved that the area was occupied by the Japanese military. Searching near the bottom of the northern side of the hill we came across additional indications of military occupation. This would fit well with several of the hand-drawn maps indicating where the Sumida Unit Headquarters would have been located.

As a witness for the prosecution in the trial for the murder of the missionaries and Hondonero family members, Superior Private KUMAGAI stated the following:

Q: Is it correct that you did not ride from the Sumida Unit to the Kempei-tai?

A: That is so. The distance from the Sumida Unit was approximately one hundred meters. The Sumida Unit was located at the bottom of the hill which led up to the Kempei-tai.

This statement clearly indicated that the Kempei-tai were located on a hill with the Sumida Unit at the bottom of the hill, exactly as we found the occupied areas. This, along with one of the cave-like features being clearly identified as the Air Raid Shelter displayed in NAKAGAWA's map, indicated that this area was indeed the area used as the Kempei-tai Headquarters from July through September 1944. Lt(jg) HALLER's nearly exact .7 mile distance finalized our analysis and allowed us to now focus on searching Execution Site Area A next.

XIV. Access to the Ridge Road

Access to the ridge road was most easily gained by using the only war-time road still recognizable. This road was located at mile marker 7 of the Compact Road. The team entered the road in our vehicles and proceeded about 300 meters up the road towards the top of Gasupan Hill. Water runoff had washed out portions of the road near the top and so we were forced to park our vehicles and walk the remaining distance to the top.



Photograph of Washout Near Top of Present Day Gasupan Hill Ridge Road

Document/Images/RidgeRoad.jpeg

Team Members L-R: F. Colmer, P. Scannon

© W. Hylton 2009

Note: Although there were several other areas of the ridge road that had washout similar to the above photograph, vehicular access could be gained for the full length of the ridge road with minimal grading work.

Once on top of the ridge, we could see that the road that follows the ridge was still visible although quite grown over with vegetation over the years. The following image shows the general condition of the ridge road today.



Photograph of Present Day Gasupan Hill Ridge Road

Document_Images/RidgeRoad.jpeg

Team Members L-R: J. Maldangesang, F. Colmer, P. Schwimmer, R. Smith

© W. Bruce 2009

XV. Evidence of the Execution Site

After walking the nearly 1200 meters along the ridge road, we arrived at Primary Execution Site Area A. From that vantage point on top of the ridge we could look westward across the valley towards the Kempei-tai Headquarters area and see the jungle area nearly directly across from where we were standing. The area between Area A and Area B was overgrown with knee-high brush and probably had not changed much since the war. One testimony statement noted that they parked the vehicles in the grassy area off of the road. This area seemed to fit that statement.

Ammunition Burn Area

Located outside of the northwestern corner of Area A was found an area where small arms ammunition and possible mortar rounds were burned. Nearby was found a 55 gallon drum that had been used as the container for the burning. This was indicated by finding lead from the bullets still located at the bottom of what remained of the rusting drum. The following two images show the general vicinity of the burn area and the types of ammunition casing found in the area.



