



Intelligence Information Report

[REDACTED]

PAGE 1 OF 5 PAGES

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE

REPORT NO. CS-311/01044-71

DATE DISTR. 8 February 1971

COUNTRY

SOUTH VIETNAM

PERIOD

NOVEMBER 1969 - 1 DECEMBER 1970

SUBJECT

VC MR-5 PRISONER OF WAR CAMP CONTAINING U.S. AND ARVN PRISONERS

ACQ

SOURCE

[REDACTED]

3
2
1

5
4
3
2
1

SIAM	INA	ARMY	NAVY	AR	NSA	[REDACTED]	(See Field Distribution on final paragraph)
------	-----	------	------	----	-----	------------	---

1580-16-5

000307

207

#

[REDACTED]

SUMMARY. A PRISONER OF WAR CAMP OPERATED BY VIET CONG /VC/ MILITARY REGION 5 /MR-5/, WHICH HELD EIGHT AMERICAN AND THREE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM /ARVN/ PRISONERS AS OF 1 DECEMBER 1970 WAS LOCATED IN THE MOUNTAINS ON THE BORDER OF QUANG TIN AND QUANG NGAI PROVINCES. THE AMERICAN PRISONERS WERE EMACIATED AND TWO SUFFERED FROM MALARIA. THE CAMP CONSISTED OF TWO BUILDINGS FOR THE PRISONERS INSIDE A STOCKADE AND THREE FOR THE STAFF AND GUARDS ON THE OUTSIDE. THE CAMP STAFF DID NOT APPEAR TO FEAR AN ESCAPE BY THE AMERICANS, WHO WERE NOT WORKED AS HARD AS THE ARVN PRISONERS. BECAUSE OF VC REGULATIONS, THE AMERICANS RECEIVED A LARGER FOOD RATION THAN THE ARVN PRISONERS. END SUMMARY.

1. VC MR-5 OPERATED A PRISONER OF WAR /POW/ CAMP, KNOWN UNOFFICIALLY AS THE "U.S. POW CAMP" IN THE MOUNTAINS ON THE BORDER OF QUANG TIN AND QUANG NGAI PROVINCES, FOUR OR FIVE KILOMETERS NORTH OF THE VC MR-5 T-15 THOUGHT REFORM CAMP, WHICH IS LOCATED AT APPROXIMATELY BS0587 OR BS0687. [REDACTED] COMMENT--VC MR-5 INCLUDES GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM /GVN/ QUANG NAM, QUANG TIN, QUANG NGAI, BINH DINH, PHU YEN AND KHANH HOA PROVINCES. [REDACTED] VISITED THE POW CAMP THREE TIMES IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1969 AND 1 DECEMBER 1970, WHILE CARRYING MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO A FOOD

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PRODUCTION UNIT LOCATED ABOUT A THREE AND A HALF HOURS' WALK FROM THE T-15 CAMP. ON HIS FIRST VISIT IN NOVEMBER 1969 [REDACTED] SAW THREE ARVN OFFICERS AND FIVE AMERICANS WHO WERE PRISONERS AT THE POW CAMP. ON 1 DECEMBER 1978 THESE SAME PRISONERS WERE STILL THERE, TOGETHER WITH THREE NEW AMERICAN PRISONERS. [REDACTED] DID NOT LEARN THE NAMES OF THE PRISONERS, ALTHOUGH HE WAS ABLE TO CONFRONT THEM. THE THREE ARVN OFFICERS INCLUDED TWO SECOND LIEUTENANTS AND ONE FIRST LIEUTENANT. [REDACTED] SAID HE WAS UNABLE TO CONVERSE WITH THE AMERICAN PRISONERS, ALL OF WHOM WERE CAUCASIANS, BECAUSE OF THE LANGUAGE BARRIER. [REDACTED] DID NOT KNOW THEIR RANKS NOR THE TIME AND PLACE OF THEIR CAPTURE, BUT HE WAS TOLD THAT ONE WAS A DOCTOR. ALL OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS APPEARED TO BE LESS THAN 30 YEARS OLD. FIVE OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS WERE ABOUT FIVE FEET EIGHT INCHES TALL WITH BLACK HAIR, TWO WERE ABOUT FIVE FEET FIVE INCHES TALL WITH BROWN HAIR, AND ONE WAS ABOUT FIVE FEET FIVE INCHES TALL WITH BLACK HAIR. SOME HAD BEARDS AND MOUSTACHES, AND ALL WERE EMACIATED. ALL WORE TWO-PIECE BLACK PAJAMAS, SHOES MADE OF OLD TIRES, AND HATS MADE OF LEAVES COVERED WITH GREEN NYLON CLOTH. [REDACTED] COMMENT--FROM A PHOTOGRAPH, [REDACTED] IDENTIFIED PVT. FREDERICK L. ELBERT, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, AS BEING ONE OF THE AMERICANS AT THE POW CAMP. PVT. ELBERT WAS MISSING ON 16 AUGUST 1968 AND WAS DECLARED CAPTURED BASED ON THE DEBRIEFINGS OF THE THREE AMERICANS WHO WERE RELEASED BY THE VC IN NOVEMBER 1969.

