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ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

ROUTINE

R 130102Z DEC 93 ZYB PSN 040080P12

FM CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J2//

TO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP:RSA//

INFO WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASH DC
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THIS IS A 3 PART MSG COLLATED BY MDU
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SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, NGUYEN HUY CHUONG//

REF/A/FAX/JTF-FA DET 2/12DEC93/NOTAL//

AMPN/SUBJ: ENTRY NUMBER 37, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS//
THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE IS A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTION OF AN ORAL HISTORY
PROJECT FIELD REPORT//

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 9 NOVEMBER 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED LIEUTENANT
GENERAL (LTG) NGUYEN HUY CHUONG, A 67 YOA DANANG CITY RESIDENT.
LTG CHUONG IS CURRENTLY VICE COMMANDER OF MILITARY REGION 5
(MR5). THE TEAM MET AT THE SONG HAN HOTEL, DANANG CITY TO
INTERVIEW LTG CHUONG, LISTED IN REFERENCE AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE
OF INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION IN
VIETNAM. THE U.S. CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF MR. [redacted]
[redacted], DET 2, JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING (JTF-FA)
CASUALTY RESOLUTION SPECIALIST; TSGT [redacted], JTF-FA ORAL
HISTORY PROGRAM COORDINATOR; PO2 [redacted], JTF-FA

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ANALYST/LINGUIST; AND SSGT [redacted], DET 2 ANALYST/LINGUIST. THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF COL LE KY, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; MR. NGUYEN VAN THANG LOI, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR; AND MR. VO XUAN, QUANG NAM - DANANG PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVE. LTG CHUONG HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM BEFORE.

2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, LTG NGUYEN HUY CHUONG, PROVIDED LIMITED INFORMATION CONCERNING INCIDENTS IN WHICH U.S. PERSONNEL WERE TAKEN PRISONER OR LOST IN BATTLE. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY LTG CHUONG POSSIBLY CORRELATES TO CASES 1167, 1171, AND 0728. LTG CHUONG PROVIDED THE TEAM WITH PAVN SECOND DIVISION POLICIES CONCERNING PW HANDLING AND REPORTING. HE ALSO SUMMARIZED PAVN EFFORTS MADE AFTER THE WAR TO RECOVER THEIR OWN MISSING. LTG CHUONG CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PW'S OR "STAY BEHINDS" IN VIETNAM AFTER 1973.

3. DETAILS. AFTER FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS, COL LE KY AND MR. FLANAGAN EXPLAINED THE JOINT TEAM'S MISSION AND INVITED LTG NGUYEN HUY CHUONG (NGUYEENX HUY CHWONG) TO SHARE HIS WARTIME EXPERIENCES RELATING TO U.S. LOSS INCIDENTS AND PRISONERS OF WAR (PW) WITH THE JOINT TEAM. LTG CHUONG PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

A. LTG CHUONG BEGAN THE WAR AS A REGIMENTAL COMMANDER SUBORDINATE TO THE QUANG NGAI PROVINCE MILITARY COMMAND. FOLLOWING HIS TOUR AS REGIMENTAL COMMANDER HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO QUANG NGAI PROVINCE MILITARY HEADQUARTERS AND BY 1965 WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM (PAVN) SECOND DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, WHERE HE REMAINED UNTIL APPROXIMATELY 1973. FOLLOWING THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO MILITARY REGION 5 (MR5) HEADQUARTERS. LTG CHUONG IS CURRENTLY VICE COMMANDER OF MR5.

B. HE PROVIDED THE TEAM WITH THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES OF INCIDENTS IN WHICH THE U.S. BOMBED A BATTLE AREA WITHOUT FIRST EXTRACTING CORPSES STILL ON THE BATTLEFIELD, LEAVING NO REMAINS

TO BE FOUND. HE SAID THAT INCIDENTS LIKE THESE WERE COMMON DURING THE WAR.

