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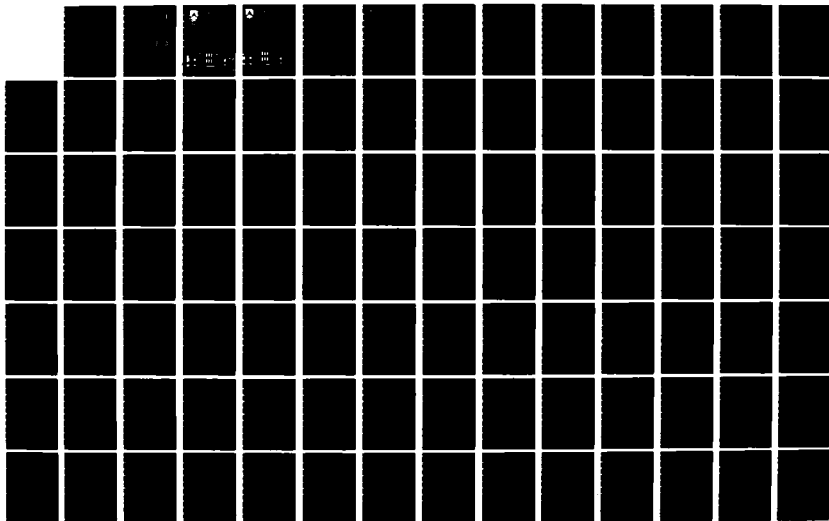
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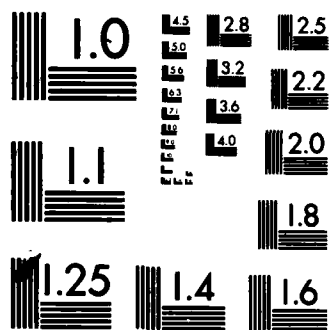
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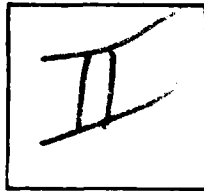


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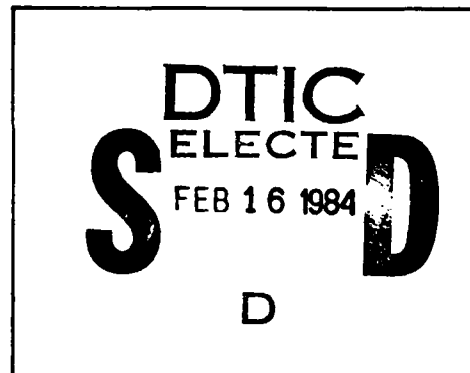
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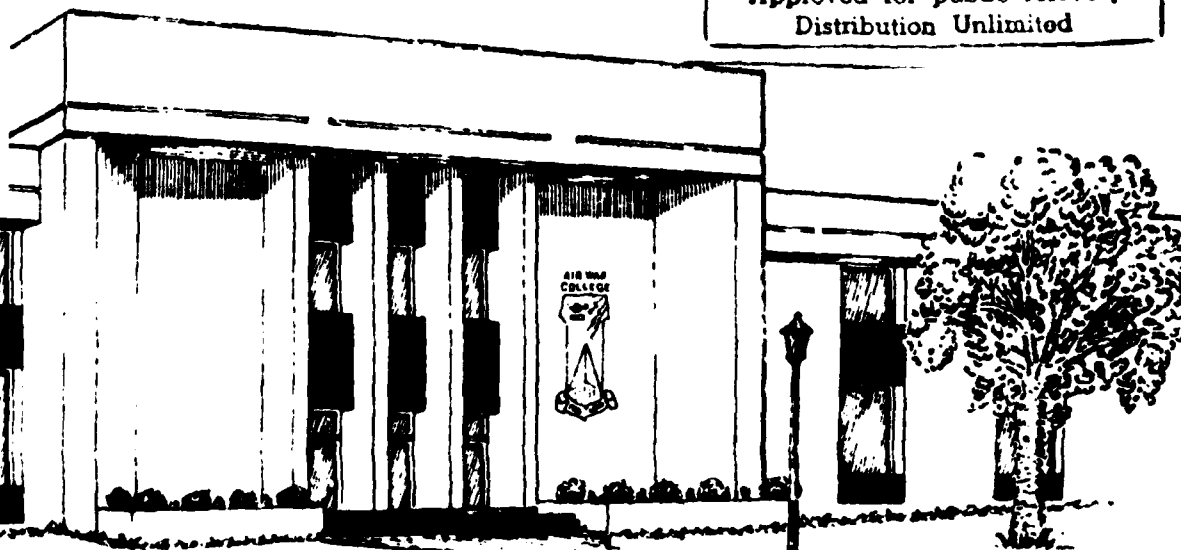
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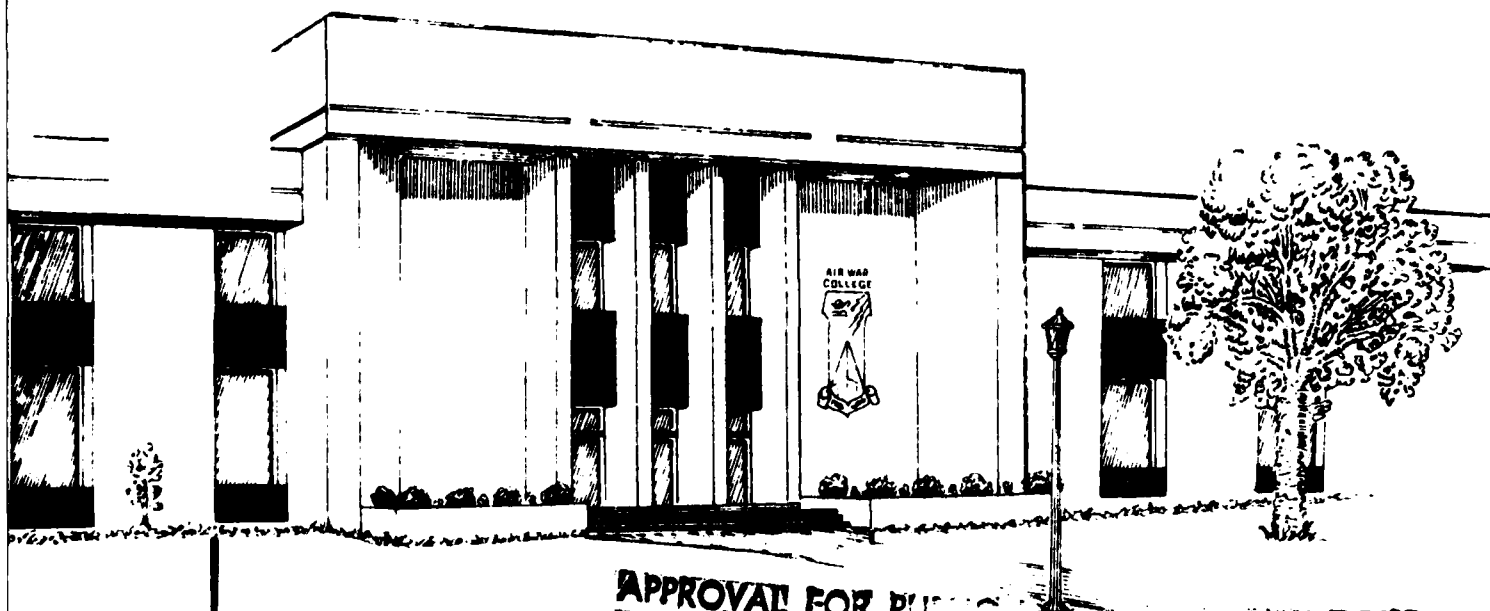
# AIR WAR COLLEGE

## RESEARCH REPORT

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AIR WAR COLLEGE

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I WILL NEVER FORGET. . . .  
An Analysis of the POW/MIA  
Episode in the War in Southeast Asia

by

1986 -  
Harold E. Johnson, 483-38-5851FR  
Colonel, USAF

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA


May 1982



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**  
**AIR WAR COLLEGE (ATC)**  
**MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA 36112**

Office of the Dean  
School of Resident Programs

The attached research report was completed by the author while attending the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. The student was given every opportunity to express ideas, criticize concepts, and develop new solutions in a free and open academic environment. This report was not formally edited by the staff nor faculty and does not necessarily represent official Air War College, Air Force, or Department of Defense policy. It is not approved for release to the public. Reproduction in part or whole can only be approved by the Air War College. Distribution of the paper is made with one goal in mind: to enhance the military profession.

  
ROBIE HACKWORTH, Colonel, USAF  
Dean, School of Resident Programs

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Air War College Research Report Summary  
No. RA003-81

TITLE: I WILL NEVER FORGET. . . . An Analysis of the  
the POW/MIA Episode in the War in Southeast Asia

Author: Harold E. Johnson, Colonel, USAF

A synoptic, personal analysis of the situations associated with those Americans lost in Southeast Asia (SEA) from 1962 to 1979 and considered as Prisoners of War (POW) or as missing in action (MIA). The geographic loss points, prisoner treatment, indigenous population attitudes, and political environment are discussed. Probable reasons or trends were sought that could explain why so many who were lost and listed as POW or MIA have not been accounted for. The author discusses US attempts at obtaining an accounting from the Communist governments involved and addresses the claims of live sightings of American prisoners in Vietnam and Laos. He concludes with the belief that there are still some Americans being held by the Communists in SEA.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Harold E. Johnson (M.A. Auburn University) was a prisoner of war in North Vietnam for almost six years. Before he was shot down and captured, he was stationed at both Korat and Takhli Royal Thai Air Force Bases. He has traveled in Thailand, South Vietnam, the Philippines, Okinawa, and Japan. He served with the F-105F Wild Weasels, surface-to-air missile (SAM) killers. His decorations include the Air Force Cross, two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, six Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars with "V" Device, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, nine Air Medals, two USAF Meritorious Service Medals, and two Purple Hearts. He is a graduate of the USAF Squadron Officer School (1964) and the Air Command and Staff College (1974). Colonel Johnson is a graduate of the Air War College class of 1981.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
	DISCLAIMER-ABSTAINER . . . . .	ii
	SUMMARY . . . . .	iii
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH . . . . .	iv
I	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II	GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF THE LOST . . . . .	8
	Air Force . . . . .	9
	Army . . . . .	20
	Marines . . . . .	26
	Navy . . . . .	31
	Civilians . . . . .	36
	Summary . . . . .	39
III	COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION . . . . .	42
	Those Returned . . . . .	44
	Those Still Missing . . . . .	55
	Rescue Successes . . . . .	63
	Negotiations . . . . .	66
	Summary . . . . .	73
IV	POSSIBLE MOTIVES FOR THE MISSING . . . . .	76
	Communist Government Decisions on POW	
	Treatment . . . . .	78
	Discipline and Culture of SEA	
	Communist Forces . . . . .	88
	Geographic Combat Activity Areas . . . . .	94
	North Vietnam . . . . .	94
	South Vietnam . . . . .	96
	Laos . . . . .	103
	Cambodia . . . . .	109
	Summary . . . . .	116
V	CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	119

	<u>Page</u>
APPENDICES	
1. Civilians Lost in SEA, 1952-1979 . . . .	127
2. List of POWs Provided to Families, 1973 . . . . .	130
3. <u>Just a Closer Walk.</u> Study of USAF POWs' Religious Experiences . . . . .	136
4. Names of Servicemen Missing in Asia, San Diego Union, January 1970. .	147
5. Statement of Mission of Task Force on POW/MIAs, 96th Congress . . .	151
6. Reservations to 1949 Geneva Convention on POW Treatment by SEA War Participants . . . . .	152
NOTES . . . . .	158
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	162



## ILLUSTRATIONS

	<u>Page</u>
 Charts	
1.	Communist Total PW Listing, 1973 . . . 3
2.	U.S. SEA Losses by Year and Rank . . . 40
3.	MIA/PW in SEA Confirmed Accounting, August 1980 . . . . . 45
4. & 5.	Status of U.S. Lost as of 25 Aug 80 . . 56
 Maps	
1., 2., & 3.	USAF Loss Points . . . . . 10
4., 5., & 6.	Army Loss Points . . . . . 21
7., 8., & 9.	Marines Loss Points . . . . . 27
10., 11., & 12.	Navy Loss Points . . . . . 32
13.	Civilian Loss Points . . . . . 37
14.	North Vietnam, Route Packages . . . . . 97
15.	South Vietnam, US/ARVN Corps Zone . . . . . 102
16.	Laos, Ho Chi Minh Trail . . . . . 107
17.	Cambodia, Communist Base Camps and Supply Routes . . . . . 111

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

I will never forget that I am an American fighting man responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my god and in the United States of America.\*

The words of the Code of Conduct quoted above served as a ready guide and a source of inspiration for me during my 2,135 days of captivity in North Vietnam (NVN).<sup>1</sup> The words are just as important to me now as I undertake each daily task. However, I realize how very fortunate I have been to have survived the shootdown and capture incident and the total period of incarceration. I have been allowed to live and to return to the world of freedom, love, and affluence. But what about my comrades?

There seems to have been a great number of my fellow American members of the Armed Forces (and some civilians) who "disappeared" during that war in Southeast Asia (SEA). Some could be accounted for very logically as having died because of injuries or wounds acquired at the time of shootdown or during fierce ground combat, but what about the fate of those individuals actually observed being captured; or those who parachuted to the ground safely; or those whose pictures appeared in Communist publications claiming them as Prisoners of War (POWs)?

---

\*Code of the US Fighting Force, Code of Conduct #6, Executive Order, August 17, 1955.

All but a few of these unaccounted for Americans have been declared "presumptively dead" by the Department of Defense, but there is still a great amount of uncertainty associated with the declarations. Several Vietnamese refugees claim to have seen Americans captives such that " . . . as of May 10 (1980), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) was checking out 370 'live sighting' reports alleged to have been made since 1975."<sup>2</sup> A number of conscientious US officials are continuing to investigate the fate of the American servicemen still missing in SEA, but the Communist officials in Hanoi have not been cooperative. There does not appear to be any intention to give a full accounting of our prisoners of war (POWs) and missing in action (MIA), as called for in the 1973 Paris peace agreement.

When the Paris agreement was signed in 1973, Hanoi and Viet Cong Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) officials submitted lists totaling 576 United States prisoners (including 21 civilians.)<sup>3</sup> The listings showed 61 Americans who died after their capture and depicted the US military with 555 living and 55 deceased POWs (Chart 1). There was a huge disparity between those Americans accounted for and those known to be missing. More than 3290\* personnel were placed in the POW or MIA category by

---

\*US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Official Statement.

# CHART 1

PREVIOUS STATUS OF PERSONNEL ON JANUARY 27 LIST  
WHO ARE TO BE RETURNED OR ( ) DIED WHILE HELD\*

	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>Air Force</u>	<u>Marine Corps</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Previously Carried as Prisoner of War	64(6)	133(9)	291(8)	20(4)	508(27)
Previously Carried as Missing	12(3)	2(0)	27(8)	4(0)	45(11)
Previously Carried as Killed in Action	0(13)	0(0)	0(0)	1(3)	1(16)
Previously Carried as in Desertion	<u>0(0)</u>	<u>0(0)</u>	<u>0(0)</u>	<u>1(1)</u>	<u>1(1)</u>
TOTAL	76	135	318	26	555

---

\*SOURCE: DOD Commanders Digest, Operation Homecoming, 1 Mar 73, pp. 5 and 6.

closely kept US casualty figures. Were all these unaccounted for Americans destined only to be a part of the following statistics?

The Department of Defense estimates that there have been 142,227 servicemen captured and interned during and since WWI. The estimate lists 4,120 from WWI; 130,201 from WWII; 7,140 from the Korean war; and 766 for the Vietnam War.

Also, an estimated 92,761 servicemen were lost in combat and never recovered. The breakdown; WWI, 3,350; WWII, 78,773; Korea, 8,177; Vietnam, 2,461.<sup>4</sup>

These sobering figures provide stark testimony to the sacrifice of American military men. But even more sobering, a quick ratio computation of those captured versus those never recovered reveals a very alarming disparity. The numbers establish the following ratios: WWI, 1 to .81; WWII, 1 to .61; Korea, 1 to 1.15; Vietnam, 1 to 3.21. The US wars against Communist forces have resulted in a much greater number of unaccounted-for personnel. Is there any tangible explanation for this condition? Were the Communist forces not taking prisoners or were the survival conditions in the Asian detention camps or countryside too harsh for most Americans? Could the Communist governments have decided to hold back prisoners for some reason? There are numerous unanswered questions, but to date no systematic study of this overall problem has been conducted. This research report attempts to develop information which can be used either in

resolution of the problem or in providing a foundation for a more thorough understanding of it.

The analysis concentrates on the POW/MIA aspect of the SEA war. There is no attempt to reconstruct the entire war scenario nor to reiterate the full historical background of the countries involved. However, some quick references are made concerning the war or the culture and attitudes of the natives in particular chapters where such discussions seemed appropriate. This historical POW/MIA analysis relied heavily on the US DIA operations report data which includes some computer tapes. Additional sources were abundantly available in the Air University Library: historical archives, professional journals, books, congressional records, and periodicals. Investigation of available data and pursuit of hypothesis was as thorough as research time would allow.

There was some tendency to be confused initially by the different POW/MIA personnel totals that appeared in separate articles. Rather than argue with the figures, I rectified the situation by using the method whereby all figures in my report are from US DIA official statistics and may vary with the quoted material from other sources. The intent was not to become mesmerized by the numbers but to use available figures to aid in the analysis of the cases to determine any observable trends which might

account for the extremely low return rate. As evidenced in the report, the analysis included consideration for such parameters as geographic loss point, terrain, controlling forces on the ground, recovery attempts, unit of assignment, aircraft/mission type, etc.

I made a special effort to keep this report unclassified so it would be readily available to more readers. Several of the sources I used were classified primarily because of privacy act requirements. Therefore, whenever I reference a particular case or incident, I have not used any names of the personnel involved. Instead, I have provided the individual's DIA identification number in parenthesis following the statement. For example, I have a DIA identification number (3-066). This method provides a legitimate reference for DIA, military or other personnel with the appropriate clearance who want or need to do further research.

