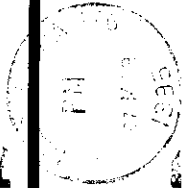
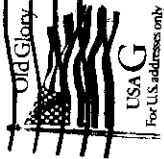


The Insider

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The Insider



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Guest Editorials

Reverend Ray W. Stubbe, who provided these notes, co-authored "Inside Force Recon" in 1973 which was edited by Michael Lee Lanning. Rev. Stubbe contacted THE INSIDER following 13:11 (Nov. 1994) with these two stories: Part-1 are notes from an interview Rev. Stubbe conducted with Maj. L.V. Bearce, the man who started the Vietnam war. Part-2 is part of a chapter from "Valley of Decision", Rev. Stubbe co-authored with John Prados concerning the disappearance of Di R. Ibanez (MIA). Note that some of these interview notes were cut out by editors when these book were published. If there are any writers out there who have produced a hook and a very good story about POW/MIAs was cut out, I would be glad to look at publishing the material as a Guest Editorials.

I announced that I would be accepting guest editorials to be published in THE INSIDER in 1995. I have received three Fact-Filled stories that I plan to publish. This is a call for "position papers" on the live POWs which contain evidence and proof that is "new". Manuscripts should not exceed 32,000 bits or 10 pages. Guest editorials will be presented in THE INSIDER to a group of current & former intelligence officers inside and outside of the US government. No fee will be paid for these manuscripts. The only

requirement is that the work be documented with evidence and facts about live POWs.

CONVERSATION WITH MAJOR L.V. BEARCE 16 OCT 1974

Maj. Bearce was hand-picked from the 3d Marine Division to join a "Sub Unit" to provide Pathfinder capability. The "Sub Unit" sent men over into Laos, Thailand and Vietnam purely for reconnaissance type operations. Jack Phillips and Dave Wittingham from Camp Pendleton were engaged in these "clandestine" (not "covert") activities. ("clandestine"-not publicized, not open; "covert"-dirty type work). In the Company-Bearce briefed Wittingham's group on Vietnam. Bearce was Submarine trained in 1963 (BLUEGILL-SS 242; BLACKFIN-SS 322 & CAPITAINE-AGSS 336).

In October, 1963, just prior to the death of Diem, McNamara went to Vietnam to kick the MAAG in the tail. He was dissatisfied with the way the civilians were running things and wanted more military involved (probably because he could then control things better). (They) needed skills the military had. At that time, there was "CSD" which was the cover for "CIA" in Vietnam. They established Study and Observation Group (SOG), a civilian staffed organization. Project TIGER, No. 34-ALFA, publicized in the Pentagon Papers. (It) had several sections: Maritime, Airborne and others. MarOps consisted of SEALs (2 officers) and Bearce in the DaNang area at My Ke on the beach at General Walt's summer home. SOG was told that Force Recon teams had one officer and 3 enlisted.



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Official Notice**1995 Evidence Kit**

A group of current and former intelligence officers has put together an educational package of material called the "Evidence Kit" written for educators and elected officials. With the "Evidence Kit" you can show history professors at Colleges and High Schools the evidence of live POWs, so they might teach their students about the POW/MIAs. With the "Evidence Kit" you can meet with your Congressman & Senator to show them the proof & evidence of live POWs. Included in the "Evidence Kit": 4300 live sighting reports; returned POWs debriefings; CIA & DIA reports; 309 discrepancy cases; select bio-sheets; how and where to get newly declassified POW intelligence reports. With the kit you can hold "show trials" to present the live POW data to the press and the public. Buy your history teacher, congressman, and senator a live POW "Evidence Kit".

To order, send \$25.00 for each "Evidence Kit" to:

Michael Van Atta, Director
The POW Educational Fund
P.O. Box 735
Stewartstown Station, PA 17363
or phone
(717) 993-5498

In December, 1963 Bearce received a secret message transferring him, he departed in the first week of January and was in Saigon the following week. He became a civilian - wore civilian clothes in DaNang. He was selected because of his EOD back-

ground and training. SOG worked out of Col. J.H. Thompson (Army) in the J-52 section of MACV. SOG headquarters was in the White Elephant building, under CDR Thomas, who was the military liaison to the "civilian" organization, to provide support on fixing their boats, e.g..

