

TALKING POINTS FOR SECOND INFORMATION RESEARCH MEETING

MARCH 1991

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

We welcome this opportunity to meet again with our Information Research and VNOSMP colleagues for expanded discussions on this important issue, incorporating the various avenues which we believe can contribute most productively to achieving shared objectives.

Though previously associated with the JCRC, I am now the Principal Advisor to the Secretary of Defense on POW/MIA matters. I work for RADM McDevitt who led the US Information Research Team in January.

What we'd like to do in this first session is to review the points of agreement and key issues raised during the first Information/Research Team meeting and propose a course of action that will allow us to get on with the practical matters of locating necessary case specific documentation, comparing notes on research methods and sharing information which hopefully, will lead to resolving cases. We also plan to show some examples of cases that illustrate the need for pursuing information/research as the next logical step. As you will see, some are compelling evidence cases.

We'd also like to propose some research ideas that, if pursued, are sure can help resolve cases--particularly discrepancy cases. In the latter two days, LTC Harvey and LTC Webb will further discuss the assessment of iterations 1-13, preliminary planning for the fourteenth iteration, report on U.S. identification efforts and further assistance necessary, JCRC activities from 1973-75 as well as other technical issues.

PROGRESS SO FAR

Let me reiterate what General Vessey said in his most recent letter to Minister Thach. We were pleased with the manner in which the first meeting between the US and the Vietnamese Information/Research Teams took place.

Your team indicated an understanding of the issues and a willingness to be helpful in identifying information that could contribute to the resolution of individual cases.

Some of your team members -- Colonel Tran Bien, for example -- have been active in recent joint investigations. This is an important and encouraging sign.

I must reiterate that we believe there are a lot of ways to address some of the outstanding, unanswered questions regarding the fate of American servicemen lost in action in Vietnam. Some of these involve excavating sites. We have done that for ten years now. Although we have had only marginal success in these excavations, we feel that in some cases, they can be an extremely useful way to conclude unilateral or joint investigations.

Other ways include delving into memories in an organized manner, and unlocking material -- wartime records -- with the aim of providing information that would have a direct bearing on individual cases.

Our first meeting emphasized the importance of finding sources of information and applying them to specific cases.

We have begun that process. We have also found that some of these cases--compelling evidence cases--that have the most unanswered questions and hence the most family/American public concern are clearly cases requiring an intensified search for relevant information.

LTC Harvey will provide our government's assessment of these cases specifically in the sessions later this week. We have taken the initial incident information and any further evidence obtained the results of our joint investigations and utilized the categorization process which focuses on further action required either unilateral or joint. We feel this process is a key element in measuring progress to resolve cases.

We have applied this process on a case by case basis with a review by senior officials of our Department of Defense, State and National Security Council.

We are satisfied that this categorization process, based on information research, joint and unilateral actions, and sharing of information will realistically move cases into areas that could lead to rapid resolution in many instances. The priority will continue to be what we call discrepancy cases or compelling evidence cases; however, as you know; our objective is to account as fully as possible for all missing Americans.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

We have seen that there is a natural point at which the work of the Information Research Teams could contribute significantly to technical planning, and have proposed that these teams meet in conjunction with the JCRC and the VNOSMP sessions on technical matters. This session and the follow-on technical meeting demonstrate this point.

We would also like to see sufficient flexibility to allow the Information Research Teams to convene in separate sessions as

the need arises for discussion unique to their focus, such as access to pertinent data on prison camp or detention facilities, as well as categories of POW/MIA related information.

We want to be clear about what we are seeking from the information/research effort:

- Your government's cooperation in providing case-specific, and issue related historical documentation and records which would rapidly expand results in resolving cases.
- Familiarity with the cases planned for upcoming joint activity and the information required to help resolve such cases.
- forthcomingness in their interaction and dialogue.
- willingness to exchanges information that is missing from each other's respective files or to correct any misunderstandings on either side.

The Information Research Teams should be able to sit down and discuss specifics on an expert-to-expert basis. This might require both teams to break into small groups to focus intensively on specific areas or individual cases.

The Vietnamese team members should be helpful in thinking through and volunteering means of identifying potential sources of information. Each side needs to be able to explore alternatives, to speak frankly about what is known, and ask direct questions about the other side's knowledge. That will require sustained attention to this issue by the specialists identified as team members during the January meetings.

