

006002

ENVELOPE

PAACZYUW RUEKJCS4692 1510621-~~CCCC~~-RUEALGX.

ZNY ~~CCCC~~

HEADER

P 310621Z MAY 01

FM DIA WASHINGTON DC

INFO RUEADWD/OCSA WASHINGTON DC

RUEALGX/SAFE

P R 310105Z MAY 01

FM [REDACTED]

TO RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//[REDACTED]
 RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP-ISA/DPMO//
 RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//[REDACTED]
 RUHEMAD/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J2//
 RUBDPLA/WHITEHOUSE WASHINGTON DC//NSC//
 RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC//EAP/VLC/DAS//
 RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J2/J283/J3/J36//
 RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI//OTC/OBU//
 RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC//[REDACTED]
 RUEHBK/USDAO BANGKOK TH//PW-MIA//
 RUEHHI/USDAO HANOI VM
 RUBDPLA/AMEMBASSY HANOI VM
 RUBDPLA/AMEMBASSY HANOI VM//CJTFFADETTWO//
 RUBDPLA/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE LA
 RUEHVN/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE//CJTFFADETHREE//
 RUHVAAA/CDRUSACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//TAPC-PED-H//
 INFO RHEFSNG/HMSNG WASHINGTON DC
 BT

OASD DPMO	
Date Received	31 May 01
Watch Officer	R
Distro	Act / Info
Director	___
Deputy Dir	___
Chief of Staff	___
Exec Asst	___
Gen Counsel	(b) (3) ___
Pol/Plns	___
Res/Analyst	___
Jt Comm Spt	___
Ref/DOC	___
Ext Affairs	___
Resource Mgmt	___
<i>Dwyer</i>	___
<i>Nash</i>	___
	Analysts

Echevarria, R.L. 0480

[REDACTED]

Williams, E.L.

Stark, W.E. 0536

Bott, R.P.

CONTROLS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SECTION 01 OF 05

THIS IS A STONY BEACH MESSAGE

SERIAL: (U) IIR 6 024 0057 01.

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) VIETNAM (VM); LAOS (LA).

//IPSP: (U) ICC1587//.

SUBJ: IIR 6 024 0057 01/PRIORITY CASE 0480 AND 0536 - DETAILED
 ACCOUNT OF EARLY 1966 CLASH BETWEEN ELEMENTS OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY OF
 VIETNAM 643RD COMPANY AND A COMBINED US/REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FORCE
 NEAR BAN TA HA, LAOS (U)

WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED

INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 19660101.

REQS: (U) INITIATIVE ICC1587.

SOURCE: (U) MR. PHAM ((PHAMJ)) HUU CHAU (HWUX CHAAU), 61 YEARS OLD AND MR. PHAM ((PHAMJ)) VIET TUNG (VIEETS TUNGF), 65 YEARS OLD. BOTH ARE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE 1ST PLATOON, PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM (PAVN) 643RD COMPANY, GROUP 559. RELIABILITY HAS NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED.

SUMMARY: (U) THIS IS A STONY BEACH REPORT. IT PROVIDES A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF AN EARLY 1966 CLASH BETWEEN ELEMENTS OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM 643RD COMPANY AND A COMBINED US/REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FORCE NEAR BAN TA HA, LAOS - INFORMATION THAT MAY CORRELATE TO CASE LAOS PRIORITY CASE 0480 AND/OR CASE 0536.

TEXT: 1. (U) THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED BY THE JOINT TASK FORCE FOR FULL ACCOUNTING (JTF-FA) INVESTIGATION ELEMENT DURING THE 64TH JOINT FIELD ACTIVITY (JFA) CONDUCTED IN THE SOCIAL REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FROM 8 FEBRUARY TO 9 MARCH 2001.

2. (U) AN EXTRACT OF THE JTF-FA DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OF LAO PRIORITY CASES 0480 AND 0536. (FIELD COMMENT--FOR THE ORIGINAL REPORT SEE CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J3//, 301940Z APR 01 - DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OF LAO PRIORITY CASES 0480 AND 0536. REFERENCES INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT APPEAR IN THE ORIGINAL REPORT AND THEREFORE ARE NOT REPEATED HERE.)

(BEGIN EXTRACT)

D. ON 14 FEBRUARY 2001, THE JOINT U.S./SRV RIT ARRIVED IN VINH CITY, NGHE AN PROVINCE TO INVESTIGATE CASES 0480 AND 0536.

E. ON 15 FEBRUARY 2001, THE RIT INTERVIEWED MR. PHAM VIET TUNG IN VINH CITY. MR. TUNG FURNISHED THE FOLLOWING:

- (1) WITNESS ONE NAME: MR. PHAM VIET TUNG (PHAMJ VIEETS TUNGF).
- (2) AGE: 65 YOA.
- (3) CURRENT RESIDENCE: CAO SON VILLAGE (CAO SOWN), ANH SON DISTRICT, NGHE AN PROVINCE.
- (4) CURRENT OCCUPATION: FARMER.
- (5) ADDRESS AT TIME OF INCIDENT: SAVANNAKHET PROVINCE, LAOS.
- (6) OCCUPATION AT TIME OF INCIDENT: DEPUTY PLATOON LEADER, 1ST PLATOON, PAVN 643RD COMPANY, GROUP 559.
- (7) BACKGROUND: IN JULY 2000, A UNILATERAL

VIETNAMESE INVESTIGATION TEAM IDENTIFIED MR. TUNG (REF B).

