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# Intelligence Information Report



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SUBJECT: Organization and Activities of the Viet Cong Military and Prisoner of War Detention Camp T.15, Quang Ngai Province

ACQ - Vietnam, Saigon

SOURCE

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Summary. The VC T.15 Military and Prisoner of War Camp was established in spring 1965 in Quang Ngai Province. It moved several times and in autumn of 1968 was located at Sa Ngang, about 25km, west of Tra Bong District Town. Parts of the camp may have been moved since early December 1970. The camp was primarily a temporary detention facility for detainees or prisoners, prior to sending them on to

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Approved for Release  
Date August 1993

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(For Field Distribution see final paragraph)

STATE	DIA	ARMY	NAVY	AIR	NSA	GRS	

North Vietnam; however, trials of some detainees were held in the camp by its military court, and detainees sentenced to short-term imprisonment remained at the camp and those sentenced to death were executed at the camp. There were two distinct detention areas, one for Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) prisoners, and a small one for Army of Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and American prisoners. The

security unit for the camp consisted of 60 armed men, who provided physical security for the camp and who controlled the detainees and prisoners who worked at the camp's food production sites from 5 to 12 km. distant from the camp area. The average number of detainees was about 200. The cases of detainees were processed while they were at the camp and trials were held by the camp's military court. The number of detainees at the camp increased during 1969 and 1970. The detainees were charged with such offenses as desertion, murder, anti-communist actions and other offenses. Camp detainees had to work in the camp food production details both prior to their trials and after sentencing (if they remained at the camp). Rice, manioc, corn, sweet potatoes and tea were grown at the food production sites. The camp supplemented its food production with purchased salt, seasonings and salted fish. At the end of November 1970, there were 3 ARVN prisoners and 8 American personnel detained at the camp. They probably were moved from the camp some time after early December 1970. End Summary.

1. The Viet Cong (VC) Military and Prisoner of War (POW) Detention Camp coded T.15 was established in the spring of 1965 in Quang Ngai Province, South Vietnam (SVN). Camp T.15 has been moved three times within the province since 1965, including the move to its present location Sa Ngang, in the autumn of 1968, a site close to Nui Ong Mountain and Nui Ong Stream, about 25 kilometers west of Tra Bong District Town, Quang Ngai Province (vicinity AS920850). The Sa Ngang area has heavy jungle-type foliage and provides natural cover for the camp. There are no other important VC installations in the immediate area, although there are isolated and scattered groups of Montagnards in the area. Physical separation and language differences are such that there are no security problems with these minorities.

2. Camp T.15 was under the direction and management of VC Colonel Nguyen Long Ba, a lawyer and accredited military court presiding judge of VC Military Region 5, and Hoang Minh Tan, a political officer representing both Hanoi and the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN) military/political superior echelons. Camp T.15 was originally established as a temporary detention area only, for VC and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) military personnel and for South Vietnamese and Allied POW's, prior to the removal of both categories of personnel to North Vietnam for proper detention, sentencing and carrying out of sentences. Over the years, however, this practice changed, and Camp T.15 took on many permanent type activities itself, including indefinite detention, trials for accused persons and the carrying out of sentences at the camp. Under the new system, Ba and Tan reported to the Hanoi

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Judiciary Department, the Military/Political Staffs of VC Military Region 5, and higher Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) echelons.

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3. Camp T.15 was composed of two distinct detention areas separated by a distance of about 3 kilometers. One camp area was under the control of Nguyen Duy Hong, a 55 year old political officer and native of Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam (NVN), and was known as Hong's camp or Hong's element.

This camp housed and managed VC/NVA military prisoners. The second camp was under the control of (fnu) Phuong, a 45 year old political officer and native of SVN, and was known as Phuong's camp or Phuong's element. This camp housed and handled POW's. At the end of November 1970, there were about 120 detainees and 50 sentenced prisoners in Hong's camp and 3 ARVN

and 8 American personnel under detention in Phuong's camp. These POWs were said to have been captured in VC Military Region 5 during operations prior to October 1970 and were to be moved to NVN in early spring of 1971.

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However, there was talk in Camp T.15 about Phuong's camp having been spotted by enemy aircraft and, although it had not been moved by 2 December 1970, it may have been moved since then. There was no talk concerning the probable exposure of Hong's camp and this camp is probably still located at Sa Ngang. Hong's camp consisted of six long wood-frame structures, surrounded by a double bamboo fence and an outer defense system of pointed punji sticks to prevent enemy penetration of the camp and the escape of prisoners. The security unit for this camp consisted of 60 armed men, who had the responsibility for physical protection of the camp and control of prisoners working at production sites from 5 to 12 kilometers away from the main compound.

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4. The average number of detainees at Hong's camp was about 200. The VC/NVA unit responsible for bringing charges against an accused was also responsible for delivering the accused, with full documentation concerning each case, to Camp T.15 for judicial processing. The "temporary" detention period pending formal trial of an accused was set at six months for normal cases, but was not to exceed 15 months for even unusual cases requiring extensive investigation and administrative processing. When processing was completed, the accused was brought before the Camp T.15 military court which met only twice yearly. Colonel Ba acted as the court presiding judge and Tan as court prosecutor; the accused did not have a defense representative working on his behalf. The sentence was entirely dependent on the prosecutor and judge. If the accused received an imprisonment sentence of up to five years, he might remain at Camp T.15 to complete his term of imprisonment; in cases where sentences to imprisonment were in excess of five years, the prisoner was held at Camp T.15 only until he could be transferred to NVN. Death sentences were carried out immediately within the confines of Camp T.15.

