

POW's
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COUNTRY : SOUTH VIETNAM (SVN)

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SUBJECT : NVA Policy Regarding Allied POW's

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S Y M M A R Y

Allied prisoners of war (POW's) were to be given good treatment after surrendering. They were to be considered friends and given adequate food, even if there was not enough for the NVA troops. A POW escapee was to be shot if he did not heed warnings of the soldiers. Troops and cadres who mistreated prisoners were severely disciplined with criticism, demotion or imprisonment. POW's were administered medical care on the battlefield and were then carried or led by the battalion assistant political section to a secret location from which they were further evacuated to another area by regiment officials.

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None

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Approved for Release

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1. Source learned the NVA policy concerning POW's in a refresher course conducted by the battalion political officer Senior Lieutenant NGUYEN TA in QUANG NAM Province, SVN, in late December 1966. Captured Allied prisoners were to be given good treatment and considered as equals. Even if there was not adequate food for the NVA soldiers the prisoners were to be given sufficient portions. POW's were not to be insulted or beaten. Once the enemy surrendered, he was to be treated as a friend unless he attempted to escape, at which time several warnings were to be shouted. If the escapee did not stop, he was to be shot.
2. If a soldier did not follow the policy dictated for POW care, he was strongly disciplined. Any soldier who beat a prisoner was warned and criticized first at company level and thereafter (depending on the severity of the offense) at the following levels: battalion, regiment and division. Repeaters were punished by jail sentences (details unknown). If a cadre beat a POW, he was demoted, as was a soldier who shot a prisoner. The penalty for cadres shooting of POW's was unknown. These disciplinary measures were more strict than during the struggle against the French.
3. A wounded POW was evacuated by hammock as was a wounded VC soldier. Other prisoners were bound, guarded and then led from the battlefield. At the site of the battle, medics could administer novacaine, give injections to arrest bleeding and dress minor wounds. This treatment was the responsibility of the primary medical section. The assistant political section of the battalion, under direction of the battalion assistant political officer, was charged with the duty of evacuating the wounded Allied POW's to the regiment. All prisoners were evacuated to a secret location under auspices of the battalion and thereafter further evacuated to another secret area under the direction of the regiment.

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