

Verna Sheldon Creed
2300 Aaron Street, Apt. 201
Port Charlotte, Florida 33952

August 14, 1994

Garnett E. Bell, President,
National Veterans Research Center,
4209 Boys Ranch Rd.,
Lavaca, AR. 72941

Dear Mr Bell -

I spoke to you at the National League
meeting - Bart Creed's mother, I am
sending some material hoping that you
can perhaps help to track Bart down. He is
MIA in Laos. Sora Frances Shay and I
decided we would ask your help. If there
is anything else I can send - please let
me know. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Verna Creed

Letter written to Susan Page Creed from her brother
Capt John Page, who was in Vietnam at the time ~~of the~~ shot down
March 13, 1971 Laos. at the time ~~was a~~ Lt now LCDR

15 Apr 71

Verna M. Creed
2300 Aaron St.
Regency House #201
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Dear Susan,

*Allison
a brother of
Susan*

I received your letter tonight, the one you wrote on the 9th. Susan, I hope Allison showed you the letter I wrote to him, but, if he didn't, I will repeat as much and as closely as possible what I told him. All that I was told was fresh on my mind at the time I wrote him, so I will stay away from details in this one if my memory ~~x~~ fails me. Too, I wrote to Allison because I thought ~~XXXXXX~~ you were going home earlier than you did, and I felt surely that Allison would let you read the letter. Also, I was a little ~~xxxx~~ doubtful about giving you information directly because what I was briefed was at that time very sensitive and I was sure that the Navy had told you all that I knew or was told, anyway. Anyway, I will tell you all I can now, and, if you have read Allison's letter, you already know all the things I will tell you now.

Bart was coming off target and a FAC flying in the area saw ~~XXXX~~ Bart's aircraft pitch as if it had been hit. In a few moments he saw his parachute open, and he said that he got a "good chute", meaning that it opened good.

As soon as Bart was on the ground, the FAC was in contact with Bart (I'm really not clear whether ~~IN~~ Bart contacted him first or he contacted Bart). Anyway, he asked Bart how he was, and Bart said something to the extent that he was a little shook up, so the FAC asked Bart to wait 15 minutes and contact him again. In 15 minutes, Bart did contact him again, and, again, he asked Bart how he was. Bart stated that he thought he had a broken arm and a broken leg. The FAC then marked a false spot with a smoke rocket (whatever they call them) hoping to draw any enemy away from the spot where Bart was in case they had seen him eject.

Within a few minutes, the helicopters were in the area. Bart had been downed in a valley about five miles long and the approach to the ~~xxxx~~ spot where he was was down the valley. As the helicopters approached, they received heavy fire from the hills around the valley. They made one low pass over the spot where Bart was and he waved to them. The second pass, some seconds later, was an attempt to pick him up. On the first pass, the helicopter crew thought they detected movement in the grass about 100 feet from Bart's position, but they decided to make the pickup attempt. When the helicopter began hovering over him, the man was let down on the boom (jungle penetrator) and he was within 30 feet of the ground when small arms fire became so heavy from close in that the helicopter took several direct hits and left the area with ~~wounded~~ wounded personnel aboard (I will not say how many now as I am confused as to which helicopters had which injuries) whatever the figure I told Allison is correct. The helicopter made a wide sweep while the two escort helicopters tried to clear the area around Bart with machine gun fire, and in about 4 minutes a second attempt to pick Bart up was made. On the second attempt, the small arms fire was more intense than it had been the first time. Both helicopters were shot up pretty badly and the co-pilot on one was seriously wounded.

Susan, when the helicopters are receiving so much fire, they will not continue to hover over the person they are attempting to recover for fear they may crash at the spot. Two helicopters did not make it back to the base at DaNang. They were recovered.

Sue, between the second and third pickup attempt, Bart was moved. They still attempted the pickup because they thought there was a possibility

that Bart had gotten into the high grass near him. The third attempt came from helicopters that had been standing by to the west of the area, and there was some time before they arrived (15 or 20 minutes). The third attempt received heavy ground fire, too, but they do not believe that Bart was even in the area when the attempt was made. I'll try to recall exactly what I was told: (This is the rescue man talking)

"Something happened between the ~~first~~ second and the third rescue attempt. The parachute had been moved some and the young man was not on the ground, but the helicopter crew had hoped that he had gotten into the tall grass close by."

I asked if there was any indication that Bart might have been further injured at that time. The rescue Commander answered "No".

"After the third attempt, we decided that we ~~have~~ had better wait for a while, so we decided to make a dusk attempt as that provides a poor target for the enemy. Actually, we did the attempt illegally, because we made it after darkness had started. This time (the fourth attempt) the man actually went down on the jungle penetrator and stayed down for some time. There was no sign of the young man on the ground."

The next morning the FAC who had originally seen Bart eject requested permission to go back out and look for him. He received the permission and he flew back to the spot. He found that Bart's parachute had been moved about 500 meters and had been spread out (a practice that American pilots do not use). There was no sign of Bart where he had been. It was at this point that the Rescue Commander stated that it was his opinion that Bart was on his way to North Vietnam.

