

No. 4439  
1940Sheet No. 1

(1)

Telegram from R. Cr., L. & L. Co., No. 348  
of 1.10.40. 2 2.10.40.

(2)

office,

Please attach file  
re search for Mrs. Putnam.

3.10.40.

(3)

His Excellency,

Submitted. A communication might be addressed to the U.S. Consul in Sydney, but, before doing so, I suggest that Mr. Gallagher should be asked by telegraph for full details, including, e.g., any indications of age of skeleton, approximate height of woman, and anything that might be useful for identification, such as condition of teeth, etc. If Your Excellency concurs, Dr. Macpherson would no doubt advise as to points that might be put to Mr. Gallagher. It would perhaps be useful to know where the skeleton was found, e.g. if on the beach it might be an indication of whether the body was washed ashore. Mr. Gallagher should also be asked to state what has been done with the skeleton, as it may be desired to forward it for identification purposes?

W. H. H. H.  
9.10.40.

(4)

el. P. 957/37  
attached 3.10.40.

(4)

Sec PL MAKE THESE ENQUIRIES

RE make these inquiries

telegraphically in the

meanwhile instructing the

RE to keep the matter secret.

AND GALLAGHER

10/10/40

(5)

Spoken with Dr. Macpherson  
on 10.10.40 and again today.

Telegram to Mr. Gallagher,  
No. 1 of 15.10.40, to be  
coded and sent, as drafted  
in consultation with Dr.  
Macpherson today.

M.

13.12.40.

(6)

Telegram to Ag. R.Cr., G. & E.I.C., No. 500

of 16.10.40, as drafted by the Secretary, coded

and sent by Mrs. Luccinelli.

Ok.

16.10.40.

(7)

Telegram from O.C., P.I.S.S., No. 1

Conf. of 17.10.40.

(8)

Central Medical Authority

What do you make of it?

Would it in your opinion be

consistent with the ascription

of the remains to Mrs. Sanhant?

10.10.40

(2)

Coded sent  
15.10.40  
PM.

(3)

(4)

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Sheet No. 2

1940.

(9)

Secretary, W.P.H.C.,

According to (4) no positive evidence of identification was found, and I am afraid the data available does nothing to establish the skeleton as that of Mrs. Putnam. It is unfortunate that the complete pelvis is not available as this would have done much to establish the remains as being those of a woman. It is unfortunate also that no evidence of dental work was found as this frequently affords a most valuable means of identification. Bones per se unless correlated with some known physical deformity or injury in the deceased (such as a healed fracture, etc.,) are of little value as regards identification, although of course sex and age can often be established.

2. I would suggest the bones be sent either to the Anatomical Department at the University of Sydney or to Fiji for farther examination, and that the search be continued with a view to discovering farther bones, personal trinkets, etc. Up till the present the number on the sextant case appears to afford the most hopeful means of identification. The instrument itself moreover, if a good one, should have engraved on it a number assigned either by the Bureau of Standards in the case of the United States or the National Physical Laboratory in the case of the United Kingdom. This number indicates as a rule the result of tests to ascertain various optical errors for which compensation requires to be made in using the instrument.

*J. A. Macpherson*  
Acting Central Medical Authority.  
23rd October, 1940.

His Excellency,

and (a),

Submitted with (4) and with a draft telegram to Mr. Gallagher for Y.E.'s. approval.

2. ? Perhaps a carefully worded letter should now be sent to the U.S. Consul-General in Sydney asking him to obtain a description of the sextant carried by Mrs. Putnam and any number or distinguishing mark on it?

26.10.40.

(5)  
(no 2 - 26.10.40)

(5) coded sent.  
26.10.40

Sec Dpt. Gen. appd.

2. 7. 82. Better I think  
await the arrival of the Rumours  
which may be the end of  
unfounded are liable to  
be spread. 26/10/40

(12)

BN 21. 12. 41.

Telegram from R. G. R., 2. 5. 9. 6. 6.

No. 75 of 11. 2. 41

(13)

12. 2. 41

His Excellency,

Submitted with (6), and with a draft telegram to the Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony for Your Excellency's consideration.

13. 2. 41.

(6)

(7) no 83,  
(bong. - 14. 2. 41.)

Back of 2.

No. 4439

Sheet No. 3

1940

.2.14.41

I have added a certificate

of the Central Medical Authority

to the file of the Central Medical School to

Dr. Hoodless.

I am sending you the file,

and the coffin to the Central Medical School to

(15)

BU. 27.2.41.

(8)

Telegram from R. G. L. E. J. G.

No 94 of 17.2.41.

(16)

18.2.41.

(9)

Telegram from R. G. L. E. J. G.

No 95 of 17.2.41.

(17)

18.2.41.

(10)

P. U. 3.4.41. (1) Letter from Officer in Charge,  
P. I. S. L., Gardner Island, Corp., of 27.12.40

(18)

25.3.41.

Asst. Secretary,

For necessary action.

28.3.41.

(19)

The Central Medical Authority,

We have spoken by telephone  
concerning this matter & I am sending you the file,  
& the coffin to the Central Medical School to  
Dr. Hoodless.2. H. E. will be glad if the bones may be  
examined & a report submitted in due course.

B. MacDonald.

Asst. Secy. W. P. H. C.

