Oral History
Ng Duc Nhuan
F:105-
Also See Phong Thông Không Của
Unit History

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ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

ROUTINE

R 211812Z JUL 93 ZYB PSN 381420P18

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AMPN/SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, NGUYEN DUC NHUAN//

REF/A/FAX/DET 2/16MAY93//

AMPN/SUBJ: LIST OF PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW-SENATOR KERRY, ENTRY NUMBER 30 OF 83//

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 8 JUL 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED RETIRED MAJOR NGUYEN DUC NHUAN, A 52 YEAR OLD HAI YEN VILLAGE, TINH GIA DISTRICT, THANH HOA PROVINCE, RESIDENT. MR. NHUAN WAS FORMERLY A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS, VOLUME-I (1959-1979). THE TEAM MET AT THE TINH GIA DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE GUEST HOUSE, THANH HOA PROVINCE, TO INTERVIEW MR. NHUAN, 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; AND TSGT [redacted], JTF-FA ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM COORDINATOR. THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF LTC LE KY, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; AND MR. TRINH QUOC KHANH, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. MR. NHUAN HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM BEFORE.

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2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, MR. NHUAN, PROVIDED INFORMATION CONCERNING AN F-105D SHOT DOWN DURING 1965 IN HA TINH PROVINCE, WHICH AT THIS TIME CANNOT BE CORRELATED TO ANY U.S. LOSS. MR. NHUAN SUMMARIZED HIS METHODS FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS, VOLUME I (1959-1979). HE CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PERSONNEL, LIVING FREELY OR AGAINST THEIR WILL, IN VIETNAM SINCE 1973.

3. DETAILS.

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

(1) SINCE 1973, HAVE YOU EVER SEEN OR HAD KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR (PW) CAPTIVE IN VIETNAM? MR. NHUAN SAID THAT HE HAS SEEN MANY FOREIGNERS IN VIETNAM AND COULD NOT TRULY DISTINGUISH IF SOME OF THEM WERE AMERICANS, HE CLAIMED HE HAD NEVER SEEN OR HEARD OF A U.S. PW IN VIETNAM SINCE 1973.

(2) SINCE 1973, HAVE YOU EVER SEEN OR HAD KNOWLEDGE OF AMERICAN "STAY-BEHINDS" IN VIETNAM? MR. NHUAN SAID THAT TO HIS KNOWLEDGE HE HAD NOT.

B. HAVING ANSWERED THE FIRST TWO KEY QUESTIONS, MR. NGUYEN DUC NHUAN (NGUYEENX DWCS NHUAANJ) SAID THAT HE IS NOT A RESEARCHER OR HISTORIAN. HE IS SIMPLY AN EDUCATED SOLDIER WHO WAS ASSIGNED THE DUTY OF CONTRIBUTING TO A PROPAGANDA BOOK. HE SAID THAT HE JOINED THE MILITARY IN 1964 AS AN INFANTRY MAN AND REACHED THE POSITION OF POLITICAL OFFICER AND THE RANK OF MAJOR BY 1990, WHEN HE RETIRED. MR. NHUAN SAID THAT HE SPENT FROM 1988 TO 1989 WORKING ON THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS, VOLUME, I. HE SAID THAT WHILE WRITING THE BOOK HIS PRIMARY CONCERN WAS BORDER DEFENSE FORCES, BOTH ON THE EASTERN VIETNAM COAST AND ON THE LAOTIAN BORDER. HE COMPILED INFORMATION ABOUT BORDER DEFENSE FORCE VICTORIES FROM THE PEOPLE'S NEWSPAPER AND THE PEOPLE'S ARMY NEWSPAPER FOR INCLUSION IN THE BOOK.

C. IN EARLY 1965, WHILE ATTENDING SCHOOL IN HANOI, MR. NHUAN RECALLED READING A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ABOUT THE SHOOT DOWN OF A U.S. F-105D IN HA TINH PROVINCE. MR. NHUAN SAID THAT THE SHOOT-DOWN OCCURRED DURING MARCH OF THAT SAME YEAR. APPROXIMATELY EIGHT MONTHS LATER, DURING NOVEMBER OF 1965, HE TRANSFERRED TO THE HA TINH PROVINCE MILITARY HEADQUARTERS AND WAS THEN ABLE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INCIDENT. HE COULD NOT RECALL THE EXACT DATE OF THE SHOOT DOWN, BUT SAID THE INCIDENT OCCURRED ONE DAY DURING MARCH, IN THE LATE MORNING. HE RECALLED THAT THERE WERE THREE OR FOUR BORDER DEFENSE ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERIES WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE F-105D SHOOT DOWN. THE BATTERIES WERE MADE UP OF LOCAL MILITIA AND REGULAR FORCES, USING ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY AND 12.7 MILLIMETER GUNS. AT THE TIME OF THE SHOOT DOWN, HE SAID, A BORDER DEFENSE UNIT WAS POSTED AT KHE KEM BRIDGE