Susan, I know that I haven't given you a lot that you do not know. My last letter gave you all the reasons to be hopeful. Bart's radio contacts had been calm (I was told). He was alive when he was last seen. He assessed his own injuries. I asked the rescue people if they had any additional reason for believing that Bart's injuries were worse than they had told me. They said that they had no way of knowing, but that the assessment had come from Bart, but that he must have had a reason to state that he thought his arm and leg were broken.

On my second visit, I told them that you had written that Bart had passed out and returned to ~~consciousness~~ consciousness. I was told, "But you must remember, that just ejecting out of a high speed jet is a very trying experience." They never did tell me that they felt Bart's injuries were any worse than they had originally told me.

As far as my questions about the NVA taking prisoners, I think I mentioned that in my last letter. Anyway, the Rescue Commander said something to the effect of: Some people had thought the NVA were taking no prisoners, but he said, "don't you believe it. Pilots are very valuable".

Susan, this gives you basically all that I have been told. Along with the last letter, that's really about all the people in Rescue know. I know that I have omitted some details that I put in the last letter to you and the one to Allison. I have made so many trips to the Rescue people that I can't remember which time they told me what, but you now have all the available information, unless, of course, there are some things they have not told me.

Susan, the Commander of the ~~the~~ Rescue Group was very concerned that what he had told me was sensitive. I therefore want to ask you, if you must

tell any of this, not to tell my source of information. As I told you before, he told me that he thought I ought to let information flow to you through official channels. Apparently, and I was somewhat put out about that, the official channels have been awfully slow. I know they refuse to divulge information that will tend to make you be too hopeful or too pessimistic simply because from the time Bart was moved from the spot, no one has any additional information. I pray, too, Susan, that you will get that information before too long.

Sue, I haven't had an opportunity to get up to DaNang to talk with the helicopter pilot (he made the first attempt to pick Bart up), but I hope to before too long. I was originally scheduled to go this week, but hops up there were not possible this week. I don't expect to learn a whole lot from him, but, the commander of the rescue unit said that it would probably do a lot of good, for my and your satisfaction, to talk to a man who saw Bart alive to confirm what he had told me. As far as giving additional facts, he didn't feel that I could learn more than I already know about details.

Sue I will close now. Please keep what I have told you (the source) somewhat quiet. I have now way of knowing if somethings have been held from me or if they have given me all that they know. I am still optimistic, and, as you say, will remain so until someone tells me different, and I want you to know that I held all this from you because I thought I was doing the right thing for you. If I had known that you have been told so little by the Navy, I would have not hesitated to pass what I know to you (what I have been told, to you). Susan, there is no doubt in my mind that Bart was captured (we know that the enemy were within a few feet of him) and I have no doubt that he was captured alive. After that, Susan, I don't think anyone can give you any more information than that at the present time. You must remember, too, that I am putting what I have heard together, and I believe we can, with good reason, keep our hopes as high as possible, unless we are told differently.

Sue, let me know if there is anything I can do. I will be more than glad to do it. I am very proud of you and your family, and I will do all I can.

Love,
[Signature]

22 April 71

Dear Susan,

I returned last night from DaNang and I did get to talk to the helicopter pilot who, along with his crew, last saw Bart. Most of what he told me I already knew and you already know, but I did ask him the questions you asked me to ask him, and I feel that what he said will fan the fires of hope.

When I first got in I was a little reluctant to point blank ask him questions, but he knew what I was there for, and he talked very freely and seemed to be glad to do so.

My first question was whether or not he thought Bart was alive when he attempted to pick him up, and he said, "he most certainly was. I saw him and my crew saw him, and there is no question about it. He was very much alive." He said that he made two attempts to pick Bart up. He said that he was "hosed" down so much during the first attempt that he felt then that there was little chance that they could make the second attempt successfully, because, he said, he knew they were in for more of the same fire they received the first time, but, it was because he knew ~~that~~ that Bart was alive that he had to ~~xx~~ make the second attempt. He said that the second fire they received was more intense than the first, but they still attempted to let the man down on the jungle penetrator, and then the co-pilot was seriously wounded and he had to leave.

I asked him if he thought there was any possibility that Bart was additionally injured after he was on the ground, and he said that he had no way of telling, but he interpreted several things as good signs. First, he said that there was no question that Bart was alive when he was captured. The second sign that he interpreted as favorable was the fact that Bart was moved between the second and third pickup attempts. He said that the VC and the Pathet Lao probably would not have done that, and then I asked him if he had any reason to believe that the North Vietnamese captured Bart instead of the Pathet Lao or the VC, and he said, "there is no question, he was taken by ~~the~~ North Vietnamese Regular Army troops". He didn't tell me why he was sure that were North Vietnamese Regulars, but he said he was positive they were. He said that was the best reason for hope.

