

ENVELOPE

CDSN = LGX273 MCN = 94005/30793 TOR = 940051933
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 ZNR

HEADER

R 051936Z JAN 94
 FM JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
 INFO RUEALGX/SAFE
 R 031802Z JAN 94 ZYB
 FM CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J2//
 TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP:RSA//
 INFO RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASH DC
 RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC//CA/EAP/VLC/CCS/OCS//
 RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J5//
 RUHQHQB/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J2/J3/J30-M//
 RUEKJCS/USCINCPAC LO WASHINGTON DC

0728
 GARWOOD-015

RUEKJCS/DIA WASHINGTON DC
 RUHVAAA/CDRUSACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//TAPC-PED-H//
 RUEHBT/USDAO BANGKOK TH//PW-MIA//

BT

CONTROLS

//N03460//
 SECTION 01 OF 03

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

MSGID/SYS.RRM/CDR JTF-FA//

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE IS A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTION OF AN ORAL
 HISTORY PROJECT FIELD REPORT//

AMPN/SUBJ: INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, NGUYEN DINH TRANG//
 REF/AID: X/JTF-FA DET 2/30DEC93//

AMPN/SUBJ: ENTRY NUMBER 67, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS//
 RMKS/1 BACKGROUND. ON 6 DECEMBER 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM ORAL
 HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED NGUYEN DINH TRANG, A 67
 YEAR OLD RESIDENT OF NUI THANH DISTRICT, QUANG NAM - DA NANG
 PROVINCE. MR. TRANG IS A FORMER ENEMY PROSELYTIZING CADRE OF THE
 1ST REGIMENT, 2ND PAVN DIVISION. THE TEAM MET AT THE NUI THANH
 DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS TO INTERVIEW MR. TRANG,
 LISTED IN REFERENCE AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING
 U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION IN VIETNAM. THE U.S. CONTINGENT
 CONSISTED OF TSGT RONALD D. WARD, JTF-FA ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
 COORDINATOR; AND PO2 JOHN L. HARVEY, JTF-FA ANALYST/LINGUIST. THE
 VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF COL LE KY,
 MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; AND MR. NGUYEN VAN THANG LOI, MINISTRY OF
 INTERIOR. MR. TRANG HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM
 BEFORE.

2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, NGUYEN DINH TRANG, PROVIDED A GENERAL
 OVERVIEW OF HIS CAREER WITH THE ENEMY PROSELYTIZING OFFICES OF THE
 1ST REGIMENT, 2ND PAVN DIVISION AND MRS HEADQUARTERS. HE PROVIDED
 INFORMATION PROBABLY CORRELATING TO PRIORITY CASE 0728, AS WELL AS

GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING PAVN EFFORTS BETWEEN 1975 AND 1977 TO RECOVER U.S. REMAINS IN MRS. MR. TRANG CLAIMED TO HAVE LIVED WITH BOBBY GARWOOD FOR APPROXIMATELY FIVE YEARS AND PROVIDED THE JOINT TEAM WITH AN OVERVIEW OF MR. GARWOOD'S ACTIVITIES AS AN MRS ENEMY PROSELYTIZING CADRE.

3. DETAILS.

A. AFTER FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS, COL LE KY EXPLAINED THE JOINT TEAM'S MISSION AND TSGT WARD INVITED MR. NGUYEN DINH TRANG (NGUYEENX DINHF TRANG) TO SHARE ANY INFORMATION HE MAY HAVE CONCERNING U.S. SOLDIERS WHO MAY HAVE BECOME MISSING AS A RESULT OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM. MR. TRANG PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

B. MR. TRANG JOINED THE PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM (PAVN) IN 1960. HE WORKED AS AN ENEMY PROSELYTIZING CADRE IN THE 1ST REGIMENT, 2ND PAVN DIVISION UNTIL THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM IN 1975, WHEN HE TRANSFERRED TO MILITARY REGION (MRS) HEADQUARTERS. HE SAID THAT AFTER 1977 HE TRANSFERRED AGAIN TO A PAVN UNIT OPERATING IN CAMBODIA AND RETIRED IN 1986.

