

# Historic Sites during the World War II in South Konawe, Southeast Sulawesi as a Source of Historiography

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## Abstract

The World War II in Indonesian territory at that time involved the Imperial Japanese Army against the military from the allies and was known later as "Theater of Pacific". The massive military activities that took place in Indonesian territory during the World War II definitely left a lot of and varied material evidences. However, in fact, many of the material evidences from the World War II have been forgotten due to its dilapidated condition. One of the military operational areas where many evidences of the World War II can be found is South Konawe, precisely at Kendari II Airfield Site, which is now known as HLO Airfield (Halu Oleo Airfield). This research utilized archives and aerial photographs during the World War II combined with direct observation at the site and reconstruction efforts using excavated data. Based on the findings, it reveals the existence of the World War II remains at Kendari II Airfield area. It is also known that the condition of the most massive findings is located in the Japanese military administration and maintenance area during the World War II at Kendari II Airfield area. These remains can certainly be a source of historical writing of the Japanese Government Era in South Konawe.

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## Introduction

The constellation of the World War II became an inseparable part of Indonesian history. The event took place in the context of the transition from the end of the Dutch East Indies Era to the Japanese Era to the Republic of Indonesia Era. At that time, the Republic of Indonesia did not exist yet, but it was still called the Dutch East Indies. In the context of the nation's independence journey, one of the triggers for the transfer of power from the Dutch colonial government to the Indonesian nation was the World War II, especially the *Theater of Pacific*. Nonetheless, it should be realized that the World War II (*Theater of Pacific*) is a historical archeological study in which until now the existence of military documents is still kept secret. Thus, the interpretation of the World War II studies is based on the presence of material remains. This condition was

getting complicated because during the Japanese occupation in Indonesia, so many military documents of the Japanese government were destroyed. The Japanese government as the losing party at that time took this step as an effort to maintain secrecy during the occupation.

The lack of availability of military documents from the Japanese occupation is inversely proportional to the abundance of material data from the World War II era. The material data became the foundation for building archaeological research, especially during the World War II in Indonesia. The remains can be found in, among others: (1) Important cities that became the administrative centers, (2) Natural resource processing locations in the form of plantation and mining, (3) Land, water and air distribution routes, (4) Military bases. The massive potential remains of the World War II are also found in Southeast Sulawesi. This is very possible because this area basically has 4 main locations that have the potential to find the World War II remains (Report of South Sulawesi Archaeological Center, 2016).

The archaeological remains from the World War II scatter from Pomalaa in the north to Bombana in the south and from Kolaka in the east to Buton in the west. The remains are generally in the form of defensive buildings, such as: pillboxes, bunkers, airfields, defensive caves, armories, as well as civil and military administration buildings. In this decade, several studies related to the World War II remains in Southeast Sulawesi have been carried out by several agencies and researchers. The identification and inventory of the World War II remains have been carried out by South Sulawesi Archaeological Center and South Sulawesi Cultural Heritage Preservation Center. The results of the inventory carried out by the two archaeological agencies confirm that several areas contain massive World War II remains, such as Pomalaa, Poleang, and Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area (Inventory Report of Makassar Cultural Conservation Preservation Center (BPCB), 2015; Report of South Sulawesi Archaeological Center, 2016).

Especially at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area, Department of Archeology, Faculty of Cultural Studies (FIB) of Halu Oleo University (UHO) carried out research in 2015 and 2016 aimed at conducting comprehensive inventory of the entire Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area. This research was based on the research conducted by Hayunira. Her research identified and analyzed the distribution of defensive buildings, especially at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area. Her research used a spatial archaeological approach to the findings of 42 buildings from the World War II era at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area. Other research was carried out by Sunarto in 2018 which examined the importance of the World War II remains at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area. Subsequently, in the same year, Riyanto revealed the existence of the bunkers around Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area (Hayunira, 2013; Sunarto, 2017, Riyanto, 2018). The HLO Airfield area is a very potential area for in-depth research. Nevertheless, previous studies have only examined the archaeological remains in this area from a cultural history perspective. Therefore, it is not surprising that the findings of the research so far have only been

limited to the inventory and description of the archaeological remains at HLO Airfield Area.

The research stages at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area so far have only studied descriptively the World War II remains. Therefore, it is suggested that there is a need to apply a new perspective to examine the World War II remains. Various research models that examine the World War II remains are growing in the world, including battlefield archaeology, occupation archaeology, military archaeology, and Holocaust archaeology. These various research focuses apply various approaches from other fields of science. As the case in the field of geography which applies the latest technology such as geographic information system and 3D modeling in conducting studies on the phenomenon of the World War II remains. The application of the latest technology in the study of the WWII remains makes the research more comprehensive. Through a spatial approach, at least historical sites at Kendari II Airfield can be seen from 3 perspectives, such as the perspective of the landscape as a battlefield, the perspective of the landscape as a conflict area, and the perspective of the landscape as a marker of events (Saunders, 2001; Shackel, 2003). In the field of history, the use of historical archives and oral traditions is the main basis in revealing the phenomenon of the World War II remains.

