

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

REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

USAFMPC (AFPMSC)
RANDOLPH AFB TEXAS 78148

3 Feb

Dear Air Force Next of Kin

During the last six weeks, large numbers of letters from US prisoners of the North Vietnamese after a long delay had been forthcoming. Most of the letters were received by representatives of the Women Strike for Peace and American Friends Service Committee, but some were received through international mail channels. In all, 166 letters from Air Force prisoners, 35 of whom were permitted to write for the first time since being captured. The status of six officers has changed from missing in action to captured based on the letters received from them. The Air Force member downed the longest, who was missing prior to this time but was a known prisoner, was recovered during July 1965. It is hoped that the flow of letters will continue with regularity. We also hope that the prisoners who are being held captive by the Pathet Lao and the Chinese will be returned by their families although we have no information to the contrary might occur.

There has been considerable publicity recently, initiated from press announcements made by Cora Weiss of the Women Strike for Peace, to the effect that North Vietnam would accept the return of prisoners on a continuing basis. In actuality, the North Vietnamese have officially agreed to liberalizing the package provisions for such action appear favorable at this time. The Department of Defense, after coordinating with the State Department and the Department of State, has decided to allow the mailing of packages to missing and captured members in North Vietnam. One package per individual, every two months. Several persons who became missing in Laos are now in North Vietnam, the families of personnel missing in action will also be included in this program. If you are a next of kin, we have attached the instructions for the preparation of your package, a Post Office Department authorization card, and necessary customs forms. The first package may be mailed in February 1970. For future mailings, we will only require an authorization card. We ask that you obtain the customs forms from your local post office. Our recommendations as to contents are unchanged, except that we have also attached a list of acceptable items (virtually the same as the information you already have) extracted from some prisoner letters received by

In the last newsletter, we stated that a number had broadcast messages over Radio Hanoi in conj season. To bring you up-to-date, 16 Air Force broadcast their Christmas/New Year's greetings, thanks for packages, and other personal comment over Radio Hanoi. Most of the messages have admitted by Radio Havana and Radio Moscow. In all tape recordings of the broadcasts have been rec the families. The remaining tapes will be forw become available to us.

For the primary next of kin, attached to the re entitled Federal Income Tax Information for Arm think you will find it useful and informative. of the pamphlet there is a paragraph concerning returns for missing persons. Although the pamphlet it does contain information especially applicab and their dependents. We suggest that, if you and regardless of whether you prepare the retur assistance, you have the pamphlet available for

The wife of an Air Force officer who is missing Sot Pethrasi, the Pathet Lao representative in accompanied by a representative of the Internat Red Cross who acted as an interpreter. Mr. Pet information about her husband or any other pers over Laos. In addition, he said he had no way prisoners because he is virtually cut off from country. He did suggest, however, that the nex following address in attempting to obtain infor relatives and/or to effect the delivery of mail

Etat Major des Forces Armees
Populaires de Liberation Lao
Sam Neua
Laos

It is our understanding that there is no postal where mail from the Free World normally enters. Therefore, we recommend that "via Hanoi Post Office" be included on the envelope. Absolutely no assured address will be productive.

A new group called the Committee of Liaison with Detained in North Vietnam was recently publicized. The aforementioned Cora Weiss, and Dave Delling

co-chairmen of the committee. The former indicated that North Vietnam had agreed to send mail from US prisoners to the committee which, in turn, would forward the letters to the persons to whom addressed. She also said that the North Vietnamese had agreed to "reply to the extent possible" to inquiries from families seeking to determine whether their relatives are captured; however, they denied having any information regarding personnel downed over Laos or South Vietnam. The decision to contact this group must be yours to make in light of your own convictions. However, we strongly emphasize that the action of the North Vietnamese in dealing through this and similar groups, rather than at an official government level, is an obvious propaganda ploy designed to promote the credibility of those who oppose US involvement in Southeast Asia. Further, those who use such groups as an intermediary run the very real risk of personal harassment and have no assurance at all that welfare information will be received. In this connection, it should be noted that, of all the family members who have personally visited or written the North Vietnamese delegation in Paris, not one has been furnished the promised information concerning the downed member. A very interesting editorial pertaining to this general subject, which was published in the 12 January 1970 issue of the Washington Daily News, is attached for your information.

