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ENVELOPE

CDSN = CFS151 MCN = 98117/28143 TOR = 981172310
 RTTUZYUW RUEKJCS5410 1172312-UUUU--RUEALGX.
 ZNR UUUUU

HEADER

R 272312Z APR 98
 FM JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
 INFO RUEALGX/SAFE
 R 270942Z APR 98 ZYB
 FM CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J2//
 TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP:ISA/DPMO//
 INFO RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASH DC
 RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC//CA/OCS/ACS/EAP/VLC//
 RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J5//
 RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC//
 RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
 RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J2/J3/J32//
 RUEKJCS/USCINCPAC LO WASHINGTON DC
 RUEHBK/USDAO BANGKOK TH//PW-MIA//
 RUHVAAA/CDRUSACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//TAPC-PED-H//
 BT

CONTROLS

UNCLAS //N03460//
 SECTION 01 OF 04

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

MSGID/GENADMIN/CDR JTF-FA/J25A//
 SUBJ/JTF-FA ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM REPORT AND EVALUATION OHP96-041:
 MR. NGUYEN BINH GIA//
 REF/A/RMG/CDR JTF-FA/100902ZJUL94//
 AMPN/REF IS THE JTF-FA ANALYSIS OF THE GROUP 559 RECORD OF
 AIRCRAFT SHOT DOWN//
 RMKS/1. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW: ON 7 SEP 96, THE JOINT U.S./VNOSMP
 RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION TEAM (RIT) INTERVIEWED MR. NGUYEN BINH
 GIA IN BAC THAI PROVINCE. MR. GIA, A FORMER RECONNAISSANCE
 ASSISTANT IN COMPANY ONE ASSIGNED TO ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY (AAA)
 BATTALION SIX, IN DIRECT SUPPORT TO GROUP 559, PROVIDED INFORMATION
 ABOUT TWO INCIDENTS INVOLVING TWO U.S. AIRCRAFT THE BATTALION SHOT
 DOWN IN LAOS AFTER APRIL 1968.

A. THE FIRST INCIDENT INVOLVED THE SHOOT-DOWN OF ONE F-4C
 NEAR CHA VAN AIRFIELD IN ATTOPEU PROVINCE, LAOS, SHORTLY AFTER
 MR. GIA'S COMPANY DEPLOYED TO THE AREA. MR. GIA, A RECONNAISSANCE
 SOLDIER AT THE TIME, WITNESSED TWO U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS EJECT FROM
 THE DOWNED AIRCRAFT. U.S. SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) FORCES RESCUED
 ONE OF THE U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS. PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM (PAVN)
 INFANTRY CAPTURED THE SECOND SERVICE MEMBER AND DELIVERED HIM TO
 MR. GIA'S LOCATION. MR. GIA CARED FOR THE INJURED AVIATOR FOR
 THREE DAYS, AFTER WHICH THE TROOP STATION TO WHICH MR. GIA'S COMPANY
 WAS ASSIGNED ORDERED THE U.S. SERVICE MEMBER SENT NORTH TO THE NEXT
 TROOP STATION. MR. GIA DID NOT KNOW THE DISPOSITION OF THE PRISONER

OASD DPMO	
Date Received	28 Apr 98
Watch Officer	R
Distro	Act / Info
Director	_____
Deputy Dir	_____
Chief of Staff	_____
Exec Asst	_____
Gen Counsel	_____
Pol/Pins	_____
Res/Analyst	_____
Jt Comm Spt	_____
Ref/DOC	_____
Ext Affairs	_____
Resource Mgmt	_____
ICD-56A	_____
CS	_____
Teach Source File	_____

Stischer, W.M. 1127
 Dalamoti, M.D. 1530
 Brown, E.C.
 Demispelero, R.J.
 Fellenz, C.R.
 Ganley, R.O.
 Grewell, L.I.
 Matthes, P.R.
 Wright, D.L.

OHP-FH

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Reviewed by DPMO
 IAW 50 USC 435 Note & DOD 5400.7-R
 Date: 16 JUN 99 Initials: JJS

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AFTER HE DEPARTED.

B. THE SECOND INCIDENT INVOLVED AN AC-130 CRASH SITE THAT MR. GIA DISCOVERED NEAR THE END OF 1971. MR. GIA WAS NOT AN EYEWITNESS TO THE SHOOTING DOWN OF THE AC-130, WHICH CRASHED APPROXIMATELY ONE KILOMETER SOUTH OF BAN BAC, SOUTHERN LAOS. MR. GIA HEARD THAT COMPANY THREE OF BATTALION SIX SHOT DOWN THE AIRCRAFT. IN APPROXIMATELY DECEMBER 1971, MR. GIA CAME ACROSS THE CRASH SITE AND SAW A SKULL AND SOME LONG BONES. MR. GIA BELIEVED THAT THE CASUALTIES WERE AMERICANS, BUT COULD NOT BE CERTAIN.

2. THE INFORMATION IN THIS REPORT CORRELATES WITH RESOLVED CASES 1127-1-01 AND 1530.

3. DETAILS OF INTERVIEW:

A. PARTICIPANTS:

(1) U.S. CONTINGENT:

- (A) MR. KEITH GARY FLANAGAN, DET TWO CASUALTY RESOLUTION SPECIALIST, GM-13
- (B) SSGT WILSON R. SIBLEY, JR., JTF-FA, RIT LINGUIST
- (C) SSG JAMES G. D. COLE, JTF-FA, RIT ASSISTANT

(2) VIETNAMESE CONTINGENT:

- (A) COL PHAM TEO (PHAMJ TEOF), VNOSMP RIT LEADER, MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE REPRESENTATIVE
- (B) MR. DAO VU THANG (DAOJ VUX THAWNG), VNOSMP RIT MEMBER, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REPRESENTATIVE
- (C) MR. NGUYEN VAN KIEM (NGUYENX VAWN KIEEMJ), BAC THAI PROVINCE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE
- (D) MR. NGUYEN VAN NAM (NGUYENX VAWN NAM), BAC THAI PROVINCE TASK TEAM MEMBER
- (E) MR. DUONG VAN KHANH (ZWONG VAWN KHANH), BAC THAI PROVINCE TASK TEAM MEMBER
- (F) MR. HOANG VAN HOA (HOANGJ VAWN HOAF), BAC THAI PROVINCE TASK TEAM MEMBER

B. PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW: OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM MR. NGUYEN BINH GIA CONCERNING THE SHOOTDOWNS OF AN F-4C AND A C-130. MR. GIA WITNESSED THE F-4 SHOOTDOWN AND CAME ACROSS THE CRASH SITE OF THE C-130 WHILE SERVING WITH A UNIT SUBORDINATE TO GROUP 559 IN SOUTHERN LAOS.

