

## FW200 CONDOR, Rhodes, 1945

My late father served in the SAAF during WWII. Years ago, he told me that at the end of the war, he, together with a few other engineers, were sent to a 'Greek island' to try and get a stranded 'German plane' airworthy again. The idea was to use the plane to transport their own troops back to the mainland...

Some years ago, I took another look at two of his photographs, and started doing research.

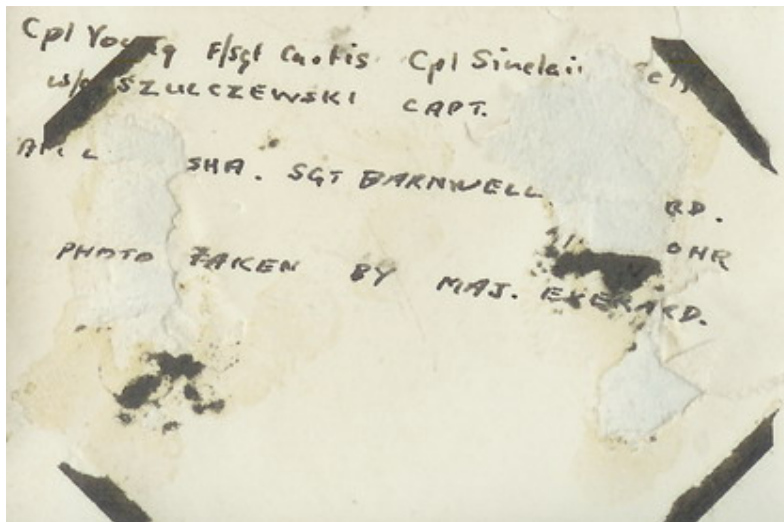


FW200 and SAAF personnel



SAAF personnel

My father, Lt DM van der Spuy is 4<sup>th</sup> from the left, back row



Back of Picture

Luckily mom remembered that it was on the isle of Rhodes. And looking at the pics, found out that it was a Focke Wulf FW200 Condor. To identify the airfield, I used Google Earth. I also stumbled upon a site of one Kryptianos Biris. He is an architect (like myself), but his hobby is flying. He has lots of pictures of different airfields. I managed to identify the airfield as Kalathos, or Gadurra.



The same mountain in the background

He also put me in touch with Luciano Berghini, who has a site dealing with airports of the Dodecanese. On his site is a different photograph of the same plane (in total disrepair), as well as pictures of the airfield, control tower...





Airfield, and control tower

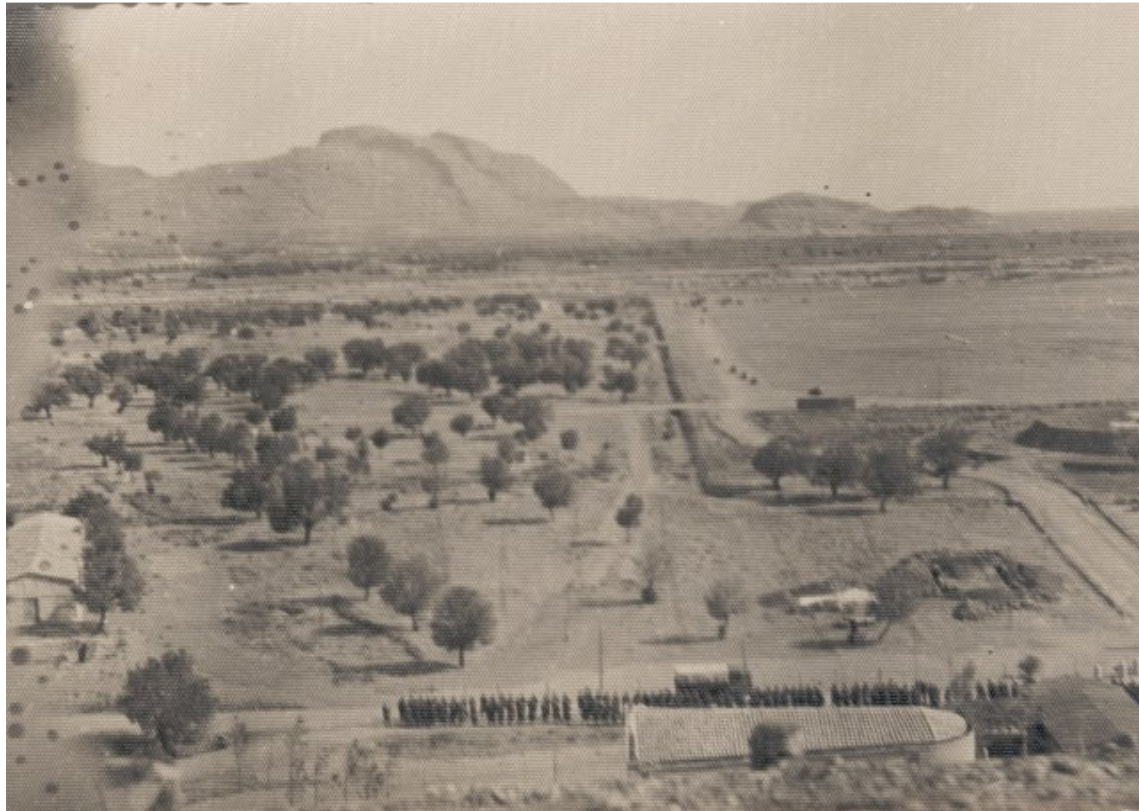
Through Google I joined *12 O'Clock High*, a huge site dealing with air forces during the WWII. I found a pic there of a FW200 under attack by Beaufighters (31 March 1945). The plane can be seen, camouflaged between the trees).



