

J-2 Report: Case 1547
Quang Nam Province, Socialist Republic of Vietnam



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INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED

Name	Service Number	Rank	Posthumous Rank	Branch of Service	Date of Loss	Status
CROSBY, Herbert C.	257-72-2905	CPT	CPT	USAR	10 Jan 1970	Dead
ALLEN, Wayne C.	RA11626448	SP5	SFC	USA	10 Jan 1970	Resolved
GRAZIOSI, Francis G.	RA11643731	SP4	SFC	USA	10 Jan 1970	Dead
Howes, George A.	317-54-9544	WO1	CW3	USAR	10 Jan 1970	Dead

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND*

Case 1547 involves the loss of one UH-1C helicopter, in a flight of three, and its four-man crew. At 1300 hours on 10 January 1970 a flight of three UH-1C helicopters assigned to the 71st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade, 23rd Infantry Division, departed Tien Phuoc, a district capital in what was then Quang Tin Province, Republic of Vietnam, on a return flight to their base at Chu Lai. Having participated in a combat assault earlier in the day, but unable to return to base because of poor weather, the helicopters landed at Tien Phuoc at approximately 1130 hours to await improvement in the weather. Captain (CPT) Herbert C. CROSBY was flying the lead aircraft (tail number 66-739, call sign Firebird 91), with Warrant Officer 1 (WO1) George A. Howes as co-pilot, Specialist Five (SP5) Wayne C. ALLEN as crew chief and Specialist Four (SP4) Francis G. GRAZIOSI as door gunner. Hearing a report of improved visibility in the area to the east, CPT CROSBY elected to have the flight rise above the overcast in the Tien Phuoc area and head due east until reaching an area in which visual flight rules could be applied. The flight did not attempt a low-level return to Chu Lai due to the presence of known enemy positions, including heavy machine guns, along the return route. Rising above the 3500-foot overcast, the flight found themselves between two cloud layers, separated by approximately 1000 feet. CPT CROSBY led the flight on a bearing of 90 degrees for approximately five minutes, at which point the cloud layers merged, requiring the use of instrument flight rules. At this point the wingman lost sight of Firebird 91. CPT CROSBY continued to lead the flight, directing a course change to 120 degrees. At approximately 1315 hours, Firebird 91 tried to make radio contact with Chu Lai Ground Control Approach. This was the last contact that either of the other two aircraft in the flight had with Firebird 91. Having determined that their current course was taking them too far

* The material in the historical and investigation sections was compiled from information owned and published by the Department of Defense unless otherwise noted.

south of Chu Lai, the other aircraft returned to a course of 90 degrees until they spotted separate open areas, which permitted them to descend and proceed under visual flight rules to Chu Lai, where they landed at approximately 1340 hours.¹

When it was determined that Firebird 91 had not returned to Chu Lai, 23rd Division aircraft launched a search, initially along the presumed flight route and in the ocean near Chu Lai, and later in a nine-by-twenty-three-kilometer grid box located southeast of Tien Phuoc. The search was hampered by continued poor weather and produced no trace of the missing aircraft.² The location of loss was estimated to in the vicinity of grid coordinates (GC) 49P BT 239 141, the presumed point along the return route at which Firebird 91 turned to a course of 120 degrees. This location lies at high point 218, on what is now the boundary between Tam Dan and Tam Lanh Villages, Tam Ky Municipality, Quang Nam Province (see Figure 1).