C. A U.S. SOLDIER WAS CAPTURED ON 12 DECEMBER 1963. HE COULD NOT RECALL THE PRISONER'S CAPTURE OR IMPRISONMENT LOCATION, BUT DID SAY THAT THIS INDIVIDUAL WAS A ROAD CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER WITH THE RANK OF CORPORAL, HAD BLOND HAIR, WHITE SKIN, AND WAS VERY YOUNG. BECAUSE THERE WERE NO SPECIALIZED HOLDING FACILITIES FOR PRISONERS IN THE SOUTH, THIS PW WAS HELD IN AN OPERATIONAL MILITARY CAMP. AFTER SIX MONTHS OF CAPTIVITY, THE PW BEGAN TO WEAKEN AND WAS RELEASED.

D. BOBBY GARWOOD, REFERRED TO BY MR. TRANG AS "BOB" AND "NGUYEN CHIEN DAU" (NGUYEENX CHIEENS DAAUS), LIVED WITH MR. TRANG FOR APPROXIMATELY FIVE YEARS. HE FIRST MET MR. GARWOOD IN 1966 AFTER MR. GARWOOD "SURRENDERED". MR. TRANG EMPHASIZED THAT THEY MET ON A DAILY BASIS. MR. GARWOOD COULD COOK ALMOST AS WELL AS A VIETNAMESE COOK AND HAD WRITTEN HIM A LETTER FROM THE U.S. SOME TIME AFTER 1978. IN THE BEGINNING, MR. GARWOOD COULD NOT SPEAK VIETNAMESE, BUT HE LEARNED. MR. TRANG RECALLED THAT BEFORE JOINING THE PAVN, MR. GARWOOD HAD BEEN A DRIVER IN THE U.S. 3RD MARINE DIVISION WITH THE RANK OF CORPORAL.

(1) MR. GARWOOD WORKED FOR THE MRS ENEMY PROSELYTIZING OFFICE (EPO) UNTIL HE WENT TO THE NORTH IN 1971. HE WAS AS MUCH A PAVN MEMBER AS THE VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS WERE; HE WORE A PAVN UNIFORM, CARRIED AN "AK" TYPE WEAPON, WENT ON MILITARY OPERATIONS, AND WAS A COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER. MR. GARWOOD BECAME A VALUABLE PROPAGANDA TOOL, WRITING PAMPHLETS, AND AT TIMES TRAVELING NEAR U.S. CAMPS TO USE A LOUDSPEAKER TO PROPAGANDIZE U.S. FORCES. NORMALLY MR. GARWOOD WAS FREE TO TRAVEL ALONE, BUT WHENEVER HE TRAVELED CLOSE TO THE U.S. CAMPS, HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY PAVN SOLDIERS, FOR SAFETY. MR. TRANG ALSO EXPLAINED THAT MR. GARWOOD DID NOT HAVE A RANK WHILE WORKING IN THE SOUTH. IN THE SOUTH, IT WAS AN INDIVIDUAL'S POSITION WHICH GAVE HIM AUTHORITY, NOT RANK. RANKS WERE ONLY USED IN NORTH VIETNAM IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE WAR.

(2) CONSIDERING THE AMOUNT OF TRAVELING DONE BY MR. GARWOOD AND HIS DUTIES, WHICH INCLUDED ASKING U.S. PRISONERS

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STATUS OF U.S. FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES, MR. TRANG OPINED, HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE THE GENERAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS FOR MANY INCIDENTS (SEE PARA 7C). MR. TRANG LATER SAID THAT MR. GARWOOD HAD MET WITH ONLY A FEW PRISONERS. MR. GARWOOD DID NOT ENGAGE U.S. FORCES IN COMBAT AND WAS NEVER WOUNDED IN COMBAT, HOWEVER HE WAS SLIGHTLY WOUNDED ONCE IN 1968 OR 69 BY U.S. BOMBING. HE HAD ALSO HEARD THAT MR. GARWOOD WAS HURT ONCE IN 1966 WHEN A U.S. PW, A SERGEANT, STRUCK HIM IN THE BACK. WHEN ASKED IF MR. GARWOOD EVER HAD BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY A BLACK FRIEND OR ANY OTHER AMERICANS, MR. TRANG SAID THAT HE HAD NOT.