Military activities during the Japanese government era can still be seen from the World War II physical remains that still exist today. They are in the form of remains of the massive structures such as bunkers, ammunition stores, building structures, or artifacts in the form of bottles, bullets, metal remains, and ceramics. Furthermore, the landscape as a conflict area can be seen through the features resulting from the World War II, such as the former sites of bomb explosion or the remains of war conflict. The landscape as a marker area is attached to Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area based on the historical data. As the landscape of a marker area of the World War II, this area has significance for the public today. Significance has an impact on the sustainability of this area. When the significance is maintained, the sustainability in this area will automatically take place continuously. On the other hand, if the significance is not maintained, this area will automatically be “forgotten” from the collective memory that exists in the public today.

Apparently, various important things can still be revealed from the archaeological remains found at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area related to the physical and morphological aspects. As a result, by combining data on the physical and morphological aspects of the remains of the Japanese Government Era at Kendari II Airfield Site with the historical data, it will become a source of historical writing of the Japanese Government Era in South Konawe.

## **Method**

This study begun with reconstructing the design patterns found in the World War II remains at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area. The reconstruction was carried out by making a research design by collecting and summarizing the research findings, archives, photo documentation, maps or other supporting data as the initial data.

Then, the archaeological data were collected and carried out in the form of surface survey and excavation. The surface survey was carried out by observing the ground surface and its anomalies that indicated the existence of the World War II remains. Its locations were carefully determined based on the summaries compiled from the previous research or archival data. A very significant source of archival data played roles in the archaeological survey, that was the aerial photo data conducted by the Allies in 1944 against Kendari II Airfield area. The data were then listed in *Allied Geographical Section* document in 1945 of Kendari area (SE Celebes) Terrain Study, No. 107.

The results of the surface survey were then used as the basis for determining the excavation areas. Excavation was focused on finding the remains of the building structures buried in the ground. In addition, it was intended to look for *in situ* artifacts and loose artifacts that showed associations with certain activities so that they could be used in interpreting the function of the structures or buildings. In this research, the excavation was carried out with box and trench systems. The box system was carried out by opening 2x2-sized boxes at the areas suspected of containing the World War II remains. On the other hand, the trench system was carried out in the areas that have remains in the form of found structures. The deepening technique was the spit technique with a depth that was adjusted based on the conditions of the excavation areas. Excavation Finding Analysis was carried out by utilizing the existing archival data with the aim to produce a chronology of regional developments, create permanent spatial visualizations, and produce interpretation materials (Nolan, 2009). The first stage in this analysis was the reproduction and integration of the aerial photographs and old maps into a single projection system so that we could find out the current locations of the areas being photographed or mapped in the present (Stichelbaut, 2005). The information in the photos and maps could be used to identify the presence of the archaeological remains. The analysis then proceeded to the integration between the results of the photo reproductions, the results of surveys, and the archaeological excavations as well as the interpretation of the historical documents.

### **Description of Kendari II Airfield**

Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area is an airfield located in Ranomeeto District, South Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province. Astronomically, this area is located at the coordinates of  $4^{\circ} 3' 49.06''$  -  $4^{\circ} 5' 56.40''$ LS and  $122^{\circ} 23' 27.47''$  -  $122^{\circ} 27' 14.96''$  BT. This airfield has the following boundaries. In the north, it is bordered by Wanggu River; in the south, it is bordered by Amba-amba River; in the west, it is bordered by Mount Puurui; and in the east, it is bordered by Wai-wai River.

During the World War II, this airfield was the only airfield that had been built in Southeast Sulawesi and was taken over by the Japanese. After Southeast Sulawesi area was occupied, the Japanese built 4 new airfields to be used by the Japanese army during the World War II. The other four airfields were; (1) Witikola/Ambesia Airfield in Ambesa; (3) Pomelaa Airfield in Kolaka Regency; (4) Tiworo Airfield in Muna Regency; (5) Baroe Airfield in Boepinang, Bombana Regency.

During the World War II, Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) was under the rule of the Imperial Japanese Army. During this era, it was not impossible for the Japanese who temporarily occupied the area to take advantage of the existing buildings, modify the existing buildings from the Dutch East Indies era, or even rebuild new buildings as an effort to strengthen the position of the Japanese military. This definitely continued during the independence of Indonesia. The Republic of Indonesia adjusts the utilization of the existing buildings. An important information that needs to be understood here is that in the context of a geographical area, there are 3 different phases of time, and each phase leaves its own unique characteristics. The three main phases that affected the World War II remains at HLO Airfield (Kendari II Airfield) area can be seen from the following treatise Table 1.

Table 1. Historical Treatise of Kendari II Airfield, Southeast Sulawesi

Period (Era)	Important Event
Dutch East Indies Government 1936/1937 – 1942	Construction of airfield Landing of Dutch Air Force aircraft (7 Oct 1938) Construction of emergency runways and demarcation of land boundaries (Apr 1939) Deployment of war logistics by allies (Jan 1942)
Japanese Era 1942-1945	Takeover of airfield by Japanese army (24 Jan 1942) Change of runway direction and length Addition of airfield defensive, maintenance, and administration buildings A series of bombing missions by allied soldiers (28 Jan 1942 – 16 Feb 1945) Construction of supporting airfields in Boro-Boro, Ambesa, Kolaka, Muna, and Buton.
NICA Era 1945 – 1950	Repair of damaged airfield facilities due to WWII
Republic of Indonesia Era 1950 – now	Landing of first Republic of Indonesia Air Force aircraft; formation of Kendari II Air Detachment (Oct 1950) Change of name to Wolter Monginsidi Kendari Indonesian National Army Air Force Base (27 May 1958) Shelter for civilian victims of DI/TII Kahar Mudzakkar rebellion Reserve Base in Jaya Wijaya Operation Added function as airfield for civil/commercial aircrafts (1975) Change of name to Wolter Monginsidi Kendari Airfield (1985) Inauguration of new passenger terminal and change of name to Halu Oleo Airfield (13 Feb 2010).