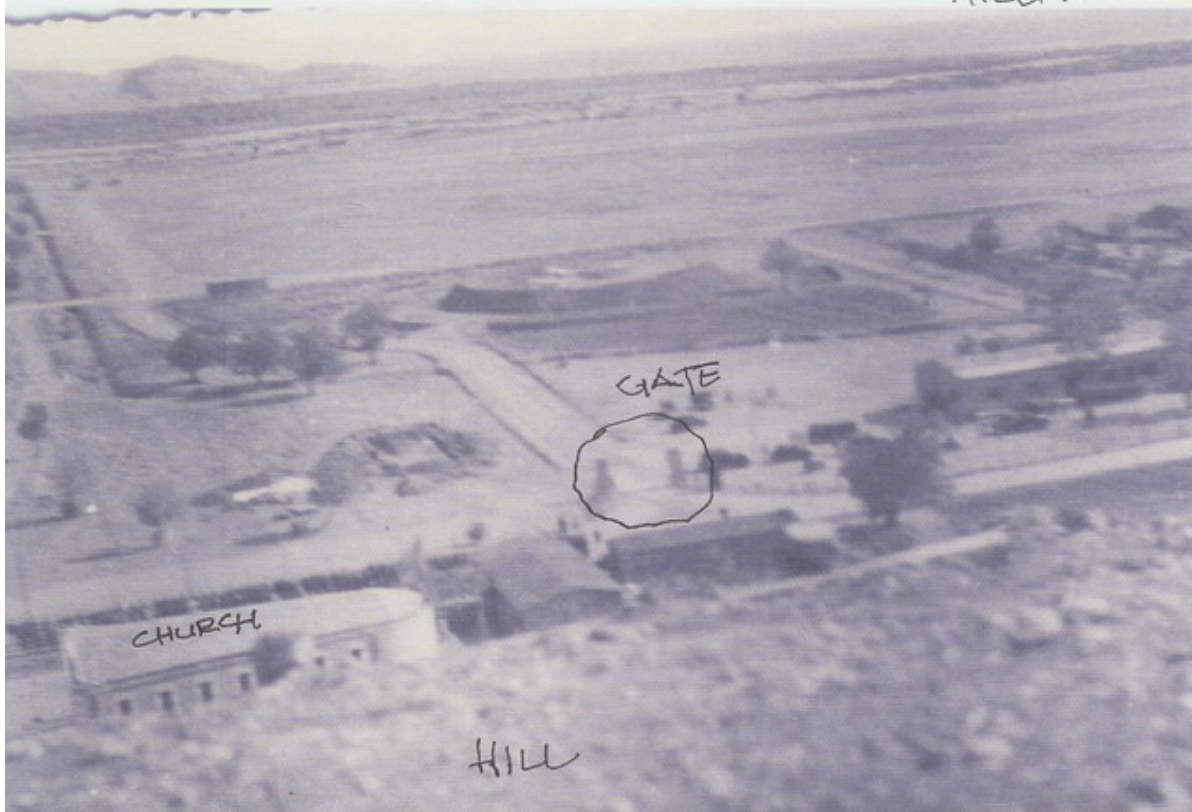
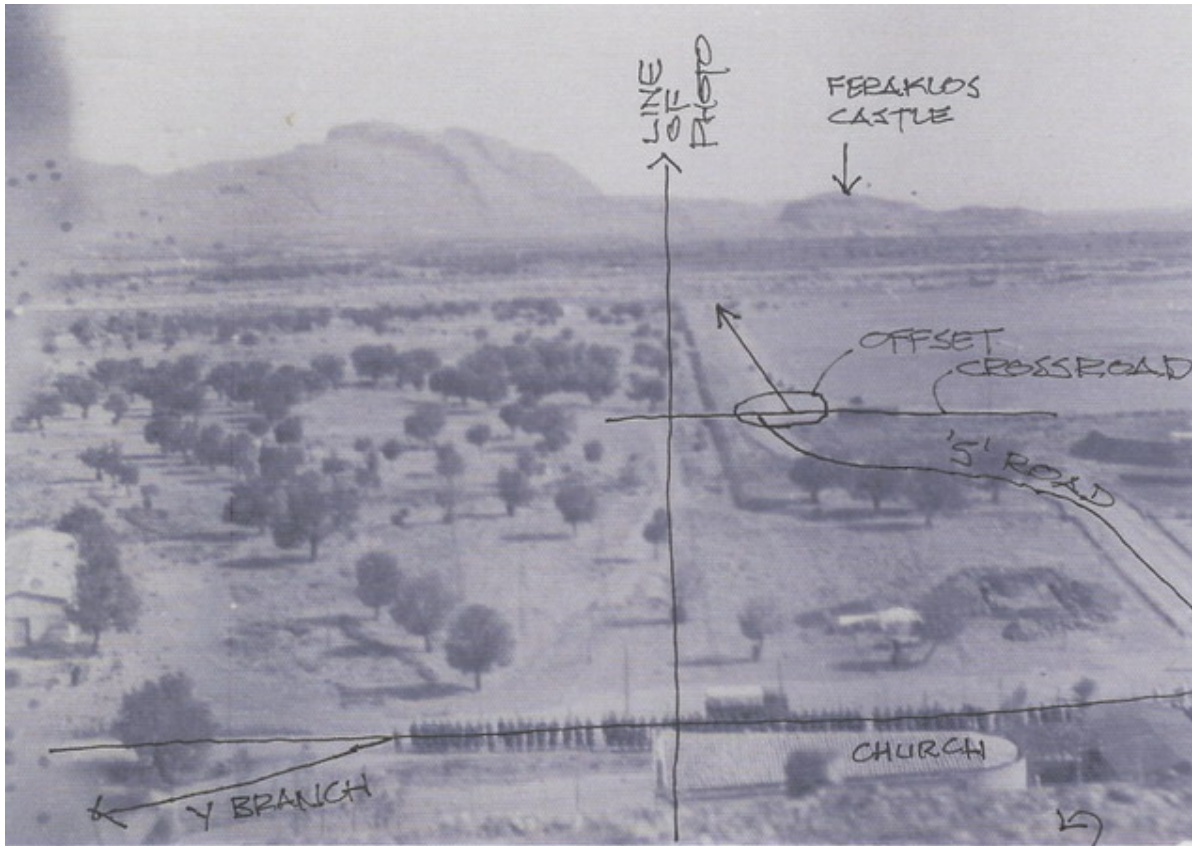
The plane survived, and left the island that same night (did not like being shot at!). Refer log at bottom.

