



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS
DIVISION



B-179296

Edwin R, Jr.

June 26, 1979

The Honorable Ed Bethune
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Bethune:

Your May 9, 1979, letter requested our assistance in obtaining information for Mrs. Donna Darr concerning her husband, Air Force Captain Charles E. Darr, who was reported missing after his plane was shot down over Hanoi on December 21, 1972.

On May 30, 1979, we discussed this matter with Ms. Denis Luptak of your office and contacted Mrs. Darr. We also contacted the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) because it handles Freedom of Information Act requests and had previously furnished Mrs. Darr copies of many documents that she had requested.

According to the above sources, the Department of Defense, in response to Mrs. Darr's request, deleted parts of 5 documents furnished to her and denied 11 other documents. Since the act provides for the courts to arbitrate complaints concerning the withholding of records by Federal agencies, the General Accounting Office is not authorized to adjudicate the propriety of such actions. However, in response to your request, we visited the Department of Defense and reviewed the contents of the 16 documents that Ms. Luptak requested we examine for relevant information. We did not make copies of any of the documents.

The first five documents contain correlated material, which means the information therein is directly related to Captain Darr. The remaining 11 documents contain uncorrelated material or general information not related to a specific individual.

The deleted portions of the five correlated documents refer to matters such as deployment concept, tactics, target coordinates, anti-aircraft gun emplacements, an analysis of enemy air defenses, and vulnerabilities and capabilities of the aircraft.

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The 11 uncorrelated documents contain information from non-American sources about prisoner-of-war camps in Vietnam. Ten of these documents contain information dated 1971 or earlier and, therefore, do not apply to Captain Darr. The remaining document contains information from the 1975 time period and is characterized as highly questionable hearsay from a foreign national concerning American prisoners of war in general, with no reference to specific individuals.

We hope that this information will be helpful to Mrs. Darr.

Sincerely yours,


for R. W. Gutmann
Director