(8) STATEMENT:

(A) MR. TUNG SERVED WITH THE PAVN 643RD CO BEGINNING IN 1962. THE UNIT'S MISSION WAS TO GUARD GROUP 559'S TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS.

(B) IN EARLY 1966, MR. TUNG'S 1ST PLATOON DEPLOYED TO THE TA HA VILLAGE (BANR TA HA - 48Q XD 632 630) AREA IN RESPONSE TO A U.S./ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN) SPECIAL FORCES AMBUSH ON A PAVN TRANSPORTATION UNIT AT THE NUA SLOPE (ZOOCS NWS). THE U.S./ARVN FORCE CAPTURED TWO 643RD CO SOLDIERS, A DRIVER AND A COOK, AND KILLED ONE 643RD CO INFANTRY OFFICER IN THIS AMBUSH. (NOTE: DOC NUA WAS THE VIETNAMESE NICKNAME FOR A STEEP SLOPE COVERED IN BAMBOO, APPROXIMATELY 30 MINUTES BY FOOT FROM TA HA VILLAGE; THE NAME IS NOT DEPICTED ON U.S. OR VIETNAMESE MAPS.) THE PAVN DID NOT CLASH WITH THE U.S./ARVN SPECIAL FORCES TEAM THAT CONDUCTED THIS INITIAL AMBUSH, BUT THE 1ST PLATOON STAYED NEARBY TO PROTECT THE TRANSPORTATION ROUTE THAT RAN THROUGH THE AREA. THE 1ST PLATOON'S FORCES AT THAT TIME CONSISTED OF APPROXIMATELY 30 MEN.

(C) ON 1 OCTOBER 1966, MR. TUNG, MR. TRAN KHUY (TRAAF KHUY), THE 1ST PLATOON COMMANDER, AND MR. PHAM VAN MINH (PHAMJ VAWN MINH), A 1ST PLATOON SQUAD LEADER, WALKED FROM THE TA HA VILLAGE AREA TO THE 643RD CO HEADQUARTERS FOR A COMMUNIST PARTY CELL MEETING. ON THE WAY, THE GROUP HEARD AIRCRAFT AND SAW MULTIPLE HELICOPTERS AND L-19'S CIRCLING OVERHEAD. MR. TUNG CLIMBED A TREE AND DETERMINED THAT ENEMY TROOPS HAD LANDED IN THE AREA. THE GROUP CONTINUED TO THE PARTY CELL MEETING, THEN ON THE WAY BACK TO THEIR CAMP THEY DETECTED THE ENEMY FORCE AT TA HA VILLAGE. THEY COULD NOT YET SEE THE ENEMY GROUP CLEARLY ENOUGH TO DISTINGUISH THEIR FACIAL FEATURES. NEAR THE ENEMY TEAM'S LANDING ZONE, MR. TUNG AND THE TWO OTHERS MET A SQUAD OF THE 1ST PLATOON IN AMBUSH FORMATION WAITING FOR THE THREE PARTY CELL MEMBERS TO RETURN.

(D) THE AMBUSH SQUAD LEADER, MR. THINH (THINHJ), TOLD MR. TUNG THE ENEMY FORCE, WHICH CONSISTED OF 10 OR 11 MEN, HAD ARRIVED IN THE AREA AT APPROXIMATELY NOON THAT DAY. MR. THINH HAD DISPATCHED A PARTY OF THREE INDIVIDUALS TO DETERMINE THE ENEMY'S DISPOSITION. THE SCOUT PARTY CONSISTED OF MR. DINH VAN THOI (DINH VAWN THOWIF), A NATIVE OF QUANG BINH PROVINCE, WHO WAS THE SCOUT PARTY LEADER; MR. XUAN (XUAAN - FULL NAME UNKNOWN); AND MR. VY VAN TUYEN (VYX VAWN TUYENR). AS THE GROUP PASSED THE ENEMY'S LOCATION, MR. DINH VAN THOI, WHO WAS WALKING POINT FOR THE GROUP, SAW MOVEMENT IN THE BUSHES. AS HE TURNED HIS HEAD TO LOOK, GUNFIRE ERUPTED FROM BEHIND THE BUSHES AND STRUCK MR. THOI, KILLING HIM ON THE SPOT. THE TWO REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE SCOUT PARTY RETURNED AND REPORTED THESE EVENTS TO MR. THINH, WHO THEN

ORGANIZED THE AMBUSH PARTY AND WAITED FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY CELL TO RETURN.

(E) IT WAS COLD WITH DRIZZLING RAIN WHEN THE PARTY CELL MEMBERS RECEIVED THE AMBUSH SQUAD'S REPORT, AND THE MEN WERE WET, COLD, AND SHIVERING. THEY DECIDED TO RETURN TO CAMP AND HAVE A MEAL. AFTER EATING, THE PARTY CELL MEMBERS RESOLVED TO DETERMINE THE ENEMY FORCE'S DISPOSITION, NUMBERS, AND INTENTIONS. AFTER SUCH AN ASSESSMENT THEY WOULD ATTACK AND ANNIHILATE THE ENEMY FORCE. TO DO THIS, THEY FORMED THREE TEAMS OF FOUR MEN EACH TO ATTACK THE U.S./ARVN FORCES IN THE DOC NUA-TA HA VILLAGE-HANG ONG DON (HANG OONG DON) AREA, USING A THREE-PRONGED ATTACK STRATEGY. (NOTE: HANG ONG DON - LITERALLY, MR. DON'S CAVE - WAS A VIETNAMESE NICKNAME FOR A KARST CAVE WITHIN A 30-MINUTE WALK FROM TA HA VILLAGE; THE NAME IS NOT DEPICTED ON U.S. OR VIETNAMESE MAPS.) MR. KHUY LED THE TEAM ASSIGNED TO OPERATE IN THE HANG ONG DON AREA. MR. THINH LED THE DOC NUA TEAM. MR. TUNG LED THE TA HA VILLAGE TEAM.

