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SECTION 01 OF 02

DIA PASS TO DOD POW-MIA CENTRAL DOCUMENTATION OFFICE//

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AMPN/SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, NGUYEN XUAN NGOAN//

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

PAGE 02 RUHQSGG6051 UNCLAS

AMPN/SUBJ: LIST OF PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW-SENATOR KERRY, ENTRY NUMBER 15 OF 83//

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 22 MAY 1993, A JOINT US/VIETNAM INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED MR. NGUYEN XUAN NGOAN, A 54-YEAR-OLD RETIRED PAVN SENIOR CAPTAIN, CURRENTLY RESIDING IN HUU THUONG HAMLET, THUONG HOA VILLAGE, HOANG LONG DISTRICT, NINH BINH DISTRICT. THE TEAM MET AT THE ANTE-BUILDING MEETING ROOM OF THE GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE, 2 LE THACH STREET, HOAN KIEM DISTRICT, HANOI, TO INTERVIEW MR. NGOAN, LISTED IN REFERENCE, BELIEVED TO BE A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION IN VIETNAM. THE U.S. CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF MR. KEITH GARY FLANAGAN, DET 2 JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING (JTF-FA) CASUALTY RESOLUTION SPECIALIST; AND PETTY OFFICER JOHN HARVEY, JTF-FA LINGUIST. THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF LTC LE KY, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; AND MR. NGUYEN THANG LOI, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. ON 21 MAY 1993, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CADRE DROVE TO NINH BINH PROVINCE AND ESCORTED MR. NGOAN TO HANOI. ON 22 MAY 1993, LTC KY ESCORTED MR. NGOAN TO THE GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE. MR. NGOAN SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY JOINT TEAMS PREVIOUSLY.

PAGE 03 RUHQSGG6051 UNCLAS

2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE PROVIDED EYEWITNESS INFORMATION CONCERNING THE ALLEGED DEATH AND BURIAL OF TWO U.S. SERVICEMEN IN AN LAO DISTRICT, BINH DINH PROVINCE IN APPROXIMATELY JULY 1967. UNABLE TO LOCATE THE BURIAL SITE ON AVAILABLE MAPS, THE SOURCE DREW A SKETCH MAP (ATTACHMENT ONE) DEPICTING THE PAVN STRATEGIC ROUTE ALONG WHICH THE SOURCE CLAIMS THE TWO U.S. SERVICEMEN WERE BURIED IN A BUNKER. THE SOURCE SAID THAT HE HAD SHARED SOME OF THIS INFORMATION WITH MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY AND HAD RELATED THIS INFORMATION TO A GROUP OF VETERANS BUT HE HAD NEVER TRIED TO DESCRIBE OR LOCATE THE PRECISE BURIAL LOCATION UNTIL HE DREW THE SKETCH FOR THIS JOINT TEAM. THE SOURCE'S STATEMENTS AND SKETCH OF THE INCIDENT AREA PROBABLY CORRELATE TO TWO ACTIVE POW/MIA CASES.

3. DETAILS.

A. AFTER FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS DURING WHICH THE JOINT TEAM EXPLAINED ITS MISSION AND OBJECTIVES, THE INTERVIEW SUBJECT, MR. NGUYEN XUAN NGOAN (NGUYEENX XUAANS NGOANX), BEGAN BY STATING THAT SINCE 1973 HE HAD NEVER SEEN LIVE U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR (PW) IN VIETNAM. HE BELIEVED THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT HAD RETURNED ALL AMERICANS PW'S TO U.S. CONTROL. ASIDE FROM THE U.S. MEMBERS

PAGE 04 RUHQSGG6051 UNCLAS

OF THE JOINT TEAM, NGOAN HAD NOT SEEN AN AMERICAN LIVING FREELY IN VIETNAM SINCE THE WAR.

