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TITLE: DEFENDERS OF KHAM JONG

Life among the Vietnamese Nama anti-aircraft gunners difficult and dangerous. Easier to count quieter hours than That. how many times a day do they have to clinging to the guns, watch for approaching American planes and fight them. Ten, and sometimes and the alarm sounds at the positions twenty times a day. And now, when battery commander Ha Huy Quang only began the story about the last contractions, with observation post reported that A group of Americans is approaching Thanh Hoa Kan fighters...

We met with the warriors of this brigade in May. They then gave us miniature images of the American fighter "F-101" (Voodoo), made by soldier stami from the remains of the plane they shot down in the first battle at the Ham Zhong Bridge. Then the battery position was close to power plants. Now the guns are standing rice fields, from where the bridge is clearly visible.

You probably won't find another one in Vietnam. Gogo object to which the American aviation would drop as many bombs as to the Ham Zhong Bridge. It is thrown between two mountains above the deep river Ma near the city of Thanh Hoa. I didn't have a chance see him the way he was created People. Only documentary footage but yes, the photographers captured his great beauty.

The first time I came to these places was several to months ago. We heard then about major American air raids to the Hai Zhong Bridge, but didn't imagine all the consequences of the barbaric bombardments nimble Near the river Ma they told us, that crossing to the other side will be dem ia ferry: mine? damaged. Night stood moonlit, bright Na Kham-Zhong it was painful to watch: distorted farms, spans that collapsed into the water...

Bridges have become one of the main target which are attacked by the American aviation. From the first raids on territory of the Democratic Republic ki Vietnam on the pages of American newspapers flashed photographs of the destroyed ny bridges. Secretary of Defense McNamara smugly demonstrated such pictures in front of reporters, praising the power and accuracy of its bomb strikes aviation. American propaganda sts make a lot of effort to instill in people the idea that Vietnam Nama bridges are purely military installations. No, American aircraft are bombing bridges in North Vietnam not because that soldiers could walk across them. Co- The United States has taken a course towards undermining throughout the economic life of the country, on creating difficulties in transportation in agriculture Republic of Vietnam. Ham Zhong Bridge is one of the largest greatest in the republic. It was commissioned atation on May 8, 1964. How happy we were then Vietnamese builders! They knew, that it is needed to speed up development of the national economy of the republic ki. It is for this reason that the American airline inflicts the most frequent and powerful new blows.

Raids are carefully designed Once upon a time, in the area of the high-rise bridge, hundred passed the American-Russian intelligence officers. Then they're on a huge the speed flew right over the bridge. Soon dozens of bombers were approaching tel to the Do Len Bridge near Thanh- Hoa. Anti-aircraft gunners shot down three enemy aircraft plane, but they failed to save my g. One American jet fighter the fighter tried to attack suddenly Ham-Zhong. but was shot down and fell ashore rivers. He ordered the fighters to appear other planes. They walked in groups 12-15 cars. Echelon after echelon for- they went to bomb anti-aircraft gunners They were met with fire. One of the sa- flight, second, third... But the raid is not walked away. It lasted five long hours.

Next to the soldiers they fought bravely people's militias from a small village Nam-Ngan vushki. They fired at the pikes fired at the planes with rifles and guns Lemetov, bandaged the wounded, they stole ammunition. Among the brave There was also a girl Nguyen among the bridge guards Thi Hang, which was told about in the pages of Pravda. (Recently Ngu- en Thi Hang visited the Vietnamese Nama delegation in Moscow).

The next day the attack was repeated las. Enemy planes did not intermittent entries. Trying to show anti-aircraft gunners' fire, they suffered the brunt attack on the artillery positions. In two more than a day were dropped on Ham Zhong 800 bombs weighing from 250 kilograms to tons each. The planes were released it has hundreds of missiles of various calibers.

And then I drove through here twice more. People fought for the bridge, despite stopping raids. And he, how- the wounded soldier continued to remain to be in the ranks, to serve your republic ike.

The anti-aircraft gunners always had to beat attacks. Who has been to the tropics? he knows how stuffy it is here during the day. It is incredibly difficult for a person to work in these conditions. Anti-aircraft gunners had to fight off attacks for several hours in a row ki. Only in the area where the ba- Second Lieutenant Ha Huy's taree Kuanga. was thrown over the stump 200 bombs.

