Oral History
Pham Khac

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ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

ROUTINE

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TO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP:RSA//

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SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, PHAM KHAC//

REF/A/FAX/DET 2/20JUL93 //

AMPN/SUBJ: LIST OF PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW, ENTRY NUMBER 62 OF 83//
THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE IS A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTION OF AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEW REPORT//

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 20 JULY 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM PRIORITY CASE INVESTIGATION TEAM (PCIT) INTERVIEWED PHAM KHAC (AKA LE MINH), A 54 YEAR OLD HO CHI MINH CITY RESIDENT. MR. KHAC IS CURRENTLY VICE-DIRECTOR OF THE HO CHI MINH CITY TELEVISION STATION, FORMERLY AN EMPLOYEE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FILM OFFICE AND PARTICIPANT IN THE MAKING OF THE FILM "DONG XOAI IN FLAMES." THE TEAM MET AT THE HO CHI MINH CITY OFFICE OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

TO INTERVIEW MR. KHAC, LISTED IN REFERENCE AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION (MIA) IN VIETNAM. THE U.S. CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF MSGT [redacted], PCIT LEADER, AND MR. [redacted], DIA ANALYST/LINGUIST. THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF LTC PHAM TEO, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; AND MR. NGUYEN DUY THANH, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. MR. KHAC HAD NOT BEEN

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INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM BEFORE.

2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, PHAM KHAC, PROVIDED INFORMATION CONCERNING THE CONTENTS OF SEVERAL COMBAT FILMS PRODUCED BETWEEN 1963 AND 1971, INCLUDING TWO FILMS WHICH CONTAIN FOOTAGE OF DEAD AMERICANS. MR. KHAC PROVIDED NO INFORMATION THAT WILL, IN ITSELF, RESOLVE ANY EXSISTING PW/MIA CASE. HE ALSO SUMMARIZED THE PURPOSE OF COMBAT FILM MAKING. THE SOURCE CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF AMERICANS, LIVING FREELY OR AGAINST THEIR WILL, IN VIETNAM SINCE 1973.

3. DETAILS.

A. AFTER FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS, LTC PHAM TEO EXPLAINED THE JOINT TEAM'S MISSION AND MSGT [redacted] INVITED MR. PHAM KHAC (PHAMJ KHAWCS), AKA LE MINH (LEE MINH) TO SHARE ANY INFORMATION HE HAS CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. MR. KHAC BEGAN BY SAVING THAT BETWEEN 1962 AND 1971 HE WORKED FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAM LIBERATION ARMY'S (SVNLA) REVOLUTIONARY FILM OFFICE (XWONGR PHIM GIAIR PHONGS). IN 1971 HE MOVED TO HANOI, WHERE HE WAS EMPLOYED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TELEVISION STATION. HE SAID THAT HE IS NOW VICE DIRECTOR OF THE HO CHI MINH CITY TELEVISION STATION.

B. DURING THE WAR, MR. KHAC SAID, FILM FOOTAGE OF DEAD AMERICANS WAS A VERY VALUABLE PROPOGANDA TOOL AND MEDALS WERE AWARDED TO CREWS WHO TOOK SUCH FOOTAGE. HE SAID THAT FOOTAGE OF DEAD AMERICANS WAS VERY RARE AND ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO GET DUE TO FIERCE AMERICAN EFFORTS TO RECOVER THEIR DEAD. WHILE IN COMBAT, MR. KHAC SAID, THE FILM CREWS CARRIED STILL CAMERA EQUIPMENT, BUT DID NOT USE IT BECAUSE IT WAS EASIER AND FASTER TO USE 16 MILLIMETER MOVIE CAMERAS. HE EXPLAINED THAT STILL PHOTOS WERE LATER MADE FROM FRAMES OF THE 16 MILLIMETER FILM. MR. KHAC SAID THAT HE HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF FILMS MADE IN THE SOUTH AFTER HE WENT TO HANOI IN 1971.

