



DEFENSE PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION OFFICE  
2400 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2400



10 6 FEB 1994

In reply refer to:  
I-93/46436

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADQUARTERS, AIR FORCE MILITARY PERSONNEL CENTER  
ATTENTION: George Atkinson

SUBJECT: Colleen Shine's Request for Information Concerning  
Lt Col Anthony C. Shine, REFNO 1950

Reference: JTF-FA ltr (J24 1771 Ser: 910) to  
HQ AFMPC/DPMCB, 6 Aug 93, w/CJTFFA Det One  
Bangkok msg, DTG 290220Z Jul 93, U (attached)

This responds to an inquiry of Ms. Colleen Shine, daughter of Lt Col Anthony C. Shine, concerning a Field Investigation Report associated with her father's case (reference a, attached.) The responses to Ms. Shine's questions constitute analysis by the JTF-FA and DPMO. Each office's inputs are provided as attachments.

Question: Has there been any indication that source 1 or 2 might be credible or have access to credible information regarding any of the names provided?

Answer: JTF-FA correlated the live sighting report (CB-93-020) to the REFNO 1950 incident based solely on the identification media ("dog tag") data the witness provided. With respect to credibility, the sources of the dog tag reports have been assessed not to be knowledgeable about REFNO 1950. Over the past few years, multiple sources have identified Lt Col Shine on the basis of his dog tags. In each case, either the source or the sub-source was interested in a reward in exchange for information. When US officials re-contacted these sources, none were able to provide any information beyond that recorded on the dog tags.

Question: Other than the data provided (partially incorrect in each case,) is there any indication that the sources may not be credible nor have any real information on the referenced missing Americans?

Answer: In addition to the previous answer, reference DPMO's attachment on dog tag reporting.

Question: Were sources interviewed by experienced, language-capable personnel with investigative backgrounds, working in a manner intended to elicit a forthright response?

Answer: The witnesses were interviewed by an experienced Cambodian linguist.



Question: Does JTF-FA plan to pursue this information further in my father's case and/or in any of the other cases referenced in this report? If so, how? If not, why?

Answer: Further investigation is not possible unless sources/subsources provide more details or evidence.

Question: Would JTF-FA please initiate contact with the sources and provide my name and address so that our family can follow up on the opportunity to gain further information on my father's case?

Answer: 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.

Question: As this report took place following recommendation to place REFNO 1950 in a pending category, does it have any bearing on the pending status?

Answer: No, the pending status only means that no further "field activity" will be conducted unless new information is received that warrants reinvestigation by a field team.

Question: What exactly does "pending" mean? Pending until the Vietnamese unilaterally provide further information on this case? Pending until JTF-FA asks the Vietnamese to unilaterally provide further information on this case? Pending until this issue and the people it involves grow too tired or old to fight for just treatment and an honest accounting?

Answer: A case is placed in a "pending" status when field investigators have exhausted all leads currently on file, interviewed all known and available witnesses, and surveyed or excavated all known or alleged sites. Several initiatives currently underway are designed to elicit such information, including the archival research and oral history programs. JTF-FA analysts continue to review all new information in an attempt to reach the fullest possible accounting.

Question: Were qualified, language-capable, experienced investigators assigned to this investigation?

Answer: Every JTF-FA investigation team includes at least one trained linguist; usually, there are two or more. Additionally, every team has experienced analysts who are familiar with the case being investigated.

Question: How were the witnesses selected/determined? Were there other possible witnesses who were not interviewed? If so, why were they not interviewed? Will they be interviewed?

Answer: JTF-FA is dependent on the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP) to locate witnesses. During the planning stage of operations, case narratives are provided to the VNOSMP so they can locate personnel who may have pertinent information and prepare them for interview by the time the teams arrive. During technical talks prior to each joint field activity, JTF-FA submits specific requirements such as requests for certain witnesses and documents. In addition, investigation teams are usually free to talk to local residents and/or canvass local areas in an attempt to elicit more information. In most cases, anyone in the local area with any "war-related" information is made available for interview. JTF-FA is not aware of any potential witnesses who were not interviewed during the REFNO 1950 investigation. In a situation where an individual having pertinent information is not available for interview during an investigation, a request is made to the VNOSMP to locate the individual and the case is scheduled for re-investigation. With respect to Lt Col Shine's investigation, the joint field activity team was granted access to villages in the loss vicinity where some of the older residents were asked if they had any information. None provided pertinent information.

