Oral History #15

Tran Ngoc Khanh
Song Be, Kpha 0054

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ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

ROUTINE

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SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, TRAN NGOC KHANH//

REF/A/FAX/CJTFFA DET ONE BKK/16MAY93//

AMPN/ENTRY NUMBER 60, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS//

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 18 JUNE 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM PRIORITY CASE INVESTIGATION TEAM (PCIT) INTERVIEWED MR. TRAN NGOC KHANH (AKA BA KHANH, AN APPROXIMATELY 65 YEAR OLD THU DAU MOT TOWN, SONG BE PROVINCE, RESIDENT. MR. KHANH IS CURRENTLY THE SONG BE PROVINCE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN. THE TEAM MET IN THE SONG BE PROVINCE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS TO INTERVIEW MR. KHANH, 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 TEAM LEADER; AND MSGT [redacted], JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING (JTF-FA) ANALYST/LINGUIST. THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF PHAM TEO, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; AND NGUYEN DUY THANH, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. MR. KHANH HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM BEFORE.

2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, TRAN NGOC KHANH, PROVIDED INFORMATION CONCERNING THE K4 PRISONER OF WAR (PW) CAMP NEAR DAK NHAO IN PHUOC LONG (CURRENTLY SONG BE) PROVINCE, INCLUDING A BRIEF

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ACCOUNT OF AN AMERICAN HELD THERE IN 1965. KHANH CLAIMED THE AMERICAN WAS LOST WHEN U.S. FORCES ATTACKED THE CAMP AREA, AND THEREAFTER KHANH HEARD NO FURTHER NEWS OF THIS AMERICAN. THIS INFORMATION PROBABLY CORRELATES TO CASE 0054-1-01, AN UNRESOLVED CASE. THE SOURCE DID NOT KNOW THE DISPOSITION OF WARTIME PROVINCE PW CAMP RECORDS. HE NAMED INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY PROVIDE FURTHER LEADS IN THE SEARCH FOR U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. MR. KHANH SAID HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PERSONNEL, LIVING FREELY OR AGAINST THEIR WILL, IN VIETNAM SINCE 1973.

3. DETAILS.

A. AFTER FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS, PHAM TEO, THE VIETNAMESE PCIT LEADER, EXPLAINED THE JOINT TEAM'S MISSION. MSGT [redacted] THANKED MR. TRAN NGOC KHANH (TRAANF NGOCJ KHANHS) FOR HIS PARTICIPATION AND INVITED HIM TO RELATE ANY INFORMATION HE KNEW CONCERNING U.S. PW'S OR AMERICANS MISSING IN ACTION IN VIETNAM.

B. MR. KHANH EXPLAINED THAT DURING THE WAR, FROM 1961 TO 1975, HE WORKED WITH THE PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL MILITARY UNIT (TINHR DOOIJ); FROM 1976 UNTIL THE PRESENT, HE SERVED WITH THE SONG BE (FORMERLY PHUOC LONG) PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.

C. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE LOSS OF MISSING INDIVIDUAL IN CASE 0054, MR. KHANH TOLD OF A WARTIME PRISON CAMP DESIGNATED K4 IN DAK NHAO (VICINITY TU3412), PHUOC BINH DISTRICT, PHUOC LONG PROVINCE. THE K4 CAMP WAS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 12 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF BU GIA MAP (YU3437). PHUOC LONG PUBLIC SECURITY (COONG AN TINHR) AUTHORITIES HAD ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OVER THE CAMP, NOT PROVINCIAL MILITARY AUTHORITIES. A MAN NAMED KHOAT (KHOATS) (LNU), THE ASSISTANT PROVINCE PUBLIC SECURITY CHIEF, ADMINISTERED THE CAMP FROM THE PROVINCE LEVEL.

D. AFTER THE BATTLE OF BU DANG IN 1965, MR. KHANH RELATED, THE CAMP HELD A SINGLE AMERICAN PRISONER; A YOUNG CAUCASIAN MEDIC, RATHER SHORT WITH A SLIGHT BUILD. IN EARLY 1966, A U.S. AIRBORNE ASSAULT BRIGADE (SEE PARA. 7.B., BELOW), UTILIZING AIR AND ARTILLERY SUPPORT, ATTACKED THE DAK NHAO AREA. THE ASSAULT KILLED THE K4 CAMP COMMANDER, WHO WAS A FIRST LIEUTENANT WITH PUBLIC SECURITY (NAME NOT RECALLED), AND ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE CAMP STAFF (NAME ALSO NOT RECALLED).

E. THE AMERICAN MEDIC, ACCORDING TO KHANH, WAS THE ONLY PRISONER AT THE K4 CAMP WHEN THE ATTACK OCCURRED. DESPITE THEIR SEARCH EFFORTS, THE VIETNAMESE (COMMUNISTS) COULD NOT LOCATE THE U.S. PRISONER, AND MR. KHANH NEVER HEARD OF HIM AGAIN. KHANH CLAIMED THAT FOLLOWING THE BOMBING ATTACK, THE CAMP WAS CLOSED AND NEVER USED AGAIN.

