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ENVELOPE

CDSN = CFS530 MCN = 97046/06284 TOR = 970460318
RTTUZYUW RUEKJCS2296 0452121-UUUU--RUEALGX.
ZNR UUUUU

HEADER

R 142121Z FEB 97
FM JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEKMDT/USDP:ESC
RUEALGX/SAFE
R 130902Z FEB 97 ZYB
FM CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J2//
TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP:ISA/DPMO//
INFO RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASH DC//
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC//CA/OCS/ACS/EAP/VLC//
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J5//
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC//
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J2/J3/J30-M//
RUEKJCS/USCINCPAC LO WASHINGTON DC//
RUEHBT/USDAO BANGKOK TH//PW-MIA//
RUHVAAA/CDRUSACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//TAPC-PED-H//
BT

CONTROLS

UNCLAS //N03460//
SECTION 01 OF 02

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

MSGID/GENADMIN/CDR JTF-FA/J252//
SUBJ/ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM (OHP97-002) REPORT: MR. VO MINH TRIEC//
RMKS/1. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW: ON 29 JAN 97, A JOINT U.S./VNOSMP
RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION TEAM (RIT) INTERVIEWED MR. VO MINH TRIEC
AT THE NORFOLK HOTEL IN HO CHI MINH CITY. MR. TRIEC WAS THE COMBAT
ENGINEER COMMANDER, OPERATIONS OFFICER, AND LATER COMMANDING OFFICER
OF THE 1ST REGIMENT (RGT), PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM (PAVN) 9TH DIVI-
SION (DIV), DURING THE WAR. HE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON TWO CASES
INVOLVING UNACCOUNTED-FOR AMERICANS FROM THE BATTLE OF DONG XOAI IN
JUNE 1965 (UNRESOLVED CASES 0096 AND 0097). IN ADDITION, HE SAID
THE 1ST REGIMENT CAPTURED A U.S. MACHINE-GUNNER (RESOLVED CASE 1480)
SOUTHWEST OF BINH LONG TOWNSHIP, BINH PHUOC (FORMERLY SONG BE) PRO-
VINCE, IN 1969 AND SENT HIM TO THE CENTRAL OFFICE FOR SOUTH VIETNAM
(COSVN) REAR SERVICE AREA. MR. TRIEC PLEDGED TO WORK WITHIN THE PAVN
VETERANS ORGANIZATION TO CONTACT INDIVIDUALS WITH FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THESE AND OTHER UNRESOLVED CASES.
2. BACKGROUND: AN UNDATED VNOSMP UNILATERAL REPORT ON CASE 1819
STATED THAT MR. LE HONG TRIEC (LEE HOONGF TRIECS) (SIC), THE OWNER
OF A FUEL STATION ON HANOI HIGHWAY, COULD PROVIDE INFORMATION ON
CASE 1819. DURING THE UNILATERAL INVESTIGATION, WITNESS MR. TRUONG
VAN DAN (TRWONG VAWN DANF) SAID MR. TRIEC WAS A RECONNAISSANCE
SOLDIER WITH THE PAVN 272ND RGT. DURING THE 44TH JFA, SRCOL TRAN
BIEN (VNOSMP) LOCATED MR. TRIEC, WHOSE NAME IS ACTUALLY VO MINH

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IAW E.O. 12812, E.O. 12958,
50 USC 435 Note

Date: 3/10/98 Initials: HSO

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OASD DPMO	
Date Received	18 Feb 97
Watch Officer	R
Distro	Act / Info
Director	
Deputy Dir	
Chief of Staff	
Exec Asst	
Gen Counsel	
Pol/Plns	
Res/Analyst	
Jt Comm Spt	
Ref/DOC	
Ext Affairs	
Resource Mgmt	
RA-SA	
Tech-Sources File	

Curlee, R.L. (43) 0096

Hall, W.L. (4)

Owens, F.M. (4)

Saegert, D.R.

Holland, L.T.

Sexton, J.C. 1480

Luh, H.B. 1819

Schott, R.S.