Source: Annual report of South Sulawesi Archaeological Center, 2016.

The aerial photographs taken on 16 February 1945 show that during the World War II, Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) had four runway lanes (1 main runway, 3 aircraft taxi lanes). Around the runway, there were a number of defensive buildings in the form of bunkers, earthen forts, ammunition storage warehouses, and several

defensive posts equipped with anti-aircraft weapons. In the south of the runway, there was a concentration of buildings annotated as extensive administration and maintenance area (see Figure 1). The completeness of the existing physical buildings shows that during the World War II, Kendari II Airfield area was an important operational area for the Imperial Japanese Army (*Allied Geographical Section, 1945*).

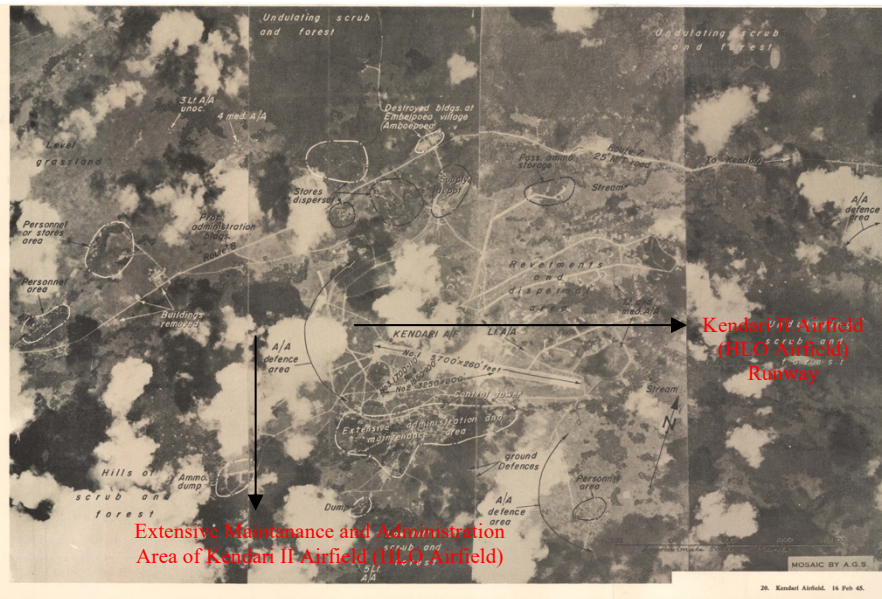


Figure 1. Situation Map of HLO Airfield Area on 16 February 1945  
Source: Collection of *Allied Geographical Section*.



Figure 2. Situation Map of HLO Airfield Area Nowadays  
Source: *Google Earth, 2016*.

Nowadays, some of the physical buildings operated at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area have undergone changes, but most of them are still deposited underground. The runway of  $\pm 2600$  m of concrete and asphalt is the main attribute in

supporting the flight operations. The runway stretches from the west to the east. The average altitude of Kendari II Airfield area is 44 meters above sea level, with the lowest point is 18 meters above sea level in the east and the highest point in the west is 42 meters above sea level. Thus, it can be seen that *Kendari II Airfield* (HLO Airfield) area is a relatively plain area and ideal for the location of the establishment of an airfield (see Figure 2). The interesting thing on the south side of the runway is that there is a river on the left and right sides of which a number of remains of defensive structures and buildings are found.

### **Excavation of Japanese Military Extensive Administration and Maintenance Area at Kendari II Airfield, South Konawe**

After conducting a toponym deepening based on the results of research that had been conducted since 2015 – 2016, it is known that the area with the most massive remains is the Japanese military extensive administration and maintenance area at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield). The findings of the surface and the building remains provide an illustration that the area was once the center of the Japanese Government military operations during the World War II (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Administration and maintenance Area at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) Area

Source: Excavation Team of Department of Archeology of Universitas Halu Oleo, 2017-2019.

Based on the aerial photo map of 1944 and direct observation of the location, it is known that the World War II remains have an area that extends along the bank of the river that divides Kendari II Airfield area. The cluster of the World War II remains covers an area of 120 meters in the south of the river. When viewed closely, the main landscape picture is still very visible and can be mapped clearly (see Figure 4).