I am very appreciative of all the assistance and cooperation I received while accomplishing this research report. The Air War College (AWC) staff provided much needed help in providing computer tape analysis time and guidance; special SEA geographic area counsel; and reading, editing, and typing assistance. My fellow AWC Class of '81 students were very encouraging and provided sincere advice and practical assistance. The Air University Library staff

in all areas were very helpful, but a special word of thanks is due for the staff in the historical archives section.



## CHAPTER II

### GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF THE LOST

I began my search with an attempt to locate the geographic points where people were reported lost or captured. I felt that there could be a pattern or series of patterns which provided some answers or could serve as a guide for areas worth deeper analysis.

There was evidence that all the losses in SEA had been plotted by someone while doing another study, so I attempted to seek out and make contact with him. After several false leads, I finally succeeded in telephoning an individual in the intelligence agency who remembered doing the plots. He informed me that, yes, they had programmed their computer to print out a geographic survey for them, but it all came out as a bunch of jumbled dots on a map. I asked if I could have the map with all those dots on it. He said that since it all did not seem to mean anything, they had not pursued the subject so he had no idea what had happened to the map.

Needless to say, I was very disappointed, but I considered pursuit of the subject important enough to plot the points by hand myself. It was a laborious process, and because I attempted to work swiftly, I made a few mistakes. Therefore my maps are not perfect, but they convey the

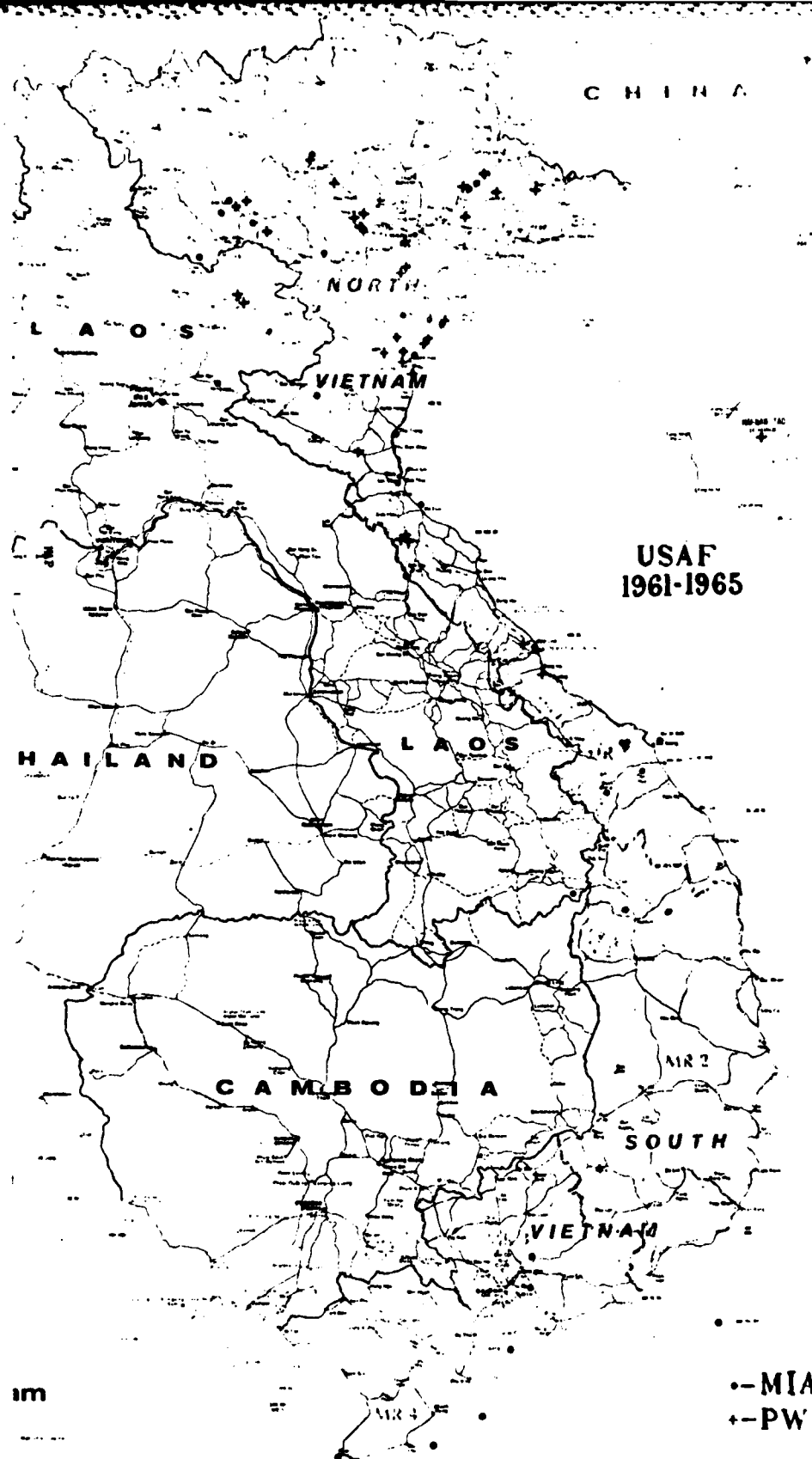
picture I wanted to look at and provide me with a framework I would not have had otherwise.

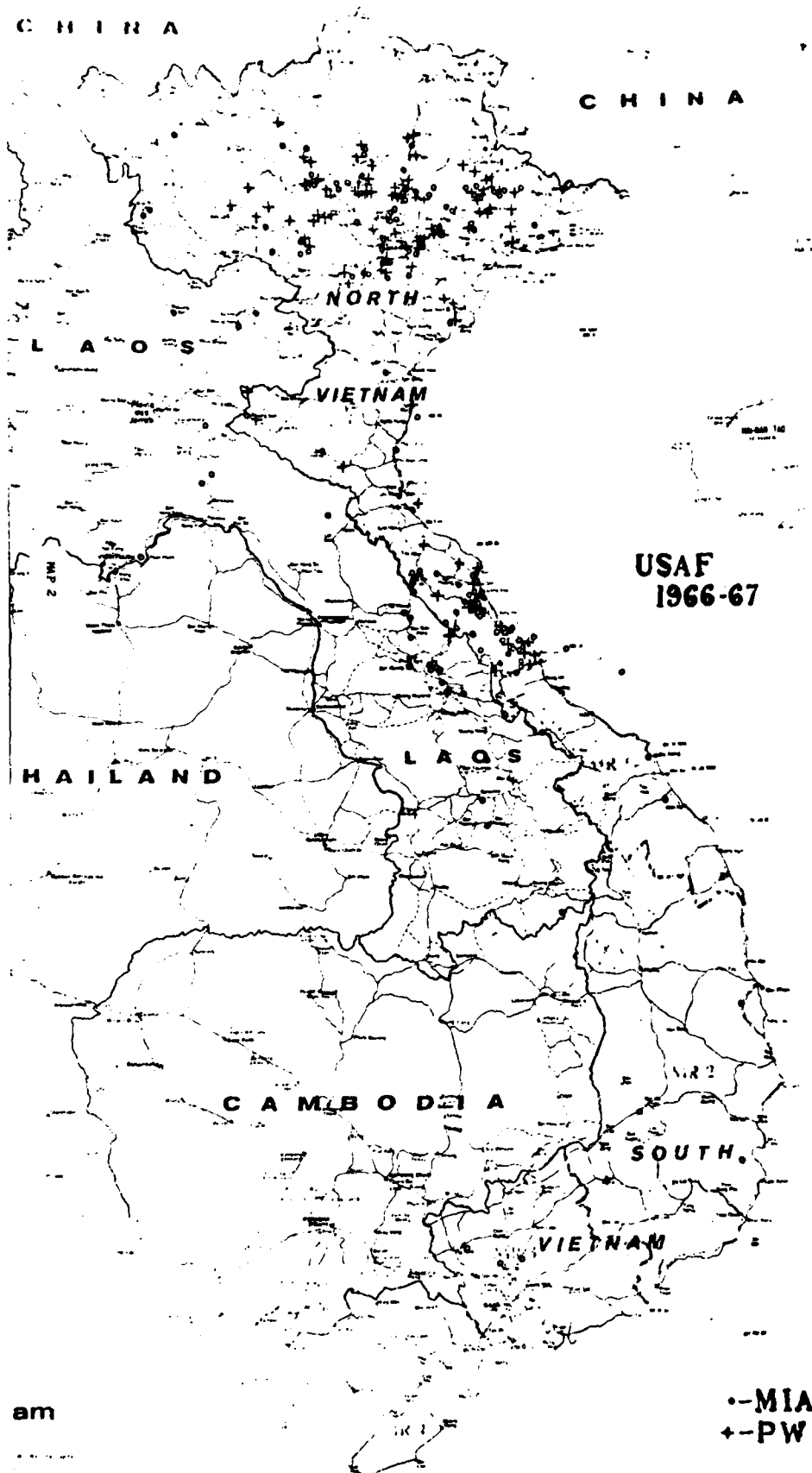
It seemed logical to plot and analyze the losses from each service and the civilians separately. I began the work with no firmly conceived notions of what I might discover. When any loss points appeared very different or out of place, I searched out some data on them. Otherwise I did not look at each and every history. But I did recognize and associate several Air Force or Navy aviator losses with actual people I met or knew in Hanoi.

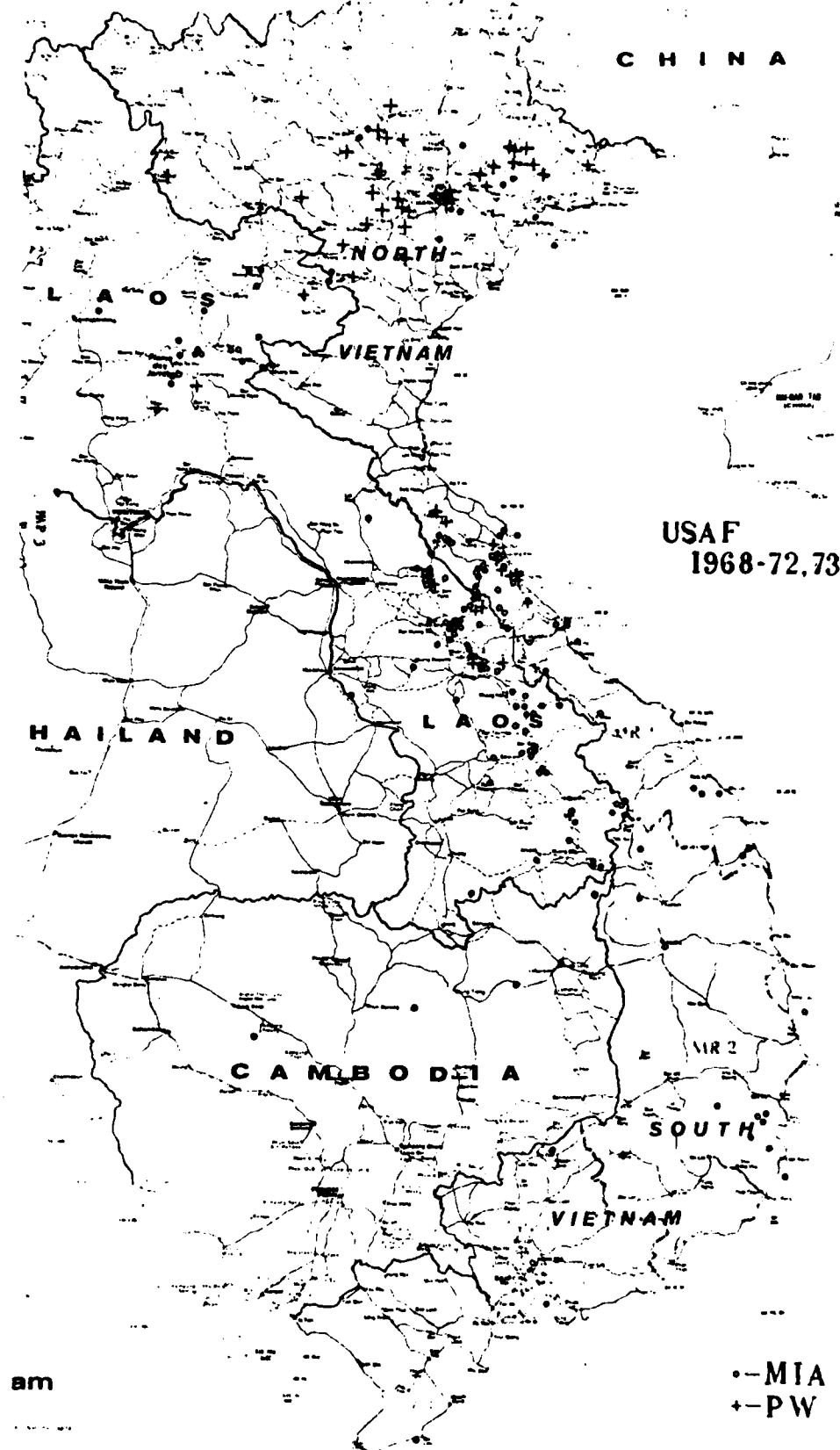
When I started plotting the losses, I arbitrarily divided them into three parts. Of course, I was most familiar with those lost between the years 1964 through 1968. Therefore, I proceeded to construct three maps that displayed the losses through 1965, 1966 and 1967, and from 1968 to the end of the war. As the work proceeded, I had misgivings that perhaps I should have done the plotting year by year. But in the interest of time and effort already expended, I continued. For ease of comparison and continuity, I plotted all the different services' losses for the same three year-group periods. The civilian losses were few, and thus I plotted them onto one map.

#### Air Force

The USAF plots indicated aircraft loss points rather than individuals. (Map 1, Map 2, and Map 3).







Aircraft with multiple crew members caused me to have to make a decision about methodology. Whenever one or more members of a crew in an aircraft were indicated as captured, I marked the loss point with a plus sign even though other members of that crew were killed or are still missing. Regrettably, some of the individual MIA circles represent as many as 15 airmen unaccounted for.

There were 1,345 USAF members lost in SEA during this period, 41.1 percent of all the POW/MIA military losses. A breakdown of the total shows 726 lost in North Vietnam, 366 in Laos, 230 in South Vietnam, 22 in Cambodia, and one over China's Hainan Island. Those lost in South Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia experienced a very low probability of capture.

South Vietnam, although supposedly under friendly control, had an appalling rate for accountability. Only five POW returnees were recovered out of Hanoi that had been captured in the South and moved North. One man (1-010) who was captured near Quang Tri in South Vietnam and moved North to Hanoi in 1965 is known to have died in captivity a couple of years before the POW release. One airman successfully escaped from his captors in the South in 1965.

Some incidents point toward the fact that many of our people stationed in South Vietnam didn't keep in mind that they were in a war zone. Two cases (1-061, 2-047)

serve to illustrate the point. In the first case, five airmen decided they would spend their off time at the beach. So they hired a Vietnamese truck driver in Saigon to drive them south through the countryside to the beach. About mid-point in the trip, the truck was stopped by a group of heavily armed Viet Cong and the airmen were taken prisoner. Sometime after being bound and led through the jungle, one airman succeeded in bowling over one of his captors and took off running. He heard gunshots behind him, but he succeeded in escaping and returning to tell the story. The other four are still missing. In the second case, a young airmen near Pleiku wanted to see more of the Vietnamese countryside. He somehow gained the use of a military jeep and proceeded to travel southward during an off-duty period. The jeep was later found parked along a main road near Ban Me Thuot, which is about 100 miles south of Pleiku. Investigators were told by a Vietnamese bus driver that he remembered seeing the jeep there as he passed by in his bus. He observed a young, tall American walking away from the jeep toward the jungle accompanied by three Vietnamese in black pajama-type dress. He is still missing.

The Laos accountability record was bad. Only six of the 366 airmen lost there came out as POW returnees. They, like the ones in South Vietnam, had been moved north to Hanoi sometime after their capture. I know three of

these men personally (4-051, 4-056, 4-089), and they all related that they were captured by North Vietnamese regular troops that happened to be moving along the Ho Chi Minh trail. It appears that the Pathet Lao either did not take prisoners or created impossible-to-survive conditions for those they did incarcerate. I shall discuss this more thoroughly in a later section.

We seemed to have better access in some areas in Laos in the early years. Reports on some downed airmen indicated that rescue helicopters braved landing near small villages as far north as the area of Samneua to ask the Laotians nearby if they could help locate the lost men. Several confirmations of capture were accomplished as a result of these helicopter landings. Obviously these areas became more hostile and more directly under Communist forces' control because such antics by the rescue crews ceased after 1965.

Most losses in Laos took place along the main routes of the Ho Chi Minh trail. The area around Tchepone was especially heavily inundated with downed aircraft. Several of these were larger crewed airplanes like the C-130 gunships. As well as many tons of bombs, we dropped a lot of aluminum airframes along the entire Mu Gia pass.

All but two USAF losses in Cambodia occurred during and after 1970. Only one USAF prisoner was released from there in 1973. The loss points were in remote areas, a fact that



partially explains why little detailed information is recorded on the individual summaries. Several of the losses involved single-ship, small reconnaissance-type aircraft.

An interesting observation brought out during my plotting was that there were not any crew members listed as prisoners from most of the larger aircraft downed by the enemy. Some crew members from aircraft that had ejection seats, such as the B-52 and B-66, showed up as prisoners and returnees, but crew members of the B-26, C-47, C-123, and C-130 did not. Crews from these four aircraft types alone amount to 170 of the airmen unaccounted for. I considered that there was a strong possibility this anomaly was due to the lack of ejection seats and the low-altitude missions flown, but I suspect that that is not the entire answer. At least some of these aircraft were gunships that had a direct and often devastating impact on the enemy. So it could be that retributions were exacted against crews from aircraft associated with certain types of missions. Evidence exists that this hypothesis could have considerable validity. A few airmen were picked up by rescue helicopters after successfully bailing out of stricken C-130 gunships. They reported seeing other chutes of their crew, but those airmen were never heard from again. There were 74 people lost in C-130's. Surely if

even a small percentage were successful in exiting the aircraft, a few would have shown up as prisoners.

