

# Disgruntled North Vietnamese Officer Defects To South

Editor's Note — Reporters in Viet Nam don't get to interview a Viet Cong defector before he is handed on to higher authorities for intelligence briefings. Hugh Mulligan, writing for stories near the Cambodian border, had for nearly an hour with a North Vietnamese officer.

By HUGH A. MULLIGAN  
 GIA NGHIA, South Viet Nam (AP) — Dang Trong, a Viet Cong second lieutenant, came out of the jungles on a steaming hot day with a few dried beans clutched in his hand. For him the war was over. He had had it. Lt. Trong had been walking for three months and four days. An infiltrator from North Viet Nam, he left a staging area above the 17th Parallel with a platoon of 28 men. Only 18 were left. Ten had died in the past year, four of starvation.

That in statistical form was Lt. Trong's story. How much he held back or how much he invented can only be ascertained by trained intelligence teams.

Trong said his orders were to get his men to Zone D, a vast jungle area 100 miles wide and 60 miles deep. Government troops have straddled only its fringes. The Viet Cong suspected to be staging a massive troop buildup there with fresh units infiltrated

from the North. But Trong, a North Vietnamese regular, never got there.

Instead, he slipped away from his men in the dense jungles of Quang Duc Province, somehow made his way to Route 14, walked into the nearest Montagnard village, and gave himself up.

He was given some beer and rice, which immediately made him sick, and was treated kindly by the raggedly uniformed popular force guards who man sandbagged outposts in the little hamlet.

The Montagnards passed Trong onto Gia Nghia, the province capital, where again he was treated kindly and taken to the officers club for beer and rice, while waiting to be shipped on to corps headquarters at Pleiku for extensive questioning.

Although he never heard of the expression, Trong was treated as a "chieu hoi" — received with open arms, which is what the program means in Vietnamese. The government's chieu hoi is designed to encourage defectors.

When he surrendered Trong had on the traditional black pajamas of the Viet Cong fighter. In the compound at Gia Nghia, where he chatted amiably through an interpreter, he was dressed in garrison fatigues which he had carried in his rucksack. His captors had

laundered them for him.

Trong had lost so much weight that the fatigue uniform hung loosely. His cheeks were deeply recessed, his eyes dull and hollow-looking and his arms thin and covered with leech bites. His sandals had been worn down at least a quarter of an inch.

Trong was hungry and tired and disenchanted. He said he had been led to believe at least four-fifths of the people of South Viet Nam were friendly to the Communist cause. But he found himself walking for weeks without being allowed to talk with anyone, friendly or unfriendly.

Some observers of the war doubt there is such a thing as the so-called Ho Chi Minh Trail, the series of trails through Laos and Cambodia for infiltrating men and supplies into South Viet Nam.

Trong had never heard it called by that name, but he said he crossed the border into Laos three miles above the 17th Parallel, walked south through Laos and Cambodia, then crossed into South Viet Nam in Darlac Province.

There his real troubles began. His 28-man platoon was part of a force of more than 400 being infiltrated at that time, he said. He never saw any of the others, because each platoon moves separately through

the jungles, and is passed from station to station.

The stations, Trong said, were always two days apart. Each station knew where the unit was heading next, and so directed them, but never knew where they came from. The lieutenant found such security procedures strange in a country where he had been led to believe the Communist were overwhelmingly popular.

Air Force and Navy bombers have been pounding the jungles with air strikes for months to prevent Mass Communist infiltrations.

Trong never saw or heard an air strike during his three months in the jungles, but he knew they must be awesome because people operating the jungle stations spoke of them in terrifying terms.

The jungles abound in fresh fruits and wild edible plants, but the lieutenant's platoon found themselves slowly starving to death. After a lifetime of eating rice, the jungle food made them sick. Malaria and dysentery killed six of his men.

Trong used to hoard his few handfuls of beans and rice to keep his men from trying to jump him and steal his fast dwindling supplies. The few beans he had when he walked out on Route 14 were all the food

he had left. Like the others he dared not pluck a banana or a mango from a tree.

The platoon was under orders never to fight. Their assignment was to get to Zone D and avoid contact with the enemy before getting there. They never dared shoot a deer or kill a lizard or snake to eat, lest government forces find their campfire or discover a carcass.

The lieutenant had gone north to join the Communist cause after the armistice with the French in 1954, but now he was 32, wiser and weary of war.

He spoke in an abstract way, as if it no longer concerned him, about the island of Hainan in the Gulf of Tonkin. He had been told that 200,000 Chinese troops were waiting there to join the war. No one had told him that the U. S. 7th Fleet was in the gulf waiting for that possibility.

He spoke of a Hanoi factory where machine guns and mortars were stamped with Chinese markings as they came off the assembly line, so that people in the South would get the idea that China was supporting the war in a big way.

Finally, he spoke of the jungles where his friends had died and his cause had vanished, and he said he never wanted to see those dense rain forests again.



# The Battalion



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## Water, Water everywhere, one For City

Brookings, Ore. (AP) — There was water, water everywhere around this coastal town 3,000 Tuesday except in the pipes of the Brookings Water Co. and city councilmen were so busy they decided to try to buy a new company, which has supplied the town with only a trickle of water Saturday.

There is plenty of water in the Pacific Ocean and in rivers and wells but the supplying company's reservoir is dry from less than normal rainfall. And in the emergency supply in Chetco River was tapped, the company's lines failed.

Schools were closed. So were restaurants, motels, taverns and other businesses.

No one was going thirsty. But residents were busy borrowing water from a lucky few with hoses, or hauling it from the river and then boiling it.

The water company promised water at noon. We still have no water," fumed Mayor Bruce Bly.