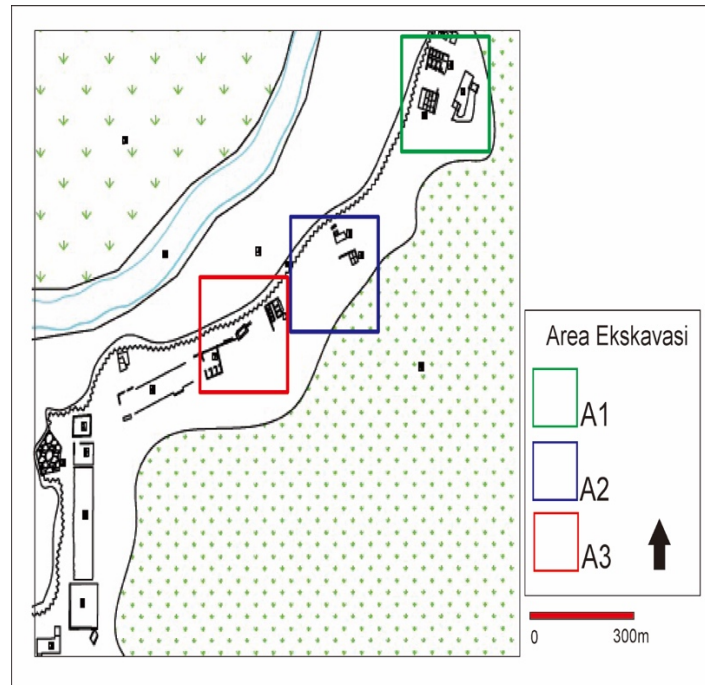


Figure 4. Distribution Map of WWII Remains in Japanese Military Extensive Administration and maintenance Area at Kendari II Airfield Area  
Source: Excavation Team of Department of Archeology of Universitas Halu Oleo, 2017-2019.

At the end of 2017, the Department of Archeology of UHO carried out excavation in the Japanese military extensive administration and maintenance area at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area. The excavation was based on the massive findings of the surface and structures of the World War II remains which can still be seen today. The excavation carried out at that time focused on finding the remains of the building structures that had been buried in the ground. Moreover, it was intended to look for *in situ* artifacts and loose artifacts that show associations with certain activities so that later they could be used to interpret the function of structures or buildings in the area. In the 2017 excavation, there were 3 main excavation areas, including A1, A2, and A3 areas.

The selection of the excavation areas was based on the results of the identification of the soil surface in the form of the distribution of faults and chunks of the building structures of the WWII remains. In general, the condition of the vegetation in this area is almost the same, in the form of a landscape overgrown with weeds, shrubs, trees, and other wild plants. In general, the opening of the initial excavation box was in the size of 1 meter x 1 meter to provide the same work steps in the excavation.

A3 Area is located in the central area of the Japanese military extensive administration and maintenance area. The findings of the surface in this area are pictures of sanitation and hygiene buildings used during the WWII by the Japanese military (see Figure 5). The purpose of opening the excavation box at the first location was to reveal details of the sanitation system used in the Japanese military extensive administration and maintenance area during the WWII.





Figure 5. WWII Remains at A3 Area, Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) Area  
Source: Excavation Team of Department of Archeology of Universitas Halu Oleo, 2017-2019.

A3 Area is in the form of 2 main buildings in the middle of which there is a waste storage pit. The first building is located in the east in the form of a sanitation cubicle. The building in the east still has an intact perimeter wall. The sanitation building in the east has a length of 5.10 meters and a width of 5.58 meters. The sanitary building has 3 chambers in the south and 3 chambers in the north. The 3 chambers in the south are the waste disposal chambers, while the 3 chambers in the north are the body cleansing chambers. Each chamber in the south has a size of 1.05 meters x 1.20 meters. On the other hand, each chamber in the north has a size of 1.4 meters x 2.06 meters. The sanitation buildings in the east and the waste storage area are connected by a 20 cm waste disposal area.

Moreover, at this location there is also a similar building for sanitation in the west of the waste storage pit. The building in the west of the waste storage area is sanitation and hygiene building in the form of chamber as found in the building in the east. The building in the west is rectangular with a size of 6.25 meters x 4.40 meters. The remains of the building can still be seen to have 4 chambers facing each other with the middle part between the chambers is an open space. The four chambers facing each other have different functions when viewed from their morphological conditions. The first line chambers are for body hygiene activities. The size of the chambers is uniform, by 1.4 meters x 1.2 meters. On the other hand, the second line chambers are in the form of a waste disposal chamber (WC). This is clearly evidenced by the presence of a toilet in each chamber. The size of the second chamber is smaller than the first, by 1.25 meters x 0.85 meters. Similar to the sanitation building in the east, the sanitation building in the west also has a sewer that leads to a waste storage facility with a length of 7.40 meters and a width of 20 cm.