C. WITNESS INTERVIEW:

- (1) NAME: NGUYEN BINH GIA (BINHF GIA)
- (2) AGE: 53 YOA
- (3) CURRENT RESIDENCE: BAC THAI PROVINCE
- (4) WARTIME RESIDENCE: STATIONED WITH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY (AAA) UNITS ASSIGNED TO GROUP 559, PRIMARILY OPERATING IN SOUTHERN LAOS
- (5) CURRENT OCCUPATION: RETIRED PAVN SENIOR CAPTAIN
- (6) WITNESS RELIABILITY: UNKNOWN (SEE PARA 4C)
- (7) STATEMENT:

(A) BETWEEN 0800 AND 1000 ON 12 APRIL 1968, TWO 37MM AAA GUNS ASSIGNED TO COMPANY ONE OF AAA BATTALION SIX WHICH WERE DEPLOYED IN THE VICINITY OF THE CHA VAN (CHAF VAWNF) AIR STRIP FOR GROUP 559 SHOT DOWN AN AMERICAN F-4C. (NOTE: CHA VAN, ONCE A FRENCH ERA AIRFIELD, IS LOCATED NEAR GRID COORDINATE 48P

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YB 217 972. SEE PAVN MAP 6439, CHA NUM, 1:100,000 SCALE, PRINTED IN 1982.) THE COMPANY COMMANDER AT THE TIME WAS MR. LUU VAN HUE (LWU VAWN HUE), A NATIVE OF BO TRACH DISTRICT, QUANG BINH PROVINCE. HE HAD JUST COMPLETED DEPLOYING HIS TWO 37MM AAA GUNS AT KEY LOCATIONS OVERLOOKING THE DIRT AIRSTRIP FROM THE NORTH. MR. GIA PERSONALLY DIRECTED THE DEPLOYMENT OF ONE OF THE TWO AAA GUNS. THE COMPANY'S MISSION WAS TO DENY ACCESS OF THE AIRSTRIP TO ANY PARATROOPER OR HELIBORNE ASSAULTS. PAVN INFANTRY COMPANY SIX ALSO DEPLOYED AROUND THE AIRSTRIP TO SUPPORT THIS MISSION.

((1)) AS THE TWO GUNS FOLLOWED THE F-4'S FLIGHT PATH, IT DESCENDED TO AN ALTITUDE BELOW 1,200 METERS AND CAME WITHIN A RANGE OF 2,000 METERS. BOTH 37MM GUNS OPENED FIRE SIMULTANEOUSLY, STRIKING THE AIRCRAFT. THE AIRCRAFT LOST ENGINE POWER, PASSED OVER THE TWO 37MM POSITIONS AND CRASHED NEAR THE CHA VAN AIRSTRIP. FROM THE TIME THE 37MM GUNS OPENED FIRE UNTIL THE AIRCRAFT CRASHED, IT WAS HEADING SOUTH. AS MR. GIA EXPLAINED THE DETAILS OF THE SHOOTDOWN, HE DESCRIBED THE INCIDENT AS MEETING EXACTLY THE PROFILE A 37MM AAA COMPANY WOULD DESIRE IN ORDER TO SHOOT DOWN AN F-4.

((2)) DURING THIS INCIDENT, MR. GIA WAS AT HIS POST AS THE RECONNAISSANCE ASSISTANT TO THE COMPANY COMMANDER (TROWJ LYS TRINH SATS). MR. GIA WITNESSED THE F-4 CRASH AND SAW TWO PARACHUTES DESCENDING SOUTH OF THE RUNWAY. MR. GIA WATCHED FROM A DISTANCE AS U.S. SAR AIRCRAFT ARRIVED ON THE SCENE. MEMBERS OF PAVN INFANTRY COMPANY SIX, IN THE AREA WHERE THE PARACHUTES LANDED, CAPTURED ONE U.S. SERVICE MEMBER. AS MR. GIA CONTINUED TO OBSERVE FROM A DISTANCE, HE WATCHED WHAT HE BELIEVED WAS THE RESCUE OF ONE AVIATOR. THE SAR FORCES THEN DEPARTED THE AREA.

((3)) SEVERAL HOURS LATER, AT APPROXIMATELY 2300 THAT NIGHT, INFANTRY SOLDIERS FROM COMPANY SIX DELIVERED THE PRISONER TO MR. GIA'S LOCATION BECAUSE THE 37MM COMPANY HAD A

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/

SUBJ/JTF-FA ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM REPORT AND EVALUATION OHP96-041: BUNKER AND FACILITIES WHERE THEY COULD SECURE THE PRISONER. MR. GIA RECEIVED ORDERS FROM HIS COMMANDER TO LOOK AFTER THE AMERICAN, PENDING RECEIPT OF FURTHER ORDERS. AS SOON AS MR. GIA RECEIVED THIS ORDER FROM HIS COMMANDER, HE WENT DIRECTLY TO SEE THE PRISONER. THE PRISONER HAD FAIR SKIN, BUT MR. GIA SURMISED THE CAPTIVE WAS EXTREMELY PALLID AND POSSIBLY IN SHOCK, DUE TO INJURIES SUSTAINED DURING EJECTION AND PARACHUTE DESCENT. HE CONJECTURED THAT EJECTING AT AN ALTITUDE THAT WAS TOO LOW RESULTED IN THE PRISONER'S INJURIES. THE PRISONER USED SIGN LANGUAGE TO INDICATE HE SUFFERED EXTREME PAIN IN HIS MIDDLE AND LOWER BACK. MR. GIA BELIEVED THE AVIATOR SUFFERED FROM A SPINAL INJURY AND ALSO HAD A LEG WOUND. (NOTE: MR. GIA SPECIFICALLY USED THE TERM FOR A WOUND. HE DID NOT USE THE TERM FOR A BROKEN LEG.) MR. GIA RECALLED THAT THE AMERICAN WAS NOT MUCH TALLER THAN HE. (NOTE: BASED ON MR. GIA'S HEIGHT, APPROXIMATELY 66 INCHES, THEN THE AVIATOR SHOULD HAVE BEEN AT LEAST 67-68 INCHES TALL AND POSSIBLY TALLER.)

