

Dac Lac

Case 0333: Airman Second Class Bennie L. Dexter

Facts:

- On 10 May 1966, Airman Second Class Bennie L. Dexter was captured near the border of Quang Duc and Darlac provinces as he was driving a jeep south on Route 14.
- Two former members of the Quang Duc Province Military forces, subordinate to Military Region 10, saw airman Dexter soon after his capture.
- A member of the C35 Company reported he saw soldiers of the Provincial Unit escort Airman Dexter into their camp located in Duc Lap District. Major Cung, a political officer assigned to the Quang Duc Province Headquarters, interrogated Airman Dexter. After a few days, Airman Dexter was moved, probably to MR10 Headquarters.
- The other eyewitness reported he saw members of the C24 Company, Quang Duc Provincial Unit, escort Airman Dexter to the Province Headquarters. He recalled a Private Xuyen, of the 3rd Platoon, C24 Company, acted as an interpreter for a brief interrogation. The following day Airman Dexter was moved to a new location, probably MR10 Headquarters.

- In 1974, a rallier said he had seen five U.S. prisoners, including a Caucasian named "Benny", being held in a COSVN camp in Tay Ninh Province during early 1974. This is believed to be the same camp where Miss Tran Le Linh worked. Airman Dexter's first name is "Bennie". Therefore, he may be the caucasian seen at this PW camp.

Investigation Results:

- Four eyewitnesses saw a captured American being escorted to the province level "F1" Headquarters by personnel of the Province Military Headquarters.
- Two eyewitnesses claimed to have killed the American during an escape attempt. They pointed out a general area where they had buried his body. An excavation of the area was conducted with negative results.

Areas for Further Research and Investigation:

- Officers assigned to the Enemy Proselyting Section and political staff of MR10, as well as the Enemy Proselyting Office, Political Staff Department, at COSVN, during the period May 1966 - January 1969 may be able to provide information on Airman Dexter's fate.

- An examination of MR10 and COSVN archival records, may reveal the fate of Airman Dexter. We believe reports of Airman Dexter's initial interrogation at Quang Duc Province Headquarters would have been forwarded to MR10 Headquarters and then to the COSVN Enemy Proselyting Office and the Enemy Proselyting Department, General Political Directorate, People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) Headquarters in Hanoi. We also assume reports of his more extensive interrogation would have been forwarded to the same offices at COSVN and PAVN Headquarters.

- The COSVN camp where "Bennie" was reportedly held in 1974 was located in Phuoc Ninh District, Tay Ninh Province. The camp is believed either to have been designated C-53 or to have been co-located with C-53. It is possible this camp was under the COSVN Security Office, Military Affairs Staff, which handled communist offenders, rather than the COSVN Enemy Proselyting Office which handled U.S. PW's. Research of COSVN Security Office archival records may lead to more information on the fate of Airman Dexter.

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Testimony