

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

June 30, 1994

TO: General James Wold  
Defense POW/MIA Office

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Commander Joint Task Force Full Accounting

FROM: Erma Hasenbeck - Primary Next of Kin POW/MIA Sgt. Paul Hasenbeck  
Connie Mangino - Primary Next of Kin POW/MIA Sgt. Thomas Mangino  
Mae & Ted Nidds - Primary Next of Kin POW/MIA Sgt. Daniel Nidds  
Robert Winters - Primary Next of Kin POW/MIA Sgt. David Winters

Gentlemen:

We are in receipt of the latest case summary report regarding our loved ones. It is obvious you have chosen to ignore previous letters. In those letters, we stated that there be no attempt to present false or misleading information to us, on our case. After reviewing this latest report, we find many instances of both misleading or outright false information. It is interesting to see how information was picked from the records to bolster the "official" version of this incident. While information that would disprove the governments fiction is disregarded.

Once again, we will, in great detail and line by line refute the enclosed report. We start with the JTF-FA report.

ITEM 1 - Circumstance of Loss - Section A:

The report states - "The platoon leader from the first sampan returned to base and reported that Sp4 Mangino was in conversation with a local resident when he lost sight of him. The platoon leader also reported hearing 20-30 rounds of small arms fire 15 minutes after losing sight of the second sampan."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

According to the findings of the Board of Inquiry the last time our loved ones were seen was 1545 hours (3:45PM) at coordinates 622977. The Time Sequence of events established by the Board of Inquiry states that Lt. Krasnomowitz and others heard sniper rounds. This was at 1630 hours (4:30 PM) some 45 minutes after losing sight of the men in the second sampan, not the 15 minutes as stated in the JTF-FA report. The Board of Inquiry also established the shots came from "hill vicinity coord: 623983. During question and answers Lt. Krasnomowitz was asked "Did you hear any firing?"

A: "Yes Sir."

Q: "What time."

A: "About 1630."

Q: "What Direction?"

A: "The firing came from the south and I think it originated 623983."

Q: "How may rounds do you guess were fired and what type weapon?"

A: "I approximate 2 or 3 clips or about 25 to 30 rounds all of which originated from the vicinity of coordinates above. I do not think there were any return rounds."

Q: "What did you think then?" Gun jeep in Bunker position #1 called and stated there was a squad from Delta Company pinned down, but the pinned down (sic). I then when up to the top of the hill to see if I could see the sampan."

The platoon leader NEVER thought the firing involved the 4 missing men.

Additional information regarding the supposed "small arms fire" comes in the form of a letter from the Dept. of Army dated 9 June 1967. In a letter signed by Col. C.A. Stanfiel, Acting Adjutant General the Army states "The first boat succeeded in reaching the shore at approximately 4:15 p.m. and the men waited on the beach for the arrival of your \*\*\*\*\*'s boat. Shortly thereafter, weapons fire was heard in the area, HOWEVER, THE FIRING INVOLVED A SQUAD OF MEN IN AN AREA OTHER THAN WHERE THE SECOND SAMPAN WAS LAST SEEN."

Clearly, you choose to extract a small portion of Lt. Krasnomowitz's statement to bolster the governments position that the men were ambushed and killed immediately.

Also ignored were the statements of other platoon members given during the Board of Inquiry. The question "Did you hear gun fire" or "Did you hear any small arms fire on the way back to camp" was asked of 7 (7) men testifying before the board. ALL seven (7) answered NO. An eighth man was asked "Would you have been able to hear any firing?" His answer was "Oh yes sir."

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SECTION B:

The report states - "Subsequent information from several wartime intelligence reports correlated with REFNO 0646 indicates that individuals associated with this case were possibly captured by an NVA or Viet Cong (VC) unit.

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

A Central Intelligence Cable dated 4 July 1967 discusses two reports relating to the capture of our loved ones. With great effort and cooperation of those outside the government, We obtained enough versions of this report to find that:

- 1) the reports were "evaluated possibly true."
- 2) One source was rated "fairly reliable."
- 3) The officer evaluating the report wrote across the bottom of the report "Note: Army E4 Mangino, E3 Nidds, E3 Winters and E3 Hasenbeck fit the description of the report."
- 4) A 1977 evaluation of the report states "the info in Field Comments re: other source reporting (exc. the Feb. 67 camp report) relates in all likelihood to Hasenbeck plus 3 lost on the Tra Bong River at Bs 62x98x on 21 Apr 67."