Question: If part of the wreckage at the crash site probably correlates to an A-7 aircraft, why were these photos not included in the report? Please send them to us as soon as possible.

Answer: Photographs taken during investigations are forwarded to the service casualty offices upon request by the next of kin. To expedite matters, copies of photographs taken during the REFNO 1950 investigation are being forwarded directly to Ms. Shine.

Question: If the witness could not pinpoint an exact grave site, how do you know it is on a steep hill? It would be helpful to have a map that shows the actual coordinates of my father's loss with the reported crash location and burial site noted, as indicated by the witness.

Answer: The witness showed the team a 100-meter-by-100-meter area where he believes the pilot was buried. This entire area is on the side of a steep hill. JTF-FA is forwarding a map directly to Ms. Shine.

Question: Do investigators correlate the first witness' story to any specific incident? Does this bear on the witness' credibility or my father's incident? Is the incident referenced in Hieu Kiem village the only one recorded by the US, or is it merely the only one this witness was aware of? Is this village even relevant to my father's case at all?

Answer: JTF-FA analysts are unable to positively correlate the first witness' recollections with a specific loss incident. The reason is twofold: the vagueness of the witness' description of the incident and the fact that there were seven aircraft losses--two of which were not jets--within a 15 kilometer radius of the area referred to by the witness (Ke Nghieng bridge.) Assessing the "credibility" of a witness is difficult when so few details are provided; however, team interviewers believe that all witnesses who provided information during the REFNO 1950 investigation did their best to recall information and events that occurred over 20 years ago.

Question: The second witness says that one of two aircraft attacking trucks on Route 7 crashed into a mountain during a November 71 to March 72 time frame. What is the likelihood that my father's A-7 could have simply crashed rather than have been shot down?

Answer: JTF-FA files contain no information to indicate the cause of Lt Col Shine's crash.

Question: The witness said that within a month of the incident, he traveled to the area and saw soldiers burying the body of a pilot who was still in uniform. Is it common among villagers to be off by an entire year, especially considering the recovery of personal artifacts, the stated fear, the fact that it was the only incident he reported that ever occurred in that area during the war? Certainly they wouldn't have buried the pilot's weapons with him; were those recovered?

Answer: Based on past experience in analyzing information provided by Vietnamese witnesses, the recollection of an event is usually tied to seasons and/or cultural events rather than a time and date. Most Vietnamese living in rural areas during the war did not have the capability nor a requirement to accurately record events. This, coupled with the long passage of time concerning war-era events, possibly explains the inconsistency in dates. We do not have any information regarding Lt Col Shine's weapon.

Question: Does the witness recall seeing any type of name on the flight suit? Had the name been obviously removed? According to the witness, had the flight suit been intentionally tampered with, other than by natural weathering?

Answer: When the witness was asked what he specifically remembered about the body he allegedly observed, he was unable to recall any details other than what was reported in the Field Investigation Report. The witness stated that he only saw the body briefly and from a distance.

Question: If Vietnamese soldiers did bury his body or tamper with his crash site, might the Vietnamese government be able to unilaterally provide information on my father's case? Have they been asked whether they could provide such information? If not, will you pursue it?

Answer: The Vietnamese Government has been repeatedly asked through various sources for any information regarding unaccounted for US personnel. Information relevant to Lt Col Shine was specifically requested prior to and during the 24th Joint Field Activity.

Question: Was my father's name included in the recent 559 document?

Answer: DPMO and JTF-FA analysts have jointly reviewed the Group 559 document and could not correlate any entries to your father's loss.

Question: [The] JTF-FA [Field Investigation Report] references other nearby crash sites. Does any of the information provided also possibly correlate to those cases?

Answer: Because of the vague description concerning the circumstances of loss and the numerous aircraft mishaps in the area in question, the information provided by the first witness cannot be correlated with a specific incident. The information provided by the second witness appears to match the time and circumstances of loss for REFNO 1950.

Question: The witness said he saw a burial near Route 7. Was that location also on a steep hill, unable to be easily excavated? How does JTF-FA make determinations as to what sites should be recommended for excavation? Or, is it CILHI which makes such determinations? Likelihood of recovering remains? Financial considerations?

