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 SECTION 1 OF 2  
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT CLASS ~~S E C R E T~~  
 DIST: 17 MARCH 1987  
 COUNTRY: LAOS  
 SUBJ: ABSENCE OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR AND DESCRIPTION  
 OF AT THE PHONKHEN REEDUCATION CAMP FROM SEPTEMBER 1975  
 TO SEPTEMBER 1976 AND NAKAY REEDUCATION CAMP FROM  
 SEPTEMBER 1976 TO JANUARY 1986  
 DOI: SEPTEMBER 1975 - JANUARY 1986  
 SOURCE:

SECRET

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TEXT: 1. ACCORDING TO [REDACTED]

THERE WERE NO AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR LOCATED AT PHONKHEN (WE 1738) REEDUCATION CAMP FROM SEPTEMBER 1975 TO ABOUT SEPTEMBER 1978 AND AT THE NAKAY (WE 2554) REEDUCATION CAMP FROM ABOUT SEPTEMBER 1978 TO JANUARY 1986. BOTH CAMPS WERE LOCATED IN KHAMMOUAN PROVINCE, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LPDR).

2. ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] IN SEPTEMBER 1975, ABOUT 50 POLICE PERSONNEL FROM THE RANK OF PRIVATE TO 2ND LIEUTENANT WERE GATHERED AT DONG KASEN, ALSO KNOWN AS (AKA) KHAMDOKMAI (WE 9809) VILLAGE. THEY REMAINED AT KHAMDOKMAI FOR ABOUT 17 DAYS AND WERE THEN RELOCATED BY TRUCK TO PHONKHEN VILLAGE, WHERE THEY WERE HELD IN REEDUCATION FOR ABOUT ONE YEAR. WHEN THE INMATES FIRST ARRIVED AT PHONKHEN THEY HAD TO SLEEP ON THE GROUND UNTIL THEY COULD CLEAR THE FOREST AND CONSTRUCT SHELTERS. THERE WAS NO FENCE AT THE CAMP. THE INMATES WERE GIVEN 800 GRAMS OF RICE PER PERSON PER DAY. FOR THE FIRST FEW MONTHS, EVERY 15 DAYS A WATER BUFFALO WAS SLAUGHTERED, BUT LATER ON THE MEN HAD TO FORAGE FOR ANY MEAT THEY RECEIVED. THE INMATES WERE FORCED TO REPAIR ROUTE EIGHT WHICH HAD BEEN DAMAGED DURING THE WAR. DURING THE FARMING SEASON THEY GREW RICE. DURING THE TIME AT THE PHONKHEN CAMP SEVEN INMATES ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE. HOWEVER, ALL WERE KILLED AS A RESULT OF THEIR ESCAPE ATTEMPTS. THE INMATES WERE GIVEN PROPAGANDA LECTURES WHILE AT THE CAMP.

3. IN ABOUT SEPTEMBER 1978, 43 OF THE INMATES FROM PHONKHEN WERE RELOCATED TO THOEN DOUAN, AKA NAKAY, TO BE DETAINED IN THE 74TH SETTLEMENT REEDUCATION CAMP. THE MOVE WAS DUE TO THE FACT THAT PHONKHEN WAS NOT A GOOD AGRICULTURAL AREA. IN LATE 1979, THERE WERE ABOUT SIX REEDUCATION BATTALIONS, NUMBERING APPROXIMATELY 2,000 MEN, WHICH WERE BROUGHT TO THE NAKAY CAMP. THESE MEN WERE FORMER ROYAL LAO ARMY PERSONNEL OF PRIVATE TO 2ND LIEUTENANT RANK FROM KHAMMOUAN AND SAVANNAKHET PROVINCES.

4. THE INMATES WERE PROVIDED WITH RICE AND SALT AND WHEN THEY FIRST ARRIVED WERE ABLE TO OBTAIN MEAT FROM AN ABUNDANT SUPPLY OF CATTLE AND WILD ANIMALS IN THE AREA. HOWEVER, IN ABOUT 1980, THE SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE AND WILD ANIMALS WAS PROHIBITED. POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION CONSISTED MAINLY OF INCITING THE INMATES TO HATE THE "IMPERIALISTS" AND TO ACCEPT THE COMMUNIST DOCTRINE. MEDICAL CARE DEPENDED ON LOCALLY PROCURED HERBAL MEDICINE.

5. THE INMATES WERE FORCED TO PERFORM HARD LABOR, SUCH AS ROAD REPAIR AND CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS AT THE CAMP. THE MOST DIFFICULT LABOR WAS THE PREPARATION OF RICE PADDY FIELDS WHICH CONSISTED OF CUTTING TREES, PREPARING THE SOIL AND CONSTRUCTION OF PADDY DIKES. EVERY DAY EACH INMATE WAS REQUIRED TO FULLY PREPARE A FOUR SQUARE METER AREA OF PADDY FIELD. EACH INMATE'S AREA HAD TO BE FINISHED IN ONE DAY REGARDLESS OF HOW LONG IT REQUIRED.

6. IN ORDER TO PREVENT ESCAPE, EACH INMATE WAS ASSIGNED ANOTHER

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INMATE TO WATCH TO PREVENT HIS ESCAPE. IF AN INMATE ESCAPED, THE MAN WHO WAS ASSIGNED TO WATCH THE ESCAPEE WAS PUNISHED.

7. AS OF JANUARY 1987, THE CAMP WAS ORGANIZED INTO FOUR COMPANIES OF 40-50 PEOPLE EACH, INCLUDING FAMILY MEMBERS. FAMILY MEMBERS HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO VISIT THE INMATES IN 1980. HOWEVER, ONCE FAMILY MEMBERS HAD BEEN TO THE CAMP THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THEIR HOME VILLAGES FOR FEAR THEY THEY WOULD REVEAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONDITIONS AT THE CAMP. THERE WAS NO POLICY TO RELEASE THE INMATES SINCE THEY WERE PROVIDING FREE LABOR FOR THE LPDR GOVERNMENT.



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