We would like to invite the team and Mr. Bai to JCRC and CILHI for an on-site orientation in mid-1991. Clearly, we need a way to nurture detailed knowledge on the part of those newer to the issue who are members of the Vietnamese Information Research Team. We hope we will be able to sustain contacts and are open to any suggestions from your team on this matter.

EXCHANGING IDEAS

During the January session we raised several questions regarding the work of the institutions to which the members of your team specifically belong. We hope you will be able to answer these during our discussions tomorrow. We believe this will help ensure a common understanding of the contributions which the Joint Information/Research teams can make in resolving cases.

We have considerable interest in learning the manner in which the various ministries and institutes contributing members to your Information Research Team will facilitate this work. You

have made the leadership of the team clear to us, and we would hope you will elucidate the division of labor and responsibilities in detail.

As we mentioned in January, we have a basic understanding of what system your military utilized in handling captured Americans and incidents involving American personnel regarding collection of information and remains. Many of our views regarding the manner in which cases could be resolved, and the views we have about what kind of information is necessary to contribute to resolving cases, are based on our knowledge of that system.

We are looking forward to your presentation tomorrow. We will be especially interested in hearing what you have to say about the elements of the General Political Directorate. Based on the information we presented to you in January, we believe that this Directorate had significant responsibility for compiling records concerning Americans who were captured or killed. Those records, or the knowledge of former officials and cadres employed by that Directorate, could be extremely useful in efforts to resolve individual cases.

We particularly are interested in learning more about the roles of the Enemy Proselytizing Department, the Institute of Military History, Group 875, the various central, regional, provincial and unit military museums, and the Department of Military Justice, as they pertain to the POW/MIA issue and efforts to resolve individual cases.

We would also like to suggest three general areas of future information research for your consideration and comment. We believe that with your help in solving these information questions, we could take important strides toward resolving many cases. Our DIA analysts will make short presentations on each of these matters following the conclusion of my points, will identify the specific types of information we seek and explain how we believe such information will contribute to case resolution.

Specifically, we have a very definite understanding of how captured American servicemen were registered, placed in the custody of higher echelons, how transfers to superior level entities were effected, and the formalities and paperwork that were required to place a captured American in a particular detention facility. We laid this out for you during the January meeting.

We need your input to refine that understanding in comparison to the assumptions we make regarding resolution of specific cases.

Answers to the questions posed in January on the process of handling American servicemen should provide us with a better

sense of how the information/research teams can best contribute to resolving the issue.

At the January meeting, we also asked questions regarding the research undertaken by the Institute of Military History. A cursory examination of publications and histories suggests that these basic studies can be very helpful in clarifying events surrounding specific incidents of loss, if only in a tangential manner.

Finally, we will describe for you the general shape of our knowledge regarding what museum holdings and exhibits could bear on the issue of missing Americans. We hope that you will be able to respond in a way that will clarify our understanding of the extent to which important information is or might be contained in such holdings.

Basically, it is essential to us that we explore all possibilities. If even the smallest shred of evidence related to missing Americans exists in museums, it would be important to explore the value of that evidence. The potential of such isolated and seemingly minor items in the overall chain of evidence should not be underestimated. We strongly encourage government-to-government cooperation in exploring this potentially valuable source of information.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION THAT IS APPLICABLE TO CASES

In more specific terms, certain units in your forces should have extremely valuable information that we can apply to specific cases.

For example, Group 559 of the General Rear Services Department administered the transportation, communications, and logistical network that made up the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Group 559 helped move all U.S. POWs captured in B.1, B.3, B.4, and B.5 Fronts as well as southern Laos, to northern Vietnam.

Group 559 collected information about Americans who were killed in combat and air operations in Laos, or died in Laos while in route to North Vietnam, and reported that information to the PAVN High Command in Hanoi.

Also, Group 559 had part of the responsibility to move all reports and material concerning Americans who were captured or killed in all of the regions noted above, as well as B.2 Front and Cambodia, to the General Headquarters in Hanoi.

The records and former cadre, officers, and enlisted personnel of Group 559 could provide important help in our efforts to resolve cases in each of these regions. We understand that

Group 559 has a museum and an extensive archive in the Hanoi area.