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((1)) MR. GIA STUDIED RUSSIAN IN SCHOOL, BUT HE HAD NOT STUDIED ANY ENGLISH. FOR THIS REASON, HE HAD TO WORK WITH THE AMERICAN TO ESTABLISH SIGN LANGUAGE FOR CERTAIN ESSENTIAL EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION. (NOTE: MR. GIA AGAIN TEMPORARILY STOPPED HIS ACCOUNT TO REMARK ON THE DATE OF THE INCIDENT. HE WAS CERTAIN THAT THE DATE WAS IN APRIL 1968. HE RECALLED ACCOUNTS OF THE SHOOT-DOWN THAT SAID EITHER 12 APRIL 1968 OR 8 APRIL 1968. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THE ACTUAL DATE WAS 12 APRIL 1968, BUT HE WAS UNCERTAIN. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WAS EVEN MORE CERTAIN THE INCIDENT BEGAN AROUND 0800.)

((5)) AFTER RECEIVING CUSTODY OF THE PRISONER FROM THE INFANTRY, MR. GIA ATTEMPTED TO SPOON-FEED THE AMERICAN FOR THREE DAYS. MR. GIA RECALLED THE ENORMITY OF THE TASK TO KEEP AN AMERICAN ALIVE. AT FIRST MR. GIA WAS VERY FEARFUL THAT THE AMERICAN WOULD DIE WHILE IN HIS CARE WHICH WOULD RESULT IN SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS FROM HIGHER HEADQUARTERS. (NOTE: MR. GIA MADE A CUT-THROAT GESTURE AND MUMBLED IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HIS HEAD IF THE PRISONER DIED.) HE QUICKLY LEARNED THE AVIATOR COULD NOT EAT VIETNAMESE DRY RATIONS. SO MR. GIA MIXED WATER IN WITH RICE AND DRY RATIONS TO MAKE A SOUP AND FED THE PRISONER LYING IN THE BUNKER.

((6)) ON THE THIRD DAY OF CUSTODY, COMPANY ONE RECEIVED AN ORDER FROM GROUP 559 HEADQUARTERS TO BEGIN TRANSFERRING THE PRISONER NORTHWARD. THE TACTICAL WATCH OFFICER WHO ISSUED THE ORDERS TO MOVE THE PRISONER WAS MR. VU QUANG VINH (VUX QUANG VINH) (NOTE: THE JOINT TEAM INTERVIEWED MR. VINH ON 26 NOV 96). COMPANY ONE RECEIVED THE ORDER TO PLACE THE PRISONER IN A TRANSPORT VEHICLE IN THE NEARBY VEHICLE PARK. MR. GIA DID NOT KNOW THE DRIVER OR THE TYPE OF VEHICLE BECAUSE HE WAS CARRYING OUT HIS RECONNAISSANCE DUTIES AT THE TIME OF TRANSFER.

((7)) COMPANY ONE INITIATED THE TRANSFER AT APPROXIMATELY 1900-2000 IN THE EVENING OF THE THIRD DAY AFTER THE U.S. SERVICE MEMBER'S CAPTURE. THE TRANSFER TOOK PLACE IN THE EARLY EVENING BECAUSE IT WAS THE QUIETEST TIME OF DAY AND AMERICAN AIRCRAFT WERE LEAST LIKELY TO ATTACK. THE COMPANY RELINQUISHED CUSTODY OF THE PRISONER AT KILOMETER MARKER 18 AT THE SOUTHERN BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN PASS OF BAN LONG (BANR LONG; UNLOCATED). FROM THIS POINT, A TEAM FROM THE MECHANIZED LIAISON UNIT (DOOIJ GIAO LIEN CON GIOVIS) RECEIVED CUSTODY OF THE AVIATOR AND BEGAN THE POINT-TO-POINT TRANSFER NORTHWARD. (NOTE: AT FIRST, MR. GIA USED THE TERM MECHANIZED LIAISON UNIT, THEN HE EXPLAINED FURTHER THAT THIS UNIT WAS PART OF THE TROOP STATION. WITHIN THE MILITARY UNIT STRUCTURE OF GROUP 559, A BINH TRAM (TROOP STATION) WAS A REGIMENT-EQUIVALENT ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF ALL PERSONNEL AND MATERIEL WITHIN ITS AREA OF OPERATIONS.) MR. GIA UNDERSTOOD THAT ONE PERSON WOULD HAVE RECEIVED THE MISSION TO TRANSFER THE AVIATOR NORTHWARD THROUGH THE BINH TRAM. AT THAT TIME THE BINH TRAM WAS CALLED BINH TRAM 35. FROM THERE THE TRANSFER TEAM WOULD HAVE FIRST CROSSED THE BAC RIVER (SOONG BACJ; UNLOCATED, VERY NEAR CHA VAN AIR STRIP) IN ORDER TO TURN THE U.S. SERVICE MEMBER OVER TO STATION 34 (TRAMJ 34, PROBABLY BINH TRAM 34).

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MR. GIA COULD PROVIDE NO PRECISE DETAILS ONCE THE PRISONER DEPARTED THE COMPANY AREA-OF OPERATIONS.