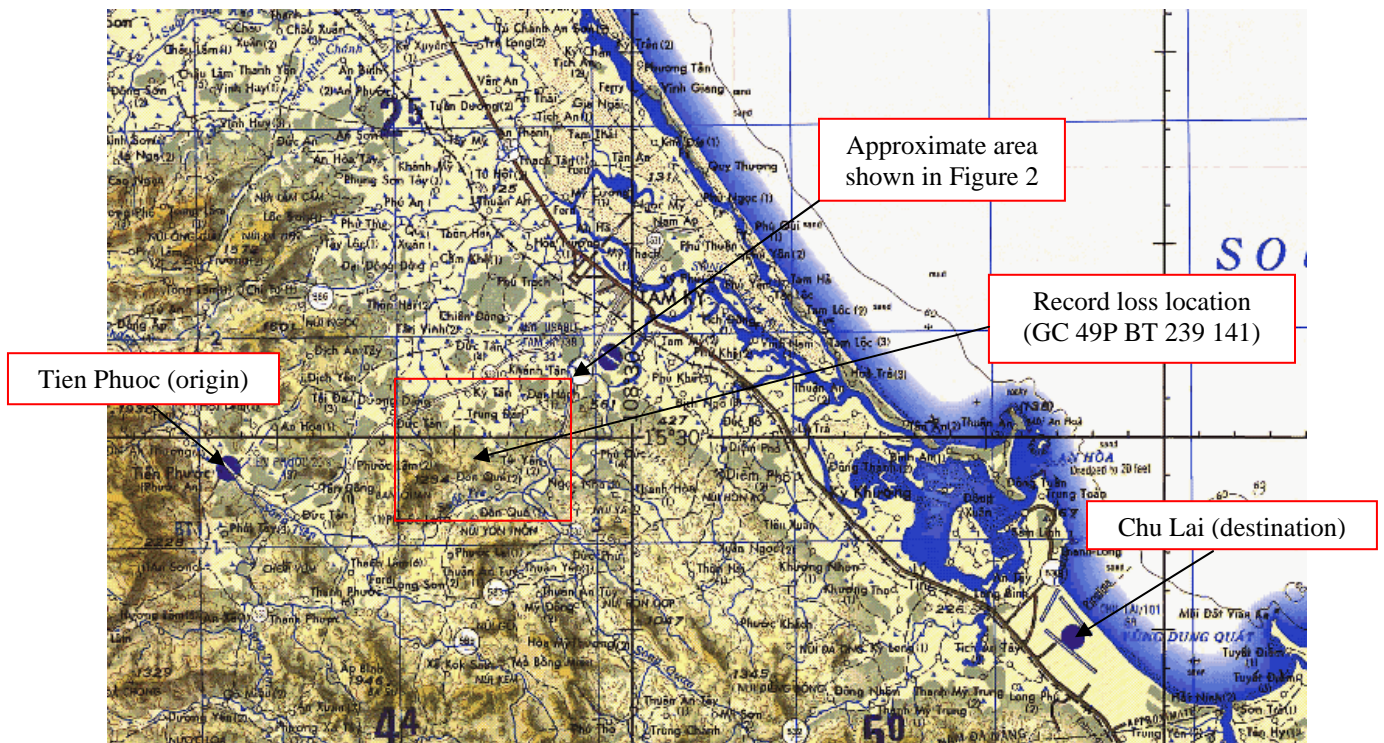


Figure 1. General area of incident, Case 1547.

U.S. Government agencies obtained no information during the war that could be correlated specifically with any of the four individuals lost in this case. A number of wartime reports concerning sightings of Americans in captivity are contained in the case file,

¹ Statements of CPT Michael D. Callahan, WO1 Neal E. Lang and WO1 John A. Blakely, dated 13 Jan 70 and provided on DA Form 2823 (Witness Statement) as appended to the findings of the Board of Inquiry, Missing Persons, HQ 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 15 Jan 70.

² Memorandum, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, Subject: *Board of Inquiry, Missing Persons, 15 Jan 70.*

but none of these provided sufficient detail, then or now, to permit correlation with any of the crew of Firebird 91 or to suggest that any of them survived the loss incident.³

On 23 January 1973 after the Paris Accords were signed, the U.S. established the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) at Nakhon Phanom Air Force Base, Thailand, to pursue information about American servicemen missing in Southeast Asia.⁴ In February 1974 the JCRC received a report concerning separate grave sites containing the remains of three Americans buried in Ky Long Village, Tam Ky District, Quang Tin Province (in the vicinity of GC 49P BT 210 160). These Americans allegedly had been killed in a 1970 battle, but their remains had not been found during the U.S. recovery operation that followed the battle. The security situation in the area prevented any recovery effort.⁵ Vietnamese officials recovered remains from another reported American burial site in the area, in a government-controlled locality, in February 1975. The Central Identification Laboratory - Thailand (CILTHAI) subsequently determined these remains (accession number CILTHAI 0011-75) to be of mongoloid racial affiliation.⁶

All the crewmembers of Firebird 91 (subsequently designated by the JCRC as Case 1547, Reference Numbers 1-4) were placed in the status of Missing in Action at the time of the incident and maintained in a pay status until declared dead by presumptive findings issued between 1974 and 1979. SP4 GRAZIOSI, SP5 ALLEN and WO1 Howes were promoted posthumously, GRAZIOSI and ALLEN to Sergeant First Class (SFC) and Howes to Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CW3).⁷