C. MR. KHAC SAID THAT THERE WERE TWO ORGANIZATIONS, THE SVNLA REVOLUTIONARY FILM OFFICE AND THE MILITARY FILM OFFICE (XWONGR PHIM QUAAN SWJ), RESPONSIBLE FOR COMBAT FILMING IN THE SOUTH. DURING PROBABLY MAY OR JUNE OF 1965, HE SAID, HE WAS TEMPORARILY ASSIGNED FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY FILM OFFICE TO THE MILITARY FILM OFFICE IN ORDER TO ASSIST IN FILMING THE ATTACK ON DONG XOAI (DOONGF XOAIF) (YT080755). HE SAID A TOTAL OF THREE TWO-MAN TEAMS CONSISTING OF A CAMERAMAN AND AN ASSISTANT WERE ASSIGNED TO FILM THE ATTACK. MR. KHAC RECALLED THE ATTACK WAS ON AN ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN) BASE WHERE AMERICAN ADVISORS WERE ASSIGNED. DURING THIS BATTLE, HE SAID, ONE DEAD AMERICAN AIRCRAFT PILOT WAS FILMED. THE PILOT, HE RECALLED, WAS PROBABLY AN A-37 PILOT, DUE TO HIS JET AIRCRAFT'S SMALL SIZE AND STRAIGHT WINGS. MR. KHAC STRESSED THAT THIS WAS THE ONLY DEAD AMERICAN FILMED DURING THE BATTLE AND THERE SHOULD BE A COPY OF

THIS FILM IN THE FILM DOCUMENTARY LIBRARY (VIEENJ TWF LIEEUJ PHIM) IN HANOI. THE FILM IS TITLED DONG XOAI IN FLAMES (DOONGF XOAIF CHAIS LWAR). MR. KHAC ALSO SAID THAT HE WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE FILM CREW WHO FILMED THE DEAD AMERICAN PILOT, BUT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDITING AND FINISHING THE FILM. MR. KHAC SAID THAT HE IS UNAWARE OF ANY COPIES OF THIS FILM IN THE SOUTH.

D. MR. KHAC SAID HE FILMED THE BATTLE OF BAU BANG (BAAUF BAWNGF) (UNLOCATED) IN TAY NINH PROVINCE DURING 1966 OR 1967. HE RECALLED THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THERE WAS COMBAT AGAINST THE U.S. 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION. MANY AMERICANS DIED IN THE BATTLE, HE SAID, BUT HE WAS UNABLE TO FILM THE DEAD. MR. KHAC STATED ANOTHER FILM TAKEN IN TAY NINH PROVINCE WAS CALLED THE SUOI DA (SUOOIS DAS) BATTLE OF VICTORY AT TAY NINH. HE BELIEVES THE AMERCIANS CALLED THIS BATTLE OPERATION "ATTENBOROUGH". THE BATTLE, HE RECALLED, WAS BETWEEN THE 9TH PEOPLE'S ARMY (PAVN) DIVISION AND THE U.S. 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION. DURING THE BATTLE, HE SAID, ONE OR TWO DEAD AMERICANS WERE FILMED, AND HE HIMSELF WAS WOUNDED.

E. MR. KHAC RECALLED ANOTHER FILM, ALSO CALLED "VICTORY AT TAY NINH". HE WAS NOT A PARTICIPANT IN THIS BATTLE, BUT ANOTHER PHOTOGRAPHER NAMED HONG SON (HOONGF SOWN) WAS. MR. KHAC RECALLED THAT THE AMERICANS CALLED THIS BATTLE "JUNCTION CITY". HE SAID THAT MANY AMERCIANS WERE KILLED IN THIS BATTLE, BUT NONE WERE FILMED. HOWEVER, THERE WAS MUCH FOOTAGE OF BURNED AND WRECKED AMERICAN EQUIPMENT. MR. KHAC STATED THAT DURING THE BATTLE THE AMERICANS CAPTURED ALL OF THE FILMS WHICH WERE STORED IN A BUNKER. HE RECALLED THAT MANY OF HIS UNIT'S AND THE MILITARY FILM OFFICE'S ORIGINAL WORKS WERE TAKEN, BUT DOES NOT KNOW HOW MANY HAD ALREADY BEEN COPIED AND SENT TO HANOI.

