

G: I can provide full detail as to why I came to the conclusion in 1979 that this was totally false. As a matter of fact, I found out that "Salt" and "Pepper" were not Americans at all. One was Cuban and the black guy, his mother was Vietnamese and his father was Moroccan. He was born in Vietnam, with Vietnamese citizenship and was sent to Cuba to a Cuban college and learned to speak English, American English, for the purpose of returning to Vietnam and working in espionage and propaganda. ("SALT" & "PEPPER" WERE ALLEGED COLLABORATORS).

T: First off, what places can you list for me where you saw Americans, after homecoming.

G: OK, after homecoming, after May, 1973. From 1971 to 1975, I was basically in two camps and that was ~~XXXX~~ ^{SON THI (BAT BAT)} and ~~Haddam~~ ^{HADONG}.

T: ~~Haddam~~ ^{HADONG} Province?

G: ~~Haddam~~ ^{KADALIS} City, ~~Haddam~~ ^{HADONG} Province. At both of the locations there were American

POWs. After 1973, there were still American POWs at Bat Bat, ^{Son Tay} ~~Son Tay~~. ~~Bat Bat~~ It is approximately two and a half ^{TO} ~~on~~ three kilometers from the Rock River. ←

t: Now Bat Bat is the Son Tay at Bat Bat, but Son Tay is the Son Tay we have heard about . . . in Son Tay Province?

Q: ~~Yes sir.~~ I spent four years at Bat Bat. 1971-1974. They took me out of Bat Bat for a short period, to ^{HANOI} ~~Hanoi~~, and then brought me back to Bat Bat. At Bat Bat, in the camp that was set up, each American prisoner, including myself, although I was housed differently than the other Americans that I saw. There were four guards. It was more like a live-in situation that they had set up like a little farm. And my duties were to work the farm. I planted ^{PINEAPPLE} ~~rice~~, I planted trees, I planted ~~rice~~ and I planted vegetables. And I also maintained a little fish pond. The other Americans were about 500 yards from me, from where I lived, but were guarded by the same guard. What drew my interest to what was going on on the other side of the hill was my overhearing the guard talking of basically the security on the other side of the hill versus security in guarding me. They felt less threatened and more secure in guarding me than they did than the other people. They expressed concern about U.S. aerial photography from satellites, etc. etc. Fear of bombing and fear of another Son ^{TAI} ~~Bay~~-type rescue operation by Americans as there had been in prior years. They did not mention the word American, but it aroused my curiosity. I wanted to know what in the hell was on the other side of the hill. What were they guarding that was so damn important. So, when I ^{WENT} ~~SA~~ to forage for wood, I try to get as close to the camp on the other side of the hill as I could get. And the closest I got was maybe 200 yards away, without being seen by the guards. The guards always used to go with me when I go out to forage for wood, but sometimes they get like really lazy, especially during the summer, because it was very hot and they wouldn't climb up the hill. They would stay at the base of the hill and know that I was up there. I couldn't come down off the hill without them seeing me, anyway, because everything else was barren down below. The wooded area was up on the hill.

I observed the camp by crouching in the bushes. This camp was all masonry buildings, it was not like the structures I had lived in made entirely of mud and grass. From the distance where I saw them, they looked like, the buildings were approximately 6½ ft. tall and they had red bricks. By the way, these bricks were poured and made by Vietnamese prisoners ^{All of whom} ~~xxxx~~ these prisoners were ~~also~~ captured in Laos.

Anyway, all of them were constructed buildings. All of them had doors and had only one very small window. Each one of them was approximately fifty yards apart, no fifty feet apart, and they were in rows. Five in each row. There were two rows here, and then there was a split about another hundred feet, and then another two rows. They basically looked like a bunch of little outhouses. That's what they reminded me of, but they were bigger than that. Upon seeing these, that's what I thought they were, but it didn't make sense because even though they reminded me of that, I also knew that in North Vietnam they didn't use outhouses. Their outhouses were over the ^{GREW FISH} little man-made lakes where they fished, because that's how they ^{fished} with human manure. I saw people coming out of these little houses, they came out one at a time and there was always a guard present. He would yell out and someone would come out. I was observing a Caucasian wearing pajamas, they were not striped pajamas, they were blue, like a blue jean blue, and they were long, not shorts. They looked like they had sandals on, some type of sandals on. I don't know if they were flip-flops, or Ho Chi Minh type. They all had beards. Elderly. When I'm talking about elderly, I mean older than I was. They looked to be in their 40's. I couldn't see the wrinkles in their faces, but their structure, the way they moved. My eyesight is good. I've never had any trouble with my eyesight. There was a couple of people I would probably recognize again if I saw them, if they were still in the present condition as I saw them then. They were very thin. They were Caucasian. They were not Oriental. I knew there were Americans at Bat Bat before Operation Homecoming. But I figured those people, from talking to the guards, those people had been released. ~~xxxx~~ I also knew ^{about} ~~Bat Bat~~ ^{BA VI} Dairy Farm, which was only about three kilometers from where my hooch was. The ~~Bat Bat~~ ^{BA VI} ~~knew that the Bat Bat~~ Dairy Farm was totally inhabited by former French Foreign Legion prisoners captured