Following the imposition of a socialist political and economic regime in southern Vietnam (1976-78), large numbers of Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese citizens began to leave Vietnam. Many of these refugees brought with them information concerning American wartime losses. Between 1982 and 1991 there were no fewer than 17 instances in which U.S. government agencies obtained from such sources identification media data associated with the crew of Firebird 91.⁸ On three occasions, in 1982, 1985 and 1989, sources provided remains in association with identification media data. These remains portions were sent to

³ See, for example, USAF Interrogation Reports 1516 0888 70 (16 Oct 70) and 1516 0356 71 (11 Jun 71), and Combined Military Interrogation Center (CMIC) reports 6 029 0006 71 (7 Jan 72) and 6 029-0253-72 (19 Jul 72). Such reports were correlated with Case 1547 based primarily upon the general date and location of the reported sightings. They were also correlated with other loss incidents.

⁴ The JCRC superseded the Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC), established in 1966, which originally had responsibility for recovery of prisoners of war or their remains. See Paul D. Mather, *M.I.A.: Accounting for the Missing in Southeast Asia* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1994) pages 10-11.

⁵ The initial report of the burial sites is contained in a message from AMCONSUL DANANG RVN 190840Z FEB 74, sent to USDAO Saigon, which in turn passed the information to JCRC. See Message, USDAO SAIGON RVN 220504Z FEB 74, Subject: *IIR 6 918 5321 74: Possible U.S. Grave Site*. This report was eventually investigated in September 1993. See p. 6 below.

⁶ Message, CDR JCRC BANGKOK TH 070522Z MAR 75, Subject: *Identification of VS-1-036-75*.

⁷ DD Forms 1300 (Reports of Casualty) issued by the Office of the Adjutant General, U.S. Army on 6 Nov 74 (CROSBY, REFNO 1547-0-01), 18 Aug 78 (ALLEN, REFNO 1547-0-02), 13 Nov 78 (HOWES, REFNO 1547-0-04), and 27 Feb 79 (GRAZIOSI, REFNO 1547-0-03).

⁸ Figure based on reports appearing in the Case 1547 files maintained at JPAC.

the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI) for analysis, where they were received and accessioned as CILHI 0040-82, CILHI 0001-85 and CILHI 0231-89, respectively. The source who provided the CILHI 0231-89 remains also provided the actual metal identification tag of CPT CROSBY.⁹ Several such sources provided a version of a list of names, each allegedly associated with remains, that included the names of CPT CROSBY, CW3 Howes and “Mekissic, Jimmy N.” This form of the list appeared to originate with Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc-Thuy, a resident of Ho Chi Minh City, (HCMC).¹⁰

On 23 January 1989, Vietnam provided 25 remains to a JCRC delegation. Box 18 was identified as the remains of “Mekisic Jimmy.” These were repatriated to the U.S. and entered the CILHI under accession number CILHI 0020-89. On 27 March 1991 the identification of a portion of these remains as belonging to SFC ALLEN was officially announced.¹¹

INVESTIGATION

Joint Field Activities (JFA) began in the S.R.V. in September 1988. Normally, a field investigation of any case would begin in the vicinity of its last known location. For Case 1547, however, the investigation process began differently. The last known location of Firebird 91 had been established as an estimate. In addition, it was evident, based on the remains and identification media data associated with this case that had been accumulated during the previous decade, that residents of Vietnam had found a site or sites associated with two of the four individuals involved in the incident. One or more of these residents had found remains that had been positively identified as those of SFC ALLEN.¹² So, rather than begin with a search for the site at the estimated location, JCRC investigators tried to locate individuals who had already found the site.

The first person interviewed in the S.R.V. in connection with Case 1547 was Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc-Thuy, whose address had been provided by several refugee sources. Mrs. Ngoc-Thuy told the JCRC interviewer that her recently-deceased husband, Mr. Nguyen Duy Be, had learned of a U.S. aircraft crash site in the Nui Thanh area

⁹ The references relative to these accessions are Message, USDAO BANGKOK TH 230923Z SEP 82, Subject: *Letter from Vietnam, Alleged Finding of U.S. “Corpses”*, the actual 4 August 1982 letter from Nguyen Van Tri of Ho Chi Minh City to the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand upon which the message was based, JCRC Letter Report RP85-001 (30 Jan 85), Subject: *Receipt of Bone Fragments*, and Message, JCRC LIAISON BANGKOK TH 020129Z AUG 89, Subj: *JCRC RPT I89-001: Remains and Dogtag Information from Vietnam*, respectively.

