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MAR 1 1968
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COUNTRY : NORTH VIETNAM (NVN)
SOUTH VIETNAM (SVN)

SUBJECT : U.S. Prisoners of War in QUANG BINH
Province, NVN in September 1965, DATE OF REPORT: 12/12/67
and in KONTUM Province, SVN in May 1966 NO. OF PAGES : 2

DATE OF INFO : September 1965 - May 1966 REF: []

DATE AND PLACE OF ACQUISITION: 13 October 1967 (P)
SAIGON, Vietnam (PIR)

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SOURCE: []

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S U M M A R Y

In September 1965, a U.S. pilot was put on display at CONG Market, QUANG TRACH District, QUANG BINH Province, NVN. The angry crowd tried to attack the pilot when a NVN cadre told the assembled people that he was a U.S. major who had taken part in the bombing of the market three days earlier. The pilot addressed the crowd through an interpreter and was then led away to an unknown destination. A helicopter mechanic was captured by VC forces in KONTUM Province, SVN in May 1966. He was the sole survivor in his aircraft which had been shot down. The mechanic, who held the rank of sergeant, seized a K44 rifle and escaped, but was soon recaptured because of his unfamiliarity with the terrain and with the weapon.

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NND 927661-197

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1. Source saw and heard about U.S. prisoners of war on two occasions. The first time occurred in mid-September 1965 when Source's unit moved to QUANG TRACH District, QUANG BINH Province, and Source was ordered to go with a number of comrades to CONG Market to buy food. When they arrived, they found that the market had been bombed three days previously. While they were purchasing supplies a command-car carrying many men from the Armed People's Security and a U.S. pilot stopped in front of the market. A cadre led from the car the pilot who was about 36 years old, wore black clothes furnished by the NVN authorities, and who seemed afraid. The cadre made a speech to the gathering crowd to the effect that this man was a U.S. Air Force Major who participated in the bombardment of the market which had killed nearly 200 innocent people; that the pilot had been shot down near DONG HOI by NVN anti-aircraft artillery guns, and that the pilot had been captured by the NVN people. The cadre continued that the pilot confessed to having taken part in the bombing and so he had been led to the market to explain his action to the people and to witness the atrocity which he committed.
2. The cadre's statement angered the crowd which produced sticks and knives in an effort to beat the pilot. One man in the crowd seized a rake and stabbed at the pilot's face; fortunately, an alert guard pushed the rake away, but injured his hand in the attempt to deflect it. The cadre asked the people to remain calm so that the pilot could offer an explanation and ordered the security unit to construct an enclosure to protect the pilot. Through an interpreter, the major stated, "I did not intend to bomb the market, but in flying over it, my supervisor and I saw fires, so he thought that it was a convoy and ordered an attack". After the pilot made his statement, the cadres, who feared that the people would hurt him, led him away to an unknown destination.
3. Source heard about another prisoner of war in May 1966 after his unit infiltrated SVN, arriving in KONTUM Province. A fellow soldier returning from a rice-transportation mission told Source that he had seen a U.S. prisoner of war whose hand had been injured and who was bound. An armed VC group conducted the prisoner to a nearby village where a VC soldier said that the prisoner held the rank of sergeant and was a mechanic from a U.S. helicopter which had been shot down one week earlier. The mechanic was the sole survivor and was being taken to a nearby camp when he took advantage of the security group's going to transport rice, to beat a guard, to seize a K44 rifle and to escape. However, because of his unfamiliarity with the terrain and the weapon he was recaptured and sent back to his security guard.

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