

COLIN KELLY'S BODY FINALLY IDENTIFIED

It Has Rested as That of an Unknown for 4½ Years in Manila, the Army Reveals

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 25—The body of an unknown soldier which has rested in United States Military Cemetery No. 1 at Manila for four and a half years has at last been identified as that of America's first hero of World War II, Capt. Colin P. Kelly Jr., the War Department announced today.

Positive identification after an exhaustive check of all available data was announced by Maj. Gen. T. B. Larkin, the Quartermaster General. The body lay near that of Tech. Sgt. William J. Delehanty of Brooklyn, who died with the Air Forces hero after their attack on the Japanese heavy cruiser Ashigara. First reports had said that they struck at the battleship Haruna, which it developed later had not been in Philippine waters at that time.

Attacked by four Japanese fighters, Captain Kelly ordered the seven other members of his crew to bail out and six succeeded in doing so before his B-17 crashed on Mount Arayat on Luzon.

After the crash a body had been tentatively identified as Captain Kelly's on the strength of a statement of a Filipino who quoted a sergeant of a field crash truck as saying "why, that's Captain Kelly."

Identification Was Delayed

The pressure of war, and especially the adverse American fortunes in the Philippines in the early days, made it impossible, however, to make a positive identification.

The bodies of Captain Kelly and Sergeant Delehanty were first buried in the post cemetery at Fort Stotsenburg on Luzon and later reburied with the bodies of eighty-six other members of the armed forces in Cemetery No. 1.

With the end of the Pacific war, identification data obtained by the American Graves Registration Command in the Philippine Islands were checked against the records of Captain Kelly's service in this country following his graduation from the United States Military Academy.

Other data which assisted in making the identification positive were supplied by Captain Kelly's widow, who is now Mrs. J. Watson Pedlow of Media, Pa., and by his father, Colin P. Kelly Sr., of Madison, Fla.

"The painstaking care with which the remains of Captain Kelly were eventually identified is typical of the consideration given every case where there is a question as to identity," General Larkin said.

"Remains are classified as unknown until we track down every available clue and make use of every method known to science. When remains are ultimately identified, there can be no question as to the authenticity of identification."

Identification Tag Never Found

The uncertainty in the Kelly case arose from the fact that his identification tag was never found. Sergeant Delehanty's was on his body.

Captain Kelly dropped three bombs at the Japanese cruiser and at first was credited with sinking the ship, but it was later established that she remained afloat.

The exploit, occurring on Dec. 10, 1941, a time of disaster, captured the imagination of the American public and gave a lift to morale.

To Captain Kelly was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously, and the late President Roosevelt put in the archives a letter "to the President of the United States in 1956," requesting that Colin P. Kelly 3d, 18 months old when his father died, be considered for appointment as a cadet

HIS BODY IDENTIFIED



Capt. Colin P. Kelly Jr.

to West Point as a youth "of goodly heritage."

Captain Kelly, a native of Madison, Fla., was commissioned a second lieutenant of infantry on his graduation from the Academy in 1937, but subsequently was transferred to the Air Forces and was promoted to captain in 1940. He was 26 years old at the time of his death.