*12 O'Clock High* was very helpful: I managed to find out the 'Work Number' of the plane, as well as the one my father was involved with. As well as the names of the crew, dates of arrival, departure...

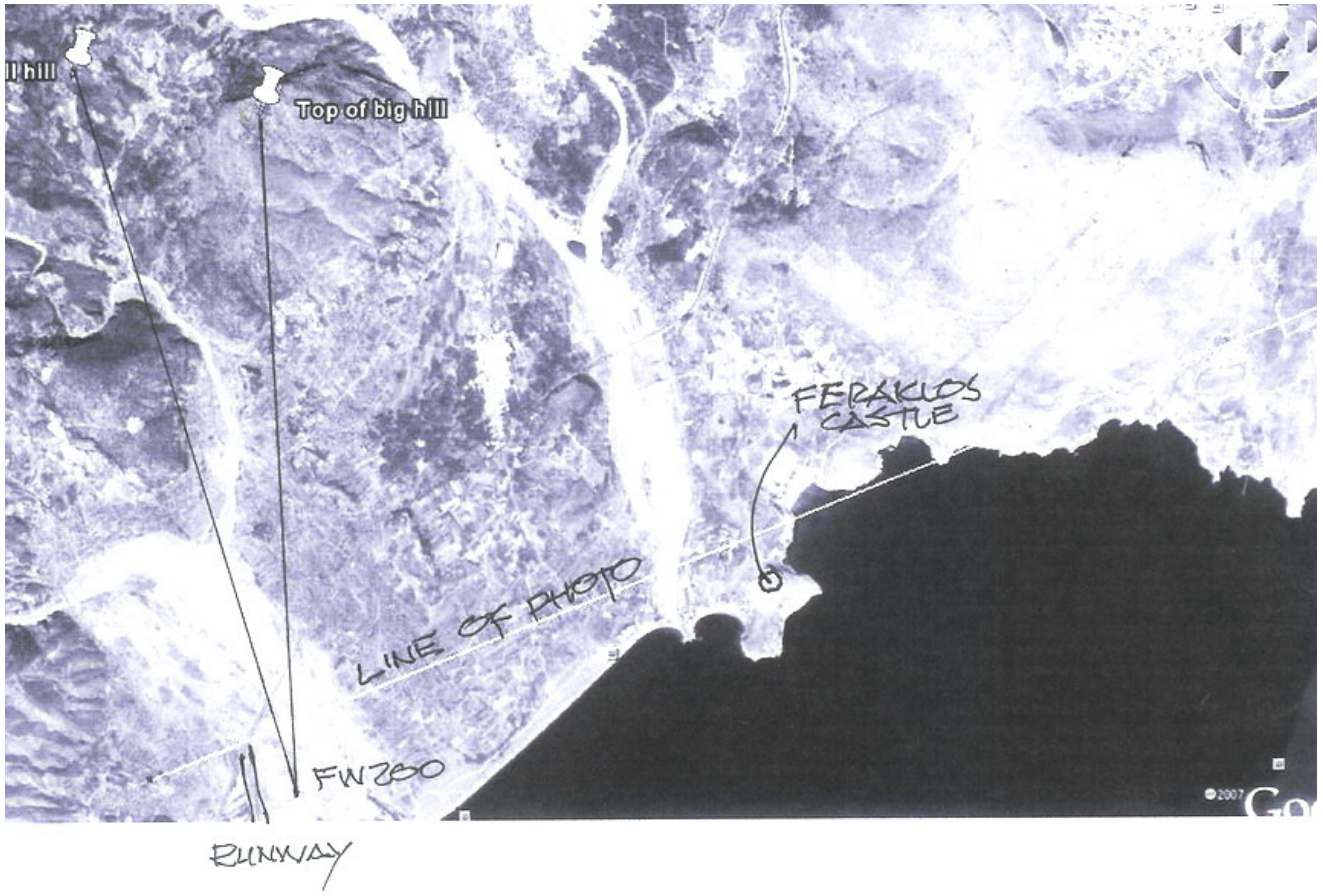
Also found some other photographs of the immediate surroundings, and could pinpoint those through Google Earth.