(F) AT 0400 ON 2 OCTOBER 1966, THE 1ST PLATOON FORCES ATE A MEAL, THEN AT 0430 THEY DEPARTED FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE OPERATING AREAS. MR. TUNG'S TEAM HEADED TOWARD TA HA VILLAGE, SKIRTING THE AREA WHERE THE U.S./ARVN FORCES HAD KILLED MR. THOI THE DAY BEFORE. THE 1ST PLATOON ANTICIPATED THAT AFTER THE 1ST PLATOON'S THREE-PRONGED ATTACK BEGAN, THE ENEMY WOULD WITHDRAW TO THE HILL BEHIND TA HA VILLAGE AND CALL FOR HELICOPTER EXTRACTION. AFTER CROSSING A MARSH INTO A WOODED AREA, MR. TUNG DISCOVERED A FRESH PILE OF HUMAN FECES WHICH LED HIM TO BELIEVE HE WAS VERY CLOSE TO THE ENEMY'S POSITION. AS MR. TUNG'S TEAM CRAWLED FROM THE EDGE OF THE MARSH FOR 15 METERS UP THE SIDE OF A HILL, THE U.S./ARVN FORCE DETECTED THEM AND BOTH SIDES OPENED FIRE. THE BARRAGE FROM THE 1ST PLATOON KILLED TWO ARVN TROOPS ON THE SPOT, AND THE U.S./ARVN FORCE QUICKLY WITHDREW. MR. TUNG THEN TURNED AND SAW THAT MR. PHAM VAN MINH, SQUAD LEADER AND COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER, HAD BEEN SHOT IN THE HEAD AND KILLED DURING THE BRIEF EXCHANGE OF FIRE. MR. TUNG WHISPERED INTO MR. MINH'S EAR THAT HE WOULD AVENGE HIS DEATH.

(G) MR. TUNG THEN CALLED FOR THE REMAINING TWO MEN IN HIS TEAM, MR. VU DINH THOI (VUX DINH THOWI) AND MR. KE (KEEJ), TO FOLLOW HIM IN PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY FORCE. AS HE DREW NEAR TO THE VILLAGE, MR. TUNG SAW THAT THE U.S./ARVN FORCE HAD NOT WITHDRAWN TO THE HILL BEHIND TA HA VILLAGE AS PREDICTED, BUT WAS REGROUPING IN THE VILLAGE ITSELF. FROM HIS POSITION IN THE TREES, APPROXIMATELY 120 METERS FROM THE ENEMY'S POSITION, HE COULD NOT DETERMINE WHETHER THERE WERE ANY AMERICANS IN THE REGROUPMENT AREA OR NOT. AT THAT

POINT MR. TUNG REALIZED HIS TWO TEAMMATES HAD BECOME SEPARATED FROM HIM.

(H) ALONE ON A HILLSIDE ABOVE TA HA VILLAGE, MR. TUNG WITHDREW THE PARTIALLY USED AMMUNITION CLIP FROM HIS AK-47, PUT IT INTO A TROUSER POCKET, AND LOADED A FULL CLIP INTO HIS WEAPON. HE CONTINUED TO QUICKLY AND QUIETLY ADVANCE ON THE ENEMY'S POSITION UNTIL HE REACHED A POSITION 40 METERS AWAY, WHERE HE STOPPED TO OBSERVE THE U.S./ARVN FORCE. WHILE IN THIS POSITION, HE BEGAN TO EXPERIENCE A MALARIA SPELL. HE RESOLVED TO WAIT FOR THE SPELL TO SUBSIDE, THEN ATTACK THE ENEMY FORCE ALONE TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF HIS TWO FALLEN COMRADES. HE DECIDED TO WAIT UNTIL THE ENTIRE U.S./ARVN FORCE HAD BOARDED THE HELICOPTER, THEN ADVANCE AND OPEN FIRE.

(I) AT THIS POINT, MR. TUNG HEARD A SMALL POPPING SOUND VERY NEAR HIS LOCATION. HE LOOKED AND SAW A CAUCASIAN AMERICAN WITH A RADIO, APPROXIMATELY TWO METERS AWAY, NEXT TO A BUSH. MR. TUNG WATCHED WHILE THE AMERICAN DEPLOYED A RED SMOKE GRENADE TO SIGNAL RESCUE FORCES. MR. TUNG NOTICED THE AMERICAN HAD BEEN WOUNDED IN THE HEEL DURING THE FIREFIGHT AND SAW VERY CLEARLY THAT HE CARRIED AN ASSAULT RIFLE AND A PISTOL WITH A SILENCER. EVENTUALLY A SINGLE UH-1 HELICOPTER APPEARED AND DESCENDED TOWARD THE WAITING U.S./ARVN FORCE, AND THE AMERICAN LIMPED TOWARD THE REGROUPMENT AREA, CARRYING THE RADIO ON HIS BACK. THE AIRCRAFT LANDED NEAR THE ENEMY FORCE, APPROXIMATELY 40 METERS FROM MR. TUNG'S POSITION.