The SOG detachment in DaNang was broken down into 5 or 6 teams of Nungs and men from North Vietnam (whose motivation was to liberate the North from the Communists). The 3 officers would plan all the missions and the SEAL enlisted would train them. Bearce and Tucker were the USMC's two new SEAL officers. (Tucker's title was "chief of station".) Force Recon was attached to this unit. Over time the staff was enlarged with Navy Captains & Commanders. They moved from "White Elephant" to set up a base for the "Nastys" at Camp Fay and were responsible for providing logistic and repair support-nothing to do with the operational end of things. This was the Naval Advisory Detachment (NAD). The establishment that was anti-Vietnam, wanted nothing to do with unconventional types, thus SEALs were founded.

Bearce's team started the Vietnam war! He had sent out a team to make a practice/actual operational firing run on Han Met and Han Mien. Their boats were outfitted with 57 mm recoilless rifles. The NVA Swa-Tow boats were in the area however, and began to chase them. Somehow, the destroyer happened to be in the area also, and the Swa-Tow must have mistaken them for the boats from SOG, and began firing on the destroyer. Thus, began the Vietnam war. Bearce found this out while he was enroute CONUS from his 6 months with SOG. There were 2 Nasty boats involved-Nasty's are Norwegian-made.

In 1964, during October-December, the Company transferred 13 officers, and lost

slowed the flow of the MIA accounting process, but it is time for Hanoi to open its doors to Washington.

Please stop using the MIAs as an excuse to halt progress because all that is needed is education and understanding, but by keeping silent as to these facts Mr. Clinton is lying to the American public.
 Sincerely,
 Michael Van Atta
 717-993-5498

ADDITIONAL TALKING POINTS

Claims that the local population in Vietnam, who stored remains under their homes, until the trade embargo was lifted, on February 3, 1994, is an untrue statement.

One of my teams who was working with an old man who was cooperating by acting as a conduit, he was providing leads and information on MIAs. One day he was visited by K-20 (The Vietnamese Secret Police). Two K-20 agents took the old man to lunch in March 1993 and he vanished, most likely put in the re-education camp system, because US officials were indiscreet and he was found out to be a source on MIAs.

Talking openly about MIAs is forbidden among the Vietnamese people. The local population is warned by K-20 not to talk to

foreigners about the MIAs or they will be punished. K-20 has asked everyone who has a foreigner come to visit in their neighborhood to report the contact.

In one case a man who responded to an newspaper ad that asked anyone who had information on MIAs to step forward and they would be rewarded. After the man stepped forward with the MIA remains, he had been keeping, he vanished (his reward) from his village (most likely taken away by K-20 to be re-educated).

In March 1994 a team came face to face with some live American prisoners. They provided this "sighting" information to DIA, who still holds the data classified.

So, it seems that the data you have presented to the public, is more, the way you would like things to be and not the way they really are.

END NOTE:

Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to Henry Lee in 1824, perhaps said it best when he warned against "those who fear and distrust the people, and wish to draw all powers from them into their own hands."

Sincerely,
Michael Van Atta
 Michael Van Atta



Wifred Burchett, known KGB agent, who covertly entered South Vietnam and had direct contact with American POWs, some who never returned.

This information service is designed to help President Clinton's appointees and other officials understand that there are unresolved problems of Americans who were captured alive and taken prisoner (POWs), but who were not released.

TELEPHONE SAVINGS PLAN

If I were to take out my wallet give you \$180.00 US dollars would you give me back \$15.00?

The Average American would take me up on this offer. So, why don't you call me and I will help sign you up. This is how it works: Let us say that you have a long distance telephone bill of \$60.00 per month and I can save you about 25% of that bill or \$15.00. If you save \$15.00 each month that is \$180.00 a year.

If I sign you up in this long distance savings program, I would ask that you contribute your first months savings to the POW Educational Fund, Inc. and help my organization raise funds to send teams to SE Asia to look for Americans who are missing there. This is our 1995 fund raising effort, so please participate. See enclosed enrollment form for details.

demanding to know our intentions.

We have been denied access to prisons (where MIAs were reported by guards, food service & medical treatment people, who drew maps & told us MIAs were in these prisons.) We have even found religious leaders who were released from prison in 1989, who said, when they were in prison, there were US MIAs with them, in 1989.

Most of the MIAs are dead, its a fact of life, but Henry Kissinger in 1973, General Vessey in 1987, General Wold in 1994 and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), all, have produced lists of several hundred Americans, who were alive, in captivity, who Vietnam's military, has not yet provided an individual answer as to what happened to them.

