



Publication of the Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation

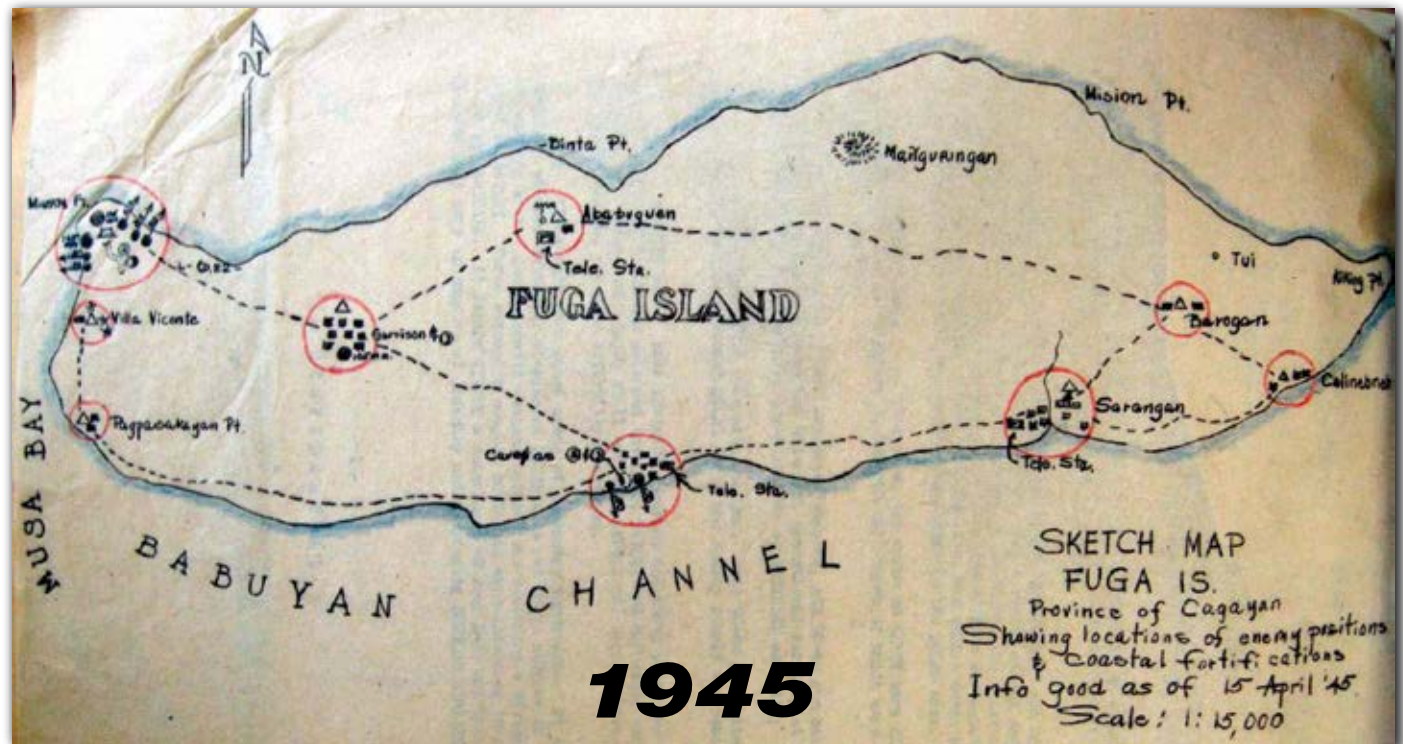
RECON

MAGAZINE

May/Jun 2023 Issue

A Summer of Hope

IN THE SUMMER OF 1945, THE ALAMO SCOUTS WERE PREPARING FOR THE INVASION OF JAPAN AND THE BLOODIEST CAMPAIGN OF THE WAR. BUT THE ATTEMPTED RESCUE OF FOUR AIRMEN AND A CIVILIAN FAMILY ON TINY FUGA ISLAND CAME FIRST. IT WAS THE "BEST OF TIMES AND THE WORST OF TIMES" IN A WAR OF BOTH.



SPECIAL FORCES



ALAMO SCOUTS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION, INC.

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The Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation

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Alamo Scouts Association 1980 - 2012

Co-founders: *Colonel Robert S. Sumner (Ret)*

Command Sergeant Major Galen C. Kittleson (Ret)

In Memoriam

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Colonel Robert S. Sumner (Ret) *In Perpetuity*

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NECROLOGY

Conrad M. Vineyard

August 6, 2022

9th Class Trainee

Marvin Peck

June 29, 2022

ASTC Staff

Eunice Carvajal

December 28, 2022

Teenage Filipina Guerrilla

Rita Buschur

February 23, 2023

Wife of the Late Robert L Buschur, Alamo Scout

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/alamoscouts/>

Alamo Scouts Exhibit at the MacArthur Memorial

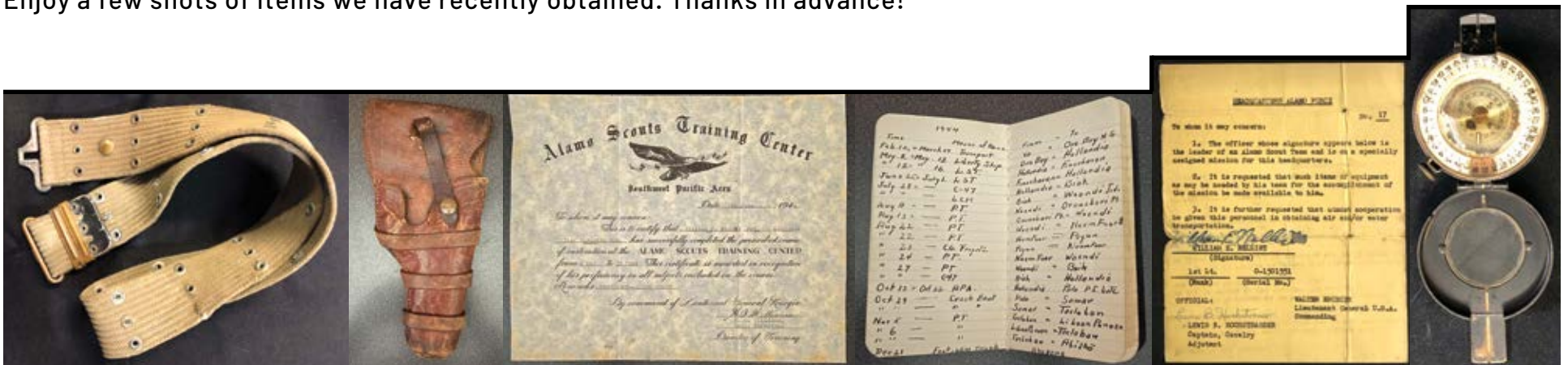


To family and friends of the Alamo Scouts—the Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation (ASHF) is thrilled to announce that the MacArthur Memorial (Museum & Park) in Norfolk, Virginia will feature the Alamo Scouts as part of a two-year exhibit beginning in September 2023. To augment the display, the museum is requesting authentic military equipment, field uniforms, war souvenirs, flags, personal items, enemy items, original documents, photos, telegrams, and other items belonging to or acquired by Alamo Scouts during World War II. Original double-buckle boots and green jungle sneakers are highly-desired, so if you have a pair, please let us know.

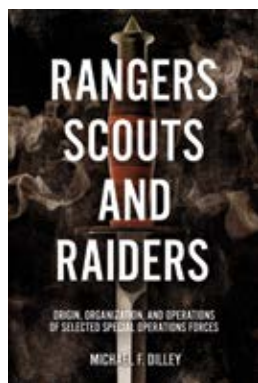
All items are insured by the museum and will be returned following the close of the exhibit. This is an outstanding opportunity to feature the Alamo Scouts in a national-level museum, so dig into your Alamo Scout's old footlocker and pull out some history for the world to see! Simply snap photos of the item(s) and text or email them to **Russ Blaise - ashf@alamoscouts.org** or to **Lance Zedric - Lzedric@gmail.com**. The deadline for submitting items to the museum is July, so please send photos as soon as possible. Once the photos are received, we'll submit them to the museum curator for consideration in the exhibit. If an item is accepted, you'll ship it to Russ Blaise in Florida or to Lance Zedric in Peoria, Illinois. We will pack it up and ship it to the MacArthur Memorial. Email with any questions.

Feel free to visit the MacArthur Memorial website at: <http://www.macarthurmemoial.org>

Enjoy a few shots of items we have recently obtained. Thanks in advance!



Book Reviews by Lance Zedric



Rangers, Scouts, and Raiders: Origin, Organization, and Operations of Selected Special Operations Forces *Michael F. Dilley*

How does Michael F. Dilley keep finding this stuff! In his latest tour de force, *Rangers, Scouts, and Raiders*, (Casemate, 2023) Dilley again proves that he is sine pari among special operations authors. Throughout the book, the author of *Galahad*, *Behind The Lines*, *Elite Warriors* and other fine books, feeds hungry readers more juicy slabs of historical meat and garnishes the narrative with tasty visuals that inform and enhance.

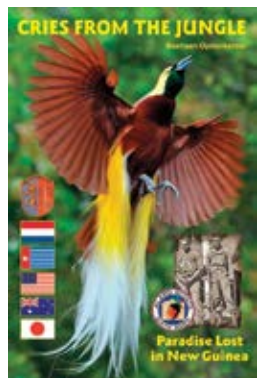
Rangers, Scouts, and Raiders is chock-full of new material that fills myriad potholes in the disconnected road of special operations history. For an opener, Dilley examines Rogers Rangers, a colonial unit, and recounts the famous Andrews Raid of the Civil War, to establish the *raison d'être* for and value of such units. But Dilley focuses the lion's share of his work on the formation and operations of 20th century Allied units and provides context to the out-front character of the planners and men who dare such dangerous things.

Throughout the book, he explores the history and characteristics of unique U.S. parachute units, Marine glider units (who knew!), and sheds light on the shadowy operations of the Allied SOE (Special Operations Executive) and SAARF (Special Allied Airborne Reconnaissance Force), among others. But it is in the examination of the Alamo Scouts that Dilley shines, crediting the role of the ASTC (Alamo Scouts Training Center) in establishing the groundwork for training modern LRRP (Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrol) and LRSU (Long-Range Surveillance Units). Moreover, he offers a succinct overview of the Alamo Scouts without the misinformation often found in less well-researched works on the unit.