B. MR. NGOAN EXPLAINED THAT FROM 1965 TO 1970 HE SERVED AS A COMPANY GRADE CADRE AND POLITICAL OFFICER FOR MILITARY REGION (MR) 5 UNITS IN THE BINH DINH AREA WITH THE MISSION OF GUERRILLA WARFARE AIMED AT INTERDICTING RVN FORCES WEST OF NATIONAL ROUTE ONE. HE PARTICIPATED IN MANY CLASHES, TO INCLUDE FIGHTING IN BONG SON (BOONG SOWN), XUAN SON (XUAAN SOWN), CHO CAT (CHOWJ CATS), AND HOAI NHON (HOAIF NHOWN), BUT NEVER CAPTURED ANY U.S. PRISONERS.

C. IN APPROXIMATELY JULY 1967, EXACT DATE UNCLEAR, HIS UNIT, THE 48TH ENGINEER COMPANY, 22ND REGIMENT, 3RD PAVN DIVISION (AKA 20B DIVISION) HAD ORDERS TO CONDUCT AN AMBUSH IN THE AN LAO AREA ON A STRATEGIC ROUTE THAT RAN FROM NATIONAL ROUTE ONE, PAST A COLLAPSED BRIDGE, TO STRATEGIC ROUTE THREE (NFI). THE PAVN ROUTINELY USED THIS ROUTE FOR CASUALTY EVACUATION, BUT U.S. FORCES HAD SEVERAL TIMES AMBUSHED THE EVACUATION TEAMS FROM "MOUNTAIN NUMBER ONE" OVERLOOKING THE ROUTE. NGOAN'S UNIT WAS TO COUNTER-AMBUSH THE AMERICANS IN THIS AREA, APPROXIMATELY TWO KILOMETERS NORTH OF HUNG NHON (HWNG NHOWN) VILLAGE (BS7414).

PAGE 05 RUHQSGG6051 UNCLAS

D. ON THE DAY OF THE INCIDENT, AS THEY MOVED TOWARDS HUNG NHON VILLAGE, A THREE MAN ELEMENT OF NGOAN'S COMPANY ENCOUNTERED A SEVEN MAN AMERICAN PATROL MOVING FROM "MOUNTAIN ONE" TO THE COLLAPSED BRIDGE. NGOAN OPINED THE AMERICAN GROUP WAS POSSIBLY SUBORDINATE TO THE 11TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE, AMERICAN DIVISION. THE VIETNAMESE CONTINGENT AMBUSHED THE AMERICANS FROM THE SURROUNDING JUNGLE, KILLING TWO SOLDIERS ON THE SPOT. THE REMAINING FIVE U.S. TROOPS WITHDREW TOWARD THE MOUNTAIN.

E. WHEN THE SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE CEASED, AT APPROXIMATELY 1600 HOURS, NGOAN'S GROUP APPROACHED THE TWO DEAD U.S. SOLDIERS AND CONFISCATED TWO AR-15 TYPE RIFLES, AMMUNITION CARTRIDGES, WEB BELTS, GRENADES, AND TWO STEEL HELMETS, BUT TOOK NOTHING ELSE. USING BANDAGES AND SHROUDS, THE VIETNAMESE BOUND THE AMERICANS AND BURIED THEM IN A NEARBY AMBUSH BUNKER. THE BUNKER, JUST OVER A METER DEEP, WAS APPROXIMATELY 15 METERS FROM THE STRATEGIC ROUTE, APPROXIMATELY THREE METERS EAST OF A STREAM, NEAR A STEEL BRIDGE THAT CROSSED THE STREAM (APPARENTLY DIFFERENT THAN THE COLLAPSED BRIDGE). THE VIETNAMESE ELEMENT FILLED THE BUNKER WITH DIRT AND LEVELED IT, AND DID NOT MARK THE GRAVE.

F. THE TWO AMERICAN SOLDIERS WERE CAUCASIAN, APPROXIMATELY

PAGE 06 RUHQSGG6051 UNCLAS

25 YEARS OF AGE, OF MEDIUM HEIGHT AND BUILD, WORE CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORMS WITH INSIGNIAS SEWN ON BUT NO RANK, AND STEEL HELMETS. ONE SOLDIER WAS SLIGHTLY LARGER THAN THE OTHER. ONE SOLDIER APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN KILLED BY ROCKET FIRE, THE OTHER BY AK-47 FIRE. BOTH BODIES WERE BURIED INTACT.