The unaccounted for aircrews that went into the water did not do well. Of course, many crews were rescued that nurtured their crippled aircraft out to sea before ejecting, but 48 USAF members that were lost over the water were eventually listed as killed in action (KIA), Presumptive Finding of Death (PFOD). One particular case (1-025) serves to demonstrate the tragedy that could happen to an airman that landed in the water. His case caught my attention because there were three other aircraft downed close by him the same day, and all of those crews were captured and eventually returned. After his F-105 was fatally hit and he ejected, his flight members circled overhead as he descended in his parachute. One flight member testified that as he made a low pass near his chute-suspended comrade, he could see that the dinghy and survival kit had been deployed and that the approaching landing appeared to be aimed for the center of the broad, fast-flowing Black River. After he had burned and made his next tree-top-level pass, all the wingman spotted was the bright orange empty dinghy floating rapidly downstream. There was no sign of either the parachute or the downed airman. Whether owing to injury or difficult circumstances, all those crew members landing in water,

whether sea or river, could have experienced similar circumstances that precluded their survival.

I observed a strange pattern develop during my plotting. Fewer prisoners were taken by the enemy after the March 1968 bombing halt than had been captured in previous years. In fact, practically no USAF losses were accounted for until the bombing raids were reinitiated around Hanoi (Map 3). At first I attributed this great deviation from previous year's capture rate proportions to the more remote areas where the missions were flown. Most of the losses occurred over Laos which always had a bad reputation for aircrew survival. Then it crossed my mind that perhaps there had been a change of attitude by the Communist leaders in Hanoi about the importance of or the need for the taking of prisoners. Had there been a change of policy made after the cessation of the bombing above the 17th parallel? Did the Hanoi decision makers convey the idea that they no longer needed fresh captured prisoners to parade through the streets to bolster their citizens' morale and to add credibility to their claims about winning the war? The increased distance from Hanoi, the center of the SEA Communist power, could affect the delivery of prisoners to Hanoi, but a political implication that the taking of prisoners was no longer important could have had a devastating impact on the survival of the downed aircrews. I was never able fully to confirm or deny that

such a policy decision was made, but the suspicious evidence stands out clearly for investigation and speculation.

All aircrews considered high threat, well defended areas such as those around Hanoi, Haiphong, Thai Nguyen, and the Thanh Hoa bridge as "white-knuckle" areas. Air strike missions fragged into these areas were known for their high loss potential. Enemy missiles, MIGs, and flak were heavy and always present. We all had our fears about the missions into these hazardous areas, but what was not considered was the survivability of the crews downed in these areas. The loss points disclose that those aircrews downed closer to the highly populated, heavily defended areas had a higher percentage capture and returnee rate. A higher number of regular soldiers might have provided the discipline necessary to protect a downed aircrew from an irate mob of citizens, or perhaps because of his visibility to so many as he parachuted to earth, the crewman would be captured and paraded through the streets as a trophy of success for that day's engagement. Whatever the reason, the pattern shows that the further the down point was from a highly defended area or population center, the less was the probability of capture or accountability.

Although the losses I concentrated on for this study were the captured (PW) or the unaccounted (MIA), for a comparison, total USAF losses in SEA from January 1962 to

August 1973 are listed as follows: aircraft lost to combat and operational causes was 2,257; USAF personnel killed were 2,118; USAF personnel wounded were 3,460. The cost of USAF operations is recorded as \$3,129,900,000.\*

### Army

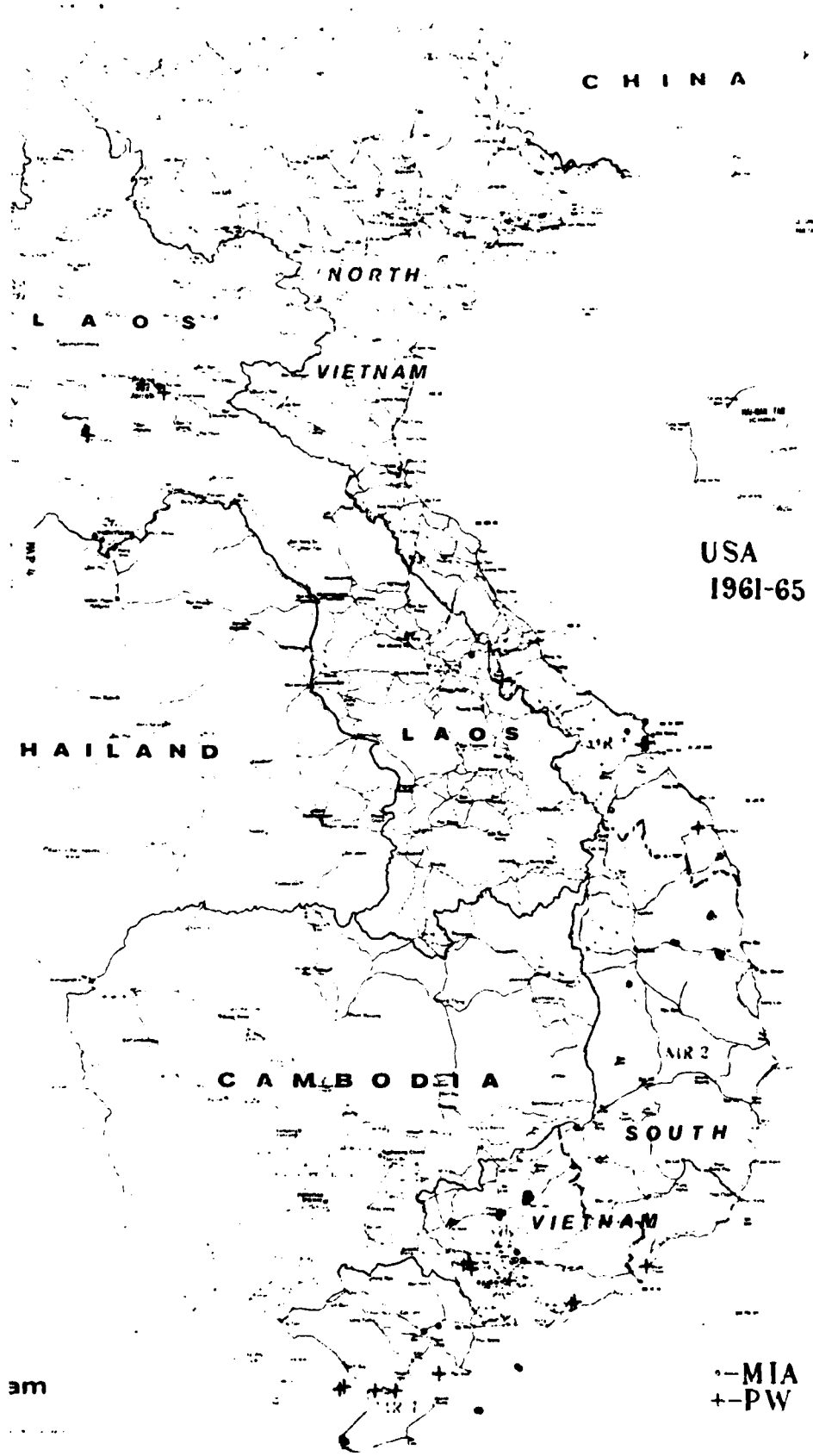
I plotted each Army MIA or PW individually. There were some areas that had multiple losses listed the same day, but for the most part, Army losses were separated from one another by either some time or distance (Map 4, Map 5, and Map 6).

The USA lost 888 men in SEA from 1961 to 1973 which accounted for 27.1 percent of all the PW/MIA military losses. There were 10 lost in North Vietnam, 132 in Laos, 690 in South Vietnam, and 56 in Cambodia.

The Army had the greatest number of personnel involved with face-to-face confrontation with the enemy, but since their operations involved generally entire units, fewer incidents percentage wise occurred that resulted in unaccounted for individuals. The smaller number of MIA's is especially descriptive when compared to the 536,100 peak American troop strength figure listed as being in South Vietnam in December 1968.

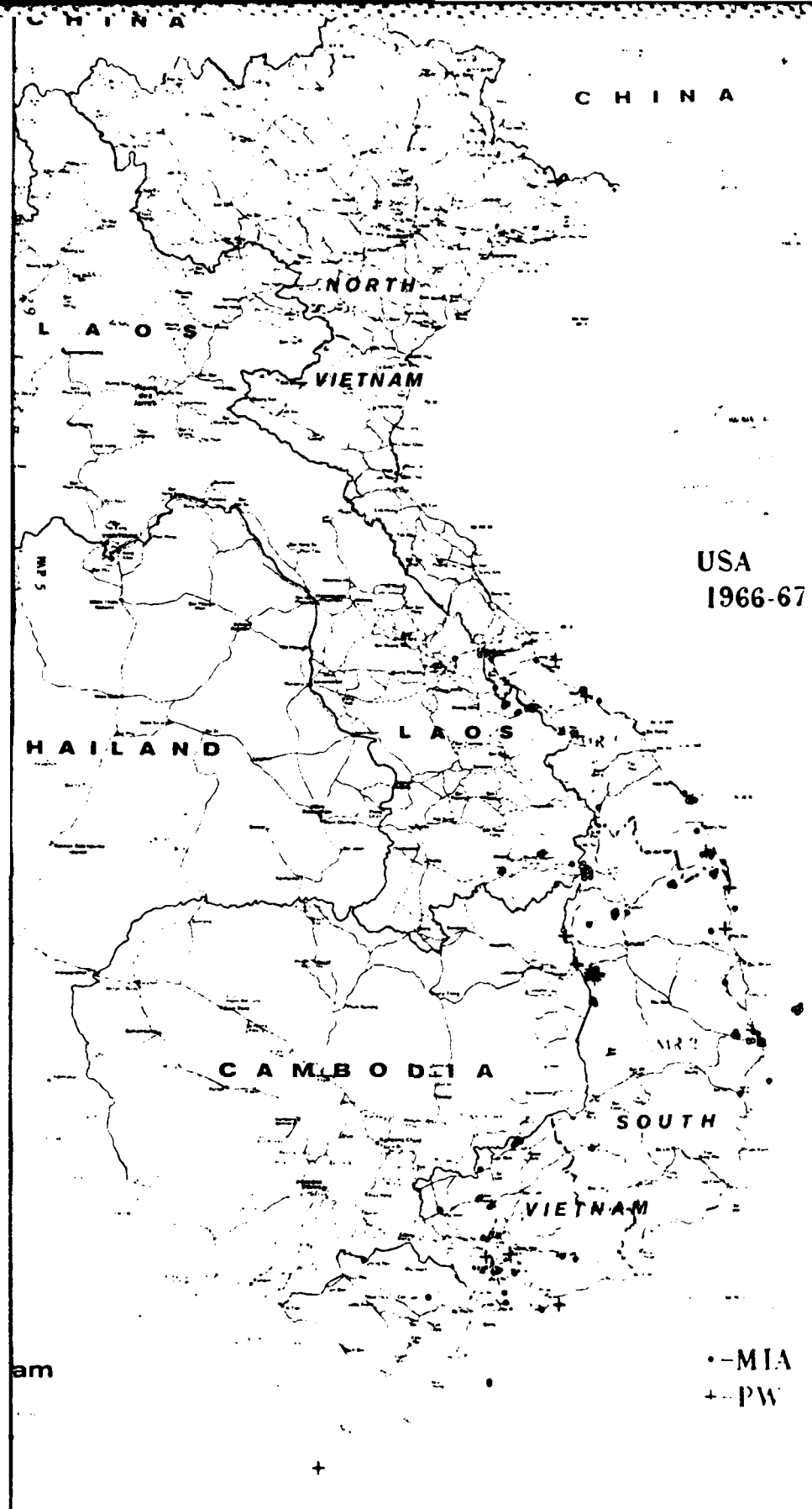
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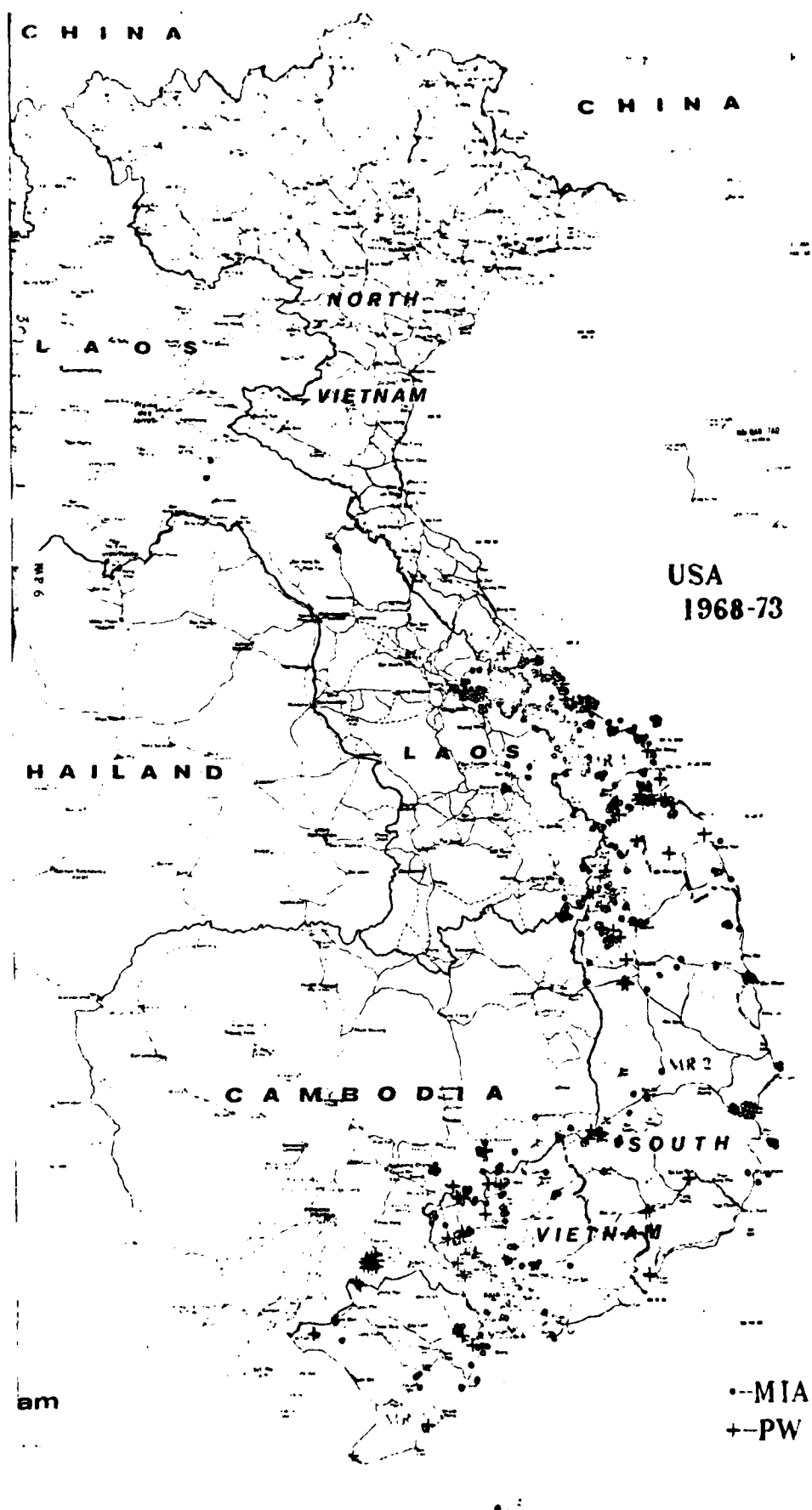
\*Ray Bonds, ed, The Vietnam War. (New York: Crown Publisher, Inc., 1979), p. 201.



USA  
1961-65

•-MIA  
+-PW







Most USA operations were conducted in conjunction with South Vietnam Army (ARVN) units. In early years, our people were acting as ARVN advisors, but as the American troop strength increased, individual USA unit combat involvement also increased. This increased involvement was directly displayed by the plots on my maps. The percentage of those captured versus those missing was much higher in the early years.

Across the border ("over-the-fence" operations as they were known) activities into Cambodia and Laos were made readily apparent by the map plot loss points. There were many special operations for clandestine purposes that will make interesting reading when declassified, but I found a high percentage of USA losses associated with the ARVN/US thrusts into Cambodia April-July 1970 and the Laos incursion February-March 1971. There was an appalling MIA loss indication of over 40 without a single capture along the route from the South Vietnam border to Tchepone, Laos.

There was a surprisingly large number of captured troops indicated south of Danang in 1968 (Map 6). As near as I could ascertain, this action was most closely associated with the 'Task Force Oregon' operation by the Americal Division in that area. Looking at this irregular occurrence of captives, I believe that a possible reason for a greater percentage of USA captured in a certain area was related to the enemy unit operating there. If it was a

long time, firmly established outfit led by either a NVN regular or a trained military man, the troop discipline and understanding of the war could have resulted in the taking of prisoners as an increased consideration. A Viet Cong outfit fired up with Communist revolutionary zeal but having guidance only for a short-term objective would be interested in attacking and killing but have little consideration about being encumbered with captives upon their withdrawal. This idea of captives associated with a more well established military unit had a bit of additional support by the USA PW plots created near Hue by the 1968 TET offensive.

There were 102 USA returnees plotted as having been captured in South Vietnam, but 59 of those were moved to camps in North Vietnam. Thirty of these men were released from Hanoi the same day I was, 4 March 1973. I talked with some of them during our short stay in the hospital at Clark AFB, Philippines. They had been walked north over the Ho Chi Minh trail via Cambodia and Laos in different increments with the trip time varying from a few weeks to as long as three months.