DIEN BIENT PHU IN 1954.
at the end of the ~~XXX~~. The ~~BA VI~~ Dairy Farm was built and set up by CUBA.
~~XXXX~~. As a matter of fact, the livestock on this farm was supposedly
donated by Cuba. The French were brought there to ~~BA VI~~ from ~~XXXX~~ in ~~THE YEN BAY TEA~~
1959. ~~PLANTATION~~

T: Did the ^{GOVERNMENT} French know they were ~~THESE~~?

G: Among the French Foreign Legion were Moroccans, Spainards, etc. Actually, there was only two Frenchmen that I knew about, that were actually French. What immediately went through my mind was that these Caucasians were from the Dairy Farm and this was like maybe they had screwed up and had done something wrong and were being punished and put in these little houses. Again, curiosity, I had a lot of time and I always had hope and I always believed, that I would never believe that I was the last American in Vietnam. I couldn't believe that. Also, with the Vietnamese telling me and laughing that Vietnam wouldn't be so stupid to release all the Americans, and then the United States turn around and start bombing Vietnam again. What they were telling me was that they had to be totally assured, that they were still holding Americans but they only gave part of them back and that the bargaining position was, you start bombing Vietnam again, we'll put these people on public display and execution, etc. ~~XXXXXX~~

So I made every excuse I could not to alert the guards. Also, I was lucky, my guards were young and inexperienced and they didn't have any idea what I was doing. I was just pulling a little recon mission there, trying to find out who these people were and to satisfy my own mind whether they were actually from the Dairy Farm, or not. Well, I got very lucky. Unlucky, but lucky. Because of my long stay there, ~~the~~ DURING Tet of 1974, ~~that~~ I found out that these people actually were Americans for sure. The way I found out for sure was before dark, what they did on Tet was they split up the four guards that were guarding me. They let two guards go home for the Tet festivities and two guards had to remain behind to guard me. And, when the two guards returned, the other

two guys could go. The two guards that stayed to guard me, they bought some booze and they got totally ^{DRUNK} shitfaced. When they were in the process of doing this, because they had been my guards for so damn long, I was like part of the furniture. Again, the guards were young, they were not combat. They had never seen combat. It was a big thing for them to guard Americans. To go home and tell their families that they were guarding American prisoners. This was a big thing for them. But there in the camp, there was almost a kind of a friendship I established with them because of the daily contact with them. So, I got to know their habits. I got to know their weaknesses. I played upon this, and when they started drinking, I just brought it up very casually, "Those prisoners over there must be giving you guys a really hard time. It's nice to have a prisoner like me. I don't give you guys a hard time. I don't try to escape." And they confirmed that they were Americans. I was saddened, but it heightened my spirits at the same time, just knowing that I wasn't the only one. At the time, when I look back, it was selfish of me then.

T: Do you think they had one American in each hooch?

G: Yes.

T: They had about 25 hooches and one in each, huh?

G: Yes, but there were only 20 of them.

T: They had four guards on you. Each of those guards were armed. Did they ever trust you at all during your captivity?

G: Never fully. At ^{HADONG} ~~Haddam~~, security was very tight. Any time I was in a prison camp ~~YEA~~, security was very tight on me. Both ^{YEN BAN} ~~Fine~~ and also Son ^{TAN} ~~was~~ ^{was} so far out in the boondocks and I was a Caucasian, that they didn't feel any threat. So, they gave me a little more freedom to move around. They would monitor my movements. If I, you know, if a peasant or farmer ever went by and I tried to talk to him, they would get upset and tell me I was breaking the rules, don't push my luck, etc. etc. But they weren't really hard about it. But I would talk

with the guards and to an extent, I think I would have their sympathy. Because they had families, and I played upon that and how long it had been since I'd seen my country and seen my family and that all the other Americans were back, etc. etc. So I played upon their sympathy a little bit to the point where I would almost get it and I think it must have shown on their faces or their attitude toward me because the officers would come and check about 7-8 times a day and several of the guards would get kicked(?). Some guys would go and another guard come in.