Answer: According to the investigation team, the general area pointed out by the witness is "steep and mountainous." Although factors such as terrain, climate, and soil are considered in the decision to excavate, the primary determinant in all excavations is foreknowledge of the specific location to excavate. The 100-meter-by-100-meter burial site area pointed out by the witness was too large to excavate. When asked by the investigation team if the witness could pinpoint the location, he pointed to an area approximately 30 meters wide by 40 meters long, an area still too large for excavation. (The witness emphasized that this was merely his best guess.) Excavation sites are jointly agreed upon by JTF-FA and CILHI; costs are not a factor.

Question: If, as reported, the corpse was found one mile from the crash site, was that location downhill from the mountain or lateral to the crash site?

Answer: The crash site observed by the team is approximately one kilometer due south of the alleged burial site. The crash site is located across a steep draw from the burial site at an elevation about 80 meters higher than that of the burial site.

Question: Does the location site indicate that the pilot could have survived the crash?

Answer: The investigation team did not observe or recover sufficient evidence to make this determination.

Question: The witness said he found a helmet near the site. Where in comparison to other referenced locations did he find it?

Answer: The team leader specifically asked the witness where he found the helmet. The witness stated that he could not remember. He could only recall that he found it in the same general area where the body was found.

Question: If this is the only incident or one of few in that area during that time frame, might there not be at least one additional villager who might be able to confirm the story? Has this avenue been pursued? If not, why? If so, please provide status.

Answer: As was previously stated, JTF-FA interviewed all witnesses known to have pertinent information. Additionally, team members questioned other villagers in the area, but none were able to provide additional information.

Question: If the team recorded serial numbers and photographed wreckage, and part of the material is detailed enough to indicate that it might relate to my father's incident, why were these photos not sent to us already? Please forward them, and any analysis, to us immediately.

Answer: As previously indicated, copies of photos taken during the REFNO 1950 investigation will be forwarded to Air Force casualty for release to the PNOK.

Question: Were the villagers who now have houses near the reported crash site questioned regarding their knowledge of the incident or items they may have found? If so, what was the result? Or, did investigators simply trust the word of the witness that no one else in the village had any information on this or other cases? If so, why?

Answer: As already stated, local villagers were questioned about this case but none were able to provide further information.

Question: To what extent do the wreckage markings possibly pertain to my father's aircraft? Does any of the wreckage or helmet possibly correlate with the other A-7 incidents in that area? Did the marking/lack of marking on the helmet the witness showed match that of my father's? Is it likely that time or treatment could have made such a helmet appear like or unlike his? Were photographs taken? If yes, please forward them. Does JTF-FA have the helmet? Is the helmet being correlated to any other case?

Answer: JTF-FA analysis of the material evidence recovered indicates the crash site investigated is associated with an A-7D aircraft. Because REFNO 1950 is the only recorded A-7D loss in the area, the site investigated is believed to be the REFNO 1950 crash site. Due to its lack of identifiable markings, the helmet could not be correlated to a specific person, aircraft, or service. The helmet did not appear to have been subjected to alteration. The helmet was not photographed or retained.

Question: On what information does JTF-FA base the statement that the remains of the individual in this case are probably not recoverable?

Answer: The term "probably not recoverable" as used in the Field Investigation Report constitutes the team leader's assessment and is not considered a final case determination, should additional evidence surface. The team leader based his comments on terrain conditions of the crash and alleged burial site and the fact that there are currently no further leads to follow up. Additionally, there is no information presently available to pinpoint the grave site for excavation.

Question: It was stated that the area was bombed on a number of occasions. Is this prior to or after the incident, as recounted by the second witness?

Answer: According to the second witness, this area was bombed several times before and after the aircraft crash.

Question: If an excavation could determine whether the site correlated to an A-7 aircraft, could that be of assistance in confirming whether or not a pilot could have survived?

Answer: As indicated above, the site has, in fact, been correlated to REFNO 1950. The JTF-FA position is that an excavation of this crash site could yield enough evidence to indicate whether the pilot was aboard the aircraft at impact. However, it should be noted that the absence of material evidence is not a conclusive indication the pilot ejected prior to impact.

Question: How might the photo we have of his intact dog tag and additional metal (possibly wreckage) with lettering and numbers fit into the investigation?

Answer: Despite repeated efforts by the DPMO and JTF-FA to acquire the dog tag and the metal identified in the photograph (attached), to date we have been unable to obtain these items. The sources who have reported information about the dog tag in the past few years have been re-interviewed by JTF-FA and DPMO analysts; however, none of the sources have provided an explanation as to how the identification media was acquired. (Several sources suggested that they might be able to get more information about this case if they could be assured of a reward.)

