

JET

8 MARCH 1973

SAILORS GETTING POOR DEFENSE: REP. BURKE

Black sailors aboard two U. S. Naval vessels have not been given the opportunity to meet with each other, according to congresswoman Yvonne B. Burke (D., Calif.).

Mrs. Burke, along with congressman Ronald V. Dellums, has launched an investigation into disturbances aboard the USS Kittyhawk and the USS Constellation (JET, Feb. 1). Their investigation followed a House Armed Services Subcommittee probe which found that the incidents were not spawned by racial discrimination, but by lack of discipline.

But Dellums, in announcing the special investigation, said he was in "almost total disagreement" with the conclusion of the subcommittee report. The California lawmaker was recently appointed to the House Armed Services Committee.

Speaking of the 20 Black sailors who have faced or will be facing courts martial in connection with the disturbances, Mrs. Burke said: "I'm convinced that the defendants are not being accorded the same kind of consideration in the preparation of their defense that the military is. Specifically, what our investigation will do is to allow them to have a proper right to prepare their defense. For one thing, they have not been allowed to meet together. It is very difficult to organize a defense when you don't have a chance to talk to the other defendants."

In contrast to the subcommittee's report against charges of military racial discrimination, the Human Resources Commission of Alexandria, Va., completed a study showing that both Black and white soldiers tend to believe increasingly that the other race is getting better treatment.

The report found that in the first week of basic training, five percent of whites, in the Army poll of 86,297 soldiers just completing basic training, said Black soldiers received preferential treatment over whites. But four months later, 23 percent of the same soldiers said Blacks got favored treatment.

Fifteen percent of Black soldiers in the first week of basic training thought whites were getting favored treatment, while four months later 38 percent held that opinion.

Said Curtis Smothers, acting deputy assistant Secretary of Defense for equal opportunity, "You've got the segregation of neighborhoods and you take people out of that environment—Black schools and white schools—and put them together for 16 weeks. After that, if a majority thinks the system is still fair, then you've done pretty well."



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

ARMY AFFAIRS

Honorable Billy Q. McCray
Twenty-ninth District
Sedgwick County
1532 North Ash
Wichita, Kansas 67214

Dear Senator McCray:

On behalf of Secretary Richardson, I am replying to your letter of 19 February 1973 requesting information on media coverage of minority group returnees.

Sixteen black servicemen were on the lists provided to us in Paris last January and of those, four were returned in the first group.

During the first release, the networks provided live coverage of all the men as they arrived at Clark Air Base in the Philippines. In addition there was regional coverage at Travis Air Force Base in California, and at hospitals near the returnees' homes.

When the men complete their necessary medical treatment and debriefings and are ready to be released from the hospitals on convalescent leave, they will be given the opportunity of holding a press conference with interested media. Two black returnees have held such news conferences. Transcripts of their remarks are attached. After the men leave the hospitals, they will decide individually whether or not to grant further interviews.

Finally, I wish to assure you that the Department of Defense shares your interest in seeing that our minority servicemen receive the news coverage that their honorable and heroic service deserves.

Sincerely,

204A

6 MAR 1973

Mr. Johannes Laursen
Publisher
Merrick Life
1840 Merrick Avenue
Merrick, L.I., N.Y. 11566

Dear Mr. Laursen:

In reply to your letter of February 15th to Mr. Friedheim, I am pleased to furnish the following information.

I appreciate your concern for the Burnas family and deeply regret the previous misunderstandings with their Marine Corps contacts.

My staff has checked with the Marine Corps Casualty Branch to see that Mr. and Mrs. Burns have all available information about their son. I have been assured that this is the case and unfortunately there is just nothing more at this time. Should new information become available through debriefings of our recent returnees, the family will be immediately notified and kept fully informed.

You may be aware that a Joint Casualty Resolution Center has been established in Southeast Asia to aid in an accounting for our Servicemen still missing in action. Part of their responsibility will be to search for grave sites of deceased personnel. When found, the remains will of course be transferred to the United States for burial. Hopefully the burial site of Sergeant Burns can be located.

Again, thank you for your concern in this matter and I trust the information I have provided will be helpful.