(1) WHILE SERVING AS TACTICAL COMMANDER OF THE 48TH QUANG NGAI PROVINCE BATTALION HIS UNIT ATTACKED A U.S. MARINE BATTALION CONDUCTING NIGHT OPERATIONS IN BINH SON DISTRICT (BS6092), NGHIA BINH PROVINCE. LTG CHUONG SAID THAT HE DID NOT DIRECTLY PARTICIPATE IN THE FIGHTING. PERSONNEL IN HIS UNIT LISTENED TO U.S. COMMUNICATIONS ON "PRC" TYPE RADIOS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE MARINE FORCE'S STRENGTH, THAT IT WAS CAMPED AT CHU

LAI (BT5306), AND WOULD BE CONDUCTING THEIR OPERATIONS IN THE CENTRAL AREA OF BINH SON DISTRICT. THE ATTACK, WHICH LASTED AN HOUR, BEGAN AT 0400 HOURS. DURING THE BATTLE THE U.S. FORCE BECAME DIVIDED AND BEGAN TO RETREAT. WHILE THE U.S. FORCE WAS RETREATING, ARTILLERY BEGAN TO STRIKE THE AREA AND HIS FORCES WITHDREW FROM THE BATTLEFIELD. AT SUNRISE HIS FORCES RETURNED TO THE BATTLE AREA TO FIND U.S. PERSONNEL IN THE AREA CONDUCTING RECOVERY OPERATIONS. DURING THE U.S. RECOVERY EFFORT, A HELICOPTER ATTEMPTING TO LAND WAS REPELLED BY HIS FORCES THREE TIMES BEFORE IT LEFT THE AREA. SHORTLY AFTER THE HELICOPTER'S DEPARTURE, NAPALM WAS DROPPED ON THE BATTLEFIELD, DESTROYING EVERYTHING. HE RECALLED THAT MORE THAN 50 OF HIS SOLDIERS WERE WOUNDED OR KILLED DURING THE BATTLE, WHILE HE HEARD ON THE RADIO THAT THE U.S. HAD LOST MORE THAN 100 MEN. LTG CHUONG SAID THAT DUE TO THE ARTILLERY AND NAPALM ATTACKS HE BELIEVES THAT THE INDIVIDUALS LEFT LYING ON THE BATTLEFIELD WOULD BE MISSING TODAY.

(2) IN MAY OF 1968 THE 1ST AND 21ST PAVN REGIMENTS ATTACKED A SPECIAL FORCES CAMP BELONGING TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES (RVNAF) ON THU (THWJ) MOUNTAIN IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, NEAR KHAM DUC (KHAAM DWCS) (ZC0008). ACCORDING TO LTG CHUONG THE CAMP WAS UNDER U.S. CONTROL. THE ATTACK LASTED THROUGHOUT ONE NIGHT AND BY MORNING THE PAVN FORCES HAD OVERRUN THE CAMP HEADQUARTERS. ALL OF THE CAMP PERSONNEL WERE KILLED IN THE BATTLE, INCLUDING FIVE OR SIX U.S. ADVISORS. BECAUSE THE PAVN PLANNED TO USE THE CAMP AS A BASE THEY BEGAN SETTING UP DEFENSIVE POSITIONS. U.S. HELICOPTERS WERE REPELLED BY HEAVY ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY (AAA) FIRE, BUT AT APPROXIMATELY 1400 HOURS U.S. AIRCRAFT BOMBED THE CAMP DESTROYING EVERYTHING IN THE AREA, INCLUDING THE BODIES OF THE U.S. ADVISORS.