We have received some inquiries lately, asking whether "via Moscow" should be added when using the "Camp of Detention" address for forwarding mail intended for missing and captured personnel in North Vietnam. Mail addressed to North Vietnam is not routed through Russia so the "via Moscow" notation should not be included. If it is, the letter could very easily become lost in postal channels. Please follow the mailing instruction you now have without any variations and leave the routing up to the postal officials.

On 1 December 1969, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 9485, a bill designed to remove the \$10,000 limit on deposits to the Uniformed Service Savings Deposit Program for captured or missing personnel. The bill is now awaiting Senate action. H.R. 9487, a bill to exclude from gross income for tax purposes the entire amount of compensation of members of the Armed Forces who are captured or missing during the Vietnam conflict, is still awaiting action in the House of Representatives.

Three more ladies have volunteered to be area contact representatives for their sections of the country. Please add the following to your list:

Mrs. David E. Ford

Two small items before we close this newsletter. First, mail intended for us should be addressed as follows: USAFMPC (AFPMSC), Randolph AFB, TX 78148. If, however, you would like your letter directed to a specific individual, the address would be: USAFMPC (AFPMSC), Attn: (grade and name of the person), Randolph AFB, TX 78148. This is pointed out because incorrectly addressed letters could be delivered to one of our homes or to a post office box. Of course, this poses a problem when we are on temporary duty elsewhere or leave, and a letter may not reach the office until our return. Secondly, we have reached the stage where we have as many as 14 missing members with the same last name. It would expedite matters if you will be careful to provide full identification of your relative in your letters and in telephone calls to us. This is particularly appropriate when your last name is not the same as the missing or captured member's.

We will continue to keep you informed of all developments regarding our missing and captured personnel in the newsletters.

Sincerely

J. G. Luther

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

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1. Package Instructions
2. Authorization Card
3. POD Fm 2922
4. POD Fm 2972
5. POD FM 2966
6. Income Tax Booklet
7. Editorial

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION AND MAILING OF PARCELS

- I. Only one parcel may be sent to each individual. Turn parcels over to the hands of your local postmaster no later than the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th, 31st months of February, April, June, August, October, December.
- II. It must conform to the weight limit set by North Vietnam. No parcel has been instructed not to accept packages weighing more than 6 ounces including wrappings.
- III. The contents set by North Vietnam are "nonpersonal articles, medication." For other restrictions see our SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR PACKAGES which was published in the 10 November 1969 newsletter or provided to you with your correspondence.
- IV. The following should not be included:
 - a. Intoxicants or drugs other than medicines
 - b. Inflammable or explosive items, including matches
 - c. Weapons, knives, razor blades, etc.
 - d. Written messages
- V. Pack contents solidly in a strong corrugated kraft paper, seal with tape and tie with string. Do not use pasteboard containers, such as shoe boxes.
- VI. Enter sender's full return address in upper left corner of wrapper and address as follows:

Complete Name (omit grade and service)
Camp of Detention of U. S. Pilots Captives
c/o Hanoi Post Office
Democratic Republic of Vietnam
North Vietnam
- VII. Enclosed with these instructions are three forms. Complete and attach them as follows: Form 2965 (Return to sender sticker). Check Return to sender box, sign on reverse side of wrapper. Form 2966 (Customs Declaration). Complete and attach to wrapper with their value. Fill in reverse side with their value. Check the Return to sender block. Tie to wrapper with string. Form 2972 (Dispatch Note). Complete to show value of parcel and that of addressee. Tie to wrapper with string. Postage or other stamps, markings or labels.