

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

KNA 11/1

Phoenix Islands Group

G. E. I. C.

13/9/1.

M.P. No. ~~13/9/1.~~

1945

REPORTS AND RETURN.

SUBJECT:

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

UNCLASSIFIED.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS ON GARIMER ISLAND.

MINUTES.

LAST PAPER

Old File

No. 94

NEXT PAPER

24/12/2 13/9/1

M.P.

(Serial No

TELEGRAM.

From.. The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Is.,

To.. The Ag. Administrative Officer, C.G.I.D., Tarawa.

No.....

(1)

(Date) 23rd Sept., 1940.

Please obtain from Koata (Native Magistrate Gardner on way to Central Hospital) a certain bottle alleged to have been found near skull discovered on Gardner Island. Grateful you retain bottle in safe place for present and ask Koata not to talk about skull which is just possibly that of Amelia Earhardt.

Gallagher

TELEGRAM.

From The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Is.,

To The Resident Commissioner, Ocean Island.

No. 71

(2)

(Date) 23rd September, 1940

Some months ago working party on Gardner discovered human skull - this was buried and I only recently heard about it. Thorough search has now produced more bones (including lower jaw) part of a shoe a bottle and a sextant box. It would appear that

- (a) Skeleton is possibly that of a woman,
- (b) Shoe was a womans and probably size 10,
- (c) Sextant box has two numbers on it

3500 (stencilled) and 1542 - sextant being old fashioned and probably painted over with black enamel.

Bones look more than four years old to me but there seems to be very slight chance that this may be remains of Amelia Earhardt. If United States authorities find that above evidence fits into general description, perhaps they could supply some dental information as many teeth are intact. Am holding latest finds for present but have not exhumed skull.

There is no local indication that this discovery is related to wreck of the "Norwich City".

Gallagher.

M.P.

(Serial No

TELEGRAM.

From... The Administrative Officer, C.G.I.D., Tarawa Is.

To... The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Is.

No.....

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(Date)..... 30th Sept., 1940.

Your telegram 23rd September. Koata
has handed to me one benedictine bottle.

A.O.C.G.I.D.

TELEGRAM.

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From... The Resident Commissioner, G & E.I.C., Ocean Island.

To... The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Is....

No. 66

(Date) 1st October, 1940

Your telegram No. 71. Information has been passed on to the High Commissioner particularly with a view to identifying number of sextant box.

Information on following points, where possible, would be of interest:

- (a) How deep was skeleton buried when found,
- (b) How far from shore,
- (c) In your opinion does burial appear deliberate or could it be accounted for by encroachments of sand, etc.,
- (d) Is site of an exposed one (i.e. if the body of Mrs. Putnam had lain there is it likely that it would have been spotted by aerial searchers)?
- (e) In what state of preservation is shoe,
- (f) If well preserved does it appear to be of modern style or old fashioned,
- (g) Is there any indication as to contents of bottle.

Do you know anything of wreck of "Norwich City" - e.g. when did it take place, where any lives lost and how long were survivors marooned at Gardner Island?

Resident.

TELEGRAM.

(5)

From The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme.....

To The Resident Commissioner, Ocean Island.....

No. 72.....

(Date) 6th. October 194. 0

Your telegram No. 66.

- (a) Skeleton was not buried - skull was buried after discovery by natives(coconut crabs had scattered many bones),
- (b) 100 feet from high water ordinary springs,
- (d) Improbable,
- (e) Only part of sole remains,
- (f) Appears to have been stoutish walking shoe or heavy sandal,
- (g) "Benedictine" bottle but no indication of contents,

There are indications that person was alive when cast ashore - fire, birds killed, etc.,

"Norwich City" wrecked and caught fire 1930 or 1932. Number of crew sailed to Fiji in lifeboat, remainder picked up later at Gardner by "Palum". Think Board of Enquiry held Suva - loss of life not known. This information derived from gossip only.

Gallagher

TELEGRAM.

(6)

From The Secretary, Western Pacific High Commission, Suva.

To The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Is.

No. 1.

(Date) 15th October, 1940.

Confidential.

Please telegraph to me particulars of finding of skeleton in Gardner Island, including where found and state reason for believing it to be that of a woman and whether this belief based on anatomical characteristics. State dental condition and whether any evidence of dental work on jaw, length of skeleton from vertex of skull to arch of foot, approximate age and condition of bones and whether any hair found in the vicinity of skeleton.

What have you done with skeleton? It should be carefully cared for and placed in a suitable coffin and kept in secure custody pending further instructions.

Keep matter strictly secret for the present.

Secretary,
Western Pacific High Commission.

TELEGRAM.

7

From The Officer-in-Charge P.I.S.S., Gardner Island.

To The Secretary for the W.P.H.C., Suva.

No. 1.
Confidential.

(Date) 17th October, 1940.

Complete skeleton not found only skull, lower jaw, one thoracic vertebra, half pelvis, part scapula, humerus, radius, two femurs, tibia and fibula. Skull discovered by working party six months ago - report reached me early September. Working party buried skull but made no further search.

Bones were found on South East corner of island about 100 feet above ordinary high water springs. Body had obviously been lying under a "ren" tree and remains of fire, turtle and dead birds appear to indicate life. All small bones have been removed by giant coconut crabs which have also damaged larger ones. Difficult to estimate age bones owing to activities of crabs but am quite certain they are not less than four years old and probably much older.

