

RESUME OF OFFICIAL RECORDS PERTAINING TO CRASH  
OF B-29 #42-24769, 27 JANUARY 1945

7 July 1948

1. The files of Investigation Division Legal Section, GHQ, SCAP, contain the following information:

Investigation at Kochi-shi in the crash vicinity establishes the following data. During the night of 3 - 4 July 1945, U. S. Army Air Force Bomber Squadrons carried out an incendiary bomb strike against Kochi-shi, Kochi-ken, Shikoku, Japan. Eighty percent (80%) of the city was reduced to rubble; fires raging on for approximately ten consecutive days as a result of the attack. Confusion existed every where. However, numerous individuals who underwent the attack in question recall that one of the attacking B-29's crashed into the flaming city during the early morning hours of 4 July 1945. No one could be found who could state that subject crash was the result of a mid-air collision. Actually, the cause of the crash could not be determined at all. The aircraft in question has been identified as B-29 #42-24774 (nickname MISS-HAP) of the 870th Squadron, 497th Group, 20th U. S. Army Air Force, based at Saipan, M. I.

Apparently, the stricken aircraft disintegrated either in mid-air or upon crashing, for the wreckage was distributed at two places, several hundred yards apart. The main or larger section crashed into the Masugata district and the smaller section, comprising the rear fuselage, crashed at the base of Castle Hill in Kochi Park. Despite the fires raging throughout the area, military and civilian guards were posted about the separated and still burning wreckage. Late that afternoon when the fires had somewhat diminished, the Kempei-Tai ordered the recovery of whatever remains were strewn about the plane's wreckage. All recoverable remains were, therefore, gathered together and buried in a common grave, nearby the Kochi Army Hospital. Masao TAKEZAKI, presently employed by the Kochi-Ken Military Government Team as an interpreter, states that during the morning of 4 July 1945, he came upon the lesser wreckage in Kochi Park at the foot of Castle Hill, and in view of its size and the lone crash victim lying nearby, assumed it to be the wreckage of a fighter plane. His knowledge of English tended to impress other bystanders with the information he gave out; and as a result, the rumors and information subsequently came to be accepted as fact. No one could be found throughout the investigation at Kochi-shi, who had witnessed the alleged B-29 fighter collision in mid-air. Furthermore, TAKEZAKI and other individuals remember finding at the spot in question, an identification bracelet bearing the name Hermann, as well as an identity card bearing the same name. These articles were turned over to the Kempei-Tai but were eventually lost due to the great confusion and disorganization effected by the city's destruction. The missing air crew report for subject air crash lists Burt J. Hermann as the tail gunner of B-29 #42-24774. Obviously, the crash victim, conjectured to be a fighter pilot, is the Burt J. Hermann listed as tail gunner for B-29 #42-24774. Hence, the probability of the wreckage in Kochi Park being that of a fighter aircraft is obviated.