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Pentagon Admits Spy Mission Plane Lost

The Pentagon has admitted that a Navy plane was on a top-secret electronic spying mission when it was shot down April 8, 1950 on a flight from West Germany over the Baltic Sea.

But Navy officials said they found no evidence any of the 10 crew members escaped and were imprisoned in the Soviet Union. The Navy listed the crew dead in 1951.

The Pentagon's response came after John Noble, once a

prisoner in a Soviet camp, and private detective Theodore Grevers said they believed at least eight members crew members may have survived.

Grevers disputed the Navy contention that none of the crew survived, saying he hoped the Pentagon admission would bring about the release of the airmen.

Grevers insisted there is "more than circumstantial evidence" that eight of the crewmen were captured and still may be alive.

"How can they (the Pentagon) deny it?" Grevers asked. "How do they know the crew is not alive? There is more evidence to indicate the men are there than not there."

He said Noble and William Marchuk, also a former prisoner in a Soviet labor camp, talked to other

prisoners who told them the Navy fliers were alive. Noble and Marchuk were freed in 1955.

The Pentagon said an investigating board accepted the Soviet Union's official claim that a Soviet fighter shot down the four-engine PB-4Y Privateer aircraft in April, 1950.