

FIELD INFORMATION REPORT

1.3(a)(4)

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COUNTRY South Vietnam REPORT NO. [REDACTED] 1.3(a)(4)
 DATE DISTR. 30 November 1970
 COUNTRY May 1970
 DOI American Prisoner of War in Tuyen Duc Province
 SUBJECT

ALBERT

Vietnam, [REDACTED] 1840 1.3(a)(4)

ACQ SOURCE An American observer from the personal debriefing of Phan Thi Huyen, surgical nurse with the surgical unit of the 810th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Main Force Battalion, who rallied to the Government of Vietnam on 31 October 1970. She was born in Dalat City on 1 October 1946. From 1964-1967 she attended the Health and Nurses Technical Course in Hue and upon completion was sent to Nha Trang for six months' training at the Nha Trang Health Center. In May 1968 while on vacation near Dalat, she was captured by an NVA unit and put to work as a production cadre until January 1969 when she was transferred to the surgical section of the 810th Battalion after it was discovered she was a trained nurse. Her surgical capabilities have been verified independently. Huyen was cooperative and appeared to be intelligent during debriefing. Her reporting reliability has not been established.

Summary. Elements of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) 810th Main Force (MF) Battalion in Tuyen Duc Province captured an American Negro male in May 1970. He had been slightly wounded and was treated by Phan Thi Huyen. As she spoke English, the battalion commander asked her to question the prisoner on personal, military, and political matters. The prisoner was well-treated during the three days he was held captive at the headquarters of the 810th Battalion. One of the reasons for his good treatment was that, when captured, he raised his arm in surrender to the Viet Cong (VC) and was not therefore considered a true prisoner of war. After spending three days at the battalion headquarters he was transferred to a prisoner camp that was believed located in Lam Dong Province. End Summary.

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1. On the morning of 22 May 1970, Phan Thi Hu y e n was instructed by VC senior Captain Bui Minh H o n, commander of the Tuyen Duc Province 810th NVA NF Battalion, to question a U.S. prisoner who had been captured by elements of the battalion during an ambush the previous day. Hu y e n was told that the prisoner, when captured, had raised one arm in the air in 21/4 and had been taken to battalion headquarters for interrogation. (Field Comment: Bui Minh Hon, 34, is a member of the People's Revolutionary Party and has been in command of the 810th Battalion since October 1968.)

2. Hu y e n described the American Prisoner of (POW) as a Negro male, approximately six feet two inches tall, dark complexion with thick dark brown hair, brown , a long face, and he was wearing a beaded necklace around his neck with a silver medal attached to it. He was wounded slightly in the left leg, which wound he had received during the ambush, but the wound had been dressed by NVA Captain Dinh Van S a u, commander of the C-1 company. Sau gave Hu y e n a list of 30 questions to ask the prisoner because she spoke English. The questions were in three categories. The first concerned biographic data such as name, date and place of birth, rank, serial number, parents names, previous employment in the U.S., date of arrival in South Vietnam (SVN), name of unit, and current assignment. The second category of questions dealt with military topics and included the number of vehicles that were in his convoy, the number of U.S. personnel in it, the purpose and destination of the convoy, the number of weapons, tanks and aircraft in Dalat and the types of communications, and the numbers and locations of U.S. forces. The third group of questions were political in nature and asked about his feelings on the war in SVN and the National Front for the Liberation of SVN.

3. The prisoner told Hu y e n his name, which she could not recall except that it began with the letter "K". He told Hu y e n that he was from Chicago, had been a farmer, had three sisters and was drafted and sent to SVN in May 1969. He said he had spent the first two months in Kontum Province and had been assigned to the U.S. Army Engineers in Dalat in July 1969. At the end of the first series of questions he requested that he be allowed to write or communicate with his family in the U.S. On the second series of questions, he said that he did not know any of the answers. Because he was in the first vehicle in the convoy, he said he did not know how many others were behind him and that he had no information about the numbers or locations of U.S. military forces in Dalat City. On the political questions, the prisoner was outspoken against all forms of war. He explained that he had not been in SVN long enough to learn about the political policies of the VC and that his only wish was to return to his home and family in the U.S.

4. The POW remained in the headquarters camp of the 810th Battalion for three days during which he was escorted the entire time by Captain Sau. Sau provided him with two cans of milk, five cans of rice, fish sauce, and cigarettes each day. Hu y e n said that since the basic staple for the rest of the battalion was corn and that rice was considered a luxury, the POW was given good treatment. He also was given two pairs of black pajamas to wear which were made from several sets of VC-size pajamas. Sau permitted the prisoner to listen to Armed Forces Liberation (sic) radio and had Hu y e n translate and write a set of English and Vietnamese questions so that the prisoner could request basic needs by pointing to the right English phrase and Sau could ask him questions by pointing to the Vietnamese. Each then would read the translation beside the brief message and were thus able to communicate with each other in a limited fashion.

5. Huyen said the American was not really considered a POW because, when captured, he had raised his arms in surrender and this partially explained the good treatment he received. She visited the American daily to examine his wound until 25 May 1970 when he was transferred to the "Hoi Truong" POW camp. (Field Comment: Huyen did not know the exact location of the camp but believed it was in Lam Dong Province about four kilometers south of where the borders of Tuyen Duc, Lam Dong and Quang Duc Provinces join.) Before the prisoner left the headquarters, he wrote Huyen a letter thanking her for her friendship and hoped that she had understood how he felt while he was in the camp.

6. On 3 June 1970, Captain Hon told Huyen that VC cadres in Dinh An Hamlet (BP225396), Duc Trong District, told him that the prisoner was a captain who had removed his identification and rank before the ambush. Huyen said she had no knowledge of or access to the prisoner's personal belongings or identification and that she accepted Hon's word. She did not see or hear about the prisoner after that date.

7. (Field Comment: U.S. military authorities in Dalat City report that at 0945 hours on 21 May 1970, a five-vehicle convoy from the 102nd Company attached to the 815th Construction and 577th Engineer Battalions, was ambushed on National Route 20 approximately 18 kilometers south of Dalat City. The ambush consisted of crew-served and individual weapons fire and resulted in two U.S. killed, 12 wounded and one missing and presumed captured. The missing soldier was Private First Class Keith A. Albert, 435724825, a Negro male over six feet in height.)

8. Field Dissem: State, USMACV, USAID, COMUS, DKB/JUSPAC (Mr. Nickel only), 7th Air Force, USARV, NAVFORV, 525th MI Gp, 6499 SAG, OSI, CINCPAC, PACFLT, PACAF, ARPAC [REDACTED]