((8)) MR. GIA RECALLED MEETING A DOCTOR FROM HANOI WHO ARRIVED AT THE COMPANY ONE BUNKER TO TREAT THE PRISONER. MR. GIA ONLY RECALLED THAT THE DOCTOR WAS FROM HANOI, BUT HE DID NOT REMEMBER THE HOSPITAL OR UNIT OF ASSIGNMENT. HE DID NOT REMEMBER THE DOCTOR'S NAME, BUT RECALLED THAT THE DOCTOR SPOKE ENGLISH. THE DOCTOR TOLD MR. GIA THAT THE PRISONER WAS A AVIATOR WITH THE RANK OF MAJOR. MR. GIA ALSO RECALLED SEEING A PIECE OF PAPER IN THE PRISONER'S POSSESSION WITH HIS NAME WRITTEN ON IT IN LARGE BLOCK LETTERS IN BLACK INK. HOWEVER, MR. GIA COULD NOT RECALL THE PRISONER'S NAME AND DID NOT KNOW IF THE PRISONER HAD ANY OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS OR IDENTIFICATION MEDIA AT THE TIME HE WAS CAPTURED. MR. GIA ESTIMATED THE U.S. SERVICE MEMBER'S TO BE APPROXIMATELY 38 YEARS OF AGE AT THE TIME OF CAPTURE.

((9)) WHILE TRYING TO RECALL ADDITIONAL DETAILS IN ORDER TO BETTER DESCRIBE THE PRISONER, MR. GIA REFERRED BACK TO THE THREE DAYS HE LOOKED AFTER THE AVIATOR IN THE COMPANY ONE BUNKER. DURING THE FEW DAYS THAT THE AVIATOR WAS IN MR. GIA'S CARE, THE PRISONER WAS ALREADY BECOMING GAUNT. MR. GIA RECALLED THE PRISONER'S BEARD GREW VERY QUICKLY AND HE NEEDED A SHAVE VERY BADLY BY THE TIME COMPANY ONE TRANSFERRED HIM.

((10)) THE U.S. SERVICE MEMBER ALSO HAD A SMALL PIECE OF PAPER, ABOUT THE SIZE OF A BUSINESS CARD WHICH HAD THE NUMBER 1930 PRINTED ON IT. MR. GIA DID NOT KNOW IF 1930 WAS THE AVIATOR'S BIRTH YEAR, BUT HE SURMISED THAT COULD HAVE BEEN THE CASE.

((11)) DURING HIS STAY IN THE BUNKER AT COMPANY ONE, THE AVIATOR ASKED FOR MEDICINE FOR A STOMACH ACHE. MR. GIA WAS CERTAIN THAT THE PRISONER WAS SUFFERING FROM STOMACH PROBLEMS BECAUSE HE WAS UNACCUSTOMED TO THE DRY FIELD RATIONS MIXED WITH WATER. THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING DOCTOR ADMINISTERED AN INJECTION OF TI-A-ZON. (NOTE: THE PRECISE TERM IS XUYEEN PHA TI-A-ZOON, POSSIBLY AN ANTIBIOTIC. LOCAL SOURCES DESCRIBE TI-A-ZON AS THE TREATMENT FOR A LARGE VARIETY OF AILMENTS, ESPECIALLY GASTROINTESTINAL.) MR. GIA THOUGHT THE MEDICINE HELPED THE PRISONER.

((12)) AFTER THE F-4 INCIDENT, MR. GIA BECAME

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 003 *****/

SUBJ/JTF-FA ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM REPORT AND EVALUATION OHP96-041: THE COMPANY COMMANDER AND FREQUENTLY RETURNED TO THE F-4 CRASH SITE AREA. THE SITE WAS A WELL-KNOWN SOURCE OF SCRAP METAL, AND THE CRASH SITE ALSO CREATED A LARGE AREA IN THE HEAVY FOREST THAT BECAME A COMMON REST AREA. MR. GIA RECALLED READING THE LETTERS F-4C IMPRINTED ON A PIECE OF METAL SALVAGED FROM THE SITE FROM WHAT HE REMEMBERED IT WAS FROM THE FUSELAGE. MR. GIA CONCLUDED HIS ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE F-4 SHOOTDOWN BY ADDING THAT HE RECALLED WRITING DOWN THE EVENTS IN HIS DIARY. WHEN HE WROTE DOWN THE ACCOUNT AFTER THE FACT, HE DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A CALENDAR, SO HE MAY HAVE MISSED THE EXACT DATES. HOWEVER, HE KNEW THE EVENT WAS IN THE FIRST HALF OF APRIL 1968. HE RECALLED WHAT HE BELIEVED WAS VERY NEARLY THE EXACT ACCOUNT THAT HE RECORDED

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IN HIS DIARY: 12 APR 68, C1, Z6, SHOT DOWN ONE F-4, CAPTURED ONE MAJOR AVIATOR ALIVE (12/4. C1, Z6, BAWNS ROWI MOOTJ CHIECS F-4, BAWTS SOONGS MOOTJ GIAWCJ LAIS THIEUS TAS). (NOTE: THIS IS VERY SIMILAR TO THE ENTRY IN THE GROUP 559 SHOOTDOWN RECORD. SEE COMMENTS, PARA 5C(1)(B).)

((13)) MR. GIA SAID HE COULD RECALL VERY CLEARLY WRITING THE SHORTHAND VERSION OF THE SHOOTDOWN IN HIS DIARY. AS SOON AS HE MENTIONED THE DIARY, MR. GIA IMMEDIATELY EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD LOST HIS DIARY MANY YEARS AGO. HE ALSO RECALLED THAT THE F-4 INCIDENT WAS THE ONLY INCIDENT DURING THE ENTIRE WAR IN WHICH HE WAS NOT ONLY A DIRECT PARTICIPANT IN SHOOTING DOWN AN AIRCRAFT BUT WAS ALSO AN EYEWITNESS TO A CAPTURED AMERICAN. HE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY OTHER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCE INVOLVING HIS UNIT. HIS UNIT MADE MANY MORE CLAIMS OF SHOOTING DOWN AIRCRAFT, BUT HE KNEW OF NO OTHER CAPTURE INCIDENTS.