Meanwhile, the waste storage area, located between the two sanitation and hygiene buildings, is rectangular with a size of 3.2 meters x 1.9 meters. The building has a depth of 2 meters with the bottom of the shelter in the form of soil. One of the most striking morphologies is the existence of pits in the building walls that lead to the river that runs along this area. The existence of the pits is allegedly a mechanism

to cope with the flow of water entering the reservoir so that the storage room will not experience problems if the incoming water discharge is too much. Additionally, the bottom of the shelter in the form of soil is intended as an effort to absorb waste naturally into the soil. The complete reconstruction of the A3 Area can be seen from the top view plan below:

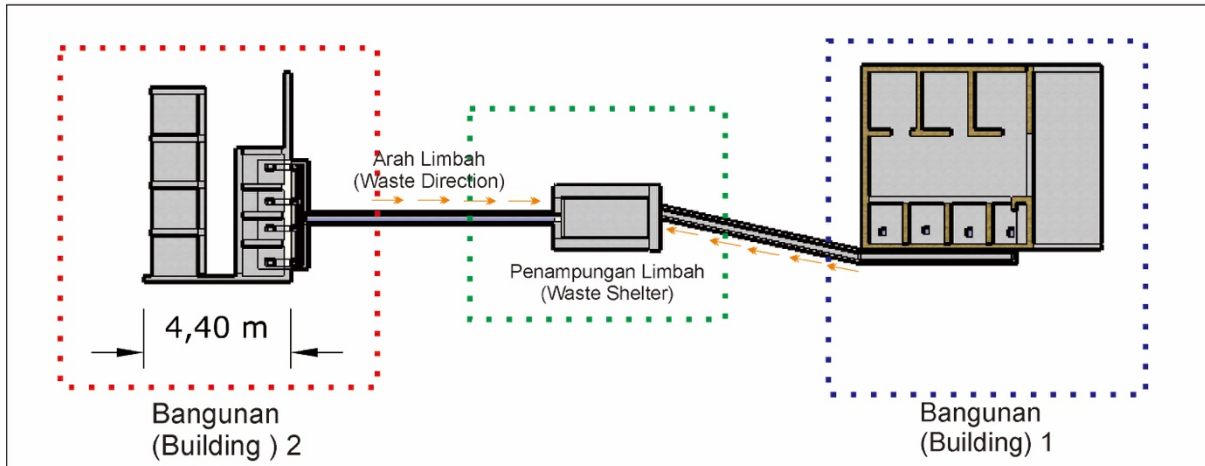


Figure 6. Building Reconstruction at A3 Area, Kendari II Airfield Area,  
Source: Excavation Team of Department of Archeology of Universitas Halu Oleo,  
2017-2019.

A2 Area is in the form of wall structure that is no longer intact. The wall structure indicates the existence of a rectangular building with a size of 30.5 meters x 6.25 meters. It appears to be a fairly wide space with morphological completeness in the form of a 1-meter-high wall. With the morphological evidence of a 1-meter-high wall, it can be assumed that the WWII military building at the time of its establishment was an administrative room that was not completely enclosed, but was combined with the upper wall made of wood, or without any additional walls.

The 2017 excavation at this area aims to reconstruct the formation of the existing spatial patterns through the building foundations. Excavating the building foundation can assume the room formation that existed at the time this building was erected. The results of the excavation at the second area revealed that the wall space, which was initially seen as 2 separate buildings, is basically an intact building that is mutually sustainable. This can be seen from the unity of the foundation that connects along 30.5 meters. Besides, after the excavation results, the building room which was initially assumed to be a whole room without wall partitions, it can be assumed that the continuous space is actually divided into smaller rooms. Based on the excavation results, it is known that the room in the building at the second area consists of 2 main rooms. The first room is 10.51 meters x 6.25 meters. In addition, the second room is 19.67 meters x 6.25 meters. The difference in measurement of each room is the size of the room foundation. In the 2017 excavation, it only succeeded in revealing and proving the unity of the building and proving that the room in this second area is a whole building consisting of smaller rooms inside. However, it is unfortunate that the excavation results have not been able to reveal the exact size of each room in the second

area. When viewed from the morphology, the building in the second area is a barrack building that functioned as a Japanese military administration room during the WWII. This is also supported by the aerial photo toponym which explains that this area was a Japanese military administration and maintenance area during the WWII at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield).

In 2019, the excavation in the second area continued to obtain more authentic evidence of the spatial details of the remaining buildings which were assumed to be the military barracks. The 2019 excavation results prove the existence of smaller rooms at the second area. In room 1, based on the excavation reconstruction results of the building foundation, it was found that room 1 consists of 2 smaller rooms. Each room is 0.4 meters x 3.8 meters and the other room is "L" shaped with the size of the first room being subtracted from the small room inside. Then the second room consists of 3 rooms measuring 0.4 meters x 3.8 meters, 4.3 meters x 4.8 meters, and 14.7 meters x 6.7 meters.

The excavation results of the building foundations in 2019 prove that the building at the second area is an office barrack consisting of even smaller rooms and these rooms certainly have different functions from one another. The lack of documents related to the Japanese military during the WWII era makes the disclosure of the functions of each of these rooms still constrained. The map of the spatial reconstruction results of the Japanese military administration and maintenance barracks during the WWII era can be seen as follows in Figure 7.

A1 Area is in the form of a floor structure in which one of its parts is in the form of a chamber. At the third area, the findings of surface show that during the WWII this area was a very wide hall. The area of the structure at the third area is 30 meters x 6 meters. In the chamber area, the width of the building structure reaches 6 meters while in the lobby of the other room it reaches 3 meters. Subsequently, the building remains at A1 Area have a part in the form of a waste storage room (see Figure 8).