(J) WHEN THE AMERICAN WAS A FEW METERS FROM THE HELICOPTER, MR. TUNG BEGAN HIS ATTACK. AS HE RAN TOWARD THE AIRCRAFT, HE CROSSED A MUDDY DITCH, LOSING ONE OF HIS SANDALS IN THE MUD. WHEN THE AMERICAN BEGAN TO CLIMB THE LADDER TO BOARD THE AIRCRAFT, MR. TUNG STRUCK HIM IN THE HEAD WITH THE STOCK OF HIS RIFLE, KILLING HIM ON THE SPOT. THE AMERICAN COLLAPSED AT THE FOOT OF THE AIRCRAFT. MR. TUNG THEN OPENED FIRE, EMPTYING A 30-ROUND AMMUNITION CLIP INTO THE INTERIOR OF THE HELICOPTER, IMMEDIATELY KILLING THE PILOT AND WOUNDING THE CO-PILOT. THE AIRCRAFT LIFTED OFF, AND AS IT WAS APPROXIMATELY 50 TO 60 METERS ABOVE THE GROUND, MR. TUNG LOADED THE PARTIAL AMMUNITION CLIP FROM HIS POCKET AND FIRED MORE THAN TEN ROUNDS AT THE HELICOPTER. THE AIRCRAFT BURST INTO FLAMES AND CRASHED COCKPIT-FIRST INTO THE GROUND APPROXIMATELY 20 METERS AWAY FROM MR. TUNG.

(K) AFTER THE CRASH, MUNITIONS ABOARD THE AIRCRAFT BEGAN TO EXPLODE AND MR. TUNG RAN UP THE SIDE OF THE HILL. AS HE REACHED A WATER-FILLED DITCH ON THE HILL, HE SAW TWO L-19 AIRCRAFT, MULTIPLE HELICOPTERS, AND MULTIPLE JET AIRCRAFT OVERHEAD. MR. TUNG LAY ON

HIS SIDE IN THE SHALLOW DITCH AND OBSERVED THE AIRCRAFT. THE L-19'S WERE MAKING REPEATED LOW PASSES OVER THE SITE. MR. TUNG LOADED A NEW AMMUNITION CLIP FROM HIS RUCKSACK AND CRAWLED FROM THE DITCH APPROXIMATELY TWO METERS TO A TERMITE MOUND WITH A TREE STUMP PROTRUDING FROM IT. AS ONE OF THE L-19'S DIVED TOWARD HIS POSITION, MR. TUNG FIRED A SALVO AT THE AIRCRAFT, THEN RAN BACK TO HIS FORMER POSITION IN THE DITCH. THE SECOND L-19 MADE A LOW PASS AND FIRED A ROCKET, DESTROYING THE TERMITE MOUND AND TREE TRUNK FROM WHERE MR. TUNG HAD FIRED AT THE FIRST L-19. HE LATER HEARD FROM BINH TRAM 6 THAT THE FIRST L-19 HAD LATER CRASHED IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE, ON THE VIETNAMESE SIDE OF THE BORDER. HE DID KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE PILOT'S FATE. (NOTE: BINH TRAM IS THE VIETNAMESE NAME FOR BATTALION OR REGIMENT-SIZED LOGISTICAL HUBS ALONG GROUP 559'S STRATEGIC SUPPLY ROUTE. THERE IS NO U.S. EQUIVALENT FOR THIS TYPE OF UNIT, AND THEREFORE NO EXACT ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE WORD BINH TRAM.)

(L) THE L-19'S ROCKET LAUNCH WAS FOLLOWED BY MORE ROCKET FIRE, THEN PHOSPHOROUS BOMB AND NAPALM BARRAGES FROM THE JETS. MR. TUNG HELD HIS POSITION UNDER THE WATER IN THE DITCH. AFTER SOME TIME, ALL THE AIRCRAFT WITHDREW, LEAVING THE AREA QUIET. MR. TUNG SAW THE BUSHES SHAKING AT TWO SPOTS ON THE HILLSIDE AND CONCLUDED THAT THIS INDICATED EITHER REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE ENEMY FORCE OR HIS TWO TEAM MEMBERS. HE FOLLOWED THE FIGURES WITH THE BARREL OF HIS RIFLE. ONE OF THE FIGURES THEN STOOD UP AND MR. TUNG SAW THAT IT WAS MR. KE, ONE OF HIS TEAM MEMBERS. MR. KE SAID TO THE OTHER INDIVIDUAL, MR. THOI, THAT MR. TUNG HAD SURELY BEEN KILLED IN THE ATTACK. MR. TUNG CALLED OUT HIS COMRADE'S NAMES, AND THEY EXCHANGED A SECRET QUESTION AND PASSWORD SEQUENCE TO CONFIRM EACH OTHER'S IDENTITIES.

