

INVESTIGATION OF CASE 1950 (SHINE)

ON 2 DECEMBER 1972, CAPT ANTHONY C. SHINE WAS THE PILOT OF THE LEAD A7-D, (#71-0312), IN A FLIGHT OF TWO AIRCRAFT ON A RECONNAISSANCE/ ESCORT MISSION OVER LAOS. SHORTLY AFTER REACHING THEIR ASSIGNED ORBIT, CAPT SHINE INDICATED TO HIS WINGMAN THAT HE WANTED TO VISUALLY RECONNOITER A SECTION OF ROAD IN THE "FISHES MOUTH," A PORTION OF ROUTE #7 BETWEEN GRID COORDINATES UG 938563 AND VG 112 468. CAPT SHINE THEN DESCENDED FOR A CLOSER LOOK.

AFTER ABOUT TEN MINUTES, DURING WHICH TIME THE WINGMAN SAW CAPT SHINE'S AIRCRAFT SEVERAL TIMES, (ONLY INTERMITTENTLY BECAUSE OF THE CLOUD COVER), MANEUVERING UP AND DOWN ROUTE #7, HE WAS UNABLE TO ESTABLISH RADIO CONTACT. THE WINGMAN THEN NOTIFIED CRICKET, (THE AIRBORNE COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER), THAT CONTACT HAD BEEN LOST WITH THE FLIGHT LEADER AT 0950 HOURS.

AIRCRAFT SEARCHING THE AREA REPORTED MUZZLE FLASHES AND GROUND FIRE. A POSSIBLE CRASH SITE WAS REPORTED AT VG 126417, BY A FLIGHT OF F4'S. SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) FORCES ARRIVED IN THE SEARCH AREA AT 1300 HOURS, (2 DECEMBER), AND REPORTED THAT THE POSSIBLE CRASH SITE APPEARED TO BE A BRUSH FIRE AND THAT THERE WAS NO VISIBLE WRECKAGE. SAR EFFORTS WERE TERMINATED ON 3 DECEMBER 1972 WITH NO RADIO OR VISUAL CONTACT REPORTED.

IN MARCH 1975 A SOURCE REPORTED THAT IN 1971 HE HAD ASSISTED NORTH VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS IN INVESTIGATION OF A CRASH SITE AT VG 157405. SOURCE STATED THAT AT ABOUT 1000 HOURS A JET AIRCRAFT HAD SUDDENLY CRASHED WHILE DIVING IN THE VICINITY OF THE CHAO RIVER VALLEY. AT THE CRASH SITE, SOURCE OBSERVED A LONG SWATH OF BURNED TREES ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE RIVER. PIECES OF METAL AND BURNED WRECKAGE WERE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE AREA. SINCE THE SOURCE HAD ONLY A VAGUE RECOLLECTION OF THE TIME OF THE CRASH AND VISIT TO THE SITE, IT MAY REFER TO CAPT SHINE'S AIRCRAFT.

PRIOR TO THE AUGUST 1987 VESSEY-THACH AGREEMENT, RECALCITRANCE ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAM COMMUNIST PARTY PRECLUDED ANY VISITS TO OR GROUND INSPECTIONS OF THE SITES INVOLVED IN THIS CASE. CAPT SHINE'S NAME AND IDENTIFYING DATA WERE TURNED OVER TO THE FOUR-PARTY JOINT MILITARY TEAM WITH A REQUEST FOR ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE. NO RESPONSE WAS FORTHCOMING. CAPT SHINE IS CURRENTLY CARRIED IN THE PRESUMPTIVE STATUS OF DEAD, BODY NOT RECOVERED.

4 May 1987, SOURCE PROVIDED LIMITED HEARSAY INFORMATION CONCERNING A U.S. PILOT KILLED DURING CAPTURE AND FIRSTHAND INFORMATION CONCERNING AN ALLEGED PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SAME PILOT WHICH WAS ON DISPLAY AT THE TRUONG SON (NOTE: NAME DERIVED FROM THE TRUONG SON MOUNTAIN RANGE ENCOMPASSING THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL) DISTRICT WORKER'S CLUB IN "BAN NONG DE" VILLAGE, VICINITY GRID COORDINATES VG 0847. THIS INFORMATION PROBABLY CORRELATES TO CAPT SHINE.

26 April 1990, THE CORRELATION WITH THIS INCIDENT IS BASED ON IDENTIFICATION MEDIA DATA ONLY. THE SOURCE CORRECTLY PROVIDED CAPTAIN SHINE'S NAME AND

RELIGION.

15 January 1991, SOURCE CORRECTLY PROVIDED IDENTIFICATION MEDIA INFORMATION ON CAPTAIN SHINE. CORRELATION IS BASED ON IDENTIFICATION MEDIA ONLY.

8 April 1991, SOURCE REPORTED THE CORRECT FIRST NAME, MIDDLE INITIAL AND SERVICE NUMBER OF CAPTAIN SHINE. CORRELATION BASED ON IDENTIFICATION MEDIA INFORMATION ONLY.

21 October 1991, THE SOURCE OF THIS REPORT CORRECTLY PROVIDED THE NAME, SERVICE NUMBER, BLOOD TYPE AND RELIGION OF CAPTAIN SHINE. CORRELATION BASED ON IDENTIFICATION MEDIA ONLY.

A JCRC PREPARED NEGOTIATION FOLDER WAS PASSED ON ANTHONY CAMERON SHINE DURING THE 9-28 SEP 1982 NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES VISIT TO HANOI. JCRC PASSED A NEGOTIATION FOLDER DURING THE 25-28 SEP 85 TECHNICAL MEETING IN HANOI. JCRC DISCUSSED THIS CASE WITH THE VNOSMP DURING THE 1 - 3 JUNE 1988, TECHNICAL MEETING IN HANOI.

AN INVESTIGATION TEAM OF JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING VISITED THE MUANG SEN AREA ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS DURING JULY 1993, MAY 1994, AND AGAIN IN JULY 1994 TO INVESTIGATE THIS CASE.

