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SUBJ: DETAILS CONCERNING DETERMINATION OF MISSING-IN-ACTION (MIA) STATUS TO LCDR BARRY THOMAS COOKE, USA, [REDACTED] AND LT PATRICIA KELLY CORCORAN, USA, [REDACTED] (U)
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INHS/1. (U) THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS A SUMMARY OF THE FACTS AND DETAILS SURROUNDING THE LOSS OF AIRCRAFT SIDE NUMBER 631, BUREAU NUMBER 16692, AND ITS CREW, LCDR BARRY THOMAS COOKE, USA, [REDACTED] LT PATRICIA KELLY CORCORAN, USA, [REDACTED]

AND PROVIDES THE RATIONALE FOR THEIR CLASSIFICATION AS MISSING-IN-ACTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFERENCE A. REFERENCES B AND C ARE THE FINAL CASUALTY REPORTS WHICH CHANGE THE STATUS OF B'S FROM DUBIOUS TO MIA/HOSTILE.

2. ON THE MORNING OF 2 FEBRUARY 1991, HEARTLESS 631 WAS FLYING AN ARMED SURFACE RECONNAISSANCE (ASR) MISSION IN THE NORTHERN ARABIAN GULF. ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN AND AROUND THE FAYLAKA ISLAND AREA WERE FORECAST TO BE: CLOUDS, 1000 FEET SCATTERED, 3000 FEET SCATTERED, 6000 FEET BROKEN WITH RAIG SHOWERS IN THE VICINITY; VISIBILITY, 2 TO 4 NAUTICAL MILES IN FOG, HAZE, AND SMOKE; WINDS, FROM THE NORTHWEST AT 6 TO 12 KNOTS; TEMPERATURE, 57 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT; SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURE, 70 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT; SEAS, 3 TO 6 FEET. THE PILOT OF AN AIRCRAFT PARTICIPATING IN THE SAR EFFORT, HEARTLESS 643, REPORTED THE VISIBILITY TO BE 4 TO 6 NAUTICAL MILES IN HAZE WITH WINDS ON THE SURFACE TO BE LIGHT AND VARIABLE FROM THE WEST. AIRCRAFT 631 WAS LAST SEEN EAST OF KUMHAT CITY AND APPROXIMATELY 2 TO 4 MILES SOUTH OF FAYLAKA ISLAND (VIC 2922N-04818E) HEADING NORTH WEST. HEARTLESS 631 WAS OPERATING AS A SINGLE AIRCRAFT, INVESTIGATING A REPORTED SURFACE CONTACT. THE CREW OF HEARTLESS 631 REPORTED SEEING ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY (AAA) FIRE AND AN SA-7 SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE (SAM) BEING LAUNCHED AT THEM.

3. THEY WERE OBSERVED ON TWO OCCASIONS SUBSEQUENT TO THEIR VOICE REPORT OF AAA/SA-7 BEING FIRED. ELAPSED TIME OF APPROXIMATELY FIVE MINUTES BETWEEN THE INITIAL VOICE REPORT OF HOSTILE FIRE AND SIGHTING BY ANOTHER A-6 (TIGER 606) INDICATES THAT THEY SUCCESSFULLY EVASIVED THAT INITIALLY REPORTED THREAT. TIGER 606 LEFT THE OPAREA BRIEFLY FOR REPELING PURPOSES. HEARTLESS 631 WAS LAST OBSERVED AT APPROXIMATELY 0618Z (1136L) SOUTH OF FAYLAKA ISLAND (VIC 2922N-048 18E) HEADING IN AT 600 FT IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE AN ATTACK RUN ON A SMALL IRAQI PATROL BOAT LOCATED WITHIN TWO MILES OF THE ISLAND LAND MASS. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, RADAR AND RADIO CONTACT WAS REPORTED LOST ON HEARTLESS 631 BY THE CONTROLLING AGENCY LOCATED ON A CRUISER, AND A COMBAT SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) MISSION WAS INITIATED IMMEDIATELY.

4. TIGER 606 WAS THE FIRST AIRCRAFT BACK ON THE SCENE AT APPROXIMATELY 0639Z (1136L) AND WAS TASKED TO ASSUME THE ON SCENE COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES IN AN ATTEMPT TO CONTACT/LOCATE HEARTLESS 631. THE EXTENSIVE SEARCH THAT ENDED UTILIZED THE MOST CAPABLE ASSETS PRESENT IN THE NORTHERN ARABIAN GULF. AT APPROXIMATELY 0645Z (1149L), TIGER 606 WAS BELIEVED OF HIS DUTIES OF SAR ON SCENE COMMANDER BY HEARTLESS 633 PILOTTED BY THE SQUADRON'S EXECUTIVE OFFICER. BOTH AIRCRAFT RECEIVED NUMEROUS REPORTS OF HOSTILE FIRE FROM FAYLAKA ISLAND AND BUBIYAN ISLAND TO THE NORTH.