After devouring *Rangers, Scouts, and Raiders*, I wondered how Dilley uncovered so much new information about subjects that have been covered before. The answer is simple. He works hard and relentlessly sluices through benign historical mud to find shiny nuggets that others often miss. That attention to detail is a hallmark of his work and makes for an enjoyable read. Moreover, the book features an extensive bibliography, a fine index, and an even better appendix that gives attention-challenged readers a ready, fast, visual reference akin to special operations Cliff Notes! And who doesn't like those!

As for the final SITREP, *Rangers, Scouts, and Raiders* is a wonderful 200-page sprint through selected elite units and a valuable contribution to the special ops collective. In the spirit of the airborne units contained therein, it's time "stand-up, hook-up..." and shuffle to the door...of the nearest bookstore! Or buy it online at <https://www.amazon.com/Rangers-Scouts-Raiders-Organization-Operations/dp/1636242839>

Geronimo!



Cries From the Jungle: Paradise Lost in New Guinea *Bastiaan Opdenkelder*

Cries From the Jungle helps fill a literary void detailing the firsthand Dutch and Dutch-Indo colonial experience in New Guinea from the early 20th century until 1962 through the words of those who lived it. Particular attention is given to the anti-Japanese resistance movement by Dutch leaders operating behind the lines in New Guinea during World War II and to the plight of families interned by the Japanese which included starvation, beatings, and execution. Thoroughly researched, strongly written, and accentuated with stirring photos, *Cries From the Jungle* is a richly layered account that follows the author's family and others through liberation navigating the myriad challenges and dangers they and other Indos faced after the war, through the tumultuous period of Indonesian Independence, and for many, the difficult and unwelcomed return to the Netherlands forced upon them by the realities of the time. Until now, few were aware of the depth of the Indo experience, but *Cries From the Jungle*, like the indigenous Bird of Paradise of Papua, offers a rare and enchanting glimpse into something wildly beautiful.

And Justice For All

Murder on Fuga Island

By Lance Zedric - Illustration by Russ Blaise

At 1:20 a.m., on 3 April 1946 at the Philippine Rehabilitation and Detention Center 35 miles south of Manila, Lieutenant General Hikotaro Tajima, former commander of the 61st Independent Mixed Brigade of the 14th Imperial Japanese Army, politely asked his American executioner if he would allow him one last *Banzai* battle cry before he was hanged for war crimes as a common criminal. The detail commander agreed, but Tajima, dressed in simple prison garb, defiantly shouted twice before the commander roughly pulled the black silk hood over Tajima's head and tightened the hangman's noose. Seconds later, a short drop through the trap door snapped Tajima's neck silencing him forever--due payment for ordering the murder of three Allied airmen captured on Batan Island north of the Philippines in November 1944. But he had also ordered the killing of four downed airmen captured on nearby Fuga Island in June 1945; an act that precipitated an unsuccessful rescue attempt by the Alamo Scouts and a crime for which others under his command would answer for.

FUGA ISLAND – 10 MONTHS EARLIER

From high above the clouds, tiny Fuga Island was a speck in the ocean seemingly far removed from the larger war raging in the Philippines 26 miles to the south and in the Pacific Theater overall. For allied aircraft passing overhead to and from missions against the Japanese on Formosa, the some 700 enemy troops sequestered on the 21-square-mile island posed little threat. But around noon on 5 June 1945, a B-24 bomber [call sign 126] from the 5th Air Force, 22nd Bombardment Group, 2nd Bombardment Squadron, experienced engine trouble at 4700 feet and soon crash landed in the center of the island. Minutes later, a PBV-5A [Catalina Flying Boat] from the 6th ERS [Emergency Rescue Squadron], 5th ERG [Emergency Rescue Group] based at Florida Blanca on Luzon, crashed at sea while attempting to recover the crew. To the men of both planes and to those trying to rescue them, Fuga, meaning "escape," was true to its name.

CRASH LANDING "I first noticed we were in trouble immediately after leaving the target, Taito, Formosa," said Cpl. Lawrence J. Child, a gunner on plane 126 based at Clark Field near Manila. "Approximately 2½ hours from the target, my pilot [Lt. Dewey G. Allmon] instructed crew members to prepare for ditching... Three men braced themselves against the bulkhead rear of the bomb bay, with the rest of the crew in the



Crash of the B-24 on Fuga. (Army photo).

forward part of the ship. The plane hit the ground with a hard jolt, and when it finally stopped, the three of us on the command deck left the wreckage. The two men with me were injured. Upon seeing the two men were clear of the wreckage, I returned to the ship and pulled three unconscious men out of the rear section. I was unable to reach the men in the forward section."

"I witnessed this crash and saw the B-24 break into flames," said Lt. Charles M. Allen, pilot of the PBV. "I saw part of the crew alive, specifically

one man dragging two others from the burning plane."

The Japanese were also watching. Pvt. Jingoro Yonezawa, a soldier with the 4th Company, Sekizaka Unit, Tanaka Force, 407th Force on Fuga, noted the incident in his diary. "An enemy Boeing made a forced landing on Abogen Plain. Three of the crew of eight died, but the others escaped with a radio set and sent out distress signals. Our troops tried to find them even though enemy planes were flying overhead..."

ATTEMPTED RESCUE Within 20 minutes after the B-24 crashed, the PBV attempted to land near Bintu Point on the north-central coast to pick up the downed crew, but the rescue attempt went wrong from the start.

The 14-ton PBV [No. 44-34012], landed in a full stall hitting the top of a wave. The plane then bounced up and slammed down again flat onto the



PBY and crew

water popping rivets and causing two large leaks in the nose, which activated the bilge pumps. The elevator controls were also damaged causing the plane to do left circles in the water. "I landed my plane in a cove on the northwest side of the

island in an attempt to rescue personnel from the burning plane," said Lt. Allen. "My plane was damaged upon landing and salvage operations were executed in an attempt to set up a temporary camp pending rescue. The plane was anchored and we started to move emergency equipment to shore. The anchor cable on the plane broke up and it drifted toward the rocks on the shoreline."

Allen and S/Sgt. Robert J. Bencek [radio operator], moved around the beach and attempted to reach their plane but were forced to hide when they spotted an enemy patrol coming out of the underbrush between their location and the location of the emergency camp. Co-pilot Lt. Clarence Meides and crewman Sgt. James E. Blackmore were also unsuccessful at reaching the B-24 and returned to the campsite where they and T5 Raymond W. Cook and T4 Robert L. Wiehl were captured while navigator Lt. Joseph E. Brandt II, concealed nearby, watched helpless to act.

At 1700, PT boats 378 and 381 based at Claveria Bay, received an urgent message and raced to Fuga at full-throttle settling into a cove near Bintong Point at 1815. The PTs soon spotted three yellow life rafts on the beach and quickly dispatched a three-man rescue party.

They then turned broadside with all guns covering the rubber boat landing, but Brandt swam out to the boat and reported that he witnessed the capture of four PBY crew as they were attempting to move inland.

At 1905 hours, a party from PT-381 went ashore and retrieved Allen and Bencek on the rocks near the PBY accounting for the remainder of the crew. The PT boats then destroyed the PBY with 20mm and 37mm shells and returned to Luzon.



Wreckage of the PBY.

"Right after the crash, many American planes kept constant watch over the crashed plane," said 1st Lt. Mikio Tokuteru, commander of the Japanese 4th Company. "Twenty minutes later, I received a report from the Battalion Headquarters stating that a PBY plane had made an emergency landing at Bintong Point and ordering me to investigate the matter to see whether any American forces had made a landing...Then with fifteen men, including a machine gun squad of ten men, I headed for Bintong Point. At that point, I added to my command twenty men from the 3rd Company..."

"After we had approached Bintong Point, we saw that the plane had drifted away..." added Tokuteru. "I wanted to sink the plane and then withdraw around the Bay on the opposite side where the plane was. When we arrived at the opposite side, we found four Americans on the beach."

MISSING MEN Corporal James G. Acker, a former farmhand from Bayard, Nebraska fancied his Army Air Corps ring, but a fractured lumbar vertebrae and escape were foremost on his mind. Gunner Martin T. Coons of Hillsdale, NY was also injured. His arm was broken in two places and his hand was almost severed requiring a tourniquet. Only Cpl. Child, who had only been overseas since March, had survived the B-24 crash with minor injuries. The airmen had been forced to abandon the wreckage when they were discovered, and following a brief firefight with a Japanese patrol, escaped into the jungle.

Lt. Allmon and his co-pilot, Lt. Edward A. Kent, died in the crash along with flight officers Albert C. Deutsch, Jr., (navigator) and Elvin W. Long, Jr. (bombardier). Corporals James F. Stengel (engineer), Donald Sutherland (radioman), and Willard L. Bohlken (gunner) also perished. Sgt. Raymond J. Riddle (photographer) survived the crash but was critically injured and later died at the crash site.

Escape was the first priority for Acker, Coons, and Child. Fortunately, Gualberto Agarpao, a 21-year-old Ilokano native, and some friends, happened by. "This airplane crashed about noon, and it was about five o'clock that day while I was returning from Maj. [Mitsuji] Tanaka's headquarters [where] I had been doing some work for them, three American fliers from the plane that crashed beckoned to me," said Agarpao. "They asked me for water. I led them to the edge of the forest and then I went in search of water and brought it to them. After I gave them water, I returned home because it was rapidly becoming dark. The fliers had told me to return the next morning to where I had led them and to bring food with me."

A half hour after Agarpao left, Child thought he heard someone yell for help by the plane and investigated only to be discovered by a Japanese patrol. To avoid capture, he hid in a deep mud for two hours until the patrol left. The next day, two men from the 6th ERS picked him up and

took him to a waiting PBV by rubber boat under enemy small arms fire. Acker and Coons remained in the area believing that Child had run off or had been killed or captured, but when Agarpao returned the next morning, Acker and Coons were gone.

Early that morning, an allied rescue aircraft observed two airmen one mile east of the B-24 wreckage and radioed in the sighting. Shortly after noon, PTs 549 and 383, led by Lt. John W. Storms, USNR, departed Salomague Harbor for Claveria and enlisted a five-man guerrilla party to rescue the remaining airmen, which he believed was three since the

the next morning and relayed native reports that the airmen were living in the house of a local official, but upon visiting the house, the patrol discovered that the Americans were not there. The PT boats then returned to Claveria.

The next afternoon, Storms returned to Fuga aboard PTs 382 and 550 with orders to pick up a survivor but that attempt was fruitless. He made another attempt later that day after he received reports of several men on the beach, but that too, was false. The PTs returned to base empty-handed.