U.S. units used a similar procedure in both Vietnam and the recent war in the Middle East that provided a specific accounting for prisoners as they were moved from capture location to detention location. LTC Harvey will address this in specific cases during the technical meeting.

Similarly, many cases in 1967-69 happened in contested areas in the western regions of Thua Thien and Quang Tri Provinces, in the areas in and around the A Shau Valley and south of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, in your B.4 Front, also called Military Region Tri-Thien-Hue.

Many of these air and ground losses occurred under similar circumstances and relatively close to each other. For those reasons, we suggest that our joint teams follow a coordinated geographic approach to these cases. Information/Research necessarily will be an important element for many of these cases.

We believe that the records and former cadre, officers, and enlisted personnel of B.4 Front Command and Military Region Tri-Thien-Hue, as well as the individual PAVN units that operated in this area could provide useful information about the U.S. losses in this area.

We believe that specific unit histories and journals of these units could reveal gravesites, capture incident descriptions or specific name associations that could resolve some of these cases, particularly the compelling evidence cases.

Again, LTC Harvey will address specific cases, and since these are largely discrepancy cases grouped in a specific geographic region, it might be useful to look at these as an area where coordination and logistics might be consolidated for the best utilization of time.

CONCLUSION

We were pleased with the first steps toward interaction between the US and the Vietnamese Information Teams. I anticipate we will have reason to provide another encouraging report to the Interagency Group in Washington on the basis of our discussions today and tomorrow.

As I have said, success will require sustained attention to this issue by the specialists identified as team members during the January meeting.

We will study your responses to our questions on museum holdings, on the processes by which POW/MIAs were handled within PAVN, by PAVN units in western Thua Thien province and on the possible contribution individual history institutes can make to our process.

Many of our views regarding the manner in which cases could be resolved, and the kind of information necessary to contribute to resolving cases, are based on our knowledge of your system. This is obviously a point at which your government could contribute in a positive and proactive manner to resolving this issue.

We look forward to hearing your response tomorrow.

DIA INFORMATION RESEARCH TALKING POINTS

Good morning/afternoon, we are pleased to have the opportunity to talk with you once again, and we are all eager to hear your upcoming presentations.

First, however, as Colonel Jordan has said, we would like to offer four joint research proposals. The first focuses on the issue of museums and the role of elements of the General Political Directorate in compiling records concerning Americans who were captured or killed.

The second relates to cases in which one member of the incident was captured and the other is still missing.

The third research proposal concerns research in the Military Region 4 archives, which we understand has already commenced.

The last proposal focuses on two cases in which your government has returned the remains of one man in the incident but the second man is still unaccounted for.

Joint Research Proposal #1

Case 0105: Major Marvin N. Lindsey's RF-101C was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed in Son La Province on 29 June 1965. His wingman believed Major Lindsey ejected and parachuted to the ground.

Joint Investigations: Joint teams investigated this incident three times:

October 1988: A document in the province museum suggested Major Lindsey was captured. The team could not confirm the reported death of Major Lindsey, the crash site or the grave.

January 1989: Witnesses said Major Lindsey was killed and was buried nearby. Witnesses said PAVN troops photographed major Lindsey's body and took his uniform, documents, and equipment. the province museum supplied a photo. We could not confirm the identity of the person in photo. The team could not confirm the crash site or find the grave.

February 1990: Witnesses said the province military command sent Major Lindsey's uniform, documents, and equipment to the North West region military command. The team could not confirm the crash site or find his grave.

Other Facts: A member of the staff of the province archive and museum, who left Vietnam, said he helped prepare records for each American who was killed or captured in Son La Province.

The records were carefully indexed and included photos, witness statements, and other details.

Various military commands received information about each incident. Also, some items concerning most incidents were sent to the Central Army Museum in Hanoi.

The member of the staff of the province archive and museum, who left Vietnam, said the Army Museum was under the General Political Directorate, had direct control over Province Museums, and could obtain all information and artifacts related to any given case. Other sources confirm this information.

The Institute for Military History has apparently worked very hard and very successfully to compile a record of the war and military histories of all elements of the Vietnamese Armed Forces.

