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Ex-POW Cited in Suit on Bombing

Washington

Sergeant Lonnie D. Franks revealed yesterday that a former prisoner of war recently released by North Vietnam was among the Air Force officers he has named in a court-martial suit arising from the unauthorized bombing of North Vietnam earlier this year.

Franks, who filed charges against 23 officers and one sergeant at the Pentagon Friday, said that the former

prisoner, Major Edward K. Elias, was "one of the most active pilots" in the unit involved — the 432nd Technical Reconnaissance Squadron stationed at Udorn Air Force base in Thailand.

Elias was released in mid-September from a North Vietnamese prison and returned home accompanied by two other former prisoners. He was shot down in April, about one month after the last of the more than 20 unauthorized bombing raids,

in the guise of "protective reaction," that were ordered by former General John D. Lavelle, then commander of the Seventh Air Force.

Lavelle was subsequently reduced to his permanent rank, major general, and retired after investigation of the bombing. Lavelle and two of his former key aides were among those accused by Franks.

A Pentagon spokesman said the sergeant's charges have been received by the Air Force and are "being reviewed."

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*filed Lavelle 4 Nov. 72

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