Sue, as far as there being no inroads into N.Vietnam in the area where Bart was, There are numerous roads in the area that are shown on the map, and there are many more that are not shown. The next statement, Sue, you should not tell that I made (Bart was downed very close to one of the main roads of the HCMinh trail. There has been a lot of truck traffic on or in this area for some time).

Susan, I know that you realize that what Col Brown told me is speculation after the fact that he saw Bart, but he is one of the most optimistic people I have run into, and, along with the Comdr of the Rescue Group, they feel that there are some good reasons to believe that Bart is a prisoner. Col Brown was very emphatic in his opinions and he insisted that I tell you "her husband was alive when we last saw him, and there are good signs that he was captured". Frankly, Susan, I feel better having talked to him. He was very willing to talk to me, and, in his opinion, Bart is a very valuable asset to the NVA and to the North Vietnamese, and he had a lot of optimism about Bart's capture. I feel, still, that there are good reasons for sharing that optimism.

Susan, I know that I have told you most of what you already knew, but I did think it was a good idea to talk to someone who had actually been deeply

involved in the rescue effort. I feel that the fact that Col Brown was willing to tell me what he saw and did is also a good sign. I never once got the impression that he was trying to hedge on a question, and I felt that he was telling me all that he knew. I do not feel that he was trying to build unwarranted hopes, and I hope you can have some comfort knowing that I have talked to him and now have his opinions.

Sue, I will continue my prayers for you, and, somehow I do feel that they will be answered for you and your family. We all love you very much, and we have the deepest love for all your family.

Sue, I feel that I have learned about all that I can find out, but I can assure you that I will pass to you any information that I get from no matter what source. I don't think I am giving you any information that is not warranted. I honestly believe that there are ~~some~~ so many hopeful signs that I am personally very optimistic. I hope you can share that with me.

Susan, I know that you are about settled in the base housing, and, after my next pay day, I will have the lamps sent to you that you want. Pam told me which ones they are, and I will be sending them as soon as possible.

Susan, if you receive this letter before Mama leaves, tell her that I send my love and that this letter is for her too, if she's still there.

Love,
John



Verna M. Creed
2300 Aaron St.
Regency House #201
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL MILITARY PERSONNEL COMMAND
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20370

IN REPLY REFER TO
NMPC-122-cks
17 August 1983

Mrs. Verna M. Creed
Charlotte Squard Comdominiums
201 Regency Houst
Port Charlotte, Florida 33952

Dear Mrs. Creed:

This letter is in response to the request you made at the recent National League of Families meeting concerning your son's identification Card.

Enclosed is a copy of the letter sent by the Defense Intelligence Agency concerning the notation that your son's identification card was shown to a returnee.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me.

By direction of the Commander, Naval Military Personnel Command:

Sincerely,

J. L. Greer, Jr.
J. L. GREER, JR.

Director
Casualty Assistance Division



DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

11 AUG 1983

U-4464/DC-2

TO: Commander, Naval Military Personnel Command
Casualty Assistance Division (NMPC-1222)
ATTN: Mr. Joe Greer
Washington, D.C. 20370

SUBJECT: Request for DIA Assistance in Case of LT Barton S. Creed, USN

1. Pursuant to your 22 July 1983 request, DIA has examined the notation on the Navy's copy of the File Record Summary in the case of LT Barton S. Creed, USN, which reads, "A returnee from NVN was shown Creed's ID card." It is noted that this handwritten comment does not appear on DIA's original File Record Summary or elsewhere in DIA files.

2. A review of the Navy's file indicates that the notation may pertain to a Memorandum for Record prepared as a result of a conversation between J. Angus MacDonald, staff director for the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia and Captain Jack Butcher, USAF, a former PW. During this 22 December 1976 telephone conversation, Captain Butcher and Mr. MacDonald discussed the case of LT Creed.

3. The following extract from the Memorandum for Record appears to be the basis for the notation on the File Record Summary:

"During his move north, he (Butcher) managed to become somewhat friendly with one of his guards. Most guards were skilled in identification of American aircraft. One of them sketched "A-7" on the ground and pantomimed an incident which he took to be putting splints on a broken leg. The guard seemed to be indicating that at sometime in the past he had splinted a broken leg of a large, heavy American. At the time Butcher assumed that the incident had occurred a long time in the past. Later, after his repatriation, upon learning of the Barton Creed case, he equated the incident as possibly referring to Creed. The only similar incident he knew of was the case of Steve Long who had been shot down 3 or 4 years earlier, suffered a broken leg, and was taken to Hanoi where the leg was set. Since Long was flying an O-2, and Creed was flying an A-7, Butcher later felt that the pantomime possibly referred to Creed. Captain Butcher also saw a Service Identification Card briefly during his move north and recalls noting two letters in the name "EE" which he later assumed was Creed. He is not positive, but he can offer no other explanation. He never saw Creed or any other indication of him, nor did any of the other POW's with whom he was eventually held in Hanoi."

4. A further check of returned PW debriefs failed to provide additional information on LT Creed.

FOR THE DIRECTOR:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark R. Richards", with a stylized flourish at the end.