The sighting report of 5 May 1967 reports 4 POW in the area with 2000 NVA. The evaluation done at the time states "Note: Mangino, Winters, Nidds, and Hasenbeck are missing for vic 622987 on 21 Apr 67. The unidentified US PW in this sighting of 5 May might well be them."

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ITEM 2

Investigations/Surveys/Excavations:

GRAVE SITES DISCUSSED IN SUBSECTION 1, 2, 3, AND 4:

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

All witness statement report at least three burials and two exhumations with the final movement of remains, by boat to a sandbar for burial. An examination of records proves an extensive search operation involving the 4/31 196th LIB, Amtracks, Republic of Korea Marines, Navy divers, and Coast Guard. Records also prove that search teams entered the village at odd hours of the day and night, in search of our loved ones.

Do you honestly expect us to believe that the Viet Cong or NVA were able to move the bodies of 4 adult males at least twice under the noses of American and Korean search team?

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SUBSECTION 5:

Section C: Conclusion

"The information provided by witness testimony correlates well with the known facts maintained in JTF-FA files. The witnesses provided an accurate last know location, time frame, time of day and detailed circumstances of loss. All testimony given was deemed to be straight forward and unrehearsed. One discrepancy with the testimony was noted. Mr. Bong described one soldier as black, however, all four men associated with REFNO 0646 are white. Sp4 Mangino was dark skinned and it is not uncommon for Vietnamese to describe dark skinned men as black."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

We conceded that the Vietnamese provided accurate information regarding last known location, time frame, and time of day. We DO NOT BELIEVE anything said regarding circumstance of loss, as our loved ones were captured, probably without a shot being fired.

Vietnamese witnesses describe using hand grenades and carbines to ambush and kill our loved ones. Yet, no American forces heard any shots or grenade explosions.

JTF-FA witness reports contain contradictory information regarding the reasons for the numerous burials and exhumations. Witness also describe the lead man as the tallest and black. You choose to assume the Vietnamese mistook the dark skinned Thomas Mangino as black. However, he was not the tallest of the four. Check your records to see who was. Also you state "it is not uncommon for Vietnamese to describe dark skinned men as black." Remember those words.

Witnesses state they took no personal identification media from the men. Someone took their personal papers as they are now on display at the Da Nang Museum. None of the personal papers on display show any sign of water damage. Since all the witness state that first burial was in the water this is indeed strange.

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ITEM 3:

"Associated Vietnamese historical summary reports state that PFC Nidds and PFC Hasenbeck were killed in Quang Ngai Province by guerrilla forces."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

We were informed of the personal effects found in the MR 5 Museum. None of us are aware of the historical summary cited above. A question begging to be asked is "Why no reference to Thomas Mangino and David Winters. In reviewing the photos of personal effects, we noted that only Paul Hasenbeck's dog tags appear to be in the Da Nang Museum. Where are the dog tags of Thomas Mangino, David Winters and Daniel Nidds?"

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ITEM 5: CONCLUSIONS:

SECTION B:

"Analysis of witness testimony along with Senior Col. Dai's diary indicates that the four American soldiers were led to an ambush site, killed and buried as reported. Team members interviewed a total of 8 witnesses, of which one, Mr. Bong, provided strong firsthand information concerning his participation in the ambush and killing of the four American soldiers." "...All witnesses provided testimony which was very detailed and corroborated well with one another as well as with Col. Dai's diary.

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

After a careful review of Col. Dai's diary, we can only conclude that the diary was a carefully constructed propaganda piece of the times. The writing style and propaganda contained within the diary make this account suspect at best. You choose to ignore the portion of the

diary which details a massacre by American troops. To refresh your memory we quote "The US paint of democracy, civilization had gone. The most cruel monster of the 20th century revealed his true colors. The US troops jumped into the crowd, seized 10 of our people, blindfolded them and took them away. Gun shots were heard from the far away fields. Then they returned to force our compatriots to observe one minute of silence for the dead. The same thing happened again and again for three times. The last time they arrested up to 25 people. The rest of the crowd, who counted about several hundred, remained indifferent, astonishingly calm. Not a single cry was uttered, even their breathing remained stable. A quiet atmosphere prevailed, full of pride, typical of the genuine Vietnamese in face of threats of imprisonment, killing by the barbarous enemy."