--DURING THE INITIAL VISIT IN JULY 1993, THE TEAM MET WITH BOTH KY SON DISTRICT OFFICIAL AND NGHE AN PROVINCE OFFICIALS. NONE OF THE OFFICIALS PROVIDED ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS CASE. THE TEAM ALSO CONTACTED RESIDENTS IN BAN NONG DE (NOTE: SHOWN ON AVAILABLE U.S. MAPS AS BAN NONG HIE) CONCERNING A REPORT BY A REFUGEE INDICATING THAT A PHOTOGRAPH OF A DECEASED U.S. PILOT WAS DISPLAYED ANNUALLY AT THE LOCAL WORKERS CLUB. NO INFORMATION CONCERNING THE REPORTED PHOTO WAS OBTAINED. A WITNESS, MR LE VAN QUYNH, STATED THAT SOMETIME BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1971 AND APRIL 1972 HE OBSERVED THE CRASH OF A U.S. ABOUT ONE KILOMETER SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 7. ABOUT 17 DAYS AFTER THE CRASH, MR QUYNH SAW A GROUP OF SOLDIERS CARRYING THE BODY OF AN AMERICAN, WHOM HE BELIEVED WAS THE PILOT OF THE AIRCRAFT HE OBSERVED TO HAVE CRASHED. MR QUYNH LATER OBSERVED THE SAME SOLDIERS BURYING THE BODY CLOSER TO HIGHWAY 7. MR QUYNH GUIDED THE TEAM TO AN OBVIOUS CRASH SITE LOCATED AT VG 16614153. THE TEAM WAS ABLE TO RECOVER A LIMITED NUMBER OF METAL PIECES OF AIRCRAFT. MR QUYNH ALSO GUIDED THE TEAM TO THE PLACE WHERE HE OBSERVED THE SOLDIERS BURYING THE BODY AT VG 166425, BUT WAS NOT ABLE TO POINT OUT A SPECIFIC GRAVE SITE TO FACILITATE AN EXCAVATION. MR QUYNH SHOWED THE TEAM A PILOT'S HELMET, WHICH HE SAID HE FOUND NEAR THE CRASH SITE ABOUT THREE YEARS AFTER THE INCIDENT. THE HELMET DID NOT CONTAIN ANY MARKINGS OR OTHER INFORMATION THAT MIGHT ASSIST IN IDENTIFYING THE PILOT. THE U.S. TEAM CHIEF OPINED THAT ALL LEADS HAD BEEN EXHAUSTED AND FURTHER RECOMMENDED THAT THIS CASE BE PLACED IN THE "PENDING" CATEGORY. THE SEARCH AND RECOVERY SPECIALIST OPINED THAT THE SITE SHOULD BE CLOSED AND THE REMAINS CONSIDERED AS "UNRECOVERABLE."

--ALTHOUGH THIS CASE WAS RECOMMENDED FOR "PENDING" STATUS, AND THE REMAINS

WERE JUDGED BY THE TEAM AS "NONRECOVERABLE," THE TEAM LATER DETERMINED THAT AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE OBTAINED DURING THE INITIAL VISIT PROVED TO BE FROM A MODEL A7-D AIRCRAFT, AND THE A7-D FLOWN BY CAPT SHINE WAS THE ONLY AIRCRAFT OF THAT TYPE LOST IN THE GENERAL AREA OF KY SON DISTRICT. THIS RESULTED IN A SECOND VISIT DURING MAY 1994 WHEN THE TEAM AGAIN MET WITH BOTH DISTRICT AND PROVINCE LEVEL OFFICIALS OF THE SRV GOVERNMENT, BUT AGAIN NO INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED. THE WITNESS PREVIOUSLY INTERVIEWED, MR LE VAN QUYNH, STATED THAT HE HAD ACTUALLY OBSERVED THE BODY OF THE PILOT, STILL IN THE EJECTION SEAT, AND NEAR THAT LOCATION HE SAW AN UNOPENED PARACHUTE. HE THEN PROVIDED A SPECIFIC GRAVE SITE LOCATION, AND AN EXCAVATION PRODUCED SIX PIECES OF BONE AND SEVERAL POSSIBLE PIECES OF UNIFORM CLOTH AND PARACHUTE MATERIAL. THREE WITNESSES, WHO SAID THEY HAD KNOWN ABOUT THE BURIAL SITE SINCE 1972, APPROACHED THE TEAM BRIEFLY, BUT DEPARTED THE AREA AFTER DECLINING TO BE INTERVIEWED. THE TEAM FOUND FRESH GREEN LEAVES IN THE GRAVE, AND NOTED THAT SOME RECOVERED ITEMS WERE BURNED WHILE OTHERS WERE NOT, AND THAT ADDITIONALLY, SOME ITEMS WERE DAMAGED WHILE OTHERS WERE NOT. MR QUYNH OFFERED NO EXPLANATION CONCERNING THE CONDITION OF THE RECOVERED ITEMS.

--DURING THE THIRD VISIT TO THE AREA, MR QUYNH WAS ALSO UNABLE TO OFFER ANY EXPLANATION AS TO THE CONDITION OF THE GRAVE SITE OR ITEMS RECOVERED FROM IT. MR QUYNH DID MENTION THE POSSIBILITY THAT UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS FROM NEIGHBORING LAOS ENTERED VIETNAM AND DISTURBED THE GRAVE. AS DURING PREVIOUS VISITS, THE THIRD VISIT RESULTED IN NO INFORMATION BEING PROVIDED BY DISTRICT OR PROVINCE LEVEL OFFICIALS. THE U.S. TEAM CHIEF HAS RECOMMENDED THIS CASE FOR REINVESTIGATION, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE REPORTS OF REMAINS FOR SALE, WHICH HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH IDENTIFICATION MEDIA REPORTING CORRELATED TO CAPT SHINE.

Bill Bell's Assessment:

THE OPINION OF THE TEAM CHIEF THAT THIS CASE SHOULD BE REINVESTIGATED, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE REPORTS IN LAOS OF REMAINS ASSOCIATED WITH "DOG TAG" INFORMATION CORRELATING TO CAPT SHINE AVAILABLE FOR SALE, PRESENTS ONE POSSIBLE OPTION. HOWEVER, THE VERY CLEAR HISTORICAL RECORD OF MANIPULATION ON THE PART OF VIETNAM REGARDING SIMILAR CASES, AND THE FACT THAT THE AREA WAS UNDER THE CONTROL OF VIETNAMESE MILITARY FORCES AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT PRESENTS A VERY COMPELLING ARGUMENT FOR CONTINUING THE INVESTIGATION IN BOTH VIETNAM AND LAOS.