The Army had the greatest number of successes in getting away from their captors with 15 plotting out as escapees from different random points throughout South Vietnam. All were escapes of opportunity and though always dramatic, had little comparison to the elaborate

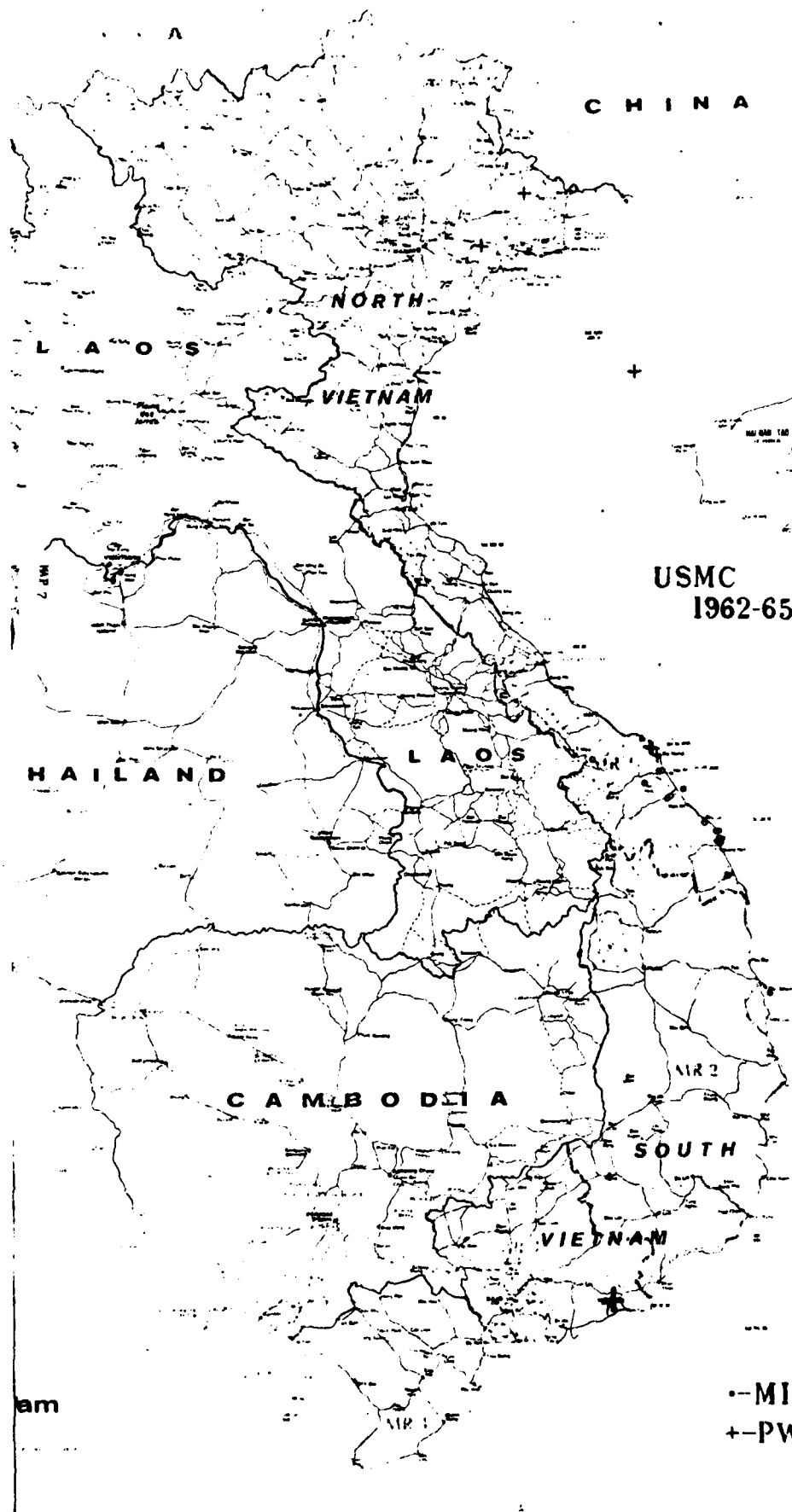
arrangements, preparations, or tunnel digging associated with the "Hogan's Hero" type escapes of World War II. Of course, these 15 were those successfully picked up. Many others could have escaped their captors but because of their wounds, weakness, or sickness succumbed to the elements or wild beasts in the jungle before successfully encountering friendly assistance.

USA capture points in South Vietnam had no particular or especially enlightening patterns. There was a greater percentage of captured versus missing in the southern regions around the Mekong delta and Saigon, but there were not so many heavy, large-scale engagements there as was the case further north closer to the demarcation line. The lack of capture points in Laos was consistent.

### Marines

Each mark on the US Marine Corps maps represents an individual PW or MIA. Their situation for occurrence and spacing of losses approximately paralleled the Army experience (Map 7, Map 8, and Map 9).

The USMC lost 347 men in SEA from 1962 to 1975 which accounted for 10.6 percent of all the PW/MIA military losses. There were 47 lost in North Vietnam, 20 in Laos, 266 in South Vietnam, and 14 in Cambodia.



CHINA

CHINA

NORTH

LAOS

VIETNAM

USMC  
1966-67

THAILAND

LAOS

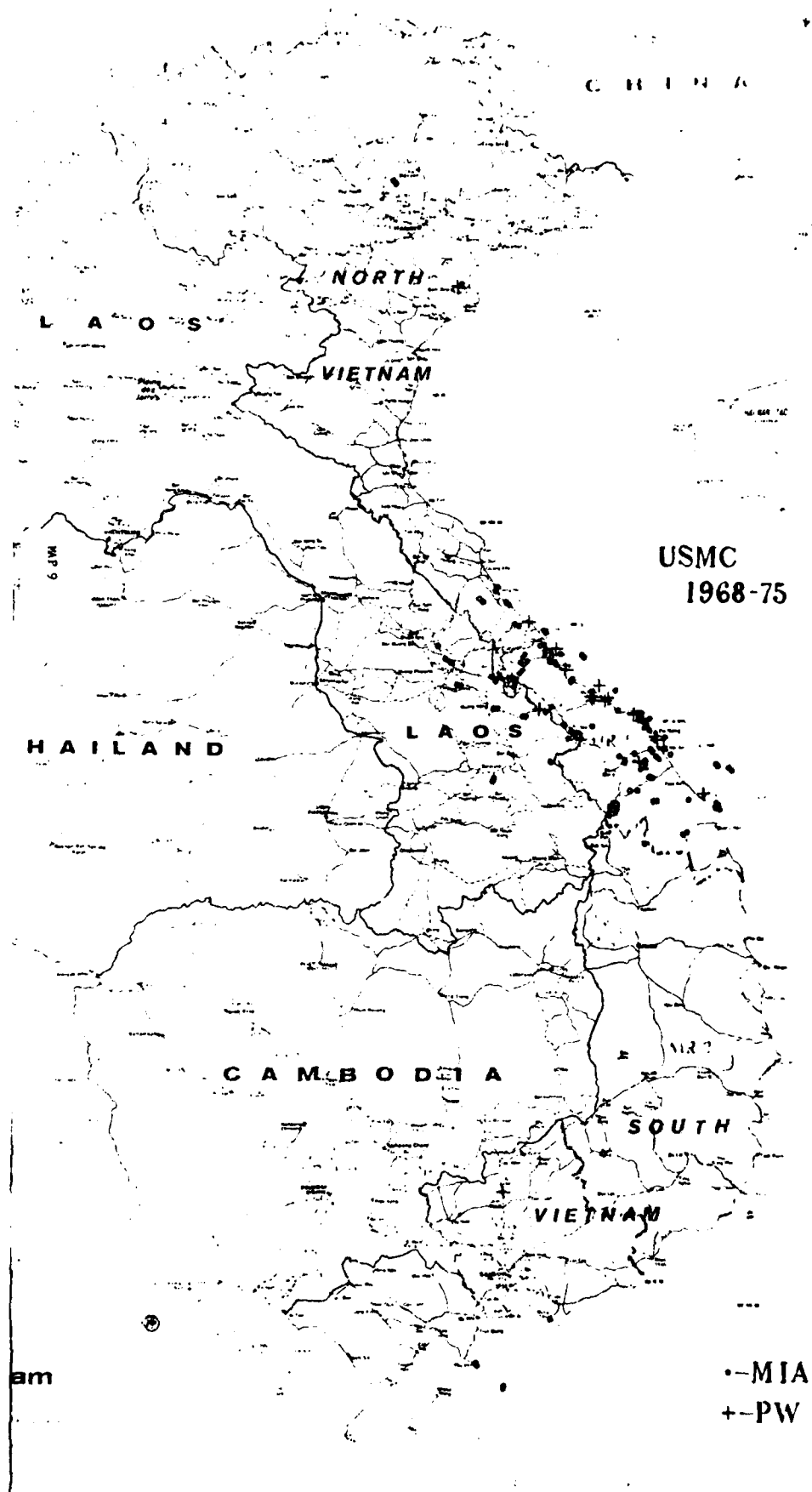
CAMBODIA

SOUTH

VIETNAM

am

•-MIA  
+-PW



The 14 Cambodian losses are all in association with the 15 May 1975 USMC landing on Koh Tang Island to free the American freighter SS Mayaguez seized by the Cambodian Communists. That episode has been well documented and is well known. These USMC losses there have not been accounted for. A total of 18 American lives were lost and 5 helicopters were destroyed or heavily damaged during this rescue operation.

Most of the USMC losses appeared in the northern regions of South Vietnam; especially around Da Nang and at the demarcation line. In fact, it surprised me to note the greater magnitude of USMC losses around the Khe Sanh area. The Marines participated in "Riverine" operations in the Mekong delta with the US Navy so some MIAs appeared there also.

Helicopter operations accounted for several tragic losses that appear as clusters of MIAs in some areas. The USMC air operations accounted for several loss episodes even into the upper regions of North Vietnam.

The Marines were successful also at escaping their captors. Ten men got away and returned.

Of the 19 returnees that had capture points in South Vietnam, 17 were moved north and had similar experiences to relate as their Army contemporaries. The zero rate of capture points in Laos was again very obvious.

The USMC had an active combat role in SEA, but their PW/MIA loss numbers could be misleading without comparing quickly to the overall USMC losses. In their ten years of SEA operations (1962-72), the USMC lost 12,936 killed and had 88,594 wounded. They lost 424 helicopters and 254 fixed wing aircraft to combat and operational causes.\*

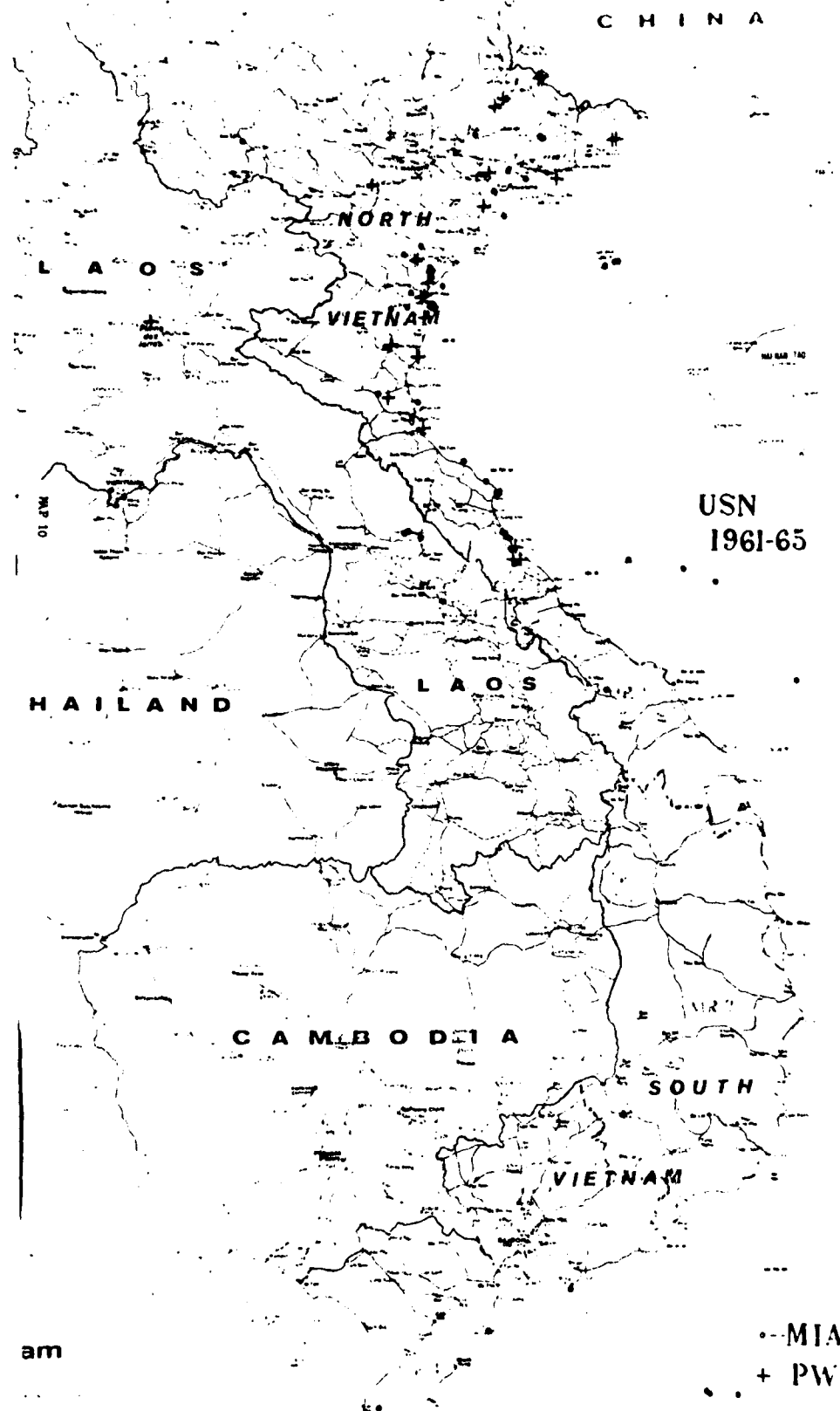
### Navy

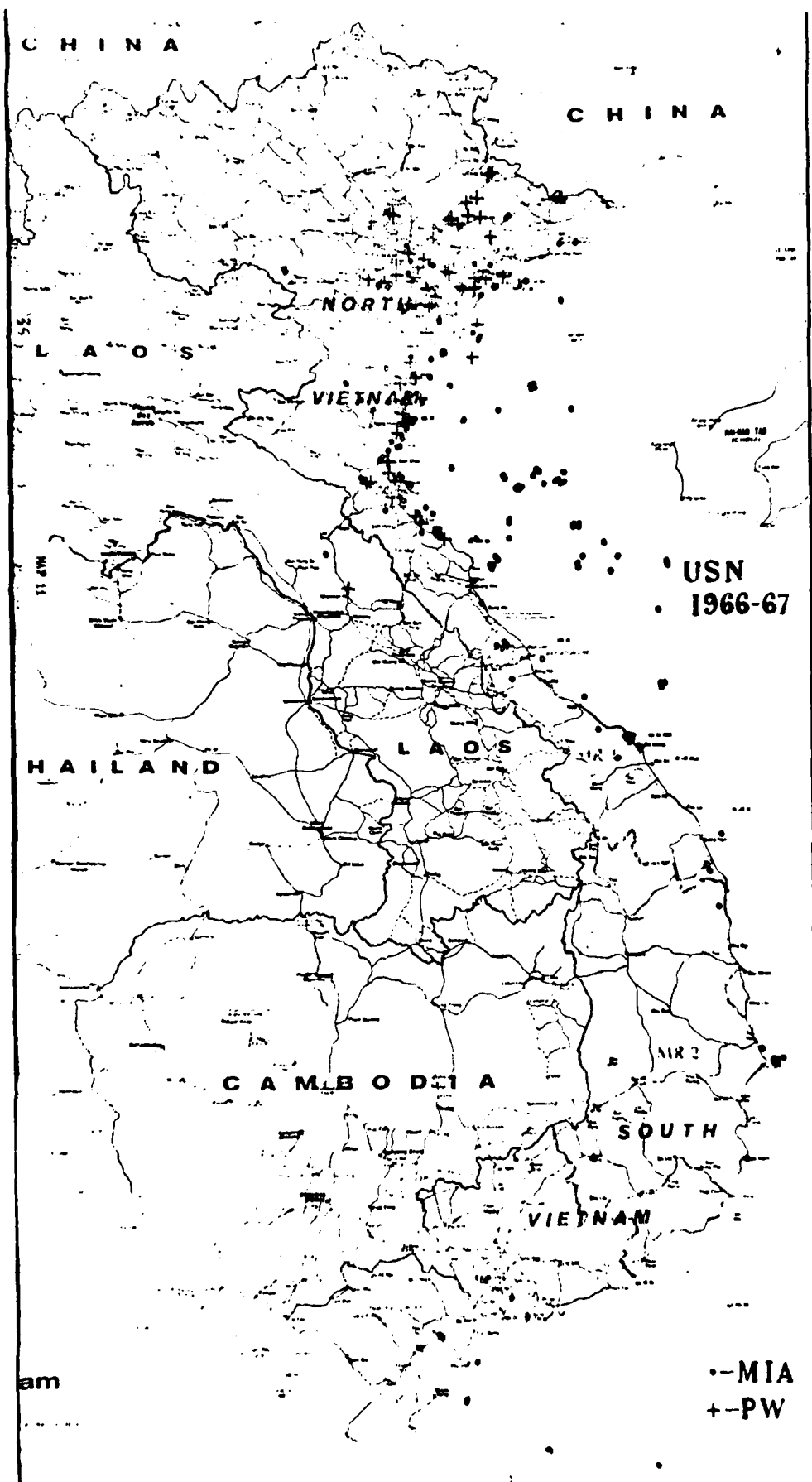
The individual Navy loss points transfer an obvious high involvement with carrying the war to North Vietnam (Map 10, Map 11, and Map 12). The USN were the first to be involved in the strikes against the North beginning with the Gulf of Tonkin incident on 2 August 1964 when three North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked the destroyer USS Maddox. Events of the following days led to the retaliatory air strikes against North Vietnam on 5 August 1964 flown from the carriers Ticonderoga and Constellation. Sixty-four US Navy planes were involved in the attacks with two of the planes being shot down. One pilot was killed and the other, Lieutenant (jg) Everett Alvarez, became the first US aviator to be captured in North Vietnam.