(M) THE GROUP THEN INSPECTED THE HELICOPTER CRASH SITE. THE EXPLODING MUNITIONS AND SUBSEQUENT BOMBING ATTACKS HAD DESTROYED THE AIRCRAFT. ALL THE INDIVIDUALS IN THE AIRCRAFT WERE DEAD, AND THEIR BODIES WERE COMPLETELY BURNED. MR. TUNG COULD NOT DETERMINE THE RACE OF ANY OF THE BODIES, BUT COUNTED TEN INDIVIDUALS IN THE CRASH. SOME OF THE BODIES SEEMED TO BE LARGER THAN VIETNAMESE BODIES. THE VIETNAMESE DID NOT BURY ANY OF THE BODIES IN THE CRASH. MR. TUNG LATER HEARD A RUMOR THAT A HELICOPTER HAD RETRIEVED THESE BODIES.

(N) THE BODY OF THE AMERICAN WITH THE RADIO WAS NOT BURNED DURING THE BATTLE. MR. TUNG'S TEAM BURIED THE AMERICAN NEAR THE HILL IN TA HA VILLAGE, BUT MR. TUNG WAS BEGINNING TO SUCCUMB TO THE MALARIA ATTACK AND DID NOT DIRECTLY PARTICIPATE IN THE BURIAL. MR. TUNG OPINED THAT LOCAL MILITIA FORCES MAY HAVE BEEN

INVOLVED IN THE BURIAL, BUT WAS NOT SURE, AND DID NOT KNOW THE NAMES OF ANY OF THE LOCAL FORCES WHO MIGHT HAVE PARTICIPATED. HE BELIEVED THERE WAS A CHANCE THAT THE REPEATED B-52 STRIKES IN THE AREA AFTER THE INCIDENT DESTROYED THE GRAVE.

(O) MR. TUNG'S TEAM COLLECTED SALVAGEABLE EQUIPMENT IN THE AREA SUCH AS RUCKSACKS, WEAPONS, AND THE RADIO. MR. TUNG THEN FULLY SUCCUMBED TO HIS MALARIA ATTACK AND THE OTHER MEMBERS CARRIED HIM BACK TO CAMP.

(P) MR. TUNG WAS SURE THAT THIS INCIDENT OCCURRED ON 2 OCTOBER 1966 FOR THREE REASONS. FIRST, HE SAID THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME AN ELEMENT OF GROUP 559 HAD DESTROYED A U.S./ARVN SPECIAL FORCES TEAM, INCLUDING A HELICOPTER, IN THIS MANNER. THE INCIDENT HAD BEEN WIDELY USED AS A TRAINING AND PROPAGANDA EXAMPLE, AND MR. TUNG HIMSELF HAD BEEN CALLED ON TO LECTURE ON THE INCIDENT IN MILITARY EDUCATION CLASSES. SECOND, FOR MOST OF THE WAR MR. TUNG KEPT A DIARY, WHICH HE OFTEN REVIEWED. THOUGH HE LOST THE DIARY IN AN ENEMY RAID LATE IN THE WAR, HE CLAIMED TO REMEMBER CLEARLY THAT HE HAD RECORDED THE DATE OF THIS INCIDENT AS 2 OCTOBER 1966. THIRD, MR. TUNG RECEIVED A MEDAL FOR THIS INCIDENT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. HE STILL HAS THE MEDAL. THOUGH THE ACCOMPANYING PAPERWORK DOES NOT REFLECT THE DATE OF THE INCIDENT, THE MEDAL HELPED HIM REMEMBER THE DATE. THE RIT AND THE VNOSMP QUESTIONED MR. TUNG EXTENSIVELY ON THE DATE OF THIS INCIDENT, SUGGESTING THAT PERHAPS HE WAS TRANSPOSING THE DATE WITH ANOTHER INCIDENT. MR. TUNG, HOWEVER, MAINTAINED THAT THE DATE OF THIS INCIDENT WAS 2 OCTOBER 1966.

(Q) ON AN UNRECALLED DATE IN 1966, AFTER THE 2 OCTOBER 1966 INCIDENT, BUT BEFORE LUNAR NEW YEAR, MR. TUNG PARTICIPATED IN ANOTHER INCIDENT THAT OCCURRED IN THE ONG DON CAVE AREA, NEAR GROUP 559'S COMMO-LIAISON STATION NUMBER 5. (NOTE: AS NOTED ABOVE, HANG ONG DON WAS A VIETNAMESE NICKNAME FOR A KARST CAVE WITHIN A 30-MINUTE WALK FROM TA HA VILLAGE; THE NAME IS NOT DEPICTED ON U.S. OR VIETNAMESE MAPS. MR. TUNG SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE KNEW HIS OLD OPERATING AREA "LIKE THE PALM OF HIS HAND" AND BELIEVED HE COULD IDENTIFY LANDMARKS INCLUDING HANG ONG DON IF HE RETURNED TO THE TA HA VILLAGE AREA.) IN THE AFTERNOON ON THE DAY OF THE INCIDENT, THE 643RD CO'S OBSERVATION POST REPORTED THAT A HELICOPTER HAD LANDED AT HANG ONG DON. MR. TUNG REPORTED TO MR. KHUY THAT HE (TUNG) WOULD SEND A SQUAD TO ASSESS THE SITUATION. IT TOOK ABOUT 30 MINUTES FOR MR. TUNG AND HIS SQUAD TO WALK FROM THEIR CAMP TO THE HANG ONG DON AREA. MR. TUNG ASSIGNED DEPUTY SQUAD LEADER PHAN VAN DU

(PHAN VAWN ZU), ORIGINALLY FROM QUANG BINH PROVINCE, TO WALK POINT. AS IT BEGAN TO GET DARK, MR. DU WAS SKIRTING A PUNJI STAKE PIT NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE AT HANG ONG DON WHEN THE ENEMY FORCE Poured OUT OF A CAVE AND BOTH SIDES OPENED FIRE. GUNFIRE FROM THE INITIAL ENEMY SALVO HIT MR. DU IN THE STOMACH AND HE DIED ON THE SPOT.