PERHAPS THE MOST GLARING DISCREPANCY IN THIS CASE IS THE ALLEGED INABILITY OF THE OFFICIALS OF KY SON DISTRICT, NGHE AN PROVINCE, AND MILITARY REGION 4, AND FINALLY THE CENTRAL MILITARY MUSEUM IN HANOI TO PROVIDE AMPLIFYING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SHOOT-DOWN OF CAPT SHINE'S AIRCRAFT. ONE REFUGEE SOURCE IN THAILAND REPORTED THE SHOOT-DOWN OF A U.S. AIRCRAFT WHICH STRUCK A TALL TREE NEAR THE NAM MO RIVER. THIS ACCOUNT BEARS SOME SIMILARITIES WITH THE ACCOUNT PROVIDED BY THE WITNESS INTERVIEWED BY THE JOINT TEAM. ADDITIONALLY, THE SAME REFUGEE SOURCE PROVIDED A SEPARATE ACCOUNT OF THE SHOOT-DOWN WITH A PROBABLE

CORRELATION TO CASE 0788. THE REFUGEE DESCRIBED THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE LOSS INCIDENT AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH "TARGET FIXATION," WHICH EXPERIENCE INDICATES OCCURS WITH GREATER FREQUENCY IN INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE A1E AND SIMILAR TYPE AIRCRAFT. HE ALSO CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED THE LOCATION OF NAM CHAO HAMLET, WHICH WAS CONFIRMED BY THE JOINT TEAM. THIS SAME REFUGEE SOURCE REPORTED THAT THE OFFICIALS OF KY SON DISTRICT ROUTINELY PHOTOGRAPHED CRASH SITE SCENES, AND HE IDENTIFIED MR VUE CHUNG PAO AS THE DISTRICT CHAIRMAN WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHING THE WRECKAGE ASSOCIATED WITH CASE 0788. THERE IS NO MENTION IN THE TEAM'S DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION THAT ANY ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO CONTACT AND INTERVIEW MR PAO. MOREOVER, AT LEAST FOUR PHOTOGRAPHS DISCOVERED IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE CENTRAL MUSEUM IN HANOI HAVE ALREADY BEEN CORRELATED TO CASES 0264 AND 0265. THESE TWO CASES HAVE INCIDENT LOCATIONS IN TUONG DUONG, WHICH BORDERS KY SON DISTRICT. DURING 1973, AN IDENTIFICATION CARD OF CASE 0621, WHICH HAS AN INCIDENT LOCATION IN KY SON DISTRICT, WAS OBSERVED IN A FILM SHOWN IN HANOI. A PROVEN MOTION PICTURE CAPABILITY FURTHER INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD THAT AT LEAST SOME STILL PHOTOGRAPHY WAS TAKEN SHORTLY AFTER INCIDENTS IN KY SON DISTRICT OCCURRED. BASED ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CRASH INCIDENTS AND THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE BODIES OF THE PILOTS WERE BASICALLY INTACT AFTER IMPACT, THE NVRC BELIEVES THAT THE PHOTOGRAPH SAID TO BE ON DISPLAY AT THE TRUONG SON DISTRICT WORKER'S CLUB MAY POSSIBLY CORRELATE TO EITHER CASE 0606 OR CASE 1560.

THE PRIMARY WITNESS INTERVIEWED BY THE JOINT TEAM, MR LE VAN QUYNH, REPORTED THAT HE IS OF THE THAI ETHNIC MINORITY IN MUANG SEN. ALTHOUGH IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT MR QUYNH IS AN ETHNIC THAI WITH LONG-TIME RESIDENCE IN THE AREA, PREVIOUS REPORTING INDICATES THAT THE AREA OF THIS INCIDENT IS INHABITED PRIMARILY BY ETHNIC H'MONG, SUCH AS THE REPORTED DISTRICT CHAIRMAN, MR VUE CHUNG PAO. WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF HAVING HEARD MR QUYNH'S DIALECT AND VOCABULARY, AND NOT HAVING OBSERVED HIS DRESS AND DEMEANOR, IT IS DIFFICULT TO FURTHER EVALUATE HIS ROLE IN THE VIETNAMESE MANAGED INVESTIGATION. IN FACT, WHEN CAPT SHINE'S DAUGHTER INQUIRED CONCERNING THIS ASPECT OF THE INVESTIGATION, SHE WAS INFORMED BY THE DPMO THAT "WITNESSES WERE INTERVIEWED BY AN EXPERIENCED CAMBODIAN LINGUIST." THERE IS NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE WHICH SUGGESTS THE INVOLVEMENT OF WITNESSES OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF CAMBODIA. THE EMPLOYMENT OF A CAMBODIAN LINGUIST MAY, HOWEVER, ACCOUNT FOR SOME OF THE ERRORS CONTAINED IN THE TEAM'S REPORTS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE TEAM RECOMMENDED THAT A REPORT OF REMAINS LOCATED AT "TUNG (MOUNTAIN) HAI HIN (UG 075514) BE INVESTIGATED. IN THE LAO LANGUAGE, RATHER THAN A MOUNTAIN WITH THE TOPONYM "TUNG," THIS DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE ACTUALLY PERTAINS TO THE "PLAIN OF JARS" REGION.