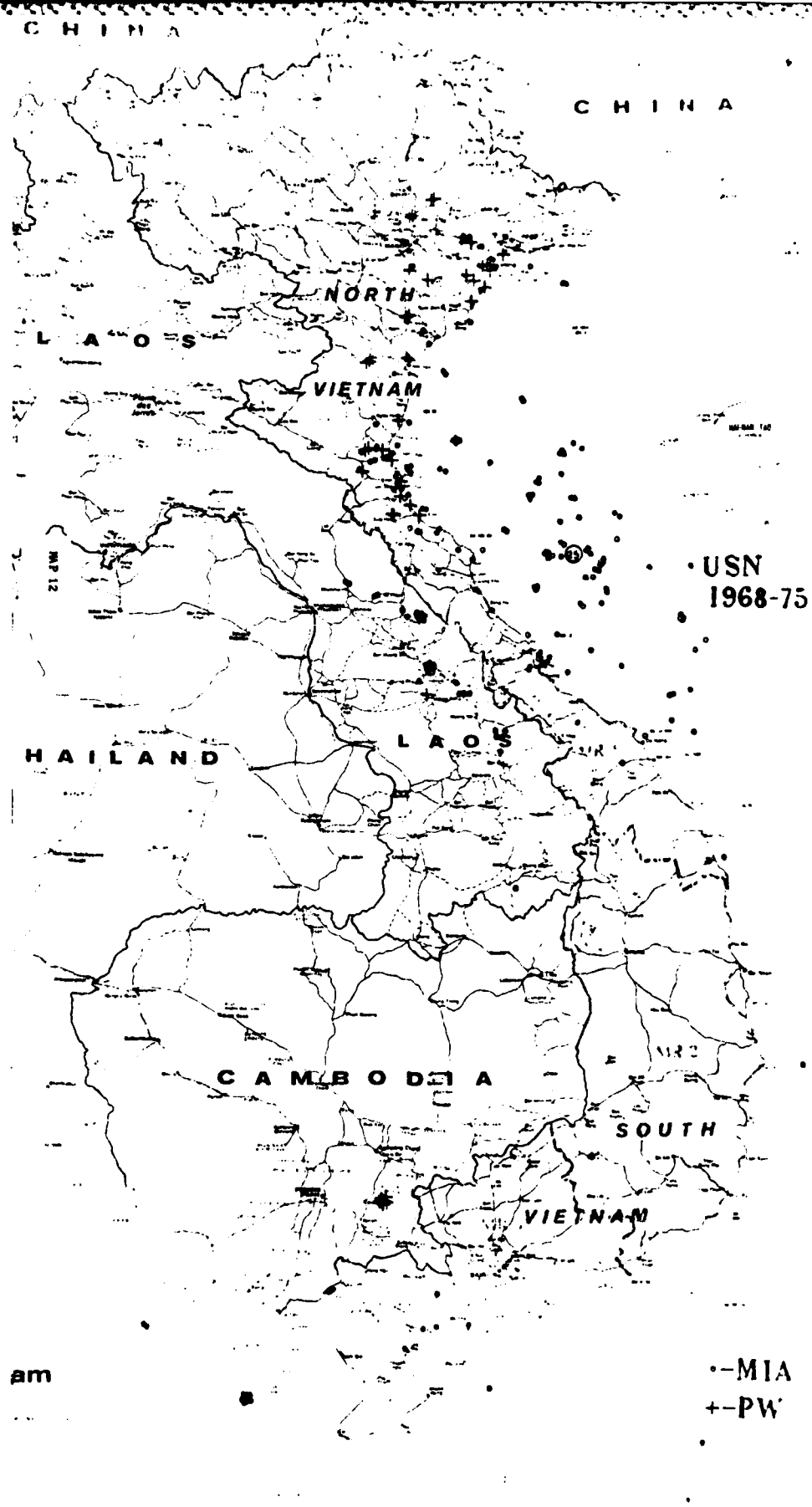
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\*Ray Bonds, Editor, The Vietnam War. (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1979), p. 136.









The USN lost 693 men in SEA from 1961 to 1975, 21.2 percent of all the PW/MIA military losses. There were 494 lost in North Vietnam, 47 in Laos, 133 in South Vietnam, 12 in China, and 7 in Cambodia.

The USN over-land loss points describe a pattern very similar to that of the USAF. A lot of captures were made in and around the highly populated cities, especially the Haiphong and Hanoi area. In addition, most of the USN remains returned by North Vietnam after the war had loss points very near Haiphong.

The USN had as many as six carriers operating in the Gulf of Tonkin near Yankee Station (rendezvous point about 75 miles east of North Vietnam) at certain times. As a result of the objectives of these carriers, and of other ships, 271 USN personnel are registered as being lost at sea. Most of these losses have no accounting. Many of them were the result of tragic accidents, such as the one that triggered fires and explosions on the flight deck of the carrier USS Forrestal on 27 July 1967. The fire raged for 18 hours, destroyed 21 aircraft, and killed 134 men. Similar accidents occurred at other times aboard the USS Kittyhawk and the USS Oriskany. USN personnel who jumped overboard to escape the flames were never recovered.

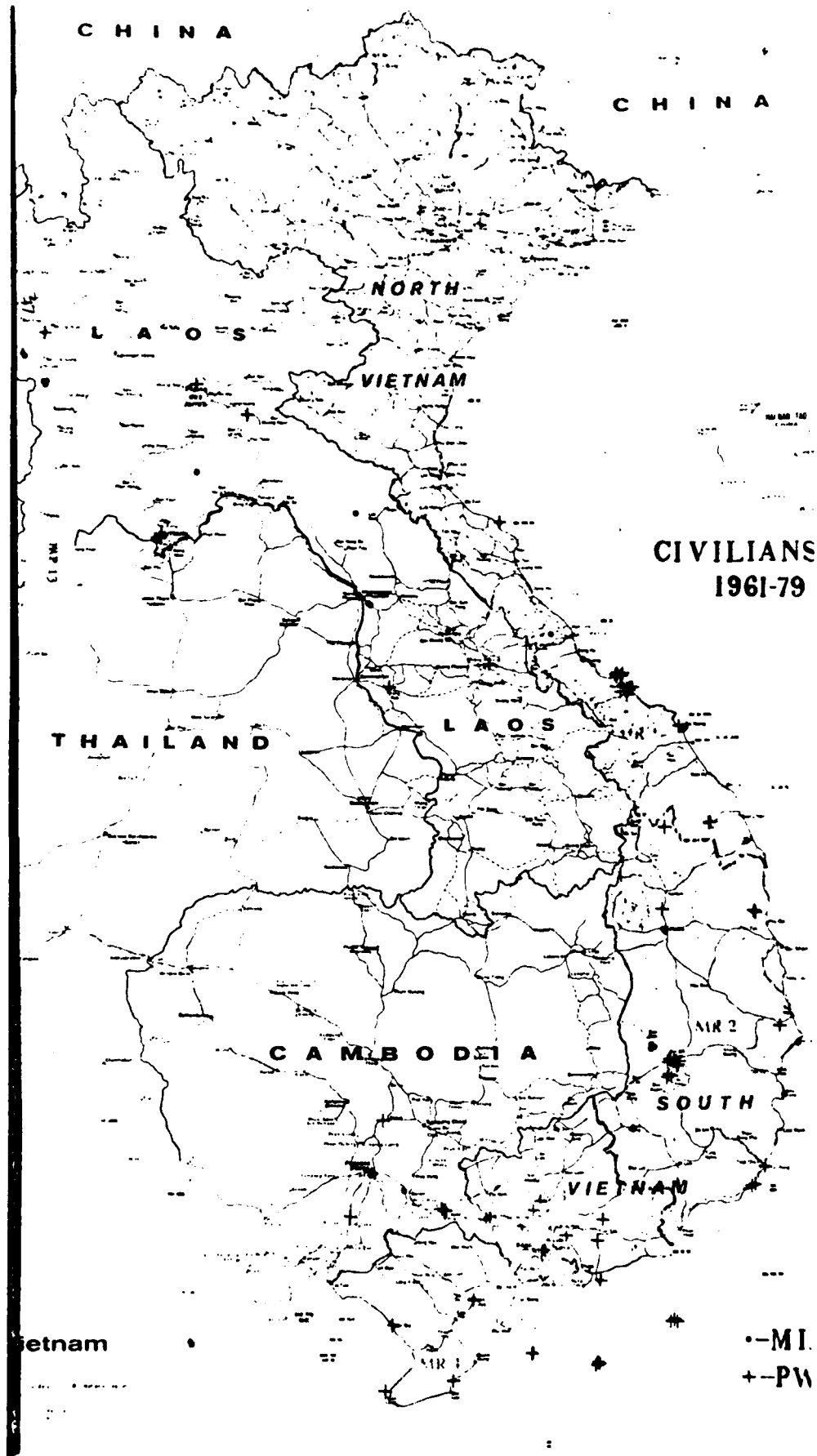
Other sailors were probably lost during normal duties aboard ship in circumstances similar to those of young Seaman Apprentice Doug Hegdahl in 1967. He was

"skylarking" above deck, where he was not supposed to be, during a coastal bombardment of North Vietnam by his ship, the cruiser USS Canberra. A sudden wave and coincident broadside firing propelled young Hegdahl into the offshore water, where he paddled about for several hours before being luckily picked up by a North Vietnamese fishing boat and subsequently delivered to a prison camp in Hanoi. Since we were aviators, we jokingly labeled Hegdahl as holding the record of those captured up North with the lowest altitude bail out.

The total losses indicated in South Vietnam were lower than I had expected considering the extensive USN policing of the waterways with ships and helicopters. The USN active riverine operations which patrolled deep into enemy-held territory in South Vietnam waterways exposed them to a perpetually high probability of combat losses. Therefore, the environment and the mission combine to make the USN low capture or accounted-for rate in South Vietnam neither surprising nor unexpected.

### Civilians

I plotted the US civilian loss points just to make sure I had looked at the complete picture of the SEA POW/MIA episode (Map 13). The resultant position points were little different from those of the military. Civilians experienced 122 losses in SEA from 1961 to 1979.



There was one captured in North Vietnam, 19 lost in Laos, 89 lost in South Vietnam, and 13 lost in Cambodia. There were two individuals (D602, F602) captured in 1952 and released by China at the same time SEA releases were being made from North Vietnam. Therefore, they appear on lists as a part of the SEA POW/MIA episode but are really subjects of the Korean war story (Appendix 1).

The individual captured in North Vietnam (K602) put himself into his predicament. He commandeered a small civilian charter airplane in 1970 and flew into North Vietnam, where it ran out of gas. After his forced landing, the Vietnamese put him into prison, where he stayed until released with the rest of us in 1973.

Several of the people were captured during the North Vietnamese offensive actions against the South. Of the large group of US civilians captured during the February 1968 Tet offensive, 13 were marched north and incarcerated in Hanoi area prison camps until the 1973 PW release. There were several taken prisoner during the March 1975 NVN march to Saigon.

The 1977 to 79 PW/MIA incidents occurred over water. They were most likely in conjunction with the mass exodus of the Vietnamese boat people refugees.

There was one area just outside of Saigon where multiple unaccounted-for losses appeared. The losses

occured in different years, but curiously all fell in very close proximity to one another.

There were several losses by Air America personnel, and quite a few journalists were captured. In fact, 21 journalists are still missing in SEA.

### Summary

We lost a total of 3,273 US military and 122 US civilian people during the 19-year period. The years of 1967 and 1968 had the greatest incidences of loss, and the military ranks of captain and first lieutenant experienced the most casualties (Chart 2). Of course, the high number of air crew losses contributes to the latter statistic. Another computation I made indicates that 80 percent of all personnel in SEA still unaccounted for are aircrew members.

There were 1,277 US citizens lost (PW/MIA) in North Vietnam, 585 in Laos, 1,407 in South Vietnam, 113 in Cambodia, and 13 in China (or Chinese waters). Of these 3,395 souls, 697 appeared as PW returnees and 33 successfully escaped from their Communist captors. Seventy-four others are known to have died in captivity.

The maps' plotted positions highlight the greater number of captured that occurred around the North Vietnam population centers as opposed to the remote areas. All military services demonstrated that the further the incident occurred away from the Hanoi area, the lesser the



CHART 2

US SEA LOSSES BY YEAR

	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
USAF	6	1	7	8	108	259	275	185	100	76	45	257	16	0	2	0	0	0	0
USA	8	6	8	15	29	59	88	249	134	96	142	48	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
USMC	0	1	1	5	16	48	93	95	30	16	0	24	0	0	18	0	0	0	0
USN	1	0	1	3	87	129	174	118	53	31	13	69	12	0	2	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	2	4	4	1	10	5	4	27	3	11	4	3	7	6	23	0	3	2	3
	17	12	21	32	250	500	634	674	320	230	204	401	41	6	45	0	3	2	3

US SEA MILITARY LOSSES BY RANK

08 -	1	W4 -	3	E9 -	1
06 -	13	W3 -	4	E8 -	16
05 -	157	W2 -	36	E7 -	74
04 -	441	W1 -	75	E6 -	110
03 -	806		118	E5 -	249
02 -	592			E4 -	300
01 -	31			E3 -	261
				E2 -	90
				E1 -	12
					1113
	2041				

Compiled from August 1980 Defense Intelligence Agency PMSA  
(Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia) File #3.

probability of capture. Conversely the evidence of those captured in South Vietnam varied with the obvious ebb and flow of the combat situation there, and subsequent survivability if captured depended on a successful move to the permanent prison camp in North Vietnam. Laos had a horrible record for survivability.

Aircrews of larger, low-altitude mission aircraft had very low to nonexistent accounting. Additionally, there was a large number of personnel lost in aircraft over the water, a fact which increased the over-water losses experienced by the Navy as a result of ship accidents or normal sea operations.

There was a noticeable reduction in the proportion of those captured versus those missing after the 1968 bombing halt over North Vietnam. This trend was especially noticeable by the USAF loss rate change but also could be directly related to the Army's drastic increase in losses in South Vietnam in 1968 (Chart 2).

The geographic location maps cover the SEA POW/MIA episode from 1961 to 1979. They describe activities that happened during that era by the position of my circles and crosses that, though difficult to analyze individually, collectively paint a dramatic human-interest picture. It is easy to understand how a computer projection of these losses could come out looking like "a jumbled bunch of dots" on one map.

### CHAPTER III

#### COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION

During my plotting of the SEA POW/MIA loss points, I made many parallel readings and analytic searches in pursuit of possible answers for some of the patterns on the maps. Naturally, each reading lead me rapidly to another area that needed my perusal.

I reconstructed some aircraft mission routes into their targets to check out the possibility of more losses along some routes than others. This idea did not prove fruitful. There were a lot of losses around "Thud Ridge," north of Hanoi, and similar areas along the coast, such as the "Hourglass," where the Navy and Air Force aircraft made their runs against Hanoi. But such discoveries only reemphasized the folly of being forced to fly the same designated routes to the target day after day, thereby making the enemy's AAA and SAM defense layouts simpler to organize. Additionally, the Mu Gia Pass, Plaine des Jarres and Tchepone areas of Laos were heavily inundated with losses, but the loss patterns seemed to have little association with the routes taken into the target area by the units flying the missions.

Another question surfaced that related to the possibility of certain military units experiencing a greater percentage of MIAs versus captured. I was not able to investigate this possibility very deeply because of

inaccessibility and unavailability of detailed background material on all the service losses by individual, but the analysis I was able to make on this unit hypothesis did not indicate a very high probability. True, some aircraft, such as the C-130's mentioned earlier, had a low capture rate, but other aviators and the ground forces seemed to have random losses more associative with their combat exposure.

I had a similar problem finding enough information on the academic and military backgrounds of the POW/MIAs to analyze the possibility of individuals with certain training or education showing an MIA consistency. A suspicion surfaced that some specialities, such as B-52 electronic warfare officers, helicopter pilots, or munitions experts, could be tucked away and forced to do training later for the Communists. A thorough study of this possibility led me further afield than I was able to adequately pursue. The academic and military background on each individual is not contained in the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) files nor in the Air University Library. Such information is retained only in each service's register file, access to which requires special permission. I have reservations about the relative productivity of a complete search, but an Air Command and Staff College research report (#1685-81) was made this year

on USAF officers lost in North Vietnam. The conclusions indicate little correlation between unaccounted for and individual academic or military backgrounds.<sup>1</sup>

There were several hypotheses I chased in an attempt to find some solid answers to the low accountability rate. I must admit I came up less than satisfied with my results, but it is all very much like chasing ghosts. I know there was a shadow of information there, but when I pursued it there was no substance to it. However, as I pursued each possible lead, certain discoveries solidified and filled many gaps in my background information and in my personal involvement with the SEA POW/MIA episode.