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The Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), a private group to which I belong and support, has taken on a project of collecting information on Vietnam's 300,000 MIAs. US veterans have given several hundred answers to Vietnam's vet groups about their MIAs. In exchange Vietnam's vet groups have only provided one ID card, for an American who was already accounted for.

A new hook by Malcolm McConnell, released in January 1995 called "Inside Hanoi's Secret Archive" reviews the information collected by a spy, Ted Schwitzer (who was signed up and paid by the DIA). Schwitzer cut a deal in 1992 to buy information from the Vietnamese Army on US MIAs. Thousands of dollars was paid to gain access and copy photos of, mostly dead GI's, killed in battles, photographed by Vietnam combat photographers. McConnell points out that US MIAs were killed (executed or tortured to death) by Hanoi's troops, in the heat and anger of war and yet Vietnam's military has withheld accounting for these very specific individuals. There are records withheld by Vietnam's military that tell of their demise. Hanoi must fear political humiliation, thus Vietnam has slowed or stopped resolution of some key MIA cases, where captivity occurred.

Many channels are open to Hanoi to use to solve these outstanding cases-in fact I am sending a team of US Doctors to Hanoi, in February 1995, to take medical treatments and knowledge to Vietnam's Doctors. It is time we improved relations with Vietnam and Hanoi officials have the opportunity and the responsibility to solve these old mysteries. I welcome Hanoi's cooperation on key discrepancy cases and policy changes that will allow solutions to be provided to old problems.

I am not angry with Vietnam, its people or its government as I understand some times, in the past, political differences have

much of its expertise. Failures in the screening process resulted in some of the new lieutenants the Company obtained, weren't as good quality. The "old guard" of officers were all transferred, their influence subsided. The loss of rugged screening and expertise through transfer occurred because everyone knew we were about to enter Vietnam and they depleted the Company of all its officers.

The problem was that some officers could not operate independently and were not good thinkers. Thus, problems began to surface in operations. Bearce, Blankenship, Giles and Randa were relieved by Creates, Price and Hamblin.

When he arrived in Vietnam, he put in three teams. They were put in the wrong place and subsequently became inundated due to monsoon flooding. They were told to return. The doctrine had been to E&E back individually. One team walked back intact. The second team was extracted by helicopter. The third team attempted to come back individually-three drowned (there was no enemy action), and one very bedraggled Marine walked back.

Bearce attempted to be the Officer-in-Charge of the advanced party going to Vietnam (after Wittingham's group).

All missions to North Vietnam were approved by the National Security Council and the boats were all driven originally by 3rd country nationals.

It was Operation STAR LIGHT (2-platoon detachment with 7th Marine Regiment). The Sub Unit took good people including riggers, SCUBA repair, divers, etc. Bearce hand-picked all the best people for the administration section. At the last minute, Bearce got orders to supply school.

In May 1965, Operation SILVER LANCE started off the coast of Vietnam. The Force Recon was in a separate Task Group and had written their own OpOrder

CONVERSATION WITH MAJOR L.V. BEARCE 30 NOV 1974

With the Vietnam war about 20 years behind us lets take a look at some WAR STORIES to see what went on:

1) In May 1972 the 3d BN of RVN Marines was holding at Dong Ha as the NVA

came down with a tank column towards the bridge. MACV told all American advisors to leave the area. Col. Turley happened to be in the area when the helicopters came to retrieve him, he asked to speak with DaNang and Saigon, but was told there was negative commo. So he and Capt. John Ripley (advisor to the RVN Marines) remained. The word came down from the RVN Marine CMC that the RVN Marines were to hold at Dong Ha until the last man and Turley and Ripley agreed to remain with them until the last man.

While Turley took over the 105s firing on the column, Ripley was setting charges on

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the Dong Ha bridge. He attempted to detonate with a battery from a jeep, but the battery was dead. While the tanks were now on the bridge, over him, he charged the charge. Meanwhile, while he was still working on the bridge, one of the RVN Marines on the other end was firing LAWs at the initial tank. The first few hounced off, but the 3d one wedged in the turret which was then firing off to its side, causing the turret to become frozen in place and making the tank unable to continue down the bridge. The tanks hacked off, giving time for Ripley to complete his re-wiring, which was successful and the bridge was blown, while Turley was decimating the advancing column of infantry with the 105s.