G. THE NEXT DAY A HELICOPTER FLEW IN TO LAND MORE TROOPS ON THE MOUNTAIN AND COUNTER ATTACK. NGOAN'S COMPANY LOST FIVE MEMBERS, INCLUDING A FEMALE GUERRILLA, AND CONSEQUENTLY LEFT THE INCIDENT AREA. DURING THAT SAME TIME FRAME, PAVN FORCES USED A TANK TO PACK DOWN AND OBSCURE THE GRAVE. NGOAN DID NOT BELIEVE THAT U.S. TROOPS, WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY MOVED INTO THE AREA IN GREATER FORCE, EVER FOUND THE GRAVE.

H. NGOAN LATER REPORTED THE INCIDENT IN PERSON TO HIS SUPERIORS AT THE 22ND REGIMENT AND TURNED IN THE CONFISCATED WEAPONS AS PROOF OF HIS UNIT'S DEEDS. HE RECALLED THAT AT THE TIME, A MAN NAMED PHUONG (PHWONG) WAS THE REGIMENT COMMANDER AND LOC (LOOCJ) WAS THE REGIMENTAL POLITICAL OFFICER. NGOAN RECEIVED A CITATION FOR HIS ROLE IN THE INCIDENT.

I. NGOAN ONLY SERVED IN THE INCIDENT AREA FOR ONE YEAR AND

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 NEVER RETURNED THERE, NOR DID HE EVER SEE THE GRAVE AGAIN. HE

PAGE 02 RUHQSGG6052 UNCLAS

DID NOT KNOW WHO ELSE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PINPOINT THE GRAVE BUT REMEMBERED THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE WITH HIM ON THE DAY OF THE INCIDENT:

- (1) BAO, NATIVE OF THAI BINH, KILLED DURING THE WAR.
- (2) TOAN (TOANF), NATIVE OF PHO CHAY (PHOOS CHAYS)

VILLAGE, Y YEN (Y YEEN) DISTRICT, NAM HA (NAM HAF) PROVINCE, PRESENT LOCATION UNCERTAIN.

J. AS FOR BEING ABLE TO FIND THE GRAVE LOCATION AGAIN, MR. NGOAN STATED THAT IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO DO SO. HE HAS NEVER BEEN BACK TO THE AREA SINCE THE INCIDENT, WHICH HE SAID HAPPENED A VERY LONG TIME AGO. HE KNEW THAT THE AREA FLOODED DURING THE RAINY SEASON AND BELIEVED THAT THE TERRAIN HAS CHANGED MUCH SINCE THEN. NGOAN KNEW OF NO ONE ELSE THAT COULD POSITIVELY LOCATE THE GRAVE SITE. HE STATED THAT HE HAD ONLY RECOUNTED THE STORY OF THE INCIDENT IN GENERAL TERMS TO HIS IMMEDIATE FAMILY AND MORE RECENTLY TO A VETERAN'S GROUP. THE MOST SPECIFIC LOCATION DATA HE USED WHEN RELATING THE STORY TO HIS FAMILY AND THE VETERANS WAS THAT THE INCIDENT OCCURRED IN THE AN LAO AREA.

K. IN RESPONSE TO WHETHER HE KNEW OF ANY OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH U.S. PERSONNEL WERE LOST, MR. NGOAN SAID THAT THERE WERE

PAGE 03 RUHQSGG6052 UNCLAS

AMERICANS KILLED IN A BATTLE AT XUAN SON, BUT U.S. HELICOPTERS HAD RETRIEVED ALL THE DEAD.

L. AFTER DECIDING NO FURTHER QUESTIONING WAS NECESSARY AT THE TIME, THE MEMBERS OF THE JOINT TEAM AGREED TO DISCONTINUE THIS INTERVIEW.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES.