MARK R. RICHARDS
Colonel, USAF
Chief, PW/MIA Division

Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia

December 22, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Subject: Barton CREED case; interview with Captain Jack Butcher USAF.

At the request of Bob Becker in Congressman Gilman's office, I telephoned Captain Jack Butcher to get certain information of interest to the Creed family. (Office: 915/267-2511 ext 2779: Home 915/263-8518)

Butcher was shot down in an OV-10 over Laos, east of Saravane, 3/24/71. The round exploded in his cockpit and he was badly wounded and lacerated. He was unconscious during most of his descent in a parachute, and kept lapsing into unconsciousness during the next two days. Immediately upon landing, he was captured by 10 to 15 North Vietnamese, one of whom was a female medic.

Captain Butcher's first clear recollection was on the third day when he awoke to find that he was being fed intravenously. He also received shots which he assumes were antibiotics and later some pills that he believes were vitamins.

His captors carried him in a litter for the first two days; thereafter they only carried him on level ground but made him walk up and down steep inclines. He stated that he tired about every 20 feet when walking, but his guards were patient and waited for him. Their reason for carrying him on level ground appears to have been to move more quickly.

Three of his teeth had been broken in the ejection, and on the 7th or 8th day he was given novacaine and morphine, but the extraction was accomplished before the medicine took effect.

Butcher escaped twice during the 4-5 week period in which he was moved north to Hanoi. The first time he was free for about 4 hours, the second time for about 10 days. During the latter escape, he was observed by 2 Lao boys who ran when they saw him; later he was seen by 2 unarmed Vietnamese who also ran. The captain opined that his physical deterioration stemmed from drinking stagnant water (since he avoided the major streams which were generally in or near populated areas), eating insects and fruit.

He assessed the few Laotians he saw as being very unfriendly and believed that they would have killed an American if they took him into custody. He also stated that he wouldn't trust the Vietnamese if captured by only one or two, but that being taken by a large group contributed to his safety.

During his move north, he managed to become somewhat friendly with one of his guards. Most guards were skilled in identification of American aircraft. One of them sketched "A-7" on the ground and pantomimed an incident which he took to be putting splints on a broken leg. The guard seemed to be indicating that at sometime in the past he had splinted a broken leg of a large, heavy American. At the time Butcher assumed that the incident had occurred a long time in the past. Later, after his repatriation, upon learning of the Barton Creed case, he equated the incident as possibly referring to Creed. The only similar incident he knew of was the case of

Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia

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On arrival in Hanoi he was kept alone for several days, alternately for medical treatment and interrogation. His interrogator in Hanoi was extremely knowledgeable concerning American aircraft, a change from the interrogators he had met in Laos who did not seem to know much and merely questioned him as a matter of standing operating procedure. Butcher was placed with 5 other POW's captured in Laos after he regained his health.

Captain Butcher met Barton Creed's brother in Washington and discussed all these details with him.

NOTE: I discussed this case with Cdr. Jack Colgan, USN, the Navy Casualty Officer, and with the Air Force casualty personnel at Randolph. Colgan assures me that the Creed parents have seen everything that is available on their son. Initially, however, I understand that the Creed's visited the JCRC in Thailand and while there saw some SAR reports from Air Force units that had not been addressed to the Navy and therefore were not held in the Navy casualty file. At their request, the Navy asked for and received copies of all SAR transmissions associated with Barton Creed. Mr. & Mrs Creed have since seen those same reports in the Navy file where they are now held.

There are no known tapes or microfilm relating to this case. If any voice tapes were ever made by SAR aircraft they would have been reused after having been transcribed. It is not clear now whether or not the voice transmissions made by Barton Creed, reporting that he had a broken leg and broken arm, and later "Get me out now! Get me out now! They are here." were ever recorded or simply monitored by the orbiting aircraft. About 20 seconds after his last voice transmission at 1330H his emergency radio ceased to beep and there were no further transmissions in either voice or beeper.

None of the rescue helicopters was able to land at any time. The hostile forces were obviously using Barton Creed as bait in a flak trap. During the rescue attempts, 3 helicopters and 8 crewmembers were shot up. Creed was last seen at 1519H. SAR efforts began again at first light the next day and he was not observed, although a parachute was seen several hundred yards from the position where he had been the previous day. The chute was in an open area, and again was obviously bait for a flak trap since the ground fire experienced by SAR forces was intense.

Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia

COMMENT: There has been no new information in this case. It is clear that Barton Creed was alive on the ground. It is not known whether he survived the incident. The pantomime described by Captain Butcher seems to correlate with the Creed case, but there is no assurance that it actually does. The ID card reported by Butcher also seems to correlate, but again there is no assurance that it does.

There is no question that hostile forces took custody of Barton Creed, but whether dead or alive cannot be determined. There is also no question that some hostile forces have or had knowledge of the incident, but whether or not that information was transmitted to Hanoi cannot be determined.

