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15 AUG 1950

166/42/42 (94A)

Dear Sir,

It is with deep regret that I refer to the news conveyed to you by a clergyman that the body of your late son, Flight Lieutenant Geoffrey Hubert Vincent has been located.

It had been known for some time that a large number of prisoners had been killed by the Japanese Navy at Matupi but until this recent discovery it was not known that your son was amongst them.

Your son's body was recovered from a grave at Matupi together with Flying Officer R.B. O'Loughlen, R.A.A.F., and five Americans who were members of the same party of prisoners taken from the Japanese Naval prison camp on 15th January, 1944. It is now evident that the Japanese were lying when they said that the party had been sent away by ship.

Japanese who were present at the execution of prisoners at Matupi have expressed their admiration of the fearless manner in which all met their deaths.

It is realised that your sorrow in the loss of a gallant son will be added to by the fact that he was the victim of a crime against all the laws of warfare and humanity but it is considered that you would desire to know the true facts.

The circumstances of the recent discovery were that a number of bodies of Australians and Americans had been recovered from the location after the end of hostilities but recent investigations and interrogation of suspected Japanese made it certain that a much greater number of prisoners had been buried in the same vicinity. A R.A.A.F. Search Party therefore made a further search and located a number of graves from which thirty bodies were recovered. Fifteen of these were members of the R.A.A.F. and the remainder Americans.

On the 18th July, 1950, your son and his comrades were laid to rest in the Rabaul (Bitapaka) War Cemetery with full Service Honours. Group Captain Carr, Officer Commanding North Eastern Area and members of his Staff attended on behalf of the R.A.A.F. The Civil Administrator, the Rabaul Sub-Branch of the R.S.L. and local civilian organisations took part in the Ceremony. The funeral was attended by a great number of local inhabitants and a band and firing party were provided by the New Guinea Constabulary; Church of England, Roman Catholic and Methodist Clergymen officiated at the funeral services. The pall bearers were ex-servicemen, mainly former R.A.A.F. members residing in the Rabaul Area. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Minister for Air and the Air Board and many other organisations and individuals; in all there were 130 wreaths. Photographs of the funeral were taken and a set will be posted to you as soon as the necessary prints have been made.

Your son's grave is Plot H, Row C, Grave 13, which will be cared for in perpetuity by the Imperial War Graves Commission.

May I assure you of my personal sympathy and that of all members of my Department.

Yours faithfully,

Del. 6/6/7
14/8.

all
(M. C. Langslow)
SECRETARY.

Mr. F.H. Vincent,
24 Monomeath Avenue,
CANTERBURY. VICTORIA. *all*