A LITTLE LUCK On 10 June, after five days on the run, Agarpao and five civilians found Acker and Coons.

"They both appeared healthy and in good shape," said Agarpao. "I gave them food and water and led them to Mt. Nanguringan where the three of us slept that night. The following day, I led them to the barrio of Bubug and then led them to another hiding place in a northwesterly direction from Bubug. As we were walking, the two fliers saw a seaplane and waved to it. The seaplane dropped a message telling the fliers to go to the northeastern part of Fuga Island and wait for the plane. The two fliers and I went to the northeastern part of Fuga Island almost directly north of Mt. Nanguringan, and



Sketch of Fuga Island used in the war crimes trial of Maj. Tanaka and others.

rescue of Child had not been communicated to him. The boats arrived at the northeastern end of the island at 0100 on 7 June and deployed the scouting party which included three men attached to intelligence from the 11th Filipino Infantry.

"Storms came in the PT boat and asked all the civilians to search for all the fliers," recalled Agarpao. "A great many of us went out to look for the three Americans..."

At 0930, two guides returned to PT-549 and reported that they had located the survivors and that they would be brought to a rendezvous point at 1500 hours. Storms went ashore with guides and an interpreter and instructed a native on horseback to visit the wreck site and to return to the rendezvous point with any survivors. He and his party then returned to PT-549 and waited, but no one showed at the rendezvous point due to active Japanese patrols. The guerrilla patrol returned to the PTs

after waiting for about 10 minutes, the seaplane landed. Three Americans in a rubber boat rowed from the plane to the shore..."

The rescue party quickly gathered the two airmen and prepared to return them to the seaplane, but Acker rushed back to the beach and stuffed something into Agarpao's hand. "You saved my life!" he exclaimed. "Don't worry, I'll be back!"

"James Acker gave me his Air Force ring and promised he would come back," beamed Agarpao. "He never did, but I still wear the ring."

A gift for the ages.

EXECUTION Immediately after capturing the four airmen on 5 June, Lt. Tokuteru took them to battalion headquarters for interrogation. All were in good physical condition at the time of capture according to eyewitness accounts. "I took them to the Headquarters at Abogen," said Tokuteru. "It was about midnight."

Before dawn the next day, they were taken to company headquarters, put in a hole, and interrogated individually.

For the next eight days the men considered their fate. Meanwhile, U.S. forces continued to search for them. Based on information supplied by Acker and Coons at the 59th Portable Hospital on 11 June, coupled with native reports received by the rescuing PBY crew and from a special



Dr. Jane (Sycip) Lin-Fu

message from another PBY that the airmen were observed on 13 June, allied intelligence correctly believed that the prisoners were still alive.

"In early June 1945, after a U.S. bomber crashed onto Fuga and its airmen captured by the Japanese, U.S. airplanes flew over Fuga repeatedly," recalled Dr. Jane (Sycip) Lin-Fu, then a teenager living on Fuga. "My cousin Paul and a friend, Hanky Pao, risked their lives to inform the search planes of the capture. Using banana trunks, they constructed huge words that read, '4 CAPTURED.' We became aware that the Americans did see our message when, to our great surprise, a U.S. airplane returned to drop us some American

goodies like sweets and crackers...it offered us some hope that our life—indefinitely suspended under great uncertainties on Fuga—might soon change for the better..."

No such luck.

On or about 13 June, Tajima ordered Maj. Mitsuji Tanaka, commander of the Yoroi Unit forces on Fuga, to execute the American fliers without a trial. In a written order, Tanaka instructed his adjutant, Sgt. Major Ikuo Ishizuki, to have Sgt. Major Kyuemon Ito carry out the execution.

On the morning of 14 June, Ito reported to Tanaka. "I am going now to dig a hole."

"It's troublesome, but do it," replied Tanaka.

"I took 10 soldiers and went to a spot about 1500 meters from headquarters and then dug a hole 2 meters in length, 1 meter in width, and 1½ meters in depth," said Ito. "After dinner I took about ten soldiers

and went to the place where we dug the hole in the morning. We took the four Americans along. The four flyers [sic] were blindfolded and placed in a sitting position with their backs to the hole and facing the firing squad."

Corporal Hiroshi Wakamori, a bugler, was recruited by Tanaka to command the firing squad. "I was to the right rear of the firing squad," said Wakamori. "Sgt. Major Ito said to me, 'Wakamori, let them shoot,' so I gave the order. *Fire!*"

The shots rang out simultaneously and the Americans fell backward into a common grave. Ito then ensured that the fliers were dead and assisted in their burial in the unmarked grave.

Their deaths would not go unnoticed.

ALAMO SCOUTS "The Fifth Air Force requested that an attempt be made to rescue the survivors..." said Col. Frederick W. Hein, acting Assistant Chief of Staff of G-2 for Sixth Army. "Lt. Hobbs was coordinating the activities of Task Group 70.4 which was patrolling the East coast of Luzon. It was decided to use his team to attempt the rescue."

Alamo Scouts team leaders John M. "Jack" Dove and Woodrow H. "Woody" Hobbs had seen and done it all. Both hailed from the 1st Cavalry Division before volunteering for the Alamo Scouts, Sixth Army's elite reconnaissance and raider unit, and had graduated with the 2nd training class at the original Alamo Scouts Training Center (ASTC) on Fergusson Island, New Guinea in February 1944. Both had led their teams on several successful missions behind enemy lines in New Guinea and in the Philippines. Both had been decorated for valor. And both were available.

Dove and his team had operated on the east coast of Luzon south of Infanta from late March to late May and had established a radio station and supplied direct information to the XI and XIV Corps and to the 43rd Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions. Dove was experienced in prisoner recovery and in direct action missions having participated in the rescue of 66 Dutch and Javanese from the Japanese in New Guinea and in the famous liberation of 513 allied POWs from Cabanatuan in January 1945. He had earned a reputation with the Navy and had long served as a liaison between the Alamo Scouts and PT boat squadrons.

HOBBS Team had also been busy operating with Task Group 70.4, consisting of *LCI(L)s* 361 and 363 [Landing Craft Infantry--Large], and *LCS(L)s* 9 and 10 [Landing Craft Support--Large] that supported guerrilla operations on the east coast of Luzon. Since 4 June, half of HOBBS Team under Lt. Irvin Ray, had patrolled the Casiguran Bay area while the other half under



Lt General Hikotaro Tajima ordered the execution of four airmen on Fuga Island.

Hobbs had patrolled the Palanan Bay area. During that time, the teams conducted two land reconnaissance missions and one direct assault with 200 men from Anderson's guerrillas, which had been formed by Bernard Anderson, an American guerrilla leader who stayed behind on Luzon following the U.S. surrender there in 1942.

On 14 June, HOBBS Team, consisting of Hobbs, Ray, S/Sgt. Ray Wangrud, and Sgts. Bob Ross and John E. Phillips, were directed to combine with Dove and Sgt. Pete Vischansky to rescue the airmen and to take prisoners. The rest of DOVE Team remained on call for Gen. Walter Krueger at the ASTC under the command of 1st Lt. Robert Sumner. Pfc. Gil Cox from NELLIST Team and Pfc. Roy Donnette and Sgt. Harold Hard from ROUNSAVILLE Team were also attached. Cox and Hard had recently returned from a war bond tour in the United States following the Cabanatuan Raid and were welcome additions.



Lt. Woodrow H. "Woody" Hobbs

On 16 June, Dove and Vischansky flew to Ballesteros and located agents who had been on Fuga. The next day, Dove joined Hobbs and Majors Bryant and Logan from Sixth Army G-2 aboard LCS-10 with 90 men from A Company of the 1st Battalion of Anderson's Guerrillas. The task group planned to land on 18 June, but the landing was delayed for two days. "We took in enough people so we could at least knock a hole in some part of their line," said Hobbs. "The Japanese were just living in a garrison condition...so they didn't have to have a front line or anything."

On 20 June at 0200, Dove, Ray, Cox, and two civilian agents rowed ashore in a rubber raft and reconnoitered the beach. They radioed back at 0345 directing the guerrilla assault force to land and to establish a perimeter while Alamo Scouts Dove, Ray, Cox, and a Filipino guide located civilians who might know the location of the fliers.



Pete Vischansky

Hours later, the scouts returned with some civilians and then Ross, Hard, and Wangrud went back out with the team and received four corroborating reports that the prisoners had been beaten and bayoneted and their bodies burned.

"We recovered some shirts," said Vischansky. "The civilians gave us the shirts of the airmen that the Japanese had held in a cave for about two weeks and bayoneted."

"The natives told us they were there," said Phillips. "But we didn't find them. It was too bad."

Based on information that the prisoners had been executed, Hobbs decided not to risk any men in an attack against the Japanese or to recover the bodies of the murdered airmen. The party departed the island at 2300 without the enemy even knowing they had been there.

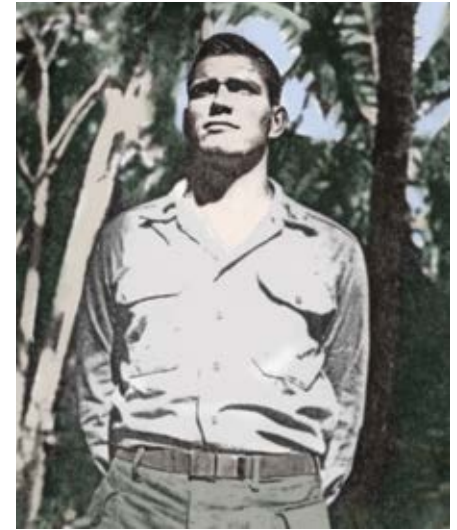
During the 19-hour reconnaissance of Fuga, Dove interrogated the mayor and learned that the Japanese commander was calling for a meeting with all civilians on the island. After returning to Luzon, Dove arranged to return to the island to learn the results of the meeting and to learn more about the airmen. PTs 383 and 547 picked him up at Abulag at 2008 on 23 June and arrived at Fuga for the prearranged contact, but no signal was received and the boats left at 0214 on 24 June. The next evening, PTs 548 and 546 returned with Hobbs and Dove and waited off the northeastern shore of Fuga, but again no contact was made.

Dove feared the worst.

"The mission bothered Dove," said Hobbs. "My team returned to the east coast of Luzon and he continued operations in the Infanta area to the south. But Fuga was always on his mind."