It must be noted that the loss occurred in Laos. To date the Vietnamese have not admitted that they had forces in Laos. The only personnel captured in Laos who returned alive were:

- 5 men released in 1962 at the first cease fire (captured by Lao)
- 9 men captured by Vietnamese in Laos and released by the Pathet Lao team that was brought to Hanoi for that purpose in 1973.
- 2 Navy pilots who escaped from the Lao in 1964 and 1966.
- 1 Air America pilot, Emmet Kay who was released by Lao in 1974.

The intelligence community has no information on the order of battle of the enemy forces in the area of Creed's loss. There is no basis for determining whether Lao or Vietnamese forces were encountered by Creed. The fact that Butcher was taken by the Vietnamese suggests that it was also Vietnamese who came across Creed, but it could have been Pathet Lao as well - or it could have been transient Vietnamese forces who were passing through the area. These factors make it impossible to predict whether or not either the Lao or Vietnamese have records of the incident or are capable of reporting on it.

Prepared by
J. Angus Mac Donald

Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia

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14 MAR 71

A PILOT BAILED OUT

SHOT DOWN ONE H-4

AT 1300G

SHOT

ONE 32

AND DAMAGED A HELICOPTER

SEIZED

PILOT

SHOT DOWN ANOTHER HELICOPTER

INFORMATION REPORT:

"14 MAR 71... HELICOPTER"

Greene H. V-47,025/DS-4

17 MAR 71

161307Z |

SHOT DOWN ONE A-1H AND ONE HU-1A
AND CAPTURED THE PILOTS ALIVE.

INFORMATION REPORT:

"17 MAR 71... ALIVE"

Enclosure 15, U-49,025/DB-4A



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20370

IN REPLY REFER TO

Pers-P521-MGS-rsm
717471/1310

16 APR 1971

Verna M. Creed
2300 Aaron St.
Regency House #201
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Mr. and Mrs. George J. Creed
1454 Elm Street
Peekskill, New York 10566

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Creed:

As you are aware your son, Lieutenant Barton Sheldon Creed, 717471, United States Navy, has been carried in the status of missing in action since the loss of his aircraft while on a combat mission over Southern Laos on 13 March 1971. A report of the circumstances surrounding the loss of his aircraft has now been received and reviewed so that a determination of status could be made.

The report contains essentially the same information as that furnished in the telegrams to you from the Chief of Naval Personnel and the USS RANGER. However, it did include more details which are being forwarded to you at this time.

Lieutenant Creed was leading a flight section on a combat mission against an interdiction point in Southern Laos, when his aircraft was hit by enemy ground fire in the starboard wing. The aircraft started spinning and the pilot ejected. The Forward Air Controller observed a good parachute ejection and a few minutes after ejection, radio contact was made with Lieutenant Creed. He was sighted in a small clearing near his parachute. The first pick up attempt to get him was thwarted by ground fire.

Another radio transmission was received from Lieutenant Creed and three more attempts were made by helicopters to reach him but they were turned back due to intensive ground fire. On the third attempt Lieutenant Creed was not sighted in the position originally reported near his chute. Efforts to reach him were suspended at dark, however, electronic surveillance was maintained through the night.

On 14 March 1971 a searching party returned to the scene and discovered that the parachute had been moved from its original position. Again, the intense ground fire encountered at the site made further attempts to find Lieutenant Creed impossible and efforts were suspended.

Pers-P521-MGS-rsm
717471/1310

16 APR 68

In absence of evidence concerning his fate, he is being continued in the status of missing in action. He will be continued in this status until information is received or other circumstances occur which would indicate that he should no longer be so continued. You may be certain that you will be advised of any additional information received concerning your son, or any action taken relative to his status.

Sincere sympathy is extended to you at this time of uncertainty. If assistance can be rendered to you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me or your Casualty Assistance Calls Officer.

By direction of the Chief of Naval Personnel:

Sincerely yours,



GERALD C. CANAAN

Captain, U. S. Navy

Special Assistant for POW Matters



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20370-5000

IN REPLY REFER TO
1771
663P

Mrs. Verna Creed
2300 Aaron Street
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Dear Mrs. Creed:

Enclosed is a document we have just received from the Department of Defense POW/MIA Office. It is the case-specific analysis of your son's incident and reflects the status of the investigation into his fate as determined by the 9-month comprehensive review of all Southeast Asian unaccounted for losses. We are furnishing this information in keeping with our commitment of providing everything we receive that relates to your son.

If we can further assist you, please call Lieutenant Michael Theres or Ms. Marian Dempski at (800) 443-9298.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. P. Trant", is written over the typed name.

T. P. TRANT
Head, Casualty Assistance
Branch (Pers-663)

Encl:
(1) OASD ltr of 11 Dec 95



INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

2400 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2400



In reply refer to:
I-95/54740

Dear Mrs. Verna Creed:

In October 1994, the Department of Defense initiated a comprehensive review of each case involving an American serviceman or civilian who is unaccounted for as a result of United States involvement in the war in Southeast Asia. Analysts of the Defense Prisoner of War and Missing In Action Office, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting and the United States Army Central Identification Laboratory worked together to examine carefully all information developed throughout the years. Our efforts included a total review of wartime and post-war intelligence as well as the reports of joint investigation, oral history interviews, and archival research. The results of this diligent, case-by-case review, completed in July 1995, have enabled us to define future actions for achieving the fullest possible accounting.