(UNLOCATED), WHICH WAS NEAR THE LAOTIAN BORDER IN HUONG SON DISTRICT. HE SAID THE U.S. AIRCRAFT IMPACTED MORE THAN TWO KILOMETERS FROM ROUTE 8, BETWEEN THE TREO (UNLOCATED) AND KHE KEM BRIDGE, WHICH ARE APPROXIMATELY FIVE KILOMETERS APART AND FIVE KILOMETERS FROM THE LAOTIAN BORDER. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE KHE KEM BRIDGE WAS 18 TO 20 KILOMETERS FROM DAN CU VILLAGE (UNLOCATED). MR. NHUAN RECALLED THAT MR. NGUYEN THIEU NGHI (NGUYEENX THIEEUJ NGHIJ) WAS A BATTERY COMMANDER AT THAT TIME AND WAS DIRECTLY CREDITED WITH THE SHOOT DOWN. HE RECALLED HEARING THAT MR. NGHI ASKED HIS SUPERIORS FOR GUIDANCE CONCERNING WHAT TO DO WITH THE AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE. MR. NGHI'S BATTERY, SAID MR. NHUAN, RECEIVED CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION FOR THEIR PART IN THE SHOOT DOWN. MANY OF THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THE SHOOT DOWN, SAID MR. NHUAN, WERE ALLOWED TO TAKE PORTIONS OF THE AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE AS WAR MEMENTOS. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE PARTS OF THE AIRCRAFT WITH DISTINCTIVE MARKINGS WERE TAKEN BY DISTRICT LEVEL PERSONNEL AND ARE PROBABLY IN A MUSEUM TODAY. MR. NHUAN SAID HE BELIEVES THE AIRCRAFT WAS NOT CARRYING BOMBS WHEN IT CRASHED. ALTHOUGH HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE AIRCRAFT'S MISSION, HE SAID HE BELIEVES THE AIRCRAFT WAS PROBABLY FLYING AT A LOW ALTITUDE, AND WAS PROBABLY CIRCLING THE AREA WHERE IT WAS SHOT DOWN. MR. NHUAN CONTINUED TO SAY THAT THERE WERE MANY POSSIBLE TARGETS NEAR THE LAOTIAN BORDER AND ALONG ROUTE 8 THAT MAY HAVE BEEN THE TARGET OF THE F-105D. THIS INCIDENT, HE SAID, IS INCLUDED IN THE BOOK.

D. MR. NHUAN SAID THAT THE PILOT'S BODY, AS WELL AS ANY PERSONAL BELONGINGS THE PILOT MAY HAVE HAD WERE BURNED IN THE CRASH. THE BODY WAS BURIED BETWEEN THE TWO BRIDGES, ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE OF ROUTE 8, AS ONE APPROACHED LAOS, NEAR THE AIRCRAFT CRASH SITE. HE ALSO SAID HE HAD VISITED THE BURIAL SITE ONCE WHILE WORKING FOR THE HA TINH PROVINCIAL MILITARY HEADQUARTERS, BUT HAS NOT BEEN BACK SINCE THEN. HE SAID TRAN DANG DUNG (TRAANF DANG ZUNG), A SQUAD LEADER, HAD DIRECTLY PARTICIPATED IN THE BURIAL OF THE PILOT, AS WELL AS TWO OTHERS: LUC AND THACH (NFI). MR. NHUAN DID NOT KNOW THE AGE, RANK, OR RACE OF THE F-105D PILOT. HE SAID THAT THERE WERE MANY LOCALS WHO KNEW OF THE LOCATION OF THIS GRAVE, AND HE BELIEVES THERE PROBABLY STILL ARE
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PEOPLE IN THE AREA WHO KNOW WHERE IT IS. MR. NHUAN SAID THERE IS NO WAY FOR HIM TO KNOW IF THE GRAVE SITE HAS BEEN EXCAVATED OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS, BUT IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS HAD AN EFFORT UNDERWAY FOR QUITE SOME TIME

TO RECOVER REMAINS FROM THE WAR, AND BECAUSE THE GRAVE SITE WAS LOCATED RIGHT NEXT TO ROUTE 8, IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT THIS SITE

HAS BEEN EXCAVATED.

