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REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

COUNTRY NORTH VIETNAM/SOUTH VIETNAM

DATE DISTR. 17 SEPTEMBER 1971

DOI FEBRUARY - APRIL 1968

SUBJECT ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR CAPTURED IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE BY ELEMENTS OF NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY DIVISION 304B

ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON (12 AUGUST 1971) [REDACTED]

SOURCE

[REDACTED]

(b) (1)
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APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: AUG 2006

SUMMARY: ELEMENTS OF REGIMENT 24B, NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) DIVISION 304B, CAPTURED 150 ARMY OF REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN) AND

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AT LEAST TWO AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR (POWS) DURING A 27 FEBRUARY 1968 ATTACK ON THE LANG VEI BASE IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE. THE POWS, ALONG WITH TWO OTHER AMERICAN POWS CAPTURED DURING A 27 FEBRUARY 1968 ATTACK ON HUE CITY AND THE PHU BAI AIRBASE, WERE HELD TEMPORARILY AT LAO BAO PRISON. IN MARCH 1968, THE ARVN POWS WERE MOVED TO A PRISON IN LAOS AND THE AMERICAN POWS WERE TAKEN TO NORTH VIETNAM. THE 5TH BATTALION, REGIMENT 24B, CAPTURED TWO OTHER AMERICAN POWS DURING A 24 APRIL 1968 ATTACK ON COLUA HILL. IN LATE APRIL 1968, AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT COMPANY OF REGIMENT 24B SHOT DOWN AN F4-H PHANTOM JET AND CAPTURED THE PILOT. OTHER ELEMENTS OF DIVISION 304B CAPTURED TEN OTHER AMERICAN POWS BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND APRIL 1968. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A 27 FEBRUARY 1968 ATTACK ON THE U.S./SOUTH VIETNAMESE LANG VEI BASE ON HIGHWAY 9 IN HUONG HOA DISTRICT, QUANG TRI PROVINCE, SOUTH VIETNAM, REGIMENT 24B OF NVA DIVISION 304B CAPTURED 150 ARVN AND AT LEAST TWO AMERICAN POWS. THE ARVN POWS WERE MEMBERS OF RECONNAISSANCE BATTALIONS STATIONED AT LANG VEI BASE AND INCLUDED PERSONNEL WITH RANK AS HIGH AS FIRST LIEUTENANT.

2. ACCORDING TO LIEUTENANT (FNU) M I N H, CHIEF OF THE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP OF REGIMENT 24B, WHO HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO CONDUCT THE POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION OF THE AMERICAN AND ARVN POWS DETAINED AT LAO BAO PRISON, THE TWO AMERICAN POWS CAPTURED BY REGIMENT 24B AT THE LANG VEI BASE WERE BROUGHT TO LAO BAO PRISON ON THE EVENING OF 28 FEBRUARY TO AWAIT TRANSPORTATION TO NORTH VIETNAM. [REDACTED] COMMENT:

[REDACTED] OBTAINED THIS INFORMATION IN [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] NORTH VIETNAM, WHEN DIVISION 304B WAS RETURNING TO ITS BASE IN NGHE AN PROVINCE, NORTH VIETNAM.) ACCORDING TO LIEUTENANT (FNU) B A Y, ASSISTANT COMMANDER OF A COMPANY OF 304B DIVISION, WHICH WAS SUBORDINATE TO THE VIET CONG HUE FRONT DURING THE TET GENERAL OFFENSIVE IN FEBRUARY 1968, HE ESCORTED TWO OTHER AMERICAN POWS, BOTH COLONELS, TO LAO BAO PRISON. BOTH HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY ELEMENTS OF THE VIET CONG HUE FRONT DURING THE 27 FEBRUARY ATTACK ON HUE CITY AND THE PHU BAI AIRBASE. ONE WAS A

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U.S. AIR FORCE COLONEL WHO WAS CAPTURED AT THE PHU BAI AIRBASE.

[REDACTED] COMMENT: ACCORDING TO JOINT PERSONNEL RECOVERY CENTER (JPRC) RECORDS, NO ONE WITH FIELD GRADE RANK IS MISSING IN ACTION OR HAS BEEN CAPTURED IN HUE OR PHU BAI. THERE ARE SOME CIVILIAN PERSONNEL WITH AN EQUIVALENT DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GRADE, BUT THE LIMITED INFORMATION GIVEN DOES NOT PERMIT ANY CORRELATION.)