C. LTG CHUONG RECALLED THE CAPTURE OF A BLACK SENIOR ENLISTED MAN (THWONGJ SIX) IN THE NGHIA HANH (BS6164) AREA, QUANG NGAI PROVINCE, NEAR THE VE RIVER. ALTHOUGH HE WAS INFORMED OF THE INCIDENT VIA RADIO AND COULD NOT REMEMBER THE SITUATION CLEARLY, HE BELIEVED THE MAN BELONGED TO THE 1ST AIR MOBILE SQUADRON (KHOONG VAANJ SOOS MOOTJ CUAR LINHS KHOONG DOANF). HE SAID THAT THIS WAS A PARATROOPER UNIT WHICH WAS KNOWN FOR TAKING HEAVY CASUALTIES. THE CAPTURED MAN HAD BLACK SKIN, WAS UNMARRIED, RATHER SMALL, AND WOUNDED IN THE FRONT OF HIS UPPER RIGHT LEG NEAR HIS TORSO. AFTER HIS CAPTURE HE WAS BANDAGED AND BEING CARRIED IN THE DIRECTION OF THE 1ST REGIMENT'S MEDICAL UNIT, THREE KILOMETERS AWAY, FOR TREATMENT WHEN HE DIED OF BLOOD LOSS. THE PW HAD ONLY BEEN CARRIED FIVE HUNDRED METERS AND WAS BURIED WHERE HE DIED, NEAR THE GRAVES OF MANY PAVN SOLDIERS. THE AREA WAS SUBSEQUENTLY HIT BY B-52 STRIKES.

D. IN THE AREA OF THE TRAU RIVER (UNLOCATED), BETWEEN HIEP

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DUC (AT9024) AND QUE SON (BT0334) HIS FORCES REPORTED CONTACT WITH AN ENEMY FORCE TO THEIR REAR AND ASKED FOR A PLATOON TO COME TO THE AREA. THREE U.S. SOLDIERS WERE KILLED IN THE FOLLOWING ENGAGEMENT AND FIVE OR SIX WERE CAPTURED. THE DEAD WERE BURIED IN THREE GRAVES AT A LOCATION WHICH HE COULD NOT REMEMBER. THE PW'S WERE GIVEN FOOD AND HIS FORCES CONTACTED THE U.S. FORCES ON A U.S. "PRC-15" RADIO TO ARRANGE FOR THEIR RETURN. THE PW'S WERE TAKEN BY A VEHICLE TO AN AREA NEAR THE RIVER WHERE A U.S. HELICOPTER COULD EASILY LAND. A HELICOPTER WAS ALLOWED TO LAND AND THE PRISONERS WERE RETURNED. WHEN THE HELICOPTER NEARED THE AREA HIS FORCES QUICKLY DEPARTED. LTG CHUONG WAS UNSURE OF WHICH UNIT WAS INVOLVED IN THIS INCIDENT BECAUSE BOTH THE 21ST AND 31ST REGIMENTS WERE OPERATING WITH PROVINCIAL FORCES IN THE AREA AT THE TIME.

E. WHILE IN TRUNG PHUOC HAMLET (UNLOCATED), PHUOC SON VILLAGE (BT0824) (NOW TIEN PHUOC AND QUE SON DISTRICTS), QUANG - NAM DANANG PROVINCE IN 1969 THE 31ST REGIMENT'S ANTI-AIRCRAFT UNIT SHOT DOWN WHAT THEY BELIEVED TO BE A C-130 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. THE AIRCRAFT, FLYING VERY LOW, WAS HIT WITH 12.7MM ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE IN THE FRONT SECTION. IT THEN STRUCK THE GROUND AND BURNED. HE SAID THAT THE AIRCRAFT WAS FLYING LOW BECAUSE IT WAS CARRYING A REPORTER WHO WAS TAKING PICTURES OF THE AREA. A PAIR OF GLASSES, A REPORTER'S IDENTIFICATION CARD AND A CAMERA LENS WERE RECOVERED FROM THE WRECKAGE AND PLACED IN A WAREHOUSE, WHICH WAS LATER DESTROYED BY BOMBING. NO BODIES WERE FOUND AND THERE WAS NO U.S. RECOVERY EFFORT.

F. THE SECOND DIVISION DID NOT HAVE A HOSPITAL TO TREAT WOUNDED. THE DIVISION'S MEDICAL BATTALION WAS DIVIDED INTO COMPANIES AND ASSIGNED TO SUBORDINATE REGIMENTS. A MEDICAL GROUP WAS IN RESERVE AT THE DIVISION AS WELL. A WOUNDED PW COULD BE TREATED AT THE MEDICAL COMPANY'S LOCATION IF IT WAS CLOSE ENOUGH

TO A BATTLE, BUT OFTEN IT WAS LOCATED TOO FAR AWAY TO CARRY A PW. IN CASES WHERE THERE WERE LIGHT CASUALTIES THE MEDICS WOULD COME

TO THE BATTLEFIELD TO TREAT THE WOUNDED. THE MILITARY REGION DID HAVE A HOSPITAL LOCATED ON A MOUNTAIN VERY FAR FROM THE SECOND DIVISION, BUT HE WAS TOLD NOT TO TAKE PRISONERS THERE.