As a result of this review, coordinated as of July 21, 1995, we identified the specific next steps to take in the case of Lieutenant Commander Barton S. Creed, United States Navy, REFNO 1724. Subsequent actions, if necessary, will be based upon the outcome of these endeavors.

In November 1994, a joint American-Lao team last investigated your son's case. Analysis had determined that the record loss location was incorrect. Therefore, the joint team interviewed villagers in the area of the new estimated loss location. Residents led the team to a crash site that was determined to be that of your son's A-7 aircraft. Although your son ejected from his aircraft, locating his aircraft crash site is helping us better understand his loss incident.

In May 1993, the Vietnamese government provided us with a document which contains information that correlates to your son. In the document, a former Vietnamese military officer recounts the shoot down, capture, death, and burial of an American pilot. The circumstances are very similar to your son's incident. Therefore, we are asking the Vietnamese government to locate the officer for interview regarding the location of the American pilot's grave.

This follow-up action in the case of your son is being incorporated into our future work plans. The Navy casualty office will keep you informed of further developments. In some cases, as you may already be aware, we have completed the action described above and are in the process of once again reviewing the case. Please know our efforts will continue.

We take our obligation to pursue the cases of our brave service members and civilians very seriously. Above all, I want to assure you that your son's sacrifice in service of his country will be honored forever by all Americans.

Sincerely,

James W. Wold
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(POW/MIA Affairs)





DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20370-5000

IN REPLY REFER TO

1771
663P

15 DEC 1995

Mrs. Verna Creed
2300 Aaron Street
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Dear Mrs. Creed:

We recently received the enclosed information concerning your son, Lieutenant Commander Barton S. Creed, U.S. Navy from Joint Task Force - Full Accounting. We are sending it to you in keeping with our commitment to provide everything we receive relating to your son.

If we can further assist you by explaining the attached document, please call Lieutenant Michael Theres or Ms. Marian Dempski at (800) 443-9298.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. P. Trant", is written over the typed name.

T. P. TRANT
Head, Casualty
Assistance Branch
(Pers-663)

Encl:

(1) JTF-FA ltr J24 1771 Ser: 803 of 22 Nov 95



JOINT TASK FORCE - FULL ACCOUNTING

BOX 64044

CAMP H. M. SMITH, HAWAII 96861-4044

J24
1771
Ser: 803
22 Nov 95

To: Department of the Navy, Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Attn: PERS-663P, Washington, D.C. 20370-5663

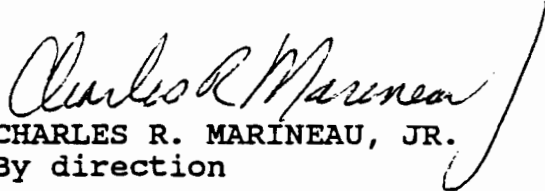
Subj: ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM (OHP) REPORT ASSOCIATED WITH CASE
1724

Ref: (a) CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J2//170902Z NOV 95

Encl: (1) CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J2//230942Z AUG 95

1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) is provided for release to the next of kin of BARTON S. CREED (REFNO 1724-1-01).

2. The JTF-FA has sanitized the enclosed report by deleting U.S. personnel names per Executive Order 12812, 22 Jul 92, and Title 5, U.S. Code 552a (Privacy Act). In no instance has substantive material been removed.


CHARLES R. MARINEAU, JR.
By direction

Copy to:
DPMO-RD (w/o encl)
REFNO FILE

14 DEC 1995

U U N C L A S S I F I E D U

U U N C L A S S I F I E D U

A BUNKER AT BT34. THIS INFORMATION PROBABLY CORRELATES TO CASE 1724, AN UNRESOLVED CASE. MR. THAI NEVER SAW THE GRAVE OR THE PILOT'S BODY, AND SAID HE COULD NOT LEAD A JOINT TEAM TO THE BURIAL LOCATION. MR. THAI REVIEWED THE GROUP 559 AIRCRAFT SHOOT DOWN DOCUMENT (REF A) AND AGREED THE 13 MAR 71 ENTRY IN WHICH AD BATTALION (BN) 44 SHOT DOWN AN A-7 CORRELATED TO THE INCIDENT HE DESCRIBED.