T: By Tet of 1974, you did find out there were 20 Americans, at least. What other places, now besides Bat Bat did they hold Americans?

G: Well, they started building other places. There was a guy named Koon. A lot of the prisoners, they knew the guards by nicknames which were given them. Pham Van Cuong, Lt., NVA, was "Scarface". See, I knew their names. I didn't know their phonetic names. I knew their real names. ~~XXXX~~ And I found out that the people that were held in these little houses were people that they termed obstinate, stubborn and were uneducated. ^{ABLE} They were unable to be educated. All were pilots. According to the guards, they were all captured in North Vietnam.

Oh, there's one thing that might be of some light with that. One of the guards was from, uh, uh, a lot of people that were held there were shot down trying to destroy this bridge.

T: ~~THANH HOA~~ THANH HOA ?

THANH HOA

G: ~~THANH HOA~~, yes. One of the guards was ~~THANH HOA~~ and he bragged that most of the people detained there were shot down trying to bomb THE BRIDGE.

T: Where else did you see Americans? Caucasians that you were convinced were Americans.

G: HADONG.

S: ~~Haddam (P) Thanh Hoa~~

T: H-A

G: H-A-U-O-N-G

FROM HONG RONG IN THANH HOA PROVIN

T: What was going on at Hadong?

G: There is someone else who can verify this. Whether he, I don't know ~~xxx~~, but Sweeney was at Hadong.

T: Who?

G: Sweeney, John Sweeney, US Marine Corps. He was released by Communists through Russia or some damn place in 1972. The reason I know Sweeney was there was because his name was all over the walls, even on the bunk I slept in.

~~GG: I've heard that name before. XXXXX~~

T: How big an incarcerated American contingent might have been there after Homecoming at Hadong? What made you think there were any . . .

G: OK, pre-1973 or 1972, the compound was the police training academy. After 1973, that academy was transferred to ^{SOUTHI} ~~Son Tay~~, the former POW camp, the one that was raided.

T: The academy went to ^{SOUTHI} ~~Son Tay~~ and what?

G: And then it turned into a prison camp. I was held here, uh, OK, on April 30, 1974, I was taken to Hadong. I remained there until the last week in September, when I was taken back to Bat Bat.

T: Why were you transferred there, do you know?

G: No, they came in the middle of the night. Had a jeep, and I was loaded up in the jeep and taken there. Every time I was moved from one place to another, it was in the middle of the night and there was no explanation. It was always in a covered jeep, one of the Chinese-built jeeps. I was made to sit in the back with guards on either side. Lt. Col. Xuan always sat in the front seat.

T: What did you see at Hadong?

G: OK, well I was transferred to Hadong. The Americans, these people were dressed differently. They weren't wearing the typical pajamas. The pajamas that I wore, I had white set, a blue set and ~~XXXX~~ ^{A BLACK SET} and they looked like pajamas. They were sewn in that fashion. These people were Caucasians. No one had a beard. No one had a moustache. They were in kind of uniforms. Not like NVA uniforms. Not tailored, but like worker's clothes. These people were taken off in the morning and brought back in the evening. All done in a covered truck, a Chinese truck, about 2 1/2 ~~TON.~~ ^{TON.} Every time they would leave, they left very early in the morning, the only time I would see them was when they came back. Where I was at, and where these people were at, was a different section of the compound. The compound was split up into four sections. The short time I was there I was able to find out that the officers and the enlisted men were in one part of the compound, and another was where they had all their documents and their office and stuff. The compound where I was in, there were Vietnamese prisoners that came from both ~~Son Tay~~ ^{Son Tay} and ~~YEN BAI~~ ^{YEN BAI} ~~XXXXX~~. The other compound was the other Americans. These were all separated by walls. Big walls. These walls and the structure were not newly built. It looked like something that had been built during the French war.

END OF PART 1

SIDE 2, PART 2

G: Actually, it looked like at one time, it might have been a temple. The building structure itself was brick and the roof was that typical roof and in the middle they had the, well like we build a fireplace, this is what they used as their offering to the heavens.

T: How many Americans did they have here?