(R) MR. TUNG SAW THAT THE ENEMY FORCE, WHICH CONSISTED OF BOTH U.S. AND ARVN PERSONNEL, HAD BEEN INSIDE A CAVE AT THE FOOT OF A KARST. A PAVN COMPANY TRANSITING THROUGH THE AREA HAD RECENTLY USED THE CAVE AS A COOKING AREA. MR. TUNG'S SQUAD CONTINUED FIRING AND FORCED THE ENEMY TEAM BACK INTO THE CAVE, TRAPPING THEM THERE. MR. TUNG'S SQUAD PINNED THE U.S./ARVN FORCE THERE ALL NIGHT, AND DURING THE NIGHT THE SQUAD CAPTURED TWO ARVN SOLDIERS, WHO WERE BOTH OF ETHNIC CHINESE DESCENT. IN THE MORNING, THEY SAW THAT THEY HAD KILLED FIVE AMERICANS AND FOUR ARVN PERSONNEL. FOUR OF THE AMERICANS WERE AT THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE AND THE FIFTH, A BLACK SOLDIER CARRYING A RADIO, HAD CLIMBED UP ONTO THE KARST. MR. TUNG REMEMBERED THIS BLACK SOLDIER'S DEATH CLEARLY BECAUSE HE HAD FOLLOWED THE SOLDIER UP THE SIDE OF THE KARST. WHEN THE BLACK SOLDIER REFUSED TO SURRENDER, MR. TUNG SHOT AND KILLED HIM ON THE SPOT. THIS SOLDIER'S BODY WAS 50 TO 60 METERS ABOVE THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE.

(S) CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS KILLED DURING THIS INCIDENT, MR. TUNG SAID HE RELIED ON THE REPORT FROM HIS SUBORDINATE SQUAD MEMBERS TO DETERMINE THE BODY COUNT. THE ONLY DEAD AMERICAN HE SAW DIRECTLY WAS THE BLACK SOLDIER, SO HE COULD NOT BE CERTAIN HOW MANY AMERICANS WERE KILLED. MR. TUNG SAID HIS SQUAD LEFT THE BODIES OF THE U.S./ARVN FORCE WHERE THEY LAY AND DID NOT BURY THEM. THEY DID NOT REPORT THE INCIDENT TO LOCAL FORCES. AS FAR AS MR. TUNG REMEMBERED, THE U.S./ARVN FORCE ONLY USED ASSAULT RIFLES AND PISTOLS AND DID NOT USE GRENADES.

(T) MR. TUNG'S UNIT CLASHED WITH ANOTHER U.S./ARVN FORCE IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE PRIOR TO LUNAR NEW YEAR 1967, BUT THIS INCIDENT DID NOT INVOLVE ANY UNACCOUNTED-FOR AMERICANS.

(U) BY LUNAR NEW YEAR OF 1967, MR. TUNG HAD MOVED WITH THE 643RD CO TO THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE. HE DESCRIBED A 1967 INCIDENT THAT OCCURRED IN THUA THIEN-HUE INVOLVING THE CAPTURE OF AN AMERICAN WHO WAS SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED DURING OPERATION HOMECOMING.

(V) IN 1968, MR. TUNG TRANSFERRED TO THE 6TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, SUBORDINATE TO EITHER BINH TRAM 42 OR BINH TRAM 43

(HE COULD NOT REMEMBER CLEARLY), AND CONTINUED OPERATING IN THUA THIEN-HUE.

(W) ASIDE FROM THE ABOVE INFORMATION, MR. TUNG DID NOT KNOW OF ANY OTHER INCIDENTS INVOLVING U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR, AIRCRAFT CRASHES OR SHOOTDOWNS, OR REMAINS OF UNACCOUNTED-FOR U.S. PERSONNEL.

F. ON 16 FEBRUARY 2001, THE RIT INTERVIEWED MR. PHAM HUU CHAU IN VINH CITY. MR. CHAU FURNISHED THE FOLLOWING:

- (1) WITNESS TWO NAME: MR. PHAM HUU CHAU (PHAMJ HWUX CHAAU).
- (2) AGE: 61 YOA.
- (3) CURRENT RESIDENCE: NAM LONG VILLAGE (NAM LONG), NAM DAN DISTRICT, NGHE AN PROVINCE.
- (4) CURRENT OCCUPATION: FARMER.
- (5) ADDRESS AT TIME OF INCIDENT: SAVANNAKHET PROVINCE, LAOS.
- (6) OCCUPATION AT TIME OF INCIDENT: MEMBER, 1ST PLATOON, PAVN 643RD CO, GROUP 559.
- (7) BACKGROUND: IN JULY 2000, A UNILATERAL VIETNAMESE INVESTIGATION TEAM IDENTIFIED MR. CHAU (REF B).
- (8) STATEMENT:

(A) MR. CHAU SERVED WITH THE PAVN 643RD CO BEGINNING IN 1964. HE LEFT THE COMPANY WHEN HE SEPARATED FROM THE PAVN IN 1971 DUE TO A LEG WOUND. AT THE TIME OF SEPARATION, HE HELD THE RANK OF SERGEANT (TRUNG SIX) WITH THE POSITION OF SQUAD LEADER.