CONCERNING THE THOROUGHNESS AND OBJECTIVITY OF THE ACTUAL CONDUCT OF THE INVESTIGATION, IT IS NOT CLEAR AS TO WHEN OFFICIALS OF BOTH THE LOCAL AND CENTRAL AUTHORITIES GAINED POSSESSION OF SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION ON THIS CASE PROVIDED BY SOURCES (REFUGEES AND DEFECTORS) NO LONGER UNDER THE CONTROL OF VIETNAM. WHEN CAPT SHINE'S DAUGHTER INQUIRED CONCERNING THE ASSIGNMENT OF QUALIFIED INVESTIGATORS TO THIS CASE, SHE WAS INFORMED BY THE DPMO THAT "EVERY

TEAM HAS EXPERIENCED ANALYSTS WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE CASE BEING INVESTIGATED." ALTHOUGH AN ANALYST CAN BE EXPECTED TO INTERPRET AND EVALUATE ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED, IT WAS NOT CLEAR AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE ANALYSTS ACCOMPANYING THE JOINT TEAM HAD WARTIME EXPERIENCE IN THE AREA OF OPERATIONS. THERE WAS ALSO NO MENTION OF THE PRESENCE OF SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL TRAINED IN INTERROGATION OF WITNESSES OR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. ACCEPTED STANDARDS FOR ALL U.S. INVESTIGATORY AGENCIES CALL FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF A QUALIFIED, PROFESSIONAL INVESTIGATOR/SUPERVISOR AT THE FIELD LEVEL FOR INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. THE CASE FILES FORWARDED TO THE NVRC BY THE NEXT-OF-KIN IN THIS CASE DO NOT REFLECT THAT THIS GENERALLY ACCEPTED STANDARD HAS BEEN UPHELD. CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF DETAILED CASE INFORMATION TO VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES FAR IN ADVANCE OF THE ACTUAL CONDUCT OF THE JOINT INVESTIGATION, THE NVRC BELIEVES THAT THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES MAY FEEL COMPELLED TO TAKE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE, DUE TO THEIR PERCEPTION THAT SUCH PROVISION INDICATES THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CONDONES SUCH ACTIVITY ON THEIR PART. FROM A LEGAL STANDPOINT, THE NVRC DOES AGREE, HOWEVER, WITH THE DPMO'S STATED POSITION THAT THIS ASPECT IS "IN THE INTELLIGENCE ARENA, SOURCES AND COLLECTION METHODS ARE TYPICALLY SAFEGUARDED. ANY DEPARTURE FROM ESTABLISHED PRACTICES WOULD REQUIRE A DECISION FROM DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POLICY OFFICIALS."

ALTHOUGH THE U.S. TEAM CONTINGENT WAS UNABLE TO SPECULATE ON MR QUYNH'S MOTIVATION FOR NOT BEING STRAIGHTFORWARD, APPARENTLY HE SEEKS TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION HE IS INTERESTED IN SOME TYPE OF REWARD. DUE TO HIS PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT AS A MACHINIST, MR QUYNH MAY BE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE DISPOSITION OF METAL SALVAGED FROM THE WRECKAGE OF THE AIRCRAFT THAN HE WOULD LEAD THE TEAM TO BELIEVE. PREVIOUS REPORTING INDICATES THAT LARGE PORTIONS OF WRECKAGE WERE REMOVED BY MILITARY TRUCK TO VINH CITY, WHERE MILITARY REGION 4 HEADQUARTERS WAS LOCATED AT THE TIME OF THIS INCIDENT. APPARENTLY SOME METAL FROM CRASH SITES WAS RETAINED BY THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS, HOWEVER, SINCE PREVIOUS REPORTING INDICATES THE PRESENCE OF A METAL SHOP FOR PRODUCTION OF CUTLERY IN THE PRISON CAMP LOCATED IN THE NAM CAN (POSSIBLE AKA THAM THALEO) CAVE COMPLEX (VG 0252). ADDITIONALLY, THE MENTION OF AN UNOPENED PARACHUTE BY MR QUYNH, AND THE SUBSEQUENT DISCOVERY BY THE TEAM OF SMALL PIECES OF PARACHUTE AT THE GRAVE SITE IS UNUSUAL. PARACHUTES WERE HIGHLY VALUED DURING THE WAR, FOR USE AS NECK SCARVES IN REWARDING THE UNIT CREDITED WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT, AND AS CANOPIES FOR SHADE. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT MR QUYNH, OR THE "SOLDIERS" HE CLAIMED TO HAVE OBSERVED BURYING THE BODY, WOULD HAVE DISCARDED A HIGHLY VALUED, UNOPENED PARACHUTE IN PROBABLE NEW CONDITION. MOREOVER, IF THE PARACHUTE WAS ACTUALLY UNOPENED AS STATED BY THE WITNESS MR QUYNH, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR PIECES OF THE PARACHUTE TO HAVE FALLEN INTO THE ALLEGED GRAVE SITE. THIS PARTICULAR ASPECT IS ALMOST AS INCREDULOUS AS THE DISCOVERY OF GREEN LEAVES IN THE GRAVE SITE BY THE JOINT TEAM. THE PIECES OF CLOTH COULD POSSIBLY BE EXPLAINED, IF THE BODY OF THE PILOT WAS WRAPPED IN THE PARACHUTE PRIOR TO BURIAL, BUT EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT THE NORMAL PROCEDURE IN SUCH INCIDENTS WAS TO WRAP THE BODY IN THE MORE SECURE AND READILY AVAILABLE 1.5 SQUARE METER BLUE PLASTIC RAIN PONCHOS OF STANDARD PAVN

ISSUE. CONCERNING POSSIBLE GRAVE SITES MANAGED BY PAVN IN THE AREA, IT MIGHT BE PRODUCTIVE FOR THE TEAM TO PURSUE THE REPORT OF TWO GRAVES, AS WELL AS OTHER INFORMATION, REPORTED BY THE REFUGEE SOURCE IN T84-207, T84-208, AND T84-209.

THE TEAM'S REPORT MENTIONED A HOUSE LOCATED ABOUT 100 METERS FROM THE ALLEGED GRAVE SITE. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THE HOUSE WAS UNOCCUPIED AT THE TIME OF THE TEAM'S VISIT. THERE WAS NO MENTION AS TO WHETHER THE TEAM ATTEMPTED TO IDENTIFY RESIDENTS OF THE HOUSE FOR THE CONDUCT OF FUTURE INTERVIEWS REGARDING THE BURIAL OR POSSIBLE DISTURBANCE OF THE GRAVE. ADDITIONALLY, ALTHOUGH THREE WITNESSES APPROACHED THE TEAM AT THE ALLEGED GRAVE SITE AND CLAIMED KNOWLEDGE OF THE GRAVE SINCE 1972, THEY WERE APPARENTLY ALLOWED TO DEPART THE AREA WITHOUT BEING INTERVIEWED. THERE WAS NO MENTION IN THE TEAM'S REPORT AS TO WHETHER THE THREE INDIVIDUALS WERE IDENTIFIED OR PHOTOGRAPHED TO FACILITATE FUTURE INTERVIEWS.