The excavation results show that this building is a building that is mutually sustainable and whole. The building is divided into two main rooms. The first room is spacious hall corridor with a size of 25 meters x 3.5 meters while the second room is a room with a much smaller area, by 5 meters x 6 meters. In this second room, there are 4 waste disposal chambers. All of the chambers is 1.2 meters x 0.8 meters. The chambers have one channel leading to the storage channel which is at the back of this building unit. One thing that distinguishes this building from the buildings in the second area is the floor formation which is in the form of rectangular cement molds arranged like tiles. Meanwhile, the floor formation of the barrack building in the second area is only in the form of cement cast made evenly on the entire building floor. Furthermore, the characters of the walls of the remaining buildings in the third area are similar to the other remaining buildings in the WWII Japanese military administration and maintenance area. It consists of half part in the form of 1-meter-high cement wall while the upper part is a combination of wooden walls or without walls.

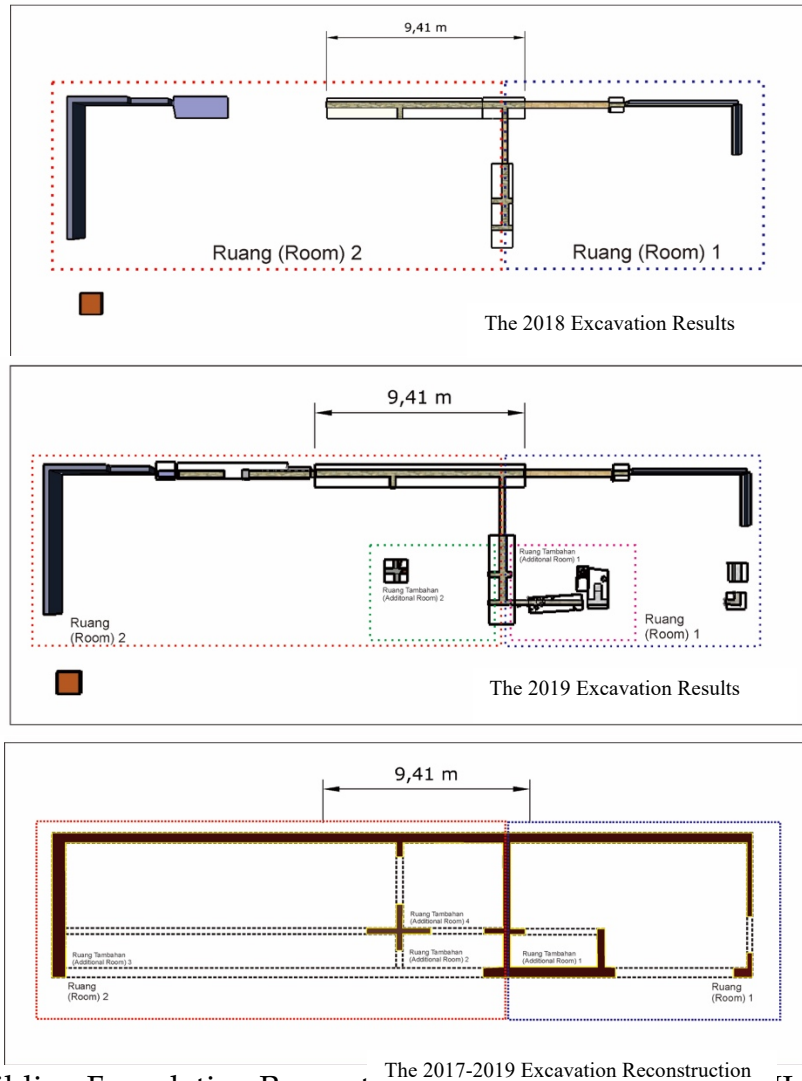


Figure 7. Building Foundation Reconstruction at A1 Area, Kendari II Airfield Area  
Source: Excavation Team of Department of Archeology of Universitas Halu Oleo, 2017-2019.



Figure 10. Floor Remains and Waste Storage at A1 Area, Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) Area  
Source: Excavation Team of Department of Archeology of Universitas Halu Oleo, 2017-2019.

The 2019 excavation at A1 area focused on getting a complete picture of the floor formation in the first room. Additionally, it also revealed the channels from the waste storage included in a series of building structures at A1 area. After the excavation, the tracing of the floor plan in the first room actually found a concentration of collapsed walls towards the outside of the building. As a consequence, the excavation results in the first room at A1 area did not produce significant data changes. Nonetheless, from the excavation results, it was found that the wall at the third area is 1 meter wall.

On top of that, the tracing of the waste disposal at A1 area actually found the continuation of a similar channel. This mechanism is found in the existing sewage system at A1 area. It seems that this kind of waste disposal system has been applied to the Japanese military facilities at Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield). The length of the channels revealed in the 2019 excavation was 6.3 meters measured from the base of the waste storage pit to the foundation of the final finding behind the III area structure.