Photograph of Small Arms Burn Area Outside Area A

Document_Images/AmmoBurn1.jpeg

© W. Bruce 2009



Photograph of Mortar Head Outside Area A

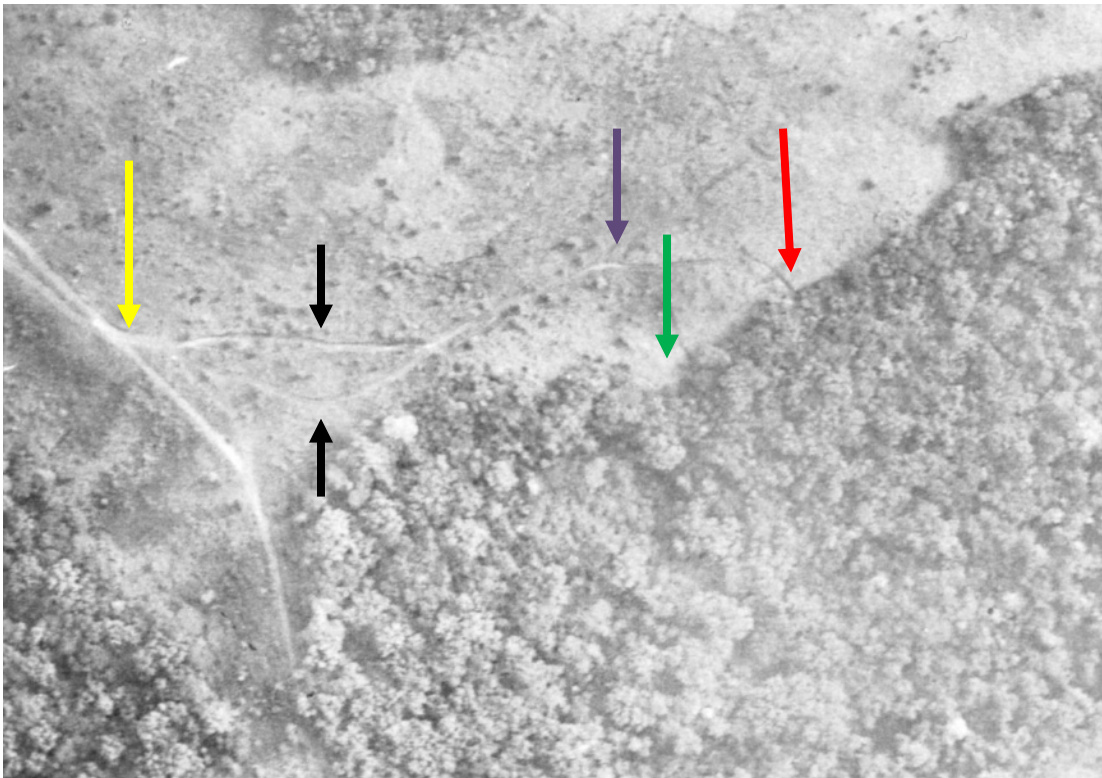
Document_Images/AmmoBurn2.jpeg

© M. Osborne 2009

The mortar head show above was approximately 4-5 inches long. There were no indications that the drum or general area was used to cremate any human remains as was indicated in several testimony statements. According to those statements, on the last day of the war a team of about thirty Kempei-tai assembled, dug up the remains of the missionaries, aviators and Smith and then cremated them by burning the remains. However, the burn-area should not be overlooked and should be considered as a possible area for the cremation if the statements of cremation are considered to be plausible.

Roads Leading from Main Ridge Road with Footpaths into the Jungle

The roads leading from the main Gasupan Hill ridge road and parallel with the northern side of Area A were almost unrecognizable today. Looking at the following image dating to July 1944, one can see where the vehicles could have parked (yellow arrow) that would fit well with the testimony statement "*the persons who followed after came through another road*". In the image below, two small roads (black arrows) on the north side of Area A lead from the ridge road and into the jungle at two places (green arrow and red arrow) in what could have only been walk-paths. It is also worth noting that the distance from the yellow arrow to the red arrow below is approximately 200 meters, matching several testimony statements.



Photographic Imagery of Area A and Small Roads Leading into the Jungle

1944_Bishop_Imagery\SP 200762.tiff

Source: Bishop Museum

It was the opinion of the team that there were indeed vehicle tracks on the roads (black arrows) leading off of the main ridge road and up to approximately where the purple arrow is indicated. However, beginning near the purple arrow the road turns into what could have only been foot paths that led down and into the jungle, quite possibly used to haul ammunition into the jungle from the vehicles that had parked on the road. While we did not specifically find the entry point marked with the red arrow above, we did find what appeared to be a water runoff area near the entry area marked by the green arrow.

Possible Execution Site of Charlie Smith

At that point the team formed a straight line along the western side of the jungle nearest the ridge road and began a slow and coordinated walk through the jungle. War crimes testimony statements indicated that Charlie Smith was executed near the edge of the jungle in an area much like a former Air Raid Shelter. Shortly after entering the jungle we found an area that seemed to match the Air Raid Shelter as described in the testimony for Charlie Smith's execution. About 10 meters inside of the jungle was found a dug-out area along the top edge of the ravine. This area was identified as GPS waypoint QA AMMO A. The following image displays that dug-out area as viewed from above.



Photograph of Possible Execution Site for Charlie Smith

Document_Images/SmithAirRaidShelter.jpeg

Team Members L-R: R. Smith, J. Liston, P.Scannon

© M. Osborne 2009

There was significant vegetation growth around the top of the hole, but limited small growth around and inside of the hole. The area was approximately 8' X 8' in size with the center appearing to be slightly dug out and deeper than the sides. Three team members are shown above, all inside of the area of the hole. The area was scanned with a metal detector with significant hits being detected around the perimeter of the hole.

Back at the top and edge of the jungle two 55 gallon drums were found. The first was approximately 20 feet south of the area identified as Smith's possible execution site. The second drum was located another 50 feet south of the first drum. Both drums were rusted out and of no significant importance other than indication of military occupation.

Probable Ammunition Storage Areas

Within Area A we also found nine nearly identical flat areas approximately 12' X 12' in size. These areas, identified with the prefix QA AMMO below, are generally built along the outer edges of the northern side of Area A along the upper edge of the valley area that comprises Area A.

These flat areas appeared to match closely Corporal NAKAGAWA's following statement describing the execution jungle:

"In the jungle where the hole was dug, ammunition of the Ordnance Department was piled up in ten or more places."