3. ON 28 FEBRUARY 1968, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TOOK CHARGE OF AN

AMERICAN POW WHO HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY THE 5TH BATTALION, REGIMENT 24B, DURING THE ATTACK ON LANG VEI BASE. [REDACTED] COMMENT: EACH REGIMENT OF DIVISION 304B HAD AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE INTERPRETER.) [REDACTED]

ESCORTED THE POW FROM THE BATTALION'S TEMPORARY COMMAND POST, WHICH WAS ONE KILOMETER FROM THE LANG VEI BASE, TO THE DIVISION 304B BASE, WHICH WAS NORTH OF HIGHWAY 9. ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] THE AMERICAN POW WAS A MASTER SERGEANT WHO HAD BEEN IN CHARGE OF CHEMICAL WARFARE (CHU NHIEM HOA HOC) AT LANG VEI BASE. HE WAS FROM CALIFORNIA, MARRIED AND HAD ONE CHILD. HE HAD A FAIR COMPLEXION, BLUE EYES, BROWN HAIR AND BIG EARS. HE WAS ABOUT 27 YEARS OLD, 1.75 METERS TALL AND WEIGHED ABOUT 65 KILOGRAMS. FOUR FINGERS ON HIS RIGHT HAND HAD BEEN BURNED BY A B.40 ROCKET. [REDACTED] COMMENT: JPRC RECORDS SHOW THAT THERE ARE THREE SERGEANTS FIRST CLASS WHO MATCH SUBJECT'S DESCRIPTION, ONLY ONE OF WHOM IS FROM CALIFORNIA -- HARVEY G. BRANDE, A RADIO OPERATOR. HOWEVER, BRANDE WAS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED IN THE CHEST. THE OTHERS -- LINDEWALD, 5'9", 170 POUNDS, BROWN HAIR AND BLUE EYES, ALSO WOUNDED IN THE CHEST, IS SINGLE AND FROM INDIANA; AND HOLT, 5'9", 150 POUNDS, MARRIED AND FROM ARKANSAS, HAD MINOR INJURIES. THERE WAS NO CHEMICAL SPECIALIST ASSIGNED TO LANG VEI.)

WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT THE DIVISION BASE, THE LEADER OF THE GUARD PLATOON AT THE DIVISION BASE TOLD THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ESCORT THAT THE CHIEF OF DIVISION 304B'S MILITARY STAFF WAS INTERROGATING ANOTHER AMERICAN POW. THE PLATOON LEADER SAID THE SECOND AMERICAN POW, A LIEUTENANT COLONEL, HAD BEEN THE CHIEF AMERICAN ADVISOR AT THE LANG

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VI BASE AND HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY THE 6TH BATTALION OF REGIMENT 24B DURING THE 27 FEBRUARY ATTACK. ([REDACTED] COMMENT: THERE ARE NO OFFICERS MISSING IN ACTION FROM LANG VEI.)

4. ACCORDING TO SENIOR LIEUTENANT PHAM GONG HOAN, COMMANDER OF THE 25TH COMPANY, REGIMENT 24B, THE 5TH BATTALION CAPTURED TWO MEMBERS OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS TROPICAL LIGHTNING UNIT (TIA CHOP NHIEP DOI) DURING A 24 APRIL 1968 ATTACK ON COLUA HILL, ABOUT FIVE KILOMETERS SOUTHWEST OF LANG VEI BASE. HOAN SAID THAT THE TWO AMERICAN POWS WERE IMMEDIATELY TURNED OVER TO ELEMENTS OF THE VIET CONG B-5 FRONT. ([REDACTED] COMMENT: THIS "TROPICAL LIGHTNING UNIT" IS UNKNOWN TO THE JPRC. THE ONLY UNIT WHICH USES THAT DESIGNATION IS THE U.S. ARMY 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION, WHICH WAS OPERATING IN MILITARY REGION (MR) 3 AT THAT TIME.)