Only experienced man could state sex from available bones; my conclusion based on sole of shoe which is almost certainly a woman's.

Dental condition appears to have been good but only five teeth now remain. Evidence dental work on jaw not apparent.

We have searched

We have searched carefully for rings, money and keys with no result. No clothing was found. Organised search of area for remaining bones would take several weeks as crabs move considerable distances and this part of island is not yet cleared.

Regret it is not possible to measure length of skeleton. No hair found.

Bones at present in locked chest in office pending construction coffin.

Gallagher.

M.P.

(Serial No

TELEGRAM.

8

From The Secretary for the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva,

To The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Island.

No.....2.....
Confidential.

(Date) 26th October, 1940.

Your telegram 17th October. Organised search should be made in the vicinity and all bones and other finds, including box, sextant and shoe, should be forwarded to Suva by the first opportunity for examination.

Secretary.

GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY.

9

Nikumaroro (Gardner) Island,
Phoenix Islands District,
27th December, 1940.

Confidential.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your confidential telegram No. 2 of the 26th. October, 1940, and to state that two packages are being handed to the Master, R.C.S. "Nimanoa", for eventual delivery to the High Commission Office in Suva. The larger of these packages is the coffin containing the remains of the unidentified individual found on the South Eastern shore of Gardner Island; the second package is the sextant box found in the immediate locality and contains all the other pieces of evidence which were found in the proximity of the body.

2. The fact that the skull has been buried in damp ground for nearly a year, whilst all the other bones have been lying above ground during the same period, was probably not apparent from previous correspondence,

but may be helpful in

The Secretary,

Western Pacific High Commission,

Suva - Fiji.

but may be helpful in determining the age of the bones. In spite of an intensive search, none of the smaller bones have been discovered and, in view of the presence of crabs and rats in this area, I consider that it is now unlikely that any further remains will be traced. A similar search for rings, coins, keys or other articles not so easily destroyed has also been unsuccessful, but it is possible that something may come to hand during the course of the next few months when the area in question will be again thoroughly examined during the course of planting operations, which will involve a certain amount of digging in the vicinity. If this should prove to be the case, I will inform you of the fact by telegraph.

3. Should any relatives be traced, it may prove of sentimental interest for them to know that the coffin in which the remains are contained is made from a local wood known as "kanawa" and the tree was, until a year ago, growing on the edge of the lagoon, not very far from the spot where the deceased was found.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd) Gerald B. Gallagher.

Officer-in-Charge,
Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme.

M.P.

(Serial No

TELEGRAM.

10

From..The Medical Officer..Tarawa Island.....

To.....The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Islands.....

No.....

(Date).....6th February, 1941....

I understand from the Master R.C.S.Nimanoa, that he has certain human remains on board consigned to Suva. As I am in charge of Medical and forensic investigation of such objects throughout the whole colony and have no knowledge of the matter, I presume that the package was intended to be consigned to myself?

Isaac.

M.P.

(Serial No

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TELEGRAM.



From... The Resident Commissioner, Ocean Island.

To... The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Is.

No.....3....

(Date).....7th February 1941....

Senior Medical Officer repeated to me his telegram to you regarding human remains addressed to Suva on "Nimanoa". I am informing him of position and there is no need for you to take further action.

Resident.

M.P.

(Serial No

TELEGRAM.

12

From..The Senior Medical Officer, Central Hospital, Tarawa.

To..The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Is.

No.....

(Date)....11th February, 1941...

Confidential.

For your information remains taken from "Nimanoa" part skeleton elderly male of Polynesian race and that indications are that bones have been in sheltered position for upwards of 20 years and possibly much longer.

Issac.

M.P.

(Serial No

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TELEGRAM.

13

From. The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Is..

To. The Senior Medical Officer, Central Hospital, Tarawa.

No.....

(Date) 11th February, 1941.....

Confidential

Your confidential telegram 11th February.

Many thanks - rather an anticlimax! ~~Personal should be delighted if you keep box but matter has been mentioned in private letter to High Commissioner who is interested in timber used and may ask to see it. It would be fun to make you one for yourself or perhaps a little tea table - we have a little seasoned timber left. Please let me know whether you prefer box or table and if former give any particular inside measurements.~~

Gallagher

M.P.

(Serial No

TELEGRAM.

14

From...The Senior Medical Officer, Central Hospital, Tarawa.

To...The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Is.

No.....

(Date)....14th February, 1941....

Your telegram 11th February. Confidential.
Matter became somewhat tense and complex after guillotine
conversation between us. As I had (and still have) no
information save presence of remains and therefore
guarantine fromno danger infection, I am still
wondering how wretched relics can be interesting.

Issac.

M.P. 94 /40

(Serial No

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TELEGRAM.

13

From...The Secretary for the Western Pacific High Commission, Suva,

To...The Officer-in-Charge, Phoenix Scheme, Gardner Island.

No.....2....

(Date)...28th April,.....194.1...

Confidential.

Your letter 27th December, Remains and
sextant box received, but no sextant. Did you forward sextant

Secoma.

TELEGRAM.

From: The Officer-in-Charge, P.I.S.S. Gardner Island,

To; The Secretary, Western Pacific High Commission, Suva.

Confidential.

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Date; 28th April, 1941.

Your telegram No 2. No sextant was found.
Only part discovered was thrown away by finder but was
probably part of an inverting eyepiece.

Gallagher

AGL
2/2