

DECLASSIFIED

Authority

NND 785095

By MS

NARA Date

7.30.03

RG 92 QM General
Correspondence. 1949-50
Entry 1894 A Box 547

Board Proceedings

QMMP 293 QRS Pacific

RESTRICTED

3d Ind

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Board Proceedings (420)

185
1/10/49

Dept. of the Army, OQMG, Washington 25, D. C., 18 February 1949

TO: Commanding Officer, American Graves Registration Service, Pacific Zone, APO 958, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, California

1. The definition of group burials contained in par 18 a, TM 10-281, is: "Group or mass burials are those burials (including inurnments) in separate graves, in one grave, or a combination of both, of the remains of two or more individuals whose identities as a group are partially or completely known beyond reasonable doubt but whose remains cannot be individually identified."

2. In formulating the above definition, it was discovered that the varying conditions under which it is desirable to consider remains as a group burial do not lend themselves to definition in specific terms. In general, the following are necessary characteristics of a group burial:

a. The total number of remains, or major portions thereof, on hand should closely approach the number of decedents represented by the group.

b. The evidence in the case should show conclusively that the remains of each decedent listed by name as a member of the group can not be presumed reasonably to be interred currently apart from the group burial.

c. The name of at least one decedent must be associated conclusively with the remains comprising the group.

3. In certain cases exceptions to the above-cited general rules are necessary. The Serpens Case referenced in par 4 of the preceding indorsement is a conspicuous exception; however, it is expected that the special circumstances involved in this case will not be duplicated in any other.

4. The term "group burial" was evolved primarily to apply to remains involved in air crashes and in fatalities of tank or other vehicular crews. It was not intended to apply in cases of large ship sinkings, and such cases should be considered as group burials only in exceptional circumstances on the approval of this office.

5. The cases listed in paragraphs 5 a, b, c and d of the preceding indorsement should not be considered as group burials, but should be processed on the following basis:

a. Segregate for individual burial all remains that can be individually identified.

Handwritten notes and stamps: "Pacific", "US Arizona", "US Serpens", "Waka Island", "USS Oklahoma".

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QUIMP 293 GRS Pacific

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b. Process the rest of the remains as individual unknowns or as groups of unknowns, depending upon whether the remains can be individually segregated.

c. Bury all individually segregated remains in individual caskets. Groups of unknowns which can not be individually segregated should be buried in the minimum number of caskets required in accordance with the physical bulk of the remains. It is understood that in some of these cases the remains consist only of skulls and fragmented bones. In such cases, where it is not possible to assemble a reasonably complete skeleton of any one individual--such as skull plus a substantial portion of the related shoulder and rib assembly and/or pelvic and leg bones--the skulls should be coningled with the fragmented bones and all buried in the minimum number of caskets.

6. The remains indicated in par 5 c of the preceding indorsement should be processed as group burials, as the term is interpreted above, provided that:

a. All individually identifiable remains are removed and processed separately.

b. The residual remains are determined to be all the recoverable remains of all the decedents known to be involved in the air crash.

7. Reply to the preceding indorsement has been delayed pending a conference with Lt. Colonel Harrie E. Hoxie of your headquarters, who is currently visiting this Office. The contents of this indorsement have been discussed with Colonel Hoxie.

FOR THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL:

1st ind 1-10-49

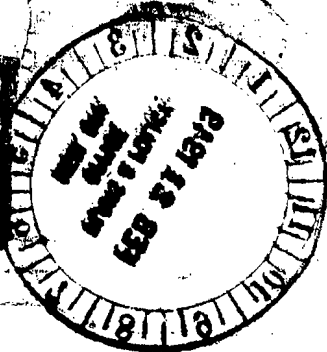
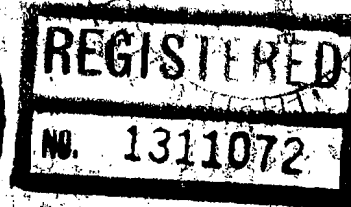
1 Incl n/c
Board Proceedings
No. 420, Pacific Zone

K. L. HASTINGS
Brigadier General, GMC
Chief, Memorial Division

MEMORIAL DIVISION
FEB 23 3 06 PM '49

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MAIL & RECORDS BRANCH
O. O. M. G.



