Oral History
Ng Thanh Man
(Biên Phòng)

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AMPN/SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, NGUYEN THANH MAN//

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 JULY 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED MR. NGUYEN THANH MAN, A 52 YEAR OLD DONG SON DISTRICT, THANH HOA PROVINCE, RESIDENT. MR. MAN IS FORMERLY A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS, VOLUME 1 (1959-1979). THE TEAM MET AT THE DONG SON DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS, THANH HOA PROVINCE,

TO INTERVIEW MR. MAN, 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. MAN HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM BEFORE.

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2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, MR. NGUYEN THANH MAN, PROVIDED NO DETAILS CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. HE SUMMARIZED HIS METHODS FOR WRITING A PORTION OF THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS, VOLUME I (1959-1979). MR. MAN 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. MAN SAID HE HAD NOT.

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

B. HAVING ANSWERED THE FIRST TWO KEY QUESTIONS, MR. NGUYEN THANH MAN (NGUYEENX THANHS MAANX) EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD JOINED THE MILITARY IN 1963 AS A PROPAGANDA/PROSELYTING OFFICER IN THE THANH HOA PROVINCE BORDER DEFENSE FORCE. HE SAID THAT HE NEVER DIRECTLY PARTICIPATED IN THE BATTLES AGAINST THE AMERICANS, NOR DOES HE HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. LOSSES IN VIETNAM. HE SAID THAT HE ONLY WENT TO THE BATTLEFIELDS FOLLOWING VIETNAMESE VICTORIES TO GATHER INFORMATION FOR PROPAGANDA EXPLOITATION PURPOSES. MR. MAN REMARKED THAT HE WAS A SOLDIER WHO LIKED GUNS, BUT COULD NOT LEARN TO SHOOT WELL, AND WAS THEREFORE ASSIGNED TO THE THANH HOA BORDER DEFENSE HEADQUARTERS AS A POLITICAL OFFICER. ACCORDING TO MR. MAN, THE PROVINCE HAD ONLY ONE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT AND HE OFTEN TRAVELED IN RESPONSE TO THE DIRECTORATE'S NEEDS.

C. MR. MAN SAID THAT HE BEGAN WORK ON THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS, VOLUME I, IN 1983 AT THE THANH HOA BORDER DEFENSE HEADQUARTERS, AND COMPLETED HIS WORK IN 1984. HIS JOB, HE SAID, WAS TO GATHER INFORMATION FOR ONE SMALL SECTION OF THE BOOK CALLED "THE ANTI-U.S. STRUGGLE". DURING THIS TIME, HE SAID, HE USED ONLY LOCAL AND NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES. THERE WAS NO NEED FOR HIM TO USE ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS FOR HIS WORK, HE EXPLAINED, BECAUSE THERE WAS AN ABUNDANCE OF INFORMATION IN THE NEWSPAPERS ALREADY. HE SAID HE IS UNAWARE IF ANY OF THE OTHER SEVEN INDIVIDUALS HE WORKED WITH WHILE WRITING THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS HAD KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PW'S.

D. WITH NO FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MR. MAN, THE JOINT TEAM AGREED TO CONCLUDE THE INTERVIEW.

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

5. POTENTIAL LEADS. NONE.

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 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. MAN ARISE DURING THE COURSE OF THE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TEAM'S FUTURE WORK.

B. REQUEST THE VNOSMP MAKE MR. MAN AVAILABLE FOR REINTERVIEW IF NECESSARY.//

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