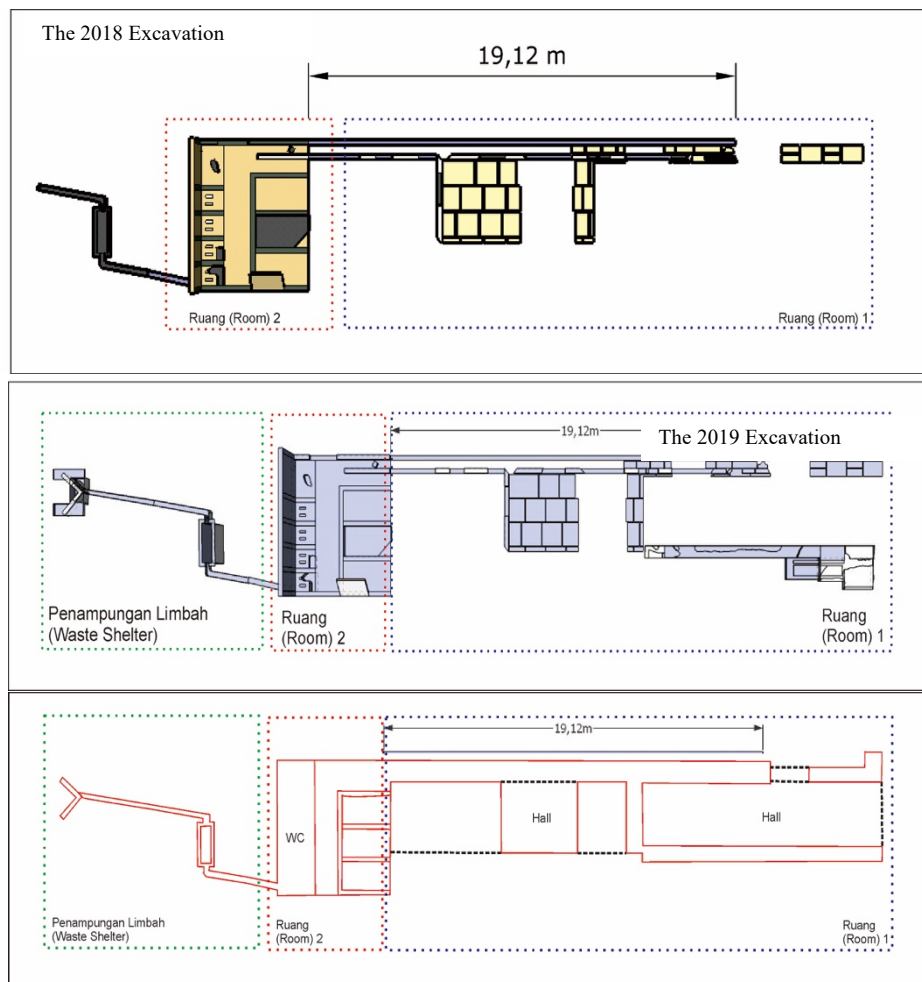


Figure 11. Reconstruction Map of Excavation Results at A1 Area, Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) Area.

Source: Excavation Team of Department of Archeology of Universitas Halu Oleo, 2017-2019.

As an illustration, from the 2018 and 2019 excavations, it appears that there is a potential for the disclosure of the existing structures at x Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area, especially in the Japanese military administration and maintenance and center area during the WWII. The development of spatial pattern mapping data that was successfully reconstructed from the 2018 and 2019 excavations is as follows (Figure 11).

### **Kendari II Airfield Site as a Source of Historical Writing**

The utilization of Kendari II Airfield site as a source of historical writing will lead to positive perceptions and make public indirectly participates in its preservation (Triaristina and Rachmedita, 2021). According to Wasino (2007), the historical sources based on their forms can be divided into three types, that are object sources (buildings, tools, weapons), written sources (documents), and oral sources (interviews). In this context, Kendari II Airfield site along with its artifacts are included in the object source category because the shape of the existing remains is in the form of building structures, bunkers, and artifacts in the form of ceramics, bottles, fuses, and hinges, so they are historical remains and symbol of historical events.

Talking about history means talking about a series of developments involving human life in the past in various aspects. In this case, Kendari II Airfield site certainly has important roles in the historical writing in relation to the collaboration between the scientific disciplines that are archeology and history. It can be used as a historical source that presents various facts closer to the truth and provides facts that can be more helpful in the historical writing in understanding and trying to arrange events that occurred in the past.

The existence of the World War remains at Kendari II Airfield site is the evidence of the existence of events and locations written in the historical documents since basically, between the historical documents and historical remains is a logical unified process that supports each other so that there is no longer a need for a process of selecting or rejecting a document. In practice, one of the most valuable applications of the archival techniques is to identify the work of earlier historians and antiquities (Department of Culture and Tourism, 2006). In this case, the historical documents from the World War II are evidenced by the existence of the World War II remains at Kendari II Airfield site.

Based on the military archives of the allied forces, it is known that the airfield in Kendari, that is Kendari II Airfield, was an important air base for the Imperial Japanese Army. This was based on its strategic and very significant position as an auxiliary/transit point that could reach Australian mainland which was the southernmost location of the Allied power center during the World War II in the Pacific at that time. It is supported by a statement in the World War II archive, that is: "Main military significance of the area is its large air base near Kendari known as Kendari Airfield. The Base is favorably situated as a feeder point for enemy airfield to the NW of the Australian main land" (Allied Geographical Section, 1944 (Military Importance)).