ANALYSIS: You can not manage the battle field from some remote command position because decision making-needs to be equipment given to the soldier. Generals can mass forces in a concentrated area, but after that, the best weapon they can equip a soldier with, at the point of contact, is cun-

ning ingenuity and the latitude to adapt-the will to win...

2) During the briefing with the Generals present, the Naval Gunfire Liaison officer was describing the shore bombardment and napalm drops, when it became apparent that the Force Recon team would still be present on the beach. When the Force representative objected, he was told, in front of all, that's just the way it is. The Force man continued, "We are Americans, we will be there, you will be kill us." The General interposed, "Well, maybe we can alter the schedule!"

ANALYSIS: There must be coordination between different functions, who are all planning to take actions in combat against the enemy, not independent of one another. Failure to coordinate results in friendly fire casualties.

3) The DZ (Drop Zone) for the Pathfinders was an open field one year previously and would have been perfect. Now, however, it was the built-up area containing the area occupied by a Cuban division. Nevertheless, the DZ would not be changed.

ANALYSIS: Generals who claim their decisions are better than intelligence provided & they have no responsibility to adjust actions to current intelligence, should not management wars. The only ones who can ignore intelligence and go on their instincts are the combatants adjusting to changes in battle.

4) Maj. Bearce had the EOD types and discovered they were to drop "butterfly bombs". He ascertained this from the Wing people. His mission was to seize and render ineffective for the Cubans the airfields. Yet, these areas were to be seeded with the butterfly bombs-used as anti-personnel devices, particularly in areas suitable for parachute DZs (they had three types of fuses: delay, anti-disturbance & contact). So they were

going to drop his men into an area seeded with these butterfly bombs.

ANALYSIS: There should be coordination of intelligence from actions already taken-an over all picture maintained and communicated to the field soldier. Big Picture may be compiled-held as a SECRETS they do not help the foot-soldier.

CONCLUSION:

The managers of the Vietnam war-Generals and Officers, act with the approval of elected leaders, are poorly prepared to save lives but well equipped to take them. Micro-management at the point of contact is an individual decision not made by Generals or planners, for which most individuals are ill prepared. The soldier must use their instinct and ingenuity to survive the deadly force directed at them and by them. Pentagon War Managers can assemble forces, intelligence, plans and decide what they want done, but implementing these plans requires education of the front line troops to act with the "will to win" (equipped with the proper attitude) and the "ability to win" (equipped with the best tools of the trade).

Give the authority to the soldier, once a plan is commanded to action. Teach your troops never to back down from a fight by give them the ability "to think" as they adjust to the changes in the battle field.

Dispatch 4 soldiers with these tools against an enemy force of 30, who do not have these tools and the 4 men will win.

Command decisions come with responsibilities and require that you as a leader, not simply go along with the official program. If intelligence surfaces that 236 American POWs are still alive, actions should be taken to recover them, without the fear of implication or political positioning. Some decisions, just need to be made & do not conform to policy.

(Continued on page 5)

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1/3/26 nor 1/3/26 reported any MIAs from that action. The entire area had been scoured thoroughly following the battle there on succeeding days, so this must have been someone placed there after that battle.)

OPENING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM

January 27, 1995

Stanley Roth OEOB, Director for Asia, NSC, Rm493

The White House, 1600 Pa. Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20506

Dear Stanley,

Please pass this note to Bill Clinton about his January 27th agreement with Hanoi to exchange diplomats at a low level with Vietnam. I have in place a group that wants to VOTE against Clinton called VAIL-Voters Against Incompetent Leadership. We are just average folks. Let me tell you why we are VOTING against Clinton. We have asked repeatedly to meet with Bill and have been denied entry because our views are non-conforming with the police of "keeping quiet" about the unaccounted for POWs who were alive at one point, in Hanoi's hands. Hanoi has not accounted for some very spe-

cific cases of capture. After repeated request for your office to provide a case by case explanation, on each case that is an outstanding discrepancy, our requests have been ignored. The group of Presidential advisors on the POW/MIAs is holding from public view, these cases of captivity and an explanation on what happened to each individual.

As a humanitarian, I must point out some problems in Mr. Clinton's decision about how the MIA issue should be pushed aside to open a US Embassy in Hanoi.

Free and open access to anywhere one wants to go in Vietnam to help resolve the MIA question does not exist. I have sent 14-teams of veterans, MIA families, former POWs and just average US citizens back to Vietnam in the last two years, to help resolve the MIA question, because Do Mai signed a memorandum inviting us to come and help.

