



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301-2400

12 MAR 1992

INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

Ms. Colleen C. Shine  
Shine and Associates

Dear Ms. Shine:

This letter is to follow-up our conversation in my office on 4 March 1992 concerning your father's case. You requested information concerning USG efforts to investigate your father's case and information on future plans for investigation.

First, I must apologize for my confusion over your father's circumstances of loss. I briefly reviewed the information held by our office prior to our meeting. It indicated that your father was lost in Vietnam. I was confused because the dog tag reports were generated in Laos.

A case narrative folder prepared by the Joint Casualty Resolution Center was first passed to the Vietnamese by the National League of Families in 1982, with no response from the Vietnamese. Similarly, JCRC passed negotiation folders on your father's case during the September 1985 and the June 1988 technical meeting in Hanoi. In neither case have the Vietnamese responded to our requests for information.

Because your father's last known location was in western Nghe Tinh Province, in Vietnam, our negotiation efforts have been focused on the Vietnamese. Even had you father been lost just across the Lao border, he would likely have fallen into the hands of the Vietnamese, who controlled much of the territory along the border inside Laos during the Vietnam War.

I requested that the Joint Task Force review the work plan for Vietnam to determine when your father's case will be investigated. As you are aware, the Joint Task Force is focusing on discrepancy cases for priority investigation. These cases were mutually agreed on by the Presidential Emissary to Hanoi for POW-MIA Affairs, General John W. Vessey, and the Vietnamese. The joint teams are permitted only limited time in each region to investigate, so they expend the majority of their efforts on the discrepancy cases. When their scheduled work on discrepancy cases in a designated area is completed, they attempt to investigate all other cases which occurred in that same area. At this time, the Joint Task Force is unable to forecast when Captain Shine's case will be investigated.

We are now in the process of establishing a Joint Task Force Detachment in Vientiane, Laos. With a full-time presence in Laos, we will be able to investigate reports of citizens in possession of American remains. Once the Vientiane Detachment is fully operational, the Defense Intelligence Agency and Joint Task Force representatives will endeavor to follow-up the reports and photograph indicating that a private individual may have recovered the remains of your father. As that investigation is conducted, you will be notified through established service casualty affairs channels.

I trust that this information has been of assistance in responding to your concerns. If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at (703) 284-0946.

Sincerely,



Charles W. Gittins  
Major, USMC

Advisor for POW-MIA Affairs

cc:  
Robert Sheetz, DIA