Oral History
Tran Ky

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ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

ROUTINE

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AMPN/SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, TRAN KY//

REF/A/FAX/DET 2/26JUN93//

AMPN/SUBJ: LIST OF PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW, ENTRY
NUMBER 31 OF 83//

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 21 JUNE 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED RETIRED SENIOR COLONEL (SRCOL) TRAN KY, A 63 YEAR OLD HANOI RESIDENT. MR. KY, A FORMER AIR FORCE OFFICER, IS A WRITER AND CONTRIBUTOR TO THE AIR AND AIR DEFENSE FORCE MEMOIRS, VOLUMES I, II, AND III. THE TEAM MET AT THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY COOPERATION, VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY, NUMBER 8 TRAN HUNG DAO STREET, HANOI, TO INTERVIEW MR. KY, LISTED IN REFERENCE AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION IN VIETNAM. THE U.S. CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF MR. [redacted], DET 2, JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING (JTF-FA) CASUALTY RESOLUTION SPECIALIST; TSGT [redacted], JTF-FA ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM COORDINATOR; AND PO2 [redacted], JTF-FA ANALYST/LINGUIST. THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF LTC LE KY, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; AND MR. TRINH QUOC KHANH, MINISTRY OF

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INTERIOR. MR. KY HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM BEFORE.

2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, TRAN KY, PROVIDED NO INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. HE SUMMARIZED HIS PART IN WRITING THE AIR AND AIR DEFENSE FORCE MEMOIRS, AS WELL AS EXPLAINING THAT THE FOCUS OF THE BOOK IS ON VIETNAMESE VICTORIES AND THE UNITS WHO TOOK PART IN THE BATTLES, NOT ON THE OPPOSING FORCE'S PERSONNEL.

3. DETAILS.

A. FOLLOWING FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS, LTC LE KY EXPLAINED THE MISSION OF THE JOINT INTERVIEW TEAM AND MR. [redacted] BEGAN THE INTERVIEW WITH THE FOLLOWING TWO KEY QUESTIONS:

(1) SINCE 1973 HAVE YOU EVER SEEN OR HAD KNOWLEDGE OF ANY U.S. PRISONERS CAPTIVE IN VIETNAM? MR. KY REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT.

(2) SINCE 1973 HAVE YOU EVER SEEN OR HAD KNOWLEDGE OF ANY AMERICAN "STAY-BEHINDS" IN VIETNAM? MR. KY REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT.

B. AFTER ANSWERING THESE TWO QUESTIONS, MR. TRAN KY (TRAANF KYF) WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT DURING THE WAR HE WAS AN AIR FORCE OFFICER, AS WELL AS A NAVIGATOR IN MIG TYPE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, AND HIS INPUT TO THE BOOKS WAS BASED ON THIS SPECIALTY. HE STATED HE WAS THE AIR DEFENSE EDITOR AS WELL AS A WRITER FOR THE BOOKS. MR. KY SAID THE BOOKS WERE NOT STRATEGY OR TACTICAL OPERATIONS ORIENTED, BUT RATHER MEMOIRS OF VIETNAMESE AIR DEFENSE VICTORIES. THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE BOOKS CAME FROM VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY (THOONG TAANS XAX VIEETJ NAM) SOURCES AND INTERVIEWS HE CONDUCTED WITH AIR DEFENSE FORCE PERSONNEL. OTHER UNITS SUCH AS SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE (SAM) UNITS AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERIES ALSO HAD INPUT TO THE BOOKS. MR. KY DID NOT RECALL EVER SEEING PHOTOGRAPHS OF U.S. PILOTS OR AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE WHILE DOING RESEARCH FOR THE BOOKS, AND HE ADDED THAT MR. HOI (HOWIJ) (SEE PARA 5.A., BELOW) WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESEARCHING THE VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY'S PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION.

C. MR. KY STATED THAT DURING THE WAR HE NEVER MET ANY AMERICANS. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE AIR DEFENSE FORCE HAD ORDERS NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH ANY U.S. PERSONS AND THAT IT WAS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR AN AIR DEFENSE UNIT TO CAPTURE AN AMERICAN DUE TO THE DISTANCE A DAMAGED AIRCRAFT COULD TRAVEL FROM AN AIR DEFENSE SITE BEFORE CRASHING. TO ILLUSTRATE, MR. KY EXPLAINED THE THREE TIER AIR DEFENSE CONCEPT, IN WHICH SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES, ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY, AND FIGHTER AIRCRAFT COMPLIMENT EACH OTHER BY COORDINATING THEIR VARYING RANGES WITHIN GEOGRAPHIC SPHERES OF RESPONSIBILITY, ENHANCED BY COORDINATED WATCH SCHEDULES. HE CONCLUDED THAT IN ANY CASE, AIR DEFENSE VICTORIES ALWAYS RESULTED IN THE TARGET AIRCRAFT CRASHING TOO FAR AWAY FOR THE AIR DEFENSE UNIT TO TAKE PRISONERS.

D. MR. KY RECALLED THAT HE HAD STUDIED A GERMAN PRODUCED FILM ABOUT CAPTURED AMERICAN PILOTS. THE NAME OF THE FILM WAS "PILOTS IN PAJAMAS" (PHI COONG MAWCJ QUAANF AOS NGUR), TO WHICH AN AUSTRALIAN JOURNALIST HAD CONTRIBUTED. THIS WAS THE ONLY INFORMATION MR. KY COULD RECALL RELATING TO U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR IN VIETNAM.

E. WITH NO FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MR. KY, THE JOINT TEAM AGREED TO CONCLUDE THE INTERVIEW.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES. NONE.

5. POTENTIAL LEADS.

A. MR. KY MENTIONED TRAN DUY HOI (TRAANF ZUY HOWIJ), ALSO ENTRY NUMBER 31 FROM REFERENCE, AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE BOOKS. THE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED MR. HOI ON 21 JUNE 93.

B. MR. KY MENTIONED KIM DU (KIM ZUJ), ANOTHER AIR DEFENSE OFFICER AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS SPECIALIST, AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE BOOKS.

C. THE FILM "PILOTS IN PAJAMAS" (PHI COONG MAWCJ QUAANF AOS NGUR).

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

7. COMMENTS.

A. MR. KY WAS VERY ANIMATED THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW AND APPEARED EAGER TO SHARE HIS KNOWLEDGE WITH THE JOINT TEAM. HE GAVE STRAIGHT FORWARD ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WHILE ELABORATING ON SEVERAL QUESTIONS TO ENSURE UNDERSTANDING. MR. KY APPARENTLY HAD NO KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION.

B. MR. KY STATED THAT SINCE HE ALSO HAS A BROTHER MISSING FROM THE WAR, THE MIA ISSUE IS ONE OF GREAT CONCERN TO HIM, AND HE DESIRED TO HELP THE INTERVIEW TEAM AS POSSIBLE.

C. THE MEMBERS OF THE JOINT TEAM CONFERRED ON THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED DURING THIS INTERVIEW. TEAM MEMBERS AGREED THAT THE NEED TO REINTERVIEW THIS SUBJECT WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MR. KY ARISE DURING THE COURSE OF THE ORAL HISTORY
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RMKS/
INTERVIEW TEAM'S FUTURE WORK.

D. REQUEST THE VNOSMP MAKE MR. TRAN KY AVAILABLE FOR REINTERVIEW IF NECESSARY.//