(B) MR. GIA DISCOVERED WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE A C-130 CRASH SITE BUT WAS UNAWARE OF THE DETAILS OF THE CRASH. MR. GIA HEARD THAT COMPANY THREE OF BATTALION SIX SHOT DOWN AN AC-130 THAT CRASHED VERY NEAR THEIR 37MM AAA GUN EMPLACEMENT JUST SOUTH OF THE BAC RIVER (SOONG BACJ) NEAR BAN BAC (BANR BACJ). (NOTE: BAN BAC, AKA BAN BAK, IS LOCATED NEAR GRID COORDINATE 48P XC 903 526. SEE U.S. MAP SHEET 6340, 1:100,000 SCALE, 1971 EDITION.) THE CRASH SITE ITSELF WAS APPROXIMATELY 100 METERS FROM A ROAD THAT THE AAA COMPANIES ASSIGNED TO BATTALION SIX USED FOR DEPLOYMENTS.

((1)) THE FIRST TIME MR. GIA CAME ACROSS THE CRASH SITE WAS NEAR THE END OF 1971. MR. GIA WAS CERTAIN THAT IT WAS NOT YET 1972. MEMBERS OF HIS COMPANY ONE WERE USING THE ROAD THAT PASSED NEAR THE CRASH SITE FOR DEPLOYMENT. SINCE HE HAD HEARD SOME OF THE DETAILS OF THE CRASH FROM MEMBERS OF COMPANY THREE, HE DECIDED TO VISIT THE CRASH SITE HIMSELF. HE HAD HEARD SOME DETAILS BECAUSE COMPANY THREE CLAIMED TO HAVE SHOT THE AIRCRAFT DOWN AND REPORTED IT WAS AN AC-130 BASED ON THEIR OBSERVATIONS OF THE ARMAMENT ON BOARD THE CRASHED AIRCRAFT.

((2)) MR. GIA STOPPED AT THE CRASH SITE LONG ENOUGH TO CONFIRM FOR HIMSELF THAT IT WAS THE SITE THAT MEMBERS OF COMPANY THREE HAD DESCRIBED TO HIM. HE SAW A SKULL AND SOME LEG BONES STILL LYING ON THE SURFACE. THE BONES WERE CHARRED, HE SUSPECTED, FROM THE CRASH AND EXPLOSION OR SUBSEQUENT FIRE. MR. GIA WAS UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE SKELETAL REMAINS HE SAW WERE AMERICAN OR VIETNAMESE. HE RECOMMENDED THAT MEMBERS OF THE JOINT TEAM SEARCH U.S. RECORDS FOR AN AC-130 THAT CRASHED SOUTH OF THE BAC RIVER IN THE AREA NEAR THE BASE OF THE BAN LONG (BANR LONG) MOUNTAIN PASS. THE BAN LONG MOUNTAIN PASS IS EAST OF THE CRASH SITE. AT THE TIME THAT MR. GIA STOPPED AT THE CRASH SITE, THE BAN LONG MOUNTAIN PASS WAS STILL MOSTLY HIDDEN IN OLD-GROWTH FOREST AND THE MOUNTAIN WAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST IN THE REGION.

((3)) WHILE AT THE CRASH SITE, MR. GIA RECALLED HE HAD HEARD THAT THE AIRCRAFT CRASHED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AND ALMOST ON TOP OF THE GUN EMPLACEMENT WHICH SHOT IT DOWN. MR. GIA HAD FORGOTTEN MANY OF THE OTHER DETAILS, INCLUDING THE DATE, BUT HE REMEMBERED THAT MEMBERS OF THE COMPANY SAID THEY SHOT THE AC-130

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DOWN SOMETIME AFTER 1700.

(C) MR. GIA WAS UNAWARE OF ANY OTHER CASES INVOLVING ANY UNACCOUNTED-FOR AMERICANS. HIS UNIT DID SHOOT DOWN OTHER AIRCRAFT IN THE AREA, BUT HE BELIEVED U.S. SAR FORCES RESCUED ALL OF THE OTHER AVIATORS. MR. GIA BELIEVED HE WOULD HAVE KNOWN OR HEARD ABOUT OTHER AMERICANS IF THEY HAD BEEN CAPTURED IN HIS AREA BECAUSE CAPTURING LIVE AMERICANS WAS A VERY IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENT.

4. MATERIAL EVIDENCE: NONE

5. COMMENTS:

A. POTENTIAL LEADS:

(1) MR. LUU VAN HUE (LWU VAWN HURE), A NATIVE OF BO TRACH DISTRICT, QUANG BINH PROVINCE WAS THE COMMANDER OF COMPANY ONE, AAA BATTALION SIX, CREDITED WITH SHOOTING DOWN AN F-4C IN APRIL 1968. MR. GIA WAS CERTAIN THAT MR. HUE WAS STILL LIVING BUT DID NOT RECALL MR. HUE'S HOME VILLAGE. MR. GIA SAID THAT ANYONE IN THE LOCAL BO TRACH VETERANS ORGANIZATION WOULD IMMEDIATELY KNOW MR. HUE.

(2) MR. NGUYEN TIEN SUU (TIEENS SWUR), A NATIVE OF GIA LUONG DISTRICT, BAC NINH (FORMERLY HA BAC) PROVINCE, WAS THE COMMANDER OF AAA BATTALION SIX AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT. MR. SUU LATER BECAME THE DEPUTY COMMANDER OF BINH TRAM 35. MR. SUU WAS WOUNDED DURING THE WAR AND RETURNED HOME TO GIA LUONG TO RETIRE.

(3) MR. TOA (TOAR) (FAMILY NAME UNKNOWN). MR. TOA WAS THE POLITICAL OFFICER FOR AAA BATTALION SIX AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT. MR. GIA DID NOT RECALL MR. TOA'S HOMETOWN.

(4) MR. NHUONG (NHWONG) (FAMILY NAME UNKNOWN). MR. NHUONG WAS THE COMMANDER OF COMPANY THREE, BATTALION SIX, WHOSE MEN REPORTEDLY SHOT DOWN AN AC-130 IN SOUTHERN LAOS SOMETIME BEFORE DECEMBER 1971. MR. NHUONG WAS A NATIVE OF HA TINH PROVINCE, POSSIBLY THACH HA DISTRICT OR ANOTHER DISTRICT NEARBY. HE IS APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AGE AS MR. GIA.