5. IN LATE APRIL 1968, AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT COMPANY OF REGIMENT 24B, DIVISION 304B, SHOT DOWN AN F4-H PHANTOM JET OVER THE SA LIEN FOREST AREA IN HUONG HOA DISTRICT, QUANG TRI PROVINCE, SOUTH VIETNAM. ACCORDING TO A MEMBER OF THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT COMPANY, THE PILOT PARACHUTED FROM THE PLANE AND MEMBERS OF THE 6TH SQUAD OF THE COMPANY LATER CONFISCATED HIS RED PARACHUTE. THE PILOT WAS NOT WOUNDED. THE FOLLOWING DAY, REGIMENT 24B TURNED THE PILOT OVER TO ELEMENTS OF THE VIET CONG B-5 FRONT. ([REDACTED] COMMENT: [REDACTED] DID NOT SEE THE AIRCRAFT SHOT DOWN OR THE PILOT.) [REDACTED] COMMENT: JPRC RECORDS DO NOT SHOW ANY F4-H MODELS DOWN IN UPPER MR 1 DURING MARCH, APRIL OR MAY 1968. THEY DO LIST TWO F-111'S AND TWO F4-D'S, ONE OF WHICH WENT DOWN IN SUPPORT OF KHE SANH AND THE OTHER THREE IN A SHAU VALLEY.)

6. ELEMENTS OF DIVISION 304B CAPTURED TWO OTHER AMERICAN POWS BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND APRIL 1968. THEY WERE CAPTURED WHEN THE 65TH AND 99TH REGIMENTS OF DIVISION 304B ATTACKED THE U.S. ARMY TA COM BASE IN HUONG HOA DISTRICT, A U.S. AIR CAVALRY UNIT IN THE SOUTHERN KHE SANH AREA, AND A U.S. AIR CAVALRY UNIT AT UT THUONG HILL. ([REDACTED] COMMENT: [REDACTED] DID NOT KNOW HOW MANY POWS WERE CAPTURED DURING EACH BATTLE, NOR COULD HE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THESE POWS.)

7. LAO DAO PRISON, WHICH WAS BUILT BY THE FRENCH, IS LOCATED

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THREE KILOMETERS SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 9. ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE 25TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY OF REGIMENT 24B SAID THAT DIVISION 304B USED LAO BAO PRISON ONLY TEMPORARILY. IN MARCH 1968, THE ARVN POWS THERE WERE TURNED OVER TO ELEMENTS OF THE VIET CONG B-5 FRONT AND WERE MOVED TO A PRISON AT AN UNSPECIFIED LOCATION IN TCHEPONE DISTRICT, SAVANNAH-KHET PROVINCE, LAOS. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF VIET CONG B-5 FRONT INCLUDES QUANG TRI AND THUA THIEN PROVINCES, SOUTH VIETNAM.) ACCORDING TO A HIGH-RANKING CADRE OF DIVISION 304B'S POLITICAL STAFF, THE AMERICAN POWS DETAINED AT LAO BAO PRISON WERE ALSO MOVED IN EARLY MARCH 1968 WHEN A GROUP OF CADRES FROM HANOI TRANSPORTED THEM TO NORTH VIETNAM.

8. [REDACTED] COMMENT: ADDITIONAL BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON [REDACTED]

HE WAS BORN ON [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BETWEEN DECEMBER 1967 AND FEBRUARY 1969, REGIMENT 24B TWICE INFILTRATED QUANG TRI PROVINCE, SOUTH VIETNAM, FOR COMBAT OPERATIONS. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BETWEEN FEBRUARY 1969 AND FEBRUARY 1971, REGIMENT 24B OPERATED IN QUANG BINH PROVINCE, NORTH VIETNAM, INFILTRATING QUANG TRI PROVINCE AGAIN FOR THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN OF 1969. ON 2 FEBRUARY 1971, REGIMENT 24B CROSSED INTO SOUTHERN LAOS TO JOIN THE LAM SON 719 BATTLE. [REDACTED]

9. [REDACTED] DISSEM: STATE, USMACV, USAID, CORDS, DIR/JUSPAO (MR. LINCOLN ONLY), 7TH AIR FORCE, USARV, NAVFORV, 525TH MI GP, 1021 FAS, OSI, CINCPAC, PACFLT, PACAF, ARPAC (ALSO SENT [REDACTED]).

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