G: The most I saw was ^{AT A TIME} ~~3~~ ³ in there, ^{BUT I HEARD THERE WERE 100 THERE.} ~~(a hundred and three?? or just three?)~~
I could never tell whether they were the same people each time, or not. I always found out when they were going to be back, so I would try to be near the gate doing something. The gate was an iron gate. It wasn't locked. There were guards on the outside. The gate itself was not locked. It had a latch. But you could see through it and ^{INTO} ~~to get to~~ the other side of the compound, there was only one road coming in and this road came in between two rice paddies, a rice paddy on each side and the road from this place to the village was maybe a quarter of a mile, maybe a little farther. You could see the village. It was stuck out in the middle. It was like a little island out in the middle of these rice paddies.

T: Had any of them been taken off to interrogation or to special work?

G: I have no idea.

T: Now, the next place that you talk about was in ^{YEN BAI} ~~Vin Bi~~ which you talked about having a special zone, a prisoner of war zone

G: Yes, the Vin Bi prison camp was the biggest and probably the most organized prison camp that I had ever been in Vietnam.

T: When were you in that camp?

G: They took me to the camp five in January, 1975.

T: You are in a rural area, [?] ~~anyway, and the XXXX way before you get into the inner sanctum of the camp, huh?~~

G: OK. The route they took me from, see they took me from Hadong back to Bat Bat, and then from Bat Bat to ^{YEN BAI} ~~Vin Bi~~. When they took me to ^{YEN} ~~Vin~~ Bi, it was not non-stop. ^{WE STOPPED AT BIT LE NAM DE} ~~YEN~~ Very early the next morning, we made a continuous journey on to Vin Bi. I was at a total loss as to where I was going to be taken. It had just become a custom to wait until you got there. You know, I never knew. They wouldn't answer any questions any way. After we crossed the river, we crossed the river by ferry, and traveled approximately two to two and a half hours until we got to ^{YEN BAI} ~~Vin Bi~~ camp. After we got to ^{YEN BAI} ~~Vin Bi~~ camp, we had to wait for another ferry to cross the Red River again and then go back. We took this twisted dirt trail over a mountain, it took approximately a half hour or forty-five minutes to get to the camp, ^{WHICH WAS CALLED "T-FIVE"} ~~camp XXX (number five?)~~ We got there and the camp was huge in area. It was scattered throughout the mountains. They had literally cut off, stripped the mountain of trees in one area and planted tea all over the place. When I got there, I couldn't believe it. You know, tea. But this tea was planted by the French prisoners.

T: They still had French prisoners still there in 1975?

G: No. ~~XXXX~~ ^{THEY HAD GONE IN 1969.}

T: Maintained now by South Vietnamese prisoners?

G: Yes. ~~XXXX~~

T: Allright, did you ever see any ^{U.S.} prisoners here?

G: Not there in ^{Camp Five} ~~camp five~~. Not on this side of the river. ^{BUT} On the other side of the river, uh, it is probably best to ^{GO} ~~take~~ from Camp Five, go back out to the river, cross the river in ^{YEN BAI} ~~Vin Bi~~ camp, take from the ferry crossing, go down 6½ to 7 kilometers, off to your left, cross the railroad tracks. This is the same railroad that comes from Hanoi where you can probably be on all the way to China. Cross over the railroad tracks, go back approximately ^{1/2} ~~XXXX~~ kilometers, ~~uh, 2 kilometers, maybe~~ ², and you come upon a huge man-made lake that was built by China. The name of this lake is Thac Ba. This lake is huge. What ^{IS} ~~formed~~ in the

middle of this lake was 3-4 little islands.

T: Just out in the middle, huh? ~~XXX~~

G: Yes, higher. Thac Ba Lake was a man-made lake made by China and they used this lake for 2 reasons, from what I understand, 2 main reasons. One was the generation of electricity to run the saw mill, paper mill. Number two, it was the main source of a gigantic fish farm. They raised fish.

T: For the hungry in Hanoi.

G: A lot of fishing. Chinese fishing ~~ing~~ Good white fish. They call them "CA ME ~~XXX~~ ^{TOO} A lot of carp. And from the shore to the island was what I knew as Thac Ba prison camp. You could see it from the shore to the island, and it took 20 minutes, almost a half an hour by motorboat. The type of boat I'm talking about is not a speedboat, but uh . . .

T: A little put-put fishing boat?

G: Well, you could walk faster. ~~XXX~~

T: Like a whaler?

G: A whaler?

T: You know, the little bobbed-in fishing boats that we saw with a little outboard on it?

G: Yeah. ~~XXX~~

T: And, what went on out there on those islands?

G: Allright. There was a prison camp set up there which was built by, ^{AN} ~~ANW~~ it was a mason structure. The material was manufactured and the labor force who built this camp were the South Vietnamese prisoners from camp

LABOR
FORC.
FROM
YEN B.

