

M E M O R A N D U M

To: FAZ

From: Sedgwick D. Tourison, Jr.

Date: August 1, 1992

Subject: Individuals Reported Died in Captivity and not
listed on current DoD/Vessey/SSC priority lists.

My review of POW/MIA case files disclosed DIA/JTFFA message traffic referring to individuals DoD now has information survived into captivity. All are individuals in a missing category after Homecoming and all were later declared dead while missing. A list of the 13 case files involving these 19 individuals declared dead without the recovery of remains is attached (Tab A.) The remains of two of these individuals were repatriated in 1990 and identified. I do not recommend that any of the 17 other individuals be placed in a category of suspected live POWs as of today although one case, Lance Corporal Carlos Ashloch, must be of priority interest.

In my judgment, these cases get to the very heart of the complexity and nature of the war itself; that the Vietnam war, like many other conflicts, was not a tidy arrangement where the precise circumstances of death can always be established. These cases provide official Vietnamese acknowledgement for the first time that some American servicemen were taken captive and then died. Due to the nature of these situations, it may never be possible to establish precisely how death occurred although there is evidence that death occurred in captivity and during the war. The majority are South Vietnam cases which occurred in an area and at a time that survivors would have been moved to one of several well camps in the western portion of Central Vietnam. None were seen there and none were seen in North Vietnam, supporting the hypothesis that they did not survive for long in captivity.

I do not recommend that any of these be added as a compelling live POW case as of today and all are cases of active investigation in Vietnam; however, it appears they are not priority cases. The emergence of such cases raises questions regarding the JTF's flexibility in aggressively dealing with such cases in light of Washington level priorities for the Vessey/ISA cases.

A categorization of these cases is attached at Tab B and a synopsis of each case is attached at Tab C. I recommend the Defense Department be requested to explain how it intends to deal with such cases. I have a draft letter attached at Tab D.

APPENDIX 3

List of 19 new POW case.

<u>Case Number</u>	<u>Name</u>
0031	Richard L. Greer/Fred T. Schreckengost (Remains Returned)
0108	Richard C. Bram/John F. Dingwall
0124	Fredric M. Mellor
0158	Charles J. Scharf/Martin J. Massucci
0235	James T. Egan
0258	Donald S. Newton
0358	Gregory J. Harris
0641	John F. O'Grady
0646	Thomas A. Mangino, Paul A. Hasenbeck David M. Winters/Daniel R. Nidds
0647	Roger D. Hamilton
0678	Carlos Ashlock
0728	Robert L. Platt, Jr.
1402	John T. McDonnell

TAB A

Breakdown of the cases of 19 individuals not currently listed as having died in captivity.

-4 individuals (MIA-KIA/BNR) killed in captivity. Two of their remains have been recovered and identified (Greer/Schreckengost) and two have not (Egan/Newton).

-6 individuals (MIA-KIA/BNR) who may have been captured alive and later killed. The period of their captivity appears to have been brief. (Bram/Dingwall/Mangino/Hasenbeck/Winters/Nidds)

-4 individuals (MIA-KIA/BNR) died in captivity of wounds suffered in combat. (Platt/Mellor/McDonnell/O'Grady)

-1 individual (MIA-KIA/BNR) survived into captivity, was wounded, and precise fate unclear. (Ashlock)

-1 case involving 2 airmen from the same loss incident (MIA-KIA/BNR), one parachute was reportedly seen by a wingman, witnesses in Vietnam have testified that a shootdown correlating to this case involved two bodies seen at the crash site. (Scharf/Massucci)

-2 individuals (MIA-MIA/BNR), wartime reporting possibly captured, Vietnamese witnesses testimony appears to indicate killed in combat. (Hamilton/Harris).

//Letter to DoD/ISA (Al Ptak);Kerry/Smith signature//

It has come to our attention that over the last several years, the Joint Casualty Resolution Center and/or Joint Task Force Full Accounting (JTFFA) have received information from witnesses in Vietnam that some American servicemen declared dead while in a missing status actually survived into captivity. In some cases this information has come from Vietnamese officials who are acknowledging for the first time that some Americans not previously confirmed captured alive did in fact survive into captivity but later died. This appears to represent a significant breakthrough and this Committee needs to learn more about such cases, a preliminary list of which is attached.

Our review of the individual incidents of loss on the attached list has raised the following questions to which we would appreciate a response:

-What is the Defense Department's policy regarding casualty reclassification of individuals declared dead while missing when information is received from witnesses that they died while captured?

-What is the Defense Department's policy on classification of persons declared missing non-hostile and later determined to have been captured alive by hostile forces?

-If such casualty updates are considered, what policy guidelines has the Department establish to guide the individual military services in reclassification from died while missing to died while capture?

-How many individuals not currently categorized officially as having died in captivity have been the subject of recent reporting by witness in Southeast Asia that they in fact survived into captivity and died in captivity? Do those on the attached list fall into this category and how many others are there?

-How many of those whom witnesses in Vietnam have stated survived into captivity and then died have resulted in a casualty change by their individual services?

-Provide a synopsis of each case to include a description of their incident of loss, their wartime casualty categorization, what was known about their fate as of Operation Homecoming compared, and what has been learned as of today.

-What specific priority has the Department and General Vessey assigned to such cases in line with the Department's stated policy of focusing on the possibility of live POWs?

-How have investigations of such cases been arranged within the existing program of field investigations, particular when compared to investigations of individuals previously confirmed to have died in captivity?

We would appreciate a response by August 15, 1992. Within the spirit and intent of the new Executive Order regarding declassification, we would appreciate your response be unclassified.

TAB D