At one time, raids on the bridge were almost disappeared. There were only a few pop- then attack him in small groups. But reconnaissance planes often came here ki. And across the wounded bridge there was a new massive snow blow was carried. Again Bombs fell, rockets exploded.

One of the major raids on Ham- Zhong was personally commanded by the Minister of Defense US citizens McNamara, who arrived with special social visit to South Vietnam. IN photographs appeared in American newspapers fii, on which a smiling McNama- ra stood wearing a headset on board an aircraft carrier tsa "Independence": he just clicked on the catapult button and released the bomb bardier on another raid nv De- wet Republic of Vietnam. 17 American planes headed for Ham-Zhong. To ensure success in a reconnaissance plane was sent to this area chik "PV-57". and then unmanned reconnaissance aircraft

An easy walk among the American Pi- there were no lots. They had to How much to pay for this raid.

Vietnamese anti-aircraft gunners shot down four planes, including an unmanned reconnaissance aircraft. One of the first to be shot down was an American plane.

Rican lieutenant colonel in charge th raid. He jumped out of a parachute Tom was caught from the Ma River, where fell. The lieutenant colonel's plane crashed in kilometer from the bridge. Was in the same battle another American pilot was captured lot, also jumped out with a parachute. He hung from a coconut tree

In August and September attacks by aa Ham- The zhong continued. Total American aviation bombed and strafed more than 40 times poured it, dropping about one and a half thousand a thousand bombs and over a thousand missiles. In ra- a radius of several tens of kilometers from the bridge lie the remains of 13 shot down there are American planes here. A lot of the air pirates collapsed into the sea.

Vietnamese comrades showed me interesting documents taken from the American Rican pilots. Sending pilots in raids on the Democratic Republic ku Vietnam, American command generously supplies them with all kinds of information literature and other things, starting from a miniature automatic ra- radio transmitter to chewing gum n tablets for insomnia.

Here are Lieutenant David M. Christian's documents. They detail his hair and eye color, height, weight, band blood and even fingerprints fingers of the left and right hands. Among him items of several dollars, West German marks and a photograph of a Thai girl, Cora, with a Bangkok address on the back. The date is also indicated there - April 21, 1965. I brought it with me just in case lieutenant and phrasebook compiled in Vietnamese, Thai, Indonesian, Chinese and French. (What geography!). In addition to questions about hot water, there are also political dialogues. I read on one of the pages: - How far are the friendly partisans from here? Where is he? Tell them to send for me.

Or here's another one a sample of the dialogue that, in the opinion of the American military department, should take place with a downed pilot with one of the local residents: - I'm an American, I don't say your language. Misfortune makes me ask you to give me food, shelter protection from communists.

You see, the American pilots who bring death and destruction to Vietnam to our people, they also want him to "protect" them. In this regard, I remembered another meeting.

The night we were in Thanh Hoa, we saw a car and Vietnamese standing near the city hospital

her. Leaning back against the car, a tall, blond man sat on a bench kid. It was an American prisoner pilot - Captain James B. Stockdal. He was captured by peasants from a fishing village. villages about 30 kilometers from Thanh- Hoa. Among them were the Le Dinh militia Thuong and the owner of the house where we are staying - Le Viet. They told us little by little, how they saw the parachute, how the American the Rican tried to reach the sea, but then hung on a tree at the very edge water.

Three planes hovered above him, trying to provide helicopter access. The American pilot cut the lines parachute and fell to the ground, breaking his leg. Here the militia picked him up. Then they provided assistance to the American, and summers circling over the village, so in left with nothing.

We told the fishermen that written in a phrasebook for American Russian pilots, how they want to ask Vietnamese protection from the communists. People laughed for a long time. Then Le said:

- Let the American aggressor be is looking for helpers among us. We all became defenders of their fatherland.

Yes, next to the Vietnamese soldiers yaa protection of Kham-Zhong, at the posts near the flesh- we are in Ban Thach, near the Vinh factories the entire Vietnamese people, who are not frighten, cannot be broken by any bombs.

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