

# DISPOSITION FORM

For use of this form, see AR 340-15; the proponent agency is The Adjutant General's Office.

REFERENCE OR OFFICE SYMBOL	SUBJECT
MACOI-A	Censorship Charges, case of, AFVN January 1970

TO	FROM	DATE	CMT 1
Col V.E. Ludwig, USMC DCINFO - MACOI	OIC, AFVN	22 August 1970 MAJ DOVE/hhm/T-3885	

1. Specialist 5 Robert Lawrence during the 2300 newscast on 3 January 1970 stated that the news broadcasts over AFVN were censored and that anyone trying to stop this policy had been taken off the air and given menial jobs or reassigned. Because of these charges and the play given them by all the commercial media an investigation was conducted by the MACV Inspector General. That investigation concluded that AFVN was operating within the policies established by the Department of Defense for the American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) and that there was no censorship at the Network.
2. The IG's investigation required Specialist Lawrence to indicate specific instances of censorship which he or others had observed. There were a total of 23 such instances cited by him over a six month period. Of these a number of items were actually broadcast. In the case of those which were not broadcast there were valid reasons, within existing policy guide lines, for not using them.
3. Some of the instances Lawrence pointed out involved a CBS report on David Dillinger (July 69), an ABC report on Cambodia's recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (July 69), an ABC background report on the U.S. 9th Infantry Division departure, a video tape actuality of congresswoman Margaret Heckler with her criticism of allegedly defective armored vests used in Vietnam, and three reports from CBS on the situation at Ben Het (July 69). These reports were not used because they were either dated, unsupported by facts, or more propaganda than news.
4. The 23 cases cited came from 180,000 items screened and some 12,000 news items which were broadcast over AFVN during the six month period; a total of some 700 hours of news broadcasting. It should be pointed out that the network receives its news copy from wire service news reports, the AFRTS news service, and taped and filmed reports from both AFRTS and commercial networks. Because the amount of material received far exceeds that which can be aired, there is a selection of items for use on the newscasts. Specialist Lawrence expressed the view that he and the other newscasters individually should have full authority to make such editorial choices. However, they felt that if their superiors made such choices, this was censorship.
5. The material used at AFVN represents various points of view from among commercial commentators as well as public figures in the news. AFVN has on several occasions carried news and commentary which have been unfavorable to the U.S. Government and to the U.S. Armed Forces.

It was found that the extent to which unfavorable news items were used was such that the allegation of censorship of unfavorable news items was considered by the

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investigators to be completely unfounded and unsupported.

6. Senator Frank E. Moss, Chairman of the House Government Information and Foreign Relations Subcommittee, in an independent investigation into the matter, stated at his exit briefing that he found no evidence of AFVN news censorship in the legal sense or in his own personal definition of the word.



F. K. PRICE

LTC, USA

Officer in Charge

- 2 Oct <sup>69</sup> - AFVN wire service (AFVNS) reporting alleged news censorship. 31 AFVN wire service item "Censorship" wire service report indicated news censorship. AFVNS wire service report also indicated Senator Young and Representative Ables (Ohio) were listed.
- 7 Oct - MACV replied SP-5 Maxwell and eight others, including USMC CPL Fred Jackson signed a complaint alleging ten instances of news censorship, most noted withholding VP Kyle's cocktail party statement on numbers involved in Phase II Redeployment.
- 8 Oct - CINCPAC replied to SECDEF.
- 17 Oct - SECDEF reopened above with specific questions to answer Senator Javits and Senator Fulbright. Allegations made by SP-5 Maxwell, Mr. Kieffer and Mr. Black. One of these was identified as an ex-AFVN; the other not known.
- 25 Oct - CINCPAC replied to SECDEF.
- 22 Dec - Letter from Mr. John Broger requesting information to base a reply to Senator Muskie concerning one of the allegations in Maxwell's list, regarding Dr. Willis Thompson. Correspondence attached to Broger's letter indicated one of the AFVN EM had written Muskie in August.
- 23 Dec - ASD/M&ERA letter received requesting information to reply to Congressman Wylie (Ohio) who had received Maxwell's letter refuting the IG report on his original allegations.
- 24 Dec - CINCPAC to MACV by mail for info to reply to Broger regarding Senator Muskie and Congressman Wylie. No replies as yet.
- 30 Dec - ASD/M&ERA requested info regarding SGT Morgan incident.
- 4 Jan - MACV reply. Morgan made editorial remark on TV newscast disrespectful of VP Agnew.
- 4 Jan - CINCPAC requested information regarding UPI story on SP-5 Lawrence.
- 5 Jan - MACV reply: SP-5 Lawrence alleged censorship during his TV newscast. (Supported by AFVN LM sportscaster who followed.) Last from wire service accounts.
- 13 Jan 70 - ASD/M&ERA requested certain information to use in answer to query from Senator Tydings concerning reasons for SGT Morgan's transfer. Tydings further requested that action taken against SGT Morgan be reversed immediately without prejudice.

- 1 Jan - MACV answered queries raised by Senator Tydings and recommended that SGT Morgan remain in present assignment.
- 15 Jan - CINCPAC concurred in MACV answers to Senator's questions and went along with MACV recommendation that SGT Morgan remain in present assignment.
- 18 Jan - MACV IG report on Lawrence delivered to SECDEF.
- 23 Jan - SECDEF requested detailed and specific information with which to respond to White House and Congressional queries on allegations of improper investigative practices involving SP-5 Lawrence.
- 26 Jan - Mr. Broger informed CINCPAC and J74 that Congressman Moss and Committee would hold open hearings in Saigon.
- 27 Jan - COMUSMACV answered three allegations per SECDEF request. CINCPAC concurred in answers and forwarded to SECDEF.
- 31 Jan - STATE 311721Z Jan 70 announced Congressman Moss' itinerary, 15-18 Feb, Vietnam; 4-5 Mar, Honolulu.

INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED

SP5 Michael C. Maxwell, USA

CPL Rick A. Frederickson, USMC

(Seven others signed letter requesting clarification of policy to news chief at AFVN)

SP5 Robert Lawrence, USA

CPL Thomas E. Sinkovitz, USMC (named only because of wire service stories saying he followed Lawrence's newscast and support him)

SGT Randall H. Morgan, USAF ( I believe this is an unrelated incident and MACV's message indicates this.)

SP4 Lynn Packer, USA

(R&R Honolulu and AFVN, Quang Tri, reiterates censorship charges over TV and in Honolulu papers.)