Along the edge of several of the flat areas were found what appeared to be unexploded ordnance (UXO) of various sizes. This UXO possibly confirms that the flat areas were indeed the ammunition storage places noted by NAKAGAWA.

Note: BentProp team member Paul Schwimmer, a UXO expert, coordinated all searches within Area A according to a strict UXO protocol in order to ensure maximum team safety. Additionally, on 6 March 2009, BentProp accompanied Palau UXO expert Mr. Thomas Bathory into Area A in order to ensure transfer of knowledge of the UXOs to the appropriate ROP authorities.

Probable Original Hole for Smith Execution

In the investigation statement²³ of Gunzuko UEMURA it was known that the original hole dug for Smith's execution was unable to be found when the time came to execute Smith.

"I immediately went into the mountain and I believe more than an hour passed with me being unable to locate any trace of the hole and also not being able to figure the way out."

Captain NAKAMURA confirmed that they did not find the original hole with his statement²⁴:

*"I told AJIOKA, if the hole cannot be found, let us use this hole."
"The hole looked like an old air raid shelter about two meters square."*

While searching Area A we found a hole that appeared much like a foxhole with the "fill-dirt" still lying on the side of the hole facing the center of the ravine. While it could be considered normal to find fill-dirt on the side of a normal foxhole to be used as protection against incoming small-arms or artillery fire, this hole was different. In the entire Area A jungle was only found two holes that appeared to be much like foxholes, only one of them with fill-dirt still on the outer edges. These holes were not in any formation to indicate a normal protective perimeter. It was the opinion of team members that this was highly like the original hole dug for the execution of Charlie Smith.

Analysis of Execution Site Area A

After investigating Area A we found that the area was formed by a ravine with a sloping down elevation on the north side and then sloping up on the south side. According to the testimony statement²⁵ of Sgt YAMADA, the execution area consisted of a slope down and then a steep rise.

"After walking a little way they entered into a forest area. There was a hill sloping down and also a steep rise."

Additionally, TAMAMOTO stated²⁶ the following description of the jungle.

"The spot where the missionaries were executed was sort of like a ravine."

Given that all of the evidence appears to match the testimony, the overall analysis of BentProp team members is that Area A is indeed the area where the executions of the six missionaries, three unknown American aviators and Charlie Smith occurred.

XVI. Evidence of Possible Final Burial Location

There are several theories as to what ultimately happened to those executed. Some testimony clearly states that the corpses were dug up, burned and then buried nearby. Other testimony states that they were dug up, cremated and the ashes buried in a jungle nearby. And lastly, there is the theory that they

²³ 470813_Uyemura_Statement.pdf

²⁴ 470723_Nakamura_Statement2.pdf

²⁵ 471112_Yamada_Statement.pdf

²⁶ Undated_Tamamoto_Statement.pdf

were never dug up and remain in their original execution holes. Because unexploded ordnance was found in Area A, BentProp did not conduct a detailed analysis of this area. Since conducting excavations is not in our scope of work, we chose to investigate and attempt to validate Corporal Nakagawa's map which shows the remains being buried 100 meters to the North from where they were burned. The northern edge of Area A is approximately 115 meters away from the southern edge of Area B. So, this seemed a good fit for that theory. However, since Area B is also nearly directly across from the Kempei-tai Headquarters area, we felt the need to investigate it for the possibility that it could have been the execution jungle. We decided to start on the northern side of Area B and search it for indications of execution sites much like we did in Area A. After searching the northern side, we would then move to the southern side and search for indications of final burial locations.

Multiple Historic Stone Mounds Found in Area B North

Shortly after entering the northern side of Area B we came across nine stone mounds which consisted of mounds of dirt covered with stones about 6-8" in size. On a subsequent trip to the same mounds with Ms. Jolie Liston, Palau Archeologist, it was determined that the mounds were indeed historic and estimated by Ms. Liston to date to the period somewhere between the late 1800s and World War II. Four hypotheses were developed by the team as to why the mounds were there. The first hypothesis was simply that they were Palauan graves dating to pre-World War II. The second hypothesis was that they were the graves of Japanese soldiers killed during the war. The third hypothesis was that they were American POW graves, possibly those other than the three aviators known to have been executed. And the last hypothesis was that after the war local farmers had dug up the unmarked graves of those executed and subsequently buried them again in the jungle area with marked graves.

The following image shows one of the mounds as it appears today.



Photograph of Stone Covered Grave in Area B North

Document_Images/Grave.jpeg

© W. Bruce 2009

A thorough search of the northern part of Area B found no indications of the execution site as described in any of the testimony statements.