If you expect us to believe the diary as an accurate account of our loved ones death, we must then also believe the U. S. government covered up a massacre equal to My Lai. The fact is that none of the details regarding the death of our loved ones or the massacre are true. Col. Dai's diary is propaganda pure and simple. John Kerry in a staged event managed to convince the media he had accurate information. The DPMO and JTF-FA continues to perpetuate that myth. Perhaps the full diary should be made available to the media? If that were to happen, they might choose to look into the massacrer detailed by Col. Dai. That should put the diary in its proper category as pure FICTION.

The diary stated "a 14 year old girl said: 'at that time we had not enough time to bury the last of them." So I had to sit on his body and tried to submerge it, but it would not sink." This implies that only one body was put in the water. Yet, the witnesses told JTF-FA that all four were put in the river. Records prove that no official search teams entered the village until at least 1800 hours (6:00PM). This would have given the Vietnamese ample time to bury the four men. Over the next several weeks Vietnamese reported various grave sites. Again, records prove that each site was investigated and dug up. All that was found was a 250 lb. bomb.

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RECOMMENDATION: - "Fate determined for all four individuals associated with this case."

We say -- WRONG - WRONG - WRONG - WRONG!!!!

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

All intelligence reports, the inconsistencies of the witness statements, the failure of the search teams to find anything, and the obvious fabrication that is Col. Dai's Diary prove -- CAPTURE.

Now we come to the DPMO report. Many of the items discussed in this report mirror the JTF-FA report. We will hit the high points, or perhaps we should say low points, as this fiction is an insult to our intelligence.

SUMMARY/WARTIME REPORTING:

"The first sampan returned to base, and the second was last seen 200 meters behind. Personnel in the second sampan were last seen in conversation with a local resident, also in a sampan."

"15 minutes later, 20 - 30 rounds of small arms fire were heard from Thuong Hoa."

"An extensive area search, including the river bottom, revealed no trace of any of the four men..." "The water search was apparently based on false information from local VC. See investigation results."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

According to the JTF-FA reports the witnesses repeated the story that the men were first put in the river. One witness even describes how several days later, she saw a portion of a body float to the surface. This necessitated the first exhumation and reburial. If, as the DPMO report suggests the "water search was apparently based on false information from local VC" that false information is still being given to JTF-FA. Since the false information, fits the DPMO's version of events, it becomes creditable.

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EVIDENCE SURVIVED INCIDENT:

"POSSIBLE"

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

Evidence of survival is not only possible, it is probable. Based on the detailed information cited above, all 4 were alive on 5 May 1967. Additionally, Daniel Nidds was possibly identified as a POW twice. JPRC held information in 1971 that referred to David Winters as a "Possible POW."

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EVIDENCE CAPTURED/IN PRISON SYSTEM

"Spate of agent reports indicating capture: veracity of these reports is uncertain."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

In the words of the CIA - "reports evaluated possible true."

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"Wartime source selected photos of PFC Nidds as "Possibly" one of dozens of US POWs seen in military region (MR) Tri Thien Hue: PFC Nidds Missing in MR-5.

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

A recent evaluation of the identifications of these photos was placed in Daniel Nidds file. Listing each POW/MIA by name, the DPMO states why the identifications could not be accurate. However, there is no mention or evaluation of the other information provided in the 18 page report. No mention is made regarding the drawings of the camp and their accuracy. No mention is made of the detailed personnel structure of the camp. The source listed personnel working in the camp in great detail. Source provided names, ages, section in which they worked, and the names of their village. Where is the evaluation of the balance of this report? Based on the effort to withhold this reports full evaluation, we can only assume that the information provided on the camp command structure was accurate. Assuming that, we must then assume the sighting of Daniel Nidds is also accurate.

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"Another wartime source selected PFC Nidds' photo, apparently at random. Report has dubious intelligence value."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

This report was declared of "dubious intelligence value" because the source identified the three men as "two Negroes and a Caucasian." When he review the pre-capture photo album, he identified Daniel Nidds, Harry Ravenna, and Michael Burke. The three are Caucasian. Therefore the report was declared of "dubious intelligence value." However, JTF-FA and DPMO is willing to accept Vietnamese identification of Thomas Mangino as black due to his dark skin. To quote: "it is not uncommon for Vietnamese to describe dark skinned men as black." If you stand by this quote, you must accept this sighting report as accurate. Try as you might, we will not allow you to rewrite the rules to suit the circumstance.

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"Other Sources reported U. S. graves in the area at the time. Reliability of these reports is also tenuous."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

You fail to mention that all grave site reports were thoroughly investigated with only a 250 lb bomb found in one of the graves reported by local Vietnamese.

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JOINT OR UNILATERAL INVESTIGATION

KERRY CODEL, DECEMBER 1992

"Wartime Diary of Col. Pham Duc Dia..."

