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DETAILED CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO LOSS OF CASE: 1981

- ON 27 JANUARY 1973, FIRST LIEUTENANT MARK A. PETERSON, AND CAPTAIN GEORGE W. MORRIS JR. WERE CREW MEMBERS ABOARD AN OV-10A OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT, SERIAL NUMBER 68-3806, CALL SIGN NAIL 89. THEY WERE ON A SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION FOR THE CREW MEMBERS OF AN F-4 AIRCRAFT WHICH HAD BEEN DOWNED AT 1715 HOURS NEAR THE CUA VIET RIVER. AT ABOUT 1735, THE CREW MEMBERS OF ANOTHER OV-10 AIRCRAFT IN THE AREA SAW LIEUTENANT PETERSON'S AND CAPTAIN MORRIS' AIRCRAFT HIT BY A SA-7 MISSILE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE MISSILE WAS FIRED BY THE 243RD ANTIAIRCRAFT ARTILLERY REGIMENT. THEY HEARD EITHER CAPTAIN MORRIS OR LIEUTENANT PETERSON TRANSMIT BY RADIO: "WE 'RE HIT, EJECT". ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THEY SAW TWO FULLY DEPLOYED PARACHUTES LAND NEAR EACH OTHER, IN THE VICINITY OF GRID COORDINATES YD 328655, ON THE NORTHERN EDGE OF LUONG KIM VILLAGE, TRIEU HAI DISTRICT, QUANG TRI PROVINCE. THEY ALSO HEARD TWO STRONG ELECTRONIC BEEPER SIGNALS.

- AFTER A BRIEF PERIOD, THE CREW MEMBERS OF THE OV-10 AIRCRAFT FLYING OVERHEAD ESTABLISHED RADIO CONTACT WITH LIEUTENANT PETERSON. HE RADIOED: "THIS IS NAIL 89 'ER. I'M GOING TO BE CAPTURED. I'M GOING TO BE CAPTURED." HE WAS ASKED TO REPEAT THIS TRANSMISSION AND HE DID SO. THE PILOT OF THE OV-10 POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED THE VOICE AS THAT OF LIEUTENANT PETERSON. THERE WAS NO FURTHER RADIO CONTACT WITH EITHER LIEUTENANT PETERSON OR CAPTAIN MORRIS. THEIR LAST KNOWN LOCATION WAS IN THE VICINITY OF GRID COORDINATES YD 328655.

- SEARCH AND RESCUE FORCES WERE IN THE AREA IMMEDIATELY, BUT DUE TO LACK OF FURTHER CONTACT AND APPROACHING DARKNESS NO RESCUE

WAS ATTEMPTED. A COMMUNICATIONS WATCH WAS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT OF THE 27TH. THE SEARCH AND RESCUE EFFORT WAS DISCONTINUED AT 1830 HOURS ON THE 28TH OF JANUARY 1972 DUE TO LACK OF FURTHER CONTACT.

SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION:

- THE PILOT OF THE F-4 AIRCRAFT WHO WAS THE SUBJECT OF LIEUTENANT PETERSON'S AND CAPTAIN MORRIS' SEARCH EFFORTS WAS CAPTURED AND SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED. HE SAID HE SAW THE PETERSON-MORRIS AIRCRAFT SHOT DOWN AND SAW BOTH CAPTAIN MORRIS AND LIEUTENANT PETERSON SAFELY EJECT FROM THEIR AIRCRAFT. AS THEY WERE COMING DOWN IN THEIR PARACHUTES, HE ESTIMATED THAT APPROXIMATELY 30 NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS OPENED FIRE ON THEM.
- A FORMER ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM SOLDIER REPORTED THAT ON 30 JANUARY 1973 HE OBSERVED AN OV-10 PLANE SHOT DOWN. SHORTLY THEREAFTER HE OBSERVED A U.S. PRISONER BEING ESCORTED BY FIVE NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS. HE HEARD THAT THIS AMERICAN WAS TO BE TAKEN TO THE TRIEU PHONG DISTRICT UNIT AND THAT A SECOND U.S. PILOT WAS KILLED AT THE CRASH SITE. THE PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AMERICAN OBSERVED MATCHED THAT OF CAPTAIN MORRIS.
- A FORMER ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM SOLDIER WHO HAD BEEN CAPTURED REPORTED SEEING AN OV-10 AIRCRAFT HIT BY ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY AND THE CREW MEMBERS EJECT FROM THE AIRCRAFT. A SHORT TIME LATER HE SAW A GROUP OF FIVE GUERRILLAS ESCORTING A U.S. PRISONER NEAR WHERE HE WAS BEING HELD. HE WAS TOLD THAT THE AMERICAN PRISONER WAS BEING TAKEN TO THE SECURITY SECTION OF THE TRIEU PHONG DISTRICT UNIT. LATER THE SOURCE HEARD FROM A FRIEND

THAT ONE OF THE OV-10 PILOTS HAD BEEN KILLED AND BURIED IN THE CENTER OF A RICEFIELD IN THE VICINITY OF GRID COORDINATES YD 328679, TUONG VAN VILLAGE, TRIEU HAI DISTRICT, QUANG TRI PROVINCE.

- A NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIER REPORTED HEARING FROM A GUERILLA MEMBER OF THE GO HAI VILLAGE UNIT THAT AN OV-10 AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN SHOT DOWN BY A MISSILE IN THE CUA VIET AREA. THE U.S. PILOT HAD EJECTED BUT HIS PARACHUTE DID NOT OPEN AND HE DIED. HE LANDED IN A RICE FIELD IN THE VICINITY OF GRID COORDINATES YD 330655, TUONG VAN VILLAGE, TRIEU HAI DISTRICT, QUANG TRI PROVINCE . ADDITIONALLY, HE HEARD THAT THE OV-10 AIRCRAFT CRASHED ABOUT TWO KILOMETERS SOUTHEAST OF WHERE THE PILOT LANDED.

AREAS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION:

- FORMER MEMBERS OF THE 243RD ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY REGIMENT MAY HAVE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE DOWNING OF THIS OV-10A AIRCRAFT.

- FORMER MEMBERS OF THE TRIEU PHONG DISTRICT SECURITY UNIT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE FATE OF LIEUTENANT PETERSON AND CAPTAIN MORRIS. REPORTS INDICATE THAT IT WAS MEMBERS OF THIS UNIT WHICH CAPTURED ONE OF THE TWO AMERICANS.

- THE INHABITANTS OF TUONG VAN VILLAGE, TRIEU HAI DISTRICT MAY HAVE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE BURIAL SITE IN THEIR VILLAGE. REPORTS INDICATE THAT ONE OF THE CREW MEMBERS MAY HAVE BEEN BURIED THERE.