

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP

TO:		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
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	4 D/ICS				
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	7 DDO		X		
	8 DDS&T				
	9 Chm/NIC				
	10 GC				
	11 IG				
	12 Compt				
	13 D/OLL				
	14 D/PAO	X			
	15 VC/NIC				
	16 C/EA/DO		X		
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SUSPENSE _____
Date

Remarks
TO #14: For your response as appropriate.

STAT

Executive Secretary
24 OCT 85
Date

3637 (10-81)

Executive Registry
85- 4120

October 14, 1985
Syracuse, New York

Hon. William J. Casey
Director -
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Casey,

I am writing to you in regard to the issue of whether or not there are still American servicemen (POW's) being held in Southeast Asia against their will. Even ignoring Hollywood's hype on the issue, there appears to be much credible information/intelligence to support the position that Vietnam is still holding American servicemen in captivity. I have enclosed one such article for your review and comment.

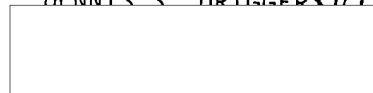
As a Vietnam era veteran, and a current active duty officer, this issue is very close to me -- both personally and professionally. It is an issue of such significant merit, that I have decided to prepare a research paper on the subject in conjunction with my doctoral studies at Syracuse University.

Specifically, I would appreciate your opinion (personal and/or professional) on whether or not there are still American servicemen being held in Southeast Asia against their will. If you believe there are, what should the United States do to gain their release? Please be specific. Your views may be included in my paper unless you request otherwise.

I will thank you in advance for your time and efforts on my behalf and that of American servicemen everywhere.

Sincerely,

Dennis S. Driggers
DENNIS S. DRIGGERS



STAT



R/100

2 Officers Claim Superiors Impeded Reports of POWs

By NEIL ROLAND
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Two Special Forces officers who in 1984 gathered intelligence on possible prisoners of war in Southeast Asia have charged that their superiors quashed reports that more than 100 Americans were being held as POWs as recently as last year.

In separate affidavits, one officer accused an Army major general, while the other cited unnamed superiors and Defense Intelligence Agency operatives.

Maj. Mark A. Smith, who commanded Special Forces Detachment-Korea from 1981-84 and retired February 1, alleged in a court affidavit that an Army major general advised him in Seoul during April 1984 to "shred" a briefing booklet containing intelligence reports of numerous POW sightings in Indochina.

While the affidavit did not name the officer who allegedly urged the booklet's destruction, Smith, in recent interviews, has identified him as Maj. Gen. Kenneth C. Leuer, who at the time was Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations of the United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command and Eighth U.S. Army in Korea.

Smith also accused Leuer of scuttling the delivery of three POWs from Laos before the mission could be completed in May 1984. Shortly after Smith reported that the prisoners were available for pick-up, Leuer barred Smith's unit from traveling to Southeast Asia, Smith said in his September affidavit.

Leuer, now commanding general of the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Polk, La., declined to comment on the allegations while a lawsuit is pending.

A suit was filed September 4 in U.S. District Court in Fayetteville, N.C., by Smith, a former POW in Cambodia who served for 22 years in the Army, and SFC Melvin C. McIntire, who served with Smith's unit in Korea and now is with B Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Smith's supervisor in Korea, Lt. Col. Robert L. Howard, accused two military officers in an affidavit of a "blatant security violation" in revealing publicly in Thailand in January 1984 that a Thai general had been relaying POW information to the U.S.

Howard, who then was chief of the Special Forces Combat Support Coordination Team in Seoul, alleged in his affidavit that these officers — Col. Stephen I. Alpern, the U.S. military attache for Thailand, and Air Force Lt. Col. Paul D. Mather, who works for the triservice Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Hawaii but is attached to the American Embassy in Thailand — sought to "undermine the successful intelligence gathering activity of Special Forces Detachment-Korea."

Mather and Alpern could not be reached immediately for comment.

In addition, Howard, who reportedly worked directly with Defense Intelligence Agency field operatives, accused the DIA of "an ongoing effort... to ignore" POW reports. He added in the affidavit that he was "shocked" when his superiors in Korea showed "no interest" in his reports about POWs in early 1984. Howard, who now commands the VII Corps Special Troops Battalion in Stuttgart, Germany, did not identify his superiors.

Howard was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism in Vietnam on Dec. 30, 1968, while on a mission intended to rescue a soldier who was missing in action in enemy-held territory.

The Department of the Army and the Defense Department, citing the pending suit, declined comment.

The U.S. government's position is that it has "been unable to prove" that any American POWs are being held in Southeast Asia, said DoD spokesman Maj. Keith Schneider. However, he said, the government has not ruled out the possibility that there are POWs being held and routinely investigates first-hand reports of sightings, most of which have come from Indochinese refugees.

The U.S. has not been able to resolve 111 of the 791 eyewitness reports of POWs that it has received since 1975, Schneider said. The DIA and the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Hawaii (for which Mather works) are now investigating these reports.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Eugene Tighe, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency from 1977-81 and now retired, stated in May his personal view that 50-60 American POWs were being held in Southeast Asia. Lt. Gen. James A.

Williams, the current DIA director, testified before Congress in 1984 that five people who claimed to have seen American POWs in Indochina had passed polygraph tests. Howard, Smith, and McIntire indicated that they relied for their information about POWs on numerous Indochinese sources, some of whom were senior officials in the Thai government.

Howard cited in his affidavit "senior Thai military officials" as the sources of his information.

McIntire said in his affidavit that he had about 10 "credible and reliable" sources, including "the highest level of a foreign military power." McIntire said his sources had field agents of their own reporting the locations of the "approximately 200 living Americans" in Laos. He added that he maintained contact with these sources from February 1982 to August 1984.

Smith mentioned about 50 local Indochinese as his sources, including Thai military agents, Laos resistance fighters, the Pathet Lao, the free Vietnamese, and gun, gold, and drug smugglers. He said he visited Thailand six to nine times over a one-and-a-half year period to collect information from these sources, most of whom did not know each other, cross-checking their reports.

Smith said in a September 16 interview that he learned that one POW had died in the summer of 1984 and some were "near death." He added that the POWs either were "under restraint" in prisons or were "just living there — where do they run to if they were to run away?"

According to Smith's affidavit, Leuer blocked all attempts to forward information contained in Smith's April 1984 report, "Possible American/Allied POWs in Southeast Asia." After Leuer read the cover letters with the report, which Smith hand delivered, he "turned white, handed the briefing back to me and said, 'this is too hot for me to handle, big guy.'... I was told that if I was smart, what I would do was to put the briefing through a shredder and forget the entire issue. I demanded authorization to go to Washington, D.C., and see another general in the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations... I was given a direct order not to have any more contact with that officer."

The suit, filed on behalf of the nearly 2,500 Americans estimated to be missing or unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, names as defendants President Reagan, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of State George Shultz, and DIA's Williams. They and their predecessors are accused of embarking since 1973 on "a continuing official or unofficial policy... intended to discredit or disprove the existence of living Americans in Southeast Asia for reasons presently unknown." Reagan is required by federal law to demand the release of the POWs thought to be held in Southeast Asia, the suit claims.

Jay Finegan contributed to this report.

The Army Times
30 September 1985
p. 8