It's an engineering problem, we need someone who knows how to do it. We're told the water company's line will take about 100 pounds and then it blows," said Bly.

Henry Kerr, a council member, was named to head a committee to negotiate for purchase of the water company, or take other steps toward solving the problem.



A&M CONSOLIDATED TWIRLERS

Twirlers for the A&M Consolidated High School Band include, from left, Carol Whitling, head twirler, Wanda Marquart, Head

## Director Praises Navy Sealab Project

LA JOLLA, Calif. (AP) — The director of the Navy's Sealab 2 underwater research project, summarizing its achievements, said Tuesday: "We obtained our key goals. We proved that men can live in ocean depths without physical harm while they carry out work assigned them."

Sealab 2 is an underwater laboratory 205 feet deep off the Southern California coast. The third of three diver teams who spent 15 days each living and working there told about it at a news conference Tuesday morning. Each said it was the thrill of a lifetime.

Capt. L. B. Melson, project di-

rector, who visited the lab but wasn't a team member, said:

"We don't really know yet all that we have learned. It will take a long time to study and analyze information."

Undersea divers traditionally have been able to work for short periods in shallow depths, descending quickly and rising slowly to avoid the dread water pressure affliction, bends.

The Sealab series is aimed at finding ways to permit divers to stay in depths for long periods — days or weeks — and perform useful work, such as salvage, construction, research.

The last team came up Sunday.

All but one left a decompression chamber Monday. The team commander, Robert Sheats, a master chief torpedoman and veteran diver, suffered from bends and didn't get out until Tuesday morning. He wasn't at the news conference.

Sheats, 50, required an extra-long stay in the decompression chamber to remove helium gases that had built up in his body tissue due to water pressure. But a Navy spokesman said he was in good condition.

In all, 30 aquanauts spent a total of 45 days in the 12x58-foot, steel Sealab 2. The project began Aug. 26.

## Great Issues Presents U.S. Consul Tonight

Dr. S. R. Gammon III, 1946 Texas A&M graduate and U. S. consul general at Asmara, Ethiopia, will give a Great Issue Discussion Series talk at 8 p.m. tonight.

The graduate of Stephen F. Austin High School in Bryan will give his talk in the Assembly Room of the Memorial Student Center.

Dr. M. T. Harrington, A&M's director of foreign programs, urged a large attendance to hear Gammon, who is here visiting his parents, Dr. and Mrs. S. R. Gammon. The elder Gammon is former head of the Department of History and Government at Texas A&M.

After graduation from high school, Gammon began United

States Army service and later returned to A&M where he earned his bachelor's degree. He attended Princeton University and was awarded a master's degree in 1948.

From 1949-50 he was International Rotary Foundation Fellow at the University of London.

During the Korean War from 1950-52, he served overseas as a captain in the Army. He earned a Ph.D. from Princeton in 1953. Prior to entering the Foreign Service in 1954 he served as an instructor at Emory University in Georgia.

Gammon was a foreign affairs aide to Vice President Johnson for two years.

The free public program is under joint sponsorship of the Office of International Programs and the Great Issues Discussion Group.

## Noted Scientist Joins Faculty

An internationally renowned oceanographer, Dr. Luis R. A. Capurro, of Argentina has joined the Texas A&M Department of Oceanography as a research scientist.

Capurro is president of the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research, an international organization with representatives from 36 nations.

Listed in Who's Who in Argentina, Capurro was recently appointed to the Upper Mantle Project of the International Council of Scientific Unions. With other scientists, he will study the first 1,000 kilometers of the earth's crust.

He will attend an Oct. 28-30 meeting of SCOR in Marseilles, France, and address the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, a division of UNESCO, Nov. 2-12 in Paris.

Capurro is also president of

the National Committee on Oceanography, vice president of the Intergovernmental Commission on Oceanography, a member of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, American Geophysical Union, International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, International Council of Scientific Unions, and a charter member of the special committee on oceanic research of ICSU.

Since 1961, Capurro has been working in physical oceanographic and marine biology projects in the Southwest Atlantic and Antarctic regions for the Argentine Navy, in which he is captain.

The native of Buenos Aires earned a doctor of science degree at the University of Buenos Aires, plus an M.S. degree from the University of California's Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

## Grad Record Exam Set For Dec. 10-11

The Graduate Record Examinations (Institutional Testing Program) will be administered on Dec. 10-11 to all seniors scheduled to graduate in Jan., 1966.

The Aptitude Test will be given on Dec. 10, and the Advanced Test Dec. 11.

Students may register for the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) at the Counseling and Testing Center in the Academic Building, Room 107, after filing for the degree in the Office of the Registrar and after paying the fee for graduation in the Fiscal office.

## Aggie Sweetheart Cheri Holland: Girl Of Varied Interests, Talents



BEAUTY QUEEN

Aggie Sweetheart was a queen also in high school. A&M Consolidated graduate was homecoming queen, representative girl and a Miss Teenage America of station semifinalist during her senior year at the College Station high school.



KINDERGARTEN TWIRLER

Cheri had ambitions of being a majorette way back in kindergarten. She realized this goal, serving as a twirler with the A&M Consolidated High School band.



ANIMAL LOVER

All her life, Cheri loved animals. Here, at age 12, she holds her pet cat Daisy which she still has. Dogs have also been a favorite around the Holland house.



TALENTED SINGER

Cheri is also fond of music—and very talented at it. In high school she sang with the Trezettes which included Diana Weirus, left, and Peggy Breazeale. The group has appeared in campus hootenannies and were guest performers for the Cotton Ball Pageant in 1964. Cheri is a voice major at TWU.