(B) IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER 1966, AN INCIDENT OCCURRED IN THE TA HA VILLAGE AREA IN SAVANNAKHET PROVINCE, LAOS, DURING WHICH MR. CHAU'S DEPUTY PLATOON LEADER, MR. PHAM VIET TUNG (WITNESS ONE), KILLED A U.S. SOLDIER AND DESTROYED A HELICOPTER WITH 11 ARVN PERSONNEL ABOARD. MR. CHAU DID NOT WITNESS THE INCIDENT, BUT CAME THE NEXT EVENING WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS SQUAD (NONE OF WHOSE NAMES HE COULD REMEMBER) TO BURY THE DEAD AMERICAN.

(C) MR. CHAU HEARD THAT MR. TUNG SHOT THE AMERICAN WITH HIS AK-47 ASSAULT RIFLE WHILE THE AMERICAN WAS ATTEMPTING TO BOARD THE HELICOPTER. ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAD HEARD, THE AMERICAN WAS CARRYING A 15-WATT RADIO ON HIS BACK. IT WAS NEARLY DARK WHEN MR. CHAU REACHED THE INCIDENT SITE AND HE COULD NOT SEE THE AMERICAN'S SKIN COLOR NOR ANY OTHER DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS. HE DID REMEMBER, HOWEVER, THAT THE BODY WAS NOT BURNED. HE AND THE OTHER SQUAD MEMBERS BURIED THE AMERICAN IN A VERY SHALLOW GRAVE DUE TO THE ROCKY SOIL. THE SQUAD BURIED THE BODY FACE UP WITH CLOTHING AND BOOTS INTACT. THEY COLLECTED THE DEAD U.S. SOLDIER'S WEAPONS AND RADIO, BUT

MR. CHAU DID NOT RECALL ANY DOCUMENTS OR IDENTIFICATION MEDIA. THEY DID NOT MARK THE GRAVE OR DRAW A SKETCH MAP OF ITS LOCATION. MR. CHAU DID NOT KNOW HOW HIS UNIT REPORTED THE INCIDENT TO HIGHER HEADQUARTERS.

(D) THOUGH MR. CHAU NEVER RETURNED TO THE BURIAL SITE AFTER THE INCIDENT, HE BELIEVED HE COULD FIND THE GRAVE IF HE RETURNED TO THE TA HA VILLAGE AREA. HE SAID HE COULD USE THE UNIQUE KARST FORMATIONS NEAR THE GRAVE SITE AS LANDMARKS. HE SAID THAT EXCHANGING IDEAS WITH HIS FORMER UNIT MEMBERS WOULD IMPROVE HIS CHANCES OF FINDING THE GRAVE.

(E) CONCERNING THE BODIES IN THE HELICOPTER CRASH, MR. CHAU SAID HE BELIEVED THERE WERE 11 BODIES, ALL VIETNAMESE. HE BELIEVED THEY WERE VIETNAMESE DUE TO THEIR DIMINUTIVE SIZE. HE SAID NO ONE BURIED THESE BODIES.

(F) MR. CHAU DID NOT REMEMBER THE NAMES OF ANY OTHER INDIVIDUALS WHO MIGHT HAVE INFORMATION ON THE BURIAL SITE. HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT BINH TRAM'S WERE IN THE TA HA VILLAGE AREA.

(G) MR. CHAU PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUALS MR. PHAM VIET TUNG (WITNESS ONE) REFERENCED IN HIS STATEMENTS:

((1)) MR. KE (KEEJ), ORIGINALLY FROM THAI BINH PROVINCE - DECEASED. (NOTE: MR. KE WAS A MEMBER OF MR. TUNG'S SQUAD WHEN MR. TUNG'S 2 OCTOBER 1966 INCIDENT OCCURRED).

((2)) MR. THOI (THOWI) - DECEASED. (NOTE: MR. THOI WAS A MEMBER OF MR. TUNG'S SQUAD WHEN MR. TUNG'S 2 OCTOBER 1966 INCIDENT OCCURRED).

((3)) MR. THINH (THINHJ) - DECEASED. (NOTE: MR. THINH WAS A SQUAD LEADER IN THE 1ST PLATOON, 643RD CO, AT THE TIME OF MR. TUNG'S 2 OCTOBER 1966 INCIDENT.)

((4)) MR. TRAN KHUY (TRAANF KHUY), ORIGINALLY FROM QUANG TRI PROVINCE - DECEASED. (NOTE: MR. KHUY WAS THE LEADER OF THE 1ST PLATOON, 643RD CO, AT THE TIME OF MR. TUNG'S 2 OCTOBER 1966 INCIDENT.)

((5)) MR. VY VAN TUYEN (VYX VAWN TUYEENR), A RESIDENT OF ANH SON DISTRICT, NGHE AN PROVINCE (VILLAGE UNKNOWN). (NOTE: A 1ST PLATOON, 643RD CO, SQUAD MEMBER AT THE TIME OF MR. TUNG'S 2 OCTOBER 1966 INCIDENT.)