THE TEAM ALSO REPORTED GOING TO BAN NONG DE VILLAGE WHERE AN INQUIRY CONCERNING THE REPORTED ANNUAL DISPLAY OF THE PHOTOGRAPH OF A U.S. PILOT RESULTED IN A NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM VILLAGERS. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO MENTION IN THE REPORT AS TO WHETHER RESIDENTS WERE QUERIED CONCERNING OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS, OR WHETHER IT WAS IN FACT A LOCAL PRACTICE TO DISPLAY SUCH PHOTOS DURING SPECIFIC ANNUAL EVENTS. MOREOVER, NO MENTION WAS MADE AS TO WHETHER THE EXISTENCE OF THE WORKER'S CLUB, OR ANY SIMILAR SUCH MUSEUM OR TRADITION HOUSE, WAS CONFIRMED OR REFUTED. SUCH INFORMATION CAN OBVIOUSLY IMPACT ON THE CREDIBILITY OF PREVIOUS, AND FUTURE, REFUGEE SOURCES.

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ALTHOUGH THE TEAM RECOMMENDED PURSUING PREVIOUS REPORTS CONCERNING REMAINS AND DOG TAG INFORMATION FROM SOURCES IN LAOS, THERE WAS NO MENTION OF FUTURE EFFORTS TO LOCATE NEW SOURCES IN REFUGEE CAMPS OUTSIDE LAOS WHO PREVIOUSLY RESIDED IN THE INCIDENT AREA AT THE TIME OF CAPT SHINE'S LOSS. THIS ASPECT IS POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT, BECAUSE SUCH SOURCES HAVE THE POTENTIAL OF BEING REPATRIATED BACK INTO LAOS OR VIETNAM WHERE THEY WILL BE UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL.

IN RESPONSE TO A WRITTEN INQUIRY, THE DPMO HAS INFORMED CAPT SHINE'S DAUGHTER THAT "THE ABSENCE OF MATERIAL EVIDENCE IS NOT A CONCLUSIVE INDICATION THE PILOT EJECTED PRIOR TO IMPACT." APPARENTLY, BY THE STANDARD CONTAINED IN THIS STATEMENT, THE PRESENCE OF MATERIAL EVIDENCE IS ALSO NOT A CONCLUSIVE INDICATION THE PILOT REMAINED IN THE AIRCRAFT AT THE TIME OF IMPACT. BARRING THE IDENTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANT REMAINS, CLEARLY INDICATING LOSS OF LIFE BY CAPT SHINE, THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS, THE REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE TEAM, THE FACT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO CREDIBLE SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION REPORTS INDICATING THE DEATH OF CAPT SHINE, THE LACK OF POSITIVE COOPERATION ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT, THE PROBABLE MANIPULATION OF THE ALLEGED GRAVE SITE, AND THE QUESTIONABLE TESTIMONY OF THE WITNESSES ALL COMBINE TO FORM A COMPELLING BASIS FOR CONTINUING THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS CASE.

CORRELATION TO CASE 0788. THE REFUGEE DESCRIBED THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE LOSS INCIDENT AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH "TARGET FIXATION," WHICH EXPERIENCE INDICATES OCCURS WITH GREATER FREQUENCY IN INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE A1E AND SIMILAR TYPE AIRCRAFT. HE ALSO CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED THE LOCATION OF NAM CHAO HAMLET, WHICH WAS CONFIRMED BY THE JOINT TEAM. THIS SAME REFUGEE SOURCE REPORTED THAT THE OFFICIALS OF KY SON DISTRICT ROUTINELY PHOTOGRAPHED CRASH SITE SCENES, AND HE IDENTIFIED MR VUE CHUNG PAO AS THE DISTRICT CHAIRMAN WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHING THE WRECKAGE ASSOCIATED WITH CASE 0788. THERE IS NO MENTION IN THE TEAM'S DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION THAT ANY ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO CONTACT AND INTERVIEW MR PAO. MOREOVER, AT LEAST FOUR PHOTOGRAPHS DISCOVERED IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE CENTRAL MUSEUM IN HANOI HAVE ALREADY BEEN CORRELATED TO CASES 0264 AND 0265. THESE TWO CASES HAVE INCIDENT LOCATIONS IN TUONG DUONG, WHICH BORDERS KY SON DISTRICT. DURING 1973, AN IDENTIFICATION CARD OF CASE 0621, WHICH HAS AN INCIDENT LOCATION IN KY SON DISTRICT, WAS OBSERVED IN A FILM SHOWN IN HANOI. A PROVEN MOTION PICTURE CAPABILITY FURTHER INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD THAT AT LEAST SOME STILL PHOTOGRAPHY WAS TAKEN SHORTLY AFTER INCIDENTS IN KY SON DISTRICT OCCURRED. BASED ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CRASH INCIDENTS AND THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE BODIES OF THE PILOTS WERE BASICALLY INTACT AFTER IMPACT, THE NVRC BELIEVES THAT THE PHOTOGRAPH SAID TO BE ON DISPLAY AT THE TRUONG SON DISTRICT WORKER'S CLUB MAY POSSIBLY CORRELATE TO EITHER CASE 0606 OR CASE 1560.

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CONCERNING THE THOROUGHNESS AND OBJECTIVITY OF THE ACTUAL CONDUCT OF THE INVESTIGATION, IT IS NOT CLEAR AS TO WHEN OFFICIALS OF BOTH THE LOCAL AND CENTRAL AUTHORITIES GAINED POSSESSION OF SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION ON THIS CASE PROVIDED BY SOURCES (REFUGEES AND DEFECTORS) NO LONGER UNDER THE CONTROL OF VIETNAM. WHEN CAPT SHINE'S DAUGHTER INQUIRED CONCERNING THE ASSIGNMENT OF QUALIFIED INVESTIGATORS TO THIS CASE, SHE WAS INFORMED BY THE DPMO THAT "EVERY

