



NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-6000

Case: 103558
29 September 2025

JOHN GREENEWALD
27305 W LIVE OAK RD
SUITE 1203
CASTAIC, CA 91384-4520

Dear John Greenewald:

This responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated 8 February 2018 for "Copy of records, electronic or otherwise, of Airborne Reconnaissance Incident History (1949-1960) which is DOCID: 3901186...." A copy of your request is enclosed. Your request has been processed under the FOIA. The document you requested is enclosed. Upon completion of our review, there remains some information within the document that still requires protection.

Although NSA has no objection to the release of the NSA equities, the Office of Secretary of Defense-Joint Staff (OSD-JS) has withheld information that has been found to be currently and properly classified in accordance with Executive Order 13526. The information meets the criteria for classification as set forth in Subparagraph (c) and (d) of Section 1.4 and remains classified SECRET as provided in Section 1.2 of Executive Order 13526. The information is classified because its disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause grave damage to the national security. Because the information is currently and properly classified, it is exempt from disclosure pursuant to the first exemption of the FOIA (5 U.S.C. Section 552 (b)(1)).

In addition, personal information regarding an individual has been withheld from the enclosures in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(6). This exemption protects from disclosure information that would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. Balancing the public interest for the information you request, against the privacy interests involved, we have determined that the privacy interests sufficiently satisfy the requirements for the application of the (b)(6) exemption.

This Agency reasonably foresees that disclosure of the withheld information would be harmful to an interest that is protected by the identified exemptions.

Since these withholdings may be construed as a partial denial of your request, you are hereby advised of this Agency's appeal procedures. If you decide to appeal, you should do so in the manner outlined below. NSA will endeavor to respond within 20 working days of receiving any appeal, absent any unusual circumstances.

- The appeal must be sent via U.S. postal mail, fax, or electronic delivery (e-mail) and addressed to:

NSA FOIA/PA Appeal Authority (P132)
National Security Agency

Case: 103558

9800 Savage Road STE 6932
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6932

The facsimile number is 443-479-3612.

The appropriate email address to submit an appeal is: FOIA_PA_Appeals@nsa.gov.

- It must be postmarked or delivered electronically no later than 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. Decisions appealed after 90 days will not be addressed.
- Include the case number provided above.
- Describe with sufficient detail why you believe the denial of requested information was unwarranted.

You may contact our FOIA Public Liaison at foialo@nsa.gov for further assistance and to discuss any aspect of your request. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Rd. - OGIS
College Park, MD 20740
ogis@nara.gov
877-684-6448
(Fax) 202-741-5769

Sincerely,



SALLY A. NICHOLSON
Chief, FOIA/PA Division
NSA Initial Denial Authority

Encls:
a/s

This document is made available through the declassification efforts
and research of John Greenewald, Jr., creator of:

The Black Vault



The Black Vault is the largest online Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
document clearinghouse in the world. The research efforts here are
responsible for the declassification of hundreds of thousands of pages
released by the U.S. Government & Military.

Discover the Truth at: **<http://www.theblackvault.com>**

17 June 1992

TO: NCR DEFENSE

SUBJECT: JOINT STAFF EFFORT ON COLD WAR POW/MIA ISSUE

At 0930L this morning I attended a session chaired by Maj Gen Ryan, JS, to discuss a task levied by SecDef regarding Cold War POW/MIAs. Essentially, a listing of missing U.S. personnel who may have been captured by the former Soviet Union, PRC or North Korea. The most likely candidates for such are downed U.S. reconnaissance assets. However, any know seaborne assets should be considered as well. The "hot war" Vietnam era will also be provided as an addendum. The completed task is due to the SecDef on Monday. Gen Ryan has asked all parties to appear this afternoon in 2E1010 to continue working on this tasker. He cautions that eventually this data - in some form or other - will be made public. However, he is perfectly willing to discuss intelligence community data in an "off line" mode. He stresses, however, that we owe the SecDef as honest a picture as we can present. He specifically asked that CIA and NSA be present this afternoon and ready to contribute (if appropriate).

Separately, ADM Cramer has asked if we have "anything to add to the list or any SIGINT confirming that Soviets have U.S. prisoners."

That need not necessarily be product; it was very apparent during this morning's session that the "official" U.S. explanation for some of our losses and what really happened might be two different stories. Gen Ryan stressed that this group needs to know the truth.

Regards,

(b) (1)
OGA

Per OSD-JS

(b) (6)
OGA

Per OSD-JS

Documents handed out at morning
session attached

TIMEFRAME IS 1946-1989, "THE COLD WAR."