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TRIEC, IN HO CHI MINH CITY. SRCOL BIEN INFORMED THE JOINT TEAMS
THAT ALTHOUGH MR. TRIEC WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE 272ND RGT AND DID
NOT HAVE INFORMATION ON CASE 1819, HE WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE OTHER
INFORMATION BASED ON HIS EXPERIENCE AS A 1ST RGT, PAVN 9TH DIV, CADRE
MEMBER.

3. DETAILS OF INTERVIEW:

A. PARTICIPANTS:

- (1) U.S. CONTINGENT:
 - (A) MR. KEITH G. FLANAGAN, DET 2 CASUALTY RESOLUTION SPECIALIST
 - (B) MSGT RONALD D. WARD, JTF-FA RIT NCOIC
- (2) VIETNAMESE CONTINGENT:
 - (A) SRCOL TRAN BIEN (TRAANF BIEENF), DEPUTY DIRECTOR, VNOSMP
 - (B) MR. TRAN MINH VAN (TRAANF MINH VAAN), MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR REPRESENTATIVE

B. PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW: THE JOINT TEAMS ARRANGED A MEETING
WITH MR. TRIEC TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON U.S. UNACCOUNTED-FOR CASES
IN THE 1ST RGT, PAVN 9TH DIV'S, FORMER AREAS OF OPERATION.

C. WITNESS INTERVIEW:

- (1) NAME: VO MINH TRIEC (VOX MINH TRIECS)
- (2) AGE: 66 YOA
- (3) CURRENT RESIDENCE: NGUYEN CHI PHUONG (NGUYEENX-CHIS PHWONG) STREET, DISTRICT 10, HO CHI MINH CITY
- (4) WARTIME RESIDENCE AND OCCUPATION: PAVN B2 FRONT (FORMER SOUTH VIETNAM) AREA OF OPERATIONS
- (5) CURRENT OCCUPATION: RETIRED; ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE PAVN VETERANS ORGANIZATION
- (6) WITNESS RELIABILITY: GOOD. AS A PAVN 1ST RGT LEADER-SHIP FIGURE AND PARTICIPANT IN AND PLANNER OF THE BATTLE AT DONG XOAI, MR. TRIEC HAD DIRECT KNOWLEDGE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING UNRESOLVED CASES 0096 AND 0097 AND OTHER INCIDENTS.
- (7) STATEMENT:

(A) IN JUNE 1965, AT THE TIME OF THE BATTLE AT DONG XOAI (DOONGF XOAI) (48P YT 080 755) IN PRESENT-DAY BINH PHUOC PROVINCE, MR. TRIEC WAS CONCURRENTLY THE COMBAT ENGINEER COMMANDER AND OPERATIONS OFFICER OF THE 1ST RGT, PAVN 9TH DIV. BY 1969, HE HAD RISEN TO THE POSITION OF COMMANDER, 1ST RGT.

(B) MR. TRIEC SAID THE PAVN'S OBJECTIVE AT THE BATTLE OF DONG XOAI, WHICH HE CALLED THE DONG XOAI CAMPAIGN (CHIEENS ZICHJ DOONGF XOAI), WAS TO ATTACK THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN) 2ND BATTALION (BN), 7TH RGT, 5TH DIV AT THE DONG XOAI SUB-SECTOR (CHI KHU) IN ORDER TO LURE AND STRIKE AT U.S. AND ARVN REINFORCEMENTS. TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE, THE 2ND RGT ATTACKED THE ARVN FORCES AT DONG XOAI WHILE PAVN 2ND AND 3RD REGIMENT ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY UNITS PREVENTED HELIBORNE REINFORCEMENTS FROM LANDING AT DONG XOAI. THIS FORCED THE U.S. AND ARVN TROOPS TO DIVERT TO THE THUAN LOI (THUAANJ LOWIJ) RUBBER PLANTATION AIRSTRIP (48P YT 060 817), THE ONLY REMAINING AIRSTRIP WITH CLOSE ACCESS TO DONG XOAI.