~~FROM XXX~~ To back up a little bit, what was I doing there. Why?

After 1975, I came to the ~~xxx~~ conclusion that I may die in Vietnam. There had been no effort, I heard of no effort whatsoever of any type of negotiations or any plans of getting the remaining people out of Vietnam. ~~xxx~~ There was no more hope anymore. It was Bob Garwood's RESPONSIBILITY to get the hell out of Vietnam. ~~xxx~~ And, taking that attitude, I agreed to help set up a Czechoslovakian generator at Camp ~~xxx~~⁷⁷⁶, hoping to gain some kind of confidence from the camp administration. What I was looking for was trying to get any kind of freedom that I could. I heard over the radio that that there were various foreign countries including capitalist countries so called, that were coming to Vietnam. Including Sweden. Sweden was widely publicized. I was hoping I could get some more freedom. If I could gain the confidence of the camp personnel, if I could do something for them to prove it, that they would give me more freedom and hopefully I could run into one of these groups and hopefully they would take me in, and rescue me, or I could do something. I mean I was just, I had to create some kind of circumstance to get out of that camp. And I was not going to be able to do it by sitting on my butt and feeling sorry for myself. I would have rotted there. I would still be there today. When I went to the camp commander and volunteered to help set ^{UP} this generator, he was very reluctant. As it turned out, ~~xxx~~. And they ^{HAD} ~~have~~ two of them. They ^{HAD} ~~have~~ two of these generators. They were about 50 kilowatt/~~xxx~~^{60 KILOWATT DIESELS}. They were diesel engines, but they were jump-started by gas. I didn't know diddely squat about putting one of these generators together. And, I was given the plans to look at them for putting these machines together, and I looked at them and found out they were actually already put together and just a few parts and a few wires had to be strapped on, be bolted down. And the battery charged up, and push a couple of buttons and everything should have worked. And the nice thing was that the directions for the Czechoslovakian generator were not in Vietnamese. They were in Russian, in French and some other, Chinese or Japanese, and English. I guess ~~xxx~~^{EVERYONE IS THE} international language, I don't know. Anyway, it was just 1-2-3, A-B-C. It would all put together like a tinker toy, even though I didn't know a damn thing about it. And so I did. I did put it together, and I was successful in doing so. And it brought ^{LIGHT} light to the whole camp. ~~xxx~~ ^{IT} was a piece of civilization. I thought they were going to hug me for it.

And so, the camp administration, I did gain the confidence in that I put it together and I made it work. I thought they were going to take me off of it, but instead, they were not. I found out later, the only reason they let me put that generator together is because they had none of their own technicians available to be able to do it. Also, was because they had a deadline for that generator was because of the offensive on Saigon. They knew that ~~XXX~~ ^{A LOT OF PRISONERS WERE COMING} and they wanted that whole place lit up before the prisoners got there. Which, by the way, over a period of about four months, there were approximately 60,000 prisoners shuffled through there and about 20,000 of them remained in ~~XXX~~ ^{YEN BAI.} The rest of them were scattered throughout ~~XXX~~ ^{LA CHAI, CAO BANG AND PHO THO.} The whole former Saigon administration except ~~Mr. Binh~~ ^{BIG MINH} (3) himself, he was held in ~~XXX~~ ^{HOA LAO (HANOI, HAITO)}. The rest of the administration were right there in ~~XXX~~, Camp Five.

T: By now, though, you are Mr. Electric Generator.

G: Yes, and the funny thing about it is I could be lucky if I could change a lightbulb. But I snowballed my way through it enough to convince the Communist that I knew what the hell I was doing. And in their minds, I could take generator apart blindfolded and put it back together. XXXX because if it had blown up or anything had happened to it, then I would have been accused of ~~XXX~~ ^{SABOTAGE.} Well, everything was going along fine. They wouldn't entrust it to any of the South Vietnamese prisoners because they were afraid of that, sabotage. That's why they wouldn't let any of the South Vietnamese prisoners ^{NEAR IT.} So I was solely in charge of the generator. I was totally responsible. If that machine had been sabotaged, I would answer to it. Everything would come down on my head. And the camp commander told me, if anything happens to that machine and that's what it would be considered, it would be considered sabotage. And sabotage was punishable, they liked to use the words the most extreme punishment. Most extreme punishment in Vietnamese, if you're lucky, you'll get a firing squad. I definitely knew what the hell he was talking about. So, everything was still running smooth. They still had the other generator all crated up. Then they did bring some Vietnamese prisoners. Then, what they wanted me to do then was to teach these Vietnamese prisoners everything I knew about the generator. And I thought