Dove wouldn't have to wait long for his return. Little did he know, he would be back in 35 days to rescue a prominent family in one of the most personally rewarding missions of the war [see Fuga Rescue story], but until then, he still had a war to fight.

ALLIED VICTORY On 6 August, the U.S. military dropped the first of two atomic bombs on Japan effectively sealing the fate of the Japanese in World War II. Within two days, all Alamo Scout teams in the field were recalled and training halted. On 15 August, Japan capitulated, and on 2 September, formally surrendered ending the war. But military life on Fuga went on relatively undisturbed until 25 September when allied forces



Lt. John M. "Jack" Dove

under the control of the 11th Infantry Regiment (PA) occupied the island and transported all remaining Japanese troops to prison camps near Manila for registration, screening, and possible investigation.

But before that, Tanaka had some cleaning up to do. Realizing that the Americans would likely charge him with war crimes for the murder of the four allied airmen, sometime in late August he ordered Sgt. Major Ito to exhume the bodies of the airmen and to burn their remains in a makeshift funeral pyre, which contrary to native and official reports, had not been done previously. Ito then placed the ashes of each airmen in a new wood box and gave them to Ishizuka, who purportedly stored them in his barracks at battalion headquarters until he was transported to LUPOW #1 [Luzon Prisoner of War Camp #1] on 28 September, where he placed them on a mass pile of items that had been voluntarily surrendered by the prisoners. Afterward, the ashes disappeared and were probably discarded.



Funeral pyre. (Army photo)

an overburdened military legal branch, and the reluctance of American servicemen to return to the Pacific to testify after having gone home, the wheels of justice turned slow, but they did turn.

In mid-November, the legal office of the General Headquarters [GHQ] of the U.S. Army, Pacific had collected information on the case of the murdered fliers but deemed it did not have enough physical and reliable evidence to prosecute the case. The GHQ then turned it over to the War Crimes Division in mid-December 1945.

On 29 January 1946, the division dispatched a three-man team from the War Crimes Investigating Detachment to Fuga to inspect the bomber and PBY crash sites, to interview civilians, and to locate the graves of the murdered airmen. The team, led by Lt. Morris D. Forkosch and consisting of Lt. Thomas J.



Investigators recovering remains of four airmen on Fuga Island. (Army photo)

Hanson, Jr., and U.S. Army Japanese interpreter, Yoneichi “Yon” Fukui, headquartered at the barrio Sarongan and remained on the island for several weeks until it obtained enough evidence to prosecute Tanaka, Ito, and Wakamori for war crimes.

“We went there fully armed,” said Fukui. “We landed on the west shore of Fuga and found it uninhabited. On the second day we met the natives who told us there were no Japanese soldiers on the island. The purpose of our trip was to bring back to Manila the remains of the Allied fliers who were executed and buried in a trench grave. The natives helped us locate the grave and we packaged the remains for shipping back to Manila. The remains were used as evidence in the war crimes tribunal proceedings.”



Unmarked grave of allied airmen. (Army photo)

On 11 March, the investigators turned the ashes and bones over to the 19th Medical General Laboratory for certification, and over the next two weeks, investigators reinterviewed defendants and obtained sworn statements. Prior to being separated several months earlier, Tanaka had tried to persuade some soldiers involved in the capture of the airmen to swear that two of them had died from wounds and two from malnutrition, but to the soldiers’ credit, they refused to lie. Tanaka maintained that two of the airmen were brought to his headquarters on stretchers but because he suffered from malaria, he claimed that he did not see them afterward.

On 6 May 1946, the defendants were put on trial before a 4-man Military Commission convened at the High Commissioner’s Residence in Manila by Lt. General W.D. Styer, commanding general of the U.S. Army Forces in the Western Pacific. The next day, Tanaka was found guilty of ordering the murders and was sentenced to life in prison while Ito and Wakamori received sentences of 20 years and 10 years respectively for their roles. However, on 31 May, Styer remitted the sentences of Ito and Wakamori and they were freed and returned to Japan on 26 November 1946. On 18 January 1947, Tanaka was likewise returned to his homeland to serve the remainder of his sentence, but given the official release of minor Japanese war criminals in the mid-1950s as a conciliatory act to curry goodwill following the official end of the occupation of Japan, it is likely that his sentence was commuted and that he lived out his life in freedom.



Maj. Mitsuji Tanaka being sentenced for his role in the murder of four airmen on Fuga Island at his war crimes trial. (Army photo).

AFTERMATH Upon their deaths, Meides, Blackmore, Wiehl, and Cook were posthumously awarded the Air Medal and the Purple Heart Medal, and retroactively the Prisoner of War Medal upon its creation in 1985.

On 1 March 1950, their remains were repatriated and interred at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

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“Only the dead have seen the end of the war” – George Santayana



At rest in Arlington National Cemetery.

COMBINED FUGA ISLAND MISSION TIMELINE

7 Dec 1941	Japanese forces attack Pearl Harbor.
8 Dec 1941	Japan invade the Philippines.
1942	Alfonso Sycip arrested and imprisoned by Japanese.
29 Apr 1943	Japanese authorities pardon Alfonso Sycip.
Summer 1944	Sycip family relocates from Manila to Fuga.
21 Sep 1944	Japanese 61st Independent Brigade occupies Fuga.
May 1945	U.S. bombing raid on Fuga kills 16 members of the Sycip family.
5 Jun 1945	
*1200 hours	<i>U.S. B-24 126</i> crashes on Fuga Island. Lt. Dewey Allmon, Lt. Edward Kent, and crewmen Albert Deutsch, Elvin Long, James Stengel, Donald Sutherland, and Willard Bohlken killed during crash. Crewmen James Acker, Martin Coons, and Lawrence Child survive.
*1620 hours	<i>PBY 44-34012</i> attempts rescue and crashes.
1700 hours	Lt. Clarence Meides, Sgt. James E. Blackmore, T5 Raymond W. Cook, and T4 Robert L. Wiehl of PBY crew captured by Japanese patrol. Lt. Charles Allen, Lt. Joseph Brandt, and Sgt. Robert Bancek escape.
1700 hours	<i>PTs 378 & 381</i> depart Claveria, Luzon to attempt rescue of airmen.
1815 hours	<i>PTs 378 & 381</i> arrive at Fuga and rescue S/Sgt. Brandt.
1905 hours	<i>PT-381</i> recovers Lt. Allen and S/Sgt. Bancek of PBY crew. PTs destroy PBY and return to Claveria.
7 Jun 1945	
0100 hours	<i>PTs 549 & 383</i> from Claveria attempt rescue.
11 Jun 1945	Airmen Acker and Coons recovered by U.S. seaplane.
13 Jun 1945	Civilians on Fuga signal U.S. reconnaissance that airmen are alive. Tajima orders Maj. Matsuji Tanaka to execute U.S. fliers without trial.
14 Jun 1945	Sgt. Major Kyuemon Ito orders Cpl. Horoshi Wakamori to command a firing squad. Wakamori executes Meides, Blackmore, Cook, and Wiehl. DOVE and HOBBS Teams ordered to combine for rescue.
16 Jun 1945	Dove and Hobbs fly to Ballesteros and recruit agents.
17 Jun 1945	DOVE and HOBBS Teams join Navy Task Force 70.4.
18 Jun 1945	Planned Alamo Scouts rescue of fliers POSTPONED.

20 Jun 1945

0200-2300 hours Dove/Hobbs Teams reconnoiter Fuga with Navy Task Force 70.4

22 Jun 1945

Japanese hold meeting with all civilians on Fuga Island.

23/24 Jun 1945

2008-0214 hours Dove returns to Fuga with *PTs* 383 & 547 to learn details of meeting.
No contact made. Returns to Claveria.

25 Jun 1945

*2000-0200 Dove returns to Fuga again with *PTs* 546 & 548 to contact civilians. No contact made. Returns to Claveria.

26 Jun 1945

Bernardo Suarez arrives at PT base in Claveria asking for assistance for Sycip family. General MacArthur contacts 6th Army.

27 Jul 1945

Dove receives letter from Sycip family at Claveria asking for assistance.

28 Jul 1945

2355 hours Dove Team departs Claveria aboard *PT-379* with *PT-551* for Fuga.

29 Jul 1945

0330 hours Dove Team lands on Fuga and makes contact with civilian fishermen.

0530 hours Dove Team captures two Japanese soldiers.

0530-0830 hours POWs interrogated. Dove meets with civilian leaders. Returns to landing point.

0830-2145 hours Civilians assemble at beach and load onto *PTs* 379 & 551.

2145 hours *PTs* depart Fuga for Claveria with 39 civilians & 2 POWs.

30 Jul 1945

0200 hours *PTs* arrive at Claveria.

Aprx 0800 Plane arrives at Ballesteros and takes SyCip & Elordis to Nichols Field. DOVE & HOBBS Teams resume missions on Luzon.

31 Jul 1945

Aprx 1300 Army truck takes SyCip family to their home in Manila.