(5) MR. VU QUANG VINH (VUX QUANG VINH), A NATIVE OF HANOI. MR. VINH WAS THE TACTICAL OPERATIONS OFFICER FOR AAA BATTALION SIX AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT. MR. GIA RECALLED THAT MR. VINH MAY HAVE RELAYED THE ORDER FROM GROUP 559 TO HAVE THE AMERICAN PRISONER OF THE F-4 INCIDENT TRANSFERRED NORTH. (NOTE: THE JOINT TEAM INTERVIEWED MR. VU QUANG VINH IN HANOI ON 27 NOV 96.)

B. INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS:

(1) CONCERNING THE F-4 INCIDENT, THE GROUP 559 SHOOTDOWN RECORD SUPPORTS MR. GIA'S BELIEF THAT HE REMEMBERED TWO DATES IN EARLY APRIL 1968 BECAUSE HE WROTE DOWN TWO ACCOUNTS OF SHOOTING DOWN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT THAT MONTH. HE DID NOT KNOW WHY HE THOUGHT THE

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 004 *****/

SUBJ/JTF-FA ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM REPORT AND EVALUATION OHP96-041: TWO DATES WERE 8 APRIL AND 12 APRIL, RESPECTIVELY. HE WAS CERTAIN THAT HIS UNIT SHOT DOWN TWO AMERICAN AIRCRAFT DURING THAT TIME FRAME. THE GROUP 559 RECORD CONTAINS TWO ENTRIES IN EARLY APRIL 1968 ATTRIBUTED MR. GIA'S UNIT, BOTH ON PAGE 21.

(A) LINE 24: "C1 Z7 (Z6); 1700; 1/4/68; 1 F4; BAN LONG." TRANSLATION: "COMPANY ONE, BATTALION SEVEN (AKA BATTALION 6) SHOT DOWN ONE F-4 AT 1700 ON 1 APRIL 1968. THE

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AIRCRAFT WENT DOWN AT BAN LONG ((BANR LONG))." (NOTE: THE AIRCRAFT TYPE LIES IN THE COLUMN FOR AIRCRAFT ATTRIBUTED TO 37MM AAA FIRE).

(B) LINE 39: "C1 27 (Z6); 1015; 13/4/68; 1 F4; CHA VAWN; BAT 1 ((CHINESE CHARACTER: ZHONG1)) TA MY C1 BB BAT." TRANSLATION: "COMPANY ONE, BATTALION SEVEN (AKA BATTALION 6) SHOT DOWN ONE F-4 AT 1015 ON 13 APRIL 1968. THE AIRCRAFT WENT DOWN AT CHA VAN ((CHAF VAWN)). ONE AMERICAN LIEUTENANT COLONEL WAS CAPTURED. COMPANY 1 INFANTRY CAPTURED ((HIM))." (NOTES: THE POSITION OF THE LISTED AIRCRAFT TYPE INDICATES THE AIRCRAFT FELL TO 37MM AAA FIRE. THE CHINESE CHARACTER SOMETIMES APPEARS IN DOCUMENTS AS AN ABBREVIATION FOR THE VIETNAMESE WORD "TRUNG" OR "MIDDLE.")

(2) CONCERNING THE C-130 CRASH SITE, THE GROUP 559 RECORD ALSO SUPPORTS MR. GIA'S RECALL OF THE GENERAL DATE THAT THE AIRCRAFT MAY HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN.

(A) PAGE 37, LINE 12: "C2 Z6 0115 21/4/70 1 AC130 (37) 2K/ (UNK) 9 G LAIS CHEETS. THIS ENTRY INDICATES THAT 37MM AAA COMPANY 2 OF BATTALION SIX SHOT DOWN ONE AC-130 AT 0115 ON 21 APRIL 1970, KILLING NINE AIRCREW MEMBERS. THIS INFORMATION CORRELATES WITH RESOLVED CASE 1600.

(B) PAGE 32, LINE 24: "C3 Z6 1910 24/11/69 1 AC130 (37) CHET 5 G LAI THU 2 SUNG NGAN." TRANSLATION: "37MM AAA COMPANY THREE OF BATTALION SIX SHOT DOWN ONE AC-130 AT 1910 ON 24 NOVEMBER 1969, KILLING FIVE AIRCREW MEMBERS AND COLLECTING TWO HANDGUNS." THIS INFORMATION CORRELATES WITH RESOLVED CASE 1530.

(C) THE ENTRY ON PAGE 32 SUPPORTS MR. GIA'S RECOLLECTION THAT HE FELT HE HAD CONFIRMED THE CRASH SITE AS THE ONE WHERE COMPANY THREE HAD SHOT DOWN A C-130. ALSO, THE ENTRY INDICATING THAT PAVN TROOPS HAD RETRIEVED WEAPONS FROM THE AIRCRAFT INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD THAT MR. GIA WOULD HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE CRASH. THIS FACT, COMBINED WITH MR. GIA'S WARTIME ASSOCIATION WITH THE FORMER COMMANDER OF COMPANY THREE, INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THIS ENTRY REFERS TO THE CRASH SITE MR. GIA VISITED.

(3) MR. GIA SPOKE VERY CANDIDLY AND CONFIDENTLY THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW. HE CONCLUDED THE INTERVIEW BY ACKNOWLEDGING HE COULD HAVE MISCONSTRUED THE EXACT DATES OF THE TWO INCIDENTS BUT NOT THE MONTH OR THE YEAR.

(4) AT THREE SEPARATE POINTS DURING THE INTERVIEW MR. GIA REMARKED AT WHAT HE AND HIS PAVN COLLEAGUES CONSIDERED THE REMARKABLE AND CONSIDERABLE SUCCESSES OF U.S. SAR OPERATIONS IN LAOS DURING THE WAR. THIS ATTITUDE BOLSTERED HIS ASSUMPTION THAT SAR FORCES RESCUED A SECOND AVIATOR DURING THE F-4 INCIDENT NEAR CHA VAN. IN ACTUALITY, MR. GIA OBSERVED SAR FORCES FROM A DISTANCE AND COULD NOT HAVE KNOWN IF THE SAR FORCES ACTUALLY RESCUED A SECOND AIRCREW MEMBER. WHEN PAVN FORCES SEARCHED THE AREA SURROUNDING THE LOCATION WHERE TWO PARACHUTES LANDED AND DID NOT LOCATE A SECOND AIRCREW MEMBER, THE LOGICAL ASSUMPTION WAS THAT SAR FORCES RESCUED THE SECOND AIRCREW MEMBER.