E. MR. TRANG RECALLED SEEING A WOUNDED U.S. SERGEANT AT THE 1ST REGIMENT'S MOBILE SURGICAL UNIT DURING THE DRY SEASON OF 1966 FOLLOWING A BATTLE ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE VE RIVER (VER) (BS6255). MR. TRANG DESCRIBED THE SERGEANT AS HAVING TAN SKIN AND BLACK HAIR, NOT VERY TALL OR HEAVY, AND FULLY CLOTHED. THE SERGEANT HAD BEEN WOUNDED ON THE LEFT SIDE OF HIS BELLY AND HAD A BULLET REMOVED BY A DOCTOR NAMED CHANH. MR. TRANG RECALLED THAT THE PW HAD WANTED THE BULLET AS A SOUVENIR. THE PW DIED FIVE DAYS AFTER THE OPERATION AND WAS BURIED AT THE MOBILE SURGICAL UNIT. THE MOBILE SURGICAL UNIT WAS 500 TO 600 METERS FROM THE END OF A STREAM NEAR HO CA (HOOS CAR) (BS603575), HAN DUNG HAMLET, NGHIA HANH DISTRICT. MR. TRANG, WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE BURIAL, DID NOT KNOW IF THERE WERE ALSO PAVN SOLDIER'S GRAVES LOCATED IN THIS AREA, BUT HE SAID THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE DUE TO A NUMBER OF PAVN KILLED IN THE BATTLE. AT THIS TIME THE 1ST REGIMENT'S HEADQUARTERS WAS LOCATED ON A MOUNTAIN "ABOVE" HO CA (SEE PARA 7D). WHEN ASKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE LOCATIONS OF DAU MOUNTAIN (NUIS ZAUUF) AND HOSPITAL B25, MR. TRANG SAID THAT DAU MOUNTAIN WAS NEAR HANH THIEN (BS6154) IN QUANG NGAI PROVINCE AND HE HAS NEVER HEARD OF HOSPITAL B25. (MAPS //

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/
RMKS/

USED: SERIES L7014, EDITION 3-DMA, SHEET 6738-1 AND PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM MAP SECTION 49, SERIAL U.T.M. 6738.)

F. IN JUNE OR JULY OF 1967 MR. TRANG HEARD A REPORT THAT TWELVE U.S. SOLDIERS OF THE 3RD DIVISION WERE CAPTURED IN THE HIEP DUC (AT9024) AREA, QUANG NGAI PROVINCE. TWO OF THE TWELVE WERE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED AND DIED AFTER THEIR CAPTURE, BUT THE OTHERS WERE TURNED OVER TO ENEMY PROSELYTIZING PERSONNEL. THE TWO DEAD SOLDIERS WERE BURIED NEAR NGO BA TU (NGOO BA TUS) (UNLOCATED). MR. TRANG HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INCIDENT. (MAP USED: SERIES L7014, EDITION 1-AMS, SHEET 6640-3.)

G. DURING A BATTLE BETWEEN THE 1ST PAVN REGIMENT AND U.S. 3RD DIVISION FORCES IN 1968 OR 69 NEAR A FACTORY IN AN TAY (AT9126), HIEP DUC, A TWO-HOUR CEASE FIRE WAS CALLED SO THAT THE U.S. FORCES COULD EXTRACT THEIR DEAD AND WOUNDED FROM THE BATTLEFIELD. NOT ALL OF THE BODIES WERE RECOVERED, ACCORDING TO MR. TRANG. HE HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THIS INCIDENT. (MAP USED: SERIES L7014, EDITION 1-AMS, SHEET 6640-3.)