G. WHEN A UNIT SUBORDINATE TO THE SECOND DIVISION CAPTURED A PW, THE PW WAS IMMEDIATELY ASKED WHAT UNIT HE BELONGED TO AND, IF WOUNDED, THE PW WAS BANDAGED AND TAKEN TO A SECURE AREA TO INSURE THAT HE WOULD NOT BE HURT IN A BOMBING RAID. HE WOULD THEN BE

INTERROGATED FOR TACTICAL INFORMATION. BECAUSE THERE WAS NO FOOD AVAILABLE FOR PRISONERS, THE PW WAS RETURNED TO U.S. FORCES FOLLOWING THE INTERROGATION. PAVN ENGLISH TRANSLATORS COORDINATED THE PRISONER EXCHANGES ON THE RADIO.

H. ALL UNITS SUBORDINATE TO THE SECOND DIVISION INCLUDED BASIC PW INFORMATION IN THEIR REPORTS TO THE DIVISION. THESE REPORTS, SENT BY RADIO OR VIA COURIER, INCLUDED ONLY THE NUMBER OF PW'S CAPTURED AND THEIR DISPOSITION. ALL OF THESE RECORDS WERE DESTROYED DURING BATTLES OR B52 STRIKES. LTG CHUONG NEVER HAD DIRECT CONTACT WITH PW'S. ONLY SPECIALISTS OF THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT (EPD) HAD DIRECT CONTACT WITH PW'S.

I. AFTER 1975 EACH DIVISION AND PROVINCE ORGANIZED UNITS TO FIND THE GRAVES OF MEMBERS OF THEIR UNITS. THIS EFFORT WAS DIRECTED BY THE "POLICY AGENCY" (COW QUAN CHINHS SACHS). THERE WERE NO OFFICIAL RECORDS OR MAPS OF THE GRAVE SITES, BUT SOMETIMES BATTLE PARTICIPANTS HAD PERSONAL MAPS OF THE SITES OR WERE ABLE TO REMEMBER THE GRAVE LOCATIONS. SOME OF THE GRAVES HAD BEEN MARKED WITH WOODEN MARKERS OR STONES, BUT OFTEN THEY FOUND THAT THE GRAVES WERE COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY U.S. BOMBING OR HAD BEEN DUG UP BY TIGERS. HE SAID THAT IN ANY WAR, NO ONE CAN EXPECT TO FIND ALL OF THEIR DEAD.

J. LTG CHUONG CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF PW'S OR "STAY BEHINDS" IN VIETNAM AFTER 1973. AS VICE COMMANDER OF MR5, HE SAID, THERE IS NO WAY POSSIBLE THAT THERE COULD HAVE BEEN ANY AMERICAN PW'S IN THE AREA AFTER THE WAR WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE. HOWEVER, HE WAS SHOCKED THAT "NAM", A "CROSSOVER" FROM THE WAR WHO RECENTLY RETURNED TO VIETNAM, RENOUNCED HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. (SEE PARA 7B)

K. WITH NO FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR LTG CHUONG, THE JOINT TEAM AGREED TO CONCLUDE THE INTERVIEW.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES.

A. THE INCIDENT DESCRIBED IN PARA 3B2 PROBABLY CORRELATES TO CASE 1167 OR CASE 1171, BASED ON THE INCIDENT LOCATIONS AND TIME FRAME.

B. THE INCIDENT DESCRIBED IN PARA.3.C POSSIBLY CORRELATES TO CASE 0728, A DISCREPANCY CASE, BASED ON THE GENERAL INCIDENT LOCATION.

