CORRELATE DATA: On 10 December 1984, Maj Woodrow R. Vaden and SFC Dominick Sansone were advisors aboard a C-123 aircraft along with 31 Vietnamese paratroopers and a crew of seven. Their aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff from Danang, in the vicinity of BT105843, which is approximately 9km northeast of Danang, on Son Tra Mountain. Search and rescue personnel located the crash site and recovered numerous remains, one of which was identified by appearance at the site as, SFC Sansone, however, his remains could not be located during subsequent examinations at Danang and Tan Son Nhut. Upon arrival at Tan Son Nhut, remains assumed to be Vietnamese were interred before an examination by U.S. Specialists could be performed. The remains of Maj Vaden were never located. Maj Vaden is currently carried in the status of Dead, Body Not Recovered. The remains of SFC Sansone were returned to U.S. control by the SRV on 17 July 1984.

BACKGROUND/COMMENTS: Data relayed by the source is consistent with several reports concerning the apparent discovery of the remains of SFC Sansone and possibly those of Maj Vaden, during the excavation of graves at Mac Binh Chi Cemetery by the SRV. Although information pertaining to the location of the crash site is erroneous, this may be due to the hearsay nature of the information.

Source a 31 YOA male Vietnamese refugee and former Opl, reported information concerning the wreckage of an A-37 aircraft with alleged U.S. remains near Danang City.

Information:

Source stated that sometime during early 1984 while scavenging for metal on Son Tra Mountain (Monkey Mountain) he located the wreckage of a crashed A-37 aircraft with one complete set of large skeletal remains. Source stated that the crash site was located approx 960 meters up the southern side of Son Tra Mountain from Bai Trach Beach (BT 105615). Source stated that he found a dogtag with the remains but that one of the men (V/1) who was also scavenging took the dogtag to his home. Source saw the dogtag but could not recall any of the information printed on it according to Source. Source stated that he thought that the remains he found were American because of their large size and because of the dogtag. Source also found a pilot's helmet in the wreckage but could not remember any name or markings printed on it. Source speculated that the aircraft had crashed by accident since it had flown right into the side of the mountain and since the area was secure during the war. Source stated that part of the fuselage and part of the tail was remaining when he discovered the aircraft but that all of the metal had been scavenged when he departed from Vietnam. Source stated that he was the first person to find the aircraft and speculated that the communist authorities were unaware of its location.
Refugee Report & Preliminary Evaluation

Reference: HK84-092
24 September 1984

Source data: Source
Refugee report number & Date: HK84-092, 24 September 1984.

Analyst: SFC R. R. Hill

Ross reference(s): HK84-093

Category data: Crash site with alleged U.S. remains with identification media data/first hand account - Crash site with recovered remains/first hand account.

Findings: Review of data supplied by the source reveals a probable correlation to REFNO 0046.

Correlate data: On 10 December 1984, MG Woodrow B. Vaden and SFC Dominick Sansone were advisors aboard a C-123 aircraft along with 31 Vietnamese paratroopers and a crew of seven. Their aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff from Danang in the vicinity of BT095836, which is approximately 3km northeast of Danang, on Son Tra Mountain. Search and rescue personnel located the crash site and recovered numerous remains, one of which was identified by appearance at the site as, SFC Sansone. However, his remains could not be located during subsequent examinations at Danang and Tan Son Nhut. Upon arrival at Tan Son Nhut, remains assumed to be Vietnamese were interred before an examination by U.S. specialists could be performed. The remains of MG Vaden were never located. MG Vaden is currently carried in the status of Dead, Body Not Recovered. The remains of SFC Sansone were returned to U.S. control by the SKV on 17 July 1984.

Background/Comments: The alleged A-37 crash site with U.S. remains could not be correlated to data in JRC files. A check of all loss records indicated that a VNAF A-1 crashed in the vicinity of BT095836 on 31 October 1967, and could be the aircraft the source observed. Certain features of both the A-37 and the A-1 are similar, such as the tail section, which could be confused at a crash site, causing mis-identification. Identification media data mentioned could not be correlated since no specific information was provided. The crash site and the recovery of U.S. remains from a crashed C-123 on Son Tra Mountain probably correlates to REFNO 0046, based on location data provided by source.

Joe B. Harvey
LTC, USA
Commander

Disposition: JRC Liaison Office, Bangkok
JRC A&AS Files
OSD/ISA; FW-MIA Affairs
DIA, DC-2
JRC Refno File: 0046-0-02
AFMC/MPCC

This is not a final evaluation, this is a preliminary analytical position.