With its strategic position, it is not surprising that the Imperial Japanese government during the World War II developed Kendari II Airfield with various supporting facilities for all types of aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Army. The statement from the allies is evidenced by the massive existence of the World War II remains at Kendari II Airfield site, especially in the Military Administration and Maintenance Area. The remains as the indications of military activities are the remains in the form of barrack structures, sanitation, bunkers, and military artifacts.

Kendari II Airfield site was an airfield belonging to the Dutch East Indies which was originally used to support the mobility of the Dutch East Indies Army to face the military aggression from the Japanese Army. Nevertheless, after the Dutch East Indies was occupied, this airfield was reused by the Japanese Army as the main airfield at that time. Kendari as the center of the Dutch East Indies government in *afdeling Butoen en Laiwoi* certainly already had transportation support facilities or other public facilities. This was also what made Kendari II Airfield site which is currently located in South Konawe as the location for the Japanese Army bases and facilities, one of which was also used to protect the nickel mining activities in Southeast Sulawesi during the Japanese Government.

“Kendari airfield was the only airfield in the area the time of Japanese Occupation.....The airfield development is largely for the protection of extensive nickel mining activities. It was estimated that by 1944. Celebes might have been able to produce 67% of Japan Nickel requirements...”

“On the mainland a fair motor road run across country from east to west, connecting Kendari and Kolaka. Roads have been developed in the important nickel mining area in the Pomelaa Region on the west coast. (Allied Geographical Section, 1944 (Military Importance))

From the statement above, it is also known that during the Dutch East Indies there were transportation facilities intended for the nickel exploitation in Kolaka. After the Dutch East Indies was occupied by Japan, the Japanese government used the means of transportation to carry out the increasingly massive nickel exploitation in Kolaka to support the military activities of the Japanese Army (see Table 1).

The destroyed remains of Japanese occupation at Kendari II Airfield site that required excavations needs to be carried out to prove the existence of the structures, the building remains, and its artifacts was caused by the attempt to take over Kendari II Airfield by the allies. Since the Japanese government took it over from the Dutch East Indies, the allies had carried out frequent bombing missions to this area since 1942 to 1945 (see Table No 2). The bombing carried out by the Allies did not only destroy the military facilities at Kendari II Airfield, but also caused the death of Japanese Army.

Table No.1 Nickel Production at Kolaka Mining 1938 – 1941 by Dutch East Indies, 1944 by Japanese Government.

Year	Nickel Production	Ore	Estimated Nickel Production
1938		20000 tons	500 tons
1939		23000 tons	570 tons
1940		56000 tons	1380 tons
1941		25000 tons	620 tons
1944*		300000 tons	4000 tons

Source: *Allied Geographical Section, 1944 (Resources, Repair Facilities, etc.)*

Table 2. Allied Bombing Missions at Kendari II Airfield

Year	Mission Date	Operation Description
1942	28 January and 30 June	Operation succeeded with 160 soldiers killed and 216 injured on the Japanese side
	8 – 9 February	Operation failed because it was repelled by Japanese aircraft and 3 allied aircrafts were shot down
1943	20 – 24 April	Military facilities at the airfield and its surroundings were damaged, including in Kendari
	16 – 30 May	
	15 June	
	03 July	
	23 August	
1944	13 September	Military barracks and airfield defensive infrastructure were damaged
	20 September	
	11 February	
1944	4, 5, 16, 25, 26 and 29 September	Airfield and armory were damaged
	1945	10 – 11, 16 January

Source: Research Report of Makassar Archaeological Center, 2016; Pacific Wrecks (2016). *American missions against Kendari and Kendari airfield.*

From the facts found in the field in the form of the World War II remains from the excavations, they are the evidence of the important areas and events during the World War II in South Konawe. The narrative to explain the findings is based on the World War II archives. Meanwhile, the evidence from the information contained in the World War II archives is obtained from the existence of the World War II remains at Kendari II site, South Konawe. This is the evidence that the historical information and historical material is a logical unity in the comprehensive and reliable historical writing. Consequently, the historical sites can be used as the basis for the historical



writing. In this context, Kendari II Airfield site with the remains in its area can be the basis for the historical writing of the World War II in South Konawe.

### Conclusions

Based on the 1944 aerial photographs, it is known that the Japanese Military Administration and Maintenance Area in Kendari II Airfield Area was an area that had a very dense concentration of buildings. Even compared to other areas in Kendari II Airfield (HLO Airfield) area, this area can be said to be the most densely populated area. Over time, these military buildings were increasingly disappearing. The disappearance of the WWII building remains belonging to the Japanese military was allegedly due to the massive bombing of the allied forces. Moreover, since the independence of Indonesia the area is no longer used as the operation center. Over the decades, the building and structure remains are still clearly visible. Nonetheless, the detailed morphological formations are still deposited in the soil. Through the excavation which focused on the Japanese military administration and maintenance center area, the morphological details of the building rooms could be revealed. The morphological details of Kendari II Airfield site are the evidence of the veracity of the information presented in the World War II archives. Hence, the existence of the site as the physical evidence and information from the World War II archives is a logical unity that supports each other so that the historical site during the World War II in South Konawe, that is Kendari II Airfield, can be a source of historical writing.

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