TEAM HAS EXPERIENCED ANALYSTS WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE CASE BEING INVESTIGATED." ALTHOUGH AN ANALYST CAN BE EXPECTED TO INTERPRET AND EVALUATE ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED, IT WAS NOT CLEAR AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE ANALYSTS ACCOMPANYING THE JOINT TEAM HAD WARTIME EXPERIENCE IN THE AREA OF OPERATIONS. THERE WAS ALSO NO MENTION OF THE PRESENCE OF SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL TRAINED IN INTERROGATION OF WITNESSES OR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. ACCEPTED STANDARDS FOR ALL U.S. INVESTIGATORY AGENCIES CALL FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF A QUALIFIED, PROFESSIONAL INVESTIGATOR/SUPERVISOR AT THE FIELD LEVEL FOR INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. THE CASE FILES FORWARDED TO THE NVRC BY THE NEXT-OF-KIN IN THIS CASE DO NOT REFLECT THAT THIS GENERALLY ACCEPTED STANDARD HAS BEEN UPHELD. CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF DETAILED CASE INFORMATION TO VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES FAR IN ADVANCE OF THE ACTUAL CONDUCT OF THE JOINT INVESTIGATION, THE NVRC BELIEVES THAT THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES MAY FEEL COMPELLED TO TAKE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE, DUE TO THEIR PERCEPTION THAT SUCH PROVISION INDICATES THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CONDONES SUCH ACTIVITY ON THEIR PART. FROM A LEGAL STANDPOINT, THE NVRC DOES AGREE, HOWEVER, WITH THE DPMO'S STATED POSITION THAT THIS ASPECT IS "IN THE INTELLIGENCE ARENA, SOURCES AND COLLECTION METHODS ARE TYPICALLY SAFEGUARDED. ANY DEPARTURE FROM ESTABLISHED PRACTICES WOULD REQUIRE A DECISION FROM DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POLICY OFFICIALS."

ALTHOUGH THE U.S. TEAM CONTINGENT WAS UNABLE TO SPECULATE ON MR QUYNH'S MOTIVATION FOR NOT BEING STRAIGHTFORWARD, APPARENTLY HE SEEKS TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION HE IS INTERESTED IN SOME TYPE OF REWARD. DUE TO HIS PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT AS A MACHINIST, MR QUYNH MAY BE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE DISPOSITION OF METAL SALVAGED FROM THE WRECKAGE OF THE AIRCRAFT THAN HE WOULD LEAD THE TEAM TO BELIEVE. PREVIOUS REPORTING INDICATES THAT LARGE PORTIONS OF WRECKAGE WERE REMOVED BY MILITARY TRUCK TO VINH CITY, WHERE MILITARY REGION 4 HEADQUARTERS WAS LOCATED AT THE TIME OF THIS INCIDENT. APPARENTLY SOME METAL FROM CRASH SITES WAS RETAINED BY THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS, HOWEVER, SINCE PREVIOUS REPORTING INDICATES THE PRESENCE OF A METAL SHOP FOR PRODUCTION OF CUTLERY IN THE PRISON CAMP LOCATED IN THE NAM CAN (POSSIBLE AKA THAM THALEO) CAVE COMPLEX (VG 0252). ADDITIONALLY, THE MENTION OF AN UNOPENED PARACHUTE BY MR QUYNH, AND THE SUBSEQUENT DISCOVERY BY THE TEAM OF SMALL PIECES OF PARACHUTE AT THE GRAVE SITE IS UNUSUAL. PARACHUTES WERE HIGHLY VALUED DURING THE WAR, FOR USE AS NECK SCARVES IN REWARDING THE UNIT CREDITED WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT, AND AS CANOPIES FOR SHADE. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT MR QUYNH, OR THE "SOLDIERS" HE CLAIMED TO HAVE OBSERVED BURYING THE BODY, WOULD HAVE DISCARDED A HIGHLY VALUED, UNOPENED PARACHUTE IN PROBABLE NEW CONDITION. MOREOVER, IF THE PARACHUTE WAS ACTUALLY UNOPENED AS STATED BY THE WITNESS MR QUYNH, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR PIECES OF THE PARACHUTE TO HAVE FALLEN INTO THE ALLEGED GRAVE SITE. THIS PARTICULAR ASPECT IS ALMOST AS INCREDULOUS AS THE DISCOVERY OF GREEN LEAVES IN THE GRAVE SITE BY THE JOINT TEAM. THE PIECES OF CLOTH COULD POSSIBLY BE EXPLAINED, IF THE BODY OF THE PILOT WAS WRAPPED IN THE PARACHUTE PRIOR TO BURIAL, BUT EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT THE NORMAL PROCEDURE IN SUCH INCIDENTS WAS TO WRAP THE BODY IN THE MORE SECURE AND READILY AVAILABLE 1.5 SQUARE METER BLUE PLASTIC RAIN PONCHOS OF STANDARD PAVN

ISSUE. CONCERNING POSSIBLE GRAVE SITES MANAGED BY PAVN IN THE AREA, IT MIGHT BE PRODUCTIVE FOR THE TEAM TO PURSUE THE REPORT OF TWO GRAVES, AS WELL AS OTHER INFORMATION, REPORTED BY THE REFUGEE SOURCE IN T84-207, T84-208, AND T84-209.

THE TEAM'S REPORT MENTIONED A HOUSE LOCATED ABOUT 100 METERS FROM THE ALLEGED GRAVE SITE. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THE HOUSE WAS UNOCCUPIED AT THE TIME OF THE TEAM'S VISIT. THERE WAS NO MENTION AS TO WHETHER THE TEAM ATTEMPTED TO IDENTIFY RESIDENTS OF THE HOUSE FOR THE CONDUCT OF FUTURE INTERVIEWS REGARDING THE BURIAL OR POSSIBLE DISTURBANCE OF THE GRAVE. ADDITIONALLY, ALTHOUGH THREE WITNESSES APPROACHED THE TEAM AT THE ALLEGED GRAVE SITE AND CLAIMED KNOWLEDGE OF THE GRAVE SINCE 1972, THEY WERE APPARENTLY ALLOWED TO DEPART THE AREA WITHOUT BEING INTERVIEWED. THERE WAS NO MENTION IN THE TEAM'S REPORT AS TO WHETHER THE THREE INDIVIDUALS WERE IDENTIFIED OR PHOTOGRAPHED TO FACILITATE FUTURE INTERVIEWS.