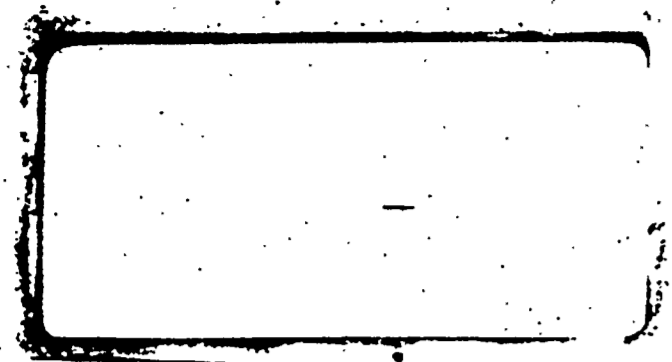
Sincerely,

(Signed) Maj Gen Daniel James Jr., USAF

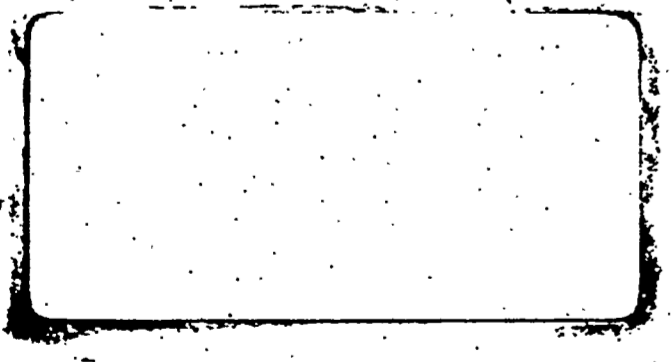
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COL Hall/cjr/6 Mar 73
DPP/ DTR

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1969-365-831
MAIL OR MESSAGE CONTROL RECORD
FORM 1 AUG 69 2445
REPLACES DA FORM 2445, 1 JUL 61, WHICH WILL BE USED.



SUBJECT NAME Deceased POW Sgt. Frederick J. Burns, USMC		SUSPENSE DATE 8 Mar 73	NUMBER TYPE
FROM Johannes Laursen, Publisher Merrick, Long Island N. Y.		DATE 15 Feb 73	FILE DESIGNATION
SUMMARY Ltr to Mr. Friedheim encloses newspaper reporting results of interview w/parents of Sgt. Burns showing bitterness & asking if there is additional information.			
TC TO Col. Hall	TO TO	TO TO	TO TO
DA DATE 28 Feb 73	DATE DATE	DATE DATE	DATE DATE
RE REPLIED OR INDORSED TO	FILED 15/ Gen James	OTHER ACTION	



MERRICK LIFE

The community newspaper

1840 MERRICK AVE., MERRICK, L.I., N.Y. 11566

FR 8-5320

February 15, 1973

Mr. Jerry W. Friedheim
Director of Public Information
U. S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C. 20330

Dear Mr. Friedheim:

Having had the pleasure of meeting you when you spoke to the New York State Society of Newspaper Editors at West Point almost four years ago, I would like to send you the enclosed interview with the parents of a prisoner of war who unfortunately died in captivity. None of the homecoming prisoners of war is from the Merricks, so we wanted to bring an interview with the parents of the one who died, the only one from here who was captured.

As it turned out, the parents were quite bitter about the way they were treated when contacting the Pentagon for information, and my purpose in writing you at this time is to ask you if it might be possible even at this date, to obtain additional information for them, whatever is available. As you will see, the parents had thoughts of having the remains of their son transferred to the U.S. for burial. I don't know whether that is possible.

I would appreciate hearing from you regarding any thoughts you may have on the matter.

Sincerely yours

Johannes Laursen
Johannes Laursen
Publisher

JL:fs
Enc.

1. JWFJ
2. Gen J.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
MESSAGE CENTER

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PMS SECRETARY DEFENSE PENTAGON WASHDC
DEAR SIR I KNOW THE HIGHER RANKING MEN WERE FLYING THE PLANES
BUT I DONT BELIEVE THEY WERE THE ONLY SOLDIERS CAPTURED IN
THE WAR. US LITTLE FOLKS HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT HAPPENED
TO OUR PEOPLE REPORTED MISSING OR CAPTURED IN INDO CHINA
THUS FAR I HAVE SEEN ONLY HIGH RANKING OFFICERS BEING RELEASED
IN THE POW EXCHANGE AND I WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FOOT
SOLDIERS THE MARINES AND ESPECIALLY THE BLACK AND MEXICAN-
AMERICAN GIS. THE ANNOUNCEMENT S HAVE BEEN SCARCE IF NOT NON-
EXISTENT, ABOUT THEIR PLIGHT.
I WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING HOW MANY BLACK GI S HAVE BEEN
REPORTED MISSING OR CAPTURED AND WHEN THEY WILL BE RELEASED.
THE SAME GOES TO FOR THE WHITE SOLDIER, THE ORDINARY FOOT SOLDIER.
I AM VERY DISTURBED OVER THIS AND HURT TO THINK WE HAVE HAD NO
REPORT ON THESE SO FAR INVISIBLE ME M PLEASE SEE WHAT YOU
CAN FIND OUT AND LET THE PEOPLE KNOW
CHARLES EVERS MAYOR FAYETTE MISSISSEPPPI
BT
#3730
ANNOTES
DGR

PAGE 1

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3844



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

2 MAR 1973

Honorable Charles Evers
Mayor of Fayette
Mississippi

Dear Mayor Evers:

On behalf of President Nixon and Secretary Richardson, I am replying to your telegrams of February 15, 1973.