COLD WAR AIRCRAFT LOSSES

The United States Air Force and Navy have provided the Department of Defense with information on 21 loss incidents that occurred during the "Cold War." The incidents occurred from April 1950 to April 1969. Of the 21 cases on the list the cases can be broken down into the following categories:

- 4 all crewman recovered; resolved
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This list does not include aircraft lost during combat mission in Korea, those on training flights; those known to have gone down for mechanical malfunctions or those not lost in proximity to a Communist landmass.

Doc ID: 6907024

Doc Ref ID: A6736290

DATE	TYPE A/C	PLACE	NUMBER LOST	STATUS	SOURCE
4/8/50	Privateer	Baltic	10	unres	B, D/no resp
11/6/51	PV-2	SOJ	8/10	unk	B/NFI
11/19/51	C-47	Hungary	4 cap	ret	A
6/13/52	B-29	SOJ	12	unk	A,B,C/NFI
10/7/52	B-29	SOJ	8	res/unres	A,B,,C/admit
1/18/53	P2V	Formosa	6	unk	D
7/29/53	RB-50	SOJ	17/1sur 2 rec	unres	A,B
4/7/54	B-29	SOJ	1 unrec	unk	B
9/4/54	PV-2	SOJ	1 unrec	unk	B
*4/18/55	RB-47	Norpac	6 unrec	unk	B
*4/18/56	RB-47	*	*	*	B
8/22/56	P4M	Formosa	16		B/PRC
9/10/56	RB-50	SOJ	16	unres	B/poss wx
12/23/57	T-33	Czech	1 cap	ret	A
6/27/58	C-118	Armenia	9 cap	ret	A
9/3/58	C-130	Armenia	17/4rel 2unk	13MIA	A,B/dem
5/1/60	U-2	USSR	1	ret	A/Powers
7/1/60	RB-47	Barents Sea	6/1ret 2 rel/3 MIA	3 MIA	A,B/admit
9/17/65	?	PRC			B/NFI
12/14/65	RB-57	Black Sea	?	unk	B
8/21/67					B
4/14/69	C-121	SOJ	29	unres	BD

Sources

A: USAF 9 NOV61/B: USAF 22NOV91/C: USAF CASO 28OCT91/D: USN 18NOV 91

JOINT STAFF ACTION PROCESSING FORM

Doc ID: 6907024 J-3	CLASSIFICATION 6290 SECRET/HVCCO	ACTION NUMBER
THRU J-31 _____ J-33 _____ J-36 _____	ORIG SUSPENSE	
SUBJECT Airborne Reconnaissance Incident History (1949-1960) (U)	ACTION	SJS SUSPENSE
	APPROVAL	J SUSPENSE
	SIGNATURE	
	X INFORMATION	

ACTION SUMMARY

1. ~~(S)~~ Purpose. To provide a summary of the approximate 30 airborne reconnaissance missions which were flown during the period 1949-1960 that resulted in international incidents and/or the loss of manned aircraft platforms.

2. (U) Background.

a. (U) Prior to late 1960, airborne reconnaissance was managed primarily by the individual services who kept the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed of their individual activities.

b. ~~(S)~~ During the period 1949-1960, there were 32 airborne reconnaissance missions flown which resulted in international incidents and the loss of 13 manned aircraft platforms.

c. (U) Provided at Enclosure* is a summary of those specific airborne reconnaissance missions. The area of occurrence of each particular mission is approximate.

Reference:

*Airborne Reconnaissance Mission Summary (1949-1960)

~~THIS PACKAGE IS CLASSIFIED SECRET WHEN REFERENCE* IS REMOVED~~

COORDINATION/APPROVAL					
OFFICE	NAME & DATE	EXT	OFFICE	NAME & DATE	EXT
STRAT		72203			
RECON		50581			
ACTION OFFICER/DIV/PHONE MAJ JIM BOLAND, JRC, 50581, FILE 1518					
DATE PREPARED 15 JUN 92	CLASSIFICATION SECRET/HVCCO		Classified by DIRECTOR, J-3 Declassify on OADR		

b10-5

1949-1960

PRIOR TO LATE 1960, RECONNAISSANCE WAS PRIMARILY MANAGED BY THE INDIVIDUAL SERVICES WHO KEPT THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF INFORMED OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. DURING THAT PERIOD, HOWEVER, MORE THAN 30 INCIDENTS OCCURRED RESULTING IN THE LOSS OF 13 MANNED RECONNAISSANCE PLATFORMS.