¹⁰ See, for example, Message, JCRC LIAISON BANGKOK TH 281009Z JUL 86, Subject: *JCRC Report T86-318, Letters from Vietnam Concerning U.S. Remains*; Message, CDR JCRC BARBERS PT HI 011805Z MAR 88, Subject: *JCRC Refugee Report RP88-004: List of 34 Alleged American Remains Held in Ho Chi Minh City with Associated Identification Data*; Message, JCRC LIAISON BANGKOK TH 021027Z JAN 90, Subject: *JCRC RPT I89-007: Remains and Dogtag Information from HCMC*; and Message, CJTFFA DET ONE BANGKOK TH 101106Z AUG 92, Subject: *JTF-FA Detachment One RPT HK91-085*.

¹¹ Message, CDR PERSCOM ALEXANDRIA VA 271300Z MAR 91, Subject: *Identification of Remains*.

¹² Although the identification was not official until 27 March 1991, JCRC analysts were aware of the forensic examination results well before that date.

(GC 49P BT 31 15) while serving as an officer in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) in Quang Ngai Province during the war. After the war, he was sent for “re-education” in the Nui Thanh area, where he located a crash site which he presumed to be the one he had heard about during the war. In late 1984 or early 1985, after returning from “re-education” and hearing that the United States was interested in recovering the remains of war dead, Mr. Be, accompanied by several friends and relatives, returned to the Nui Thanh area. They recovered a small portion of remains and the identification tags of CPT CROSBY and WO3 Howes from one of the sites known to Mr. Be, and remains and identification media from other sites in the area as well. Mr. Be brought the remains back to his home in HCMC. Mrs. Ngoc-Thuy, herself a former employee of the U.S. Government, reported the acquisition of the remains to the HCMC District 5 office of the Public Security Service (PSS), hoping this act would both protect her family and enhance their priority for resettlement in the United States. Five days after making this report, she was arrested and the remains confiscated. She was imprisoned for fifty days. Her family members, after hearing her fate, declined to provide information to S.R.V. authorities about the other remains and identification media in their possession. Mrs. Ngoc-Thuy promised to make contact with them and recommend that they provide the remains and identification media as a humanitarian gesture, but there is no indication in the records associated with Case 1547 that she has ever done so.¹³

Since Mr. Be was deceased and no other persons believed to have direct personal knowledge of the Case 1547 incident location were known to U.S. agencies, analysts decided that the next step in the investigation of the case would be to make inquiries in the last known location of the Case 1547 aircraft. Consequently, on 1 September 1993 during the 25th JFA, a joint U.S./S.R.V. investigation team traveled to Tam Dan Village, Tam Ky District, Quang Nam – Da Nang Province to investigate the case. The team found no witnesses to the incident, nor anyone with knowledge of crash or burial sites in the area. They surveyed the last known location of the aircraft (GC 49P BT 239 141) and the location cited in the 1974 report of three burial sites (GC 49P BT 210 160) without finding any indication of a crash or burial (see Figure 2). The joint team recommended pursuit of the information obtained through refugee sources rather than continuing field investigations.¹⁴

¹³ Message, JCRC LIAISON BANGKOK TH 010334Z NOV 90, Subject: *Additional Information Concerning REFNO 1547*. Mrs. Ngoc Thuy emigrated from Vietnam to the United States in 1994. She remains a relevant source regarding Case 1547.

¹⁴ Message, CJTFFA DET ONE BANGKOK TH 271202Z SEP 93, Subject: *Detailed Report of Investigation of Case 1547*. Joint Task Force – Full Accounting (JTF-FA) assumed responsibility for the Southeast Asia War accounting effort from the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in January 1992.