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MR. TRIEC'S 1ST RGT ENCIRCLED THE RUBBER PLANTATION TO AMBUSH THE U.S. AND ARVN REINFORCEMENTS WHEN THEY ARRIVED.

(C) IN PREPARATION FOR THE ANTICIPATED HELIBORNE LANDING AT THUAN LOI, MR. TRIEC DIRECTED HIS COMBAT ENGINEERS TO SET UP A TOTAL OF 12 DH-10 DIRECTIONAL MINES ON TWO SIDES OF THE AIRSTRIP IN AN "L" SHAPE. WHEN THE FIRST HELICOPTER CAME WITHIN RANGE, THE COMBAT ENGINEERS DETONATED THE MINES, DISABLING THE AIRCRAFT. IN THE ENSUING FIRE FIGHT, PAVN FORCES KILLED AT LEAST TWO U.S. ADVISORS WHO HAD BEEN ABOARD THE HELICOPTER. MR. TRIEC BRIEFLY INSPECTED THE TWO BODIES FOR WRIST WATCHES OR OTHER VALUABLE ITEMS, BUT HE SURMISED THAT THE COMBAT ENGINEERS CLOSEST TO THE AIRCRAFT WHEN IT WENT DOWN HAD ALREADY SCAVENGED THE BODIES. THE 1ST RGT THEN WITHDREW TO POSITIONS ENCIRCLING THE PLANTATION. MR. TRIEC'S UNIT DID NOT SEARCH THE INSIDE OF THE DOWNED HELICOPTER, SO HE DID NOT KNOW IF THERE WERE MORE DEAD OR WOUNDED AMERICANS INSIDE. HIS UNIT DID NOT BURY THE TWO AMERICANS AND HE DID NOT KNOW THE FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE REMAINS.

(D) THE NEXT MORNING, TROOPS FROM THE ARVN 7TH PARATROOPER BN LANDED IN HELICOPTERS AT THE THUAN LOI RUBBER PLANTATION AIRSTRIP. THE 1ST RGT TROOPS, STILL POSITIONED AROUND THE PLANTATION, ATTACKED THE ARVN FORCE, CAUSING HEAVY CASUALTIES, THEN WITHDREW AND LEFT THE AREA.

(E) MR. TRIEC SAID THAT SINCE U.S. AND ARVN FORCES REMAINED AT THUAN LOI AFTER THE PAVN ATTACK ON THE ARVN 7TH BN, THEY (THE U.S./ARVN) WOULD HAVE CLEARED THE BATTLEFIELD AND POSSIBLY BURIED THE AMERICANS. HE SUGGESTED THAT IF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE U.S. SIDE DID NOT KNOW WHERE THE UNACCOUNTED-FOR U.S. INDIVIDUALS WERE BURIED, THE COMMANDER OF THE ARVN 7TH BN, OR WHATEVER FORCE CLEARED THE BATTLEFIELD, MIGHT KNOW.

(F) MR. TRIEC SAID THAT DURING THE BATTLE OF DONG XOAI, THE PAVN 3RD RGT SHOT-DOWN A U.S. JET. THE AIRCRAFT WAS OPERATING OVER THE 3RD RGT'S AREA AND A 1ST RGT OBSERVER ON A WATER TOWER AT

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/

SUBJ/ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM (OHP97-002) REPORT: MR. VO MINH TRIEC// THUAN LOI AIR STRIP DETECTED THE PLANE AND REPORTED IT TO THE 3RD RGT. ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNNERS FROM THE 3RD RGT SHOT DOWN THE U.S. JET, BUT MR. TRIEC DID NOT SEE THE PLANE GO DOWN OR SEE A PARACHUTE FROM THE PLANE. HE COULD NOT PROVIDE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS SHOOT-DOWN INCIDENT.