Question: Does information from the report and follow-up investigation correlate with any of the wreckage investigated in this effort? Has JTF-FA already looked into this possible correlation? If so, with what result?

Answer: Without an examination of the actual items shown in the photograph, analysts cannot determine the authenticity of these items or make a positive correlation to Lt Col Shine's loss incident.

Question: How close is Nong De Village to the other coordinates referenced?

Answer: Nong De Village is approximately 7 kilometers northwest of the surveyed crash site.

Question: Is the original witness in this report available for further questioning?

Answer: The witness is probably available for further questioning. If JTF-FA or DPMO analysts determine that a witness needs to be re-interviewed, the case is scheduled for re-investigation and a request is forwarded to the VNOSMP to make the witness available to the investigation team during a subsequent joint field activity in the province.

Question: Are JTF-FA analysts working in a vacuum? What relevant personal views regarding the interviews or investigations might the analysts assigned to the case be able to provide?

Answer: JTF-FA analysts objectively weigh each witness statement and each piece of evidence before proffering a recommendation or conclusion. Paragraph 9 ("Analyst Comments") of the Field Investigation Report of Case 1950 reflect the personal views of the field team analyst, search and recovery specialist, and team leader who investigated this loss incident.

Question: Does JTF-FA believe the Central SRV Government and its related "province contingents" cooperated as fully as possible in providing information which might help account for Lt Col Anthony C. Shine?

Answer: As stated in paragraph 11a ("Team Chief Comments") of the Field Investigation Report, the team leader of this investigation believes the team received "excellent support from the Vietnamese Government" at both the central and provincial level.

Question: Please explain the accuracy of "four satellite vectors" in layman's terms.

Answer: JTF-FA field teams use the NAVSTAR Global Positioning System (GPS) to determine loss site locations. GPS is a space-based radio navigation network of 18 satellites that orbit 11,000 miles above the earth. Each satellite emits a signal which is used by a hand-held GPS receiver to determine its position on earth. The system requires the reception of at least two satellite signals to establish its location to an accuracy of 10 meters. Each successive satellite signal received ("vector") increases location accuracy. Thus, a "four vector" reading could determine a loss location to an accuracy of two feet.

Question: Does the reference "individual in this case" mean my father or the pilot whose body was allegedly seen by the witness? Does JTF-FA consider them to be one in the same?

Answer: As used in paragraph 11d ("Team Chief Comments") of the Field Investigation Report, the reference pertains to Lt Col Shine.

Question: If JTF-FA believes that my father's remains are "probably not recoverable," please provide further clarification regarding the basis for this belief.

Answer: As used in the Field Investigation Report, the reference "probably not recoverable" is the team leader's assessment and not a final case determination, should more evidence surface in the future. As stated in the Report, the team leader's recommendation is based on the knowledge that the aircraft crashed in a creek on the side of a mountain, indicating the probability that biological evidence has been washed away. The recommendation is also based on witness testimony that the pilot was buried in an area covering more than 10,000 square meters that had been disrupted by bombing. These factors, coupled with a lack of information upon which to pinpoint the grave site for possible excavation, prompted the team leader to conclude that the body was probably not recoverable.

I trust this information is responsive to Ms. Shine's questions and concerns.



Joseph A. Schlatter, Jr.  
Colonel, USA  
Acting Deputy Director  
(POW/MIA Affairs)

Attachments:

1. JTF-FA ltr to HQ AFMPC/DPMCB (J24 1771 Ser: 910), 6 Aug 93 w/CJTFFA Det One Bangkok msg, DTG 290220Z Jul 93
2. Colleen Shine ltr to USAF Casualty Office, 6 Oct 93
3. JTF-FA ltr HQ AFMPC/DPMCB (J24 1771 Ser: 374), 9 Nov 93
4. HQ AFMPC/DPMCB ltr to Colleen Shine, 23 Nov 93
5. Dog Tag photo from CDR JTF-FA, 8 Dec 93 fax
6. DPMO/EA memo to AFMPC/DPMCB, 26 Jan 94 w/CDR JTF-FA Honolulu msg, DTG 081112Z Dec 93
7. JTF-FA input for tasker 940039 w/revision
8. DPMO inputs for tasker 940039
9. CDR JTF-FA Honolulu msg, DTG 020732Z Feb 94