5. THEIR COMBINED SEARCH DID DISCOVER A MOST PROBABLE WATER IMPACT POINT, VIC 2927N-04814E, WITH AN A-6 SPECIFIC 400 GALLON FUEL TANK, OIL/FUEL SLICK, AND DISTURBED WATER. ALL OF THE INDICATIONS OF HEARTLESS 631'S WATER IMPACT WERE AT THE ABOVE LOCATION AND MATCH A PROJECTED FLIGHT PATH OF THE AIRCRAFT AND CREW AS THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN ENGAGED BY HOSTILE ENEMY AAA FIRE/SAM'S FROM FAYLAKA ISLAND ON A SOUTH EAST TO NORTH WEST RUN SIMILAR TO THE LAST SEEN FLIGHT PROFILE (BY TIGER 606 AT 1115 - PARA 3). THERE WERE NO RADIO SIGNALS

RECEIVED FROM ANY SOURCE, ALTHOUGH BOTH AIRCREW WERE CARRYING PPC-1124 AND ONE PPC-90 PERSONAL SURVIVAL RADIO EACH. THERE IS VISUAL INDICATIONS OF AN ATTEMPTED EJECTION BY EITHER CREW MEMBER NO PERSONAL SURVIVAL GEAR NOR EJECTION SEAT COMPONENTS WERE SEEN DURING THE CRITICAL SAR, OR ON ANY REVISIT TO THE SCENE SUBSEQUENT TO THAT TIME UP TO AND INCLUDING THIS WRITING.

6. DURING THE SAR-EVAL EFFORT, TWO SMALL IRACI PATROL BOATS (DESCRIBED TO BE SIMILAR TO 25'-30' (FIBERGLASS PLEASURE CRAFT) SEEN TRANSMITTING BETWEEN EL ZAHN HARBOR ON FAYLAKA ISLAND AND KUMHAT CITY PENINSULA ON THE MAINLAND. THESE BOATS RECEIVED NUMEROUS ROCKET AND IRON BOMB ATTACKS FROM THE SAR AIRCRAFT AND MADE A DIRECT LINE BETWEEN THE TWO HARBOR AREAS, WHICH APPEARED SOME MEASURE OF SAFETY. AT NO TIME DID THEIR INTERFERE WITH THEM CLOSER THAN TWO NAUTICAL MILES FROM THE PROBABLE WATER IMPACT OF HEARTLESS 631. THEIR LACK OF INITIATIVE TO SEARCH THE IMPACT SUPPORTS THE ON SCENE EVALUATION BY SAR ASSETS THAT THE PROBABILITY OF OTHER SUCH CRAFT HAVING PICKED UP SURVIVORS DURING THE 1136L 1138L PERIOD WHILE NO ON SCENE AIRCRAFT WERE PRESENT, IS A REMOTE ONE.

7. THE SEARCH FOR BOTH CREWMEMBERS CONTINUED UTILIZING THE EP-3, AND AIRS BEYOND SUNSET (APPROXIMATELY 1710 LOCAL). ALL AIRBORNE UNITS WERE SPECIFICALLY LISTENING FOR ANY DISTRESS CALL, EMERGENCY LOCATING BEACONS. THE FORMAL SEARCH WAS TERMINATED AT 03 FEBRUARY WITH LOCAL UNITS CONTINUING TO MONITOR THE SCENE FOR ENDSIGNALS AND INDICATIONS OF ANY SURVIVORS OR EJECTION ATTEMPTS. REPEATED MISSIONS IN THAT AREA ARE CONDUCTED DAILY, BUT NO FURTHER DEBRIS FROM 631 HAS BEEN SEEN.

8. BASED ON THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ABOVE IT IS MY CONCLUSION THAT SURVIVORS DO NOT EXIST BUT IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT HOWEVER IN THE PROBABILITY, THE POSSIBILITY DOES EXIST, THAT IN THE PERIOD 20 MINUTES DURING WHICH TIGER 606 WAS NOT IN THE LOCAL AREA, THE AIRCREW OF HEARTLESS 631 MAY HAVE EJECTED AND EMERGENCYLANDING BEEN RETRIEVED BY HOSTILE FORCES, WHICH THEN CLEARED THE AREA PRIOR TO TIGER 606'S RETURN. THAT UNLIKELY BUT THEORETICAL SCENARIO, COM WITH THE ABSENCE OF THE BODIES TO CONFIRM THE DEATH BEYOND DOUBT LED ME TO LIST BOTH LCDR COOKE AND LT CORCORAN AS MISSING-IN-ACTION (MIA). I HAVE REQUESTED A SALVAGE CREW/DIVER BE COMMITTED TO EX THE SCENE AS SOON AS HOSTILITIES SUBSIDE IN THE PRESUMED IMPACT, IN ORDER TO GAIN FURTHER EVIDENCE WHICH COULD CONCLUDE WITH CERTAINTY THE ACTUAL FATE OF THE CREW.//

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