

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



REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

USAFMPC (AFPMSC)
RANDOLPH AFB TEXAS 78148

21 November 1969

Dear Air Force Next of Kin

One of the purposes of this newsletter is to advise you that three of our officers who were formerly prisoners of war in North Vietnam will be visiting 17 Air Force bases throughout the country during December 1969 to brief and answer questions from the next of kin. Their itinerary is attached for your information, and you are cordially invited to attend one of the briefing sessions. Please note that individual invitations will not be sent, and it will not be necessary for you to notify this office should you decide to attend. Attendance will be limited to adult next of kin of missing in action and captured personnel, and no additional briefings of this type are planned.

The briefing team will consist of Lieutenant Colonel Norris M. Overly, released in February 1968; Major Fred M. Thompson, released in August 1968; and Captain Wesley L. Rumble, released in August 1969. They will be accompanied by a representative of this office. Due to the extremely short notice connected with this program, we are unable to advise you at this time of the exact location where the briefing will be presented on each of the bases. However, you may contact the casualty assistance office at the base where the briefing is to be held to determine the location, or ask the security police at the main gate when arriving on the day of the briefing, and they will furnish you the necessary directions. You will be required to make your own arrangements for quarters if you desire to remain overnight, and travel expenses and arrangements are the responsibility of the traveler.

On 17 November 1969, North Vietnam announced in a propaganda release that packages would be accepted for American prisoners. The enemy has not, however, provided us a list of those being held captive. Instructions have been finalized in Washington, D. C., and the decision was made to permit one package to be mailed by the primary next of kin of each member missing or captured in North Vietnam. In addition, since several persons who became missing in Laos are now known to be prisoners in Hanoi, the State Department has advised us that primary next of kin of persons who are missing or captured in that country will also be permitted to mail a package to Hanoi. It was reiterated that this does not indicate that our government believes all personnel downed over Laos are now in North Vietnam, nor is there any assurance that packages sent this way will reach these members; but we consider it worth a try. We want to caution those who mail a package to a member downed over Laos to make no mention of this location on or inside the package.

The State Department has assured us that every effort is continuing to be made to find a way to send packages to personnel who are missing or captured in South Vietnam. We sincerely hope that such arrangements will be worked out and, if successful, instructions will be passed to all concerned with the least possible delay.

Attached are the instructions to be followed when sending packages to North Vietnam. We recommend that items of significant value not be included in the package. If you are the primary next of kin, the customs forms and postal authorization card which will be required by your local postmaster are included. Should you not desire to send a package, please let us know at once (collect telephone call) so that we may offer the opportunity to the secondary next of kin.

In conjunction with the package program, the North Vietnamese have also stated that they will accept Christmas cards for American prisoners. In view of this, next of kin of personnel downed over North Vietnam or Laos may send a card, if they so desire, to the camp of detention address, shown on the attachment to this newsletter, in the hope that it may be delivered. As with the packages, there should be no indication on the card that an addressee became missing over Laos.

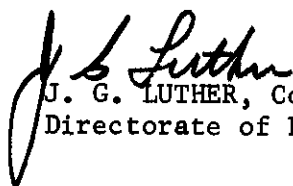
Changing the subject, those of you who are participating in the Uniformed Services Savings Deposit Program will be interested to know that the Department of Defense (DOD) is backing legislation to remove the \$10,000 limit for deposits in the case of missing and captured personnel. A draft of a proposed change to the bill was submitted from DOD on 29 October 1969 to the Chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

Two additional wives have volunteered to act as area contact representatives for the Tennessee/Kentucky and Louisiana/Mississippi areas. Names of these wives are included as an attachment to this newsletter. We realize that our initial listing of wives who volunteered to act as contact representatives for this program left several large areas of the country which did not contain a contact representative. We are willing to expand this program and would prefer to do it on a voluntary basis. We would be most happy to print in forthcoming newsletters names of additional wives who would like to participate in this program as contact representatives as explained in our newsletter of 21 October 1969. If you are interested, please so inform us.

We want to advise you that none of the peace activists released any prisoner lists in connection with the moratorium last weekend. It is our belief that, as of this writing, no such information has been furnished them by the North Vietnamese. In addition, you may have heard that a Reverend Paul D. Lindstrom recently obtained a list, containing 97 names, from an unknown source in Canada which he made available to the Department of Defense. This list is essentially meaningless in that a review shows that only three names appear to be similar to those of US servicemen who are listed as missing in action or captured in Southeast Asia. Concerned next of kin have already been notified.

That's all for now. We will be contacting you again in the very near future.

Sincerely



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

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1. Briefing Schedule
2. Package Instructions
3. Customs Forms (if applicable)
4. Postal Authorization Card
(if applicable)
5. List of Contact
Representatives