The Institute, under the General Political Directorate, can gain access to all archives in the Armed Forces. Many military archives contain some information about Americans killed in the war. Those elements included the Enemy Proselyting Department, the Department of Military Justice, and Group 875.

Group 875 is particularly important for our research work. Group 875 helped recover remains of Americans from areas throughout Southeast Asia, beginning in about 1970, including Son La Province, where Major Lindsey's incident occurred.

In view of the facts outlined above, we believe our joint Research/Information Group can find information in the files of Group 875 and other elements of the General Political Directorate that could lead to an early resolution of this case and likely others.

Recommendation: Request your research team provide access to or relevant extracts from the important files cited above. Also request that you use this case to illustrate how the various archives are related to each other.

Joint Research Proposal #2

Several of our unresolved discrepancy cases relate to two-men incidents in which one man is still unaccounted for and the second man was captured, held in Vietnamese prison camps and subsequently repatriated. In many of these cases, we have not yet been able to determine the fate of the missing man. In some other cases, we have confirmed the fate of the missing man, but his remains have not yet been repatriated.

During their capture and evacuation, many of our returned POWs observed that their Vietnamese captors were also collecting a great deal of information on the other Americans involved in the same incident.

We believe valuable information of this sort may be contained in files maintained on our returned POWs. Our interest is limited to information that would help us resolve cases, particularly data describing the location and circumstances of loss, the fate of those missing and, if deceased, the disposition of their remains.

We believe the information in these files might also aid us in identifying relevant witnesses who could help resolve these cases.

Request the Vietnamese Information/Research Team provide access to or relevant extracts from these important files. We believe that information on the following cases should be readily available:

- Case 0213 (MIMS): The returnee in this case is Capt. Robert d. Jeffery. Information in Capt Jeffery's files should help us locate the crashsite and also reveal information on the fate of 1st George I. Mims.
- Case 0678 (Ashlock): The returnee in this case is LCPL Jose Agosto-Santos, who was released in January 1968. LCPL Agosto-Santos' files should contain valuable information on the capture and the fate of LCPL Carlos Ashlock.
- Case 0804 (Sittner): The returnee in this case is Capt. Larry E. Carrigan information in Maj Tyler's file should help us document Capt Ronald N. Sittner's fate and his incident location.
- Case 0805 (Lane): The returnee in this case Larry E. Carrigan. Information in Capt Carrigan's file should help us document the fate and loss circumstances of 1st Lt. Charles Lane, Jr. We have collected sufficient information to confirm that one of the the two individuals involved in cases 0804 and 0805 was killed in the incident. We believed that information in Major Tyler's and Capt Carrigan's files will clarify our understanding of both cases.
- Case 1327 (Cuthbert): The returnee in the case is Capt Mark J. Ruhling. Information in Capt Ruhling's file should help us identify an incident location for this loss, something we have not yet accomplished during two separate Joint Investigations. Data in this file should also yield information that would help us determine Capt. Bradely g. Cuthbert's fate.
- Case 1982 (Hall): The returnee in this case is LCDR Phillip Kientzler. We believe LCDR Kientzler's file will contain information on LCDR Harly H. Hall's fate, about which there are still several unanswered questions.

Joint Research Proposal #3

As Col Jordan indicated in his introduction, we were very pleased to hear that the Vietnamese information team was active during Iteration 13.

During our investigation on four cases--0641 (O'Grady), 0826 (Moore), 1329 (Morrison) and Francisco) and 0859 (Derrickson and Hardy)--we were informed that relevant records had been located in the Air Defense Archives of Military Region 4.

Although the Joint Teams were provided fragmentary details from these records, time constraints unfortunately prevented a more thorough examination of these potentially valuable documents.

Request the Vietnamese information Team share with us the results of this research.

The following cases may be relevant:

- Case 0641 (O'Grady). As Colonel Harvey will indicate in his assessment of the 13th iteration, during the Joint Investigation the team acquired hearsay information that Maj John F. O'Grady died in his incident. We believe that independent corroboration in the form of original documents on this case may result in sufficient evidence to confirm Maj O'Grady's death. We also believe these documents may contain information critical to the recovery of his remains.
- Case 0826 (Moore). Colonel Harvey will also report that while the joint team collected information suggesting that Capt Herbert W. Moore died in his incident, additional evidence is needed to corroborate this information. We believe that documentary evidence said to have been located in military region 4 archives may provide sufficient corroboration to confirm Capt Moore's fate. It may also contain valuable information that could lead to the repatriation of his remains.
- Case 1329 (Francisco and Morrison). Finally, members of the joint investigation team were informed that military region 4 archives noted that case 1329 downing and identified the two pilots as a major and a 1st Lieutenant. Although this case has been investigated during two iterations, this is the first and only information we have acquired relating to 1st Lt San D. Francisco and Maj Joseph C. Morrison. We hope that your research will help move this stalled investigation forward.