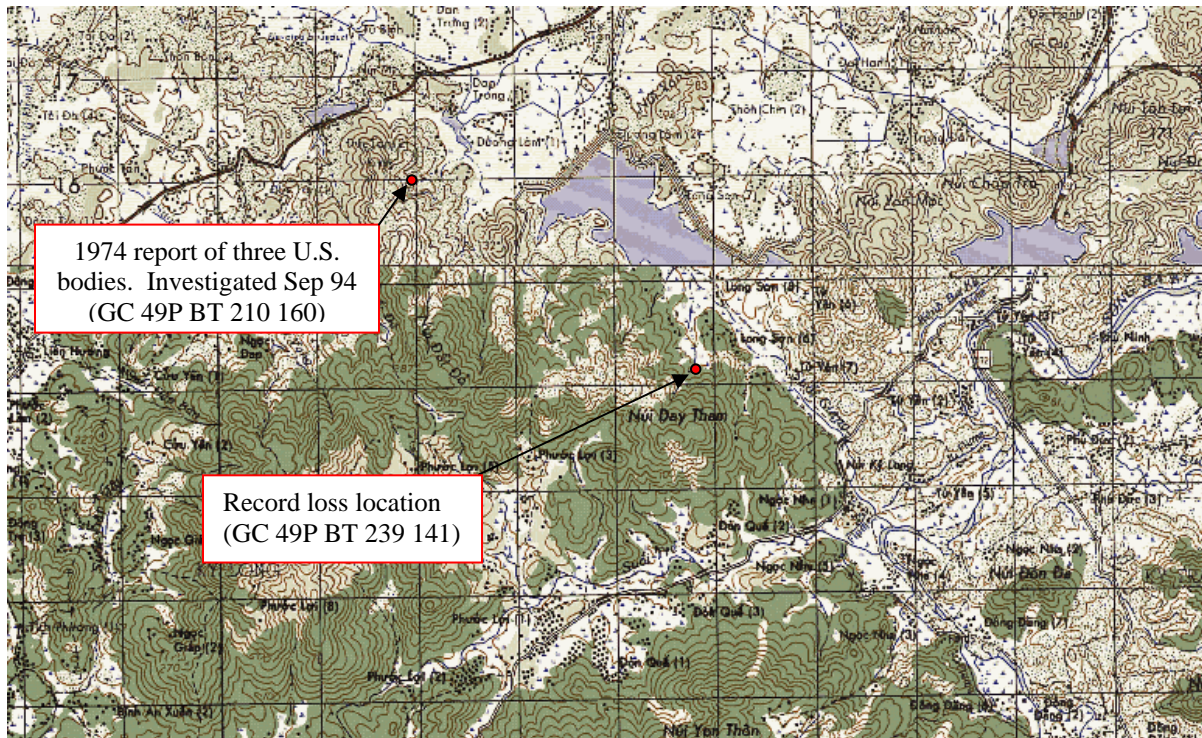


Figure 2. Case 1547 incident location of record, as shown on a composite map. The upper portion of the map shows the northern reaches of the Phu Ninh Reservoir, constructed after the war (scale: 1:50,000).

In accordance with the recommendation of the 25th JFA joint team, a second joint investigation team traveled to HCMC in March 1994 during the 28th JFA, to interview persons named in refugee reports. It was determined that four of these six persons sought had already emigrated (three to the United States). The team interviewed the two remaining individuals, Mr. Nguyen Van Ran and Mr. Dang Ngoc Chai, each of whom told interviewers that while they themselves were keeping no remains or identification media, it was possible that a friend named Mr. Truong Ngoc Chau might have some. The team then located and interviewed Mr. Chau, who confirmed that he had at one time possessed remains and identification media associated with nine individuals. Mr. Chau said that he had previously served in the South Vietnamese Navy, but after the war could only find employment as a truck driver between Da Nang and HCMC. In approximately 1983 he had received the remains and identification media from a group of former Republic of Vietnam military personnel who were making a living searching for incense wood in the forests of Quang Nam – Da Nang Province. The group had trusted Mr. Chau as a former comrade-in-arms and had expressed the hope he would be able to return the remains to the associated American families. Mr. Chau entrusted the remains to his son, Mr. Truong Ngoc Toan, who subsequently told his father that he had buried the remains near the house of his maternal grandfather, Mr. Pham Van Thi, in An Hai Ward, District 3, Da Nang City. Mr. Chau had not been present at the burial. Mr. Toan had emigrated from Vietnam to the United States but had returned in 1994 and had shown his father the burial location. He had also returned the identification media to Mr. Chau, who in turn provided them to the team. One metal identification tag among the nine that Mr. Chau gave the team was that of CW3 Howes. The

team recommended, based on the association of the identification tag with the remains reportedly buried in Da Nang, that Mr. Chau point out the burial site to a subsequent joint team.¹⁵

On 25 April 1994 during the 29th JFA, Mr. Chau directed a joint search and recovery team to the site he described to the investigation team the previous month. The team first surveyed then excavated a site at GC 49P BT 04814 79142 in An Hai Bac Ward, Son Tra District, Da Nang City. The team recovered miscellaneous clothing and equipment items, five bags containing remains and a metal box containing four additional bags of remains.¹⁶ The remains were subjected to joint forensic review, portions were selected for repatriation, and returned to the United States on 8 June 1994, where they were accessioned into the CILHI as CILHI 0097-94.¹⁷