15 Aug 1945 Alfonso Sycip hosts Dove and Aubrey Hall at his home in Manila.

2 Sep 1945 Japan formally surrenders ending World War II.

29 Jan 1946 War Crimes Investigating Detachment travels to Fuga.

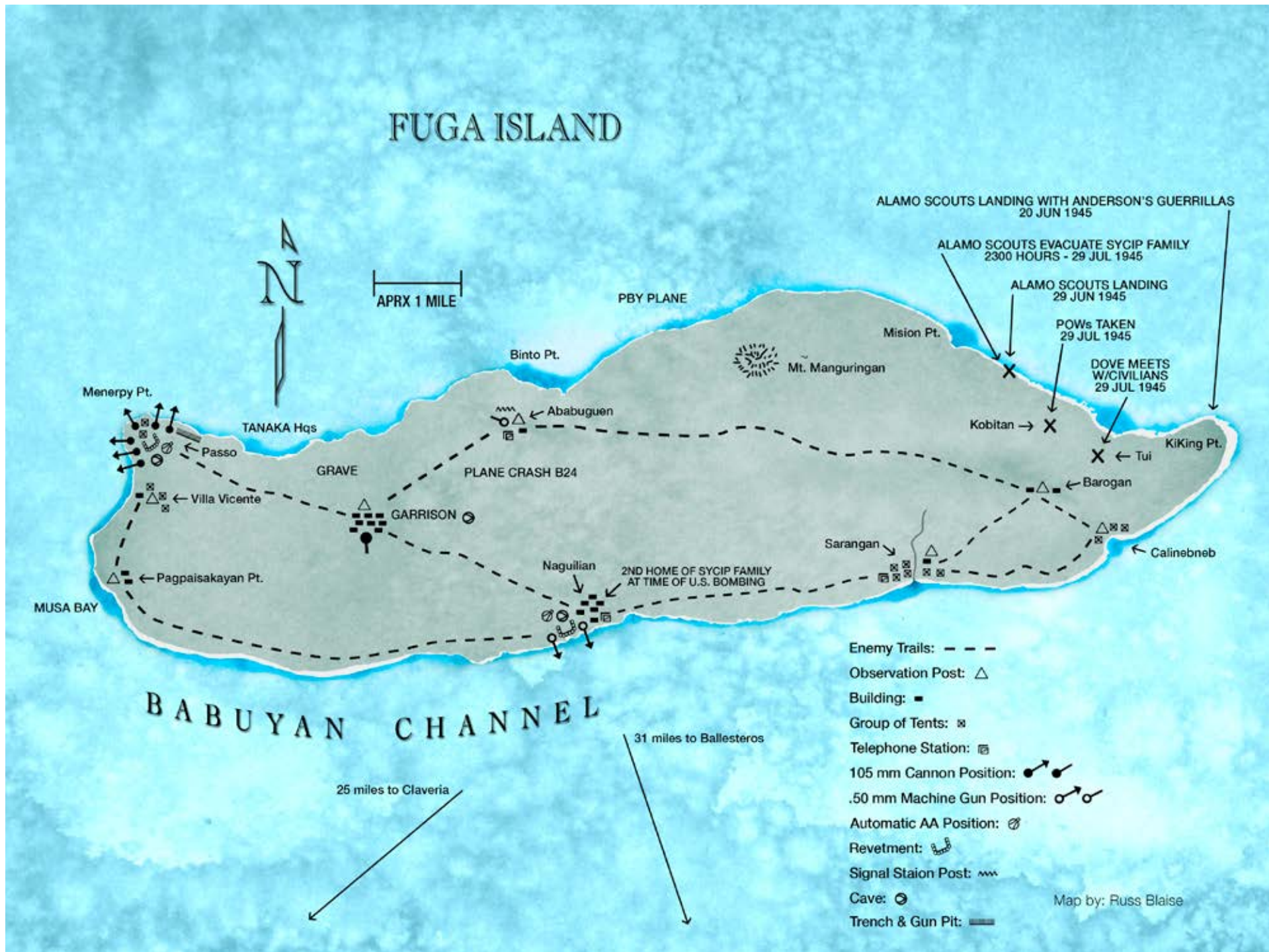
11 Mar 1946 War Crimes Investigating Detachment returns to Luzon.

3 Apr 1946 Major General Hikotaro Tajima executed for war crimes.

6-7 May 1946 Tanaka, Ito, and Wakamori tried and convicted for war crimes on Fuga.

1 Mar 1950 Meides, Blackmore, Cook, and Wiehl repatriated and interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



A Matter of Time

Alamo Scouts Rescue on Fuga Island

By Lance Zedric - Illustration by Russ Blaise

In 1941, tiny Fuga Island located 26 miles north of the Philippine islands and some 200 miles south of Formosa (Taiwan) in the Babuyan Archipelago, was an idyllic postcard setting for a subtropical paradise of white sands and palm trees. Meaning “escape” in Latin but known locally as “Isla Dagyti Espiritu” or “Island of the Spirits,” Fuga was aptly named either way. Claimed by the Spanish in the 16th century and administered by the Dominican Order of Friars during the Spanish encomienda system before being returned to Philippine control in 1898, Fuga, believed by many to be governed by ancient Anito spirits, could not escape the impending world war. But in the midst of that terrible conflict, a special friendship was forged there between Alamo Scout John Dove and Chinese businessman Alfonso Sycip, two men of separate station sharing a common faith.

1937 With the Japanese military invasion of mainland China, Chinese-Filipino businessman Alfonso Sycip and others in the Philippines believed that war with Japan was inevitable. In response to Japan’s aggression, Sycip and his brother Albino, and friends Dee Chuan and Yu Khe Thai, organized the Philippine Chinese Resist-The-Enemy Foundation and raised over 10 million pesos and sent it to the Chinese KMT (Kumintang) government headed by General Chiang-Kai-Shek. The foundation advocated the boycotting of Japanese goods to thwart the war effort. If the Japanese were successful in expanding the war into the Philippines, there would be hell to pay.



Sycip brothers (Sycip Family photo).



Chiang-Kai-Shek with Alfonso Sycip and wife.

Born Xue Fenshi (Shoo Fin-sure) in Manila in 1883, Sycip was educated in China and returned to Manila and became a leader in the China community in 1912. Over the next three decades, he played a prominent role in the Philippines as vice-president and charter member of the Rotary Club Manila based in the Manila Hotel, home to General Douglas MacArthur, while he

served as the Military Advisor to the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines from 1935-1941, and when he was recalled to active duty in the Philippines in late July 1941. Sycip served as Chairman of the Philippine Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, as a director of China Bank in the P.I, and as president of his own company, Yek Hua Trading Corporation, co-owned with his brother, Albino.

Half a world away in Hollywood, California, 19-year-old John M. “Jack” Dove was beginning to fill out. The handsome blue-eyed teenager had worked as a furniture mover for different trucking companies off and on since graduating from Hollywood High in 1935 and had attended the Bible Institute of Los Angeles for a year to “firm things up” in his mind. He even sang in the choir and helped teach Sunday School at the Hollywood First Baptist Church. A lot had happened over the past eight years, and like many Americans living through the Great Depression, life was often difficult, but Dove’s burgeoning faith had sustained him and his family through the best and the worst of times.

Jack’s parents, Walter and Carrie Graves Dove, hailed from Kentucky and were the salt of the earth. Walter was an automotive engineer and worked in Detroit and Carrie was a homemaker. After Walter experienced some health problems,



The Dove family circa 1920.



he and Carrie returned to Kentucky, and in 1916, welcomed their first child, Betty, followed by Jack and his twin brother, Robert, in late March 1918. Six months later, Walter deployed to France as a captain with the 327th Field Artillery of the 84th Division composed of National Guard units from Indiana and Kentucky. After a brief deployment in The Great War, he returned stateside and baby Martha arrived nine months later. In 1925, Walter moved the family to southern Florida where he became superintendent of the Opa Locka Papaya Plantation and helped develop several new varieties of papaya. Life was good. And then it wasn't.



Capt. Walter Dove

In May 1929, five months before the stock market crash, Walter suffered a stroke and died at age 46 leaving Carrie with four children to care for. A few months later, the family, descendants of the legendary trailblazer Daniel Boone, followed the spirit of their heritage and moved to California heeding Horace Greeley's famous call to "Go West" in search of a new life. And there they found it.

1942 On a mild Thursday morning in Los Angeles on 22 January 1942, Jack and his brother, Robert, who later earned

a commission and was wounded in Belgium, raised their right hands and enlisted in the United States Army at Fort MacArthur overlooking beautiful San Pedro Bay. Robert chose the infantry and Jack the mechanized cavalry. Jack's girlfriend, Julia Brady, an attractive brunette from Hollywood, was proud but worried about the future. In less than a week, her Jack would enter basic training at Fort Riley, Kansas as a private and hopefully be selected to attend Officer's Candidate School (OCS) there before being deployed to either Europe or the Pacific. Since Adolf Hitler had a firm control over western Europe and Japan was slicing throughout the Pacific, chances were good that her Jack would be sent overseas, but there was still the slim possibility of a stateside posting. Either way, there would be a lot of work to do and few believed the war would end quickly. She only hoped that Jack would be out of harm's way for as long as possible and that there might be time for them to wed before he shipped out, perhaps at the famous Old Post Chapel. But that was in God's hands.

Two weeks earlier on 8 January, the Imperial Japanese Army had entered Manila after MacArthur had declared it an open city on Christmas 1941 following the 7 December attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent invasion of the Philippines. The dreaded Kempeitai, the Japanese military police, quickly rounded up suspected spies and pre-war friends of the Americans and the Filipino establishment. Alfonso Sycip and his brother, Albino, along with others from the Philippine Chinese Resist-The-Enemy Foundation and seven members of the Chinese consular staff, went into hiding but were arrested on information supplied by Alfonso's Japanese driver who secretly worked for the Kempeitai. Alfonso and the others were then transferred to the old Bilibid Prison in Manila and tried and convicted by a military court for spying for the Americans and sentenced to death. However, in an attempt to improve relations between the Japanese and the Filipinos, the Japanese commuted the sentence to life imprisonment and Sycip and several others were transferred to a new national prison at Muntinglupa. Fortune further shined on the Sycip brothers when the Japanese pardoned and released them from prison on 29 April 1943 upon Japanese Emperor Hirohito's birthday on the condition that Alfonso cooperate with



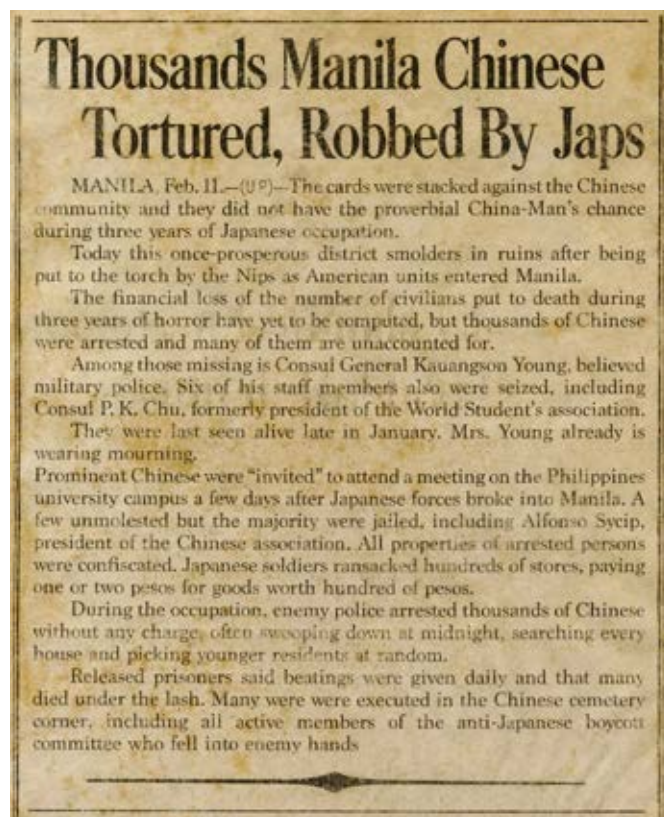
Lt. Jack Dove

authorities and promise to head the Chinese organization in Manila. A devout Methodist, Alfonso accepted the release and prayed about what to do. He had a lot to ask for.

