

Intelligence Information Report

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PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES

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REPORT NO. CS-311/04946-71

DATE DISTR. ~~104 40 52~~

COUNTRY North Vietnam/Laos/Cambodia

DOI March-May 1968

CAMP

SUBJECT Sighting of Three Groups of American Prisoners of War on Infiltration Route in Laos and Cambodia

ACQ Vietnam, Saigon (6 May 1971)

SOURCE

[REDACTED]

Summary. While traveling south from North Vietnam (NVN) at a place in Laos approximately opposite Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam (SVN), Infiltration Group 209 passed about 40 Caucasian and Negro prisoners being led northward. They were followed by a group of civilians, including a large number of children, also heading north. In April 1968, the infiltration group stopped for five days' rest at the second commo-liaison station on the infiltration trail in Laos west of Kontum Province, SVN. At this site [REDACTED] saw buildings which he was told were occupied by U.S. prisoners. [REDACTED] was taken into the area and saw a group of Caucasian prisoners. Near the K-9 commo-liaison station in Cambodia, [REDACTED] saw another group of about 20 Americans being led northward. A group of Laotian prisoners also

[REDACTED]

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STATE	DIA	ARMY	NAVY	AIR	NSA	CS	(See Field Distribution see Each paragraph)

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UNLOCATED

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DIA 258

Encl 278 (S-47301/DB4H)

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was marching in column. End Summary.

1. In March 1968, as Infiltration Group 299 was traveling toward SVN on a commo-liasion trail in Laos located approximately in the same latitude as Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province, SVN, [redacted] observed a group of 16 invalid communist soldiers heading north. Following this group was a line of about 40 Caucasian and Negro prisoners marching in single file, bound together by metal chains attached to the left arm of each man. All the men were in uniform; about half wore solid green and the other half camouflaged jungle fatigues. The men seemed tired and had long beards, but none appeared to be wounded or sick. A commo-liasion cadre walked in front of the group and another was at the rear of the column. There were a number of guards on both sides of the prisoners carrying AK-47 automatic rifles and pistols. Each prisoner carried in his right hand a fairly large blue wooden box which appeared very heavy, but [redacted] did not know what was inside. Behind the column of prisoners was a group of 30 civilian cadres, all of whom were middle to old age, and behind them was a large number of children ranging from ages 8 to 14. The children asked some of the soldiers for candy and food and made comments about losing their families in the south. Several of the children talked to [redacted] and said they were going to Hanoi.

2. In April 1968, in Laos, west of Kontum Province, SVN, at the second commo-liasion station on the "Liberation Commo-Liaison Line" (Duong Giao Lien Giai Phong), Infiltration Group 299 stopped for five days' rest. The troops were given refreshments, vitamins and canned beef to strengthen them before proceeding south. Entertainment was provided in the way of movies, stage shows and reading material. [redacted] squad was summoned to an area on the side of a hill near the commo-liasion station where 10 to 12 buildings were surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards. [redacted] was told that U.S. prisoners were kept here and that his unit would be allowed to observe the POWs. Different squads of [redacted] unit were brought to each one of the houses and allowed to look at the Americans. [redacted] only saw one house where four American prisoners, one a Negro, were detained. Each of the four men wore camouflaged jungle fatigues and appeared to be in good health. Also inside the building was a North Vietnamese doctor's office and an area for food supplies. [redacted] and his squad were cautioned not to speak to the prisoners or to abuse them physically. Before entering the hut where the Americans were housed, the soldiers were searched by a guard for any objects that prisoners might be able to seize and use as weapons. The group then moved into the hut and walked around the area watching the Americans. The Americans waved to them and smiled, but did not try to talk to the soldiers.

3. [redacted] described the huts used for detaining the POWs as approximately 10 meters long and two meters wide. Each individual prisoner was in a barbed wire enclosure inside the hut but was able to reach through to the adjoining cell. A corridor ran down one side of the hut where [redacted] and his squad walked. [redacted] observed that the POWs had canned meat to eat and appeared to be in good health. The prisoners were not chained or tied and had freedom of movement within their cells. [redacted] heard that the doctor in this hut was responsible for taking care of the prisoners. Comment: According to [redacted], rumors were being spread around the infiltration rest camp nearby that Communist Chinese

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advisors were working with the prisoners, but [redacted] did not see any.) The guards around the POW camp and at each hut entrance were North Vietnamese assigned to the Security Border Defense (Cong An Bien Phong) and were armed with AK-47 automatic weapons.

4. In May 1968 Infiltration Group 299 was nearing the K-9 commo-liaison station in Cambodia when [redacted] saw another group of about 20 Americans, about three-quarters of them Negro, being led northward. They were tied with rope to one another by the left hand and were surrounded by guards armed with AK-47 automatic weapons. The POWs were still in uniform, most of them wearing camouflaged jungle fatigues. They appeared in good health and [redacted] saw no injured persons. [redacted] heard one of the guards talking about six Lao POWs and looked down the column where he saw six oriental soldiers, tied by their hands and feet with metal chains. These men seemed to be in poor condition and were walking rather slowly.

5. [redacted] Dissem: State, USMACV 7th Air Force NAVFORV
CINCPAC PACFLT PACAF ARPAC [redacted]