Since the only identifiable remains from Case 1547 obtained to date had been recovered originally from sources believed to be associated with remains trafficking, analysts recommended the next activity on the case be continued investigation of such sources. In July 1998 during the 51st JFA, a team went to HCMC to interview five individuals thought to have information concerning Case 1547 remains. The team learned that four of the sources had emigrated and the fifth was not in HCMC at that time. Another joint investigation team returned in March 1999 during the 54th JFA to interview the fifth source, Mr. Nguyen Van Xuan, but his limited information proved not to be associated with Case 1547 or any other case involving unaccounted-for American personnel.¹⁸

Analysts next decided to expand the area of field investigation to the vicinity of Nui Thanh. This area is near the last known location of the Case 1547 aircraft. More importantly, this was also the area that Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc-Thuy had reported to a JCRC interviewer as the general location from which her late husband and other family members had recovered the remains that were subsequently identified as those of SFC ALLEN. In September 1999 during the 57th JFA, after the joint investigation team arrived in Tam Ky, capital of Quang Nam Province, officials of the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP) informed the U.S. team that they had located witnesses in two villages who knew of wartime helicopter crash sites. On 22 September 1999 the joint team went to

¹⁵Message, CDR JTF-FA 302233Z HONOLULU HI MAR 94, Subject: *Field Investigation Report: Case 1547*. While the identification tag of CW3 Howes was genuine, Mr. Chau's account of the manner in which he obtained it was highly suspect. The search for incense wood is the single most widely-reported device used by those Vietnamese who seek to benefit from the sale of human remains to account for their discovery and subsequent possession of remains.

¹⁶ Message, CDR JTF-FA 030723Z HONOLULU HI JUN 94, Subject: *Detailed Report of Investigation of Case 1547*. See also Message, CDR JTF-FA 190702Z HONOLULU HI AUG 94, Subject: *Analysis of Material Evidence Associated with Case 1547*.

¹⁷ Message, CDR JTF-FA 081903Z HONOLULU HI JUN 94, Subject: *Repatriation of Remains from Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV)*. The description of the remains in the CARIS database indicates that only the dental portions of the remains were repatriated. A portion of this accession was identified as additional remains of ALLEN.

¹⁸ Message, CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI 211857Z AUG 98, Subject: *Detailed Report of Investigation of Case 1547*; Message, CDR JTF-FA 280155Z APR 99, Subject: *Detailed Report of Investigation of Case 1547*.

Tam Xuan I Village of Nui Thanh District, Quang Nam Province, where they interviewed two witnesses who knew of a helicopter crash site near the village. Neither witness had actually observed the helicopter crash; they simply knew of its location. The team surveyed the reported crash site at GC 49P BT 309 158, but saw no evidence that a crash had occurred there.

On 2 October 1999 the team went to adjacent Tam Ngoc Village, Tam Ky Township and interviewed two additional witnesses. These witnesses who related an incident that happened approximately 1630 hours one afternoon in 1967. They observed “dragonfly” helicopter (a term Vietnamese forces used to denote the OH-23 helicopter, based on its open tail boom) that was forced to land at the junction of the Tre Stream and Ba Ky River (GC 49P BT 267 124) due to a mechanical failure. The joint team and witnesses traveled by boat to the location of this incident, which is now covered to a depth of 30 meters by the Phu Ninh Reservoir (see Figure 3).¹⁹ Analysts determined this information correlated with another case.



Figure 3. The Case 1547 incident location, as shown on a postwar map, including the Phu Ninh Reservoir (scale: 1:100,000). Construction of the Phu Ninh Reservoir began in March 1977 and was completed in March 1986.

¹⁹ Message, CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI 022230Z DEC 99, Subject: *Detailed Report of Investigation of Case 1547*. The Phu Ninh Reservoir was constructed between March 1977 and March 1986 by the damming of the Tam Ky River at GC 49P BT 305 156. The low-lying areas upstream of this dam were completely flooded. The Ba Ky River became the Tam Ky River at a point just below the location of the dam. Figure 3 shows the relationship between the southwestern portion of the reservoir and the last known location of Case 1547.

In 1996 the United States and the S.R.V. established a unilateral investigation program to supplement the joint investigation program. Under this program, U.S. analysts provided investigation leads for the VNOSMP to pursue. In general, these leads involved such things as widespread searches for witnesses or agencies that were sensitive from the Vietnamese internal security standpoint. When successful, such investigations developed leads suitable for subsequent joint investigation. By the end of 1999, it was clear to analysts that if further progress were to be made in the investigation of Case 1547, it would be necessary to request the VNOSMP undertake certain unilateral actions.