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Folder: " 293 GRS
Pacific Boards

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FOR RECORD ONLY (Skaggs - 74692):

1. Second Ind. dated 26 Jan 49 from AGRS, Pacific Zone, referred to action by OCMG disapproving the recommendation of the Pacific Zone Board of Review that a large group of unknowns from Lone Palm Cemetery (Tarawa) be considered a group burial, and requested clarification of the term "group burial", with particular reference to:

- a. Wake Island unknowns (85 remains).
- b. Fornosa mass burial (400 remains).
- c. "USS Oklahoma" unknowns (375 remains).
- d. "USS Arizona" unknowns (160 remains).
- e. Numerous air crashes in former India-Burma Zone.

2. Correspondence was held by Identification Br. (Lt. Col. Metz) pending arrival in OCMG of Lt. Col. Hoxie, Deputy Chief, AGRS, Pacific Zone, on an official visit to this office. On 14 Feb 49 a conference was held on this matter; Col. Hoxie, Col. Metz (Ident Br.), Lt. Waite and Lt. Marsden (Navy Liaison Section) and Mr. Skaggs (Plans & Policy Office) attended. It was agreed that while the term "group burial" does not lend itself to an exact definition, it was not intended that it be applied to large-scale casualties such as those involved in ship sinkings. Rather, it was originally contemplated that the term would be applicable in the main to aircraft crew casualties and casualties involving tank and other vehicular crews, wherein there was clear evidence as to the identity of the personnel in the aircraft or vehicle at the time of the casualty action.

3. A related problem, as explained by Col. Hoxie, concerns the fact that the Wake Island remains consist of skulls and fragmented bones which can not be associated with any particular skull. With reference to casketing these remains, he inquired whether each skull should be interred separately in a casket, and all the fragmented bones placed in other caskets according to physical volume. This problem was discussed later with Col. Allen (Ops Br.), who stated that casket supply need not be the governing factor, however, in his opinion the skulls and fragmented bones should be comingled (after any identifiable cases had been removed) and interred in as few caskets as required by the volume of bones involved.

4. This action (3d Ind) explains the concept of "group burial" as understood in OCMG, and indicated the general outline of the processing to be done in the cases cited in par 1, above.

5. Concurrences:

O/Ident Br. (Lt. Col. Metz)
Ops Br. (Lt. Col. Allen)
Navy Liaison Sec (Lt. Waite, USN)

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Folder: "293 GRS"

Headquarters, American Graves Registration Service, Pacific Zone, APO 958,
26 January 1949

TO: The Quartermaster General, Department of the Army, Washington 25, D. C.

1. Each unknown deceased indicated in Exhibit 2, Board Proceedings 420, is hereby certified unidentifiable.

2. Board findings of non-recoverability for each deceased indicated in Exhibit 1, Board Proceedings 420, will be forwarded as quickly as administratively possible.

3. ~~Establishing that unidentified remains from Lone Palm Cemetery were properly buried in accordance with the policy of this Headquarters in the case of Tarawa. Since only the second burial service was carried out, all remains occurred in a limited area of approximately 1000 square yards within a period of ninety-six (96) hours, the First Board of Review was of the opinion that a strict interpretation of paragraph 10, AR 16-20, defining group burials, permitted no other~~

4. In view of your disapproval of this case, it is requested that the term "group burial" be re-defined in unequivocal language, establishing definitive limits beyond which remains will not be considered for group burial status. Attention is invited to your approval on 9 December 1948 of Board proceedings establishing a group burial of ~~thirty-two (32) unknown remains two hundred and fifty (250) persons killed aboard the USS Arizona.~~ Numerous approvals have also been received from your office in those cases of group burials in which only a small number of the total decedents involved were recovered.

5. The decision announced in First Indorsement appears to be a reversal of previous policy, inasmuch as the Tarawa case differs only in the number of persons involved. It is requested that formal announcement of the new policy be expedited as this Headquarters had contemplated the establishment of group burials in the following cases:

- a. Wake Island Unknowns. This case involves ninety-two (92) persons not yet accounted for, of which eighty-five (85) unidentified remains have been recovered.
- b. Formosa Mass Burial. This case involves approximately four hundred and twenty-five (425) persons not yet accounted for, of which approximately four hundred (400) unidentified remains have been recovered.
- c. USS Oklahoma Unknowns. This case involves approximately four hundred (400) persons not yet accounted for, of which approximately

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293 GRS

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Authority NND 785095
By MS NARA Date 7.30.03

RG 92 QM General
Correspondence. 1949-50
Entry 1894 A Box 547

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RRFXO 293 (7 Dec 48) 2d Ind (Cont'd)
SUBJECT: Transmittal of Board Proceedings (420)

three hundred and seventy-five (375) unidentified remains have been recovered.

