

37

SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)

*Casualty Branch*

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority *EO 13526*

NOTES ON PRISONERS  
IN FRENCH INDO-CHINA

37

SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority: *NND 913096*

27 March 1945

MEMORANDUM

To: Lieutenant W. H. WRIGHT.

Subj: French Indo-China - Prisoners of War in.

1. By dispatches dated 23 February 1945, and 2 March 1945, the Swiss Consulate at Saigon has furnished the information to the effect that the following Navy men are held as prisoners by the Indo-Chinese Authorities:

- Lieut. (jg) Horace Blake MORANVILLE, A1, USNR, 291317;
- Ensign Peter LAMBROSE, A1, USNR, 325538;
- SANTOPADRE, Edward Xavier, A1M3c, V-6, USNR, 709 22 04;
- FETZER, Richard Dean, ARM3c, V-6, USNR, 653 51 58;
- Lieut. (jg) Elmer George STRATTON, A1, USNR, 301501;

these men are not carried as casualties on the records of this Bureau because of the fact that immediately following the report that they were missing 12 January 1945, they were reported to be in friendly hands. Their status should now be shown as "prisoners of war".

2. Lieut. (jg) Donald Augustus HENRY, A1, USNR, 173471, pilot of TBM-3C, BuNo 23603, and his radioman SHIRLEY, Ellsworth Abbott, ARM2c, (T), USNR, 203 67 83, both attached to VT 4, based on the U.S.S. ESSEX, were reported missing in action 12 January 1945. The pilot as recently as 2 March 1945, has been shown to be in friendly civilian hands and is not carried as a casualty. SHIRLEY, however, was not reported as a survivor and is carried as missing in action. The Swiss Consulate at Saigon has forwarded the information that the body of E. A. SHIRLEY was found on 18 January 1945. He was identified as having been born on 1 October 1924 and as having been a passenger in the plane designated as "Navy 23603-Jeck" which crashed 12 January 1945. The above named service man was actually born on 10 January 1924 instead of 1 October 1924. However, the discrepancy is easily explained by the fact that his birthdate is undoubtedly shown on his identification tag by numbers. The crashed plane bears the same number as that in which subject man was known to have been a passenger on 12 January 1945. The casualty status of SHIRLEY should be changed from "missing" to "reported dead". Inasmuch as no report of internment has come in regarding Lieut. (jg) HENRY, no casualty record should be made of him at this time.

3. The telegram from the Swiss Consulate at Saigon lists Lieut. Joseph O. LYNCH as a prisoner of the Indo-Chinese Authorities. Lieut. LYNCH is a member of the Marine Corps, his casualty status should be reported to that branch of service. He is Second Lieutenant Joseph Otto LYNCH, (NAVC) USMCR (028082) VMP 213.

E. E. WOLLITZ,  
Lieutenant, USNR.

37  
SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)

NOTES RE FRENCH INDO CHINA:

23 March 1945: So. Eastern Asia Section (French Indo China)

1. Interview with Mr. Cathorm (?) Room 3525, Social Security Building - OWI.

On 20 February 1945 the Japanese gave an ultimatum to the authorities in French Indo-China regarding the harboring and aiding of Allied airmen.

On 10 March 1945 the military government if not actual political administration of French Indo-China was taken over by the Japanese.

2. Mrs. Petro, State Dept., Extension 707, room 2503 of the (Barracks) Annex, State Department, "Special War Problems" has promised to send over a copy of a dispatch sent 3-2-45, of information given by the Governor (French) of Indo-China regarding the six Navy airmen-denying the Swiss representative's request to be permitted to see the Navy men. The denial was on the ground that the exact place of internment had not been decided upon at that date. One of the men - Lieut.(jg) HENRY was not interned but was hiding out with friendly civilians. The body of SHIRLEY was reported to have been found on 18 January 1945. Mrs. Petro said the Japanese have several prisoner of war camps in French Indo-China.

From Bern, 23 Feb 1945, to Secretary of State:

FETZER, Richard D., ARM3c, V-6, USNR, 653 51 58  
Ens. LAMBROS, Peter, A-1, USNR, 325538, VF 45  
Lieut. LINC, Joseph O. (home address 1432 Sargent Ave., St. Paul Minn.)  
Lieut.(jg) MORANVILLE, Horace Blake, A-1, USNR, 291317, VF 11  
Lieut. STRATTON, Elmer George, A-1, USNR, 301501, VF 7  
SANTOPADRE, Edward Xavier, AMM3c, V-6, USNR, 709 22 04

Swiss consulate Saigon telegraphs that these six men were "taken prisoner Indo Chinese authorities following air raid January 12". Body of E.A. SHIRLEY, ARM2c, 203 67 83, VT 4 (being processed as MIA) found Jan. 18. His plane crashed Saigon Jan. 12 - Navy 23603.