E. HE ALSO SAID THAT BEFORE WORKING ON THE BOOK HE WAS AWARE OF PATHET LAO FORCES SHOOTING DOWN U.S. AIRCRAFT IN THE BORDER AREA, AND HAD ON OCCASION BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THESE FORCES, BUT HE HAD NO IDEA WHAT PATHET LAO PROCEDURES WERE FOR REPORTING ON CAPTURED PRISONERS OR SHOT DOWN AIRCRAFT.

F. IN CONCLUSION, MR. NHUAN SAID HE NOW SPENDS MUCH OF HIS TIME WITH RETIRED POLICEMEN AND FORMER PW CAMP CADRE AND THEY HAVE NOT RELATED ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PW'S OR MIA'S TO HIM.

G. WITH NO FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MR. NHUAN, THE JOINT TEAM AGREED TO CONCLUDE THE INTERVIEW.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES.

A. THE F-105D SHOOT DOWN DESCRIBED ABOVE CANNOT AT THIS TIME BE CORRELATED TO ANY U.S. LOSS INCIDENT (SEE PARA 7.A.). NOTE: THIS CONCLUSION IS BASED ONLY ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT DET 2, JTF-FA, AND DOES NOT REPRESENT FINAL ANALYSIS.)

5. POTENTIAL LEADS.

A. MR. NGUYEN THIEU NGHI (NGUYEENX THIEEUJ NGHIJ) WAS, ACCORDING TO MR. NHUAN, THE INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE F-105D SHOOT DOWN. MR. NHUAN SAID MR. NGHI WAS FROM SON HOA VILLAGE, HA TINH PROVINCE, AND WAS MARRIED TO HA THAI BINH (HAS THAIS BINH). MR. NGHI RETIRED AT THE RANK OF COLONEL. MR. NHUAN DOES NOT KNOW NGHI'S CURRENT WHEREABOUTS.

B. MR. VO BIEN (VOX BIEENS) FORMERLY A POLITICAL CADRE OF THE UNIT INVOLVED IN THE F-105D SHOT DOWN. MR. BIEN IS, ACCORDING TO MR. NHUAN, 64 YEARS OLD AND CURRENTLY RESIDING IN XUAN GIAY VILLAGE, NGHI XUAN DISTRICT, HA TINH PROVINCE. MR. NHUAN BELIEVES MR. BIEN HAS KNOWLEDGE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE AIRCRAFT SHOOT DOWN.

C. MR. TRAN DANG DUNG (TRAANF DAWNG ZUNG), MR. NHUAN SAID, WAS THE SQUAD LEADER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BURIAL OF THE F-105D PILOT. MR. NHUAN BELIEVES THIS INDIVIDUAL SHOULD BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE BURIAL LOCATION. MR. DUNG WAS, ACCORDING TO MR. NHUAN, LAST KNOWN TO BE LIVING IN XUAN PHO VILLAGE, HUONG SON DISTRICT, HA TINH PROVINCE.

D. MR. LE THACH (LEE THANHS THACHJ), ACCORDING TO MR. NHUAN, WAS A MEMBER OF THE SQUAD WHICH BURIED THE F-105D PILOT, RETIRED FROM THE MILITARY IN 1969 AND WAS LAST KNOWN TO BE LIVING IN XUAN PHO VILLAGE, HUONG SON DISTRICT PROVINCE, HA TINH PROVINCE.

E. MR. TRAN XUAN LUC (TRAANF XUAAN LWCJ), ACCORDING TO MR NHUAN, WAS THE THIRD MEMBER OF THE SQUAD WHICH BURIED THE F-105D PILOT. MR. LUC WAS LAST KNOWN TO BE LIVING IN XUAN KY VILLAGE, HUONG SON DISTRICT, HA TINH PROVINCE.

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 CRASH SITE AS DESCRIBED BY MR. NHUAN IS PROBABLY LOCATED WITHIN AN AREA BOUNDED BY GRID COORDINATES WF370230, WF400230, WF370260, AND WF400260. THE BRIDGES HE SPOKE OF ARE PROBABLY LOCATED AT WF380236 (KHE KEM) AND WF390255 (TREO). CONSIDERING THAT MR. NHUAN HAS ONLY BEEN TO THE BURIAL SITE ONCE, HE PROVIDED A VERY CREDIBLE DESCRIPTION OF THE GENERAL AREA, WITHOUT USING A MAP.

B. THE MEMBERS OF THE JOINT TEAM CONFERRED ON THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED DURING THIS INTERVIEW. TEAM MEMBERS AGREED THAT THE NEED TO RE-INTERVIEW THIS SUBJECT WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MR. NHUAN ARISE DURING THE COURSE OF THE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TEAM'S FUTURE WORK.

C. REQUEST THE VNOSMP MAKE MR. NHUAN AVAILABLE FOR RE-INTERVIEW IF NECESSARY.//

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