"Entry on this case based on Dai's discussions, few days after incident, with locals directly involved. Details consistent with joint investigation witnesses. Bodies buried three times to avoid detection. Entry describes false information from local woman to US searchers, which apparently led to the extensive, fruitless underwater search. April 1993 interview of Col. Dai confirmed he did not see events, contrary to news accounts of Kerry Codel but got details from locals, consistent with diary."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

Lets, start with the simple error first. Col. Dai's diary was presented to the Kerry Codel in November of 1992, not December. The presentation was filmed and aired on ABC Nightly News. Had it not been for that airing only God knows when we would have been informed of the diary's existence. We are also aware that the diary was in US hand as early as 1991, making the presentation of the diary a staged event to bolster the status of Senator John Kerry and contribute to the "tawdry illusion of progress" so aptly described by Col. Mike Peck. Additionally, Col. Dai was interviewed by ABC news and stated he witnessed the ambush and killing. This was clearly a lie. DPMO knew the first hand account of Col. Dai was a lie. Yet, it chose NOT to inform the families.

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ARCHIVAL RESEARCH 1993.

"Several items of identification media and other personal documents of all four men found at MR-5 museum. Historical summary with Nidds' media indicted "guerrillas and people killed (him)... in Ginh Son district..."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

While we are aware of this portion of the information, we are unaware of the historical summary mentioning both Daniel Nidds and Paul Hasenbeck. Which report is true? When were they obtained? When did you intend to inform the families? We would also like to know where the Ginh Son district is in relation to the location of loss?

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ARCHIVAL RESEARCH TEAM INTERVIEW MAY 1993

"Three additional witness, all of whom had personally seen the four bodies and had helped bury them in the third and final grave site. A sand bar in a tributary to Tra Bong River indicated site now under two meters of water due to broken dam upstream. Location nominally consistent with that given by earlier witnesses. All had general knowledge of preceding events. Consistent with earlier witnesses and two had participate in earlier (second) burial."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

One of the witnesses interview in the second report was reported dead by a witness in the first report. Additionally the witnesses in the second report all state different reasons for the movements of the bodies. See our previous three letter (all unanswered) for details.

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#### ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDED FUTURE ACTION

"Analysis: Witness information. Reinforced by contemporary diary. Clearly establishes these men were killed and buried by guerrillas."

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

Based on the information cited above, your analysis and recommended future action is clearly --

WRONG - WRONG - WRONG - WRONG!!!!

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ASSESSMENT:

"FOUR MEN KILLED"

CITING THE FACT PRESENTED ABOVE, WE AGAIN SAY

WRONG - WRONG - WRONG - WRONG!!!!

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We agree on two points in this report. The first is that men have not been found alive nor have their remains been recovered. The second point of agreement is the likelihood of additional information. However, we wonder if the answers lay solely in Hanoi. We wonder how much information on our loved ones case lies in the files of JTF-FA and DPMO withheld from us by our own government.

Perhaps there should be less effort put into creative writing and more effort put into the details of our loved ones case. Reports such as the two cited here are an insult to our intelligence.

Please note that this letter is signed by the primary next of kin of all four men captured on April 21, 1967.

Very truly yours,

Erma Hasenbeck  
Mrs. Erma Hasenbeck (PNOK)

Connie J. Mangino  
Mrs. Connie Mangino (PNOK)

Mae Nidds  
Mrs. Mae Nidds (PNOK)

Thaddeus Nidds  
Mr. Thaddeus Nidds (PNOK)

Robert S. Winters  
Mr. Robert Winters (PNOK)

Mrs. Angelo Mangino  
Mrs. Angelo Mangino (SNOK)  
Mr. Angelo Mangino  
Mr. Angelo Mangino (SNOK)

Jeanie Hasenbeck  
Jeanie Hasenbeck (Sister)  
POW/MIA Paul Hasenbeck

Robert J. Hasenbeck  
Robert Hasenbeck (Brother)  
POW/MIA Paul Hasenbeck

CC: President William J. Clinton  
Senator Bob Smith  
Senator Christopher Bond  
Senator John Danforth  
Senator John Glenn  
Senator Howard Metzenbaum  
Senator Alfonse D'Amato  
Senator Daniel Moynahan  
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Congressman Maurice Hinchey  
Congressman Thomas Lantos  
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General John Shalikashvili  
Major General John H. Admire  
Lt. Col. Mack Brooks  
Mr. Sydney Schanberg