6. EVALUATION:

A. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN PARA 3C(7) (A) ABOVE, CORRELATES

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PAGE:0014

WITH RESOLVED CASE 1127-1-01, BASED ON LOCATION OF INCIDENT, DATE OF LOSS, AIRCRAFT TYPE, CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS, AND FATE OF INVOLVED CREW MEMBERS.

(1) CASE 1127 INVOLVED THE 13 APRIL 1968 LOSS OF AN RF-4C NEAR 48PYB218961. BOTH CREW MEMBERS PERFORMED A SUCCESSFUL EJECTION, BUT WERE SEPARATED BY APPROXIMATELY TWO MILES BY THE TIME THEY LANDED. ONE AIRCREW MEMBER WAS IMMEDIATELY RECOVERED BY SAR FORCES. CASE 1127-1-01 WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CAPTURED AND WAS RELEASED FROM HANOI IN 1973.

(2) THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN PARA 3C(7)(A)((10)) ABOVE, REGARDING THE DATE 1930, POSSIBLY CORRELATES WITH THE DATE OF BIRTH FOR CASE 1127-1-01, WHICH IS ~~REDACTED~~

B. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY MR. GIA IN PARA 3C(7)(B) DESCRIBING A C-130 CRASH SITE, ABOVE, CORRELATES WITH RESOLVED CASE 1530, BASED ON LOCATION OF INCIDENT, CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS, TIME OF LOSS, AND AIRCRAFT TYPE. (b)(6)

(1) CASE 1530 INVOLVED THE 24 NOV 69 LOSS OF A C130A AIRCRAFT NEAR 48PXC902495 (APPROXIMATELY TWO KILOMETERS FROM THE GENERAL LOCATION GIVEN BY MR. GIA). THE REMAINS FROM ALL EIGHT CREW MEMBERS WERE RECOVERED IN OCTOBER 1995.

(2) ONLY ONE OTHER C-130 LOSS (RESOLVED CASE 1600) OCCURRED WITHIN 20 KILOMETERS OF BAN BAK. HOWEVER, THE LOCATION OF LOSS AND CRASH SITE DESCRIPTION OF CASE 1600 DO NOT COINCIDE WITH THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY MR. GIA.

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7. EVAL: JRM/JMC//

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BT

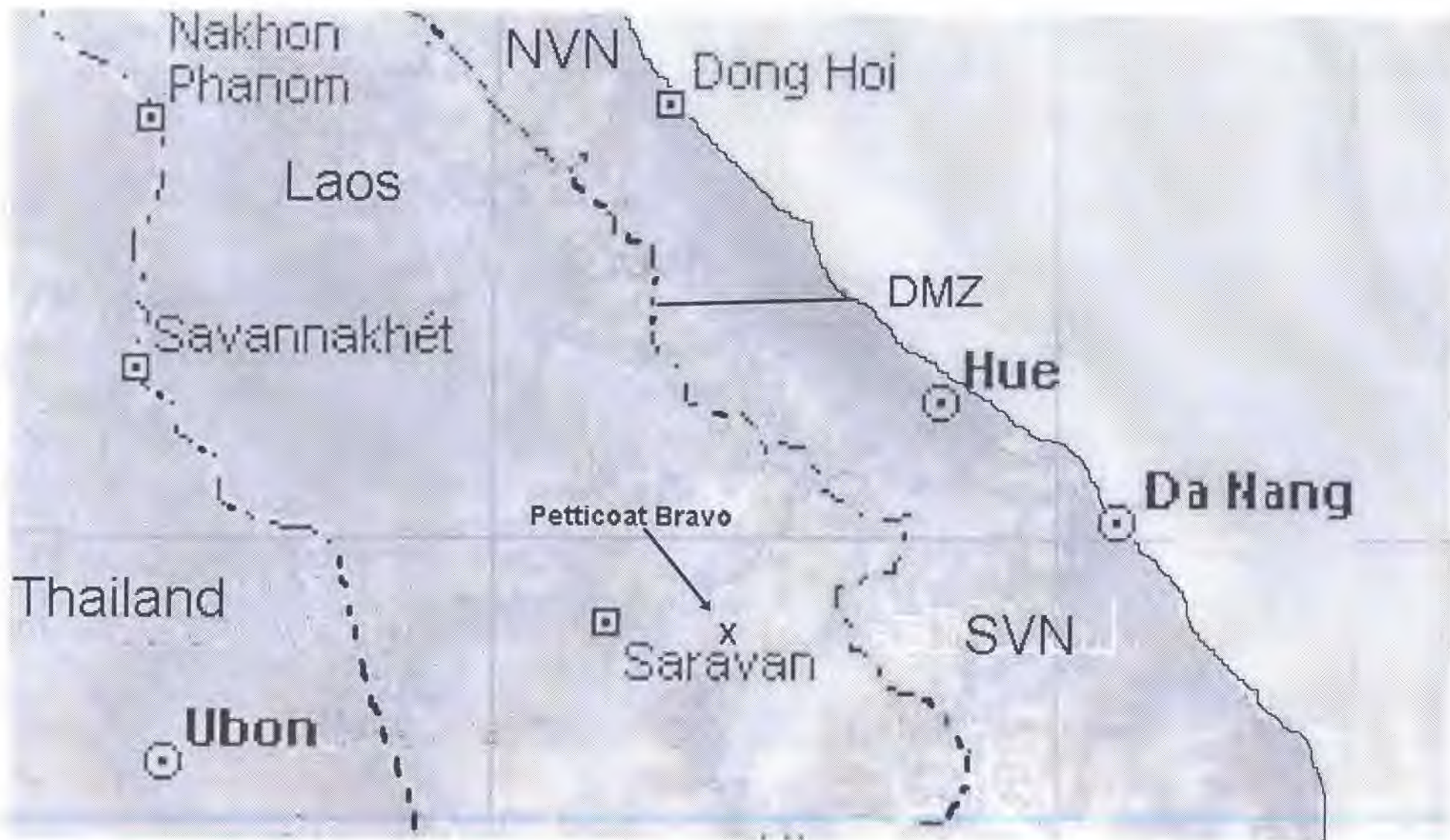
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Robert LaPointe