to myself, "Oh, ~~shit~~ ^{Hell}". And these are former Saigon officers. They could speak English as well as Vietnamese and they could speak French. I got scared. Because what I had to do was completely dismantle this other generator into XXXX pieces. I said, OK, that I would try. They wanted to transport it to somewhere else, and they couldn't transport it because when the generators were brought there to Vin Bi, they were brought in a big flatbed truck. But they wanted to truck this thing out by little trucks. So they had to break it down, right? And this was a big generator. This deal is horrendous. And, I thought the gig was up. I got scared, but God was looking out after me and I was thankful for that. These men were still ~~loyal~~ ^{LOYAL TO THE U.S.}. They hadn't been brainwashed by the Communists. I was always up front with them. I talked to them for a little bit. The guards left us alone. I told them I had to have the complete confidence of these guys so that I could tell them what to do. After talking with them, trying to get their feelings about what had happened to them and their captivity here and my situation--I told them I didn't know a damn thing about this generator. They laughed. They thought it was funny. But there were two electricians. There were three mechanics and they did know what they were doing. And that's what saved my butt. So the whole time, over a week, that I'm supposed to be teaching these guys, all we did was sit around and we played cards talked about ~~XXXX~~ ^{LT. GEN. LAM VAN PHAT} he was the highest ~~XXXX~~ ^{DRVN} officer ever been caught. And talked about Vietnam, and the downfall of Saigon and South Vietnam.

<sup>Labeled a
collaborator
by ARVN
troops</sup>
~~XXXX~~ and talked about the several generals who had committed suicide and the ones that did surrender. Especially one general, Gen. ~~XXXX~~ VAN HUNG, Air Force, who took his own life when he was captured. I was able to locate his wife and family ^{in Falls Church, VA.} ~~XXXX~~. She knew who I was because people that had been released from prison who had come to the United States had been in contact with her, told her about me and when I met her. ~~XXXX~~ ^{was} SHE SAN I ^{was} the only American to date that made an effort to find her. ~~XXXX~~ I'm the ONLY AMERICAN WHO HAS BEEN IN HER HOME. And she's got a plaque of all of the armed services of Vietnam ~~XXXX~~ THERE. It is very sacred to her. Every Sunday she goes down to Arlington

National Cemetery and she puts ~~a~~ ^{THESE} flags, an American flag and a Vietnamese flag and kneels and prays.

Anyway, through the help of the SVN, uh, I don't even like to call them Army. As far as technicians, they ^{KNOW} ~~know~~ what the hell they ^{WERE} ~~are~~ doing. They ^{WERE} ~~are~~ the ones ^{WHO CARRIED} ~~that~~ carry me through.

T: They are teaching you a little bit, huh?

G: Yes. Exactly what they do. So I became a little more knowledgeable about the diesel engines, etc. etc. I also found out why they wanted this other generator torn down. They wanted it torn down because they were setting it up in another area. And they wanted to have people to be able to set this generator up. Well, we got the generator torn down and we labeled every part A-B-C . . . you know, kind of numbered the way they go back together. This will be simple. Well, they trucked it out in 1976, approximately in July maybe. ~~XXXX~~

T: ~~There~~ ^{W/} ^{DID} where ^A they wanted ~~the~~ the new generator?

G: ~~XXX~~ All I knew was that there were a lot of camps being built in other areas. They were using the labor force of South Vietnamese prisoners, they were trucking them off every day to build camps, expecting these huge ^{NUMBERS} ~~XXXX~~. Well, Saigon fell, all of South Vietnam fell and ^{THE PRISONERS ARRIVED} ~~XXXX~~ and ^{AND} they would be trucked to the camp, ~~like XXXX~~. But anyway, they made a compound. They completely engulfed the generator in a very ^{LARGE} ~~XXX~~ compound and the camp commander told me that they were going to set up ^{A MOTOR POOL} ~~XXX~~, that they had been issued a lot of vehicles, that the camp had been issued a lot of vehicles and that these were all American vehicles. It would be Vietnamese prisoners that would help maintain this compound and the maintenance of these vehicles, changing the oil, etc that I would,