Disp. #21002, VT 45, 5 Feb. 1945. LAMBROS, FETZER, and SANTOPADRE - missing status cancelled since it is reported by the French mission through 14 AAFCOM NAV units that these men will be brought to Kunming since they were picked up by French with other U.S. Pilots.

Bulletin of survivors from French Military Mission, Kandy, around SEAC (SoEast Asia Con). 23 Jan 1945: American aviators in the region of Saigon on 12 Jan 1945 - two pilots received by the French Authorities:

Pilot Donald A. HENRY, slightly wounded being cared for at French  
(VT 4) hospital at Saigon.  
Lieut.(jg) S/Lieut. LYNCH, unhurt  
Lieut. Elmer STRATTON, EM 1st mobile force (VF 9 - Temp. VF 7)

37  
SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)

Lieut.(jg) S/Lieut. Pierre LAMBROS  
Lieut. Horace MORANVILLE  
Sergeant FETZER  
Sergeant Edward SANTOPADRE

All received by the French Authorities and are unhurt.

Speedletter VT 45, 13 Jan 1945: Ensign LAMBROS missing in action 12 Jan 1945 following an assigned air group mission.

Secret dispatch, from SacSea, 25 1111 (2) of January 1945: Info from French Military Mission, Kandy, Ceylon, states that HENRY and LYNCH have been picked up by French authorities in the vicinity of Saigon on 12 Jan. HENRY slightly wounded and now in French hospital, Saigon. STRATTON, LAMBROS, MORANVILLE, FETZER, SANTOPADRE, have also been recovered by French authorities and are safe. The above is the total information available from translation of French letter received here.

U.S. Naval Dispatch (visual system) DTG 180135 Jan: French mission reports through 14 AAF Com.Nav.Units: Ens. LAMBROS, FETZER and SANTOPADRE picked up by French with other U.S. Pilots. States they will be brought to Kunming.

Disp. #20662 from U.S.S. ESSEX, VT 4, 30 Jan 1945: SHIRLEY, Ellsworth Abbott, ARM2c, (T), 203 67 83, missing in action 12 January 1945.  
Lieut.(jg) Donald Augustus (al) 173471 is reported to be in friendly hands (refer 20661).

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority *NND 913096*

37  
SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)

1. VF 11 - U.S.S. HORNET      F6F      70680
2. Lieut.(jg) Horace Blake MORANVILLE, A-1, USNR, 291317,  
not carried as a casualty.

Disp. # (not logged) 170604 of Jan. from US.S. HORNET: MORANVILLE  
missing in action 12 Jan 1945. Since reported with friendly forces.

Secret Speedletter from U.S.S. HORNET, 27 Jan 1945:

MORANVILLE, Lt.(jg) missing in action, approximately 1630, 12 Jan.  
1945 when F6F-5, buno 70680 made forced landing in vicinity of Saigon,  
French Indo China, result of damage from enemy anti-aircraft fire. Pilot  
seen to walk away from plane apparently unhurt. CO Task Gr. 382 reports,  
"French mission reports picking up Lt. MORANVILLE after 12 January raid.  
States he will be sent to Kunming."

37

SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)

1. VT 45 TBM-3 68078  
U.S.S. SAN JACINTO

2. SANTOPADRE, Edward Xavier, AMM3c, V6, USNR, 709 22 04  
FETZER, Richard Dean, ARM3c, V6, USNR, 653 51 58  
Ens. Peter LAMBROS, A-1, USNR, 325538

Disp. #20964, VT 45, 5 February 1945:

SANTOPADRE and FETZER missing in action 12 Jan 1945 following an assigned air group mission.

Note: Disp. #21002 cancels report of missing status of these men and also one listed as missing in #20965. (LAMBROS) Missing in action following assigned air group mission 12 Jan 1945 - disp. from, VF 45, 5 Feb 1945; above notes added to this dispatch also)

Disp. #21002, VT 45, 5 Feb 1945:

LAMBROS, FETZER and SANTOPADRE, missing status cancelled since it is reported by French mission through 14 AAF Com.Nav. Units that these men will be brought to Kunming since they were picked up by French with other U.S. Pilots. (See logs 20964 & 20965) (Message relayed by Navy via visual system).