The original U.S. request was for the VNOSMP to search for documents concerning the provenance of the Box 18 remains from the 23 January 1989 repatriation (CILHI 0020-89), subsequently identified as SFC ALLEN) in the hope of finding information concerning the original site, and to search Tam Ky and Nui Thanh District archives for similar information and information about helicopter crash sites there. The report from the December 2000 unilateral investigation contained no information about the Box 18 remains and only a vague reference to the site of a 1970 helicopter crash on Tham Mountain, Tam Dan Village, Tam Ky District, that was now inundated by a lake.²⁰ The U.S. requested additional unilateral investigation be carried out.

A second VNOSMP unilateral team undertook the investigation in November 2001, working in both HCMC and Quang Nam Province. In HCMC the team confirmed that the Box 18 remains had indeed been received from Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc-Thuy, but also learned that Mrs. Ngoc-Thuy had emigrated to the United States in 1996. In Quang Nam, the VNOSMP team sought witnesses in Tam Dan, Tam Xuan I and II, Tam Lanh, and Tam Son Villages who might have knowledge of a helicopter crash in the vicinity of Tham Mountain, as the previous team had reported. The four witnesses the team interviewed provided information about an F-105 loss (resolved Case 0290), the Case 0737 incident, and very limited information on a number of other incidents that could not be correlated with Case 1547. In addition, the team was told that there was no "Tham" or "Day Tham" Mountain in Tam Dan Village unlike the previous unilateral team had reported. Finally, while conducting inquiries in Tam Lanh Village, the team learned of a reported helicopter crash site in adjacent Tra Kot Village and provided the names of three potential witnesses for a joint team to interview.²¹

The unilateral reports had not obtained any information that appeared to correlate with Case 1547, so in June 2003 during the 74th JFA, a joint investigation team returned to the Tam Ky area hoping that by seeking general information about wartime incidents, they might be able to develop leads for the case. The team interviewed two witnesses in Tam Loc Village concerning a crash site they had found in a field in Tam Dan Village. The

²⁰Message, CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI 120722Z MAR 01, Subject: *Translation and Evaluation of Vietnamese Document: Report of Unilateral Investigation of Case 1547.*

²¹ Message, CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI 030812Z APR 02, Subject: *Translation and Evaluation of Vietnamese Document: Report of Unilateral Investigation of Case 1547.* Both U.S. and Vietnamese maps of the area show a "Nui Day Tham" (Day Tham Mountain) at GC 49P BT 239 141, the last known location of Firebird 91. See Figures 2 and 3.

description of the wreckage they found at the site appeared to correlate with a propeller-driven light aircraft and not a helicopter. Team analysts correlated the information with the 1969 loss of an O-2A aircraft, and not with Case 1547. Before the team left Tam Loc Village, however, the chairman of the village People's Committee provided the names of three Tam Dan Village residents who were not available for interview at that time and who might have information of interest.²²

In July 2004 during the 78th JFA, another joint team went to Tam Dan Village to interview the witnesses (Mr. Huynh Ngoc Luong, Mr. Nguyen Duc Thi and Mr. Nguyen Sua) whom the Tam Ngoc Village chairman had identified the previous year. These men described three separate incidents that had occurred in the area during the war, one of which was Case 0737. Their descriptions of the other two incidents did not contain enough information to correlate with a specific loss. However, in both of the latter incidents, the witnesses reported that U.S. forces had recovered the remains of the crew at the time of loss. Consequently, neither of these could have been Case 1547. The team was also supposed to go to Tra Kot Village, Bac Tra My District to investigate the information the second Vietnamese unilateral team had obtained in 2001, but there was insufficient time remaining in the JFA for this action to be carried out.²³

In August 2005 during the 82nd JFA, a joint investigation team traveled to Tra Kot Village. The leader of the second Vietnamese unilateral team that had originally obtained the information about the crash site in Tra Kot was also present during the 2005 investigation. He located one of the three named witnesses, Mr. Tran Van Vinh. The two other witnesses, Mr. Lam and Mr. Lap, had died in 2003 and June 2005, respectively. The team also interviewed Mr. Vo Ngoc Minh and Mr. Vo Ngoc Thien, who had accompanied Mr. Vinh on a visit to the crash site in 1989. Only Mr. Vinh had been an eyewitness to the actual loss incident. Mr. Vinh stated that the helicopter had been shot down on or about 20 February 1970, two weeks after the Lunar New Year celebration. Two other helicopters from the flight had remained in the area for an hour after the first had been shot down. Mr. Vinh did not approach the wreckage until the following day. He did not see any remains there, but had also been too far away the previous day to determine whether the crew of the remaining helicopters had rescued its crew or recovered any bodies. None of the witnesses had ever found any remains or personal effects at the site. The joint team surveyed the reported crash site, located at GC 49P BS 271 996, but saw no wreckage or other evidence of a crash there. None of this information was sufficient to permit correlation with a specific incident. Analysts noted, however, that while 18 helicopters had been lost within 10 kilometers of the reported crash site, none of these losses were associated with unaccounted-for personnel.²⁴

