

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



REPLY TO: USAFMPC (AFPMSC)
ATTN OF: RANDOLPH AFB TEXAS 78148

3 November 1969

Dear Air Force Next of Kin

In the last newsletter, we mentioned that we had requested reprints of a prisoner article appearing in the October 1969 issue of the AIR FORCE AND SPACE DIGEST, which is a private publication. There are two items in the article, a copy of which is attached, that should be clarified. The statement by Congressman Pucinski on page three that, "So far as is known, 401 American soldiers are missing in action - most of them air-men - are believed to be prisoners of war being held by the Vietcong or North Vietnam. Nearly 1,000 others are missing in action and are believed to be captives", may be misleading. In actuality, as of 10 October more than 1300 American servicemen were officially listed by our government as missing or captured. Of these, more than 700 are Air Force members. Of the total figure, over 600 are officially being carried as prisoners of war, including more than 200 Air Force members. Next, in the first complete paragraph in the right hand column of page 13, a reference is made to printed forms being made available by all the services for use by the next of kin in attempting to correspond with our downed members. Actually, the Air Force has never prescribed the use of a printed form for the letters. This is based on the fact that North Vietnam has never indicated that the printed forms must be used, nor has any prisoner stated in his letters that they are a necessity. Also, we know that letters not using the printed forms have been, and continue to be, delivered to prisoners. If North Vietnam or any other country imposes restrictions on the letters they will accept, all appropriate next of kin will be advised immediately. We have also attached to this newsletter a summary of the actions taken by the publisher of the AIR FORCE AND SPACE DIGEST to effect wide dissemination of the above mentioned article.

You will be interested to know that the sister of one of our captured members recently received a letter from Xuan Oanh of the North Vietnamese delegation in Paris. This person visited the delegation on 25 August 1969; however, she was refused any information concerning her brother at that time. Instead, Mr. Oanh asked that she write him a letter, which she did upon her return to this country. While still in Paris, her brother's status was changed to captured, a development of which she was unaware at the time of her visit to the delegation. In her letter to Mr. Oanh, she advised him among other things that her brother was now known to be a prisoner in North Vietnam. Mr. Oanh's reply to her was dated 22 September 1969 and was received exactly one month later. It stated in part "I am glad you got the news about your brother," but no information regarding his welfare was included. It is not possible to

determine whether his comment was meant as a polite acknowledgement of her remark or as further confirmation of the captured status of the member involved. As of this writing, we know of no other next of kin who has received information about his or her missing or captured relative from the North Vietnamese delegation.

Attached to our 21 October 1969 newsletter was a listing of area contact representatives. Unfortunately, we made a mistake in the address of Mrs. Rosalind A. Apodaca; her correct address is as follows:

Our apologies for this error.

In accordance with the instructions contained in the 25 July 1969 newsletter, many of you have contacted us requesting guidance relative to granting interviews with the news media. Since the number of inquiries has been large, we have compiled the attached fact sheet which contains the guidance we have been furnishing on an individual basis. The fact sheet was developed in conjunction with the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force (Information) and should answer many of your questions on the subject.

The last attachment to this newsletter is a recent news release made by the American Red Cross. We found the resume of their recent actions to be very interesting, and hope that you will, also.

We are hoping to obtain instructions for a Christmas package program soon so that it will not be a last minute, rush affair. Information has been received that the program is being formulated, and I want to assure you that we are geared to relay the instructions to you as soon as they are received.

Sincerely

J. G. Luther SP Col USAF

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

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1. Reprint fr AF & Space Digest
2. Summary of Action
3. NOK Contacts w/News Media
4. ARC News Release