#### Those Returned

Less than 1,000 US personnel have been absolutely confirmed as dead or have returned from SEA (Chart 3). Most were those who were released from Hanoi and South Vietnam after the January 1973

At the time of "Operation Homecoming," the DIA still listed 113 individuals as POWs because their pictures had appeared in Communist or other-country publications or had been reasonably confirmed as PWs by other means. Some of their remains have been returned, and others were validated as having died in captivity by returnees' testimony, but most of them are still unaccounted for. Prior

# U.S. PERSONNEL MIA/IV IN A CONFIRMED ACCOUNTING

AS OF AUGUST 1980

BY YEAR LOST\*

	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
CAMBODIA								A13		A3 N5 C4	A1	F1							
CHINA					F1		N1												
LACS	A3 N1 C1				C1		M1	F2	F1 N1		F2	F1 C1	C1		C4				
NVN				N1	F35 M2 N24	F61 M1 N23	F98 M2 N52	F28 M3 N16		C1	F5 N2	F92 M1 N22							
SVN	A1	A3	A3 C1	A3	M1 C2	A3 M1 C3	A10 M3	A41 F1 M3 C19	A18 M2 C2	A7 M1 C5	A5 C1	A8 F4 M2 C1	N1 C3	C5	C14		C3		C3
LACS				N1		N1													697
SVN			A2		F1 M2 C3	M2	A2 C1	A8 M5	A3						C2				
CAMBODIA																			34
CHINA						N(1)	N1			A2									
LACS	A1				F1 N1		A1			F1			F1						
NVN					F2 M1 N4	F17 N5	F10 N9	F(1) F5 N4				F13							
SVN		A2	A2 C2	A4	A3 F8 M1 C1	A5 F3 M4 C2	A3 F2 M4 C1	A13 M5 N2 C5	A12 F2 N2 C1	A2	A2	A6 F10	C2		C1				197

Legend: A-Army; F-Air Force; M-Marines; N-Navy; ( ) over water; C-Civilian.

\*Numbers are placed in country of capture - many moved to NVN.

Compiled from August 1980 Defense Intelligence Agency  
PMSEA (Prisoners & Missing in SEA) File #3.

OR  
DIED IN CAPTIVITY

CHART 3

to the release, the North Vietnamese negotiators provided the US a list containing 562 names of those servicemen who were to be repatriated. Among them were 51 who had been listed MIA and one Marine who had been listed as KIA until the NVN list was released (Appendix 2).

There were 34 escapees over the years. Most of the escapes were accomplished in South Vietnam. In fact, there were only two successful escapes from Laos and none from North Vietnam. Some escapes from NVN camps were successful, but since the camps were deep in enemy territory and usually near open and heavily populated areas, the escapees did not get far before being recaptured. At least one NVN escapee was known to be killed after an attempt, and the captors would incorporate harsher treatment on all the PW's in the camp where the escape occurred. Probably the two best-known and documented escapes were those of Navy Lieutenant (jg) Dieter Dengler in 1966 after six months in Laos and Army Major Nick Rowe in 1968 after five years in South Vietnam. Both of their experiences are testimony to the harsh conditions of the imprisonment, the cruel and barbaric treatment by the captors and the relative weakness, yet determined survival, of the PW's. Escape in any SEA area after a period of incarceration was made even more difficult by the fact that we Americans did not know the

language, we knew very little about the culture of the people or the geography of the area, and we did not look anything like the indigenous population. Psychological strain accompanying an escape attempt was best described by Dengler in his book when he and his six friends' plans were all made and they were ready to make their break:

The more I thought about the escape, the more it scared me. Was it the right thing to do? Should we wait until more of the guards were gone? If anything went wrong, we'd all be killed. Was the slim chance of freedom worth the high risk of death? I was still alive. The moment I committed myself to escape I gave up that firm grip on life. I knew that as soon as we were on the other side of that fence and into the jungle, the rest would be up to us. It would have been so much easier and more secure to stay where we were and give it another six months or a year, hoping the war would end and we'd be released.<sup>2</sup>

Treatment in the prison camps varied considerably between South and North Vietnam. Those captured in South Vietnam were more apt to have to survive the challenge of the natural physical elements; exposure, starvation and sickness. Their guards were often cruel, and the prisoners were occasionally worked, but they were not systematically tortured for information. However, the torture administered by the North Vietnamese in the permanent POW camps around Hanoi was systematic, regular and coincident with propaganda shows or disciplinary punishment. They used torture techniques that shut off circulation, inflicted much pain, but did not produce easily seen scars about the face or neck.



My first interrogation session shortly after arriving at the Hanoi Hilton (Hoa Lo Prison) quickly introduced me to the atmosphere that would prevail around me for almost the next six years. I was captured less than 60 miles west of Hanoi and was transited first by long, fast walk and then by truck to the Hilton in less than three days.

I fully expected to be hammered hard about Wild Weasel operations. I knew all about the Quick Reaction Capability (QRC) jamming equipment, the surface-to-air missile (SAM) suppression techniques, and the Shrike (anti-radiation) missile. I was flabbergasted by the line of questioning that developed.

"What new targets? You know Rolling Thunder 56 (DOD target series) came into Takhli last Wednesday. You were there! What new targets?

I honestly did not know. The target package had arrived only a few days before I'd been shot down, so I had no idea what new targets there were designated for release. But my tormentors introduced me to their interrogators one after the other and encouraged me to "think in my mind clearly." They quickly lost their patience with the name, rank, service number, date of birth answer. They brought in the guards, who introduced me to the Vietnamese hospitality beatings, rope tricks, and hang-from-the-ceiling-hook parties. I discovered what pain, fatigue,

hallucinations, despair and things like that were all about. I lost track of whether it was day or night, but within a week I was pointing out bridges and other likely-looking juicy target points on the map the interrogators always spread out on the table before me.

Over 95 percent of the prisoners in North Vietnam were tortured, and most had considerable experience with isolation. Five men spent over four years in solitary confinement. Everyone suffered considerable weight loss due to the diet and standard illnesses.

From 1966 to 1968, the Hanoi captors made a big issue about how under certain circumstances those who cooperated would be allowed to go home. Those who did not might face war crimes trials, with death or post-war imprisonment as possible punishment. The captors went so far as to play a detailed tape recording (about these trials) over the loudspeakers tied to the bars of each of our cells. They proclaimed that we had all committed grave crimes against the Vietnamese people and were therefore "the blackest of criminals." Therefore, after the war was over trials would be held and we would receive sentencing "in accordance with the magnitude of our crimes." Some would receive from five to seven years; others would receive 10 to 12 years; some very serious criminals would be executed. About mid-1968 all reference

to this postwar imprisonment suddenly stopped and was never brought up again.

Each POW had his survival-and-daily-living routine pretty well established after making it through the first year. After two years, he was a professional PW who knew his own limitations, understood the guards and the general prison environment, and knew what was needed to help or keep faith with his fellow prisoners. Also many prisoners renewed their commitment to their individual faith while others found their understanding of a covenant with God (Appendix 3).

The bad treatment in the prison camps remained fairly static until the fall of 1969. Sometime in the summer of 1969 the wives and families decided to become vocal in the cause of the prisoners. Until then, they had been advised by the US government to use restraint because the government thought public attention could raise the price for our release. But groups of wives had begun to organize in different areas of the country and were questioning the value of continuing silence. After early-released PWs, Navy Lieutenant Frishmen and Seaman Hegdahl, spread the news that the prisoners were being badly treated, the government began to feel there was little to be lost by speaking out. Also, more and more, the wives and other citizens were demanding action of some

sort on the prisoners' behalf, and the pressure began building in all directions to do something about the issue of those missing in SEA, an issue which had been all but ignored by the public (Appendix 4). When US citizens began wearing bracelets and writing letters, and the families made speeches and trips to Paris to confront the North Vietnamese delegation, things did begin to change. Hanoi was put on the defense by such actions and the attendant publicity, to such an extent that some show of bravado was necessary. A radio Hanoi broadcast on 10 April 1970 was a reaction to the world public attention the American prisoners were unknowingly receiving:

In the past few days, the Nixon Administration again set up a new psychological warfare farce to stir public opinion about our Army's and people's arrest and detention of US aggressor pilots who committed crimes in North Vietnam. Concerning the captured U.S. aggressor pilots, our government and people have many times clearly expressed their stand and attitude they are air marauders who, on U.S. government orders, bombed and strafed the Democratic Peoples Republic of Vietnam--an independent and sovereign country--and who were caught red-handed while perpetrating crimes.

They are not entitled to enjoy provisions on the treatment of POWs as stipulated in the 1949 Geneva Convention as the U.S. authorities have frequently clamored. They are only culprits who are under jurisdiction of the current DRV law.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of the tough words projected to the public, the treatment of the NVN PWs was greatly improved. Torture was stopped, food was improved, some health care was provided, and many more six-line letters were allowed between PWs and their families. Prisoners in both NVN and

SVN that had been kept isolated in small groups or in solitary confinement were moved into larger groups and experienced a more POW detention-status atmosphere. •

The purpose of having kept us separated was quite evident. They did not want us able to organize our resistance and oppose their harsh treatment or attempts at indoctrination. An individual by himself became a single animal fighting for survival, losing the ability to identify or associate with anything other than himself and basing his actions on his immediate needs. Also, there was a sense of security being with or near other Americans, knowing that if something happened to you, at least someone would know. Alone, you were at the mercy of the guards, who could not care less whether you lived or died.

The treatment remained more reasonable until the 1973 release, but the Communist captors kept a tight rein and still insisted that we were no longer military men. We were prisoners under their control. Because we had committed crimes against the Vietnamese people, they could judge us according to our crimes. They could kill us, torture us or whatever, but they always claimed they really desired to "show us the truth of the situation in Vietnam" and create conditions so we might eventually return to our families.

After the brave POW rescue attempt at Son Tay on 21 November 1970, the prisoners being kept in different camps throughout NVN were consolidated into the Hanoi Hilton. It was the only large, permanent prison facility and was located in the center of Hanoi. The Son Tay raid was not successful in extracting any POWs, but as well as raising POW morale greatly when we eventually heard about it, the brash act itself served to create conditions that made the atmosphere much better for the POWs. Since the American prisoner population was so much larger now and concentrated into one camp, POW isolation and solitary confinement was virtually ended. Some POW groups in the newly arranged confinement facility contained over 50 men. The POW organization became stronger, and a sense of well-being was experienced by all the POWs. The captors seemed disposed, either because of the central location or of the need to maintain a calm environment, to increase and improve the food and needed medical attention.

A little over a year later, over 200 of us were blindfolded, bound and moved stealthily in covered trucks at night. We were taken to a camp near the Chinese border at a point north and west of Dong Khe. The camp was constructed among the Karst ridges and had surrounding barbed-wire-topped walls and buildings made of solid stone. It had been obviously constructed especially as a permanent

prison facility. There was not any electricity, and we depended on the stream flowing down the mountain for our water supply. We named the camp Dog Patch in association with our mountainous surroundings and primitive living conditions. We remained in this camp until January 1973, when we were returned to Hanoi to be released. The U.S. did not know the location of this camp until after the returnee debriefing.

Those of us who returned alive represented the pluralistic, marble-cake society of America. There were big-city boys and country hicks; blacks, orientals and Chicanos; college-educated and high-school drop outs; rich boys and poor boys; Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. Among the aviators, the average age at capture was about 30, the education level was either some college or college graduation, and the experience level was about 6 to 7 years of military service. Most had traveled around the U.S. extensively, and some had seen different parts of the world. There is not any readily apparent specific reason or easily applied magic formula available that can show why some PWs survived and returned as opposed to those who did not. A positive attitude toward living and a determination to survive were always necessary, but even a determined spirit could not overpower disease or execution. Determination could have helped to overcome any food

aversions because there were revolting things that had to be eaten to keep up strength. Some special attention to personal hygiene and self-help, primitive remedies for your own medical problems were required very often.

### Those Still Missing

For all practical considerations, the August 1980 DIA statistics listed 2,465 U.S. citizens still to be accounted for in SEA. There were 1,133 registered as KIA at the time of their loss or shortly thereafter, but their bodies have not been recovered. The services and State Department have labeled 1,275 individual POW/MIA records with a presumptive finding of death (PFOD). Very few records indicate a category that would indicate they might still be alive: 33 are listed as missing, 14 are registered as deserters, and 10 are still listed a POWs (Charts 4 and 5).

At the time of the 1973 release, the basic United States policy was that there were to be no presumptive changes in status of MIAs or POWs still unaccounted for in SEA unless requested by the next-of-kin or until the President was personally convinced that every man had been accounted for as accurately as possible. Since that time, and in spite of the fact that only 75 remains have been returned, the policy has been totally reversed. When queried about the U.S. Government position on the possibility of Americans continuing to be held captive in SEA, a Carter



STATUS OF U.S. LOST AS OF 25 AUGUST 1980

	CAMBODIA	MARINES				CAMBODIA	CIVILIANS			
		CHINA	LAOS	NAN	SVN		CHINA	LAOS	NAN	SVN
KIA, Body not returned	11	0	5	9 +(1)*	123 +(30)		0	0	0	3
KIA, Body recovered	0	0	0	0	9		0	2	0*	6
AWOL, DESERTER	0	0	0	0	1		1	0	0	0
ESCAPEE	0	0	0	0	10		0	0	0	6
Died in Captivity(DIC)	0	0	0	1	6		0	0	0	8
DIC, Body returned	0	0	0	1	0		0	0	0	0
MISSING	0	0	1	0	2		4	4	0	7
Remains Returned	0	0	0	0	2		0	0	0	1
POW	0	0	0	0	0		3	1	0	5
RETURNEE	0	0	1	9	19		4	8	1	50
KIA, PFOD	3	0	13	20 +(6)	63 +(1)		1	4	0	3
Total	14	0	20	47	266	347	13	19	1	89

\*( ) = over water

Compiled from Defense Intelligence Agency PMSFA (Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia) File #3.

CHART 4

STATUS OF U.S. LAOT AS OF 25 AUGUST 1980

	AIR FORCE				ARMY				NAVY			
	VICTIMS	CHINA	LAOS	SOVI	RAV	NAS	CAMBODIA	VNIHO	LAOS	CHINA	LAOS	SVN
KIA, Body not returned	14	0	91	32	95	62	5	215	2	2	31	29
				+(8)*	+(25)		+(2)	+(27)		+(1)		50
KIA, Body recovered	0	0	2	(1)	21	0	0	31	0	0	1	4
RECOVERED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	2
ESCAPED	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	15	0	0	1	0
Died in Captivity(DIC)	0	0	1	1	4	2	0	25	0	0	0	0
DIC, Body returned	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISSING	0	0	9	4	1	0	0	0	0	(1)	0	0
Remains Returned	0	0	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
										+(1)		+(2)
POW	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RETURNED	1	1	6	319	5	17	0	102	5	1	2	140
KIA, POW	7	0	257	300	76	18	0	259	0	2	12	104
				+(12)	+(2)			+(6)		+(3)		+(20)
Total	22	1	367	725	230	57	0	689	7	12	47	132
						1345		888				693

\*( ) = over water

Compiled from Defense Intelligence Agency PRIMA (Prisoners and Missing; in Southeast Asia) File #3.

CHART 5

administration spokesman said, "the Department of Defense has no credible evidence to indicate that any U.S. servicemen are alive and being held against their will in Southeast Asia."<sup>4</sup>

This position has become increasingly challengeable in view of the increased information provided by SEA refugees, information which includes several thousand reports of U.S. POW live-sightings throughout the war and into 1978. The DIA has expended a great deal of time and energy attempting to follow up on these live sightings and has registered over 11,000 pages of uncorrelated information. They have not indicated that the information is untrue, merely that it is uncorroborated as to specific identities and that the information is unconfirmable.

Title 37, U.S. Code is the law governing missing persons. In conjunction with this law, the Air Force has conducted mandatory status review hearings on all its missing personnel. The following quoted material typifies the problems encountered and the details involved with status reviews to determine a PFOD:

Following the cease fire in Vietnam on 27 January 1973, and the return of 325 Air Force prisoners of war in February and March 1973, the Air Force began status reviews on personnel who remained missing in action and captured. This action was taken in accordance with the law governing status reviews and supported by intelligence

reports, prisoner of war returnee debriefs and known circumstances of loss. In July 1973, a class action suit was filed against the Services charging the law denied due process to the next of kin and was therefore unconstitutional. As a result of this class action, all Services-initiated status reviews were halted in accordance with DOD instructions. On 11 March 1974, a three-judge Federal panel concluded their review of the Missing Persons Act and found it legally sound, but stated additional requirements for next of kin that should be adhered to. Because of executive interest, however, the Department of Defense continued the moratorium on status reviews except where requested by the next of kin or upon receipt of new evidence; i.e., return of remains.

In September 1977, the Services resumed involuntary status reviews of those remaining personnel missing in action and captured from the Southeast Asian conflict in consonance with Department of Defense policy. At this time, the Air Force had 379 personnel in a missing in action and captured status. Under their direction and guidance, all next of kin were systematically notified of the procedures and rights that would be afforded to them. To be fair and equitable to everyone, procedures were established whereby cases would be reviewed in chronological order and except for delays caused by voluminous Freedom of Information Act requests, we have adhered to this policy. Hearings, normally attended by next of kin and in some instances their lawyers, are held before a board of three rated, senior officers with SEA combat experience and chaired by a military legal advisor. An Air Force court reporter transcribes each hearing.<sup>5</sup>

The governments in Hanoi (now the capital of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam [SRV]), Vientiane and Phnom Pehn have continued to be very uncooperative on the subject of the missing Americans. The Vietnamese have kept some dialogue going but have been evasive and noncommittal. Official Vietnamese replies to U.S. inquiries have often been vague and nonspecific. In the beginning, the Vietnamese Communists stated that all those Americans that registered to be repatriated had returned home. Being quite

familiar with the weasel-wording ways of the Communists, I would be very interested to learn whether they offered all the Americans POWs the chance to register for repatriation. Lately it seems the Vietnamese prefer to respond periodically only to inquiries concerning specific names or incidents.

As regards the validity of the SEA refugee information, it is all very difficult to check. Some has a high probability of substance and fact. However, many refugees may come forward with carefully fabricated information with the hopes that it will gain them attention and possible eventual entry into the U.S.

One refugee, Ngo Phi Hung, had a very detailed and well-supported story that he had seen and had contact with 49 American prisoners in South Vietnam during the periods 1975-1977. The U.S. officials asked the Vietnamese authorities for information on this report. Replying promptly, they stated that there were no American prisoners in Vietnam.<sup>6</sup> Similar, though less specific and detailed, stories of live American POWs have been passed by Vietnamese refugees who were among the more than 400,000 sent to the Communist's remote "reeducation" centers.

