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SERIES: I: SUBJECT FILE

Folder Title: [TWA 847 Hijacking
June 1985-July 1985] (8 of 8)

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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

Collection Name POINDEXTER, JOHN: FILES

Withdrawer

CAS 7/25/2007

File Folder [TWA HIJACKING JUNE 1985-JULY 1985] (8)

FOIA

F1792

Box Number 2

BATTLE

32

ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
39208	CABLE	RE REACTION	3	ND	B1
39211	HANDWRITTE N NOTE	POINDEXTER TO MCFARLANE RE CALL	1	ND	B1
39214	DRAFT MEMCON	OF TELEPHONE CALL BETWEEN PRESIDENT REAGAN AND PRESIDENT ASSAD	3	7/1/1985	B1
39216	HANDWRITTE N NOTE	POINDEXTER TO MCFARLANE	1	ND	B6
39217	CABLE	012047Z JUL 85 (INCLUDES POST-IT- NOTE ON P. 2)	4	7/1/1985	B1

The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of processing

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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ID Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
39219 NOTE	MCFARLANE TO THE PRESIDENT RE CABLE	1	7/3/1985	B1
39220 CABLE	011314Z JUL 85	8	7/1/1985	B1

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18 JUNE 81 A9 45

WASHFAX RECEIPT
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RECEIVED

65 JUL 1 A9: 53

B

S/S #

UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL
OF CLASSIFIED ENCLOSURE(S)

MESSAGE NO. 001656 CLASSIFICATION SECRET No. Pages 3

FROM: S/Sgt. RIVANSHUVER STATE 632-1517
(Officer name) (Office symbol) (Extension) (Room number)

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION DAMASCUS 4104

TO: (Agency)

DELIVER TO:

Extension

Room No.

WHSR

Michael Smith

WHSR
ROUTE SLIP

Time Stamp

FOR CLEAR

STAFF C/O

COMMENT ☐

REMARKS. F

McFarlane C

Polindexter C

Martin C

Thompson

FORTIER C

TEICHER C

COVEY C

NORTH C

Pearson

Merchant

NSC S/S

LDX

Approval: _____

C : Copy

O : Original

Henna

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REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Robert Dean Stethem, 1961-1985

Petty officer Robert Dean Stethem came from a Navy family. His father, Richard, a retired warrant officer, served for 29 years. His mother, Patricia, spent a career in Navy administrative posts. His older brother, Kenneth, 24, is a Navy diver stationed in Norfolk. His younger brother, Patrick, 19, has signed up to join in November.

Robert Stethem was born Nov. 17, 1961 in Waterbury, Conn. For the last 19 years, his family made its home in Waldorf, Md., a town of 26,000 in Charles County, 20 miles south of Washington. He was graduated from Thomas Stone High School in 1980.

At Thomas Stone, Robbie played defensive back on the football team and was active in student government. Friends remember him as polite and open-minded. A high school business teacher recalls, "He was a nice kid—an all-American kid."

Six months after graduating from Thomas Stone, he enlisted in the Navy—without any family encouragement, his father reports. After completing basic training, he joined Mobile Construction Battalion 62 in Gulfport, Miss. After schooling at the New Construction Training Center in Point Hueme, Calif., he joined the Underwater Construction Team No. 1 in Norfolk. At the time of his death he was a Navy steelworker 2nd class and rated as a diver; specializing in undersea steelwork.

He liked the job because it gave him a chance to travel and involved little chance of direct combat. His last assignment was an inspection and repair project on a sewer overflow system at an Air Force facility in Neamarki, Greece. He phoned his parents from John F. Kennedy airport while awaiting his TWA flight to Greece. Shortly before he had visited Thomas Stone High School. "I told him how beautiful Greece was—the blue skies, the white houses," recalls teacher Patricia Collins. "He told me he was afraid to go to Central America because of all the fighting."

On June 14 Robert Stethem boarded TWA flight 847 at the Athens airport. About 10 minutes into the flight, two armed men jumped up and ran along the gangway shouting "This is a hijack." More hijackers boarded the plane in Beirut. Robert Stethem's last hours are described by his seatmate, Ruth

Henderson, a 16-year old Australian released shortly afterward:

"They singled him out because he was American and a soldier. They knew who he was because he didn't have a normal passport. He had a special Navy one. . . . They dragged him out of his seat, tied his hands and then beat him up. I watched as they kicked him in the head. They kicked him in the face and knee caps and kept kicking him until they had broken all his ribs. Then they tried to knock him out with the butt of a pistol—they kept hitting him over the head but he was very strong and they couldn't knock him out. . . . Then they dumped him back in his seat next to me and left him for ages. I tried to nurse him but there wasn't a great deal I could do. Later they dragged him away and I believe shot him."

His mutilated body was lifted from where it was dumped on the tarmac of the Beirut airport and flown to the Air Force base in Torrejon, Spain, for identification from medical records. He was buried June 20 with military honors in Arlington National Cemetery, next to Marines killed in the attack on their Beirut barracks in October 1983. A squad of riflemen fired a salute; a bugler played taps, and a Navy officer presented Robert Stethem's parents with the flag that had draped his coffin and a purple heart. At a news conference, President Reagan called him "a young American hero."

There will be no yellow ribbons for Robbie Stethem. With the release of his fellow hostages finally completed, the nation certainly must join in profound relief at a safe end to their ordeal. But it is no time for celebration. Instead, the Republic should contemplate the courageous death of a young hero, the humiliations just undergone by the nation he served, and the likelihood that there will be more martyrs in the future as terrorism goes unpunished. Indeed, his commander-in-chief should ask himself a private question. In the dead of the night, in response to the hijackers' final demand of no retaliation, the State Department delivered up a carefully worded statement. The question is whether, despite the president's words about justice last night, in the end this cryptic affirmation will not prove to be exactly what the kidnappers claim, an amnesty for Robert Stethem's murderers.

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39217 CABLE

4 7/1/1985 B1

012047Z JUL 85 (INCLUDES POST-IT-NOTE ON P.
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39219 NOTE

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7/3/1985

B1

MCFARLANE TO THE PRESIDENT RE CABLE

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39220	CABLE 011314Z JUL 85	8	7/1/1985	B1

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