H. MRS HEADQUARTERS HAD ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE

HANDLING OF ALL PWS IN THE MR. WHEN A PW WAS CAPTURED THE SITUATION WAS REPORTED VERBALLY FROM THE UNIT INVOLVED THROUGH THE DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL MILITARY AUTHORITY TO MRS HEADQUARTERS. MRS THEN REPORTED THE CAPTURE TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (MOD). THE PROVINCIAL MILITARY AUTHORITY ALSO REPORTED TO THE MR IN WRITING.

I. WOUNDED PWS RECEIVED TREATMENT FOR THEIR WOUNDS, AND AT TIMES WERE RELEASED TO U.S. CONTROL. U.S. SOLDIERS ALSO DIED WHILE BEING TREATED FOR THEIR WOUNDS, BUT MR. TRANG WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY REPORTING PROCEDURES CONCERNING THESE DEATHS, STATING THAT THERE WAS NOT TIME FOR VERY MUCH REPORTING DURING THE WAR.

J. FOLLOWING THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM IN 1975 THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ORDERED THE RECOVERY OF ALL U.S. REMAINS IN MRS. MR. TRANG COULD NOT RECALL WHICH AGENCY HAD ORGANIZED THE RECOVERY EFFORT, BUT SAID THAT IT WAS POSSIBLY THE ENEMY PROSELYTIZING DEPARTMENT (EPD) OF THE MOD. MR. TRANG TRANSFERRED TO THE MRS EPO TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EFFORT. BECAUSE THERE WERE NO LISTS, SKETCHES, OR MAPS MADE DURING THE WAR DOCUMENTING THE GRAVE LOCATIONS, ANYONE KNOWING OF A U.S. SOLDIER'S GRAVE LOCATION WAS ORDERED TO REPORT THROUGH THE CHAIN OF COMMAND TO MRS. THE INDIVIDUAL WOULD THEN LEAD MRS REPRESENTATIVES TO THE GRAVE SITE FOR EXCAVATION. ALL OF THE RECOVERED REMAINS WERE SENT TO THE MR HEADQUARTERS AT NHA TRANG FOR TRANSFER TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. DURING THESE OPERATIONS, MR. TRANG WORKED WITH EIGHT INDIVIDUALS FROM BINH DINH, QUANG NGAI AND QUANG NAM PROVINCE MILITARY COMMANDS. HE COULD REMEMBER ONLY SEVEN; MR. NGUYEN TUNG, MR. VO CUC TIEN, MR. NGO TRUNG TINH, MR. DA, MR. PHUONG, MR. THANH, AND MR. PHOC. MR. TRANG DID NOT KNOW THE NAME OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE WHO RECEIVED REMAINS FROM MRS, NOR COULD HE REMEMBER HOW MANY SETS OF REMAINS HAD BEEN SENT TO MRS HEADQUARTERS. AT THE TIME OF RECOVERY, PICTURES WERE NOT TAKEN OF THE REMAINS.

K. MR. TRANG RECALLED THAT A WEST GERMAN WAS CAPTURED IN 1968. THIS PW WAS SENT TO NORTH VIETNAM. HE HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THIS INCIDENT.

L. WITH NO FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MR. TRANG, THE JOINT TEAM AGREED TO CONCLUDE THIS INTERVIEW.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES.

A. MR. TRANG'S COMMENTS CONCERNING THE INCIDENT IN PARA 3C WERE TOO VAGUE TO DRAW TENTATIVE FIELD CORRELATION. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE IS CONFUSING ELEMENTS OF CASE 0010 OR 0013 WITH CASE 0016.

B. THE INCIDENT DESCRIBED IN PARA 3E PROBABLY CORRELATES TO CASE 0728 BASED ON THE GENERAL INCIDENT LOCATION, AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL ASSOCIATED WITH CASE 0728.