²² Message, CDR JTF-FA 050059Z HONOLULU HI AUG 03, Subject: *Detailed Report of Investigation of Case 1547 Conducted during the 74th Joint Field Activity in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.*

²³ Message, CDR JPAC JPAC ANNEX CAMP SMITH HI 140104Z HONOLULU HI SEP 04, Subject: *Detailed Report of Investigation of Case 1547 Conducted during the 78th Joint Field Activity in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.* JPAC, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, was formed by the merger of Joint Task Force – Full Accounting and the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii on 1 October 2003.

²⁴ Message, CDR JPAC JPAC ANNEX CAMP SMITH HI 060142Z OCT 05, Subject: *Detailed Report of Investigation of Case 1547 (VM-02202) Conducted during the 82nd Joint Field Activity in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.*

ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

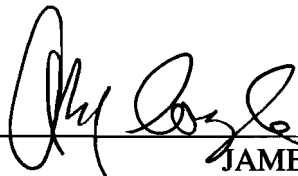
The actual location of loss of the Case 1547 aircraft has not been established by field investigation. No eyewitnesses to the loss incident have been identified or interviewed, nor have any burial sites (if there were any) associated with the crew of this aircraft been located. It is possible that these locations may now lie beneath the Phu Ninh Reservoir. Nevertheless, it is clear from the unilateral turnover of identification media data associated with two of the four individuals lost in this incident that citizens of the S.R.V. located a site or sites associated with the Case 1547 incident prior to or during construction of the reservoir. The presence of the reservoir precludes investigation and excavation of sites now located beneath its surface.

The remains identified as SFC ALLEN (CILHI 0020-89) are most likely those the District 5 Public Security Service reportedly confiscated from Mr. Nguyen Duy Be and Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc-Thuy. Not only is the information Mrs. Ngoc-Thuy provided corroborated by refugee sources, but the name "Jimmy Mekissic" that appears on the list attributed to her is the same name that appeared associated with Box 18 of the 23 January 1989 repatriation – the box that contained the remains designated CILHI 0020-89.

The incident at the junction of the Tre Stream with the Ba Ky River, first related by Mr. Nguyen The Vinh and Mr. Vu Thien Hoang in September 1999 and subsequently by several other witnesses, is almost certainly unresolved Case 0737, which involved an OH-23 helicopter (called a "dragonfly" by the Vietnamese based on the appearance of its tail boom) and a crew of three.

No information that can be correlated positively with Case 1547 has been obtained in five joint and two unilateral investigations that have been carried out in the area where that aircraft was presumed during the war to have been lost.

The only items that definitively correlate with this case, the identification tags of CPT CROSBY and CW3 Howes and the remains identified as SFC ALLEN, have been obtained from private Vietnamese citizens, either directly or indirectly through confiscation from those citizens by S.R.V. authorities.



JAMES M. COYLE
Senior Researcher, Southeast Asia

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

All primary source materials utilized in the preparation of this report, unless otherwise cited in the footnotes, may be found in the case files for Case 1547 maintained at the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command at Hickam AFB, Hawaii. All documents cited are unclassified.

14th Combat Aviation Battalion, Memorandum, Subject: *Board of Inquiry, Missing Persons*, with attached statements, 15 Jan 70.

1021st USAF Field Activity Squadron, Intelligence Information Report 1516 0356 71, Subject: *Sighting of Two American PWs in Quang Tin Province*, 11 Jun 71.

6499th Special Activities Group, Intelligence Information Report 1516 0888 70, Subject: *Observation of Two US PWs Outside Quang Nam Village*, 16 Oct 70.

Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Message, 070522Z MAR 75, Subject: *Identification of VS-1-036-75*.

_____, Message, 011805Z MAR 88, Subject: *JCRC Refugee Report RP88-004: List of 34 Alleged American Remains Held in Ho Chi Minh City with Associated Identification Data*.

Joint Casualty Resolution Center Liaison Office, Bangkok, Thailand. Letter Report RP85-001, Subject: *Receipt of Bone Fragments*, 30 Jan 85.

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