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Crashed Aircraft Site Report

Date Visited: 07 Dec 2010

Model & Serial Number: B-24J #42-100184

GPS Coordinates: N 28-33-47.6 E 095-23-27.4

Datum: WGS 84

Country: India

State/Province/District: Arunachal Pradesh

Nearest Town/Village: Cheppe

Distance/Direction: 3-day trek SW of Cheppe

Altitude: 11,432 ft.

Topography: Mountains

Aspect: SW

Terrain Notes: Steep forested slope

Vegetation: Forest

Nearest Water: Small stream approx. .25 mi. from site

Site Disturbance: None noted

Aircraft ID Method: Wing number 42100184, engine serial number 42-1462

Engines/Propellers: 4 engines and propeller blades

Wreckage/Artifacts/ID Tags: Wreckage extending approx. 200 yds. downslope from estimated point of impact, remnants of leather shoes and jackets

Human Remains: Human bones seen laying on ground surface

Removed from Site: Nothing removed by investigator, not known if others removed anything

Photos: See website for photos, additional photos/video on file

Misc. Notes: American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) had made 2 unsuccessful ground searches for this crash site in the late 1940's. They wrote a report in 1948 summarizing their search efforts, and I obtained a copy of their report to study for details that might assist me in my search effort. I focused on the names of the tribesmen mentioned in the AGRS report as having been to the crash site and recovered some ID tags and pistols, and was able to identify them as being of the Idu Mishmi tribe. Further research revealed that in the 1940's some of the Idu Mishmi lived in the remote upper Sessari River Valley, just S of a mountain range. I reasoned that these Idu Mishmi tribesmen would only have been to the crash site and recovered some artifacts from it if the crash site was somewhere in their hunting territory, as the tribal people traditionally only hunt in their own territory. I also reasoned that the crash site was most likely on or very near the mountain range just N of the upper Sessari River Valley. Interestingly, Adi Abor folklore in Damroh village talks of an old aircraft wreck located high on a mountain E of Sarcing, but I wasn't able to find anybody in Damroh who had ever ventured there to investigate it. I learned the Idu Mishmi had long ago abandoned the upper Sessari River Valley and migrated to the E and N. With the upper Sessari River Valley now uninhabited and no known roads or trails into the area, I decided to access the mountain range from the N. The Idu Mishmi village that's closest to the N side of the mountain range is named Cheppe. My local contacts introduced me to a young Idu Mishmi named Mate Miuli, whose family lives in Cheppe. Mate told me he had been to the crash site with his father and grandfather while hunting and he agreed to guide me there. Mate said the aircraft wreck was on his family's ancestral hunting grounds on the SW slope of a mountain known to the Idu Mishmi as Shidibi Mountain. This mountain is directly E of and adjacent to Kalong Mountain.

Starting at road marker 173 km on the Roing - Anini road, we trekked W for 2 days to Aneleih village and continued W to Cheppe village. In Cheppe, I met Mate's 85-year old grandfather, Naji Miuli. Naji said I was the first white person to ever visit Cheppe. He then recounted how his father, Longe Miuli (long-deceased), had found the crash site in the mid-1940's while hunting the high-altitude plants they use for making poison for their hunting arrow tips. Longe soon returned to the crash site with his friends Tako Menya, Takkir Linghi, Poso Miuli and Anjou to salvage any items they could use or sell. Some of these men were referenced in the 1948 AGRS report as having sold 3 crewmember ID tags and 7 rusted US Army pistols to a shopkeeper in Sadiya. The ID tags belonged to 3 airmen known to be aboard B-24J #42-100184 at the time it crashed. Naji said the shopkeeper paid the men 70 rupees, a bag of rice and a bag of tea for the ID tags and pistols. The US Army had a small outpost in Sadiya, and they soon became aware of the salvaged artifacts from B-24J #42-100184 now in the possession of the local shopkeeper, and that prompted their search efforts to find the crash site. Naji said he was unaware of any US attempts to reach the crash site in the 1940's. This means that any search attempts by the AGRS must have approached from the W or S, and not from the N through Cheppe, as I had chosen to. The AGRS report mentioned they started their search expedition in Damroh village, and no mention was made about circling around to Cheppe on the N side of the mountains. Local hunters told me there are no known trails or bridges to reach the crash site from either Damroh or Milang villages, and the site can only be reached safely from Cheppe village. This explains why the AGRS search efforts failed. It required 2 additional days of trekking from Cheppe to reach our high camp location. High camp was at 10,640 ft. on the NE face of Shidibi Mountain, along a small stream flowing from the N side of the mountain. Summit day started at 0500. We followed the ice-clogged stream to the base of a cliff, then climbed up frozen waterfalls and out onto steeply-sloped snowfields. The snowfields were prone to avalanching, so this traverse was very dangerous. The 12,873 ft. summit ridge was reached by mid-day. The village of Milang could be seen to the W and the Brahmaputra River could be seen to the far S. We then downclimbed the steep SW slope and into the pine forest below. The crash site was reached in early afternoon.

Investigator: Clayton Kuhles.