that he trusted me in telling me that each and every vehicle, they are American vehicles and I understand you were a driver and a mechanic. You know all about American vehicles. All I did was drive them. I just paid attention and said Yes sir, No sir. Each and every vehicle, the maintenance before it leaves the compound, you will inspect it. Any vehicle that leaves that compound and breaks down, you will be totally responsible. XXXX Working on a vehicle is one thing, but driving that vehicle is another. If the driver does not know how to drive the vehicle, XXXX he can strip the gears, he can milk the battery, he can burn up the starter. I'm sorry, I cannot ^{ACCEPT} the total responsibility. Well, the camp commander didn't know anything about mechanics either, so he got together with this South Vietnamese mechanic. The South Vietnamese mechanic reiterated what I had told him that there was no way to be responsible for a vehicle after it leaves the compound, so he agreed to that. He said just don't let any explode. I don't want any of my drivers getting hurt. The drivers are all NVA. There were no prisoners driving. I did drive some in the compound, testing, etc. etc., within the motor pool, but no prisoner was allowed ^{TO DRIVE OUTSIDE} ~~XXXX~~. Well, the generator had long been taken out. The POW population at 776 which was formerly camp five. 776 was derived from the camp being formed in July, 1976. The camp was directly commanded by Col. ^{THAI} ~~XXXX~~, 776. Under him was Lt. Col. Xuan. He ran the camp. The camp itself, 776, was broken up into smaller camps scattered over an area ~~from XXXX, over an area~~ of a hundred square miles. To my knowledge there were 22 different camps within 776 camp administration. Each camp housed from, the largest camp I knew of housed 6,000 prisoners. Normally, there were between 2 & 3,000 prisoners at each camp. These camps are segregated to South Vietnamese prisoners, whether they were Saigon police, whether they were Navy, Air Force, Marines, Special Forces. Then they had special categories to rank. All field grade officers who were imprisoned right in former camp five were in the headquarters of 776. There were battalions over battalions of special NVA troops that were brought from South Vietnam.

END OF TAPE

SIDE 2, PART 3

Garwood: Field grade officers were imprisoned right in camp 5 where the headquarters has been since then. There were a battalion, over a battalion of NVA troops that was brought from South Vietnam and these people were IN CHARGE*. The standing order at that time with all the guards that any escape attempt would end in execution. No tribunal session. There was a large POW population. Alright in the middle of all this raucous, and everything was going on, POW's were still coming in from South Vietnam, they were being trucked in, ~~they were being trained~~, they were being brought in by trains. They were being brought in by trains as far as ^{YEN BAI} ~~Vin Bi~~, and then trucked from ^{YEN BAI} ~~Vin Bi~~ to the camp. Uh, I got word, ok let just back track up a little bit. It was then the first of July 1976, that the camp was being set up all the way through the middle of the night. One of the trucks had broken down in the middle of Route 1. The vehicle could not move, the engine was froze up or something - they didn't know what was wrong with it. They didn't have any tow trucks in Vietnam. There were no tow trucks. They may have had some in the South, but they didn't have any ^{N.V.N.} (unintelligible) ~~because~~ I was there. And uh, what happened was everytime a vehicle was broken down, they instead of taking one vehicle and towing one vehicle, to bring it back to the compound, they would take the mechanic directly to the vehicle to try to repair it on the spot. And then if they could get it started, they would take it back to the motor pool. They did this for the purpose of fuel consumption because they were having some kind of fuel shortage. And also for lack of vehicles. And they took me out to ^{YEN BAI} ~~Vin Bi~~ by jeep, it was late at night, it was the middle of the night, ~~with~~ ^{AND} ACCOMPANIE some first lieutenant NVA ~~I had~~ two guards. ~~It was, we got in Vin Bi, there was a lot of traffic, the whole city of Vin Bi was lit up totally. I mean it was no secret about what happened in South Vietnam, and the (unintelligible)~~ So the commotion and everything, it wasn't anything new, it wasn't anything new to me, it had been going on for a couple of months. OK we went out of ^{YEN BAI} ~~Vin Bi~~ then over to Route 1 headed towards Hanoi - north. And we got to the point where we were at Tac Bai, Tac Bai Road and there was a road block. They don't have military police, the just use regular militia, but the train was stopped on the tracks there were 20 some odd box cars, the train was fully stopped, on top of six cars they had electric generators, they had flood lamps, on the top of the tracks ^{AND} on top of the train and they were opening these doors on the