A refugee who wished to remain anonymous testified that he had been a mortician in Hanoi, and had worked on the remains of 400 Americans kept in a camp nicknamed by American POWs as "The Plantation." He also claimed he saw three live US POWs in a Hanoi prison after 1973.<sup>7</sup> A U.S. commission

that visited Hanoi shortly after this testimony was given questioned the Vietnamese officials about these bodies kept at the Plantation. The question, of course, was rebuffed as untrue and an element of pure fabrication.

Most recently, Mr. Stein Gudding, a Swedish suveryor whose company was commissioned to do some surveying for the SRV, claimed that one of his crews sighted some Americans along a road in the mountains north of Hanoi. They had just walked over a rise in the road when they came upon an apparent prison group of Caucasians doing work along the road. When the Vietnamese guards spotted the Swedish surveyors looking down on them, they started shouting and scurrying about to move their prison charges out of sight. The prisoners looked around to see what had instigated the guards' excitement. The two prisoners nearest the surveyors turned toward them and one shouted to them in English with what the Swedes claimed as an obvious American accent, "Tell the world about us!" The incident occurred in August 1980.<sup>8</sup> However, when the DIA made a follow-up investigation and interviewed the Swedish personnel involved, they then proclaimed no personal knowledge of Americans in Vietnam. The Swedes stated their information on Americans remaining in Vietnam was hearsay.

Ms Rosemary Conway, an American fluent in Laotian, was a school teacher in Laos until the Communists arrested her in 1975 on charges of suspected espionage. During her

11-month imprisonment, she heard many stories among the Laotian prisoners, who were moved about from one prison to another, concerning "American pilot" prisoners. As she related, because of the SEA air-war experience, any captured American was called a pilot by the Laotians. One claim often repeated was that Xiangkhoang Province had at least 50 "pilot" prisoners. Another incident she related was that her Vientiane prison officials threatened her with the statement that her crimes might be bad enough to have her moved to Tchepone with "the other American prisoners."<sup>9</sup>

An additional emphasis on the possibility of American POWs in Laos is displayed by the following short article in the February 1981 Chicago Sun Times:

Some 40 to 50 MIAs are being held captive by the communist government in Laos, a former Royal Lao air force pilot told the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. In a copyright story, the newspaper reported that former pilot Sayfa Pounsavan, who now directs the Lao Family Center in Seattle, said his information came from the hundreds of Laotian refugees who seek services from his agency. He predicted that the American servicemen listed as missing in action, most of the pilots, will be held captive in Laos for several more years of forced labor. "The governments there use the Americans to teach them how to fly the airplanes and helicopters abandoned in 1975," Sayfa said. "They are also being used as English instructors."<sup>10</sup>

The probability of the Americans training the Communist forces in the use of captured U.S. equipment is debatable, but no possibility should be overlooked. After all, any surviving U.S. POW would not have any outside world contact, and any escape would have to be near miraculous without the remotest possibility now of making contact with an overflying U.S. military aircraft. His hopes and prayers

for freedom someday would have to be tempered with the necessary adjustments for survival in his present environment. What individual sacrifice and personal price in pride might have to be paid to stay alive and meet the demands of the captors? How deep would the feelings of despair at possibly being forgotten by the people and government of the U.S. drive a surviving SEA PW toward doing whatever had to be done to pay his own way out of his predicament? With only the Communist propaganda for information, there wouldn't be any way he could know that anyone in the U.S. still cared about his plight or was trying to do anything in his behalf. Throughout the SEA PW experience, open opposition to the Communist captors was not productive in most instances. The Communists could bring whatever pressures, harassment or tortures they chose to bear that could be maintained as long as they chose. Since the Communists have consolidated their power and solidified their gains in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, their control of and pressures on any remaining POWs could be even more formidable.

Whether anyone could survive the long period of incarceration is often discussed and deserves attention. The experiences related by the PW returnees serve as a good basis for comparison. Survival was always the "name of the game," so individual adjustments to the environment



prevailing at the time were necessary in order to keep going. I believe that in a detention-camp environment, such as we experienced in the Dog Patch camp, and barring purposeful starvation or debilitating disease, the existence could be continued indefinitely. Boredom or depression could be suppressed by some involvement with physical labor. Additional diversion could be provided by some books or games such as chess, checkers or cards.

### Rescue Successes

Other ideas on probable survival in the SEA environment can be appreciated when investigating some of the search-and-rescue (SAR) stories. Different sources disagree on the total number of personnel saved by SAR efforts during the SEA conflict, but a number over 2,000 is most prominent. Needless to say, the SAR people in SEA were well respected and loudly hailed as some of the bravest heroes of that conflict. Every mission they flew was a taxing challenge, and the exploits by many SAR individuals in the face and under fire of the enemy, and always in hostile territory, will never be forgotten. Their motto, "That others may live," inspired an attitude and mission dedication that was hard to match in any combat outfit.

The physical area of USAF SAR operations was approximately 1.1 million square miles, which included

North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and the Gulf of Siam. The U.S. Navy had responsibility for rescue operations in the Gulf of Tonkin and in that portion of North Vietnam within five miles of the shortline.<sup>11</sup>

According to the records, downed aircrews played a crucial role in their own recovery. The survival equipment carried by crew members was an essential element in the SAR mission. Usually a survivor spent the first 15 minutes or so on the ground in evading the enemy and acquiring a reasonably good place for a pick up. When finally pinpointed, a downed crew member had to refrain from radio transmissions except when told specifically to do so by a SAR aircraft or when urgent information had to be passed to the rescue forces. The presence and proper use of the standard survival radio was a tremendous facilitator in a successful rescue.

The survival and pick-up story of USAF Captain Robert C. Locher serves to illustrate the point of survival in the SEA environment.<sup>12</sup> Captain Locher and his pilot in an F-4 Phantom were shot down by a MIG on 10 May 1972. His pilot was never recovered, but Locher was rescued after 23 days of escape and evasion (E&E) in North Vietnam.

During the E&E, Locher subsisted on fruits, nuts, berries, and an ample supply of water. Captain Locher stated, "One day I eyed a banana tree all day. It didn't

have any bananas on it, but I remembered I could get water out of it. Just before evening I stuck a hole in it and got three pints of good banana water."

He was also able to obtain various vegetables by raiding native gardens. Locher continually changed his position in search of cover, food, and water. He moved a total of 15 miles, but he was unable to make contact with a U.S. aircraft. On 1 June, he heard U.S. airplanes conducting a bombing mission somewhere close by. He knew that when the bombing ended the planes would egress over the target area and he might be able to contact them. He waited, successfully made contact with one of the flights as it passed overhead, and a rescue operation for him was initiated.

The next day, a SAR Task Force went in after him, consisting of Jolly Green helicopters, HC 130 "King" aircraft, and A-1 Sandys, all covered by F-4 Phantoms and F-105 Thunderchiefs. Heavy ground fire was encountered on the way to and from the rescue area, which was located deep within the NVN heartland. With the Jolly Greens orbiting, the Sandys made several passes over the area. They then led a Jolly Green to a position over Locher. Automatic weapon fire erupted from a nearby building, but was silenced by the miniguns on the Jolly Green. The flight engineer lowered the jungle penetrator and Captain Locher climbed on.

It would be a bit ridiculous to assume any U.S. MIA in SEA could still be evading and living off the land, but Locher's experience demonstrated the capability for an individual to survive in the tropical environment. Other men successfully evaded for several days before finally being captured and interned. Unlike Locher, they had to wait for the negotiators' success before being rescued.

### Negotiations

On May 3, 1968, President Johnson accepted a North Vietnamese offer to conduct preliminary peace discussions in Paris. The U.S. and NVN delegates held their first formal meeting in Paris 10 days later, and the tedious task of dealing with the Communist (Viet Cong) propagandists began.<sup>13</sup> The first meetings were harbingers of all following patience-testing sessions for the U.S. delegates. A great debate of insignificant importance about the shape of the negotiating table belabored by the Communists occupied the greater portion of the first month's meeting. A large circular table was finally agreed upon. The search for a lasting settlement of the conflict through diplomacy proceeded haltingly.

The Paris talks during 1969 were stalemated by Communist demands that all "foreign" troops should be withdrawn from South Vietnam prior to a settlement, and by disagreement on what constituted an "acceptable" South

Vietnamese government. The chief American negotiator, Henry Cabot Lodge, insisted that the Thieu government must be involved in any final agreement. The NVN and NLF delegations pressed for the creation of some kind of coalition regime in Saigon. On 10 June 1969, the NLF sponsored the establishment of a new Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), at an unspecified location in South Vietnam, as a rival to the Saigon administration. A PRG delegation replaced that of the NLF at Paris two days later.

In July, President Thieu proposed that free elections be held in the South with the participation of the NLF. The suggestion was quickly rejected by the Communists, who felt that the Saigon regime would manipulate any such contest to its own advantage. Nguyen Cao Ky, Thieu's vice president, also objected. Later Ky warned that the ARVN would not sanction any coalition government that included Communists. Ky was the spokesman for those American and SVN officials who felt that the best way to end the war lay on the battlefield.

The departure of Lodge from Paris in November 1969 left Philip Habib as the acting U.S. delegation chief until the arrival of David Bruce in August 1970. The American position, however, remained virtually unchanged. The U.S. and SVN representatives continued to oppose any coalition

government other than one resulting from free elections sponsored by the Thieu regime. During the second half of 1970, the negotiators put forward various peace plans based on different aspects of the coalition question. In September, the Viet Cong offered to release all POWs in exchange for a deadline for the withdrawal of American troops and elections supervised by a provisional coalition government. President Nixon countered in October with a five-point plan which included provisions for a cease-fire based on the present military position, a general release of prisoners, and a negotiable U.S. troop withdrawal.

In the following months, each side made minor concessions in an effort to stimulate the interest of the other. The Viet Cong agreed to international supervision of elections, but objected to Nixon's ceasefire proposal because the Saigon government maintained that it controlled more than 99 percent of the population. Negotiator Bruce intimated that a U.S. troop withdrawal might be forthcoming if North Vietnam would produce a similar schedule for its forces. All these proposals came to nothing.

Finally, private talks between U.S. national security advisor Henry Kissinger and the chief North Vietnamese negotiator, Le Duc Tho, took place during 1972. Throughout these negotiations, both sides accused the other of wrongdoing, dishonesty, failure to keep promises, and

irresponsible changing of demands. Basically, the U.S. wished to make certain that South Vietnam had a chance of autonomy after a cease fire, insisting also that POWs be returned in connection with any agreed total withdrawal of American troops. The North Vietnamese wished to impose a new government on the South, and consistently called for the resignation of the Thieu government in favor of a coalition. The extremely complicated and sensitive negotiations, both formal and private, increased in frequency until 26 October 1972, when Kissinger announced that he believed "peace is at hand." Then the talks stalled with charges of insincerity being made by both sides.

The North Vietnamese walked out of the Paris peace talks on 13 December 1972. Two days later, President Nixon ordered execution of "Linebacker II," a three day maximum effort by B-52s against the Hanoi-Haiphong area. The targets were storage and supply complexes, railroad yards, trans-shipment points and repair facilities along the major northwest and northeast rail lines, communication stations, and some MIG airfields. The primary aim was to strangle the North Vietnamese war effort by shutting off the flow of equipment and supplies to the Viet Cong at the source. The B-52 bombings quickly acquired the North Vietnamese' attention and spurred them into respectful requests for resumption of the talks. On 30 December it was announced

that the bombing would stop and that both secret and public talks would soon begin.

The cease fire resulting from these new initiatives was initialed by Kissinger and Thu on 23 January 1973 and formally signed on 27 January. Final U.S. withdrawals began, and American and South Vietnamese POWs were freed. Among the first Americans released was my friend and former cell mate Lieutenant Commander Everett Alvarez, Jr., the first to be captured. His words expressed the thoughts of all when he said: "God bless the President and God bless you, Mr. and Mrs. America, you did not forget us."

Ever since that emotion-packed return of the POWs, each administration and the Department of State have followed a policy of trying to obtain the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel. However, many efforts appear feeble in the face of the uncooperative attitude of the SEA Communists. The U.S. has rejected their approach, but Hanoi has continued to try tying the MIA accounting to U.S. reparation, aid, and normalization of relations. Contacting the Soviet Union for assistance and using U.S. and other country channels have not been productive. Our efforts to send our MIA experts to Vietnam, either to talk to the Vietnamese search teams firsthand or actually conduct searches themselves, have been to no avail. Mr Vu Hoang, Chief of Consular Affairs of the SRV Foreign



Ministry, claims that Vietnam has reduced manpower, funds, and material devoted to recovering MIA remains.<sup>14</sup> Also, they have no concrete information on the whereabouts of such remains. These claims are a complete lie of course because the Communist tendency and doctrinal demand for meticulous reporting and record keeping is well known and specifically observed by former SEA POWs. The DIA believes the North Vietnamese Ministry of Defense maintains centralized information on U.S. POWs, and that data pertaining to the death and burial of an American was dutifully forwarded to Hanoi.

President Carter sent a Presidential commission, the Woodcock Commission, to Indochina in March 1977 to explore directly with the Vietnamese and Lao officials how the fullest possible accounting of our MIAs might be obtained. Perhaps there was a subtle strategy being used in the selection of personnel for this commission. Mr Woodcock, former head of the auto workers union, could have been perceived as a "friend of the Vietnamese people." He was a well-known outspoken critic of the Vietnam war and had obvious mutual Communist contacts accumulated from his trade union and worker's council convention meetings in Moscow and other Eastern-block countries. The effect and results of this commission are best expressed in the comments by California Congressman Doran:

The Woodcock commission was perceived by some of us to be a joke in the sense that it was cosmetic. The woman who went on this commission knew nothing about this problem before she left; learned nothing there, and came home to talk about kindergarten and school training, and got a giant multimillion dollar contract from some United Nations body. She should not have been one of the five distinguished people. I might add, for the record--since I am not using names here I could be making this up, I assure you, I am not--military men at the second level of the Woodcock commission who had to stand behind the front page personalities told me they were ashamed to be Americans. That they thought that trip and subsequent trips had the nature of a disgrace to them because of some people groveling for autographs and giving the Vietnamese the impression they did not have to come up with any accounting, that they were going through the motions with these trips. 15

The Vietnamese handed over 12 bodies of missing U.S. pilots to the Woodcock Committee. The last remains of MIA's the U.S. has received were returned in July 1981. Diplomatic efforts through all avenues continue, but the only physical presence of U.S. MIA accounting authorities in SEA is our Joint Casualty Resolution Center Liaison Officer (JCRC) in Bangkok, Thailand. Additionally, a task force on POW MIA's was established by Chairman Lester L. Wolff of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs (Appendix 5).

The sudden and unexpected appearance and return to the U.S. in 1979 of USMC Private Robert Garwood after 14 years in Vietnam under less-than-honorable circumstances exploded a renewed interest in the probability of other Americans being still alive in SEA. There was a great

interest initiated by all committees and organizations connected with and working on the MIA accountability. It was hoped that Garwood could shed some new light on the subject, but USMC debriefers informed DIA that PFC Garwood provided no POW/MIA information of substance but only rumor, hearsay or speculation.

#### Summary

An explanation for the U.S. PW/MIA losses in SEA is not easy to find or formulate. There is no constant reason, like a mathematical formula, that can be applied to the situation that comes close to describing what happened there. All the losses more correctly coincide with the common-sense analysis that wherever the enemy had the greatest amount of activity and concentrated firepower, there were also found the greatest associated number of American losses. Also, whenever pressure was relieved on the Viet Cong in one area, they were free to move their forces and equipment to another to serve their own purposes. The increased aircrew losses experienced in Laos after the bombing halt over North Vietnam accommodated movement of SAMs and AAA southward serves to attest to that argument.

The POW returnees and escapees gave valid testimony to the cruel, barbaric and barely survivable conditions they experienced as captives in the SEA Communists' hands.

There was never any intention of complying with the Geneva convention provisions for the treatment of POWs. Torture, starvation, untreated sickness, harassment, indoctrination and isolation were standard fare meted out by their tormentors. Though the treatment was harsh in the PW camps, those who survived over the many years exhibited similar tendencies. After an individual got over the initial shock of capture and recovered from wounds or sickness, he soon learned how to cope in the hostile environment. The monotonous daily routine became his way of life. A desire to live and an attitude of self-help, as practical, assisted in making it through each day. A flame of resistance to the enemy was kept glowing by whatever means available. Faith in God, the U.S. and his fellow prisoners provided a strength that insulated and preserved his honor and dignity.

The 2,465 still unaccounted for in SEA are being talked about and studied. The 388 individuals that were lost over water may not be recoverable, but it is highly probable that the remainder of those 1,133 registered as KIA could be returned. The standard notion conveyed by refugees from SEA countries is that there are American prisoners still being kept in Vietnam and Laos. This could prove that some of the 1,275 MIA status changes to PFOD are a bit premature. Stories of live sightings continue to

surface. There is a high probability that some of the AWOL/deserters at least could still be living somewhere in Vietnam or Laos.

The Paris peace talks that culminated with the eventual cease-fire agreements and POW release were long and tedious. The eventual takeover of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia declare just how much of a Communist propaganda stage they all were. Now the S.R.V. continues to apply similar techniques to the U.S. MIA/PW issue. Additionally, some groups that have been sent to investigate the situation and prod the Communist for information have not been the best to truly represent American interests. The S.R.V. link the accounting issue to the question of aid or to the idea that the return of remains or information could be traded for diplomatic relations. It will never penetrate the Oriental Communist logic that Hanoi has a humanitarian obligation to provide this information. The Vietnamese could be doing much more to resolve the MIA issue.

## CHAPTER IV

### POSSIBLE MOTIVES FOR THE MISSING

Break the will of the enemy to fight, and you accomplish the true objective of war. Cover with ridicule the enemy's tradition. Exploit and aggravate the inherent frictions within the enemy country. Agitate the young against the old. Prevail if possible without armed conflict. The supreme excellence is not to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles. The supreme excellence is to defeat the armies of your enemies without ever having to fight them.

