

Burma Reports

Publisher's Note: For most of the years since World War II, Burma (now Myanmar) has lived pretty much as a closed society. Now suddenly there are signs of activity coming from there. Since Burma played such an important role in our experiences in the CBI during World War II we are printing a number of items that indicate some of these changes. Of special interest to our members, are developing efforts to locate missing Army Air Forces aircraft that were lost in the northern Burma area during that period. We are therefore beginning this report with a significant letter which we are sure will be of interest to all.



February 17, 2004

Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office

Remains Recovery Operations in Burma

- DPMO initiated discussions with the Burmese government in late 2001 to establish the framework within which the U.S Government can send teams into Burma to recover the remains of American war dead from WWII,
- On 12-13 September 2002, a small delegation led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) Jerry Jennings visited Rangoon to secure the framework from senior officials in the Burmese government and an agreement on a timeline for initial recoveries.
- On 17-18 Oct 2002 the DASD (POW/Missing Personnel Affairs) hosted a three-person Burmese delegation for a visit to the Central Identification Laboratory - Hawaii (CILHI) to orient them on U.S. recovery techniques and to discuss recovery operations in Burma. Burmese participants were at the Colonel and lower rank.
- On 21-22 Nov 2002. DPMO and CILHI conducted initial recovery operations talks in Burma. These talks laid the foundation for the first investigation and recovery operations.
- > Dec 2002: CILHI conducted a medical/logistic survey to evaluate Burmese support.
- > Jan 2003: CILHI surveyed proposed recover sites.
- From 2 Mar-27 Apr 2003, CILHI conducted initial Recovery Operations. The team recovered suspected human remains, various aircraft parts, and personal equipment. The laboratory is now analyzing the items.
- In October 2003, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) conducted technical discussions for future investigation and recovery operations.
- In November 2003, JPAC surveyed proposed recovery sites.
- **From February 25 to March 25, 2004** JPAC will conduct their second Burma recovery operation, in the Katchiri State 15 miles northwest of Myitkyina. JPAC will excavate the site of a C-47 loss from May 23, 1944 with seven crew members unaccounted for.
- Conditions for the operations:
 - > We will not permit any preconditions for conducting recovery operations.
 - > Contact with the Burmese government and recovery operations will be strictly humanitarian in nature.
 - > There will be no military-to-military training or related activities.

Please convey to Mr. Thornley our sincere appreciation for his concerns and efforts to air our missing countrymen and for his service to our country. As always, your continued strong support in this is issue is gratefully appreciated.

Sincerely,

Boyd Sponaugle
External Communications

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