DATE	TYPE MISSION	AREA OF OCCURENCE	REMARKS
22 Oct 49	ELINT	Sea of Japan.	USAF RB-29 fired on by Soviet fighters. Damage/casualties unknown.
8 Apr 50	OSAP	Baltic Sea	USN FB4Y2 shot down by Soviet fighters. Crew lost.
3 Jun 51	Photo	East China Sea, east of Shenyang	USAF RB-43 fired on by PRC fighters. No damage.
6 Nov 51	OSAP	Sea of Japan, 110nm east of Vladivostok	USN P4V probably shot down by Soviet fighters. Crew lost.
23 Jan 52	ELINT	Baltic Sea, off of Latvia	USN P4M fired on by Soviet fighters. No damage.
11 MAY 52	OSAP	Korea Bay	USN PBM fired on by unk Mig-15 fighters. No damage.
13 Jun 52	Weather	Sea of Japan	USAF RB-29 probably shot down by Soviet fighters. Crew lost.
16 Jul 52	Weather	Korea Bay, 45nm SE of Port Arthur	USAF RB-26 attacked by fighters. No damage.
31 Jul 52	OSAP	Korea Bay, 60nm SE of Port Arthur	USN PBM-5 attacked by fighter. No damage.
20 Sep 52	OSAP	East China Sea, 50nm east of Shanghai	USN P4Y fired on by PRC fighter. No damage.
7 Oct 52	Photo	Vicinity Nemuro Strait (Hokkaido-Kuriles)	USAF RB-29 disappeared after merging with two Soviet fighters. Soviets admitted firing on the aircraft and claimed airspace violation. Crew lost.
21 Nov 52	OSAP	East China Sea, 110nm east of Shanghai	USN P4M attacked by PRC fighters. No damage.
15 MAY 53	Photo	N. Pacific, 50nm east of the Kamchatka Penin.	USAF RB-30 fired on by Soviet fighters. RB-30 returned fire and took evasive action. No damage.
22 Apr 53	OSAP	East China Sea, SE of Shanghai	USN P4M fired on by PRC fighters. No damage.

~~SECRET~~~~HANDLE VIA COMINT OR INTELL ONLY~~

DATE	TYPE MISSION	AREA OF OCCURENCE	REMARKS
29 Jul 53	ELINT L	Sea of Japan, 50nm SE of Vladivostok	USAF RB-50 shot down by two Soviet Mig-15 fighters. Co-pilot recovered by US destroyer, rest of crew lost.
2 Oct 53	OSAP	Yellow Sea, 25nm off Shantung Peninsula	USN FBM fired on by PRC fighters. Major damage.
6 Nov 53	OSAP	Yellow Sea	USN FBM attacked by PRC fighters. No damage.
18 Nov 53	OSAP	East China Sea, off Shanghai	USN FBM attacked by PRC fighters. No damage.
22 Jan 54	Photo	Korea Bay, 20nm west of Korea	USAF RB-45 and F-86 escorts attacked by North Korean fighters. No damage to US aircraft. One Mig destroyed.
3 Aug 54	Photo	Yellow Sea, 40nm SE of Dalian	USAF RB-29 fired on by PRC fighters. No damage.
4 Sep 54	ELINT L	Sea of Japan, 40nm SE Vladivostok	USN P2V shot down by two Soviet probable Mig-17 fighters. Crew lost.
18 Apr 55	Unk L	N. Pacific, east of Kamchatka Pen	USAF RB-47 lost, possibly to Soviet fighters.
22 Jun 55	OSAP L	Bering Strait, off SE coast of Chukotsk Penin	USN P2V shot down by Soviet fighters. Crash landed on St. Lawrence Island. Crew rescued.
18 Apr 56	Photo L	Kamchatka Penin	USAF RB-47 shot down by Soviet fighters. Crew lost. Soviets claimed overflight.
11 Apr 56	ELINT	Yellow Sea	USAF RB-50 fired on by PRC fighter. No damage.
10 Sep 56	ELINT L	Sea of Japan	USAF RB-50 possibly lost to Soviet fighters. Crew lost.
10 Jul 58	ELINT	N. Pacific, off Kamchatka Penin near Petropavlovsk	USAF RB-50 exchanged fire with Soviet fighters. No damage.
4 Sep 58	COMINT L	Soviet Armenia across Turkish border	USAF C-130 shot down by Soviet fighters. Crew lost. Six of seventeen bodies returned.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~~~RESTRICTED FOR COMINT~~

DATE	TYPE MISSION	AREA OF OCCURENCE	REMARKS
Nov 58	ELINT	Baltic Sea, east of Gotland Island, 66nm from Soviet territory	USAF RB-47 fired on by Soviet fighters. No damage.
6 Jun 59	OSAP	Sea of Japan, 30nm from Korean DMZ	USN F4M fired on by two North Korean Mig fighters. One crewman seriously wounded.
1 MAY 60	Photo	Sverdlovsk, USSR	CIA U-2 shot down by surface-to-air missile. Pilot, Francis Gary Powers, tried, convicted, and sentenced. Later traded for Soviet spy.
Jul 60	ELINT	Barents Sea, 40nm N of Kola Peninsula	USAF RB-47 shot down by Soviet fighter. Two crewmembers survived, returned to US.