1944 In the summer of 1944, Alfonso worried about the well-being of his large extended family and feared that he might be rearrested and ultimately executed. Without any means of income, he was unable to support his family as he wished and requested that the Japanese issue him a permit to take his family to Fuga Island, which the Sycip family partly owned, with a promise that he would return. The Japanese issued the permit but Sycip reneged on his vow. Although Fuga had no electricity and consisted of a small number of barrios with about 500 people, it contained an estimated 3000 cattle and enough arable land to feed the family and its Spanish domestics, totaling some 60 people, for the immediate future. Sycip believed that his family would be safer there than at their luxurious compound in Manila, but the Japanese believed that the island, located in the direct path to Formosa, was still a



Sycip family photo taken early in the war.



primary military target of the Allies. They were both wrong.

On 21 September 1944, the Japanese 61st Independent Mixed Brigade (IMB) from Formosa arrived and confiscated all the cattle and forbade buying food on the economy. The Sycips were then forced to grow their own food.

Two weeks later

in New Guinea (4-5 Oct), now 1st Lt. Jack Dove and two teams of Alamo Scouts, Sixth Army's elite reconnaissance and raider unit, supported by Lt. Louis Rapmund, a Dutch operative, and two Navy PT boats, had just liberated 66 Dutch and Javanese prisoners from the Japanese in a daring night raid. In February, Dove had graduated with the second class of Alamo Scouts and was everyone's All-American. The burly 200-pounder had led his team on several missions deep behind enemy lines without losing a man and had earned a reputation among the men as the "best of the best." The rugged team leader neither drank nor smoked, rarely cursed, and remained true to the tenets of his faith. During missions he often quoted scripture and required his men to quietly sing hymns as they inched toward enemy shores at night from the sea in a rubber raft. In camp, Dove was a physical, rough and tumble officer with a playful, goofy personality, but he was all business when it came to winning the war. Two weeks after the raid, Dove and the Allies returned to the Philippines and were one step closer to that end.

1945 For over nine months, the Sycips had faced increasing food shortages but had avoided harsh treatment from their Japanese occupiers. Although Allied air traffic over the island made the Japanese increasingly suspicious of Alfonso, the Sycips had

been lucky and were largely unaffected by the war. But luck always runs out.

In early May, in an attempt to shake up the Japanese garrison on Fuga, American B-24s mistakenly bombed the Sycip compound killing 16 family members. The horrific loss claimed young and old but helped convince the Japanese that they could trust the Sycips. The Japanese then allowed the family to relocate and to move freely over the island.

A month later on 5 June, an American B-24 crashed in the center of the island and four airmen from a PBY that was attempting to rescue the survivors were captured by the Japanese leading to increased air activity over



Alfonso and Epifania Sycip.



PROUD—Mrs. Julie Dove holds picture of husband, Lt. John M. Dove, who helped free prisoners from Luzon stockade. Both are graduates of Hollywood High School.

the island (see *And Justice For All*). On 13 June, members of the Sycip family constructed a message from logs alerting reconnaissance aircraft of the airmen. On 20 June, Dove and fellow Alamo Scout team leader Woodrow Hobbs were sent in to find and rescue them if possible. The Scouts, supported by a force of 90 guerrillas, landed by boat on Fuga Island and attempted to learn of the fate of the airmen but soon discovered that they had been killed. During their brief reconnaissance, they were unaware of the Sycips and the Sycips of them. Dove wrote to Julia to keep praying for a quick end to the war. A few months earlier at a movie theater, she watched a brief Newsreel clip showing her smiling

husband handing out cigarettes to ex-POWs after the famous raid on Cabanatuan where Army Rangers, Alamo Scouts, and Filipino guerrillas liberated over 500 men in the most famous raid of the war. Her Jack was at it again. He loved helping others.

AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT Sometime in late July 1945, Albino Sycip wrote a handwritten letter to his close friend, General Douglas MacArthur, requesting the rescue of his brother and his family from Fuga Island.

On 26 July, Bernardo Swarez, a civilian from Claveria, arrived at the PT base bearing letters of introduction from Philippine president Osmena and General Roxas asking for help rescuing the Sycips. MacArthur immediately tasked Sixth Army G-2 for the mission, which alerted Dove and the commander of PT Squadron 28 to devise a plan. The next day, the mission was a go!

On the evening of 28 July 1945, Sgt. Pete Vischansky celebrated his 25th birthday with a simple meal and a nap at a private home in Claveria on the northern coast of Luzon where the Alamo Scout team stayed between missions. It had been over three years since the wiry 150-pounder had enlisted and left Towanda, Pennsylvania located on the mighty Susquehanna River.



Jack Dove and Alamo Scouts row ashore at Fuga.

He joked to Dove that “Susquehanna” truly was Algonquin for “burial ground,” and that he hoped that he wouldn’t be returning there any time soon.

At 2355 hours, Dove and the rest of his Alamo Scout team consisting of 1st Sgt. Frederico Balambao, Sgt. Estanislao “Bear Cat” Bacat, Sgt. Paul Draper, and Swarez, boarded PT-379 and PT-383 bound for Fuga. Dove looked up at the full moon. It was so large that he could almost hold it in his hands. Landing on an enemy shore under a full moon in choppy seas was not ideal, but with luck and a prayer he and his team would slip in undetected.

Earlier that evening, Alfonso Sycip and his family held hands and prayed for a miracle. Their situation had become desperate. The family only had one day of food left and were unsure of what the Japanese might do. Morale was also low among the troops and many suffered from malnutrition, dysentery, and malaria. As a Christian, Sycip believed that God answered all prayers but this time he hoped the answer was “yes.”

SPECIAL DELIVERY At 0330 hours under a full eclipse of the moon, DOVE Team landed by rubber boat on the northwest coast of the island.

“PT-379 and 383 left Claveria with throttles and mufflers open until they were 10 miles from the island,” said Dove. “We used the moon, charts, photographs, and radar to select our landing point. The last 4 miles of the final approach were made at idling speed, which is 3 knots. The final approach and rubber boat landing was made during the dark of the eclipse. The darkness was so intense that we walked up on the coral upon three Filipino fishermen without them seeing us. At first, they thought we were a Jap patrol, but Mr. Swarez talked them out of running away. After landing, we hid our boat, told the PT boys by radio that all was well, and to go on home—all was forgiven.”

As the eclipse passed, the fishermen led



PT-379 and crew.

the team along the jungle trails to a banana patch where two Japanese soldiers were sleeping. Dove determined that they would be the best source of information about the enemy strength and disposition on the island.

"Two hours before dawn found us 2 miles inland standing over two snoring Japs," chuckled Dove. "The next five minutes can best be described as 'dusty,' 'noisy,' and reeked of a barroom brawl. The odds were 3 to 1, and the outcome was just an inevitable as the final outcome of the war... One Jap saw the advantages of a quiet and quick surrender but the other received many a tap [from a pistol butt] and ended up tied in a fish net, strung on a pole like a dead tiger... he was finally quieted by a morphine syrette."

"We had a conference and decided it would be better to take them while they were sleeping," added Draper. "It was decided that Dove would jump on one and I was to jump on the other one... I whacked my man over the head four times with my .45 but it didn't seem to do much damage. I noticed Dove out of the corner of my eye and saw that he was really having a picnic. He looked like he was chopping wood! We didn't want to kill them... we just wanted to put them to sleep for a while."

With first light approaching, Dove, Vischansky, Balambao, Swarez, and the fishermen set out to the village of the Sycip family home while Bacat and Draper remained with the prisoners. One of the fisherman went into the village to ensure no Japanese were present. He then went to the Sycip home and spoke with John, Alfonso's son, and brought him to the edge of the clearing where the Scouts were hiding. After a brief conversation, John left and returned a few minutes later with his father.

Alfonso bowed to Dove. "I knew you would come today."

In a pig's eye, thought Dove, keeping his opinion to himself. "We've been asked to help you any way we can," he said flatly. "How can we help you?"

"Take us off," replied Sycip.

Dove smiled. "Will do, sir."

"On the morning of July 29, 1945, to our great surprise, Uncle Alfonso and Cousin John told us that some soldiers had secretly landed on Fuga and met with them earlier that morning," recalled Jane (Sycip) Lin-Fu, then a 13-year-old. "The message was simple and straightforward: 'The Americans will return that evening after dark and evacuate our family.'"

THE EXODUS The Scouts made plans for the civilians to assemble at the beach at sunset for transport to the PT boats and then returned to a coral cave in which they were hiding and watched the jungle trails for signs of the enemy who might be looking for the missing soldiers. Now if only the weather would cooperate.

"We had to get these civilians off the island as soon as possible as a bad storm was brewing," said Dove. "The only radio we had with us at the time was a line of sight radio which could be expected to carry about five miles. I was doubtful we could be heard by anyone... Yet our call traveled

over 4 miles of dense foliage and 26 miles of ocean. By coincidence, the call was received by an operator who happened to pick up the tail end of our message as he tested some of his equipment. By clearing the message ten hours before schedule, the PT boats could rendezvous four hours early. Hopefully, this would allow us to beat the storm."

Throughout the day, the Scouts watched the trails while the Sycips prepared to leave without drawing the attention of the Japanese.

"The Alamo Scouts told us not to bring anything with us," recalled Jane Lin-fu. "Once we got to the beach, we were to all hide behind the nearby rocks until the American rescue team showed up. If there were only a few of us, we could make some plausible excuses for going to the beach. But there we were, the entire clan of twenty-some people, old and young, and with elderly Mrs. Alfonso Sycip being taken on horseback because of her bound feet... taking that long walk to the beach with so many young children was far from an easy task."

"At sundown, there were about 200 civilians that came down where we were, figuring we could take them all back with us," said Draper. "When the PTs finally arrived, we had three families that we had seen earlier in the morning. It took about 15 round trips to the PTs from the shore to get everyone aboard."



Sycips aboard PT-379.

"We contacted the PT boats and gave the skipper the glad news that 43 persons, instead of 6 would board his boats," said Dove. "He said, 'Anything goes with me, Bud.' Enough good things cannot be said about the PT skippers and the support that they and their commanders gave to the Scouts throughout the war."

