



DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY
2300 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2300

25 July 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

From: (b) (6), Historian, Research Division, Indo-Pacific (IP)
Directorate, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA)

To: The Bell Family, Headquarters Marine Corps Casualty Section, and IP Directorate,
DPAA, and Outreach and Communications Directorate, DPAA

Subj: Discovery of Billy Weldon Bell's Identification Tag at Iwo Jima

In April 2024, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) sent an investigation team to Iwo Jima to collect Japanese records and investigate leads associated with the invasion beaches and cemeteries. A Commander from the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force, [REDACTED], explained through a translator, that an American identification tag (Figure 1) was found near an American Sherman tank (Figure 2 and Figure 3). [REDACTED] expressed a desire to return the identification tag to the Service Member's family. DPAA historian (b) (6) [REDACTED] photographed the tag and agreed that she would follow up with [REDACTED] to provide more information about the Service Member so he might return the identification tag to the Service Member's family. To DPAA's knowledge [REDACTED] is still in possession of the identification tag.¹

¹ DPAA Lead Number: WII-JP-24377
Location Number: LN-94916 (54RWN3117640284 MGRS)
Incident Number: WII-00421-J
Mission Number: 24-1JP



Figure 1. The American identification tag found by Japan Self Defense Force personnel near an American Sherman tank site at Iwo Jima.



Figure 2. The American Sherman tank near which [REDACTED] said the identification tag was found.

DPAA historians believe the tank is an American Sherman medium tank, specifically a late model of the M4A3 with a 75-millimeter gun.² The tank sits across a gravel road from a Japanese war memorial and is a stopping point for tourists. Specifically, the tank is located at the center of Iwo Jima, south of the main airport runway at 54RWN3117640284 MGRS (24°46'36.98"N, 141°18'30.23"E) (Figures 3 and 4).

² Analysis courtesy of DPAA Historian (b) (6) [REDACTED]. See also Figure 6. Medium tank M4A3, “The Sherman M4A3 Medium Tank,” *The Sherman Tank Site*, (Wordpress), accessed 22 July 2024 from: <https://www.theshermantank.com/the-sherman-tank-variant-page-pages-for-each-type-of-sherman-tank/the-sherman-m4a3-medium-tank/>.



Figure 3. The Island of Iwo Jima with the location of the Sherman tank marked at center.