F. CONCERNING WARTIME RECORDS OF U.S. PW'S, KHANH DIDN'T KNOW IF ANY STILL EXISTED OR WHERE THEY MIGHT BE, SINCE PUBLIC SECURITY AUTHORITIES CONTROLLED THE PW CAMP SYSTEM IN THE SOUTH. HE SAID THAT PUBLIC SECURITY COMPARTMENTALIZED THE CAMP

ORGANIZATIONS IN SUCH A WAY THAT NO ONE INDIVIDUAL AT HIS LEVEL HAD A CLEAR IDEA OF THE SYSTEM. ADDITIONALLY, HE DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO SECRET MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (MOD) AND MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR (MOI) INFORMATION. HIS ONLY SUGGESTION WAS THAT PUBLIC SECURITY RECORDS FROM THE FORMER MILITARY REGION 6 MIGHT BE HELPFUL (SEE PARA. 7.C., BELOW). HE COULD PROVIDE NO CLUE AS

TO WHERE THESE RECORDS MIGHT BE.

G. IN RESPONSE TO THE JOINT TEAM'S QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE T52 PRISON CAMP, HE STATED THAT HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THAT CAMP. HE KNEW THAT IT DEFINITELY WAS NOT SUBORDINATE TO PHUOC LONG PROVINCE, SO OPINED THAT CENTRAL MOD OR MOI AUTHORITIES MUST HAVE CONTROLLED T52. HE SUGGESTED THE TEAM QUERY THOSE AGENCIES FOR INFORMATION.

H. IN CLOSING, AND IN RESPONSE TO MSGT [redacted] QUERY, MR. KHANH STATED THAT HE HAD NEVER, SINCE 1973, SEEN OR BEEN AWARE OF ANY U.S. PERSONNEL, LIVING FREELY OR AGAINST THEIR WILL, IN VIETNAM.

I. WITH NO FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MR. KHANH, THE JOINT TEAM AGREED TO CONCLUDE THE INTERVIEW.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES. TRAN NGOC KHAN'S STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE U.S. PRISONER IN THE K4 PRISON CAMP PROBABLY CORRELATE TO CASE 0054-1-01, AN UNRESOLVED CASE, BASED ON GENERAL TIME FRAME; GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION; GENERAL PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MISSING INDIVIDUAL; DUTY POSITION; AND THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL REPORTS CLAIMING THE MISSING INDIVIDUAL WAS INCARCERATED AFTER HIS LOSS.

5. POTENTIAL LEADS. TRAN NGOC KHANH IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY PROVIDE INFORMATION RELATING TO MISSING U.S. PERSONNEL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

A. KHOAT (LNU), FORMER PHUOC LONG PROVINCE ASSISTANT PUBLIC SECURITY CHIEF, A NORTHERN VIETNAM NATIVE, CURRENTLY RESIDING SOMEWHERE IN NORTHERN VIETNAM. (THIS INDIVIDUAL IS A DESIRED ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUBJECT, PRESENT WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN.)

B. DO VAN NGUYEN (DOOX VAWN NGUYEEN), AKA TU NGUYEN (TW NGUYEEN), PHUOC LONG PROVINCE PUBLIC SECURITY CHIEF AND PROVINCE //

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SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, TRAN NGOC KHANH//

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PUBLIC SECURITY CHIEF AND PROVINCE PARTY CHAIRMAN AT THE TIME U.S. FORCES ATTACKED DAK NHAO IN 1966. (THIS INDIVIDUAL IS A DESIRED ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUBJECT, AND THE PCIT TEAM INTERVIEWED HIM ON 21 JUNE 93. REPORT OF INTERVIEW PENDING,

ANTICIPATE RELEASE PRIOR TO 30 JUNE 93.)

C. KIEU VIET OANH (KIEEU VIEETJ OANH), CHILDHOOD NAME HOANH (HOANH), FORMER PHUOC LONG PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICER, PRESENTLY WITH THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR IN HANOI.

D. TU BINH (TW BINH), SERVED IN THE FORMER BINH LONG DISTRICT, CURRENTLY RESIDING IN DONG NAI PROVINCE.

E. BA NAM, FORMER SONG BE (NOT PHUOC LONG) PROVINCIAL MILITARY OFFICER, PRESENTLY RESIDING IN VUNG TAU.

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 TRAN NGOC KHANH PURSUANT TO PCIT TASKING DURING THEIR INVESTIGATION INTO CASE 0054. SINCE MR. KHANH 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. THE SOURCE MENTIONED THREE DESIGNATORS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE U.S. "BRIGADE" THAT ATTACKED DAK NHAO: THE 80TH, THE 60TH, OR THE 101ST. HE WAS EVIDENTLY UNSURE OF THE DESIGNATOR.

C. THE SOURCE EXPLAINED THAT SIX WARTIME PROVINCES COMPRISED MILITARY REGION 6: BINH THUAN, NINH THUAN, LAM DONG, TUYEN DUC, KHANH HOA, AND QUANG DUC.

D. REQUEST THE VNOSMP MAKE TRAN NGOC KHANH AVAILABLE FOR RE-INTERVIEW IF NECESSARY.//

BT

DLVR:CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI(1)...ORIG
J2(1)...INFO FOR USCINCPAC HONOLULU H(14)
J30-M(1) J3(1) DO-01-04(1) MDT(1) LRNO61PCMT(1) J52(1) J51(1)
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