2. IN TALKING WITH CAMP CADRES AND MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCE, [REDACTED] LEARNED THAT THE POW CAMP HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN 1966 OR 1967 BUT HAD NO FIXED LOCATION UNTIL 1969. THE POW CAMP STAFF, ALL VC, INCLUDED THE CAMP COMMANDER FIRST LIEUTENANT /PHU/ P H U O N G. THE GUARD FORCE CONSISTED OF THREE VC AND FOUR NVA SOLDIERS, OF WHOM [REDACTED] COULD REMEMBER ONLY THE NAME OF /PHU/ T H I N. THE CAMP, WHICH COVERED ABOUT ONE ACRE OF LAND, HAD FIVE BUILDINGS MADE OF BAMBOO WITH THATCHED ROOFS UNDER A JUNGLE COVER. THE FIVE BUILDINGS INCLUDED A SIX BY THREE METERS STRUCTURE TO HOUSE THE

[REDACTED]

16

PRISONERS, A FOUR BY THREE METERS KITCHEN AND MESS HALL FOR THE PRISONERS, A FOUR BY FOUR METERS STORAGE BUILDING, SIX BY THREE METERS BUILDING TO HOUSE THE STAFF AND GUARD FORCE, AND A FOUR BY SIX METERS KITCHEN AND MESS HALL FOR THE STAFF AND GUARDS. THE PRISONERS' MESS AND QUARTERS WERE INSIDE A BAMBOO FENCE ABOUT 2.5 METERS HIGH FORMING A STOCKADE ABOUT 58 METERS SQUARE. THE OTHER THREE BUILDINGS WERE ABOUT 80 METERS OUTSIDE THE STOCKADE. A PLACE TO URINATE WAS LOCATED INSIDE THE STOCKADE, AND SLIT TRENCHES WERE ABOUT 100 METERS OUTSIDE. A SINGLE GUARD TOWER ABOUT TWO METERS HIGH WAS LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE AT THE ONE GATE OF THE STOCKADE. THE TOWER WAS LOCATED ON THE OUTSIDE AND ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE FACING THE STOCKADE. THIS GUARD TOWER WAS MANNED BY ONE MEMBER OF THE GUARD FORCE AT ALL TIMES WITH CHANGES IN GUARD OCCURRING AT 0600 AND 1800 HOURS. THE GUARDS WERE ARMED WITH AK-47'S AND COMMUNIST CHINESE-MADE SKS RIFLES WITH 50 ROUNDS PER GUN. THE CAMP COMMANDER AND HIS ASSISTANT WERE ARMED WITH COMMUNIST CHINESE-MADE K-54 PISTOLS WITH AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF ROUNDS. THERE WERE NO KNOWN COMBAT OR OTHER GUARD UNITS WITHIN A FIVE-KILOMETER RADIUS OF THE CAMP, NOR WERE THERE ANY BUNKERS, MINE FIELDS, BOOBY TRAPS, OR PUNJI STICKS. THE CAMP WAS IN A VALLEY SURROUNDED BY A HILL 1,000 METERS HIGH ON THE WEST, A 600-METER HIGH HILL ON THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST, AN 800-METER HIGH HILL ON THE SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST, AND A 50-METER HIGH HILL ON THE EAST. A SMALL, JUNGLE-COVERED STREAM RAN NEAR THE CAMP. A CORN AND MANIOC FIELD, ABOUT 1,000 METERS BY 300 METERS, LYING ABOUT 200 METERS EAST OF THE CAMP, WAS THE ONLY LANDMARK. THERE WERE NO ACCESS ROADS AND ONLY TWO MONTAGNARD VILLAGES IN THE AREA--MANG XIEN VILLAGE /UNLOCATED/ WAS EIGHT TO 10 KILOMETERS SOUTHEAST OF THE CAMP AND ONG A] VILLAGE /UNLOCATED/ WAS ABOUT THE SAME DISTANCE NORTHEAST OF THE CAMP,