2. DETAILS OF INTERVIEW:

A. PARTICIPANTS:

- (1) U.S. CONTINGENT:
(A) TSGT [REDACTED], RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION TEAM (RIT) NCOIC
(B) SSGT [REDACTED], RIT ANALYST/LINGUIST
- (2) VIETNAMESE CONTINGENT:
(A) LTC NGUYEN NGOC BICH (NGOCJ BICHS), VNOSMP TEAM LEADER
(B) MR. TUNG LAM (TUNGF LAAM), MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR REP

B. PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW: THE JOINT OHP TEAM'S OBJECTIVE IN INTERVIEWING MR. THAI WAS TO EXPLORE HIS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT U.S. LOSSES IN SOUTHERN LAOS. SPECIFICALLY, WE SOUGHT FULL DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT HE BRIEFLY DESCRIBED IN REF B IN ORDER TO HELP ASSESS HIS POTENTIAL VALUE AS A TRILATERAL WITNESS FOR LAO CASE 1724.

C. WITNESS INTERVIEW:

- (1) NAME: PHAM HONG THAI (PHAMJ HOONGF THAIS)
(2) AGE: 70 YOA
(3) CURRENT RESIDENCE: NUMBER 27 BAT SU (BATS SWS),
HOAN KIEM DISTRICT, HANOI
(4) WARTIME RESIDENCE: BT34, SAVANNAKHET PROVINCE, LAOS
(5) CURRENT OCCUPATION: RETIRED
(6) WITNESS RELIABILITY: MR. THAI'S MEMORIES OF SOME

INCIDENT DETAILS, ESPECIALLY SITE LOCATIONS, WERE UNCLEAR. IN FACT, HE SAID A HEAD WOUND HAD DAMAGED HIS NERVES AND ADVERSELY AFFECTED HIS MEMORY. THOUGH WE BELIEVE HIS STATEMENTS TO BE FAIRLY ACCURATE, HE PROBABLY DID NOT PROVIDE COMPLETE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO HELP FIND THE INCIDENT LOCATION. HE DID NOT BELIEVE HE COULD LEAD A JOINT TEAM TO THE SITE IN LAOS. WE ASSESS HIS VALUE AS A TRILATERAL WITNESS FOR LAO CASE 1724 AS LIMITED.

(7) STATEMENT:

(A) FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO YEARS, IN 1971 AND 1972, MR. PHAM HONG THAI, THEN A PAVN SENIOR CAPTAIN, WAS A COMMAND POST WATCH OFFICER AT BT34 IN SAVANNAKHET PROVINCE, LAOS. HIS DUTIES INCLUDED COMMUNICATING WITH HIGHER HEADQUARTERS AND COORDINATING DAILY TACTICAL EVENTS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION. THE COMMAND POST HAD BOTH WIRELESS AND LAND-LINE COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY, AND COULD CONTACT BOTH GROUP 559 HEADQUARTERS AND HIGHER ECHELONS IN HANOI, ESPECIALLY DURING THE DRY SEASON.

(B) DURING THE 1971-1972 DRY SEASON (APPROXIMATELY DEC THROUGH MAY), AFTER LUNAR NEW YEAR (TEETS), A COMPANY SUBORDINATE TO BT34'S AD BN 44 SHOT DOWN A U.S. F-4 FIGHTER PLANE.

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C) MR. THAI HEARD THE GUARD AND HIS TEAM WRAPPED THE PARACHUTE BEFORE BURYING HIM. HE DID NOT KNOW HE TOOK IDENTIFICATION MEDIA OR OTHER ITEMS FROM THE AREA WHEN THEY BURIED HIM IN HIS FLIGHT SUIT AND BOOTS. HE DID NOT KNOW IF IT WAS MARKED, AND SAID HE COULD LEAD A JOINT TEAM TO THE GRAVE SITE.

D) AFTER THE BURIAL, THE BT34 COMMAND POST REPORTED TO GROUP 559 HEADQUARTERS VIA FIELD RADIO (DAAV TAIR) REPORT INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE FACT THAT ONE AIRCRAFT; THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT; THE ACTIONS AFTER THE INCIDENT (SENDING A GUARD); THE FACT THAT THE WEDD AND LATER DIED. MR. THAI SAID THE BT34 COMMAND ONLY BASIC DETAILS, SUCH AS THESE, TO GROUP 559.

E) AT THIS POINT, THE INTERVIEWER SHOWED MR. THAI
44 OF THE GROUP 559 SHOOT DOWN DOCUMENT. THE ENTRY
NY 12, BN 44; 1012 HOURS; 13 MAR 71; TWO 37MM
SHOT DOWN ONE A-7; WE CAPTURED THE PILOT, WHO LATER
THE JOINT TEAM BRIEFLY EXPLAINED THE GROUP 559
STORY AND UTILITY, MR. THAI SAID HE BELIEVED THIS ENTRY
THE INCIDENT HE HAD JUST DESCRIBED.

