

REPORT OF BOARD OF OFFICERS, 229TH ASLT HELICOPTER BATTALION, 1ST
CAVALRY DIVISION, which convened at 1815 hours, 3 January 1966.

NOTE: The following abbreviations are used in this procedure:

PRES: President or senior member of the board
RCDR: Recorder or junior member of the board
MBR: member of the board

PRES: This hearing will come to order.

RCDR: The board is appointed by paragraph 1, Unit Order #1, Headquarters,
229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile
APO San Francisco, California 96490, dated 3 January 1966.

RCDR: The following members of this board are present:
CAPTAIN JOSEPH W. BEGERS JR, 084268, HHC, 229th Aslt Hel Bn, 1st Cav
CAPTAIN ROBERT L. BLANKENSHIP, 05311165, Avn Co, 7th SF Gp, 1st SF,
1st Cav Div
CWO CHARLES E. NAY, W3151613, Co A, 5th Avn Bn, 5th Inf Div, 1st Cav

There were no members absent.

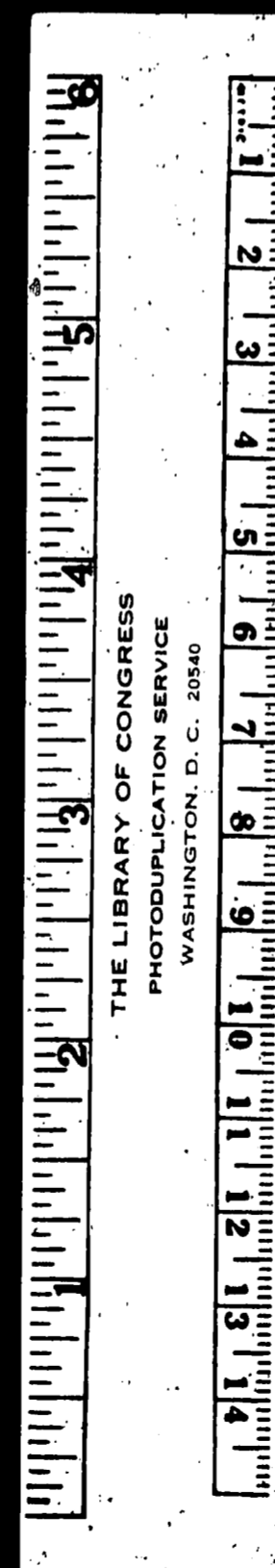
PRES: This board of officers convened to determine the whereabouts of CWO
Kenneth L. Stencil, W3151099; CWO Jesse D. Phelps, W3151731; SP5
NAME of Avn Co, 7th SF Gp, 1st SF, 229th Aslt Hel Bn, 1st Cav Div, whose
status is reported as unknown.

RCDR: Request appointing order to be attached to these proceedings and
marked "Exhibit A".

PRES: The appointing order will be attached to the board proceedings and
marked as requested.

RCDR: The board will be sworn. All members rise and raise right hand.

RCDR: Do you Captain Joseph W. Bejers and Robert L. Blankenship, swear that
you will faithfully perform all the duties incumbent upon you as a
member of this board; that you will faithfully and impartially examine
and inquire, according to the evidence, your conscience, and the laws,
and regulations provided, into the matter now before you without partiality,
favor, affection, prejudice, or hope of reward; that you will
find such facts as are supported by substantial evidence of record;
that, in determination of those facts which are in dispute or are
difficult of proof, you will use your professional knowledge and best
judgement and common sense in weighing the evidence, considering the
probability or improbability thereof, and with this in mind will
regard as established facts those which are supported by evidence



deemed most worthy of belief and that you will make such recommendations as are appropriate to; warranted by, and consistent with your findings, according to the best of your understanding of the rules and regulations for the government of the Army, Department of the Army policies, and the customs of the service, guided by your conception of justice, both to the Government and to the individuals concerned. So help you God?

EACH MEMBER: I do.

PRES: You, CWO Charles E. Nay, Do swear that you will faithfully perform the duties and functions of recorder of the board. So help you God?

RCDR: Does any member of the board desire to be advised as to the laws, regulations, or orders concerned in this hearing?

RCDR: I have no opening statement.

RCDR: The first witness to be called is CWO Vincent J. LeDuc.

RCDR: Do you CWO LeDuc swear that the evidence you shall give in the case now in hearing shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help you God?

WITNESS: I do.

RCDR: State your full name, rank, grade, SN, branch of service, organization and station.

WITNESS: Vincent J. LeDuc, CWO-3, W2205178, Co A, 5th Avn Bn, 229th Aslt Hel Bn, 1st Cav Div, An Khe, Vietnam.

RCDR: Explained to witness why the board had convened and instructed the witness to tell the board what he knew of the whereabouts of CWO Stancil, CWO Phelps, *NAMEs*

WITNESS: On 28 December 1965 at approximately 0550 hours, my clerk advised me, the assistant operations officer of Company B, 229th Aslt Hel Bn, that he has finished loading food and supplies unto 808, a helicopter of Company A (Avn Co, 7th SF Gp), 229th Aslt Hel Bn, of which the previously mentioned personnel were crew members. At approximately 0555 I observed the takeoff of what I assumed to be this same aircraft from the Golf Course helipad. As it was still dark outside, I could not positively identify the aircraft as being 808; however, I did watch it takeoff to the north and turn toward the east, enroute to its destination in the field. At this time I went into the operations tent and listened on the radio while 808 called to inform its operations that it was airborne and enroute to its destination. Approximately eight to ten minutes later I monitored a radio conversation between 808 and company A's forward support element concerning the present weather conditions at their destination. They received the reply that it was misting and that the ceiling was unknown. 808 then replied, and I remember this exactly, "The pass does not look bad from here,

however, I am having trouble seeing the ground". I heard nothing else on the radio.