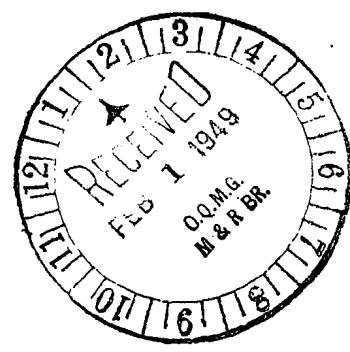
d. USS Arizona Unknowns. This case involves approximately one thousand (1,000) persons not yet accounted for, of which approximately one hundred (100) unidentified remains have been recovered.

e. Numerous air crashes in the former India-Burma Zone in which only partial remains of a few individuals, out of a crew and passenger list of twenty (20) to thirty (30) persons were recovered.

6. This Headquarters desires to emphasize that although the work involved in certifying remains as unidentifiable is considerably less than that necessary to establish a group burial, the impelling motive for establishing a group burial of the Tarawa Unknowns, and like cases, was the belief that such action was mandatory under previously established policy.

1 Incl
n/c

N. E. WALDRON
Colonel, OMC
Commanding



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1st Ind

QMGU 293
GRS Pacific
SUBJECT: Transmittal of Board Proceedings (420)

Department of the Army, OCMG, Washington 25, D. C., 10 January 1949

TO: Commanding Officer, American Graves Registration Service, Pacific
Zone, APO 958, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, California

1. Findings indicated in paragraph 3a(1) of Board Proceedings Number 420, your headquarters, are approved.
2. Findings indicated in paragraph 3a(2) of above referenced Board Proceedings are disapproved, and the unknown remains listed in Exhibit 2 will be designated as individual unknowns.
3. It is not the intent of this office to memorialize battles, engagements, events, etc., by the establishment of group burials of the only recoverable remains of large numbers of unaccounted-for deceased. If the subject case were approved as a group burial, it would then be necessary to consider similar cases involving large numbers of unaccounted-for deceased all over the world.
4. In view of the decision indicated above, it is requested that the following action be taken by your headquarters:
 - a. Submit to this office certificates of unidentifiability for each unknown deceased indicated in Exhibit 2.
 - b. Submit to this office appropriate Board Findings of non-recoverability for each deceased listed in Exhibit 1.

FOR THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL:

1 Incl: n/c

K. L. HASTINGS
BRIGADIER GENERAL QMC
Chief, Memorial Division

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Authority NND 785095
By MS NARA Date 7.30.03

RG 92 QM General
Correspondence. 1949-50
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HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE
(Pacific Zone)
APO 958

RRBOR 293

7 December 1948

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Board Proceedings (420)

TO: The Quartermaster General
Department of the Army
Washington 25, D. C.

Proceedings of a Board of Review with exhibits, concerning
the identification of Tarawa decedents, are transmitted herewith.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

1 Incl
BD 420 w/6 exhibits
atohd to orig (510 cys)

s/ HARRIE E. HOKIE
HARRIE E. HOKIE
Lt. Colonel, GMC
Deputy Chief

RESTRICTED

7 Bd. Proceedings

CGMH 293
GES Pacific

1st Incl

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Board Proceedings (420)

Department of the Army, CGMH, Washington 25, D.C., 10 January 1949

TO: Commanding Officer, American Graves Registration Service, Pacific Zone, APO 755, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, California

1. Findings indicated in paragraph 3a(1) of Board Proceedings Number 420, your headquarters, are approved.

2. Findings indicated in paragraph 3a(2) of above referenced Board Proceedings are disapproved, and the unknown remains listed in Exhibit 2 will be designated as individual unknowns.

3. It is not the intent of this office to memorialize battles, engagements, events, etc., by the establishment of group burials of the only recoverable remains of large numbers of unaccounted-for deceased. If the subject case were approved as a group burial, it would then be necessary to consider similar cases involving large numbers of unaccounted-for deceased all over the world.

