

MEMORANDUM

June 16, 1998

TO: Jeremy Gunn

CC: Jim Goslee
Andrew Funk
Laura Denk
Marie Fagnant

FROM: Doug Horne

SUBJECT: "NBR" Recommendation for Portions of the FBI File on Former U.S. Army Enlisted Man Thomas R. Peasner, Jr.

Thomas Peasner was an Army enlisted man captured by the enemy during the Korean War, and held in a POW camp by the Chinese Army. In November 1963, he was working as a piano player in Jack Ruby's Carousel Club in Dallas. Reportedly, he bought a .22 caliber rifle with a bad check on or about November 9, 1963, and then "disappeared," *i.e.*, left his employment at the Carousel Club for parts unknown, prior to the assassination on November 22, 1963.

The FBI has retained in its files the extensive, formerly classified U.S. Army debriefing records of Mr. Peasner and his fellow POWs. Although the Army's position is that the records no longer constitute "classified material," they do consider the contents of POW debriefings extremely sensitive, and wish to withhold the details in Mr. Peasner's file pertaining to his own statements about his captivity, and the statements of his fellow POWs about him during captivity, under privacy grounds [Section 6 (3)], for a period of ten years.

As Military Records Team Leader, I support this compromise position reached with the Army's Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Directorate. Initially, the Army wanted to withhold the entire file on POW privacy grounds--see attachment 1. Subsequently, I discussed the issue with Mr. Bert Haggett, and he agreed on May 20, 1998, that it would be acceptable to release the fact that Mr. Peasner was a POW, where he was held prisoner and by whom, and the dates and general circumstances of his captivity (such as camp number, location, etc.). Subsequently, Mr. Hagget and I worked together on what should be opened, and what should be temporarily withheld, under this negotiated arrangement; on June 16, 1998, the Army approved this compromise position re: Mr. Thomas Peasner on POW debriefing privacy in writing--see attachment 2.

Recommendation:

The Review Board's guidelines for NBR information state that where information in a record under review truly has no apparent relevance to the assassination, and where the information appears, on its face, to fall within one of the specific grounds for postponement, the record fits within the Review Board's definition of an "NBR" record. Since these criteria have been met for the portions of the Peasner file related to the informational details of POW debriefings, **the staff recommends that all portions of the Peasner file highlighted in yellow--the details of debriefing statements of former POWs--be declared "NBR" and postponed for ten years, until 2008.** In following this staff recommendation, the Review Board would be releasing all essential portions of this file (namely, the *facts* in Peasner's POW internment, as opposed to unsubstantiated and conflicting hearsay), while simultaneously showing the appropriate sensitivity for POW issues requested in attachment 1 by both the Army, and the Defense Prisoner of War Management Office (DPMO).