

~~WAR~~ DEPARTMENT of the Army:
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

APP 119

TO:

Chief, Naval Personnel,
Navy Department.

The Commandant, U.S. Marine
Corps.

FINISHED FILE 5322

1. The person inquired about
in the attached communication has
not been identified on any casualty
list received in the War Department
to this date.

2. The inquirer has been in-
formed of this reference.

Edward F. Witsell

EDWARD F. WITSELL

Major General

The Adjutant General of the Army

WD AGO FORM 0698
1 MAR 1945

PREVIOUS EDITIONS ARE
OBSOLETE.

24-71718

DECLASSIFIED
Authority *4ND 963019*

HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE
CHINA ZONE

GER/mcj

PO
APO 917
28 Oct 47

File Ref: Case No. 371

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal

TO: The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D; C.

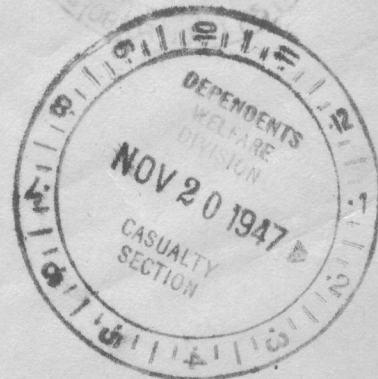
Transmitted herewith is copy of Casualty Clearance and Case Review of AGRS-CZ Case No. 371 for your information and files.

FOR THE CHIEF OF ZONE:

W. M. Michel
W. M. MICHEL
Capt AC
Adjutant

Incl:
Casualty Clearance

FINISHED FILE 5322



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TO: The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.

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FOR THE CHIEF OF ZONE:

W. M. MICHEL
Capt AC
Adjutant

Incl:
Casualty Clearance



HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE
CHINA ZONE

GER/ln

APD 917
24 Oct 47

File ref: Case No. 371

SUBJECT: Casualty Clearance

TO : The Quartermaster General, Washington 25, D. C.
ATTENTION: Memorial Division

1. On the basis of the attached findings and recommendations by a board of officers appointed to review casualty clearances, it is recommended that the status of:

✓ BROOKS, Edward W.	AAMT 1/c	0632185
✓ GRANER, Robert E.	Lt. (Jg)	314881
✓ HULLICK, Donald C.	AAMT 2/c	7111135
✓ LONG, Walter I.	AOMG 2/c	7585438
✓ MARTIN, Alvin R.	Ensign	368864
✓ MOLIER, Robert C.	AOMS 1/c	6136088
✓ ORNOZ, Louis J.	AAMT 2/c	5637408
✓ RIGBY, Jackie B.	AOM 3/c	8394696
✓ SMITH, Leonal L.	AAMM 51/c	8861657
✓ SMITH, Carl R.	AAMT 1/c	6147061
✓ VOGELSBANG, Walter C.	Lt. (Jg)	240722
DAVIS, Harold R.	S 1/c	2931264

be amended to read: "Bodies recovered, identified as a Group, Not Individually".

2. It is further recommended that the dental charts of subject personnel be compared with the dental charts of the remains recovered for possible individual identification.

FOR THE CHIEF OF ZONE:

W. M. Michel
W. M. MICHEL
Captain AC
Adjutant

Inclosure:

Casualty Clearance and
Case review (14 copies)

cc: TAG

HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE
CHINA ZONE

GER/lm

APD 917
24 Oct 47

File ref: Case No. 371

SUBJECT: Casualty Clearance and Case review

PART I - INITIAL INFORMATION

The personnel listed below are recorded as having been the crew members of a Navy PB4Y-2LU type aircraft, Serial No. 59422, organization and base unknown, and were reported as having crashed near Lakli, Hainan Island, on 19 May 1945.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SERIAL NO.</u>
BROOKS, Edward W.	AAAF 1/c	6632185
CRANER, Robert B.	Lt. (Jg)	314881
HULICK, Donald C.	AAAF 2/c	7111135
LONG, Walter T.	AOAB 2/c	7585438
MARTIN, Alvin H.	Ens	368864
MOLTER, Robert C.	AOAB 1/c	6136088
ORONOZ, Louis J.	AAAF 2/c	5637408
RIGSBY, Jackie B.	AOAB 3/c	8394696
SMITH, Leonal L.	AAAF 1/c	8661657
SWIFT, Carl H.	AAAF 1/c	6147061
VOGELSANG, Walter C.	Lt. (Jg)	240722
DAVIS, Harold H.	S 1/c	2931264

PART II - CASE EVIDENCE

1. A report of investigation made by China Theater Search Detachment is attached as inclosure no. 1.
2. No other information relative to the crash of subject aircraft is available at this headquarters.

