

0453

Case 0453: Major Lawrence B. Tatum, U.S. Air Force

On 10 September 1966, Major Tatum was flying an A1-E attack bomber that was hit by antiaircraft fire and crashed in the vicinity of XD 952766, approximately 7 1/2 kilometers north of the DMZ and approximately 3 kilometers west of Route 102, Ben Hai District, Quang Binh Province. The forward air controller saw Major Tatum parachute from his aircraft and land in a wooded area approximately 1600 meters northeast of his crashsite. An electronic beacon sounded for about one minute. U.S. observers in the air saw a number of NVN forces in the area. They also saw Major Tatum's parachute being pulled from the trees some ten minutes after he landed.

Major Tatum was lost in the Vinh Linh Special Zone, which was subordinate to Military Region (MR) 4, headquarters Nam Dan District. Reports of his capture and his fate were submitted to the political department for the Vinh Linh Special Zone Military Command, the senior political officer of which was Tran Tinh. Reports were also forwarded to Headquarters MR4 at Vinh.

U.S. personnel captured in the Vinh Linh Special Zone were evacuated northward to Headquarters MR4 at Nam Dan District for initial processing into the formal prison system. Records at the MR4 prisoner of war facility may contain information on Major Tatum. Records held by both the province and the district military command will also contain information on Maj Tatum's fate.