

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.



REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

USAFMPC (AFPMSC)
RANDOLPH AFB TEXAS 78148

5 June 1969

Dear Air Force Next of Kin

Since our 26 February 1969 newsletter we have received new information on a number of different subjects which we want to pass on to you.

A substantial number of letters from Air Force and Navy captured personnel in North Vietnam were received during the latter part of April/early May 1969 by the next of kin. A few of the families involved received two letters each, and there were three new Air Force and five new Navy writers. Two of the Air Force members who had not written before were downed during 1966, the third was lost in 1967. The letters were written from late October through mid-December 1968, postmarked in Hanoi, and forwarded to the next of kin via international mail channels. Transit time to this country was over four months. All of the members who wrote were known to be captured prior to receipt of the letters. Unfortunately, we still have not heard of any letters being forwarded from captured personnel of the Viet Cong or Pathet Lao.

Effective 1 July 1969, the Social Security Account Number (SSAN) will become the Military Service Number for all members of the Armed Forces. The current service number will no longer be used after that date. The SSAN for all missing in action (MIA) personnel and prisoners of war (PWs) is contained on the DD Form 1300, Report of Casualty, which has been furnished to the primary next of kin. Knowledge of the member's SSAN will be required for filling out official forms, cashing checks, and the like. Contact your Personal Affairs Officer if you have any questions regarding the conversion to the SSAN.

We are initiating a personal briefing program for the next of kin of MIA personnel and PWs. The briefing sessions will be held at a number of Air Force installations throughout the country and will be conducted by officers from the Casualty Division in conjunction with representatives of the State Department and the Department of Defense. Topics covering the whole MIA/PW spectrum will be discussed. Since the briefing program is in the planning stage at this time, we will advise you of more definite information later on. However, we intend to begin the briefings some time in June 1969.

There have been a few instances where persons have contacted the next of kin, stating that they can gain welfare information about MIA personnel or PWs or that they would be able to influence or obtain their release

from captivity. Some of these people may have good intentions, but many have questionable motives. In any case, none can do what they claim! If you are contacted, you should make no commitments and immediately notify your Personal Affairs Officer.

Under the Uniformed Services Savings Deposit Program (USSDP), the maximum amount on which interest is paid is \$10,000. When the account of an MIA member or PW reaches the maximum, the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center automatically stops deposits and notifies the concerned next of kin. The \$10,000 will continue to draw 10% interest per year as long as it remains in the account. Although the regulation governing USSDP prohibits the withdrawal of interest until the account is settled, all or part of the principal may be withdrawn for any worthwhile purpose. Interest on USSDP deposits should not be reported for income tax purposes until the account is settled. Your inquiries concerning USSDP should be directed to the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center.

We want to remind you of the importance of advising your local Social Security office of the possibility of a claim as the result of the MIA or PW status of an Air Force member. If you have not already done so, we urge you to file a protective writing statement to prevent the possible loss of Social Security benefits. If you have previously made a formal claim for benefits, retain the notice of disallowance that you received. However, you should still file a protective writing statement. If you have any questions call or write your Personal Affairs Officer.

On 19 May 1969, the Department of Defense presented a detailed and comprehensive briefing to the news media. The briefing was specifically designed to bring the pressure of the world opinion to bear on the enemy which, hopefully, will result in more information about and better treatment for our downed personnel and their eventual repatriation. We have attached the entire text of the briefing, along with the charts used, and an associated statement made by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird. The charts are in order, and you should have no difficulty in determining which ones are being referred to while reading the briefing. We are certain that you will not become unduly concerned over the briefing if you keep in mind the purpose for which it was tailored.

As new developments occur, we will continue to keep you up-to-date.

Sincerely



J. G. LUTHER, Colonel, USAF
Directorate of Personnel Services

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1. Text of DOD Briefing
2. Charts
3. Photo Credits
4. Statement of Secretary Laird