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15. SUMMARY: /Leave Blank

(C) This report contains information obtained from an enemy document and concerns an extract translation of a notebook maintained by Nguyen Duc Phuong, member of an unspecified unit ((possibly 8th Artillery Battalion, Sub-Region 1)). The extract, dated 22 July 1970, reveals Phuong's hardships, experiences, and feelings about the Revolution and the war.

((TN: The extract translation published below concerns an NVA soldier's feelings toward the VC.))

((The preceding pages, 20 through 23, reveal that the author has been in SVN for two years; that he fell in love with a liberation (meaning SVN) girl; but that he could not love her because of his contempt for "these despicable, backward N.K." (possibly Nam Ky, a derogatory term referring to a native of SVN))).

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22 Jul 70

B. Công ((possibly Búng Công Forest))

This afternoon I celebrated the third anniversary of my enlistment in the army ((NVA)) which took place on 22 Jul 67. Around me is the bivouac site of my unit and the bare trees of the "bulldozed" Búng Công Forest. Time passed so quickly. I remember when I enlisted in the military service, I was enthusiastic and only 18 years old. Then, I had to leave my father and younger sisters and brothers and my native village. But strangely enough, I was not homesick.

After undergoing training for four months, I departed for the South ((SVN)) to fight the Americans.

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This time I was homesick, I missed my father and mother, I had passed many days full of difficulties and hardships with my friends, suffering from cold together, climbing steep hills and lofty mountains, and fording deep streams in the rugged Trường Sơn Cordillera. Many of my comrades contracted malaria but I have not, since my health was very good. While we were in the Laos, we had to travel many days under a hot sun. We did not have enough water to drink nor food to eat. Most of my comrades caught certain diseases but I seemed to be immune.

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Then we were in Cambodia, a barren territory which was the gate to the South Vietnamese battlefield. From afar, I heard the rumble of bombings and the sky-rending roar of artillery fire. There was one explosion very near us.

I was then assigned to Unit P.D.K ((possibly an artillery unit)). I took part in the first battle of my life as a combatant. I felt bewildered and had no experience. Afterwards my ears rang for nearly a week. I participated in several successive battles such as shellings, attacks on posts, countersweep operations, etc ... ((sic)).

I became able to distinguish the different kinds of enemy planes. But I was not yet familiar with the country. Besides, there were bombardments by B52's which US Special Forces called in on us incessantly.

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((RVNAF/FWMAF)) artillery fire was also constant. For the first time, I saw by comrades-in-arms wounded and killed ... ((sic)). But I was only concerned with fighting the enemy. At the beginning of 1969, I was assigned combat missions in Areas CC ((possibly Củ Chi)) and TB ((possibly Trảng Bàng)). I gradually came to know certain customs of the local people. During that period I lived happily

with them. They had affection for us. Then the ((attack)) order came and destroyed that life. I traveled along the Saigon River. Once I had nothing to eat for an entire day, and just sat on the bank of a brook. For the first time, we engaged enemy boats. They fired furiously on us, while enemy vehicles ((possibly armored vehicles)) rumbled on the road. I was very afraid.

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Shortly afterwards, on 30 Aug 69, several ((of my comrades-in-arms)) were killed by a grenade ... ((sic)); I cried that night. The following day I was to attack enemy bulldozers. I was greatly grieved when I learned about Uncle Ho's death. I did not eat for several days. We had continuous engagements with enemy Special Forces troops and ((armored)) vehicles. With a B-40 ((anti-tank grenade launcher)) I set a US M-41 ((tank)) ~~afire~~. This was my first exploit. History will record that at times one could not find any rice or any edible roots to eat but always found enemy soldiers. Again I spent four or five days without food.

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After spending many days without food and enduring hardship and difficulties my love for my comrades-in-arms increased. We had affection for each other because we were in the same situation, we had the same adamant determination, and pursued the same ideal.

I will never forget the courage my comrade-in-arms displayed in the face of dangers, hardships, and difficulties. Nor would I ever forget the sincere friendship they had for me.

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I will never forget my comrades-in-arms with whom I had shared the hazards of war. The future generations too will never forget them, for they were always ready to sacrifice their lives for a just cause, for the country, and to achieve their ideal.

((Since my enlistment in the NVA)), three years has passed. During these three years, many of my comrades-in-arms ~~have~~ departed ((possibly meaning were killed)). We conducted many attacks against the Americans, facing death, and braving all dangers. Many of them were held prisoner, tortured, and killed by the enemy. Now, I wonder who, among my friends in the North ((NVA)), a Communist paradise, ~~are~~ already dead and who ~~are~~ still alive.

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During Jul ((possibly 70)), besides carrying out revolutionary tasks, I had to carry another burden: My love ((of a South Vietnamese girl)). Being in love is the greatest joy ((on earth)) when one is in the prime of life. But with that love, I had come to a better understanding ((what is good and what is bad)) and to differentiate white from black. Those NK ((possibly Nam Ky, a derogatory term referring to the natives of SVN)) are a herd of dogs having human faces. How despicable these dogs are! The new socialist society and civilization will liquidate all of them.

You want to sabotage ((our socialist achievements)), you despicable "N.K!" But how can you ever hope to destroy the force of a "pure love" ((possibly meaning patriotism)). You are still too stupid. How can you forget that there still is "a forest" of ((meaning many)) people... ((sic)) of socialist North Vietnam. You will forever remain as ignorant and backward as you are now. You despicable "N.K," you must learn more. As for me, I am becoming more mature through the experiencing of difficulties and facing the fierceness of combat.

----- END OF TRANSLATION -----