F. MR. KHAC RECALLED THAT SEVERAL YEARS AGO THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (BBC) BOUGHT MUCH OF THE EXISTING FILM FOR USE IN THE TELEVISION SERIES "VIETNAM, A TELEVISION HISTORY".

G. IN RESPONSE TO THE INTERVIEWER'S QUERY, MR. KHAC CLAIMED THAT SINCE 1973, HE HAD NEVER SEEN OR KNOWN OF AMERICANS LIVING, FREELY OR AGAINST THEIR WILL, IN VIETNAM.

H. WITH NO FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MR. KHAC, THE JOINT TEAM AGREED TO CONCLUDE THE INTERVIEW.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXSISTING POW/MIA CASES.
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MSGID/GENADMIN/CDR JTF-FA/J223//

SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, PHAM KHAC//

RMKS/

A. ALTHOUGH THE PCIT INTERVIEWED MR. KHAC WHILE INVESTIGATING CASE 0096, HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE U.S. LOSS INCIDENTS ABOVE CANNOT BE CORRELATED TO CASE 0096 OR ANY OTHER CASES AT THIS TIME.

5. POTENTIAL LEADS. MR. KHAC PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING LEADS:

A. TRUONG THANH HI (TRWONG THANH HIR) WAS HIS COUNTERPART IN THE MILITARY FILM OFFICE. MR. HI IS NOW CHAIRMAN OF THE HOC MON (HOCS MOON) VETERAN'S ASSOCIATION. MR. HI WAS INTERVIEWED BY THE PCIT WHILE INVESTIGATING CASE 0096 ON 21 JULY IN HO CHI MINH CITY.

B. AN NHU SON (AN NHW SOWN), AKA AN SON (AN SOWN), AKA THEP HONG (THEPS HOONGF) WAS ALSO INVOLVED WITH BATTLEFIELD PHOTOGRAPHY. MR. KHAC SAID THAT HE DEOES NOT KNOW THE PRESENT WHEREABOUTS OF MR. SON. MR. SON (THEP HONG) IS ALSO NUMBER 62 OF REFERENCE.

C. THANH XUAN (THANH XUAAN), WAS ALSO INVOLVED WITH BATTLEFIELD PHOTGRAPHY, BUT WAS NOT AT DONG XOAI. ACCORDING TO MR. XUAN IS NOW RETIRED AND LIVING IN CAN THO. MR. XUAN IS ALSO NUMBER 62 OF REFERENCE.

D. TRUNG CHINH (TRUNG CHINH) WAS ALSO INVOLVED IN BATTLEFIELD PHOTOGRAPHY, BUT DIED IN 1968. MR. CHINH IS POSSIBLY LISTED AS NUMBER 62 OF REFERENCE UNDER THE NAME TRUNG CHANH. THIS POSSIBLITY WILL BE INVESTIGATED FURTHER AS THE SPECIAL INTERVIEW PROGRAM PROGRESSES.

E. HONG SON (HOOWGF SOWN) WAS ALSO INVOLVED WITH BATTLEFIELD PHOTOGRAPHY AND HAD PHOTOGRAPHED THE JUNCTION CITY BATTLE, "VICTORY AT TAY NINH". MR. KHAC DOES NOT KNOW THE PRESENT WHEREABOUTS OF MR. SON.