What we found was that local officials stopped anyone who talked to us and questioned them-in some cases impounding their cars. We were turned away, by police, from villages where their were very young Amer-Asian children, we were told we must leave the area immediately or face arrest. Knocking on our door in the middle of the night, we were interrogated by local Party Officials,

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use and could hold three people; the other, 20 meters east of the fighting hole, could accommodate 8-10 and also showed signs of recent use (Debrief of Recon Patrol 24-67). The Marines, arriving late with insufficient time to check out their harbor area, may have encamped right in the midst of an enemy harbor area without knowing it! The two areas of flattened grass, extremely well camouflaged, were only a short way from the patrol that night.

A/1/26 arrived on the scene to assist the search of the area and the trail towards Lang Kat (1). By 1745H, A/1/26 had completed a search of the area, as well as Lang Kat (1) and (2) at XD904394 and XD909395, finding them to have been uninhabited for at least two months. (3rdMarDiv COC 051430Z, OPN Crockett SitRep #93) In addition to the cracked dental plate at XD903400, blood-stained leaves were at XD903500, all of which was forwarded to NSA, DaNang, to determine if it were type "AB", Ibanez's blood type. (3rdMarDiv 061150Z/June67 Open Crockett SitRep #94)

After the search with A/1/26, everyone returned to KSCB and the rumor mill began to spew out everyone's version of "what happened", some quite bizarre. One said that Ibanez was not really a Philippino as everyone thought; he was a Vietnamese double agent! Others said he was a spy. Some, not believing anyone could sneak up and grab him without making a tremendous racket and others would certainly hear, together with hearsay statements that Ibanez had said he was going to defect and join the North Vietnamese, felt he defected. Some said he worked for the CIA and this was a way of "inserting" him into the area. Some felt a tiger had dragged him away.

The pain of these things is always forever. In 1986, Al Lumpkin states, "It always has been on my mind. They could have

gotten any one of us. . God bless him. I hope...it wasn't too bad for him." Another Marine on that patrol, John Franklin also in 1986: "I've had something just eating me to death the last twenty years. It was real scary...The surroundings were so strange and left so many questions unanswered...Why, if the 'hungries' took him from us that night, why didn't they kill us all? Why did he get up and walk out without telling anyone? How come there's no Casualty Card on him at the library of the Marine Corps History Center? How did he become listed as 'KIA' since dead or alive 'they've' got him!."

About a month later, a body was found. It was not that of Di Ibanez (since he is still listed as MIA in the directory for the Vietnam Memorial Wall in DC)..but who is he?

In the Hill 689 area on 13 July 1967 at 1000H, K/3/26 at XD804408 found a harbor site used by an estimated twenty enemy soldiers. Also found was part of a USMC utility uniform covered with flies. Odor in the area indicated a dead body, but none was found. Further search of the area revealed empty ChiCom ammunition cans and tunnels cut into brush. The tunnel floor was matted. At 1245H, Co K/3/26 reported finding the remains of one Marine body at XD804408, estimated to be 15 days old. ID unknown. Body was 6'1" tall and approximately 180 pounds in weight. Body decapitated and right arm missing. US propaganda, two M-14 magazines and ammunition, two M-26 grenades, one compass and one cartridge belt with one canteen was found on or in the vicinity of the body. The area was further searched and the head located near the body, but no evidence of the right arm or weapon was found. (26Mar 131105Z/Jul67 OPN Crockett SitRep #245. NOTE: the 2 MIA from CAC at Hill 689 from the skirmish there of 27 June 1967 were recovered. Neither

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Project: Unauthorized Entry

The Live POW Lobby of America sponsors trips back to Vietnam and Laos to look for the Americans who were captured alive but not released. We provide maps and put you with a team of searchers in an area where there are of live sighting reports. You stay in a hotel at night but search for POWs during the day. We have a search team advisory group that will help you with every detail. We have sent 16 teams in the last 2 years into Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Russia, and Cuba.

Ever thought of going to look for the live POWs?

Call us today, because you can help.

A two week trip costs about \$3500.