4. In view of the decision indicated above, it is requested that the following action be taken by your headquarters:

a. Submit to this office certificates of unidentifiability for each unknown deceased indicated in Exhibit 2.

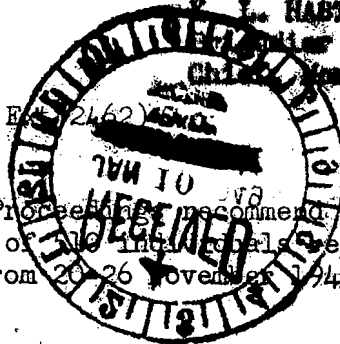
b. Submit to this office appropriate Board Findings of non-recoverability for each deceased listed in Exhibit 1.

FOR THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL:

1 Incl *n/s*

V. L. HASTINGS
Quartermaster General, GPC
Chief, Memorial Division

FOR RECORD ONLY: (MacFarland Ex 2462) MSVC



cc: [unclear]

JGH

1. Pacific Zone Board Proceedings recommend establishment of group burial of recoverable remains of 16 individual remains reported to have been killed or missing in action from 20-26 November 1943, in the battle of Tarawa.

VLC

EVF

293 GES Pacific
Tarawa

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Authority NND 785095
By MS NARA Date 7.30.03

RG 92 QM General
Correspondence 1949-50
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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D. C.
JAN 11 1949

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HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN GRADES REGISTRATION SERVICE

QMMD 293
GRS Pacific
SUBJECT: Transmittal of Board Proceedings (420)
1st Ind FOR RECORD ONLY (Cont'd) 10 Jan 49

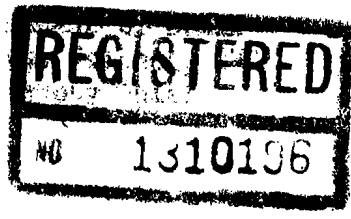
2. ~~Reference is made to the recommendation to establish a group of ...~~
~~... to identify and locate the graves of ...~~
~~... of the ...~~
~~... of the ...~~
~~... of the ...~~

Department of the Army
Washington 25, D. C.

CONCURRENCE JK Waite
Lt. Waite, USN
Navy Liaison Section

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JCH
VLO
EVF



MEMORIAL DIVISION

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IDENTIFICATION BRANCH

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HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE
(PACIFIC ZONE)
APO 968

In reply refer to:
HRCOR 293

7 December 1948

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Board Proceedings (420)

TO: The Quartermaster General
Department of the Army
Washington 25, D. C.

Proceedings of a Board of Review with exhibits, concerning
the identification of Tarawa decedents, are transmitted herewith.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

1 Incl
BP 420 w/6 exhibits
atcd to orig (510 cys)

HARRIE E. HOXIE
Lt. Colonel, QMC
Deputy Chief

1948 Dec 11

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M&R BR

DECLASSIFIED
 AUTHORITY NND 785095
 BY MS NARA DATE 7.30.03

RG 92 QM General
 Correspondence. 1949-50
 Entry 1894 A Box 547

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AFPO 888
 (PACIFIC ZONE)
 AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE
 HEADQUARTERS

OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL OF THE ARMY
INTRAOFFICE REFERENCE SHEET

DUE, HOUR AND DATE _____

1 NO.	2 FROM-	3 TO-	4 DATE	5 MESSAGE
1	Chief, Mem Div	Chief, Iden Br, Mem Div	5 Jan 49	<p>1. Findings submitted in Board Proceedings Number 420, Hqs., AGRS, Pacific Zone, are approved except that in findings (2) the unknown remains listed in Exhibit 2 will comprise a group of unknowns. It is considered neither proper nor logical to classify these unknowns as a group burial since the number of unknown remains (approximately 100) is too far removed from the number of decedents involved (approximately 500).</p> <p>2. In accordance with established Division policy (Information Bulletin No. 37, 1948), no memorialization of these unknowns will be provided.</p> <p>3. These unknowns are to be buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.</p> <p>1 Incl. Ltr AGRS (PZ) 7 Dec 48 w/incl.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">111 HASTINGS 5289</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Eto</p>