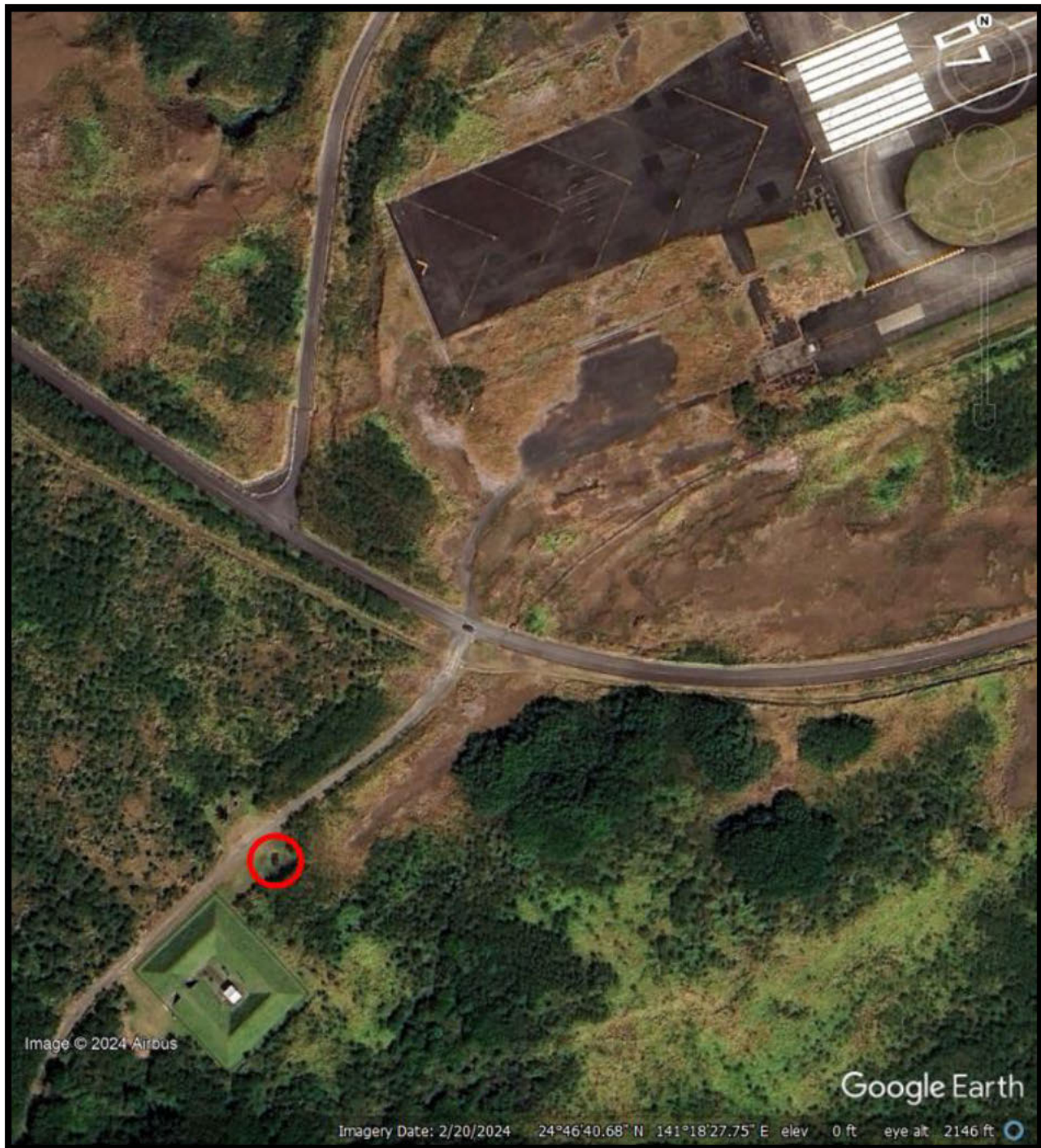


Figure 4. An enhanced satellite view of Iwo Jima. The Sherman tank near where the identification tag was found is circled in red. The southwest end of the airport runway can be seen in the top right corner of the photo.

The identification tag belonged B. W. Bell, service number 990830, of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Reserve, rank unknown. Initial analysis failed to associate the identification tag to any unresolved Service Member as no DPAA records match the initials and

name or the service number. However, the USMC Casualty Card Index, which indicated that Bill Weldon Bell had been Wounded in Action while serving with E Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines, 4th Marine Division, on 28 February 1945.³ Additional muster rolls for April 1945 place Mr. Bell back in U.S. Naval Hospitals in California convalescing from his wounds.⁴ According to his obituary, Mr. Bell passed away at age 95, on 31 May 2021 (Figure 5).⁵

³ Billy Weldon Bell, in the Web: Y.S., Marine Corps Casualty Indexes, 1940-1958, accessed from ancestry.com on 24 July 2024 from, [https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/5920:70837?_phcmd=u\(%27https://www.ancestry.com/search/?name=Billy+Weldon_Bell&count=50&keyword=990830&name_x=1_1&successSource=Search&queryId=b94deff7-3fca-4f91-a884-2b942c655e26%27,%27successSource%27\)](https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/5920:70837?_phcmd=u(%27https://www.ancestry.com/search/?name=Billy+Weldon_Bell&count=50&keyword=990830&name_x=1_1&successSource=Search&queryId=b94deff7-3fca-4f91-a884-2b942c655e26%27,%27successSource%27)), which cites, usmcu.edu/Research/Marine-Corps-History-Division/Research-Tools-Facts-and-Figures/Casualty-Card-Database/.

⁴U.S. Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1893-1958, Microfilm Publication T977, Roll 0957, PDF page 85, 86, 98; document pages 1129, 1130, 1142; NAID: 992159, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, Record Group (RG) 127, National Archives in Washington, D.C., from Ancestry.com, U.S., Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1892 [database on-line] Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2007.

⁵ Obituary for Bill Bell, Sr., Corpus Christi Caller-Times, 2 June 2021, accessed 24 July 2024 from, https://www.newspapers.com/image/752631062/?focus=0.6526239%2C0.08030634%2C0.9705948%2C0.4769164&xid=3355&_gl=1%2a7zdfm%2a_gcl_au%2aMTEwNTcyODM2NC4xNzIwMDI2MTY0%2a_ga%2aNjMzNjAzNTYyLjE3MjAwMjYxNjU.%2a_ga_4QT8FMEX30%2aMWQxM2M4ODEtYmViOC00NTUxLTlmZDAtYWYxMjUwNWZkMTUwLjUuMS4xNzIxODUzNzY0LjYwLjAuMA..%2a_ga_LMK6K2LSJH%2aMWQxM2M4ODEtYmViOC00NTUxLTlmZDAtYWYxMjUwNWZkMTUwLjUuMS4xNzIxODUzNzY0LjYwLjAuMC4w.

Bill Bell, Sr.

CORPUS CHRISTI - Bill Bell, Sr., age 95, passed away May 31, 2021. He was born October 13, 1925 to Jodell and Ella J. Bell in Fort Worth, TX. He was raised in Gonzalez, TX and Corpus Christi, TX, where he graduated from Corpus Christi High School in 1942.



Bill enlisted in the Marines 4th Regiment during WWII. He fought in the battle of Iwo Jima and received many medals and honors; including a purple heart, a Combat Action Ribbon, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Medal, Sea Service Ribbon, and a Presidential Unit Citation.

Bill married his wife, Gloria Nieman, of 74 years on July 17, 1946. He was self-employed, owning Bell and Bell Properties. He was a loving son, husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend to many. He enjoyed spending time with his family, traveling and real estate. He will always be remembered for his love of family, his sense of humor and sharp wit.

Bill Bell, Sr. is preceded in death by his daughter, Priscilla Bell; his parents; and brother, Tom Bell.

Left to cherish his memories are his wife, Gloria Bell; son, Bill Bell, Jr. (Deidre Bell); grandsons, Cody Bell and Justin Bell; great grandchildren, Madison Bell, Brooklynn Bell, Kennedy Bell and Cooper Bell.

Visitation will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, June 3, 2021 at Seaside Funeral Home. A Funeral Service will take place at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, June 4, 2021 Seaside Funeral Home Chapel with Interment to follow at Seaside Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Patriots Band and Honor Guard of America, Corpus Christi, TX.

Figure 5. Billy Weldon Bell's Obituary, dated 2 June 2021.

○ Email:

▪ [Redacted]

● (b) (6)
[Redacted]

○ Phone:

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