Oral History
My Duc Chau
(Bien Phong)

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ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

ROUTINE

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SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, NGUYEN DUC CHAU//

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

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

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 12 JULY 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM ~~ORAL~~ HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED MR. NGUYEN DUC CHAU, A 51 YEAR OLD HANOI RESIDENT. MR. CHAU IS FORMERLY A CONTRIBUTOR

TO THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS, VOLUME I (1959-1979). THE TEAM MET AT THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY COOPERATION, VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY, NUMBER 8 TRAN HUNG DAO STREET, HANOI, TO INTERVIEW MR. CHAU, LISTED IN REFERENCE AS A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION IN VIETNAM. THE U.S. CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF MR. [redacted] [redacted], DET 2, JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING (JTF-FA) CASUALTY RESOLUTION SPECIALIST; AND TSGT [redacted] [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.

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CHAU HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM BEFORE.

2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, MR. NGUYEN DUC CHAU, PROVIDED A FIRST HAND ACCOUNT OF AN AD-6 SHOOT DOWN IN NGHI XUAN DISTRICT, HA TINH PROVINCE WHICH OCCURRED IN 1967 OR 1968, AND AT THIS TIME CANNOT BE CORRELATED TO ANY U.S. LOSS. HE RECALLED HEARING THAT THE PILOT OF THIS AIRCRAFT WAS RESCUED BY U.S. FORCES. MR. CHAU 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 OF 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 SEEN OR HAD KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR (PW) CAPTIVE IN VIETNAM? MR. CHAU SAID HE HAD NOT.

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

B. HAVING ANSWERED THE FIRST TWO KEY QUESTIONS MR. NGUYEN DUC CHAU (NGUYEENX DWCS CHAAU) SAID THAT HE BECAME INVOLVED WITH THE EFFORT TO WRITE THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS IN 1972. BETWEEN 1963, WHEN HE JOINED THE MILITARY, AND 1972 HE WAS A 12.7 MILLIMETER GUN OPERATOR FOR THE HA TINH PROVINCE BORDER DEFENSE FORCE. DURING THIS TIME, HE SAID, HE NEVER SHOT DOWN AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT, BUT HE WAS WITNESS TO AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT SHOOT DOWN DURING THE SUMMER OF 1967 OR 1968. THE AIRCRAFT, HE SAID, WAS A BRIGHT METALLIC COLOR AD-6, STRAFING THE COAST. HE SAID THE AIRCRAFT WAS FLYING TOWARD THE OCEAN FROM THE DIRECTION OF VINH CITY (WF 7171), NGHE AN PROVINCE OVER XUAN HOA VILLAGE (UNLOCATED), NGHI XUAN DISTRICT (WF8063), HA TINH PROVINCE, WHEN IT WAS STRUCK BY A MISSILE AND BURST INTO FLAMES. THE AIRCRAFT, HE SAID, CRASHED INTO THE OCEAN, WHILE THE PILOT PARACHUTED FROM THE PLANE. HE LATER HEARD THAT THE PILOT WAS RESCUED BY AMERICAN FORCES. AS MR. CHAU REMEMBERS, THE ENTIRE VILLAGE WITNESSED THIS INCIDENT.

C. MR. CHAU SAID THAT THE HISTORY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE TROOPS BOOK WAS WRITTEN STRICTLY FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. THE BOOK, HE SAID, WAS NOT MEANT TO CONTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT AMERICAN PW'S AND HE, AS A CONTRIBUTOR, DIDN'T PAY ATTENTION TO THE PW ISSUE. HE SAID THAT INFORMATION WAS GATHERED FROM THE PEOPLE'S NEWSPAPER (NHAAN ZAAN) AND THE PEOPLE'S ARMY NEWSPAPER (QUAAN DOOIJ NHAAN ZAAN) FOR INCLUSION IN THE BOOK. THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THESE PAPERS WAS VAGUE, HE SAID. THE NEWSPAPERS, HE SAID, ONLY REPORTED THAT A CERTAIN POST HAD SHOT DOWN AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT AND SOMETIMES WOULD REPORT THE CAPTURE OF A PILOT, BUT THAT WAS ALL.

D. HE SAID THAT RECORD KEEPING WAS VERY DIFFICULT BECAUSE OFTEN TIMES MANY OF THE BORDER DEFENSE UNITS WOULD FIRE AT THE SAME AIRCRAFT, AND IF IT WAS SHOT DOWN, THEY WOULD ALL CLAIM RESPONSIBILITY. SOMETIMES, HE SAID, BECAUSE U.S. AIRCRAFT HAD CONTRAILS, A UNIT WOULD REPORT THE SHOOT DOWN OF AN AIRCRAFT EVEN IF THEY DIDN'T SEE OTHER EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE. MR. CHAU OPINED THAT NONE OF THE BORDER DEFENSE UNITS STILL EXIST TODAY.

E. MR. CHAU SAID THAT MR. NGUYEN DUC NHUAN (NGUYEENX DWCS NHUAANJ) WAS ANOTHER CONTRIBUTOR TO THE BOOK (SEE PARA. 7.B.). HE SAID THAT MR. NHUAN ALSO BELONGED TO THE BORDER DEFENSE FORCE, BUT MR. NHUAN WAS STATIONED FAR FROM HIMSELF. MR. CHAU RECALLED THAT MR. NHUAN PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO DETAILS WHILE GATHERING INFORMATION FOR INCLUSION TO THE BOOK.

F. IN CONCLUSION, MR. CHAU SAID THAT THERE IS NOTHING HE COULD PROVIDE WHICH WOULD HELP RESOLVE ANY PW OR MIA ISSUE. MR. CHAU SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION, THE FIRST PLACE TO LOOK FOR INFORMATION TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE IS IN MUSEUMS.

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

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES.

A. THE AD-6 SHOOT DOWN DESCRIBED ABOVE CANNOT AT THIS TIME BE CORRELATED TO ANY U.S. LOSS INCIDENT. (NOTE: THIS CONCLUSION IS BASED ONLY ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT DET 2, JTF-FA, AND DOES NOT REPRESENT FINAL ANALYSIS.)

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 XUAN HOA VILLAGE MR. CHAU REFERENCED IN PARA. 3.B. AS THE SHOOT DOWN SITE IS POSSIBLY LOCATED AT WF9539.

B. MR. NGUYEN DUC NHUAN (NGUYEENX DWCS NHUAANJ) WAS INTERVIEWED ON 8 JULY 1993 BY THE JOINT U.S./VIETNAM ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW TEAM. MR. NHUAN, PROVIDED INFORMATION CONCERNING AN F-105D SHOT DOWN DURING 1965 IN HA TINH PROVINCE, WHICH BASED ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT DET 2 CANNOT BE
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SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, NGUYEN DUC CHAU//

RMKS/
CORRELATED TO ANY U.S. LOSS. DURING THIS INTERVIEW, MR. CHAU

LEARNED THE POSSIBILITY THAT MR. NHUAN'S STATEMENTS ABOUT THE F-105D SHOOT DOWN MAY HAVE BEEN INACCURATE.

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

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

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