"We were told to just bring the clothes that we wore," recalled Priscilla Sycip Bogner. "So we wore three-to-four outfits, one on top of the other."

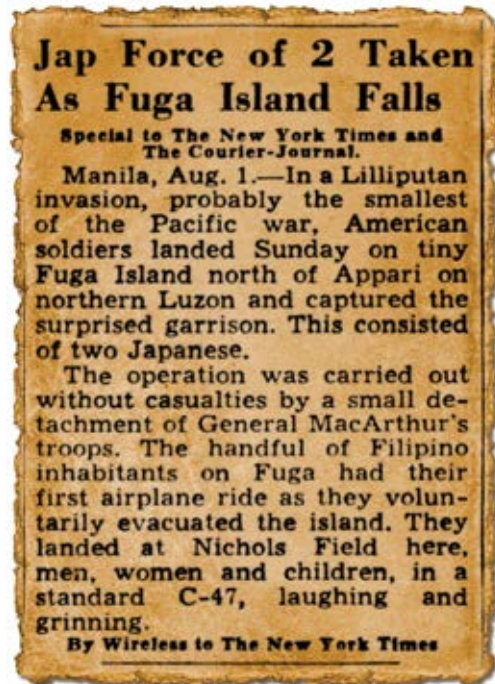
"Taxiing women and children from shore to PT boats was certainly a nightmare," said Dove. "The kids howled, the parents howled for them to shut up, and the wind out howled them all."

"The night was very dark with a bad storm threatening," said Ralph Kleeberger, a crewman aboard PT-379. "We had to get into shore as close as possible, so everyone was...making every effort to be quiet as we could...We finally got all the passengers aboard...the last person we took aboard was a beautiful five-year-old boy all dressed up in a Chinese mandarin outfit...he looked like something out of a travel magazine."

"On the way back I remember feeling just a little bit sorry for the Jap prisoners. They looked so small and pitiful with their bandaged-up heads," said crewman William Rankin of PT-379. "The Filipino scout gave them cigarettes and spoke to them in Japanese. I asked him what he said. He'd told them that if it was up to him he'd have killed them both!"

A few hours later, the Sycips arrived at Claveria and were flown from Ballesteros to Nichols Field in Manila and trucked to their compound arriving on the afternoon of 31 July.

The next day, a hyperbolic wire article, "Jap Force of 2 Taken As Fuga Island Falls," appeared in several newspapers across the United States stating that in a "Lilliputan [sic] invasion" American soldiers had landed on the island and "captured the surprised garrison." Lilliputan [correct spelling] refers to the tiny island of Lilliput in Jonathan Swift's novel, *Gulliver's Travels*, and the Japanese garrison was the two prisoners captured by DOVE Team. The article was the only known period article published



about the rescue.

After the mission, Dove and Vischansky remained at Claveria and continued with intelligence collection until they were called in from the field after the dropping of the first atomic bomb on 6 August 1945, while the Sycip family remained in Manila and began rebuilding their lives.

"I cannot speak too highly of the unfailing courtesy and kindness of all the officers and enlisted men who aided us," wrote Sycip in a letter to General MacArthur immediately after their rescue. "The gallantry, courtesy, and self-effacing modesty of your men have moved me profoundly and have made me realize more deeply than ever how magnificent are the armies under your command."

Sycip wrote to Dove, and on 15 August, a day after the preliminary Japanese surrender, hosted him and fellow Scout Aubrey Hall at his home.

"We visited the family that my team brought off this small island a couple weeks ago," wrote Dove in a letter to Julia. "They were very glad to see me...It was a lovely meal in a lovely home with happy surroundings. When we left they gave me...a very beautiful set of lacquer from China. It is made of silk instead of wood and is certainly beautiful. I have packed it as carefully as I can in sawdust and it's in the mail now. I never saw anything so light and pretty. The painting of a Chinese temple is very fine and is done in gold. We will open it one of these days..."

Shortly before he left the Philippines, Dove wrote to Alfonso expressing his thoughts on their shared faith. "I have been a Christian since a young boy, so faith in God is a big thing in my life," he explained. "I want you to know that the greatest evidence of faith I have ever seen was in your saying, 'I knew you would come today.' You didn't say 'Someday soon' or 'In time,' but 'Today.' This did my faith more good than it did yours, although you may not agree as your prayers were obviously answered. You had an undiluted faith in God while mine was mixed with faith in our arms, radio, and the other members of the team. I know that God has helped me through more difficult missions than



Evangelist Billy Graham with members of the Sycip family.

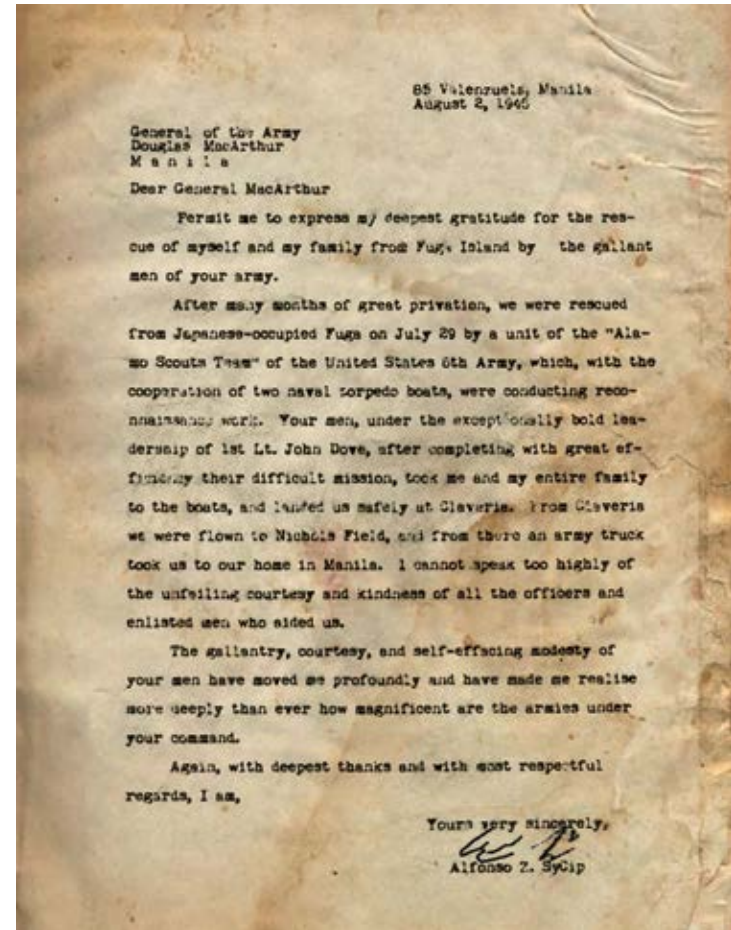
the Fuga one, but never was my faith any stronger. Whenever I see your beautiful present, I think of you and your family, then I can't help but remember your faith in God."

EPITAPH Julia and Jack Dove wed at the Old Post Chapel at Fort Riley, Kansas on September 21, 1942 before Jack deployed to the Pacific in June 1943. After the war, they corresponded with Alfonso a few times a year and frequently received Christmas and anniversary gifts from him until his death in 1969. Jack and Julia were married for 53 years before Jack died in 1995. Until her death in 2013, the gifts served as warm and loving reminders of her beloved Jack, the power of faith, and the Sycips' miraculous escape from Fuga Island.

Note Jack Dove retired from the U.S. Army as a full colonel in 1970 with 29 years combined active and reserve service. He served in the cavalry and as an Alamo Scout during World War II, as a tank commander in Germany during and after the Korean Conflict, and as an advisor in Vietnam. He also served at many stateside posts and in Saudi Arabia. His decorations include the Silver Star w/oak leaf cluster, the Legion of Merit, the Soldier's Medal, the Bronze Star for Valor w/ 2 oak leaf clusters, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 4 stars, the WWII Victory Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal (Germany), the National Defense Service Medal w/ oak leaf cluster, the Southeast Asia Campaign Medal with 3 stars, the Army Reserve Medal w/Hourglass, the Philippine Liberation Medal w/ 2 stars, the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, the Presidential Unit Citation for his role in the Cabanatuan Raid, and the Special Forces Tab earned for his service with the Alamo Scouts. Salute!



Jack Dove's ribbon array.



Letter from Alfonso Sycip to Gen. MacArthur.

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William L. “Willie” Ruf, Jr.

Alamo Scout Spotlight

By Lance Zedric - Illustration by Russ Blaise

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, affectionately known as “Ike,” flashed his famous smile as Chief Warrant Officer William L. “Willie” Ruf (roof), an army pilot with the 1st Executive Flight Detachment and former Alamo Scout, lifted off from a helipad in Spain taking Ike to the next destination on his 1959 presidential world tour. Ruf earned the distinction of piloting the first overseas helicopter flight of an American president. He would later have an audience with the Pope, meet the King of Spain and other foreign heads of state, and also fly Presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Baines Johnson, and Richard M. Nixon. A storied 52-year career of combined military and government service that culminated with a posthumous induction in the Army Aviation Hall of Fame.

Born in New Jersey in 1923, Ruf quit high school after his sophomore year and enlisted in the Army in June 1941, and after basic infantry and specialized training, deployed to Hawaii with the 20th Infantry, 6th Infantry Division in August 1943 for amphibious training. In February 1944, Ruf's unit deployed to New Guinea and later to the Philippines and Korea.

In December 1944, the diminutive 5'5 120-pound private volunteered for and was selected to attend the Alamo Scouts Training Center (ASTC) at Abuyog, Leyte to train in reconnaissance and raider work. On 1 February 1945, he was among only a handful of men from the 6th training class, including future Major General Herbert Wolff, who graduated from the elite training course following relocation of the camp to the Calisiao area on Luzon. Due to manpower levels, the class was the only one from which no operational scouts were retained and all graduates returned to their parent units to serve in a conventional reconnaissance role.

But Ruf's service after the Alamo Scouts was anything but ordinary. He was briefly captured but escaped and was hidden under a house for several days by Filipinos while the Japanese



William L. “Willie” Ruf, Jr.

scoured the countryside looking for him. Soon after rejoining his unit, he was almost killed by an enemy sniper. Ruf had just returned from a patrol and settled into his foxhole to rest and read a few letters from home. He removed his helmet and placed it outside his foxhole but the top of his head stuck out just enough for the sniper to get a shot off at his head. The bullet lodged near Ruf's optic nerve. Miraculously, he survived when medics rushed him to a field hospital for lifesaving treatment.