PRES: What was the weather at your location?

WITNESS: It was very dark, and stepping outside the operations tent I could not see the horizon toward the east. However, my eyes were unaccustomed to the dark, but it was definitely dark.

PRES: Have you seen any of the crew since then?

WITNESS: No.

RCDR: The next witness to be called is Major Detwiler.

RCDR: Do you Major Detwiler swear that the evidence you shall give in the case now in hearing shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. So help you God?

WITNESS: I do.

RCDR: State your full name, grade, SN, branch of service, organization and station.

WITNESS: Harvey C. Detwiler, Major, 081412, Transportation Corps, Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Division, APO San Francisco, Calif 96490.

RCDR: Explained to witness why the board had convened and instructed the witness to tell the board what he knew of the whereabouts of CWO Stancil, CWO Phelps, *NAMEs*

WITNESS: I was notified that aircraft number 63-8808 was missing at approximately 280715 Dec 65. A search was initiated at 280730 December 1965. Initially it involved two OH-13's and two UH-1D's and one OIE. The major area of search centered on the An Khe Pass, the western and eastern slope of the ridge running north of the An Khe Pass. A total of 23 sorties were flown the 28th. The search continued at 0800 hrs on 29 Dec. The search was conducted six kilometers east and west of the An Khe Pass, 18 kilometers north and 12 kilometer south. A total of 40 sorties were flown the 29th. The search continued on the 30th with a total of 49 sorties flown. The search area was extended to include Mong Yang Pass. 40 sorties were flown on the 31st. Sorties mentioned averaged two and one half hours each. No trace of the missing aircraft or personnel were found.

PRES: What is the enemy situation in the area of the flight path of UH-1D 63-8808.

WITNESS: The aircraft flying in that area have received sporadic sniper fire on numerous occasions.

RCDR: Does any member have further questions? There being no further questions, the witness was excused.

RCDR: The next witness to be called is Sgt Smith.

RCDR: Do you Sgt Smith swear that the evidence you shall give in the case now in hearing shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help you God?

WITNESS: I do.

RCDR: State your full name, rank, grade, branch of service, SN, organization and station.

WITNESS: Charles R. Smith, SSgt, RA15273136, Co A, 229th AHB, 1st Cav Div, An Khe, Vietnam.

RCDR: Explained to witness why the board had convened and instructed the witness to tell the board what he knew of the whereabouts of CWO STANCIL, CWO PHELPS, *NAMES*.

WITNESS: I was in the vicinity of the forward support area on 28 December 1965 in Company A's operations tent. At 0605 hours, aircraft 808 called on the radio and informed me that they were off Golf Course helipad and inbound to my location. They asked me where they were to park, and I informed them that they were to park in the same area that they had parked in the previous night. They then asked how the weather was at my location, and I informed them that the visibility was good, and that I could see some stars. I said that the ceiling was approximately 2000 feet. They then asked me if the pass was clear, and I said that I did not know. I asked them about the weather in An Khe, and they said it was good. I advised them that there would be a guide available for parking, and signed off the air.

PRES: Do you recall any transmission from 808 regarding the weather at the Pass?

WITNESS: No.

PRES: Did you instruct 808 to change radio frequencies?

WITNESS: No. I wanted them to remain on the same frequencies for parking instructions.

MBR: After the aircraft was late in arriving, did you attempt to contact them?

WITNESS: Yes I did, due to the fact that the food was late. I could not reach them by radio, so I searched the sky and saw nothing. I could see the pass, as dawn was breaking by that time.

PRES: Have you seen any of the crew since then?

WITNESS: No.

RCDR: Does any member have further questions? There being no further questions, the witness was excused.

RCDR: There are no other witnesses to be called.

The board closed with all members present and considered the facts and evidence received.

SUMMARY: On 28 December 1965 at approximately 0555 hours, aircraft 808, with the aforementioned crew, did depart Golf Course helipad for a flight of approximately fifteen (15) minutes to a forward support area east of Golf Course, and over a relative secure flight path, although occasional sniper fire had been observed at times. For four days since the disappearance of 808 an intensive search had been made of the surrounding area by H-13's, UH-1D's and OH-6A's, at an altitude from tree top level to 2000 feet absolute, and no trace of an accident, wreckage, bodies or material was found, and that as of this date the whereabouts of the aircraft and crew is unknown.

RECOMMENDATION: It is the recommendation of this board that CWO STANCIL, CWO PHELPS, *NAMES* should be listed as Missing in Action, as no evidence has been discovered to warrant any other classification.

Joseph W. Segers, Jr.
JOSEPH W. SEGERS JR.
Captain, Infantry
President

Robert L. Blankenship
ROBERT L. BLANKENSHIP
Captain, Artillery
Member

Charles E. Nay
CHARLES E. NAY
CWO W2 Avn
Recorder