



The
BentProp™
Project



MISSION STATEMENT: A team of select self-funded volunteers, each with essential expertise (eg, history, aviation, diving, navigation), who are dedicated to finding and assisting with identifying Americans missing in action from WWII. Our primary focus is on locating sites containing MIAs (including POWs) and missing aircraft within the Palau Islands. We coordinate and report our activities with all appropriate authorities in Palau and the United States.

PALAU – MARINES + ARMY AIR FORCE + NAVY
Mission XIIIb (PMAN-XIIIb)
19 March to 15 April 2011

Final Mission Report

Prepared by:
Derek Abbey
Mission Leader
BentProp Project
21 February 2012

P-MAN XIIIb Final Report

I. Team Members:

1. Patrick Scannon MD, PhD: Team Leader (California, USA)
2. Derek Abbey: Mission Leader (North Carolina, USA)
3. Joe Maldangesang: Master Guide Boat Captain (Palau)
4. Flip Colmer: P-MAN XIIIb Mission Coordinator: Naval Historian, Aviation Expert, Photographer and Former Diving Instructor (Michigan, USA)
5. **Daniel T. O'Brien: PMAN XIIIa Mission Leader and Navigator:** (California, USA)
6. Major Warren Bruce: Safety Officer and Navigator: USMC active duty: Aviation Expert (California, USA)
7. Molly Osborne: Navigator: (Arizona, USA)
8. Captain Casey Doyle*: Documentation and Photography USMC active duty: (Virginia, USA),
9. Wesley Abbey*: Operations (California, USA)
10. Jolie Liston: Archeologist (Palau) – part time

* First mission to Palau

II. Introduction to Findings and Events

PMAN XIIIb was the second of two missions to Palau by the BentProp Project this year. PMAN XIIIa, the first of the two missions, was entirely focused on the performing Side Scanning Sonar (SSS) and other water activities associated with SSS. PMAN XIIIa was able to gather a large amount of data for follow on analysis and action in future missions to include PMAN XIIIb. PMAN XIIIb once again expanded to include water, land, and air operations. PMAN XIIIb was a traditional month long in duration. This year the team decided to move the mission one month later in the year, beginning in March vice February. While ten members participated in PMAN XIIIb, the average strength of the team in country at any one time was five members. All of our members have varying professional careers and commitments, which sometime limit the time they have available to spend in Palau for the annual missions.

PMAN XIIIb included two new members, Casey Doyle and Wesley Abbey. Casey is an **active duty Marine Corps Captain and the grandson of SSG Jimmy Doyle who's B-24** was located by the BentProp Project in 2004. The crew of that aircraft were recovered over the span of three missions to Palau by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), repatriated back to the United States, and identified. Since then all have been memorialized, culminating in a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in April 2010. The President of Palau and several Palauan dignitaries attended and participated in this ceremony. Casey is the first member of the BentProp Project to be related to a former

service member declared Missing in Action (MIA). He brings a wealth of knowledge and a fresh outlook to the team.

At the time of the mission Wesley was a high school student in California and an accomplished wrestler. He is the son of member Derek Abbey and at 18 is the youngest member to participate with the team. As well as fresh outlook to the team, he contributes fresh legs, a strong back, and a youthful spirit. The rest of the members participating in PMAN XIIIb have participated in multiple missions with the BentProp Project.

The daily routine of the team starts with a daily brief covering the activities of the day followed by gear preparation. Prior to the beginning of the daily mission the team reviews the gear and safety checklists appropriate to the activities being conducted that day. Upon completion of the mission the team members gather to conduct a debrief. The team discusses information gained and the practices used that day. Using this information as well as previous planning and information, the team verifies the mission and activities for the following day and conducts any preparation required.

As is always the case, the BentProp Project recognizes that we are working within the independent and sovereign boundaries of the nation of Palau. We ensure to make all required correspondence and attain authorization and permit for all of the activities we pursue, from the President and his staff, government offices, state and local officials, landowners, and tribal authorities. This preparation was done prior and during PMAN XIIIa for both missions. Follow up courtesy visits were done for verification and updates at the beginning and during PMAN XIIIb. It is with great gratitude that the BentProp Project continues to work with and share the information that it garners from these missions with the people and leadership of Palau.

The primary goal of the BentProp Project is locate Americans missing in and around Palau since World War II [NOTE: specifically designated as Missing-in-Action (MIA), Body Not Recovered (BNR), including Prisoners-of-War (POW)] so that they will ultimately be identified and repatriated back to the United States. Because of this we also report our findings and coordinate our activities with the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC), the U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA), and the Embassy of the United States of America in Palau. Each of the above Palauan and American offices receive a full report of our findings. These official reports are available upon request for other appropriate agencies. The BentProp Project makes every effort to share information in support of our mission of locating these long last Americans, but we also understand the sensitivity of much of the information gathered and maintain that information in a confidential/for official use manner.

