

LUGGAGE
CDR
W.E.

COUNTRY CAMBODIA

DOI MID APRIL 1971

SUBJECT SIGHTING OF U.S. PRISONER OF WAR (POW) AND BODY
OF U.S. HELICOPTER CREWMAN IN SKUD DISTRICT, KRATIE
PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

ACQ

SOURCE

Exel 1 (C-70,323/Rev.4)

1. AT ABOUT 1100 HOURS ONE DAY IN MID-APRIL 1971, A U.S. COBRA HELICOPTER WAS SHOT DOWN BY 12.8MM ANTI AIRCRAFT MACHINE-GUN FIRE OF THE F-21B INFANTRY REGIMENT, VIET CONG (VC) 5TH DIVISION AT XU476458 NEAR SEANG VILLAGE, SNUOL DISTRICT, KRATIE PROVINCE, CAMBODIA. TWO CREWMEN GOT OUT OF THE COBRA AFTER THE CRASH AND CLIMBED A NEARBY TREE. ONE OF THE CREWMEN TOOK AIM TO FIRE AT VC PERSONNEL ATTEMPTING TO CAPTURE HIM, AND HIS COMPANION AND WAS SHOT TO DEATH. THE OTHER WAS CAPTURED BY VC SOLDIERS OF THE 6TH COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, F-21B INFANTRY REGIMENT AFTER HIS PISTOL RAN OUT OF AMMUNITION. A VC CADRE WHO TOOK PART IN THE CAPTURE HAD HIS RIGHT ARM BROKEN BY A SHOT FROM ONE OF THE CREWMEN.

2. BOTH OF THE CREWMEN WERE CAUCASIAN AND HAD LIGHT COMPLEXIONS. [REDACTED] OBSERVED THE CREWMAN WHO WAS

TAKEN PRISONER OF WAR (POW) FROM A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 40 METERS WHEN HE WAS BEING ESCORTED ON FOOT IN THE DIRECTION OF KRATIE CITY. HE WAS ABOUT 1.80 METERS TALL, HEIGHED ABOUT 92 KILDS, AND WORE A GREEN SHORT-SLEEVED FLIGHT UNIFORM. HIS WRISTS WERE TIED WITH A NYLON ROPE AND HIS BOOTS HAD BEEN REMOVED. ABOUT THREE DAYS LATER [REDACTED] WENT TO THE CRASH SITE IN SEARCH OF VALUABLES AND FOUND THE BODY OF THE DEAD CREWMAN. HIS BODY WAS LYING UNCOVERED ON THE GROUND, BUT [REDACTED] DID NOT GO CLOSE BECAUSE OF ITS BAD SMELL. [REDACTED] LATER HEARD THAT THE BODY WAS CREMATED ON THE SPOT ONE WEEK LATER BY CAMBODIAN CIVILIANS WHO CAME TO THE CRASH SITE TO SALVAGE PARTS FROM THE WRECKAGE.

3. THE HELICOPTER DID NOT BURN WHEN IT HIT THE GROUND, AND VC PERSONNEL WERE SUCCESSFUL IN SALVAGING GASOLINE, TWO MACHINE-GUNS, TWO PISTOLS, AND OTHER UNIDENTIFIED ITEMS. [REDACTED] COMMENTED [REDACTED] SAID THE CRASH SITE WAS LOCATED IN A VC-CONTROLLED AREA. HE SAID HE COULD LOCATE IT AGAIN, BUT THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO GUIDE A SEARCH PARTY BACK TO THE AREA ONLY IF HE WERE PROVIDED FULL SECURITY PROTECTION. [REDACTED] WAS SHOWN THE ALBUMS OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF MISSING AND CAPTURED PERSONNEL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BUT WAS UNABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS.

4. [REDACTED] COMMENTS: JOINT CASUALTY RESOLUTION CENTER (JCRC) EVALUATED THE REPORT AS FOLLOWS: "TWO INCIDENTS ON

17 MARCH 1971 POSSIBLY CORRELATE TO THIS REPORT:

"A. U.S. ARMY 1ST LT LAWRENCE E. LILLY WAS THE CO-PILOT OF AN AH-1G AIRCRAFT. IT WAS FORCED DOWN AT A LANDING ZONE AT XU488458 BECAUSE OF SMALL ARMS GROUND-TO-AIR FIRE. THE PILOT OF THE AIRCRAFT, ARMY CAPT DAVID P. SCHWEITZER, WAS RESCUED. LT LILLY WAS LAST SEEN BY U.S. PERSONNEL LAYING ON HIS BACK WITH HIS SHIRT PARTIALLY OPEN AND BLOOD ON HIS CHEST AND NECK. HE WAS OBSERVED BEING FIRED UPON BY VC. JCRC CARRIES LT LILLY IN STATUS OF DEAD, BODY-NOT-RECOVERED.

"B. ON 17 MARCH 1971, AT THE SAME LANDING ZONE (XU488458), A UH1H HELICOPTER WAS DOWNED BY GROUND FIRE. FOUR PEOPLE WERE INVOLVED:

"(1) ARMY CH2 RICHARD L. BAUMAN, JCRC NO. 1910, PILOT, MIA.

"(2) ARMY WD1 JAMES H. HESTAND, JCRC NO. 1911, CO-PILOT, RELEASEE.

"(3) ARMY SP4 CRAIG M. DIX, JCRC NO. 1919, CREW CHIEF, MIA.

"(4) ARMY SP4 BOBBY G. HARRIS, JCRC NO. 1918.

CREHMAN, MIA.

CHD1 HESTAND, A RELEASEE, PROVIDES THE MOST INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INCIDENT. HE SAYS THAT SP4 DIX, ALTHOUGH WOUNDED IN THE UPPER RIGHT ANKLE, WAS AMBULATORY AND WAS EVADING AT THE TIME OF HIS (HESTAND'S) CAPTURE. HESTAND ALSO REMARKED THAT, WHEN LAST SEEN, CW2 BAUMAN WAS ALIVE, IN GOOD CONDITION, AND WAS HIDING WITH DIX. IN HIS HOMECOMING DEBRIEF, HESTAND SAYS THAT HARRIS IS DEAD. WHEN HESTAND, HARRIS, AND DIX INITIALLY EXITED THE AIRCRAFT, HESTAND WENT TO THE PLACE WHERE HARRIS' BODY HAD BEEN THROWN. HE NOTICED THROAT LACERATIONS AND A DISCOLORATION OF THE BODY, WHICH, IN HESTAND'S OPINION, INDICATED THAT THE MAN WAS DEAD. JCRC CONTINUES TO CARRY HARRIS IN STATUS OF MISSING-IN-ACTION. STATUS OF PEOPLE IN THIS INCIDENT ARE LISTED ABOVE.

S. [REDACTED] DISSEM: DEFENSE ATTACHE FOR JCRC REPRESENTATIVE IN SAIGON; SENT TO CINCPAC (FOR CINCPAC AND POLAD ONLY), USSAG AND VIENTIANE (FOR JCRC REPRESENTATIVE ONLY).