(G) CONCERNING OTHER INCIDENTS IN WHICH MR. TRIEC'S 1ST RGT CAME IN CONTACT WITH AMERICANS, HE SAID HIS UNIT OFTEN DID BATTLE WITH AMERICAN UNITS; HOWEVER, HE KNEW OF ONLY ONE OTHER INSTANCE INVOLVING A POSSIBLY UNACCOUNTED-FOR AMERICAN. IN APPROXIMATELY JUNE 1969, THE 1ST RGT, WHICH MR. TRIEC NOW COMMANDED, CLASHED WITH A U.S. ARMORED FORCE SOUTHWEST OF BINH LONG (BINH LONG) TOWNSHIP (AKA AN LOC (AN LOOCJ), AKA HON QUAN (HONNS QUANR) (48P XT 755 895) AT THE XA CAT RUBBER PLANTATION OFFICE (SOWR TW XA CATS) (IN THE VICINITY OF 48P XT 720 825). DURING THIS BATTLE, MR. TRIEC'S UNIT CAPTURED AN 18 YOA CAUCASIAN AMERICAN M-113 ARMORED VEHICLE MACHINE-GUNNER. THE PRISONER WAS NOT WOUNDED, BUT WAS STUNNED BY THE ANTI-TANK GRENADE

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THE PAVN USED TO DISABLE HIS VEHICLE. MR. TRIEC'S UNIT BRIEFLY QUESTIONED THE PRISONER AND ASKED HIM WHY HE CONTINUED TO FIGHT THE "SOUTHERN LIBERATION ARMY." THE AMERICAN REPLIED THAT HE FOUGHT BECAUSE HE WAS A SOLDIER. THE 1ST RGT TURNED THE U.S. PRISONER OVER TO CENTRAL OFFICE OF VIETNAM (COSVN) REAR AREA FORCES. MR. TRIEC DID NOT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS AMERICAN'S FINAL DISPOSITION.

(H) MR. TRIEC SAID THE PAVN 9TH DIV PARTICIPATED IN THE BATTLE OF AN LOC IN 1972, BUT BY THAT TIME HE HAD TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER UNIT AND DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN WHAT HE CALLED THE NGUYEN HUE CAMPAIGN (CHIEENS DICHJ NGUYENX HUEJ; THE PAVN DESIGNATOR FOR WHAT U.S. HISTORIANS REFER TO AS THE 1972 EASTER OFFENSIVE). MR. TRIEC SAID THE 9TH DIV COMMANDER AT THE TIME OF THE NGUYEN HUE CAMPAIGN WAS NGUYEN THOI BUNG (NGUYENX THOWIS-BWNG). (NOTE: MG-NGUYEN THOI BUNG IS THE RECENTLY RETIRED SRV DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER.)

(I) MR. TRIEC OFFERED TO USE HIS CONTACTS IN THE PAVN VETERAN'S ASSOCIATION TO LOCATE OTHER FORMER 9TH DIV MEMBERS WITH KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. UNACCOUNTED-FOR PERSONNEL. WE AGREED THAT IF HE DISCOVERED ANY PERTINENT NEW INFORMATION, HE SHOULD CONTACT THE VNOSMP.

4. MATERIAL EVIDENCE: NONE

5. COMMENTS:

A. CORRELATIONS:

(1) MR. TRIEC'S STATEMENTS IN PARA 3C(7)(B)-(E) ABOVE CORRELATE WITH UNRESOLVED CASE 0096 BASED ON MONTH, YEAR, LOCATION, AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS.

(2) MR. TRIEC'S STATEMENTS IN PARA 3C(7)(F) ABOVE CORRELATE WITH UNRESOLVED CASE 0097 BASED ON MONTH, YEAR, LOCATION, AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS.

(3) MR. TRIEC'S STATEMENTS IN PARA 3C(7)(G) ABOVE CORRELATE TO RESOLVED CASE 1480 BASED ON YEAR, LOCATION, AND CAPTURED INDIVIDUAL'S SPECIALTY (MACHINE-GUNNER).

B. POTENTIAL LEADS: NONE

C. INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS: NONE

D. DETACHMENT COMMANDER'S COMMENTS: NONE//

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