F) MR. THAI SAID THAT THE NEXT DAY AFTER THE F-4 SHOOT IN RESPONSE TO THE PILOT'S SIGNAL BEACON THE PREVIOUS 0-6 RECONNOITERED THE BT34 AREA. MR. THAI, WHO WAS ON COMMAND POST THAT DAY, ORDERED ALL PERSONNEL WITH WEAPONS TO THE AIRCRAFT. A UNIT SUBORDINATE TO BN 44 HIT THE AD-6, FAR FROM THE BT34 AREA. THE COMMAND POST ALSO REPORTED TO GROUP 559 HEADQUARTERS. AS FAR AS MR. THAI KNEW, NO ONE EVER WENT THE CRASH SITE, AND HE DID NOT KNOW THE

(G) SOMETIME AFTER THE F-4 AND AD-6 SHOOT DOWN
STILL DURING THE 1971-1972 DRY SEASON, A BN 44
NOT DOWN AN OV-10. BT34 OBSERVERS DETECTED THE PLANE
ITS ACTIVITIES TO THE COMMAND POST. THE COMMAND POST
O FORCES, WHICH SHOT DOWN THE AIRCRAFT NEAR A RIVER FORD
THAI DID NOT REMEMBER THE FORD'S NAME, NUMBER, OR
E COMMAND POST SENT THE BT34 DEPUTY COMMANDER, MR. BANG
FORCE TO CAPTURE THE PILOT, WHO HAD PARACHUTED FROM THE
M. BANG'S TEAM CAPTURED THE PILOT WITHOUT INCIDENT AND
M BACK TO BT34. MR. THAI DID NOT KNOW THE EXACT
ION. HE ONLY KNEW IT WAS NEAR THE FORD AND FAR ENOUGH
T MR. BANG AND HIS GROUP HAD TO TRAVEL TO THE CAPTURE

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(C) MR. THAI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT LINE 38, PAGE 44 OF THE GROUP 559 SHOOT DOWN DOCUMENT REFLECTED THE INCIDENT HE DESCRIBED. THIS LINE CORRELATES TO CASE 1724 BY DATE, TIME OF DAY, AIRCRAFT TYPE, AND PILOT'S FATE.

(D) MR. THAI STATED THAT A COMPANY SUBORDINATE TO AIR DEFENSE BN 44 SHOT DOWN THE AIRCRAFT, AS DOES LINE 38, PAGE 44 OF THE SHOOT DOWN DOCUMENT.

(2) THROUGH PRELIMINARY FIELD ANALYSIS WE COULD NOT CORRELATE MR. THAI'S STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE AD-6 TO ANY U.S. LOSS.

(3) THE OV-10 SHOOT DOWN AND PILOT'S CAPTURE INCIDENT:

(A) MR. THAI'S STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE OV-10 SHOOT DOWN AND PILOT'S CAPTURE CORRELATE TO CASE 1734 BASED ON YEAR, GENERAL TIME OF YEAR, GENERAL LOSS LOCATION, AND PILOT'S FATE.

(B) LINE 23, PAGE 45 OF THE GROUP 559 SHOOT DOWN DOCUMENT CORRELATES TO CASE 1734 AND MR. THAI'S STATEMENTS BASED ON TIME FRAME, AIRCRAFT TYPE, AIR DEFENSE UNIT, AND PILOT'S DISPOSITION.

B. POTENTIAL LEADS: MR. THAI SAID THAT THE BT34 COMMANDER, MR. CAO DON LUAN (CAO DOON LUAAN), AND THE BT34 DEPUTY COMMANDER, MR. BANG (FAMILY NAME UNKNOWN) MIGHT BE ABLE TO LOCATE THE INCIDENT SITES. HE DID NOT KNOW EITHER INDIVIDUALS' CURRENT DISPOSITION. HE ALSO SAID ONE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS MIGHT KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE GUARD WHO WENT TO THE CRASH SITE AND VIEWED THE PILOT AND THE GRAVE.

C. INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS: REF C NOTED THAT MR. THAI'S STATEMENTS IN REF C CITE AIR DEFENSE BN 41 AS THE UNIT THAT SHOT DOWN THE U.S. AIRCRAFT. REF C, THEREFORE, CONCLUDES MR. THAI MAY HAVE DESCRIBED A CASE OTHER THAN CASE 1724. DURING THIS JOINT ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW, MR. THAI SPECIFICALLY SAID BN 44 SHOT DOWN THE AIRCRAFT IN QUESTION. THERE ARE TWO PLAUSIBLE REASONS FOR THE APPARENTLY ERRONEOUS INFORMATION IN REF A. FIRST, IN VIETNAMESE SCRIPT, A WRITTEN NUMBER "1" CAN APPEAR VERY SIMILAR TO A WRITTEN NUMBER "4". SECOND, THE NUMBERS ONE AND FOUR ARE PHONETICALLY SIMILAR IN SPOKEN VIETNAMESE AND CAN EASILY BE MISUNDERSTOOD. WE BELIEVE MR. THAI'S STATEMENTS CORRELATE BOTH TO CASE 1724 AND TO LINE 38, PAGE 44 OF THE GROUP 559 SHOOT DOWN DOCUMENT.

D. COMMANDER'S COMMENTS: BASED ON THE ABOVE INFORMATION, I RECOMMEND THIS INDIVIDUAL FOR THE TRILATERAL WITNESS PROGRAM.// BT

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