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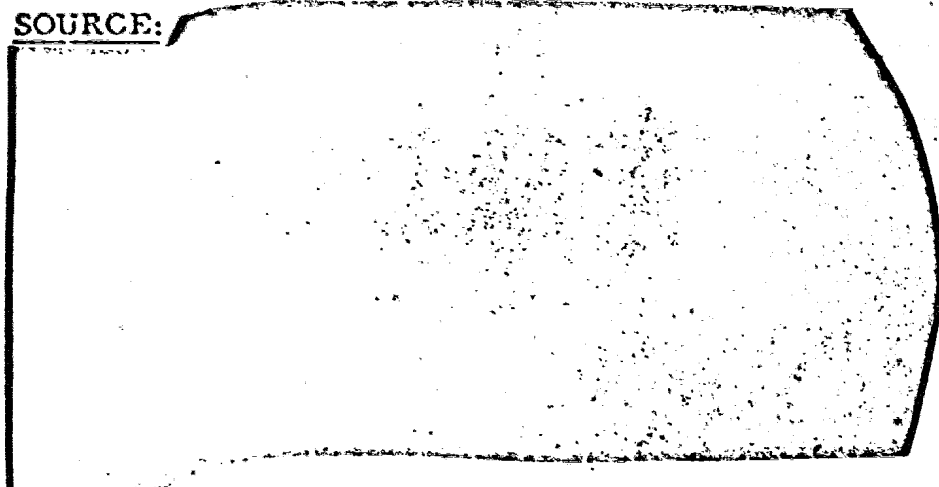
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12 December 1972

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Observation of the Killing of One and Capture of Another U. S. Air Force Officer in North Vietnam in 1968

SOURCE:



1. At about 1600 hours one afternoon in early February 1968, [REDACTED] saw four F105's flying over Ba Don Town, Quang Trach District, Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam (NVN), coming from the direction of the South China Sea. The jets flew over the town in a "Y" formation and the lead jet bombed the Ba Don Bridge, Ba Don Town. On its first pass, the lead jet was hit by anti-aircraft fire from emplacements around the town and broke into three pieces in mid-air. [REDACTED] saw two pilots bail out. One pilot had a blue parachute and the other, an orange parachute.

Approved for Release
Date 1 MAY 1978

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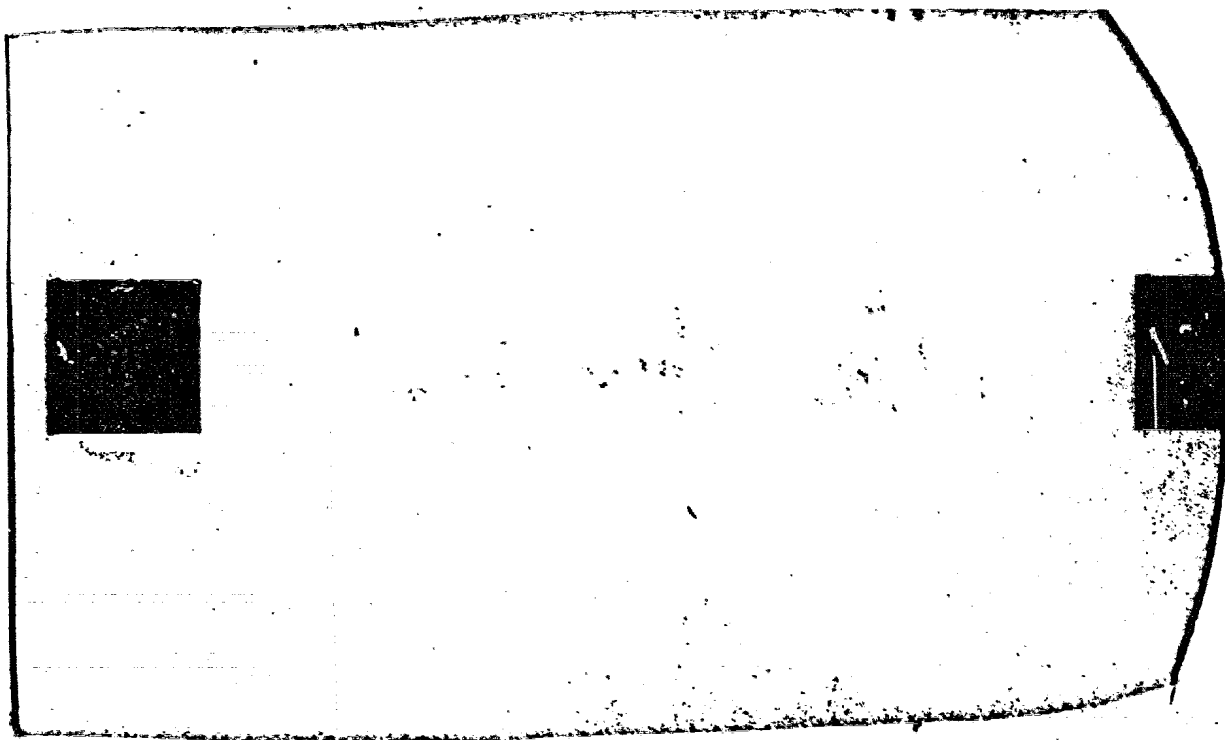
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2. The pilot with the blue parachute landed in an artillery emplacement and was immediately captured by artillerymen. [redacted] saw the pilot in a car when it passed him heading in the direction of Quang Trach District Town.

3. The pilot with the orange parachute fell into a bomb crater in a rice paddy east of Ba Don Town. A North Vietnamese girl had taken shelter in the crater and when she saw the pilot she panicked and tried to run. For an unknown reason, the pilot killed the girl with his pistol. By this time, the militiamen of a nearby village, including the brother of the dead girl, surrounded the pilot. When the brother of the dead girl saw that his sister had been killed by the pilot, he became enraged, ran ahead of the other militiamen to the crater, and killed the pilot by shooting him twice. The pilot was pulled out of the crater by the militiamen. [redacted] said the pilot had been shot in the head and chest and his entire body was covered with blood. He had long brown hair, a blondish-brown moustache and a pale complexion. He wore a dark blue flight suit and black leather boots. /1/ and /2/ After the jet was shot down, several AD 6's and an unidentified jet flew around the area until dark, but they did not open fire.

/1/ The above information was coordinated with the JPRC which made the following comments: "The incident described in this report correlates with an incident involving a flight of four (4) F4D's on 17 August 1968 in the general area mentioned by Source. The number two aircraft went in for a strike on its target. Other flight members never saw it come out. Beepers were heard, but no chutes were observed and no voice contact was made. Several months later, the North Vietnamese Government released the name of one of the crew members. The other one is still carried in a Missing-in-Action status. The description of the man allegedly killed matches quite well that of Captain William E. Powell, United States Air Force (USAF) (#1041). Captain Powell is still in a Missing-in-Action status. Captain Arthur T. Hoffson, USAF (#0832) is a confirmed prisoner of the North Vietnamese Government." [redacted] was shown the Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC) album of missing and captured personnel in South-east Asia (SEA) but he could not identify any of the men.

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~~GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE, E.O. 11652. EXEMPTION~~
~~CATEGORY 5B (1) (2). IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE~~
~~DATE OF DECLASSIFICATION.~~