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Six American P.O.W.'s Dead, Hanoi Informs a Peace Group

North Vietnam has disclosed that six American servicemen it held prisoner have died. Hanoi also confirmed the identities of four additional American prisoners.

A Government spokesman in Washington said this was the first information that any prisoners had died in North Vietnam.

The announcement was made at a news conference here yesterday by Mrs. Cora Weiss, co-chairman of the Committee of Liaison with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam, a New York-based peace group.

Identification of the four new prisoners brings to 339 the number of American prisoners confirmed by North Vietnam. The previous belief, based on information supplied to a visiting peace group in Hanoi last June, was that a list of 335 men was final and complete.

The Defense Department challenged this figure at the time, asserting that it believed 376 men were held by Hanoi.

'Provides Hope for Families'

United States officials said yesterday that the confirmation of the four new names "re-opens the list and provides hope for the families of men whom North Vietnam still has not supplied any information about."

According to the Pentagon, 780 men are officially listed as missing in action over North Vietnam, with 1,525 missing in all of Southeast Asia.

Three of the men Hanoi has now confirmed as prisoners had been listed by the Pentagon as presumed captured. They are Lieut. Cmdr. John H. Fel-

lowes of Virginia Beach, Lieut. Col. George Everett Day of Glendale, Ariz., and Lieut. James J. Connell of Wilmington, Del.

The fourth, Maj. Ben Marksbury Pollard of Colorado Springs, had been listed as missing in action but there had been no indication that he had been captured.

Names Not Released

The six men said to have died in prison had been listed by the Defense Department as presumed captured.

Mrs. Weiss refused to release the names of the six dead men because of what she termed family reasons. She did not provide any information on how or when the men had died.

She said she had informed the men's families of the deaths.

A State Department official said: "There is grave concern over the news, since no information has been supplied on the date or circumstances of the men's deaths."

He added that the men's families had been told previously that the men were alive.

The Committee of Liaison was organized in December, 1969, with the agreement of the North Vietnamese, to transmit letters from prisoners to their families in the United States. At the news conference, at the Hotel Diplomat, Mrs. Weiss said that with the recent arrival of 571 letters the committee had received a total of 2,203.

She asserted that the arrival of the letters and the disclosure of the four names "show that the North Vietnamese are following a humanitarian policy toward the prisoners."