From: "Robert LaPointe" <rlapointe@gci.net>
To: "Vertrees, Larry" <cwolves@ix.netcom.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 01, 2000 8:40 PM
Subject: Mission Report

I want to confirm that I sent you the mission report on your SAR. I received a cryptic e-mail regarding getting the report out to you. If I failed to do so, I will quickly remedy the situation. The book is progressing slowly but surely. The Petticoat SAR will be one of those used in the book. I am going to have about 10% of the missions written by someone other than myself. My perspective is always seen from the SAR side of the house. One mission will be written by a King pilot, another by a Sandy, another by one of the maintenance personnel and a few by survivors. Would you be interested in writing up your mission as seen from your eyes. The toughest part will be to keep it ten pages or less in length (12pt 1 1/2 line spaced pages). All guest authors will be given total credit for their particular article. Don't feel under any obligation to do this. There is plenty of primary source material available for me to tell the story. I just want to make the offer.

FOLLOWED UP BY U.S. MAIL

STISCHER, WALTER MORRIS

Name: Walter Morris Stischer
Branch/Rank: UNITED STATES AIR FORCE/O4
Unit: 12 TRS
Date of Birth: 27 Sept 30
Home City of Record: SAN ANTONIO TX
Date of Loss: 13-April-68
Country of Loss: NORTH VIETNAM (Stischer states LAOS)
Loss Coordinates: 152000 North 1070300 East (Stischer states Chavanne)
Status (in 1973): Returnee
Category:
Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: RF4C #0383
Missions: 60
Other Personnel in Incident: Captain Donald Verhees, navigator, rescued.
Refno: 1127

Source: Compiled by P.O.W. NETWORK from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews and CACCF = Combined Action Combat Casualty File. Update 2002.

REMARKS: 730328 RELEASED BY PL (LAOS) [Stischer states NVN - he "did not see Laotians until we arrived (10 released together) arrived at the airport. He was "capture by NVN troops and was in their custody the entire time]

ALIVE IN 2002/RET COL/RESIDES TX

No further information available at this time.

RELEASED 28 MAR 1973

APR - JULY 68 TRAIL TO HAWAII

6 MONTHS 68

69

70

71

72

3 MONTHS 73

3 April 2000

Hi Bob -

As I said in my e-mail - here's my check for a copy of your book and in turn hope you'll send the after action reports on my pickup on 13 Apr 68.

you also asked for a few words on my SAR. before I get into that, I have to tell you that my "report" has a few flaws in it. Namely I lied in a few places because we were breaking some rules and I thought "no one will ever know". Actually we were flying a lot lower than 2000 ft and going a mite faster than 450! But then the dumb thing was: we were on our third pass ^(not second) because we thought that the second part of our first pass was not our best effort i.e. we were offet a little too much! well it was one pass too many. ~~I~~ ~~sim~~

A few years later (1973) when Walt got released as a POW, I talked to him in his home town (Austin, TX) and ~~told~~ he told me he saw some bursts coming from behind just before we were hit. ^{He further related that} The location of the hit was just below his seat in the nose section and that after I ejected the fire + smoke subsided for an instant and he "thought he might fly it home"!! Imagine But the fire + smoke restarted so he quickly ejected. He was captured some 20 minutes after landing by NVA troops and

- the next day I caught a ^{ride} back to Tan Son Nhut AB in Saigon - my home base - I was well met by the group in my squadron, the 12th TRS. Anyway, I ~~was~~ was dropped off ~~at~~ near the hospital where I had to go to drop off my x-rays. I only had one block to walk and there I was, hobbling along in a dirty flight suit, g-suit over my shoulder, and x-rays under my arm when I was stopped by an AF. He looked me up and down, finally figured out I was an officer, and said: "Sir, where's your hat" in an unfriendly tone - I said one word, "LAOS", without a blink or an "oh yeah?", he proceeded to give me a "ticket" for being "out of uniform". After all, it was a big HQ type base and the base CO was told to keep "those ops guys" under tight reign.
- Walt and I had gone to Udorn a few days before the shootdown on a SCATBACK exec jet to pick up our Aircraft which had ^{emergency} landed ~~there~~ ^{there} after getting shot up a couple months before. The battle Damage was repaired and the jet was ready to be flown back to Saigon. The ~~shootdown~~ shootdown occurred on that return flight. — Since I therefore was on TDY orders for the entire several days I had to be creative when filling out my TDY voucher - calling my "stop" in LAOS as "Change Mode of Transportation". By the way I was also reimbursed

Bob ,

This note was left on the Jolly Green Association page... thought maybe you might have the information the Col is looking for. His e-mail contact is :
< dverhees@hotmail.com >.

Regards,

D.J. McGill

The note read:

Don Verhees (Col USAF Ret)

Website:

Referred by: Just Surf'd On In

From: San Diego

Time: 2000-02-28 16:29:32

Comments: I was rescued on 13 Apr 68, RF-4C c/s petticoat(B), from Laos by a Jolly stationed at Da Nang, pulling strip alert at (I think) Pleiku. The front seater, Maj Walt Stischer, was captured (returned in '73), but the SAR continued all night. I was told later (at the hospital at Da Nang) that there were 64 acft in on my rescue!! Three questions: 1. Is there an official report available? 2. Are the Crew's (King, Covey, Sandy's, Jolly's) names somehow available, I've lost them over the years. 3. Does anyone have one of those famous "rescued by the Jolly Greens" patches available? for sale? Thanks in advance. Great site. Cheers, Don Verhees