For the course of several years I have been trying to /illegible/ the central press to attract the attention of our and the American public to the fate of Americans POWs who became prisoners of the Japanese and were sent to Iturup Island after the tragic events at Pearl Harbour.

On 26 January 1992 I was compelled to turn to Mr. R. Strauss, the United States Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Moscow, about this matter. I sent a registered letter but have not received a reply from them yet. Possibly my letter did not get through. I decided therefore to turn to you.

Iturup Island is one of the largest islands in the Southern Kurile chain. At the present time Japan is persistently laying claim to the return of this island to them. Iturup island, as earlier with Japan and now with Russia is a sparsely populated island. Japanese militants made use of this island for strategic military goals. On this island in the area of Sopochnaya BAY, far from the populated areas, the Japanese built a runway after Pearl Harbour on an elevated spot. This runway was made of concrete and was over one kilometre long. It exists to this day in a dilapidated state. Among our inhabitants who came to Iturup island after it was liberated was a small civilian population who were fishermen and employed in /illegible/.

Our residents were particularly perturbed by the report that after the runway was built the American POWs were loaded onto a ship and sailed into obscurity.

From 1955 to 1957 I worked on Iturup as a construction chief on a project to renovate a small fish hatchery in the Sopochnaya bay area.

I was at this runway numerous times and I took an interest in it. I was told personally, by those who had heard from Japanese civilians that the runway was built by American POWs.

As a builder I was also intrigued. How in this remote, unpopulated area was such a large amount of concrete construction done and there not be a single building - no warehouses, no accommodations, no dwellings, no roads etc. There weren't any signs that a large concentration of construction workers had lived there.

Below, right by Sopochnaya bay, at the foot of the mountain were excavated some horizontal tunnels with wooden reinforcing. On the floors were spread thin bamboo, which grew on this island. Talk had it that these tunnels served as living quarters for American POWs where they lived in inhuman conditions at hard slave labour. In the future, these tunnels supposedly became storage for aircraft bombs.

While I was on Iturup in the area of Sopochnaya Bay several small stonecrushers and concrete mixers were strewn about dismantled.

More importantly, I also knew from native Russian inhabitants that not far from the road from the village of Rejdovoj in the direction of the city of Kuril'sk (this is about 30 kilometres from Sopochnaya Bay) are possibly burial sites of American POWs who were doing other work on Iturup.

I am already an old man. I am 84 years old. The day is not far off when I depart from this sinful, mortal earth. I myself was a front line soldier. I was on the front from 7 Jan 42. I was able to endure this difficult time for our homeland, our first sad defeats, retreats, encirclements to experience the joy of our victory. I was in the hospital when victory was achieved having become an invalid of war of group II. As a front line soldier, I am not indifferent to the fate of the front line soldiers of our allies, the Americans, who spilled blood along with us in defeating the German and Japanese aggressors who unleashed World War II.

I hope that my report about the fate of American POWs who died on Iturup island interests you and that you will take steps to investigate this version.

It must also be noted that the Japanese militarists started their secret surprise attack on Pearl Harbour from Iturup. This island has a large, natural deep water bay, Yasnaya, where the Japanese naval fleet massed for the attack on Pearl Harbour.

In my opinion it is extremely desirable that a film crew fly to Iturup island. This is all necessary to record verification of my stated version about American POWs. This needs to be done immediately, before the onset of the cold and stormy weather which sets in on the island in September.

With every year there are fewer living witnesses to these tragic events. For all of this the Japanese are persistently insisting on the return of the Kurile Islands, which includes Iturup. If the island of Iturup reverts back to Japan then it will be practically impossible to expose this secret. The Japanese would endeavour to destroy this runway.

If all of this is confirmed, and I am fully certain in this, this secret must be uncovered through the Japanese archive documents.

If you decide to investigate my story about dead American POWs on Iturup, I earnestly ask you to bring in Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, a journalist for “Pravda”, who has promised to do some investigative journalism on this version.

Respectfully, /Signature/ Volkov, G.S.

Ukraine, Sevastopol 335057 3 Yunasheva St. Apt 220 Tel 42-40-52, 3 July 1992 Sevastopol 80690

P.S. Please keep me informed /illegible/