

OFFICIAL RESPONSES

ANNEX E

(b) seagoing service brought to an end by any of the following: death, wounds, . . . capture . . . , cessation of hostilities"

33. The American Ex-Prisoners of War organization is involved in Medical Research under the name "MedSearch". In "Ex-POW Bulletin" Volume 44, August 1987, No. 8, page 32, in a column entitled "Civilian POW Today", regular columnist Isabel Cogan Krebs quotes the following American statistics, "Each year 10 to 15 percent of our senior citizens [POWs] die, as against 1 to 3 percent of others in this age group." *POW ranks are dwindling rapidly.*

34. On 19 January 1988, U.S. Secretary of the Air Force, Edward C. Aldridge, determined that service in the "American Merchant Marine in Oceangoing Service during the period of armed conflict, December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945," shall be considered "active duty" under the provisions of Public Law 95-202 for the purposes of all law administered by the Veteran's Administration. Foreign individuals can recover VA benefits. [Aldridge was the Pentagon's designated administrator of a 1977 law that governs appeals for veteran status].

35. On 28 March 1988, the Honourable George Hees, Minister of Veteran's Affairs, responded to an enquiry of 18 March 1988 from Professor F. J. K. Griezic, Associate Professor Department of History and Chairman Labour Studies at Carleton University concerning benefits for merchant seamen. I quote and comment from the perspective of Merchant Navy prisoners of war as follows:

35.01 "I think it is important at the outset that Canada does indeed recognize the valuable contribution made by merchant seamen during the First and Second World Wars, in aid of the Allied cause. For legislative purposes, merchant seamen are identified as civilians, not veterans, and benefits for