



## DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20340

### DIA EVALUATION OF PW/MIA INFORMATION, PROVIDED BY LAO REFUGEE SOURCE

**SUMMARY:** A Lao refugee reports on the wreckage of an aircraft and photograph of a U.S. pilot.

**DETAILS:** A Lao refugee volunteered to interviewers that in early 1983 he observed the wreckage of an aircraft on the western edge of Nong De (actually Nong Hie) village. The wreckage was approximately 500 meters from route 7. When source entered the village he saw a black and white photo of a dead Caucasian which was posted on the side of a building. A villager told source that this was a photo of the U.S. pilot from the aircraft wreckage source had seen. The photo was displayed each year during the Lunar New Year celebration. The villager reportedly claimed that he had personally been involved in the shutdown of the aircraft. Source was told that although the pilot's leg had been broken he attempted to resist capture and was shot. He was buried near the location where he was killed. Source said he seems to recall that the villager told him this incident occurred during the "Ban Lop Ku Kiet" period of 1971-72. (Research indicates that this period was an ethnic uprising which actually took place in the Nam-Bac area from 1965-1968.)

**ANALYSIS:** A computer-assisted search of aircraft losses in the area reveals one incident which is less than a kilometer from the location described by the source.

On 9 August 1967 Captain Allen Sheldon Cherry, USAF, was on an armed reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam, where he attacked a truck park. The plane did not pull out of a dive and his wingman saw the aircraft crash into the ground. The wingman was able to provide the location of the crash site.

Another refugee source has previously furnished an eyewitness account of an incident in this area which has been correlated to Capt Cherry's attack on the truck park and the subsequent crash. This same source also reported that at the time of the incident Ky Son District officials secured the area and photographed the crash site.

The claim by the source of this recent report, that the airman had a broken leg but still resisted capture, is probably the result of embellishment in the retelling of the story by either the villager or the Lao refugee source.

**EVALUATION:** Based on the location described by the source the wreckage he reported seeing at the edge of the village is most likely that of Capt Cherry's A1E aircraft.

While the photograph of the dead Caucasian could relate to Capt Cherry, the hearsay nature of the report, combined with the passage of time and the apparent embellishment in retelling the story, preclude a definitive correlation to a specific missing American.

**DATE OF EVALUATION:** 10 June 1987.