3. THE CAMP STAFF DID NOT FEAR THE AMERICAN PRISONERS WOULD ESCAPE SINCE THEY WERE UNACQUAINTED WITH THE AREA AND WERE IN NO CONDITION TO TRAVEL. [REDACTED] DID NOT KNOW OF ANY CAMP EVACUATION PLAN IN THE EVENT OF AIR ATTACKS. THE PRISONERS WERE NOT SHACKLED OR BOUND AT ANY TIME. THEY AWOKE AT 0600 HOURS DAILY AND, IF THE WEATHER PERMITTED, THEY EXERCISED FOR 15 MINUTES. THE AMERICAN

PRISONERS WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE STOCKADE FOR UP TO AN HOUR WITHOUT A SECURITY GUARD, BUT THE ARVN PRISONERS COULD NOT. ALTHOUGH THE ARVN OFFICERS WORKED ALONG WITH THE GUARDS IN THE FOOD PRODUCTION SITE, A 90-MINUTE WALK FROM THE CAMP, THE AMERICAN PRISONERS ONLY CARRIED THE FOOD BETWEEN THE SITE AND THE CAMP. TWO AMERICAN PRISONERS PERFORMED THIS DUTY DAILY, WHILE THE OTHER AMERICANS AND PRISONERS HAVING A MALARIA ATTACK WERE ALLOWED TO REST. KEROSENE LAMPS COULD BE USED UP TO 2100 HOURS. [REDACTED] DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PRISONERS WERE INTERROGATED OR GIVEN ANY INDOCTRINATION AT THIS POW CAMP. THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES USED TO TREAT THE PRISONERS CAME FROM MR-5. ALTHOUGH NO NEWSPAPERS OR PERIODICALS WERE AVAILABLE, THE PRISONERS COULD LISTEN TO CERTAIN BROADCASTS OF RADIO HANOI.

4. AMERICAN PRISONERS RECEIVED A DAILY FOOD RATION OF 500 GRAMS OF RICE AND VNS28-30 /US\$0.17-0.25 AT THE OFFICIAL RATE VNS118 EQUALS US\$1.00/. ARVN PRISONERS RECEIVED A DAILY RATION OF 300 GRAMS OF RICE AND VNS8 /US\$0.07/. THE CAMP STAFF AND THE SECURITY FORCE RECEIVED DAILY 250 GRAMS OF RICE AND VNS18 /US\$0.08/. FOOD AND FUNDS TO SUPPLEMENT THE DIET WERE PROVIDED BY THE POLITICAL SECTION OF MR-5. THE PRISONERS NEVER ACTUALLY RECEIVED ANY MONEY, FOR MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCE USED THE FUNDS TO MAKE ONE TRIP EACH WEEK TO THE LOWLANDS TO PURCHASE FISH SAUCE, CANNED FISH, AND OTHER FOOD WHICH THEY BROUGHT BACK TO THE CAMP FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE PRISONERS AND THE CAMP PERSONNEL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ALLOWANCES. THE ROUND TRIP TO THE LOWLANDS TOOK SIX DAYS. THE AMERICAN PRISONERS GOT PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT BECAUSE OF VC REGULATIONS. ALTHOUGH THE STAFF AND SECURITY FORCE RESENTED THE AMERICAN PRISONERS RECEIVING DOUBLE THEIR RATION, THEY DID NOT OBJECT OPENLY. [REDACTED] BELIEVES THE PRISONERS RECEIVED ALL THE FOOD PURCHASED WITH THEIR ALLOWANCES. THERE WAS NO APPARENT FRICTION BETWEEN THE PRISONERS AND THE CAMP STAFF OR SECURITY FORCE.

5. FIELD DISSEM--STATE, USMACV, USAID, CORDS, DIR/JUSPAO /MR. NICKEL ONLY/, 2TH AIR FORCE, USARV, NAVFORV, 225TH MI GP, 6499 SAG, OSI, CINCPAC, PACFLT, PACAF, ARPAC

3
2
1

6
4
2
1