5. LTG CHUONG PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL LEADS:

A. MR. CAO NIEM (CAO NIEEM) WAS THE 31ST REGIMENT COMMANDER AT THE TIME OF THE AIRCRAFT SHOOT DOWN (PARA 3E). HE MAY HAVE ADDITIONAL, FIRST HAND, INFORMATION RELATING TO THE INCIDENT.

B. DR. TU (TUJ) WAS THE DOCTOR IN CHARGE OF THE SECOND

DIVISION'S MEDICAL BATTALION AT THE TIME OF THE NGHIA HANH INCIDENT DESCRIBED IN PARA 3C, AND MAY KNOW THE NAME OF THE DECEASED PW OR THE MEDIC WHO TREATED HIM. DR. TU, LINE ITEM 68, WAS INTERVIEWED ON 9 OCTOBER 93.

C. MAJ VAN BICH (VAWN BICHS) WAS A MEMBER OF THE SECOND DIVISION COMMAND WHO WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 1ST REGIMENT AND MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION RELATING TO THE INCIDENT DESCRIBED IN PARA 3C AND POSSIBLY U.S. LOSS INCIDENTS IN THE QUE SON AREA. MR. BICH, LINE ITEM 67, WAS INTERVIEWED ON 11 NOVEMBER 93. THE REPORT OF THE INTERVIEW WITH MR. BICH WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY.

D. DR. NGUYEN VAN HIEU (NGUYEENX VAWN HIEEUJ) IS A RETIRED MEDICAL CADRE OF THE SECOND DIVISION. HE CURRENTLY LIVES IN VINH PHU. DR. HIEU, LINE ITEM 68 WAS INTERVIEWED ON 12 OCTOBER 93.

E. SRCOL TANG (TAWNGJ) WAS A MEMBER OF THE 31ST REGIMENT AND MAY HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT LOSS INCIDENTS IN THE QUE SON AREA. HE IS NOW RETIRED FROM THE MILITARY AND IS DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF A DANANG COFFEE COMPANY.

F. MR. SON (SOWN) WAS A POLITICAL CADRE OF THE PAVN SECOND

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RMKS/

DIVISION AND MAY HAVE INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE INCIDENTS IN QUE SON AND NGHIA HANH. MR. SON, LINE ITEM 68, WAS INTERVIEWED ON 20 SEPTEMBER 93.

6. MATERIAL EVIDENCE: NONE. THIS SOURCE BROUGHT NO RECORDS, NOTEBOOKS, DIARIES, OR ANY MATERIAL EVIDENCE ASSOCIATED WITH UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL.

7. COMMENTS.

A. LTG NGUYEN HUY CHUONG EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE TO COOPERATE FULLY WITH THE JOINT TEAM SEVERAL TIMES. HE APPEARED TO ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS AS BEST HE COULD. HE WAS VERY CORDIAL THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW. DURING INTRODUCTIONS HE SAID THAT BECAUSE THE WAR WAS 20 YEARS AGO HE HAS FORGOTTEN MANY IMPORTANT DETAILS, SUCH AS DATES AND PLACES.

B. "NAM", REFERENCED IN PARA 3J, WAS A VIETNAMESE NAME USED BY THE INDIVIDUAL ASSOCIATED WITH CASE 0155 (A 1979 RETURNEE). THIS INDIVIDUAL RETURNED TO VIETNAM DURING JULY 1993.

C. THE MEMBERS OF THE JOINT TEAM CONFERRED ON THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED DURING THIS INTERVIEW. TEAM MEMBERS AGREED THAT THE NEED TO REINTERVIEW THIS SUBJECT WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR LTG CHUONG ARISE DURING THE COURSE OF THE ORAL

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HISTORY INTERVIEW TEAM'S FUTURE WORK.
D. REQUEST THE VNOSMP MAKE LTG NGUYEN HUY CHUONG AVAILABLE FOR REINTERVIEW IF NECESSARY.//

BT

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J30-M(1) J3(1) 00-01-04(1) WWMCS(0) MDT(0) LRN061PCMT(0) J52(1)
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