September 11, 2004 CBS Evening News Report

Russ Mitchell: This week, a 60 Minutes report raised new questions about President Bush’s service in the Texas Air National Guard some thirty years ago. Among them:

Did then Lieutenant Bush receive preferential treatment to get into the National Guard and out of possible service in Vietnam?

Did he refuse a direct order from a commanding officer?

Did he take a required physical exam?

And, did he complete his commitment to the Guard?

The questions grew out of interviews with new witnesses and four documents obtained by CBS News written by then Lieutenant Bush’s squadron commander. The documents were authenticated for CBS News by outside experts. On the Internet and elsewhere, some have questioned the documents’ authenticity focusing on the type styles in the memos, suggesting the memos are fake.

Today, one document expert, Philip Bouffard, who had expressed suspicions about the documents, told the Boston Globe and CBS News that he now believes the documents could have been prepared on an IBM Selectric Composer Typewriter, available at the time.

Also today, there are reports that retired National Guard Major General Bobby W. Hodges, one of the sources corroborating the CBS News account, now says he believes the documents were not real, in part because of recent statements by relatives of Jerry Killian, the squadron commander credited with writing the memos.

CBS News responded today, “We believed General Hodges the first time we spoke with him, we believe the documents to be genuine, we stand by our story and will continue to report on it.”