THE TEAM ALSO REPORTED GOING TO BAN NONG DE VILLAGE WHERE AN INQUIRY CONCERNING THE REPORTED ANNUAL DISPLAY OF THE PHOTOGRAPH OF A U.S. PILOT RESULTED IN A NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM VILLAGERS. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO MENTION IN THE REPORT AS TO WHETHER RESIDENTS WERE QUERIED CONCERNING OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS, OR WHETHER IT WAS IN FACT A LOCAL PRACTICE TO DISPLAY SUCH PHOTOS DURING SPECIFIC ANNUAL EVENTS. MOREOVER, NO MENTION WAS MADE AS TO WHETHER THE EXISTENCE OF THE WORKER'S CLUB, OR ANY SIMILAR SUCH MUSEUM OR TRADITION HOUSE, WAS CONFIRMED OR REFUTED. SUCH INFORMATION CAN OBVIOUSLY IMPACT ON THE CREDIBILITY OF PREVIOUS, AND FUTURE, REFUGEE SOURCES.

3

ALTHOUGH THE TEAM RECOMMENDED PURSUING PREVIOUS REPORTS CONCERNING REMAINS AND DOG TAG INFORMATION FROM SOURCES IN LAOS, THERE WAS NO MENTION OF FUTURE EFFORTS TO LOCATE NEW SOURCES IN REFUGEE CAMPS OUTSIDE LAOS WHO PREVIOUSLY RESIDED IN THE INCIDENT AREA AT THE TIME OF CAPT SHINE'S LOSS. THIS ASPECT IS POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT, BECAUSE SUCH SOURCES HAVE THE POTENTIAL OF BEING REPATRIATED BACK INTO LAOS OR VIETNAM WHERE THEY WILL BE UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL.

IN RESPONSE TO A WRITTEN INQUIRY, THE DPMO HAS INFORMED CAPT SHINE'S DAUGHTER THAT "THE ABSENCE OF MATERIAL EVIDENCE IS NOT A CONCLUSIVE INDICATION THE PILOT EJECTED PRIOR TO IMPACT." APPARENTLY, BY THE STANDARD CONTAINED IN THIS STATEMENT, THE PRESENCE OF MATERIAL EVIDENCE IS ALSO NOT A CONCLUSIVE INDICATION THE PILOT REMAINED IN THE AIRCRAFT AT THE TIME OF IMPACT. BARRING THE IDENTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANT REMAINS, CLEARLY INDICATING LOSS OF LIFE BY CAPT SHINE, THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS, THE REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE TEAM, THE FACT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO CREDIBLE SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION REPORTS INDICATING THE DEATH OF CAPT SHINE, THE LACK OF POSITIVE COOPERATION ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT, THE PROBABLE MANIPULATION OF THE ALLEGED GRAVE SITE, AND THE QUESTIONABLE TESTIMONY OF THE WITNESSES ALL COMBINE TO FORM A COMPELLING BASIS FOR CONTINUING THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS CASE.

ONE REPORT WHICH SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED IS THE HEARSAY ACCOUNT OF TWO AMERICANS HELD IN BAN NONG DE VILLAGE DURING DECEMBER 1975. THIS REPORT IS TITLED"

JCRC RPT T91-355; HEARSAY OF TWO AMERICANS HELD IN A CAVE NEAR THE LAO-VIETNAMESE BORDER IN DECEMBER 1975"

IN THIS CASE THE SOURCE REPORTED THAT HE WAS CAPTURED BY PATHET LAO FORCES IN MUANG MO (UG9107), XIANGKHOANG PROVINCE, ON 24 DECEMBER 1975. HE AND SEVERAL OTHER LAO PRISONERS WERE TRANSPORTED BY HELICOPTER FROM MUANG MO TO NONG HET (UG9456), AND THEN BY MILITARY TRUCK ALONG ROUTE SEVEN ACROSS THE VIETNAMESE BORDER. APPROXIMATELY THREE KILOMETERS PAST THE BORDER THE TRUCK TURNED LEFT OFF OF ROUTE SEVEN AND CONTINUED FOR ABOUT ONE KILOMETER. THE LAO PRISONERS WERE UNLOADED AND FORCED INTO A CAVE ON THE SOUTH END OF AN UNIDENTIFIED MOUNTAIN. SOURCE STATED THAT THE TRUCK RIDE WAS AT NIGHT AND THE TRUCK WAS COVERED SO HE WAS NOT ABLE TO SEE THE SURROUNDING TERRAIN. SOURCE HEARD THE CAVE WAS NEAR BAN NONG HAE VILLAGE (POSSIBLY BAN NONG HIE VG0947). WHILE IN THE CAVE HE MET A 25 YEAR OLD HMONG ARMY LIEUTENANT (SOURCE COULD NOT RECALL HIS NAME), WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN TWO AMERICAN PRISONERS HELD IN A CAVE ON THE NORTHWEST END OF THE MOUNTAIN. THE LIEUTENANT TOLD SOURCE THAT HE HAD SEEN THE ALLEGED AMERICANS TWO OR THREE TIMES WHILE HE WAS ON A WORK DETAIL. THE LIEUTENANT SAID HE OBSERVED THE AMERICANS FROM A DISTANCE OF 30 TO 40 METERS AWAY, THAT THEY WERE TALL, HAD "YELLOW" HAIR, AND WERE WEARING ARM AND LEG CHAINS. SOURCE STATED THAT THE LIEUTENANT DID NOT KNOW THE NAMES OF THE TWO AMERICANS, THAT HE NEVER SPOKE TO THEM, AND NEVER HEARD THEM SPEAK TO THEIR VIETNAMESE GUARDS. THE LIEUTENANT TOLD SOURCE THE CAVE WITH THE TWO AMERICANS WAS LESS THAN ONE KILOMETER AWAY FROM THEIR CAVE. SOURCE STATED THAT THERE WERE ALMOST 100 LAO AND HMONG PRISONERS HELD IN THE CAVE ON THE SOUTH END OF THE MOUNTAIN AND THAT THEY WERE GUARDED BY PATHET LAO SOLDIERS. SOURCE STATED THAT THE LIEUTENANT DID NOT KNOW IF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS WERE PILOTS OR GROUND SOLDIERS. SOURCE GAVE JCRC REP A ROUGH SKETCH MAP OF CAVES AND SURROUNDING FEATURES.