5. In 1970, the Camp T.15 military court held its first session from 5 to 25 May. A total of 44 cases were tried during this session: one defendant was sentenced to death.

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and was executed on 7 May 1970; 12 defendants received sentences of from 10 to 20 years imprisonment; and 22 defendants received prison sentences of from five to nine years. These 34 detainees were moved out of Camp T.15 in early June 1970, destined for NVN. Five defendants received prison sentences of two years and were to be held at Camp T.15 for production work; four detainees were found not guilty and released. The second 1970 session of the court was scheduled from 1 to 20 December.

Another cadre who escaped from Camp T.15 after 20 December 1970 and arrived at Son Tinh ARVN Base prior to [ ] the end of February 1971, revealed [ ] that this session considered a total of about 50 cases, including several involving multiple defendants. This escapee, [ ]

said two defendants were given death sentences; 40 received sentences of over 10 years imprisonment; 30 defendants were sentenced to 10 years; 15 received sentences of over two years; and five were declared innocent of charges brought against them

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6. The number of detainees handled by Camp T.15 increased during the years 1969 and 1970, as the camp officials began taking on broader responsibilities. It is estimated that the military court has considered the cases of at least 500 defendants since 1965 and transferred about 200 of these to NVN. The proportions of NVA defendants have been: officers - 20 percent; non-commissioned officers - 40 percent; enlisted ranks - 40 percent. Of all defendants processed, about 85 percent were males and 15 percent females; 75 percent were northerners and 25 percent were southerners. Defendants have included about 52 percent charged with desertion; 15 percent charged with murder; 20 percent charged with anti-communism; 8 percent charged for allowing themselves to be taken prisoner; and 5 percent charged with minor offenses. The majority of defendants charged with desertion were northerners who escaped from their units, remained in remote areas and awaited an opportunity to rally to the Government of South Vietnam (GVN), but were captured by the VC/NVA.

[ ] Camp T.15 authorities considered that an NVA deserter was very dangerous since the deserter knew he would receive the death penalty if recaptured. He would be willing to take enormous risks to escape, including killing security guards and guerrilla look-outs and, if he should reach ARVN units, the NVA deserter would be able to provide information to the enemy which could lead to the destruction of both VC and NVA units.) The majority of defendants charged with murder were officers and commanding VC cadres who committed illegal killings of innocent civilians and leaders of organizational elements without orders from superiors. Anti-communist defendants, both military and civilian cadres, were usually charged with speaking against communism, both verbally and in written letters, with listening to Free World radio news, with possession of anti-communist documents and with having in other ways indicated their interests to surrender at first opportunity. The other main category of defendants included those persons who had misused or embezzled military funds.

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7. A Camp T.15 detainee, whether during his processing time or after sentencing, had to work on the food production details. On a daily schedule, detainees were awakened at 0530 hours, had breakfast at 0600, began work at the production sites at 0630, had lunch at 1130, returned to work

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at 1300, had dinner at 1800, attended compulsory meetings at 1900 and were in bed by 2000 hours. Detainees were granted two one-day holidays during each year: Independence Day on 2 September and Army Day on 22 December. On these holidays, meat was provided, but otherwise the diet consisted of salted fish and food obtained from the production sites; an exception was the occasional wild boar meat which had been hunted and brought back to camp by the camp's armed security personnel. The detainees were assigned to working groups consisting of from 20 to 60 men and women, who worked under an assigned group chief and about 10 security guards.

Normally, about 60 percent of the detainees reported in sick in an effort to evade the work detail, but whether this percentage was actually sick or not, only 30 percent of the detainees at the camp were allowed to be within the camp at any given time during working hours. Standard rations allowances per year for each detainee were 100 kilograms of rice and the equivalent of 3,000 piasters (about US\$25.40) for additional food, exclusive of extra rations from the production sites, if available. Rice, corn, manioc, sweet potatoes and tea plants were grown at the production sites. The produce was assigned not only to Camp T.15, but also had to augment the supplies of the Rear Services of VC Military Region 5. Since 1965, Camp T.15 production sites have produced 140 tons of rice, 300 tons of manioc and 3.5 tons of corn. There were about 500 square meters devoted to growing tea plants. Of the 140 tons of rice produced, Camp T.15 consumed about 40 tons, and the remaining 100 tons was moved to other areas within the military region. Every three months Camp T.15 sent a five-man team to go shopping at Son Tinh market, which is about 50 kilometers from the camp. On each occasion this shopping detail spent about 100,000 piasters (about US\$847.40) for salt, seasoning powders and salted fish. The trip took about 10 to 25 days, depending on ARVN operations in the area. Early in 1969, the shopping detail was attacked by aircraft and three of the five-man detail were killed.

8. Field Dissem: State USMACV USAID CORDS Dir/JUSPAO (Mr. Nickel only) 7th Air Force USARV NAVFORV 1021 FAS 525th MI Gp OSI CINCPAC PACFLT PACAF ARPAC.

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