

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

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Dag Hammarskjöld's sand.

Peking story - 1955

1-9 Aug.

Corresp. conc. 1st Lt. P.M. Darakis

a.) Darakis, John (Amherst, Ohio)

- 1 letter to D.H., 1 Aug.

b.) Cordier, A.W. (Exec. Assist. to D.H.)

- 1 letter to J.W. Barco (U.S. Mission to the U.N.)
4 Aug.

c.) Armour, N. (U.S. Mission to the U.N.)

- 1 letter to A. Cordier, 3 Aug.

COPY

Amherst, Ohio
1 August 1955

To: Mr. Dag Hammarskjold

Dear Sir,

I haven't written you before, though many times something urged me to do so. I heard that through your efforts our boys who are prisoners of war are being released. I wrote to Pr. Chou-en-Lai two months ago. I have no way of knowing if my letter left this country, and of course have received no reply as yet from him, if I ever will. There is always talk of the 11 airmen and before that the 4 airmen. What about the other airmen who are being held and nothing is ever said of them. Are they, just because of this, going to become the forgotten men, to stay in prison for something they were ordered to do and had no choice but to obey orders, like my son and his observer are two men of many others? I have continually written the State and Air Force departments and always received a routine reply. Also wrote the President twice and finally received an answer that so far there was no proof that my son died in the plane crash, and he may be a prisoner and all was being done that was possible, etc. which I have faith something was being done, but it has been just a lot of soft soaping so far, and all talk. I have never for one moment believed, and it is now 2 1/2 years that my son is dead. There has been nothing to tell me so. We are a close family, and I knew a week before that something was going to happen to him, and when the telegram came it was not too much of a surprise, but he did not die in the plane crash as they told me, he did, Day after day is that waiting for news of him, there is no relief at all for me, and I can't stop trying to get help for him, but so far everywhere I've turned its agzinst a blank wall. Recently, my husband and I returned from a tour of our United States and we stopped at the home of Capt. Fisher. He was in Washington, but we talked to his parents and they told us how helpful you had been. So will you please help us too in your fight to get our men, all of them released. Will write you details and please god you will be able to do something. My son, 1st Lt. Peter M. Darakis, Serial No. A02 224 197 of the 6148th Tactical Control Air Group, or known in Korea as the "mosquito Squadron", who on March 10, 1953 was shot down with his Observer Sgt. Price of North Carolina, while on a mission for the Rocks, "which I have always questioned", out of Chunchon Koreanto Northern Korea; this happened in the morning of the day after he got back from the first rest period he had since getting to Korea, this was supposed to have been 7000 meters north of the Communist line. He flew a T-6 type aircraft known as the spotter plane; now the Government based the boys death on no radio contact. I have letters here that say that when they needed their radio, the most it had concked out, all the equipment the boys had was of poor quality, and the boys should never be written off as dead with just this poor proof or excuse. Something has to be done is all. I'm getting tired of all this waiting and saying nothing. They knew where to find my son when they needed him. They also made a promise to him and the other men, which fact seems to be over-looked. All you hear is, they made a promise to Nationalist China and all that rot, but they also made a promise to the men they took from their homes and jobs. I just heard the 11 were released.

Well how about the rest now. My son is alive over there somewhere and I want him back. What in heaven's name must a person do to get results. I never thought when my son went over there that some day I would have to beg for someone to help him to be found. I've got to do something. So far I haven't let myself get bitter about all this, but I sure have stopped sitting back and hoping our State Department or Air Force to do something, which they probably just laughed at my letters and wrote me off as a foolish woman. Well my son is too fine a son to be left to fate. We have always felt privileged to be his parents, as our other two sons, who were in the Second World War, one in Pacific where his carrier was sunk by a jap suicide plane, and through God his life was spared; the other in England with the Engineers, so you see it is not new to us, and why I feel the way I do. I have written at length and hope I have made myself clear. Please try your best, don't you too, do like the others and say it is all finished, because now is the time to make them give us all the men back. They have always denied holding men, but you see, they have them. Let me know what I can do. We will do anything in our power. We are not poor people. If that will help any. My people were of German descent, and always proud of being so. Please, will you help?

Sincerely,

(Signed) Mr. and Mrs. John Darakis
R.D. No. 1, Leavitt Rd.
Amherst, Ohio.

4 August 1955

Dear Jim,

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I am enclosing herewith a copy of a letter received by the Secretary-General from Mr. and Mrs. John Darakis regarding their son, 1st Lt. Peter M. Darakis.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew W. Cordier
Executive Assistant to the
Secretary-General

Mr. James W. Barco,
Minister,
Counsellor of Mission,
United States Mission to the United Nations,
2 Park Avenue,
New York 16, N. Y.



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

2 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK 16, N. Y.
MURRAY HILL 3-6810

August 9, 1955

Dear Mr. Cordier:

In the temporary absence of Mr. Barco I would like to acknowledge your letter of August 4 enclosing a copy of the letter received by the Secretary-General from Mr. and Mrs. John Darakis regarding their son, 1st Lt. Peter M. Darakis.

The enclosure has been sent to the Department of State for their information.

Sincerely yours,

Norman Armour, Jr.
Norman Armour, Jr.

Mr. Andrew W. Cordier,
Executive Assistant to the
Secretary-General,
United Nations, New York.

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