31.3.41.

MEDICAL DEPT.

31.3.41

RMB

(7) Copied  
sent by  
Mrs. L.  
14.2.41.

(20)

Principal C.M.S.

The entries in this file  
will put you in possession of the  
known fact of certain human  
remains which will be sent  
to you, probably within 1/4, for forensic  
examination and later report.

Leisure

31.3.41

(21)

D.M.S.

My report on these bones is  
enclosed. I will take charge of  
these bones until it is decided what  
to do with them.

D.W. Hodder

5.4.41

(22)

Mr. Hodder

Any further report from Dr  
Hodder is enclosed at (11). Do  
you wish to take the further action  
he mentions?

Leisure

4.4.41

(11)

MEDICAL

5.4.41.



His Excellency,

Submitted with (10) and (11) and minutes  
(20) to (22) above. The report (11) appears  
definitely to indicate that the skeleton cannot be  
that of the late Amelia Earhart, but Y.E. may wish  
action taken as suggested in paragraph 9 of (11)  
although it does not seem possible that any useful  
purpose will be served by proceeding farther.

2. The sextant box with its contents is now



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with me. Perhaps Captain Nasmyth might be willing to examine this with a view to ascertaining the origin?

*D. Nasmyth*  
11.4.41.

(11)

*Sec*

1. Pl. ask Cma to convey  
to Maudie to Dr. Hoodless for  
his report & the trouble he  
has taken in this matter & to  
request him to retain the  
remains until further notice.  
2. Pl. ask Captain Nasmyth  
orally if he can throw any  
light on the origin of the  
remains.

*Done again*

*15/4/41*

The Central Medical Authority,

With His Excellency's minute (24) above  
(paragraph 1). Would you be so good as to take  
action accordingly?

2. I should be grateful if the file could be  
returned early for further action.

*D. Nasmyth*  
Secretary, W.P.H.C.  
12.4.41.

15.4.41.

(26)  
Principal. C.M.S.

of (24)

Please see para I

16/4/41  
D. Thompson  
for C.M.A.

C.M.A.

(27)

Noted - thank you.

D. Hoodless  
17.4.41.

(28)

Secy. W.P.H.C.

Returned to you. I have  
read D. Hoodless' report with interest  
and agree with his conclusions.

D. Thompson.  
S.M. Fiji.  
18.4.41.



(29)

Telegram  
Despatch

to Ag. A.O. Gardner Island

Conf.

No. 2

dated 28/4/41

(1)  
coded + sent  
28/4/41

(30)  
BN. 5.5.41.

Telegram  
Despatch

from O.B., P.G.S.S.,  
Gardner Isd.

Conf.

No. 1

dated 28/4/41.

2.5.41.

D/o. letter to Cdr. G.B. Nasmyth, Suva,

No. 4439 of 6.6.41, paired for signature.

G.B.

6.6.41.

(14) signed.

A.H.

7.6.41.



No. 4439

19 40

Sheet No. 5

(33)

Office,

Please empty sextant box carefully and wrap box up in a parcel and send it to bdr. Nasmyth with original of letter (14)

(34)

7.6.41.

Secretary,

The empty sextant box has been packed as a parcel and sent to Commander Nasmyth together with original of (14).

2. The contents of the box have been parcelled and placed in your office.

E.H. 9.6.41.

(35)

The Secretary,

With reference to para 2 of (34), I have examined the contents of the parcel mentioned. Apart from stating that they appear to be parts of shoes worn by a male person and a female person, I have nothing further to say.

Three coils or brass chains would appear to have belonged to a small eak.

K.R.S.

1.7.41.

(36)

BN

16.7.41.

The Secretary,

I have read the contents of this file with great interest. It does look as if the skeleton was that of some unfortunate native

castaway and the sextant box and other  
curious articles found nearby the remains are  
quite possibly a few of his precious  
possessions which he managed to save.

2. There was no evidence of  
any attempt to dig a well and the wretched  
man presumably died of thirst. Less than  
two miles away there is a small grove of  
coconut trees which would have been  
sufficient to keep him alive if he had  
only found it. He was separated from these  
trees, however, by an almost impenetrable belt  
of bush.

GBL  
5.7.41

BU 26. 8 (37)  
17. 7. 41

(38)

His Excellency,

File submitted as orally directed this morning.

H. A. S. S.  
5.8.41.

(39)



No. 19

Sheet No. ....

Sec., H.C.,

I return the sextant box which I had retrieved from Captain Nasmyth in order to show it to Mr Gatty, who has expert knowledge of such matters. Mr Gatty thinks that the box is an English one of some age and judges that it was used latterly merely as a receptacle. He does not consider that it could in any circumstances have been a sextant box used in modern trans-Pacific aviation.

2. What was Captain Nasmyth's opinion of it?

*JB*  
8.8.1941

*ME*  
*the Secretary*

(40)

Wrt (39) para. 2. I have spoken to Captain Nasmyth who replied as follows:- "As the sextant box has no distinguishing marks, & since it was discovered that no sextant had been found, all I have been able to find out is that the make of the box - that is the dovetailing of the corners - makes it appear to be of French origin."

*Rm.*

(41)

*DN*  
13.8.41

11.8.41

*Seen. Pa.*

*AB 9/8/41*

*File*

(42)