Although I have recently discussed briefly with your secretary the substance of answers to your questions, I am pleased to provide here more detailed information concerning our enlisted servicemen who have been or are still in a captive status.

As you are no doubt aware, I have been deeply involved in all planning for the return of our men since my assignment to the Pentagon in April 1970. I am extremely pleased that the planning for the repatriation of American prisoners has been done with one thought in mind -- the welfare of the individual returnee and his family, regardless of rank, race or creed or branch of service. This is the paramount consideration in all Department of Defense activities associated with their return. I want to assure you that the Department of Defense recognizes each man as an individual and considers the last man to be released equally as important as the first man.

Perhaps a little background on all our men who are prisoners will help you understand what may seem to be an apparent lack of publicity concerning our missing and captured enlisted men in the Armed Services. On January 27, 1973 the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam gave our representatives in Paris a list of 562 names of American servicemen who they held captive. Of these 562 men, 68 are enlisted. Since January, 155 men have been returned to the United States. Of these, 12 are enlisted, leaving 56 enlisted still

to be returned. It should be noted that enlisted men comprise approximately 12 percent of our prisoners of war which to some degree accounts for the seemingly lack of publicity.

In keeping with military tradition, and the desires of the returning servicemen, the senior returnee on the medevac aircraft disembarked first at most stops. He was followed in order by those held prisoner the longest. Additionally, the prisoners themselves decided which men would make short statements for the media. Again this partially explains why the media focused on our more senior returnees.

Since your telegram of February 15th, four of the 12 enlisted returnees have held news conferences and will soon be enjoying convalescent leave. The remainder are in their processing schedule and will meet with the media when their processing is complete if they so desire.

Two of our black returnees have completed their processing and are now on convalescent leave at places of their choice. Staff Sergeant Bobby L. Johnson held his departure news conference on Feb. 23rd at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. In the Washington D.C. area, Major Norman A. McDaniel held his on Feb. 24th. Both conferences were attended by representatives of the national and local news media and received coverage throughout the United States.

I know you are concerned about the number of blacks on the list presented to us in Paris compared with those blacks previously listed by us as captured or missing. Sixteen blacks were listed as held captive on the Paris list. Of these, four have been returned. Additionally two blacks were listed as having died while in captivity. This leaves a total of 54 blacks unaccounted for. The fullest possible accounting for all our missing is of great concern to us. I am enclosing a memorandum from Dr. Roger E. Shields, Director of the Department of Defense PW/MIA Task Force, to members of Congress which expresses the Department of Defense concern and provides a description of the efforts being made to acquire an accounting for those men still missing.

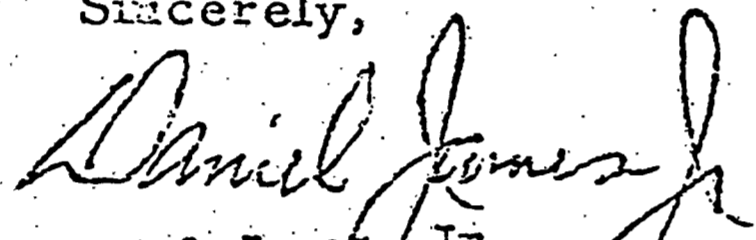
Finally I wish to assure you that the United States Government shares your interest in seeing that our minority and enlisted servicemen receive the news coverage that their honorable and heroic service

deserves. I have personally talked with many news media members who represent minority groups to help them provide coverage on our minority Americans. You may have seen the March 8th issue of Jet Magazine which has quite an extensive article entitled "What's Ahead for Returning Black Prisoners."

Additionally I am personally aware that Johnson Publications, with my help, covered the return of the first group at Clark Air Base in the Philippine Islands.

Thank you for your humanitarian concern for the members of our Armed Forces. Hopefully the information I have given will be helpful.

Sincerely,



Daniel James, Jr.
Major General, USAF
Deputy Assistant Secretary

Attachment

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(Signed) Maj Gen Daniel James Jr., USAF

Attachment

CC: OSD Files
OSD No. 3844

ASD(PA) Chris

back

Col. E. L. Hall/cjr/3 Mar 73
OASD(PA)/DPP/ATA

copy of this page-attached for
Special Assist Consideration E.A.

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Sincerely,

Colonel E. L. Hall, USAF

Attachment

CC: OSD Files
OSD No. 3844

Col. E. L. Hall/cjr/3 Mar 73
OASD(PA)/DPP/1 E DATA

BT SATSD Jan 2 1972

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Memo For _____

Total Blacks POW-MIA
before freeze - 72

POW's - 16 - 10 Army
 - 6 AF

Died - 2 - Army

Returned to date
11 - 3 AF
 - 8 Army

To be Returned -
5 - 3 AF
 - 2 Army