A. MR. NGOAN'S STATEMENTS PROBABLY CORRELATE TO CASES 0242-0-01 AND 0242-0-02, BASED ON LOCATION (INCLUDING PROVINCE DISTRICT AND VERY SIMILAR GRID COORDINATES); NUMBER OF PERSONNEL MISSING; THE FACT THAT ONE SOLDIER WAS SLIGHTLY BIGGER THAN THE OTHER; CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS; AND THE DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT.

B. ELEMENTS OF NGOAN'S STATEMENTS THAT DO NOT MATCH CIRCUMSTANCES IN CASES 0242-0-01 AND 0242-0-02 ARE:

(1) THE YEAR. THE 0242 INCIDENT OCCURRED ON 29 JANUARY 1966 VICE IN THE SUMMER OF 1967.

(2) WEAPONS INVOLVED. NGOAN STATED HIS ELEMENTS CONFISCATED TWO "AR-15'S FROM THE DEAD SOLDIERS. IN CASE 0242, ONE SOLDIER HAD AN M-16 (SIMILAR TO AN AR-15), BUT THE OTHER HAD A 9MM PISTOL.

PAGE 04 RUHQSGG6052 UNCLAS

5. POTENTIAL LEADS. MR. NGOAN PROVIDED NAMES OF THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WHO MIGHT HELP RESOLVE THE FATE OF THE TWO SOLDIERS IN NGOAN'S STORY:

A. A TEAM MEMBER NAMED BAO (BAOR), A NATIVE OF THAI BINH, WHO LATER BECAME KIA.

B. ANOTHER TEAM MEMBER NAMED TOAN (TOANF), FROM PHO CHAY VILLAGE, Y YEN DISTRICT, NAM HA PROVINCE, WHO MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE, BUT TRANSFERRED OUT OF NGOAN'S UNIT.

C. HE SAID THAT WHEN HE REPORTED THE DEATHS HE SEEMED TO REMEMBER (MR. NGOAN SAID THAT HE WAS NOT VERY SURE) THAT THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED BY EITHER A MAN CALLED PHUONG, THE 22ND REGIMENT COMMANDER, OR A MAN CALLED LOC), WHO WAS THE REGIMENT'S POLITICAL OFFICER.

D. THE INFORMATION MR. NGOAN PROVIDED THE JOINT TEAM CONCERNING THIS INCIDENT, ESPECIALLY THE LOCATION DATA ENHANCED BY HIS HAND SKETCHED MAP, PROVIDES A POTENTIALLY VERY LUCRATIVE LEAD TO RESOLVING CASES 0242-0-01 AND 0242-0-02. IF NGOAN CAN LEAD A JOINT TEAM TO THE BUNKER IN AN LAO DISTRICT WHERE THE TWO SOLDIERS ARE BURIED, A JOINT EXCAVATION TEAM MAY BE ABLE TO RECOVER THE REMAINS.

PAGE 05 RUHQSGG6052 UNCLAS

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

7. COMMENTS.

A. THE CONSENSUS OF THE JOINT TEAM WAS THAT CONTINUATION OF THIS INTERVIEW OR AN ATTEMPT TO RE-INTERVIEW THIS SOURCE WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER FURTHER PERTINENT QUESTIONS ARISE AND WHETHER A JOINT TEAM WILL REQUIRE MR. NGOAN TO ACT AS A GUIDE TO THE GRAVE SITE.

B. THE SOURCE WAS INITIALLY HESITANT TO SAY WHETHER HE WOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THE SITE OF THE LOSS INCIDENT. ONCE THE SOURCE LEARNED THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO PAY FOR TRANSPORTATION, ROOM, OR BOARD DURING A POTENTIAL TRIP TO THE SITE, HE AGREED THAT HE COULD POSSIBLY LOCATE THE ALLEGED BURIAL SITE. THE SOURCE WAS NOT OVERLY OPTIMISTIC, BUT HE AGREED TO ASSIST A JOINT TEAM IF NEEDED.//

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