5. POTENTIAL LEADS.

A. BOBBY GARWOOD (CASE 0055). MR. TRANG CLAIMED THAT MR. GARWOOD SHOULD HAVE INFORMATION RELATING TO CASES IN KHAM DUC AND HIEP DUC DISTRICTS.

B. A DR. CHANH, WHO REPORTEDLY REMOVED A BULLET FROM THE U.S. PW DESCRIBED IN PARA 3E. DR. NGUYEN NGOC CHANH (NGUYEENX NGOCJ CHANH) HAS BEEN INTERVIEWED BY JOINT TEAMS SEVERAL TIMES.

C. THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WERE IDENTIFIED BY MR. TRANG AS PARTICIPANTS IN THE MR5 U.S. REMAINS RECOVERY EFFORT. ALL OF THESE POTENTIAL LEADS ARE REPORTEDLY LIVING IN DA NANG CITY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MR. PHOC.

- (1) MR. NGUYEN TUNG (NGUYEENX TUNGF)
- (2) MR. VO CUC TIEN (VOX CUCS TIEEN)
- (3) MR. NGO TRUNG TINH (NGOO TRUNGF TINHF)
- (4) MR. DA (ZAJ)
- (5) MR. PHUONG (PHWONG)
- (6) MR. THANH (THANH)
- (7) MR. PHOC (PHOWCS)

MR. PHOC IS REPORTEDLY LIVING IN THANH HOA 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. MR. TRANG EXPRESSED HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENTS, AND STATED THAT HE HOPES THE INFORMATION HE PROVIDED TO THE TEAM CAN BE USEFUL TO THE JOINT TEAM.

B. MR. TRANG WAS IN POOR HEALTH AT THE TIME OF INTERVIEW. HE WAS NOT ABLE TO HEAR WELL; , HAD BEEN SICK FOR SEVERAL DAYS, AND BECAME EASILY CONFUSED. HE ALSO SAID THAT BECAUSE THE WAR WAS A LONG TIME AGO HE HAS FORGOTTEN MANY DETAILS OF THE EVENTS DESCRIBED. MR. TRANG'S RECALL OF DATES AND YEARS APPEARED TO BE LACKING. ALTHOUGH HE APPEARED TO MAKE A GENUINE EFFORT TO GIVE THE JOINT TEAM ACCURATE DATES AND TIME FRAMES OF EVENTS, HE OFTEN PAUSED AND APPEARED UNSURE OF HIMSELF.

C. MR. TRANG CITED KHAM DUC AND HIEP DUC AS SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE MR. GARWOOD MAY HAVE CONSIDERABLE KNOWLEDGE. THE ONLY SPECIFIC INFORMATION MR. TRANG PROVIDED CONCERNING MR. GARWOOD'S INTERACTION WITH U.S. PWS WAS THAT MR. GARWOOD HAD INTERVIEWED TWO U.S. PRISONERS FROM THE 5TH U.S. DIVISION IN MR4. ACCORDING TO MR. //

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 003 *****/
RMKS/

TRANG, BOTH OF THE PWS WERE LATER RETURNED TO U.S. CONTROL.

D. THE ONLY TWO MOUNTAINS "ABOVE" HO CA ARE DAU TUONG (BS5959) AND BAN CO (BS6158).

E. DURING THE INTERVIEW MR. TRANG WAS SHOWN A PICTURE TAKEN IN 1968 OF A U.S. PRISONER BEING INTERROGATED IN THE DA NANG AREA. MR. TRANG CLAIMED NOT TO RECOGNIZE ANYONE IN THE PICTURE, ONCE STATING THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT HE WAS ONE OF THOSE PICTURED. (PICTURE TAKEN FROM PAGE 123, VOLUME 1 THE BOOK "THE 2ND DIVISION" (DA NANG PUBLISHING HOUSE, 1989)).

F. 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. TRANG ARISE DURING THE COURSE OF THE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TEAM'S FUTURE WORK. SHOULD MR. TRANG'S HEALTH