THE SOURCE STATED THAT HE NEVER SAW THE ALLEGED AMERICAN PRISONERS AND THAT NO OTHER PRISONERS EVER REPORTED SEEING THEM. SOURCE SAID THAT HE AND FOUR OTHER PRISONERS MANAGED TO ESCAPE WHILE ON A WORK DETAIL CUTTING TREES IN APRIL 1976. SOURCE STATED THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW THE CURRENT LOCATION OF THE LIEUTENANT, BUT SOURCE RECALLS THAT HE WAS ORIGINALLY FROM BAN MUANG MO (UG9206), LAOS.

ALTHOUGH PREVIOUS REPORTING INDICATES LIVE AMERICANS CAPTURED IN THE AREA OF CAPT SHINE'S INCIDENT WERE TEMPORARILY HELD AND INTERROGATED IN KY SON DISTRICT, AND LATER MOVED TOWARD VINH, THIS MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN THE CASE AS OF LATE 1972, DUE TO OPERATIONS

CONDUCTED BY FRONT 31 IN THE PLAIN OF JARS. ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. CASUALTIES WAS MOST LIKELY REPORTED THROUGH POLITICAL/MILITARY CHANNELS TO THE CAMP FOR U.S. POW'S LOCATED IN THANH LAM VILLAGE (WF 385688), OR THE MR-4 HQ IN VINH CITY.

THE TRUCKS TARGETED BY CAPT SHINE MAY HAVE BEEN ORGANIC TO THE 11th MILITARY STATION, THE 500th OR 559th LOGISTICS GROUPS, OR POSSIBLY

PATHET LAO ALLIED DEUANE TRANSPORTATION GROUP 135, WHICH MOVED SUPPLIES FROM THE VIETNAM/LAO BORDER INTO THE PLAIN OF JARS AREA.

CONCERNING ORDER OF BATTLE INFORMATION AND POSSIBLE CADRE FOR INTERVIEW, THE FOLLOWING IS PROVIDED BY THE NVRC:

UNITS OPERATING IN THE AREA INCLUDED THE 165th, 174th, AND 209th REGIMENTS OF THE 312th DIV; THE 141st, 148th, 165th, AND 335th REGIMENTS OF THE 316th DIV; THE 866th INDEPENDENT REGIMENT; THE 88th REGIMENT OF THE 308C DIV; THE 16th ARTILLERY REGIMENT; THE 20th SAPPER REGIMENT; THE 27th SAPPER BATTALION; THE 25A, 25B, AND 45th ENGINEER BN'S; THE 195th TANK BN; MILITARY STATION (BINH TRAM) 11, WITH ONE ORGANIC 37mm AAA BN; AND MILITARY HOSPITAL 139 (VIEN 139). PATHET LAO UNITS IN THE AREA INCLUDED THE 1st, 2nd, 13th, 15th, 24th, 46th, 47th, 585th, 609th, and 701st BN'S.

AS A RESULT OF THE "KAN HOP KU KIET" CAMPAIGN IN LAOS, THE PAVN HIGH COMMAND ESTABLISHED THE 959th FRONT DURING 1969. THE 959th FRONT BEGAN CAMPAIGN 139, AND AT THAT TIME THE FORWARD COMMAND POST WAS LOCATED IN KHE TI, KY SON DISTRICT. IN 1970, WHEN THE 959th FRONT BEGAN CAMPAIGN 74B, THE FORWARD COMMAND POST WAS MOVED TO THAM HOA (CAVE), LOCATED JUST SOUTH OF BAN BAN. AS OF 1971, THE REAR HEADQUARTERS OF THE 959th FRONT WAS LOCATED IN CON CUONG (VG 9805), NGHE AN PROVINCE. THE 959th FRONT WAS COMPRISED OF ELEMENTS OF THE 316th DIV, THE 866th REGT, GROUP 463, AND GROUP 766. DURING 1972, FRONT 31 WAS ESTABLISHED FOR OPERATIONS ALONG ROUTE 7 AND 7B INTO THE PLAIN OF JARS. FRONT 31 WAS COMPRISED OF ELEMENTS OF THE 312th AND 316th DIV'S, AS WELL AS THE 2d AND 701st PATHET LAO BN'S.

THE COMMANDER OF PAVN VOLUNTEER FORCES IN CENTRAL LAOS WAS MG TRAN DO. THE PARTY CHAPTER SECRETARY (BI THU DANG BO MAT TRAN) FOR THE 959TH FRONT WAS SR COL HUYNH DAC HUONG. THE COMMANDER OF THE 959th FRONT WAS SR COL VU LAP (NOTE: REPORTEDLY DECEASED). THE POLITICAL COMMISSAR OF FRONT 31 WAS SR COL LE LINH. XA MAN WAS THE POLITICAL COMMISSAR FOR LAO FORCES IN THE PLAIN OF JARS CAMPAIGN. OTHER KNOWLEDGEABLE CADRE INCLUDE: DUNG MA (DEP CDR, FRONT 31), LE VU (DEP POLITICAL COMMISSAR FRONT 31), LE SON (DEP CHIEF OF STAFF

FRONT 31), HA QUOC TOAN (POLITICAL DIRECTOR FRONT 31), DOAN DO
(DEP POLITICAL DIRECTOR FRONT 31), NGUYEN NANG (CDR 312th DIV),
LE HOAN (CDR 316th DIV), THE HUNG (DEP CDR 316th DIV), PHAM NGOC
NHAN (CDR 174th REGT, LATER REPLACED BY HONG TAN), LY LAM BAO (POL
COMMISSAR 174th REGT), NGUYEN TUONG (Cofs 174th REGT), DINH THUAN
(POL DIRECTOR 174th REGT), HOANG CHIM (CDR 148th REGT), PHAM TRAN
(POL COMMISSAR 148TH REGT), TRUONG DANH DIEU (DEP CDR 148th REGT),
BUI NHU (DEP POL COMMISSAR 148th REGT), LE DON LUAN (POL DIR 14th
REGT), TRAN THAI (DEP POL DIR 148th REGT), TRAN LAM (DEP Cofs
148th REGT), PHUNG KINH (DEP Cofs 148th REGT), DAO TRONG LICH
(DEP Cofs 148th REGT).