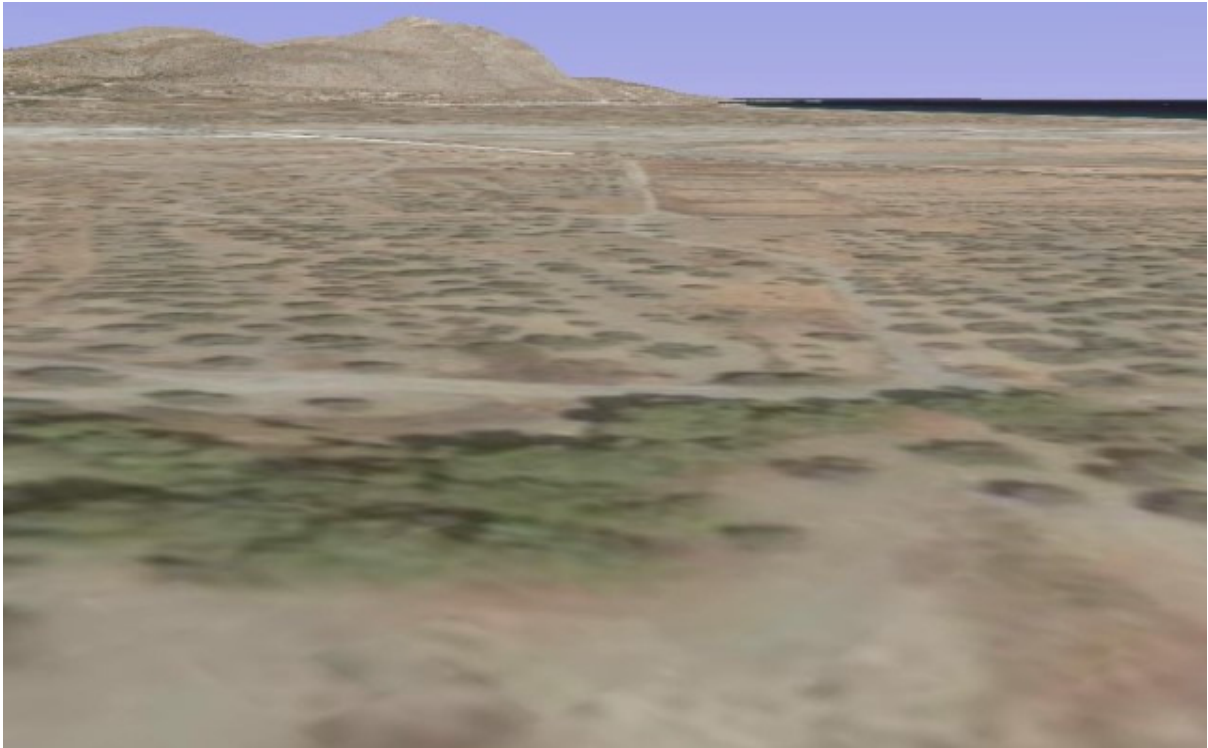
1944. German troops awaiting what appears to be the arrival of officers, seen driving towards them.  
