

ARTIFACT 2-8-S-5



Artifact 2-8-S-5 is the broken brass liner and nickel-silver bolster from a bone handled, double-bladed “Easy Open Jack Knife” manufactured by The Imperial Cutlery Company of Providence, RI. some time between 1930 and 1945.

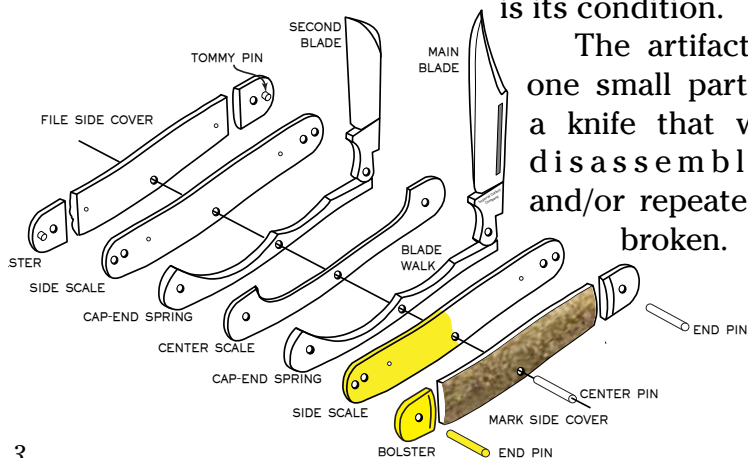
Bone handled, double-bladed “Easy Open Jack Knife” manufactured by The Imperial Cutlery Company. This knife was widely available commercially from 1930 onward and, during WWII, was also produced in large numbers under U.S. government contract as “bone handle Navy general utility pocket knives” and “Navy easy-openers.”



Any of the people known to have visited the Seven Site might theoretically have had such a knife. Gerald Gallagher, although British, had an American Colt .22 caliber pistol. There is no reason he could not have also had an American jackknife. Veterans of U.S. Coast Guard Unit 92 do not recall being issued pocket knives but any of them could have had a “Navy easy-opener.” But the best clue as to the artifact’s origin

is its condition.

The artifact is one small part of a knife that was disassembled and/or repeatedly broken.



Despite extensive metal detector sweeps of the area, no other parts of the knife – neither of the two blades, nor the other half of the broken liner, nor the second liner, nor any of the other three bolsters – were found. What’s more, at least some of the knife appears to have been intentionally hammered apart.

The bolster shows deformation from at least two sharp blows, apparently by different objects. One blow could be an accident. Two blows suggests purpose.

The liner snapped in two through its weakest point at the pivot hole. The broken edge may show signs of having been used for prying.



INTERPRETATION

This artifact appears to be an expedient prying tool made by breaking apart a jack knife, the blades of which had already been broken or removed for some purpose (spear tips?).

The British-sponsored colonists and the Coast Guardsmen of Unit 92 were well supplied with knives and other tools. It seems unlikely that either group would go to such lengths to create a prying tool.


Near the spot where Artifact 2-8-S-5 was found, there was a deposit of clams that had been pried open. Pacific islanders usually harvest clams by cutting the meat out while the clam is still in the water. They seldom bring the shells ashore. Coast Guard veterans of Unit 92 say that they didn't eat clams.



Although there is no way to be certain, the available evidence suggests that Artifact 2-8-S-5 belonged to the castaway and may have been used to open clams.

Item 24 in the inventory of Earhart's Electra done by the U.S. Army following the wreck in Hawaii that ended her first world flight attempt, is "Bone Handle, double blade Jack Knife, large Blade No. 22309." (http://www.tighar.org/Projects/Earhart/Documents/Luke_Field.htm)

Although the type of knife – bone handle, double blade jack knife – fits the description of the knife of which Artifact 2-8-S-5 was once a part, the blade number may indicate that the knife aboard the Electra in March was made by a different company. That, of course, would not mean that the knife represented by the artifact found at the Seven Site was not aboard the Electra in July. Research is continuing.

The identification of this artifact was made by Barry Robinson (TIGHAR #2114), a Life Member the National Knife Collectors Association; Ron Stewart, also a Life Member the National Knife Collectors Association and author of *The Standard Knife Collector's Guide* (currently in the Fifth Edition copyrighted 2007); and Mark Zalensky, Editor of *Knife World Publications*. Barry Robinson's full report can be found on the TIGHAR website. 

Next Time ...



ARTIFACT 2-8-S-3

Talon™ Zipper Pull and Slider

It's just a zipper. It's not even the whole zipper; just the moving part. How much can you possibly learn from a zipper? You might be surprised. We were.