Case 0859: (Derrickson and Hardy). During the 13th Iteration the joint team interviewed four eyewitnesses in Son Thuy Village who provided information possibly correlating to this case. A copy of the document from the

MR-4 Air Defense Archives pertaining to this case would reveal important information on this case.

- In addition to the three cases mentioned above, we believe research into Military Region 4 archives will also provide information on the following cases: 0453 (Tatum); 0727 (Apodaca); 0761 (Dove and Squire); 0859 (Hardy and Derrickson); 0903 (Morgan); 0904 (Crew and Cook); 0928 (Brennan and Condit); 1234 (Greiling); 1327 (Cuthbert); 1388 (Bruchher); 1843 (Wiles).

Joint Research Proposal #4

In two of our unresolved cases, your government has repatriated the remains of one member of the incident, but the other members case is still unresolved.

In both of these cases, interviews at the locale have not produced viable answers. It is our hope that records research could clear up much of the confusion in these cases and lead to early resolution.

In three cases investigated to date -- 0349 Steen; 0691 Patterson; and 1882 McCarty -- the VNOSMP has provided copies of reports of SRV efforts to recover remains in 1972-74.

The information in each of these reports has been critical to the investigation of these cases, particularly those elements that identified the precise location of the incident and described the circumstances of the original burial.

In case 0691, the only one of these cases involving more than one man, the report also contained information on the fate of the other American, who is a returned POW.

We believe that similar reports on the unilateral recoveries of the remains of 1st LT Jon T. Busch (case 0727) and 1st LT Charles Huneycutt (case 0903) may also contain information relevant to the investigation of the other Americans involved in each of these cases.

Request the Vietnamese Information/Research Team provide access to or original extracts from reports on the unilateral SRV recoveries of the following individuals:

- 1st Lt Jon T. Busch (case 0727). 1st LT Busch's remains were repatriated in July 1988. Reports on the original recovery effort may contain important information that would confirm the location of the crashsite and the fate of 1st LT Bush's fellow crewmember, Capt Victor J. Apodaca. We believe the recovery probably took place in Quang Binh Province.

- 1st LT Charles J. Huneycutt, Jr. (case 0903). 1st Lt Huneycutt's remains were repatriated in November 1988. Reports on the original recovery effort may contain information relating to the fate of the other crewmembers, Major James S. Morgan. We believe this recovery also took place in Quang Binh Province.

Attached are separate data sheets on each of the above cases.

CONCLUDING REMARKS FOR TECHNICAL MEETING (COL. JORDAN)

A. Much has been discussed during this meeting. This paper which I would like to give you provides a summary of our team's presentations. As we conclude this meeting, I would like to make a few observations. It is obvious that we have differences with regard to what has been learned during the past thirteen iterations.

B. I hope these differences, however, will not thwart progress. Our Government is convinced that further progress can be made in resolving the discrepancy cases. Their resolution will require an extensive research effort and, quite possibly, several technical changes before the teams can proceed to the field. We can achieve progress in resolving a number of nearby cases by employing a systematic, geographic approach consisting of a combination of investigative, survey, and recovery activities. As with the discrepancy cases, prior research and technical planning will be necessary to ensure success as we embark on this effort starting first in Quang Binh, if you agree.

C. During this meeting, we gave you our preliminary views on how we can conduct these activities. We're hopeful that you will share your views and the results of your advance research during the next technical meeting which will follow General Vessey's and Minister Thach's meeting.

D. Finally, General Vessey and Senior IAG members asked me to convey to you that they are looking forward to meeting and hope that our information/ research and technical discussions this week will be productive in terms of outlining the views which General Vessey, the IAG, and other senior members within our government have as far as what has been learned and what our next steps should be.