Multiple Depressions in Area B South

After investigating the northern part of Area B we moved around and to the southern side of Area B to search for indications of possibly final burial depressions. In this area we came across several generally flat areas that seemed to not be normal for the general surroundings. Ms. Liston also viewed these areas and determined that there was nothing to indicate to her that they were graves or depressions. Closer to the southwestern corner of Area B South we found two areas that were definite depressions with squared off corners. The first depression was 2 meters by 2 meters in size with a small 6" depression. The following image shows this depression.



Photograph of 2X2 meter depression in Area B South

Document_Images/QBHOLEB.jpeg

Team Member: P. Scannon

© M. Swank 2009

A second depression, nearly exactly matching Corporal Nakagawa's drawing of the final burial hole and L-shaped, was also found within the southwestern edge of Area B. Another very important feature of this depression was the fact that it still had some fill-dirt lying to the eastern edge of the hole which could be expected if fourteen sets of remains were placed into a hole and it was then filled in with remaining dirt.

The following image shows that L-shaped hole with two team members inside the taped area encompassing the depression. Notice the fill-dirt to the left of the image.



Photograph of 3.5 meter X 2 meter L-shaped depression in Area B South

Document_Images/QBHOLEA.jpeg

Team Members L-R: P. Schwimmer, P. Scannon

© M. Osborne 2009

Multiple Manmade Holes Just Outside of Area B South

Lastly, the team felt it was important to walk the area outside Area B looking for depressions as this would place the distance to Area A closer to the 100 meter reference used by Corporal NAKAGAWA. Just outside Area B, and approximately 20 meters in the direction of Area A, the team found three separate man-made square holes. These holes were found in 5-ft-high fern grass by walking in a line formation along the outer edge of the jungle. None of these holes were deep enough to be foxholes. One possible explanation for the existence of these holes would tie them to the graves theory of farmers digging up and then re-burying the remains. The following picture shows the height of the grass in this area.



Photograph of Fern Grass Outside Area B South Near Multiple Man-made Holes

Document/Images/Grass_Outside_Area_B.jpeg

Team members L-R: R. Smith, P. Scannon, K. Rasdorf, P. Schwimmer, M. Swank, M. Osborne, W. Bruce
© F. Colmer 2009

Analysis of Final Burial Location

The team analysis of Area B was that there were multiple areas that require further analysis or possible excavation. Because of the high fern grass and the imprecise method by which those holes were discovered, a further search of the area between Area A and Area B should be performed with more accurate methods of search. One such method would be to perform a controlled burn of the fern grass and then to look for depressions.

XVII. Search and Analysis of Areas C, D and E

Areas C, D and E were searched for any evidence that would match the war crimes testimony. While no evidence was found in Area C indicating any occupation, we did find cooking pots in two areas in Area D that indicated some minor occupation. Neither foxholes nor depressions were found in Areas C and D. It was determined by the team that neither Area C nor Area D was a possible execution or final burial location.

In Area E was found several foxholes and other larger holes along the ridge road edge of the jungle area. The larger holes had the appearance of Air Raid Shelters. In one specific area near the bottom of the valley and near a stream we found a tree that had four insulators attached to it. These multiple insulators indicated that communication lines were coming from multiple locations. It could be assumed that a headquarters dispensary would have communication lines from all units in the area. All along that stream could be found foot path areas that were easily identified by our master guide. The image below shows the insulators in the tree.



Photograph of Multiple Insulators in Area E Near Suspected Sumida Unit Dispensary

Document/Images/Area_E_Insulators.jpeg

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While we did not specifically find any flat areas that could have been indicative of the Sumida Unit Dispensary, it was felt that considerable evidence was found to indicate that this area was indeed the area where the Sumida Unit Dispensary was located.

Overall Analysis and Recommendations

Overall, the POW Mission portion of P-MAN XI was a success. BentProp is confident that the location of the Kempei-tai Headquarters area as occupied in July thru September 1944 has been located and confirmed. Also, it is highly likely that the area where the Sumida Unit Dispensary was located was found in Area E. After analyzing all of the evidence, it is also the opinion of BentProp that Area A is the area where at least fourteen, and quite possibly more, POWs were executed in 1944 by the Japanese Kempei-tai and possibly the 45th Naval Guard Unit on Palau.

The testimony clearly indicates that the bodies of those executed were exhumed on 15 August 1945, burned, and then the bones were buried near or just inside the southern edge of Area B. There exists enough evidence to warrant search and excavations of both Area A and the stone mounds and depressions in and outside of Area B. These have been forwarded to JPAC for consideration.

Lastly, pending a search and excavation of Areas A and B, the author acknowledges the possibility that some of the unaccounted POWs were executed by the 45th Naval Guard Unit in an area other than the Gasupan Hill area and as such further investigation may be required to validate or invalidate this possibility.