37

SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)

1. VF 7 U.S.S.HANCOCK
2. Lieut.(jg) Elmer George STRATTON, A-1, USNR, 301501,

Bulletin of Survivors,

French Mil. Mission, Kangy - 23 Jan 45: Lt. STRATTON received by French authorities and is unhurt.

(37)

SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)



1. VT 4 U.S.S. ESSEX

2. Lieut. (jg) Donald Augustus HENRY, A-1, USNR,  
no casualty record (reported in friendly hands)  
SHIRLEY, Ellsworth Abbott, ARM2c(T), USNR, 203 67 83  
carried as missing in action since 12 January 1945.

Letter, VT 4, 18 Jan 1945, forwarding inventory of personal effects:  
HENRY and SHIRLEY missing in action.

Disp. #20662, U.S.S. ESSEX, 30 Jan 1945: SHIRLEY is missing in action  
12 Jan 1945. HENRY is reported to be in friendly hands (refer to #20661).

Disp. from Swiss Consulate, Saigon relayed through Bern states body of  
E. A. SHIRLEY was found on 18 Jan 1945 following plane crash at Saigon  
on 12 January. Plane identified as "Navy 23603".

Bulletin of Survivors from French Military Mission, Kandy, SEAC (Ceylon)  
23 Jan 1945: American aviators in the region of Saigon on 12 Jan 1945.

Two pilots received by French Authorities.

Pilot HENRY slightly wounded being cared for at French  
hospital, Saigon.

*Henry reported killed while resisting capture - Report rec'd 9/12/45.*

37

SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)

ACTION REPORT COMAIRGR 4

Reel A 1405  
M S 106918

TBM-3C, Buno 23603

Attack against enemy shipping, Saigon River. Pilot: Lt.(jg) Donald Augustus HENRY, crewman Ellsworth Abbott SHIRLEY.

Believed hit by AA.

At 1330 (I) on 12 January 1945, the U.S.S. ESSEX launched 12 VF to attack enemy air facilities and shipping in the Saigon River near Saigon, French Indo-China and to escort 14 VT striking the same area; rendezvoused with TBM & F6F from the SAN JACINTO.

ACTION REPORT U.S.S. ESSEX

Reel A 1403  
M S 106832

12 Jan - TBM launched 1332 made final run on target not heard from again until word received he was slightly wounded but safe in French hospital Pilot now on way back to U.S. No word received on crewman. Missing in action: HENRY & SHIRLEY. Plane reported shot down, pilot slightly injured and in safe hands. It is unknown if SHIRLEY was rescued.

WAR DIARY U.S.S. HANCOCK

Reel 1403  
M S 10682, cont.

LYNCH, Joseph Otto - 2nd Lt.(NAVC) USMCR (028082) VMF 213. Reported in friendly hands.

BULLETIN OF SURVIVORS

From Fr. Mil. Mission, Kandy - 23 Jan 45: Lt. LYNCH, unhurt, received by French Authorities.

SECRET DISPATCH

SacSea, 25 1111 (2) of January 1945: Info. from Fr. Mil. Mission, Kandy, Ceylon states that LYNCH has been picked up by French Authorities in vicinity of Saigon on 12 Jan 1945.

(37)  
SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: AMLEGATION, Bern  
TO: Secretary of State  
DATED: March 2, 1945  
NUMBER: 1347

Legation has received from Swiss Foreign Office a note dated February 27 concerning American interest in Indochina (POWS). According to the note the Swiss representative in Saigon reports that the following information was furnished by the Government General of Indochina and concerns the six flyers named in the legations telegram No. 1202 of February 23.

International conventions concerning combatants arrested in neutral territory are applicable to aviators who landed January 12. These men are therefore subject to internment. Regret was expressed by the French authorities that for the time being they cannot give permission to the Swiss Consul to visit the aviators since the place of internment has not been decided. The Swiss Consul will be allowed to contribute toward their welfare. They are said to be in good health.

In addition, it is stated by the Swiss Consul that Augustin Donald Henry who parachuted to earth is, with French civilians, in safety. Shirley was a crew member of the plane which Henry piloted.

37

SAIGON POW CAMP (FRENCH INDO-CHINA)