PART III - DISCUSSION

1. A Mr. Tang-shi, a laborer in the Sheklock iron mines reported that two (2) or three (3) months before the Japanese surrender, a four (4) engine bomber raided the iron mines and successfully bombed a warehouse at the mines. The plane was hit by Japanese anti-aircraft fire and crashed about ten (10) miles from the mines, in the mountains. No one was seen to parachute from the plane.

2. The wreckage of subject plane was identified by the numbers 59422 on the empennage. The wreckage was strewn over an area of at least seventy-five (75) yards and from all appearances it had exploded upon impact with the ground.

3. Five graves were found, marked with plain wooden crosses, but only a few segments of remains were found when the graves were opened.

4. An extensive search was made of the crash area for identification clues, but nothing was found.

5. The fact that the wreckage found was that of subject aircraft establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that the remains recovered near the scene of the crash are those of subject personnel.

PART IV - CONCLUSION

Based on the evidence contained in Parts II and III, it is concluded that the personnel whose names appear in Part I, died in a plane crash, resulting from enemy action, the bodies were recovered and identified as a group, not individually.

PART V - RECOMMENDATION

1. In view of the conclusions in part IV, and the evidence contained in Parts I, II, and III above, it is recommended that the status of the personnel whose names appear in part I, be amended to read: "killed in Action, bodies recovered, identified as a group, Not Individually".

2. It is further recommended that the dental charts of subject personnel be compared with the dental charts of the remains recovered for possible individual identification.

Harold L. Taylor

HAROLD L. TAYLOR, Capt, GMP, O-29694

W. M. Michel

W. M. MICHEL, Capt, AC, O-560231

John J. Stamm

JOHN J. STAMM, Capt, INF, O-1309859

1 Incl - Copy of rpt of Inves (CISD) dtd 20 Apr 46

C O P Y

HEADQUARTERS
CANTON SUB - DETACHMENT
CHINA THEATER SEARCH DETACHMENT

Canton, China
20 April 1946

SUBJECT: Report of Investigation and Recovery of Remains in Hainan Island

TO : Commanding Officer, China Theater Search Detachment, APO 971

1. Information pertaining to an American plane crash was received 29 March 1946 at Yulin, Hainan Island. The investigation was conducted by 1st Lt. William K. Patch, T/3 Edwin F. Vandenberg and Mr. Felix Seto, a special agent and interpreter hired by this headquarters.

2. The report was received from Mr. Tang Si (), a Hongkong Chinese who was a forced laborer brought to Hainan by the Japanese to work in the Sheklock Iron Mines (), which is located 40 kilos east of Bakli (108.45 - 19.10). An interview with Mr. Tang revealed the following:

Approximately two to three months before the Japanese surrender, a plane described as a large four-engined bomber had raided the Sheklock mine installation. After successfully combing a two hundred foot long warehouse the plane was hit by Japanese anti-aircraft and crashed about ten miles from the mines in the mountains. No one was seen to parachute from the plane.

3. On 30 March 1946 the investigating party proceeded to the town of Bakli by Jeep. General Chou Wei, Assistant Commander of the New 19th Division was contacted and the mission explained. While he was unable to furnish additional information about the crash, his assistance and cooperation in securing transportation to the Sheklock mines from Bakli proved extremely helpful. General Chou stated that the road was impassable, but there was a train that made the trip once weekly, the next one being scheduled for 1 April 1946. The necessary arrangements were made and personnel and jeeps were transported to Sheklock on this train.