III. Summary of Findings (Attachments with details for each event follow below):

1. Permitting Process:

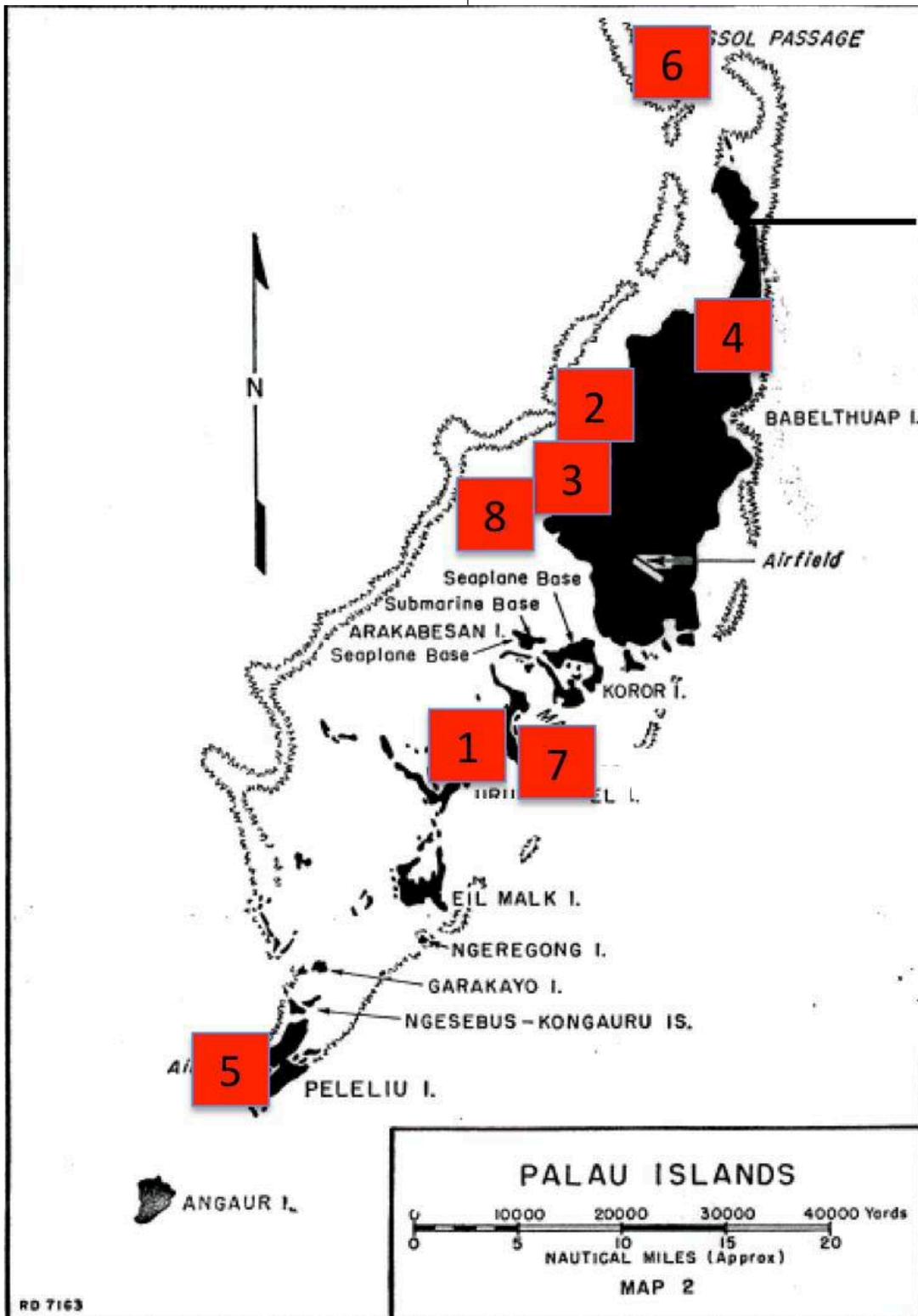
The BentProp Project attained all permits and permissions during PMAN XIIIa. Courtesy calls verification was conducted with the Bureau of Arts and Culture, the President Toribiong, Koror State Office, the US Embassy to Palau, the US Civic Action Team, and all appropriate governors.