CONTACT

Michael Van Atta, Chairman
The Live POW Lobby of America
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CONVERSATION WITH MAJOR L.V. BEARCE 2 DEC 1974

Upon leaving, Bearce was to brief FMFPAC, but the J-52 types didn't like that and kept him in Saigon for several days to clear this. Eventually they gave permission. When he got to Hawaii Col. Grove wanted a briefing. Col. Grove told him that he knew about NAD operations, but Bearce said nothing. Col. Grove then made the classic statement, "I'm gonna have you court-marshaled because I'm telling you things no one is supposed to hear!" Bearce kept showing him the Security Termination Statement threatening-\$10,000

fine.

Finally, approval was given to brief Col. Axtel. Bearce had to get into uniform-he hadn't been wearing a uniform since he went to Vietnam. He thought he was now a Captain since he had received a plain government envelope with Captain's bars and a note: "Congratulations R.R. DICKY". That's all he had. So he put on the Captain bars, but needed one more for his cover, Unfortunately, the PX was out of them, so he purchased 2-2nd Lt. bars and carefully put them together so they appeared like a Captain's.

On 8 DEC 1974 Bearce committed suicide by shooting an SKS into his mouth-his home was full of guests at a dinner he set up-he went to dinner & shot him self. The man who started the Vietnam war on August 2, 1964 was dead.

The Disappearance of Di R. Ibanez (MIA)

Di R. Ibanez was quick as a cat, he had a black belt in Karate and was always in motion. A platoon from Co. A, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, had lost quite a few Marines once they arrived in the Khe Sanh area. Sgt. Adams, the platoon's E-6, was wounded and sent home. The patrols were almost always hair-raising, fearsome experiences, with almost as much time in Laos as in Viet Nam. Sent to Okinawa to integrate new replacements, Ibanez among them, the training was cut short due to the Hill Battles at Khe Sanh.

This loss of training time in the hills and jungles of the Northern Training Area (NTA) of Okinawa was a significant loss for Sgt. Ibanez, although he could answer almost any question with a book-type answer concerning Marine tactics, he lacked practical experience. He really was not good in the field. He was unable to do what he could teach by the manual. Nevertheless, he was in top physical condition, knew everything, was alert, a good Marine and it seemed like everyone got along well with him.

It was now early June, 1967 and everyone was back in Khe Sanh. Two different patrols, one led by Sgt. Gary D. Trowbridge, the other by Sgt. Albert

(Continued on page 6)

R. Lumpkin, 4A1 and 4A2 were to be inserted together, then split off into respective RZ (Recon Zone). Ibanez--this being his first recon combat patrol--was part of the patrol.

Everyone was assigned their particular gear. Ibanez was given a claymore mine, used to secure positions at night or any other time the team harbored.

Sgt. Ibanez was not satisfied: "He liked to carry a gas mask bag full of grenades with him because you wouldn't give your position away at night by throwing a grenade. He carries a bag with about 25 frags in it," said John Franklin. Sgt. Lumpkin objected; although he was in excellent physical shape, it was still too much weight and Lumpkin feared that if he became fatigued, he would pawn off the grenades on the other members of the patrol. Ibanez insisted and assuring Lumpkin that he would carry the grenades until the end of the patrol, so he was permitted to do so.

Other gear carried by the Marines in the patrol included four PRC-25 radios, two 7X10 field glasses, six Claymore mines, ten CS grenades, two M79 grenade launchers, two shotguns, one .45 caliber grease gun and two M-14 rifles. The mission of the 17-men patrol: "...to find a company size HLZ and a suitable area for battalion-size command post in the vicinity of LL XD8934 and UR XD9137." (26MAR, Debrief of Recon Patrol 24-67 in 3dReconBn ComdC JUN67; "LL" refers to the corner of the box "lower left", while "UR" refers to "upper right".)

The two team patrol was inserted at their IP (Insertion Point), XD885399, the top of a hill along Route 9. (3dMarDiv COC 040825Z/Jun67, OPN CROCKETT SITREP #88)

Sgt. Lumpkin felt uneasy. It was, by now, becoming quite late (insertion was at 1645H), much later than recon teams usually insert, not allowing much time to determine if

they had been spotted during their insertion or to move off to a different location to harbor for the night. If any enemy force had heard the commotion from the trucks and spotted the Marines without helmets and flak jackets, they would know it was a lucrative target to attack, a small recon team.

Some Willy Peter rounds were called; the teams were sure of their location. The two teams moved a short distance to a location along a small cliff overlooking a river, a place they could protect and set in for the night, people dispersed in a 360.