(H) MR. CHAU DID NOT KNOW OF ANY OTHER INCIDENTS INVOLVING U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR, AIRCRAFT CRASHES OR SHOOTDOWNS, OR REMAINS OF U.S. PERSONNEL. HE SAID THE INCIDENT HE RELATED TO THE JOINT TEAM WAS THE ONLY INCIDENT HE KNEW INVOLVING AMERICANS.

4. MATERIAL EVIDENCE. NONE.
5. SITE SURVEY RESULTS. NONE.

6. PERTINENT LOCATION OR DATA CHANGES. NONE.

7. [REDACTED] DEBRIEFER COMMENTS.

A. WITNESS ONE: MR. TUNG WAS A CREDIBLE WITNESS. DISCREPANCIES IN THE DATES OF THE INCIDENTS AND THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS KILLED IN THE SECOND INCIDENT MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE PASSAGE OF TIME AND THE FACT THAT MR. TUNG ASSUMED THE REPORTS FROM HIS SUBORDINATE PERSONNEL TO BE ACCURATE. THE INTERVIEW TEAM SPENT THREE HOURS INTERVIEWING THIS WITNESS IN AN ATTEMPT TO CLARIFY THE APPARENT DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE TIME FRAMES IN MR. TUNG'S STATEMENTS AND THE CASE 0480/0536 INCIDENTS. THE WITNESS MAINTAINED HIS CONVICTION, HOWEVER, THAT THE FIRST INCIDENT HE DESCRIBED OCCURRED ON 2 OCTOBER 1966 AND THE SECOND INCIDENT OCCURRED AT SOME TIME AFTER THE FIRST. THOUGH THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THE WITNESS' MEMORY IS IN ERROR, HIS CONVICTIONS ARE SUCH THAT HE WILL PROBABLY NEVER CHANGE HIS MIND ON THE DATE OF THE INCIDENT.

B. WITNESS TWO: MR. CHAU'S MEMORY OF THE INCIDENT HE RELATED LACKED DETAIL, BUT HE WAS A CREDIBLE WITNESS. HIS IMPORTANCE AS A WITNESS LIES IN THE FACT THAT HE WAS A DIRECT PARTICIPANT IN THE BURIAL AND BELIEVES HE CAN FIND THE GRAVESITE.

8. ANALYST COMMENTS.

A. WITNESS ONE: THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND GENERAL TIME FRAMES OF THE TWO INCIDENTS MR. TUNG DESCRIBED ARE SIMILAR IN MANY RESPECTS TO CASES 0480 AND 0536. THE DISCREPANCY IN THE DATES, HOWEVER, PRECLUDES THE RIT FROM MAKING A FIELD CORRELATION TO EITHER CASE. MORE COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS IS REQUIRED TO DRAW ACCURATE CORRELATIONS.

B. WITNESS TWO: THE INCIDENT MR. CHAU RELATED APPEARS TO BE THE SAME AS WITNESS ONE'S 2 OCTOBER 1966 INCIDENT, BASED ON GENERAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND CORRELATING EVENTS. DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE TWO STATEMENTS CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE FACT THAT MR. CHAU ONLY PARTICIPATED IN THE BURIAL, NOT THE BATTLE. AS WITH WITNESS ONE'S STATEMENTS, MORE COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS IS REQUIRED TO DRAW ACCURATE CASE CORRELATIONS.

9. TEAM LEADER COMMENTS:

A. CONCUR WITH ANALYST COMMENTS. RECOMMEND ANALYSTS USE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION PRESENT IN MR. TUNG'S STATEMENT TO DRAW CASE CORRELATIONS. RECOMMEND NOT RE-INTERVIEWING THIS WITNESS IN AN ATTEMPT TO CLARIFY THE TIME FRAME OF THE INCIDENT, SINCE THE RIT SPENT THREE HOURS OF INTENSIVE QUESTIONING DOING SO DURING THIS JFA.

B. HOST GOVERNMENT COOPERATION/SUPPORT: THE VNOSMP PROVIDED GOOD SUPPORT DURING THIS CASE INVESTIGATION.

10. RECOMMENDATION. NONE.

11. DETACHMENT COMMANDER'S COMMENTS. NONE.

(END EXTRACT)

COMMENTS: (FIELD COMMENTS) - 1. (U) SOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR FURTHER DEBRIEFING ONLY THROUGH THE VIETNAM OFFICE FOR SEEKING MISSING PERSONS (VNOSMP). MEMBERS OF THE VNOSMP WERE PRESENT DURING THE DEBRIEFING.

(b) (1) 1.5 (c)

2. (U) ALTHOUGH THE INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS OF THIS REPORT ARE UNCLASSIFIED. ASSOCIATION OF [REDACTED]

AND

[REDACTED] CAUSES THIS REPORT TO BE CLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL.~~

(b) (3)

3. (U) QUESTIONS/COMMENTS CONCERNING THIS IIR SHOULD BE MADE TO [REDACTED]

ADMIN

COLL: (U) AC.

INSTR: (U) US NO.

PREP: (U) 7-01672.

ACQ: (U) VIETNAM, VINH CITY (20010215).

DISSEM: (U) FIELD - NONE.

WARNING: (U) REPORT CLASSIFIED ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L.~~

Deleted as an element of composite classification

DRV FROM: DIA/SCG, OCT 97

DECL ON: ~~HT.~~

BT

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