4. Four hours later the team arrived at Sheklock, and Major Yang, Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, 57th Regiment, was contacted. He informed the group that the jeeps were useless as the terrain over which the team would have to travel to search the crash site was entirely mountainous and could only be traveled by foot. A mine worker by the name of Mr. Lo Ng () was summoned, who was reported to have helped bury the crash victims and would escort the recovery team to the site of the crash. It was learned that the trip was roughly ten miles each way over very rugged country, so it was decided to set out immediately in order to complete the mission before darkness. Major Yang detailed a platoon of soldiers to accompany the search party as a protective measure against banditry.

5. The scene of the crash was reached after two and one half hours of steady hiking. The location is approximately 108.50 - 19.12 about one quarter of a mile from the Bai Tan River. The plane proved to be a land based USN

report of investigation and recovery of remains in Hainan Island (cont'd)

bomber, serial #59422; the number found on the empennage of the crash. The plane had four engines and a single rudder. Although the investigation party was unable to ascertain what type of plane it was due to the extensiveness of the wreckage, it is believed to be a navy type B-24, known as a "Privateer". The only noticeable difference between the two planes is that the B-24 has a double rudder. The wreckage was strewn over an area of at least seventy-five yards square, as the plane had apparently exploded upon its initial impact. Five graves were found marked with plain wooden crosses, but according to Mr. Lo, the graves contained only a few remains as only pieces of the bodies were found. He did state, however, that he thought he buried the remains of seven or eight men. An extensive search was made over the crash area for identification clues, but to no avail.

6. The graves were then uncovered, and the remains exhumed. Mr. Lo's testimony as to the few remains proved true as only a few bone segments were recovered from the graves. An attentive look-out was kept for personal identification items, but none could be found.

7. Several persons were interviewed regarding this case, but all of them told practically the same stories, and that no one was seen to parachute. The Japanese war criminal suspects now held in Yulin were interrogated and the only information obtained was that they believed seven men were in the crash.

8. Our records show that on 19 May 1945, a navy plane Type PB4-2B0, #59422, was listed as missing over Hainan Island. The proximity of the plane number, date and place of crash establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that the remains recovered are those of the following men:

AMF1c	BROOKS, EDWARD W.	ASN 6632165
LT JG	CRANER, ROBERT E.	314881
AMM 2c	MULLICA, DONALD C.	7111135
AOME2c	LONG, WALTER I.	7585438
ENS	MARTIN, ALVIN R.	368864
AOMS1c	MOLLEN, ROBERT C.	6138088
AMMF2c	ORONOZ, LOUIS J.	5637408
AOM 3c	RIGSBY, JACALE E.	8394696
AMMS1c	SMITH, LEONAL E.	8661657
AMM1c	SWIFT, CARL H.	6147061
LT JG	VOGELSANG, WALTER C.	240722

9. Photographs of the crash area, plane number, and the grave site were taken and will be forwarded your headquarters when developed.

10. The remains have been placed in a single coffin, marked # 8 and shipped to US Graves registration Service in Shanghai, China by the US Navy from Yulin, Hainan Island on 6 April 1946.

IDENTIFYING CHINESE NAMES:

Tang Si _____ who reported the lead
Lo Ng _____ who helped bury the crash victims

/s/ William K. Patch
/t/ WILLIAM K. PATCH
1st Lt. Infantry
Commanding Officer

Incl. No. 1, to AGAS-UZ
Case No. 371

HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE
CHINA ZONE

APO 917
18 August 47

SPECIAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 132)

E-X-T-R-A-C-T

* * * * *

1. The following Board of Officers is established to review and act upon all cases pertaining to the identity of unknown remains and to review and determine in all cases, from evidence presented, the non-recoverability of remains:

Maj	ALVA R SMITH	0-324739	FA
Maj	EDWIN B WINTERLING	0-415593	IGD
Capt	HAROLD L TAYLOR	0-29694	CLP
Capt	WILLIAM M MICHEL	0-360231	AC
Capt	JOHN J STAMM	0-1309859	INF
Capt	JOHN W REDELFIS	0-469053	MC

Auth: Ltr AGAO-S 293.9 (27 Mar 47) D-M WDAGO Wash., D.C.
dtd 9 April 1947.

* * * * *

BY ORDER OF COLONEL KEARNEY:

W. M. MICHEL
Capt AC
Adjutant

OFFICIAL:

W. M. Michel

W. M. MICHEL
Capt AC
Adjutant