F. THE FILM "VICTORY AT BINH GIA" (BINH GIA) WAS MADE IN 1963 OR 1964 IN THE OLD BA RIA PROVINCE.

G. THE FILM "DONG XOAI" (IN FLAMES) WAS MADE IN 1965 DURING THE ATTACK ON DONG XOAI AND CONTAINS FOOTAGE OF ONE DEAD AMERICAN A-37 PILOT KILLED DURING THIS ATTACK. MR. KHAC SAID THAT THIS FILM SHOULD BE IN THE HANOI FILM DOCUMENTARY LIBRARY (SEE PARA 7.E.)

H. THE FILM THE "SUOI DA (SUOOIS DAS) BATTLE", ALSO CALLED "VICTORY IN TAY NINH" CONTAINS FOOTAGE OF ONE OR TWO DEAD U.S. SERVICEMEN.

I. THE TELEVISION SERIES "VIETNAM, A TELEVISION HISTORY".

6. MATERIAL EVIDENCE: NONE. THIS SOURCE BROUGHT NO RECORDS, NOTEBOOKS, DIARIES, OR ANY MATERIAL EVIDENCE ASSOCIATED WITH UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL.

7. COMMENTS.

A. THE PCIT INTERVIEWED PHAM KHAC PURSUANT TO PCIT TASKING DURING THEIR INVESTIGATION INTO CASE 0096. SINCE MR. KHAC IS LISTED IN REFERENCE AS A DESIRED ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUBJECT, THE PCIT AND ORAL HISTORY TEAMS COORDINATED LINES OF QUESTIONING PRIOR TO THIS INTERVIEW TO MORE EFFECTIVELY FULFILL BOTH PCIT AND ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

B. AT THE TIME OF THIS INTERVIEW, MR. KHAC WAS RECOVERING

FROM A NEAR FATAL TRAFFIC ACCIDENT, WHICH INCLUDED A BROKEN LEG AND FRACTURED SKULL. HE ALSO HAS RECENTLY UNDERGONE BRAIN SURGERY TO REMOVE A BLOOD CLOT. MR. KHAC WAS WEAK AND TIRED EASILY DURING THE INTERVIEW.

C. DURING THIS INTERVIEW MR. KHAC REFERENCED TWO DIFFERENT FILMS CALLED "VICTORY IN TAY NINH", ONE OF WHICH HE ASSOCIATED WITH THE NAME "SUOI DA BATTLE", AMERICAN NAME OPERATION "ATTENBOROUGH", AND THE FILMING OF AT LEAST ONE DEAD AMERICAN. THE OTHER, HE ASSOCIATED WITH THE AMERICAN NAME "JUNCTION CITY" AND THE FILMING OF BURNED OUT AND WRECKED AMERICAN EQUIPMENT. THE SOURCE WAS NOT AN ENGLISH SPEAKER. HIS PRONUNCIATION OF "ATTENBOROUGH" AND "JUNCTION CITY" ARE REPORTED PHONETICALLY.

D. DETACHMENT 2, JTF-FA, RECORDS SHOW THAT FROM SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1966 THE U.S. 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION WAS ENGAGED IN "OPERATION ATTLEBORO" IN WAR ZONE C (TAY NINH PROVINCE). DURING FEBRUARY AND MAY 1967, THE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION WAS INVOLVED WITH "OPERATION JUNCTION CITY", ALSO IN WAR ZONE C.

E. THE FILM "DONG XOAI IN FLAMES" IS NOT LISTED IN THE HANOI FILM ARCHIVES LIST OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS, PART 2 (1964-1975). HOWEVER, THE FILM "DULY PUNISHMENTS" (SIC) (NHWNGX DOWNF TRWNGF PHATJ DICHJ DANGS) IS LISTED AS NUMBER 22, RECORDED AT THE DONG XOAI BATTLE BY MR. KHAC AND OTHERS REPRESENTED IN ENTRY NUMBER 62 OF SAME.

F. REQUEST THE VNOSMP MAKE MR. KHAC AVAILABLE FOR REINTERVIEW IF NECESSARY//

BT

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