After recovering from his wound, Ruf returned to the 20th Infantry Regiment and earned a Silver Star for valor three days before the preliminary Japanese surrender in mid-August 1945. Shortly thereafter, he became the regimental sergeant major at age 22 and went with the unit to Kwangju, Korea where he reenlisted and served for three more months

before returning stateside for duty in December 1945.

Four years later, he took an examination to become a warrant officer, and following brief service in the Korean War, was appointed as a Warrant Officer Junior Grade (WOJG) in April 1951 and assigned to the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia as an Infantry Light Weapons Instructor. It was there that his life changed.

“Dad loved to watch helicopters while he was an instructor at the Infantry



Ruf with the 6th Infantry Division on Luzon. 1945.

School,” said his son, Billy. “One evening, a Maj. Bill Howell asked him to go up—he was the commander of the helicopter unit there. After they went up, the major asked Dad if he wanted to take the stick. Dad did, and things got worse after that. The major took the stick back and said, ‘I got it!’ Dad about killed them both. Since Dad was a warrant officer, the major assumed he was a pilot, but he wasn’t, so the major asked him if he’d like to become one. Dad later graduated with the first helicopter class at Camp Rucker, Alabama, which is now Fort Rucker.”

But Howell had to pull a few strings. Ruf was eight days too old to be admitted into the class, so Howell sent him to Washington, DC to speak with Brigadier Gen. Richard Kenyon, Howell’s former commander. It pays to know people.

On 18 October 1954, Ruf was among 25 officers and officer candidates admitted to Flight Class 55-F, the first warrant officer class for helicopter flight at Camp Rucker. He graduated on 30 April 1955 becoming a pilot



Army One in flight.

at age 32 with 14 years of infantry experience in two wars. He was then assigned to the 587th Transportation Company at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and after transitional training, deployed with the unit to Munich, Germany.

In late 1958, Ruf’s career took another turn when he was assigned to the Army Executive Flight Detachment (Presidential Flight Detachment) which had become operational on 1 January 1958. The Army conducted the helicopter transport of U.S. presidents until 1976 when the Marine Corps assumed the duty.

“President Eisenhower hated stopping traffic whenever he was being driven to Camp David,” said Billy Ruf. “So he called in Bill Howell and

pointed to the White House lawn. ‘Can you land me a helicopter out there?’ he asked. ‘I can land three of them there,’ Howell replied. It wasn’t long after that while Dad was serving in Lebanon and we were living in Germany, that Dad got a message to report to Fort Belvoir, Virginia to be part of the Presidential Flight Detachment.”

After service during the Lebanon Crisis from May to September 1958, where he played an important role in the evacuation of the Lebanese prime minister while serving with Task Force 201, Ruf enjoyed one of the most prestigious assignments of his career by flying the president, future presidents, and foreign dignitaries at home and abroad.

“Dad had several slides of the Kennedy family standing out on the porch waving,” said Billy. “One time, Mrs. Kennedy was

already in the helicopter and little John Kenny jumped onto Dad’s lap. He loved sitting on Dad’s lap in the helicopter. I’m sure Dad loved it too.”

But Ruf wasn’t a one-trick pony. While stationed at Fort Belvoir in March 1962, he flew several mercy missions during a flood that struck Chincoteague Island, Virginia and Ocean City, Maryland earning an Air Medal. “With complete disregard for his own personal safety, Chief Warrant Officer Ruf voluntarily flew an H-21C Helicopter on mercy missions through congested areas characterized by atmospheric turbulence, gale force winds, high tension wires, and tall trees and buildings to evacuate stranded victims...” stated his citation. “Chief Warrant Officer Ruf’s professional skill, perseverance, and outstanding performance throughout these rescue operations reflect great credit upon himself and the military service.”

VIETNAM In July 1962, Ruf volunteered to go to Vietnam and later served as part of the 93rd Transportation Company dubbed the *Soc Trang Tigers*. The unit was one of the earliest helicopter units in Vietnam and the first to operate in the Mekong Delta. Having experienced combat as an infantryman, Ruf was prepared and kept a Thompson .45 machine gun



CW2 Ruf while serving with Executive Flight Detachment.

and a pistol loaded with hollow point bullets next to his pilot's seat. During a resupply operation, he landed his Huey in a rice paddy, and when the force from the rotors beat down the tall elephant grass nearby, a Vietcong jumped up and fired into the cockpit striking his pilot's stick. Ruf responded by shooting through the plexiglass nose of the chopper killing the soldier.

But he also had some fun.

"The unit had a pet tiger cub named, 'Tuffy the Tiger,' said Billy Ruf. 'They also had a dog named, 'Tiger the Dog.' They got the tiger cub from a Montagnard tribe that had killed the mother of the cub, and they brought it to the unit. They ate the mother but didn't want to eat the cub. When the unit left Vietnam, some of the guys pulled some strings with some Air Force buddies to fly the Tiger to the Toledo Zoo in Ohio, and when the guys from the zoo met the guys at the airport, they had



Tuffy and Tiger play at the base in Soc Trang, Vietnam.

tranquilizer guns and all this equipment to subdue this tiger, but when the ramp came down on the back of the airplane, a guy walked out with the tiger on a leash and said, 'Here you go!' The guys from the zoo didn't know what to do!"

After returning from Vietnam in 1963, Ruf worked with the

newly-activated 11th Air Assault Division (Test) at Fort Benning and earned the original Air Assault Badge. The division helped develop the Airmobile concept later employed in Vietnam by the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) formed in June 1965.

While at Fort Benning, Ruf frequently flew to the Chinook factory in Pennsylvania and ferried the large transport helicopters back to Benning. On the way back during one trip, he flew over his brother's house in a residential area and landed in a nearby clay pit. After picking up two



Ruf in the cockpit of Army One.

cases of live blue crabs and spending the night, he returned to face an angry commander, but Ruf soothed his commander's ire with several live crabs and the incident was quickly forgotten.

In 1965, now a CW4 and a Master Army Aviator with a college degree from Troy State, Ruf deployed during the crisis in the Dominican Republic to support the loyalist government during a revolution by armed constitutionalists. Upon returning to Fort Rucker, he became a Standardization Instructor until his military retirement on 1 January 1970 with 28 years of military service and over 16,000 total flight hours, including 1,200 in combat.

Ruf remained at Fort Rucker as a civil service flight instructor employee in the Department of Academic Training where he also taught history and other subjects to cadets until Civil Service

retirement in 1993. But he wasn't done yet. For the next several years, he volunteered with the Red Cross at the USA Aeromedical Center, coached Special Olympics athletes, and gave tours at the Army Aviation Museum.

"Dad used to enjoy giving tours at the Aviation Museum at Rucker," said Billy Ruf. "One time the Sergeant Major of the Army came through, and after quite some time, the sergeant major's aide said, 'Don't you think we should be going?' And the sergeant major snapped back, 'I'll let you know when I'm ready to go!' He was enjoying himself listening to Dad's stories. Dad loved to talk."

It was hard not to listen to a man who had been there and done that.

In a stellar military career, Ruf served at several stateside posts and in many foreign campaigns, including those in New Guinea and in Philippines during WWII, and in Korea, Germany, Lebanon, the Dominican Republic, and Vietnam,



The Soc Trang Tigers.

as well as in Greece, Spain, Italy and other countries with the Executive Flight Detachment. Ruf earned numerous individual combat decorations and campaign and service medals (see insert). Additional awards include the Presidential Service, Combat Infantry, Master Army Aviator, Parachutist, and Air Assault badges, and the Special Forces Tab awarded for his service with the Alamo Scouts. In 1997, Ruf was named Volunteer of the Year and awarded the Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal. Three years later, he was presented with the Order of St. Michael Silver Medal for significant contribution to Army Aviation.

Ruf died on 20 September 2007, but his legacy of service lives on at his beloved Fort Rucker and throughout the U.S. Army. In September 2013, officials at Fort Rucker renamed Fifth Avenue as “Ruf Avenue.” In 2015, the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Career College there established the “CW4 (R) William L. Ruf Leadership Award,” and in 2018, he was further honored with induction into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame located in the Army Aviation Museum. A fitting and lasting recognition for a man who lived above the clouds but whose feet were planted firmly on the ground.

Salute!

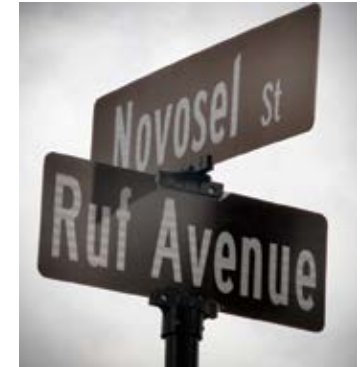
WILLIE RUF DECORATIONS

Silver Star
 Legion of Merit
 Distinguished Flying Cross
 Bronze Star
 Purple Heart
 Air Medal w/2 oak leaf clusters
 Army Commendation Medal
 Good Conduct Medal (4th award)
 American Defense Medal
 National Defense Service Medal w/olc
 American Campaign Medal
 Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal w/3 stars
 WWII Victory Medal
 Army Occupation Medal (Germany)
 Army Expeditionary Medal w/2 stars
 Korea Campaign Medal
 United Nations Medal
 Southeast Asia Campaign Medal w/1 star
 Philippine Liberation Medal w/1 star
 Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal
 Republic of Korea Service Medal
 Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal



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 *Photos courtesy of the Ruf family.



Ruf after receiving the Order of St. Michael.

Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation Membership

The Alamo Scouts Historical Foundation offers three types of memberships to those who wish to support the organization. Annual dues are \$25.00, and will be used to help maintain the Alamo Scouts website; secure memorial plaques for the unit at historical and military institutions; fund special projects; and support ongoing archival research and procurement of historical unit-related memorabilia for educational purposes. Membership also entitles you to a membership card, a newsletter, our new RECON magazine, and attendance to any of the ASHF events. **We offer a 3 and 5 year membership. Get a three-year membership for \$70.00 (\$5.00 savings) or a 5-year membership for \$115.00 (\$10.00 savings).**

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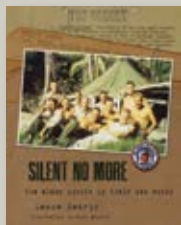
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<https://www.amazon.com/Silent-No-More-Alamo-Scouts-ebook/dp/B08KRZHTNH>



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Hybrid Alamo Scouts insignia taken from the original drawing by Harry Golden, and the H.S. Meyer's patch. Created in Adobe Illustrator by Russ Blaise.