1961-1973

Doc ID: 6907024

Doc Ref ID: A6736290

B)U-b

SINCE THE INITIAL STEP TOWARD CENTRALIZED MANAGEMENT IN 1960,

ERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN RECONNAISSANCE-RELATED INCIDENTS. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INCIDENTS BETWEEN 1961 AND 1973 WERE LESS THAN HALF THE PREVIOUS PERIOD AND THERE HAVE BEEN NONE SINCE EARLY 1973. HOWEVER, THERE WERE THREE LOSSES DURING THE PERIOD: THE U-2 OVER CUBA DURING THE MISSILE CRISIS IN 1962; THE PUEBLO OFF THE COAST OF KOREA IN 1968; AND THE EC-121 OVER THE SEA OF JAPAN IN 1969.

Per OSD-JS

(b) (1)
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THE NAVY PROGRAM WHICH UTILIZED SHIPS SUCH AS THE PUEBLO HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED;

DATE	TYPE MISSION	AREA OF OCCURENCE	REMARKS
2 62 30 AUG	Unk	Sakhalin Island	US U-2 shoot down attempted by Soviet fighters after aircraft inadvertently violated airspace.
17 Oct 62	Photo	Cuba, 15nm east of Holguin	USAF U-2 shot down by surface-to-air missile. Pilot lost.
19 Oct 62	Photo	Cuba, San Julian	Two USAF RF-101 aircraft received 27mm fire. No damage.
13 Oct 64	OSAP	La Perouse Strait	USN P2V fired on by Soviet surface-to-air missile. Slight damage.
28 Apr 65	ELINT	Sea of Japan, 80nm from North Korean coast	USAF RB-47 attacked by two North Korean Mig-17 aircraft. Fighters made six firing passes, RB-47 returned fire. Heavy damage.
2 Aug 66	OSAP	Yellow Sea	USN P-3A fired on by PRC mine sweeper. Minor damage.
7 Apr 67	OSAP	East China Sea, 70nm SW of Shanghai	USN P-3 fired on by two PRC trawlers. No damage.
17 APR 7 67	OSAP	Yellow Sea	USN P-3A fired on by North Korean naval craft. Minor damage.
3 Jun 67	SIGINT	Mediterranean, off ARE coast	USS LIBERTY attacked by Israelis. Heavy loss of life and damage to ship.

Doc ID: A6736290
~~SECRET~~

Doc Ref ID: A6736290
~~HANDLE VIA COMINT CHANNELS ONLY~~

DATE	TYPE MISSION	AREA OF OCCURENCE	REMARKS
23 Jan 68	SIGINT (L)	Sea of Japan, off Wonsan	USS PUERLO captured by North Koreans. One crewman lost, remainder returned.
20 Jul 68	OSAP	Yellow Sea, 150nm NE of Shanghai	USN P-3 fired on by PRC minesweeper. No damage.
15 Apr 69	SIGINT L	Sea of Japan, 82nm from North Korean coast, SE of Chongjin	USN EC-121 shot down by a North Korean Mig fighter. Crew lost.
2 Jul 70	COMINT	East China Sea, off Shanghai	USAF C-130 reacted to with intent to shoot down by two PRC Mig-19 fighters. Aircraft aborted, no damage.
11 Jul 70 NOT ON GRAPHIC	COMINT	Adriatic Sea, off Yugoslavian coast, vicinity Molat Island	USN EC-121 intercepted by two Yugoslav Mig fighters which attempted to force the aircraft to land (unsuccessful). No damage.
17 Nov 70 NOT ON GRAPHIC	ELINT	Barents Sea, off Novaya Zemlya	USAF KC-135T intercepted by four Soviet Mig fighters. One Mig fired two volleys parallel to line of flight. No damage, no hostile intent.
21 Mar 73	COMINT	Mediterranean Sea, 104nm off Libyan coast	USAF C-130 fired on by two Libyan MIRAGE fighters. C-130 descended into clouds, lost fighters. No damage.

TOTAL

148
(see attached)
N.K. on file

~~SECRET~~

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17 June 1992

TO: NCR DEFENSE

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D

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