Small church in the foreground



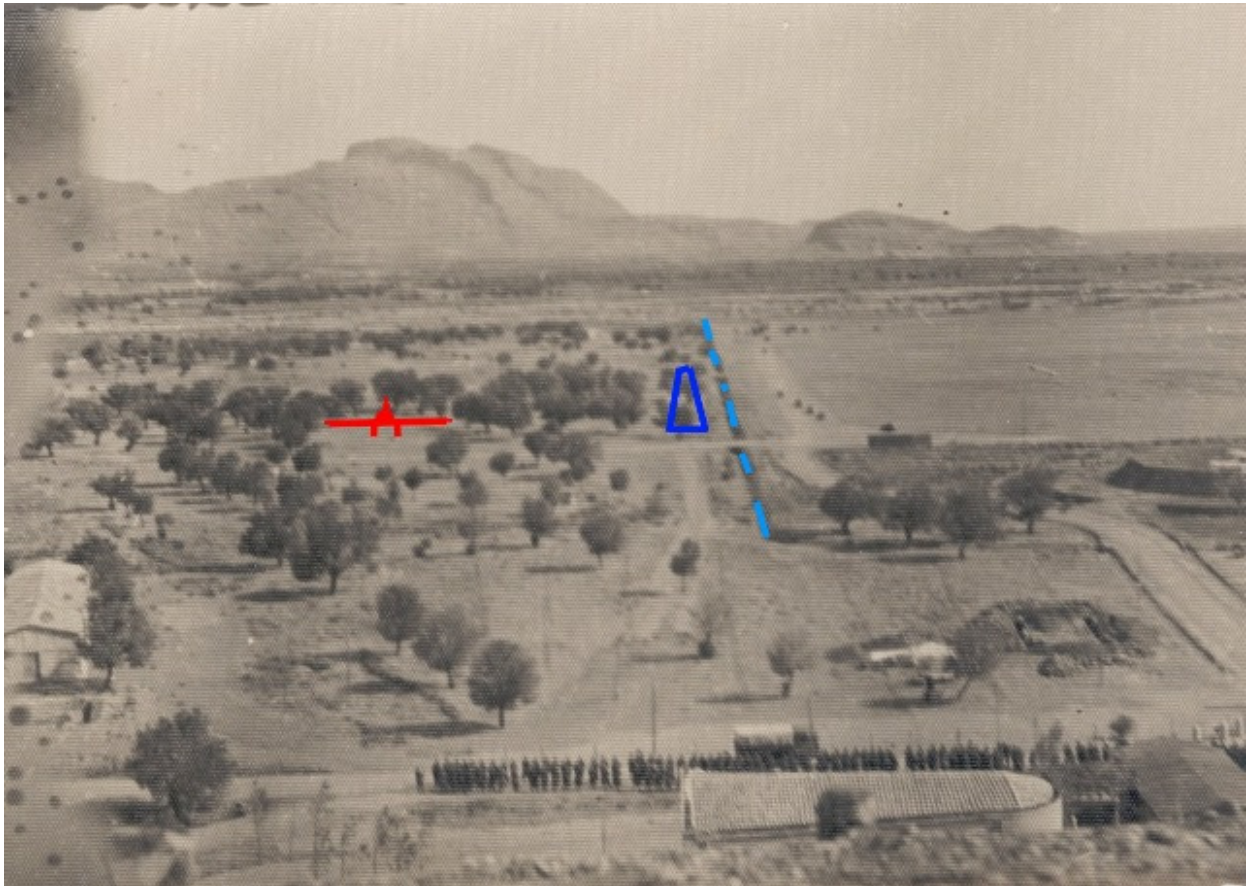
Culvert can be seen to the left of the road