2. Objectives:

The objectives of the BentProp Project during PMAN XIIIb were determined prior to the team traveling to Palau. Prior to the mission members of the team gathered in California to conduct pre mission planning. Using information from PMAN XIIIa and previous missions, as well as research conducted in United States, the team members produced a mission proposal that included eight new and previously discovered targets. These targets and possible targets were both land and water based. They spanned the length of the entire nation of Palau from Kossel Passage to the North to the Southern tip of Peleliu. The map below depicts the locations of these targets and is followed by a short description of each:

P-MAN XIIIb PREMISSION INDIVIDUAL TARGET DESCRIPTIONS:

Map 1



Target 1. Information provided by Palauans points to a possible American aircraft crash site on Ngeruktabel. This is a return visit to expand search area.

Target 2. Returning to a previously known American aircraft crash site in Ngatpang to gather more information for presentation to JPAC for follow on recovery missions.

Target 3. Returning to a previously known American aircraft crash site in Aimeliik to gather more information for presentation to JPAC for follow on recovery missions.

Target 4. Possible new target in Ngiwal. Information provided by Palauans through interviews.

Target 5. Sunken American landing craft possibly associated with MIAs off the shore of Peleliu.

Target 6. Information provided by Palauans points to possible American aircraft crash site in Kossol Pass. This is a return visit to expand search area.

Target 7. Information provided by Palauans points to possible American aircraft crash site East of Malakal Harbor. This is a return visit to expand search area.

Target 8. Information gathered from previous BentProp missions points to possible American aircraft crash site in the waters to the Northwest of Aimeliik. This may be related to a known TBM 1c Avenger wing discovered by the BentProp Project on a prior mission.

3. PMAN XIIIb Key Events (Each of which is described in a separate Attachment)

1. New. (Target 5) Finding, partially identifying, and documenting one new site of a sunken American Landing Craft off the of Peleliu. The status of the crew and passengers remains unknown (22MAR11, 26MAR11, 6APR11, 9APR11)

2. New. (Target 4) Finding and documenting evidence of Japanese presence in Ngiwal (20MAR11, 28MAR11).

3. New. Finding and documenting aircraft debris on a northeast beach of Ngeruktabel (10APR11)

4. Revisit (Target 3) Further documentation and mapping of the debris field of a Marine Corsair likely associated with an MIA in the Ngatpang jungle. This Corsair was located by the BentProp Project during PMAN XII (19MAR11).

5. Revisit. (Target 2) Further documentation and mapping of the debris field of a Marine Corsair likely associated with an MIA in the mangrove swamp on the

coast of Ngeremlengui. This Corsair was located by the BentProp Project during PMAN IX (24MAR11, 7APR11).

6. Revisit. Returned to possible burial site of executed prisoners to gather further data using a metal detector (11APR11).

7. No Find. (Target 1) Returned to Ngeruktabel in search of an aircraft crash site previously reported by eyewitnesses (31MAR11).

8. No Find. Using SSS data gathered from PMAN XIIIa and SCUBA dove two points to in an attempt to identify objects on the lagoon bottom (8APR11).

9. No Find. (Target 8) Conducted Side Scanning Sonar and SCUBA diving to the northwest of Aimeliik in search of possible American crash site. (29MAR11, 2APR11, 3APR11).

10. No Find. Searched the land and waters off of Ngeruktabel in the vicinity in search of suspected crash site (10APR11, 12APR11).

11. No Find. Searched Northwest region of Ngeruktabel with eyewitness of crash site (10APR11).

12. No Find. Searched area within Kossol Passage for the possible crash site of what is believed to be a TBM Avenger (25MAR11, 13APR11).

13. No Find. Using eyewitness searched the Eastern reef Northeast of Peleliu for possible crash site (9APR11).

14. Ancient Sites. Along with Jolie Liston found and documented what is believed to be a newly discovered ancient terrace and altar (28MAR11, 5APR11).

15. New Interviews. Many other American aircraft lost over Palau have never been found. Accordingly, the P-MAN XIIIb team continued to request and conduct videoed interviews (with permission) with Palauans to seek information leading to additional crash sites, MIAs or POWs.

16. Chised. For the first time the BentProp Project was featured on the TV show Chised filmed in Palau. This broadcast informed the local populace about the mission of the team and had a positive impact on the mission (6APR11).

17. Vandalism. Discovery of vandalism to protected items was documented and formally reported to HPO.

18. Reporting. Preliminary findings of PMAN XIIIb were delivered to the Palau Historical Preservation Office, Palauan Office of the President, JPAC and US Embassy of Palau (14APR11)