* CRACK SAPPER TROOPS WHO TOOK SAIGON

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train and Vietnamese were falling out of the train. And a lot of the Vietnamese had South Vietnamese uniforms, most of them were in civilian clothes. They were falling out and jumping out and they were ^{CURSING.} ~~(UNINTELLIGIBLE)~~. This wasn't either shocking to me or new to me, I knew about it and I heard about ~~HE~~ ^{THEM} being shipped out of the train. But they wouldn't let anyone through. And I was in this jeep along with my guard and the driver and we all got out and we were just watching the people falling out. And I stood there next to the jeep and I walked over closer within 100 yards, maybe 100 yards close enough to the box cars and was just observing and everyone else was observing but nobody was observing me. I almost fit in with the crowd and they opened all the box cars, except one, which was right in the middle, immediately in the middle of the train and I didn't think anything of it and I don't think did anybody else. It could have been supplies, food, whatever. It was the last one opened and it was only after the rest of the South Vietnamese prisoners, they filed them out in formation and they brought them closer to the road, to Route 1 and they sat these South Vietnamese prisoners down on Route 1 literally sat them all down, had the flood lights on all of them. Then they turned the flood lights back to the train and they opened the box car and the Caucasians started falling out. And that's where I stood. I didn't take my eyes off these people and I heard over the radio, from the Hanoi Hannah, that there had been a lot of Americans that had been captured IN Saigon. So I said, well, these are probably those people. And I kept watching them, and these people weren't really captured these people had been prisoners for a while, quite a while. They were thin, bearded, all wearing the same uniforms. The uniform was blue jacket, blue pants, ~~(unintelligible)~~. There was one individual that he had one leg, they had to lift him off. They were bitching and moaning about heat, they were hungry, ^{AND USING AMERICAN SLANG.} ~~(unintelligible)~~. ^{SLANG.} ~~(unintelligible)~~ American, I mean this was THE LANGUAGE I grew up with. I just said Oh, Shit. I was really SURE these people were not new, ^{CHONGGO.} ~~(unintelligible)~~ These were not people who just came from Saigon, these people have been, I mean ^{CAPTIVE A LONG TIME.} ~~(unintelligible)~~. These people had been prisoners for quite a while. Well anyway, something drew attention, one of the people who was in charge of it, he saw me, he saw me standing on the road along side this jeep and he came up, he came up to me and he just kept looking at me and asked who I was. I wouldn't say anything. The officer who was in charge of me, he told him who I was, that I was a

* I LATER HEARD THAT U.S. PRISONERS CAPTURED IN SAIGON

prisoner and I was from 776 and they brought me out here on emergency to repair a ~~Fit Bok~~ ^{SICK TRUCK (SHUA KI)}. They only knew the word ~~Fit Bok~~ ^{SHUA KI}, they used the word truck. The camp truck that was broken down. Soon the officer started screaming and yelling and said a lot of people were going to get into a lot of trouble, that I wasn't supposed to be there and to get me back to the compound as fast as possible and he wanted that guys name and everything else to get ~~OUT OF THE~~ ~~at San Hoa~~. So that's what they did, they just put me in the jeep ~~(unintelligible)~~ AND OFF WE WENT.

Tighe: How many do you think you saw getting off that box car?

Garwood: Thirty. I counted up to 28 - the problem I had, General Tighe, was that I was a prisoner there too and I really had no interest in finding the names of these people. What their names were, where they came from. The only thing I was concerned was they were Americans. ~~(unintelligible)~~. If I had known that I was going to get out of Vietnam, believe me, I would have tried. I would have tried with all my heart to get any information all the names I could from those people. ~~(unintelligible)~~. But I didn't, it was kind of like, you know, we were all American prisoners. The only thing that I made the distinction was these guys weren't just captured. These guys had been prisoners for a while.

Tighe: You never got to see whether they trucked them off someplace else did you?

Garwood: No.

Tighe: Where do you think they went?

THAC BA ISLAND

Garwood: I know exactly where they went. They went to ~~(unintelligible)~~.

Tighe: Oh really? ~~(unintelligible)~~.

Garwood: Yeah.

Tighe: When did you ever get another chance to SEE THEM?

Garwood: ~~American~~ ^{AGAIN} and I saw those people, because ^{or} what happened ~~was~~ ^{THAC RA} to the generator ~~was~~ (unintelligible) at ~~Tan Bi~~ ^{TA} Island.

Tighe: Oh I see.

Garwood: ~~I was working back up to the other.~~ What happened, the Vietnamese prisoners they put the generator together and everything, but somebody put the negative on the positive and ~~it burned up.~~ ~~What happened was they burned up the jump starter (The gasoline engine.)~~ It burned it up so they couldn't get the ~~damned~~ ^{DAMNED} thing started. With these engines, you can crank start them.

Gen. Vesser --

We have technical problems with the tapes at this point. Ross Perot is trying to get the copies transcribed for me. Tape machine, was overloaded - changing recording speed. Nearly unintelligible. Will get them to you if I get them in time.

Gene