

Peking story (American prisoners in China) - correspondence, letters and ca...

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Peking story - 1955

26 May - 17 June

Waldock, Humphrey (Prof., All Souls
College, Oxford, England)

- 1 letter to Per Lind (+ 1 encl.)
- 1 letter from D.H.

26 May 1955

Dear Humphrey,

At the end of last month I visited London but, unfortunately, again only in transit and I was, therefore, not able to get in touch with you. I sent you through the United Nations Information Centre the prints from the beach at Hawaii which I hope you have received. I now want to tell you that your fears as to the cost were unfounded, in fact I had to pay only \$1.28 for the prints, which means that I still owe you \$7.29. Is there anything I could buy for you on this side, or how would you like me to repay you?

May I take this opportunity of sending you a copy of a letter addressed to the Secretary-General which is somewhat puzzling to us. I wonder whether the writer of the letter could be the person who, I understand, came to see you in London before our departure for Peking with regard to the fate of his son. If I am right in this assumption, would you please search your memory in order to give any clarification of the matter and facilitate our replying to the letter.

Sincerely,

Per Lind

Professor Humphrey Waldock,
All Souls College,
Oxford, England

COPY

Rectory Farm, Kittisford, Wellington
Somerset.

Tel: Greenham 236

The Secretary-General
The United Nations,
Dear Sir,

I am the father of a British (RAF) pilot attached to the 77th R Australian Squadron - Flying Officer F H G BOOTH - who was hit in action in North Korea in January 1953 and of whose survival as a prisoner in enemy hands there must still remain a possibility, however remote. Information as to the confident opinion of his fellow pilots that he had landed alive and indications that he was still alive on the following day, though not official were sufficiently trustworthy and authentic and bore sufficient weight to induce the two members of your delegation to Peking, who I saw in London, to assure me that they would make special enquiries, and I understand that through the British Charge d'Affaires there they presented a note concerning my son which was accepted by the Chinese authorities and was not rejected as had been the previous note put up by the British Foreign Office, last June I think.

As recent reports in United States newspapers seem to hint at fairly imminent developments in the matter of the imprisoned USA personnel, I am greatly hoping that information about my son will be given at the same time, but as your mission was primarily pressing only for the release of the known United States prisoners, it may well be that the special note about my son will be ignored, if that happens. I shall be most grateful if I may be told anything that is known as to the relations between the Chinese and North Korean governments. Is it possible or thought likely that North Korea would be holding men prisoner without the knowledge of the Chinese? If the Chinese do release the USA prisoners I imagine that fresh efforts will be made by your Commission in Korea to get the North Koreans to accept the list of missing, supposed alive, which I believe was presented in July last and which the North Koreans (or ? and Chinese) refused to look at.

Should your Commission decide to take further action I would most earnestly beg that my son's name should be included in their list it was not included in the July list as this I understood was confined strictly to those men who had been reported by returned prisoners as having been alive, and I was told that the inclusion of the name of one

who was known by the North Koreans to be dead might prejudice the value of the whole list, but need this last argument still apply as my son's name surely will now have reached the North Koreans through your delegate's action in Peking.

If you wish I will let you have details of the information to which I referred at the beginning of my letter. This as I said was not official but came from the 77th Squadron and the map readings etc. had been obtained by them from the United States Air Force headquarters. I feel sure that more weight will be given to an enquiry for a man thought to be alive than for one merely stated to be missing so I beg that you will give my request your earnest consideration.

Yours faithfully,

L. G. Booth

10/4/1955

17 June 1955

Thanks for the message transmitted by Per and for the trouble you have taken to clarify the situation.

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I understand your interest in the background of the release of the four. I think that a good way to inform you is to send you the enclosed memorandum of a conversation of mine with the Chinese Ambassador to Stockholm on 23 April as well as a copy of Mr. Chou En-lai's letter concerning the release of the four. The conclusion seems to be obvious without any comments or analysis.

I hope that somehow and somewhere we will meet soon again. There is so much I would like to tell you which you might find interesting in the light of our common venture.

D.H.

Encl.

Professor Humphrey Waldoek, C.M.G., O.B.E., Q.C.,
D.C.L., M.A.
All Souls College
Oxford, England