Sgt. Lumpkin noticed Ibanez nervously moving his gear and himself here and there and on several occasions, walked over to order him to settle down and remain in one spot. "Earlier he seemed to be having a little bit of trouble adjusting (his gear). I'm sure he was scared, being his first patrol." said Sgt. Lumpkin. Finally he set up the claymore and set in for the evening.

Meanwhile, it had begun to rain. "It was just an absolute downpour. You almost couldn't see your hand in front of your face. And of course that particular time it did start getting dark." The jungle at night was a matter of COMPLETE DARKNESS!

Trowbridge and Lumpkin whispered with each other, planning the next day's activities. Then, in that absolute darkness, it happened.

As the night progressed--again, it was just pouring, pouring down rain, and I forgot what time it was. But just out of the clear blue, I heard something, and it's almost right next to me and then I feel someone touch my foot. It is Corporal Mark M. Hughes, one of the other people on my team that was on that patrol with us. And he whispers to me that while he was on watch or during his watch he had heard what he thought was a noise. And in trying to describe the noise he thought it sounded as though someone had

been hit or punched in the stomach...over in the area where Ibanez was. And he had called over to make sure Ibanez was still there, and Ibanez was not there at that time.

Sgt. Lumpkin sent Cpl. Hughes back and assumed Ibanez had perhaps left his position to relieve himself or to check out a suspicious noise.

Later, Cpl. Hughes again attempted to contact Ibanez, to tell him it was his turn to stand watch. He still was not there. After being informed, Sgt. Lumpkin crawled over to where Ibanez was to be; he was not there. Recon at night, of course, uses no flashlights or other light, so he began groping around in the total darkness and eventually located Ibanez's rifle and gear including the pouch of grenades.

I went back and told Trowbridge about it and I guess we were both rather stupefied..., in a quandary on what to do. We didn't feel it was necessary to call back to the command post...cause there was nothing they could do at the time. We figured the best thing to do...is wait to first light and then get everybody set and find out what's going on at first light which really at that time wasn't that long a period away--maybe an hour.

At first light, Sgts. Lumpkin and Trowbridge examined the area. Ibanez's gear was there. The grenades were there. The Claymore magneto was there. Mysteriously, his rifle was also there with the safety selector on "automatic", something very odd since recon Marines always had their rifles on "Safe" being able to flick the selector rapidly and noiselessly (unlike the noisy AK-47 switch) if necessary. The claymore had been turned around to explode TOWARDS the recon team, according to Tom Franklin. The patrol members examined the immediate area and checked with each other if anyone else heard anything. No one had. Neither LCPL George W. Hee nor LCPL Craig C. Kuhlenheck, actually over at the cliff near the river, had heard anything. Of course, as Lumpkin notes, "It was very difficult to hear anything because how heavy it was raining." They then called back to the base, reporting that the assistant patrol leader was missing as of 0500H. (3rMarDiv COC 051228Z/Jun67, OPN Crocket SitRep #92)

THE INSIDER newsletter started publication in January 1982 and is written by a group of current and former intelligence officers who set up an educational fund to provide government officials and the general public with hard, factual proof that Americans were captured alive, in war, who were not released. The group publishes a monthly newsletter called THE INSIDER that reviews CIA documents, interviews intelligence officers, provides insight through analytical review of Prisoners of War sightings and discrepancy cases of captives who were not released. THE INSIDER is available in hard copy format on a subscription basis at \$24.00 for 12 issues; or using personal computers via phone modem on the military affairs section on COMPUSERVE, the POW Computer Network and the National Forget-Me-Not Association Computer Network. For a hard copy subscription, write to:

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A million things right then went through my mind. To be honest with you, I didn't know what to think at that particular point. Obviously I knew what it was. He wasn't there. Here's his teeth, his blood all over them. There's the drag marks. Somebody got him. An extreme chill at that point went through me--thinking that they--. Who were they or whatever was that close all night, why didn't they take the rest of us or why they didn't try for the rest of us.

Perhaps he had heard something and felt confident he could handle it with his own Karate-trained hands. It had been instilled into everyone in recon not to fire a weapon except as a last resort since it disclosed one's position to the enemy. Usually, grenades are thrown, but Ibanez hadn't even done that.

A further search of the area revealed two harbor sites, probably used by the enemy. One fighting hole, 50 meters east of the patrol's harbor site, showed signs of recent

This information service is designed to help President Clinton's appointees and other officials understand that there are unresolved problems of Americans who were captured alive and taken prisoner (POWs), but who were not released.