Google Earth, the roads are still visible.



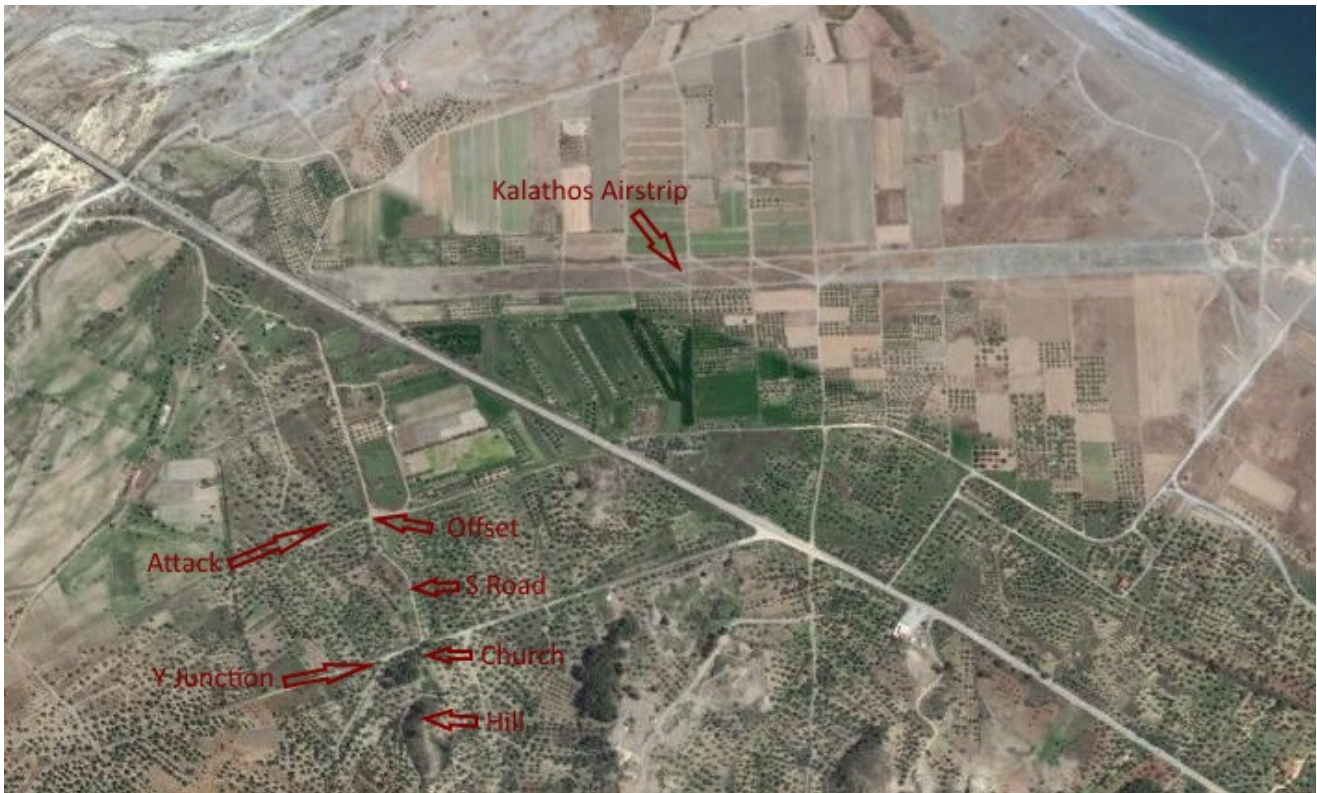
Google Earth pan: 'S' road, offset road all visible



Red = FW200; Blue = Tower; Light Blue = culvert,  
as seen on the Attack Picture



All that remains of the church, at the 'Y' road junction



There was a lot of speculation that the planes were used by the KG200 to transport spies, but, according to Luciano Berghini: *"Here is the solution of the mystery ..that was the last mail plane to reach the Dodecanese on 3 March 1944 and had to stay there because Vienna where it came from, was occupied by the Russians in the mean time. No plan to take Wagener or Nazis back! Only wounded and some officers were taken to Germany with these monthly flights. Even if the FW200 belonged to KG40 (which was disbanded on 2/2/44) it belonged to KG200."*



I also happened upon a model-building site, and found another photograph of the same plane. Posted by one William Marshall. I then found out he is a Lt Col in Pretoria, South Africa...!



O/Lt Stanke was OC of this unit (Kommando Kapiten). The Kommando had two Condors, the G6+FY, and the G6+AY. O/Lt Stanke was the pilot of the first Condor. Haupt. Ing. Link (the navigator) has flown on every occasion to Rhodes.

The Condors have done five flights from Austria to Rhodes. Four of the flights were from Wiener Neustadt, whilst the last flight was from Horsching, near Linz

PLANE	LEFT	AT	ON	ARRIVED	TIME
G6+AY	Wien N	02h36	28 01 45	Calato	07h50
	Calato	17h10	28 01 45	Wien N	21h45
G6+FY	Wien N	00h12	22 02 45	Calato	05h40
	Calato	00h20	25 02 45	Wien N	06h12
G6+AY	Wien N	-	14 03 45	Calato	05h30
	Calato	-	18 03 45	Wien N	23h25
G6+AY	Wien N	23h45	30 03 45	Calato	05h35
Attack took place on 31 March 1945					
	Calato	23h50	31 03 45	Wien Aspern	06h20
G6+FY	Horsching	23h30	03 05 45	Calato	06h20
G6+FY remained on the island					

#### CREW OF G6+FY

They were taken prisoner after the fall of Rhodes

TITLE	NAME	POSITION
Haupt Ing	Link	Navigator And Captain
FW	Schaffranck, Adalbert	1 <sup>st</sup> Pilot
FW	Buthner	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pilot
FW	Hottlinger	1 <sup>st</sup> W/T Operator
FW	Dehndel	2 <sup>nd</sup> W/T Operator
FW	Bohner	1 <sup>st</sup> F/Eng
Ufz	Kuchinko	2 <sup>nd</sup> F/Eng

Jon Fletcher of Scotland wrote:

*"My grandfather was stationed there in 1945 after the German surrender. I think he was part of "10 SPS", having transferred from 178 Squadron in Palestine. The unit spent most of the time enjoying the island, waiting to be*

*transferred to the Pacific or home. He remembers the airfield well. There were 3 Fieseler Storchs and a single FW200 Condor: This (was) supposedly a mail plane, fuelled up to the brim. His unit managed to get 2 of the Storchs flying, which they used to jolly around the island in.*

*He recalls the Condor and it's crew, having 'captured' them (i.e. gone to pick them up, to take them into captivity) with a fresh faced Officer just out from England. My grandfather was chosen to go as he was the 'old boy' of the unit at 25, having served in 10, 216 and 178 Squadrons; home, Africa, Palestine and Italy. The Hauptmann (German Captain) was 'arrogant' but the crew were nice lads and good to chat to. They all had SS Hitler Youth daggers, but alas this fresh faced and green Officer let the crew keep them (not for long, no doubt, once they were handed over to the Army).*

*The Condor was left to the South Africans who managed to get it running: They flew it around the airfield, before one of the engines packed in and they had to return to Kalathos: On closer inspection, the German crew had contaminated the oil with sand and the remaining engines were all damaged beyond safe use."*