Sun Tzu, The Art of War--500 BC

The Asian Communists, such as Mao Tse Tung and Ho Chi Minh, evidently paid close attention to the teachings of the Chinese warrior-philosopher Sun Tzu and learned their lessons well. They applied Sun Tzu's dictums to the atmosphere of modern warfare; added the deceitful, shrewd propaganda techniques evident in Marxism-Leninism; employed all energies and means, including up-to-date weapons, necessary to conduct large scale guerilla warfare; and conducted successfully a protracted conflict. Although they were unable to prevail in the conflict without giving battle, the SEA Communists were able to "exploit and aggravate the inherent frictions within the enemy country" and to "agitate the young against the old."

The bitter lesson learned by the French forces in their war in Indochina proved that wars can be lost in the halls of government and on the streets at home rather than on the battlefield. The U.S. didn't seem to learn a thing from that lesson. The SEA Communists combined their

efforts with the other "friendly Socialist Countries" and their "peace and justice-loving friends" in America and the world and succeeded in changing the long-established image of the United States as a champion of liberty into that of a big power interfering harshly and inhumanely into the internal affairs of a small nation. In the process, the purposeful propaganda offensive "broke the will of the enemy to fight" and despite American victory on virtually every battlefield, the Communists emerged in the end triumphant.

President Johnson tried to explain the American involvement in Vietnam when in a 1 December 1964 televised address he defined the U.S. aims in SEA as: to end NVN support of the Viet Cong, to maintain the security of other non-Communist nations in SEA, and to reestablish an independent and secure South Vietnam. We weren't successful in accomplishing any one of those aims. Perhaps those aims would have had a better chance if we had had stronger, more popular allied leadership than Ngo Dinh Diem and successive regimes in Saigon or the Prince and Prime Minister of Laos, Souvanna Phouma. Perhaps the military did not try hard enough. As is now well articulated, the actual reason for failure had to do with the U.S. policies incorporated to consummate those aims. The circumstances appear more adroitly in the words of the 19th-century Prussian, Carl von Clausewitz:

No major proposal required for war can be worked out in ignorance of political factors; and when people talk, as they often do, about harmful political influence on the management of war, they are not really saying what they mean. Their quarrel should be with the policy itself, not with its influence. If the policy is right--that is, successful--any intentional effect it has on the conduct of the war can only be to the good. If it has the opposite effect, the policy itself is wrong.<sup>1</sup>

Also, Clausewitz would have been critical of the aims cited by President Johnson because he said, "The aim of war should be what its very concept implies--to defeat the enemy. We take that basic proposition as our starting point."<sup>2</sup>

This bit of philosophical and historical reflection is necessary to guide the attitude and form the foundation for the following discussion. The immediate actors that were involved with attempting to accomplish the U.S. aims and policies in the SEA war were those men who had to fight it. They bravely met the challenges of the Communists and attempted, in good faith, to fulfill the requirements and aims of the Washington drummers and insure the freedom of millions of SEA people. Many died for the cause and others observed the Communist propaganda first-hand as POWs.

#### Communist Government Decisions on POW Treatment

The SEA Communists had their treatment program for captured opponents pretty statically outlined. All parties had considerable practice with confinement and prisoner-treatment procedures since there had been much strife and



warfare in this SEA area during the whole of the 20th century. The French had applied their "discipline" of the Indo-Chinese people during their domination, the Japanese were heavy handed during their occupation, and the warfare in this area had continued off and on since WW II. But all SEA participants in the Vietnam war became eventual signatories to the 1949 Geneva Convention on prisoners of war. Therefore, even though North Vietnam followed the lead of their USSR benefactors and registered reservations to the Geneva Convention, POW treatment should not have been an issue (Appendix 6). However, Marxist-Lenist teachings produced glib definitions for international agreements, and words in general, in such substance that it resulted in gross mistreatment and self-serving utilization of the POWs for propaganda purposes.

From the very first moment an American was captured, the Communist in SEA incorporated their standard process of reeducation, indoctrination, and utilization of them for their rabid cause. In the beginning, Everett Alvarez described his treatment by the North Vietnamese as being firm but tolerant. He was allowed to write home and was even given some Red Cross packages. The Vietnamese interrogators spent long hours chatting with him about the war and the United States. They gave him a book and encouraged him to learn Vietnamese (an opportunity he later wished he had pursued) even though they claimed he probably

would not be there long. The food was bad, and Everett was kept in solitary confinement, but he was not tortured or systematically mistreated. Things changed drastically, however, as the bombing of the North picked up and more American military personnel were introduced into the South. His indoctrination sessions and treatment became increasingly heavier and more demanding. Physical abuse and mental harassment were incorporated to encourage him to "think in his mind clearly" and "learn the truth about the war."

The treatment of POWs in South Vietnam was carried out very similarly to that in the North. Though the camp environment was more transient and subject to the elements as discussed earlier, the Communist interrogation and indoctrination system was much the same. In his book, Five Years to Freedom, Nick Rowe vividly portrayed the experience of all U.S. POWs when he described the speech he was given by an English-speaking Viet Cong cadre soon after his capture in the Mekong Delta in 1963:

The National Liberation Front has dispatched us to present to you the truth of the situation in Vietnam. In the coming days you will learn of the just cause of the revolution, and the certainty of final victory. You will learn of the lenient and humane policy of the Front toward captured alien soldiers and of your duty toward the Front. Your release, sooner or later, will depend upon your good attitude and repentance of your past misdeeds, so I encourage you to have a good attitude, be well disposed toward this instruction.<sup>3</sup>

This dialogue typifies the pattern memorized and espoused by the faithful Communist cadre teachers. It was always especially emphasized that, "You must have a good attitude." The teachings included a Communist interpreted background of having "4000 years of culture and civilized history." It covered a sketchy history of the revolution against the French, the Geneva Accords of 1954, Ngo Dinh Diem's accession to the presidency in South Vietnam, the suffering in South Vietnam caused by Diem and his successors, and the intervention of the United States. Liberal accounts about the numerous crimes committed against the people of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia by the U.S. PWs carrying out the orders of their U.S. "bosses" were provided. The role of the National Liberation Front (NLF) in the South as a savior of the people was stressed and the unquestionable victory of the Vietnamese people in their fight against foreign aggression was asserted. They inevitably compared the Vietnamese revolution to the American Revolution of 1776.

The faulty logic in their arguments was overwhelming. The blatant omission or twisting of facts which tended to invalidate their primary assumptions gave the impression that their lessons were geared toward individuals of a low educational or semi-illiterate status. Some of the commonly used terminology, particularly "U.S. aggressor," "puppet government," "imperialist warmonger"

and "neocolonialism," was purposely harsh in terms of the real U.S. involvement. The PWs, rather than believe what was said, found themselves picking holes in the arguments.

During the years I was subjected to their harangue, I was angry with myself for not having been more familiar with my own country. I had taken for granted the concept of liberty, equality, and justice as a basis for our own form of government, which provided the foundation necessary for a man to achieve a place in the society based on his own capabilities and limitations. I found areas of political theory versus political reality that I was not able to resolve in my own mind. I wished that as a member of the military I had not been encouraged to disregard political activity and to simply have a basic political-ideology awareness. I was confronted by an enemy who stressed the interrelationship between the military and politics; both serving to achieve a political goal. Even though exposed to some political theory in college, I was unable to cover myself against the Communist attack. It was a case of knowing clearly what I was against, but being unable to define clearly what I was for. I found that my American upbringing and resultant desire to trust made me unable to comprehend the effectiveness of hypocrisy as a tool. The compromise of ethics and lowering of standards in order to compete against this system were a source of mental anguish.

Most PW returnees would admit that this ever-present Communist diatribe was a game which, though nauseating and unreal, was necessary to play in the environment for survival. Infractions of the camp rules or too vehement, "impolite" denouncements of the Communist teachings could result in even fiercer punishment than that administered for refusal to answer an interrogator's military questions. It would not be difficult to perceive that several unfortunates expired during such disciplinary sessions when they were unable to withstand the punishment because of their weakened condition or ill health.

An additional clout given to the enemy in their propaganda war was especially difficult to cope with. The Communists loudly proclaimed their "just struggle" was supported by the true peace-loving people of the world. Therefore they added ammunition to their arguments with the anti-war and anti-U.S. statements made by congressmen, actors, and other prominent Americans. The Communists added these statements to their repertoire, were bolstered by their support, and used them against the POWs, punishing those who disagreed with the statements. Without access to other sources for information, it was difficult for a POW to deal with the confusion created in his mind by criticism of the war emanating from his own people. He was weakened and saddened by the barrage of condemnation of the U.S. government and the enthusiastic support for the enemy

coming from within his own country. The feeling of betrayal and the hopelessness of resisting and suffering for a cause that was doomed because of lack of support back home were enemies difficult to defeat.

God only knew, it was bad enough being a POW without someone in the States creating additional problems. Could any of those people be actually misguided and naive enough to help the Communists? Reports over Radio Hanoi about the "peace and justice loving people of America" who were protesting the war and the Radio Stateside program pronouncements about genocide and crimes committed by the American military provided support the Communists needed badly and gleefully accepted. Weren't those Americans doing such things aware that their statements and actions bolstered the Communists' efforts and morale, undermined our own, and resulted in a longer war and more American casualties? Dissent is a part of the freedom of American life, but to support the enemy at the expense of other Americans' lives and suffering was tantamount to treason.

It took tremendous patience, stubbornness, and gut-rending endurance for the POW to survive and overcome the Communist indoctrination and punishment. With so much working against the American PW, it was very difficult for the Communist captors to understand why they continued to resist "the truth." I can still remember the words of a particularly dangerous Communist cadre nicknamed the

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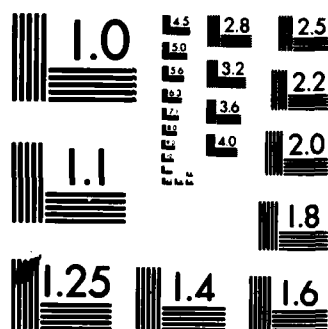
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Rabbit after a long and frustrating session with him when he screamed, "You Americans--you are all like a brick from an old outhouse! We could wash you for a thousand years and never get rid of the stink!"

The 1966 through 1968 period when threats of after the war trials for POWs were being made was an especially tedious time. Indoctrination was heavy and punishment was harsh. All reference to trials after that time being avoided by our captors was a bit suspicious. Coupled with the Oriental passion for face-saving, the Communist drive to appear legitimate and credible makes the possible reason for the drastic change in policy rather intriguing. Some might say that President Johnson's warning about dire consequences if such trials took place deterred them. If so, that would have been one of the few times the Communists were intimidated into action without forceful leverage. Putting captured hostages on trial seems to be a Communist fetish. Therefore a mere threat to a country already involved in a shooting war would not appear to sway drastically their stated intentions for when after the war was over.

A more plausible hypothesis for dropping the trial references was because perhaps the Communist captors made other arrangements. Either because of the hubbub created by the increased activities of the PW families and the American people, or as a result of the noise made by the

early releasees about the bad treatment, the Communists could have decided to designate certain individual PWs or entire PW camps as inmates for eventual repatriation. Other PWs kept in camps secreted in the hinterlands could have been designated as recipients for the proposed trials. All loyal cadres could be instructed on the underhanded plans, and further reference to and emphasis on the subject could be dropped. Such a plan would have required meticulous cross referencing to insure what released POWs had been in contact with or knew each other to reduce possibilities of repercussions about those remaining being designated by name and supported by specific testimony after the big release. Once the plan would have been implemented, no further early releases could be made (as there were not) until it was insured that such individuals released would not carry out names of PWs the Communists wished to keep hidden. All this is pure conjecture on my part, but it makes sense from my experience in looking at it from a Communist viewpoint.

Other memories in this regard chill my sensations by their inference when I think about them. For example, often times when better treatment dictated softer-sell indoctrination sessions, the English speaking interrogators were more apt to ad lib or philosophize a bit. During such an interview or discussion period with an interrogator

nicknamed Spot, the subject was turned to the eventual release of prisoners about the war. During his reflections I remember he said, "We learned our lessons from the war in Korea. They released all the prisoners they had after the war was over and lost influence. We will not do that." What did he mean? What was the impetus behind such a statement?

Another area where a conscious, purposeful decision was made by the Communist planners concerned the handling of chronically ill, both mentally and physically, POWs and probably amputees. We had several of the former in the camps over the years but never saw any of the latter. Chronically ill prisoners were not released and, of course, would have made a bad impression directly on the treatment by the captors. Their appearance would have made it obvious that the PWs were not fed properly or their illnesses and wounds were not receiving correct minimal attention and a wait-and-see-if-they-live attitude. It seems logical that there could be some amputees, as there usually has been in every war, but the absence of any among the POWs or returnees may directly reflect on the SEA people's reflex aversion to anyone with a missing limb. In another sense, treatment might not have been given to an amputee necessary to counteract the bleeding or the shock accompanying such a wound.

In all fairness, it probably can be said that the American POWs received slightly worse treatment than many of the SEA people themselves. Food was scarce and medical treatment was primitive to nonexistent in all the SEA countries. Any persons designated as "enemies of the people" were eliminated. During another session with the Rabbit, I remember his declaration that they did not have such a thing as life imprisonment in Vietnam. When I queried him about what they did, he said criminals were imprisoned and given instructions on correct conduct in the "Socialist" system and encouraged to repent for their crimes. When I continued to press him with what they did if an individual continued to believe as he had before and became a repeat offender? The Rabbit coolly outlined that when this happened, the offender was brought back and taught the "Socialist" truths again. If he persisted after release and committed crimes a third time, he was then exterminated as unfit to be in society.

#### Discipline and Culture of SEA Communist Forces

As can be understood from the previous discussion, the citizens or native inhabitants of the SEA countries exist in an atmosphere far different from that experienced in the United States or Europe. There is a primitive element of survival present because of the jungle conditions and a lack of modern development coupled with

disciplines dictated by Marxist-Leninist doctrine. At the time of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, estimates placed the illiteracy rate of all Indochinese people at about 96 percent. The Communists tried to claim they had eradicated illiteracy in the years since then with their progressive teaching system, which was but another false and ridiculous claim.

Before I was shot down and captured, I had wondered why people would keep fighting for the Communists to help implant such a dictatorial, oppressive system over themselves. I soon learned that in a poor, backward country where all inputs are controlled, freedoms are suppressed and occupations are dictated, people do not have much choice other than to support war. Few had ever been anywhere else, so they did not have any foundation for comparison about anything other than what they were told. Most had no education, so they did not explore new ideas, but those who were educated had little to read except the Communist-controlled publications. I remember the proud declaration by an interrogator when describing how the people were always exposed to the "truth" of the war by acclaiming, "We have one loudspeaker for every 64 people." I doubt that they were listened to all that closely, but you would hear those loudspeakers blaring away throughout the countryside, obviously declaring how great

victories were being won, explaining the necessity to endure great hardships for victory against the foreign aggressors, and declaring the need to liberate the South and defend the North. The only music played were marches and ballads relating to the great deeds of the "liberation fighters."

Added to this atmosphere of anxiety and hate-filled emotion was the ever-present requirement to attend meetings, either to hear a Communist cadre preach about how things were, are, and will be, or to participate in self-criticism sessions held for wrong doers to come forward and confess about themselves or witness against others. Peer pressure was cleverly manipulated to produce guilt feelings and a desire for forgiveness. The forced discipline and calculated harassment molded the society into the necessary atmosphere and attitude for war.

Although the Communist system vehemently denies and belittles religious teachings, beliefs and superstitions existing in cultures are passed from one person to the other and take generations to die out. SEA has been predominantly Buddhist for centuries, and the effects and evidence of the religion are everywhere. Many homes in the region have a small, separately constructed spirit house where offerings are made to appease all the spirits, such as of the forest, streams, wind, or harvest. Such

spiritual beliefs result in practices that appear barbaric to Westerners but are common sense to many SEA people. For example, when rescue teams finally reached the area of a downed airman in Laos, they often found him already dead, with his body dismembered and the parts strewn all over the area some distance from one another. Was it an act of barbarism used to strike fear into those who discovered it? Not necessarily completely the case when you understand that certain SEA spiritualists believe the human body contains three souls and seven spirits that live in different parts of the body. In order to keep the ghost of a hated enemy they have killed from haunting them in their after life, they have to chop up the body and separate the parts far enough so the three souls and seven spirits cannot get all together again. This attitude could be partly an explanation for the lack of amputees among the PWs. If a member of the body has been lost, some of the spirits and souls were also lost. If so, which ones were lost and which remain? To a spiritualist, an amputee is unable to be a whole, normal person.

A psychology-major PW friend of mine labeled the normal Communist indoctrinated SEA soldiers as "armed children." According to his analysis, not only were most very young physically, they all were infants mentally. There were some field combat soldiers used by the

Communists who were estimated to be as young as 12 or 13. None of the combatant-age soldiers had lived long enough to know any real period without war somewhere in SEA. All had grown up under the guiding influence and strict control of the Communist system. Many were conditioned responders to some emotion-packed words or phrases selectively supplied by their officers. A perfectly placid and disinterested guard one minute could become a nose-flaring, hate-glaring tormentor the next with just a few obviously well-chosen words. Left to themselves, these soldiers would be hard pressed to accomplish judgments or act in situations not previously outlined as acceptable procedure. After being pumped up for so long about killing the hated "aggressors" for the glory of the fatherland, it is doubtful many of these "armed children" could have any comprehension about the necessity of capturing prisoners or caring for them. In the presence of U.S. PWs, they could become cruel and arrogant, believing in their immature way that they were so much more superior.

The discussion about the SEA people here is a gross simplification in the interest of brevity, but it serves to portray some of the atmosphere in which any captured Americans found themselves. A deeper description of the traditional Chinese culture, their dominant religions of ancestor-worship and Mahayana Buddhism with a strong Taoist



influence, and of the major ethnic highland tribe minorities can be found in other sources. However, it should be apparent that all these people were subjected to the atmosphere of war and effectively utilized by the Communists for their purposes in a revolutionary endeavor. The people were often uprooted and thrown into the fray against the "foreign aggressor" somewhere on the front. Many never knew where they were once they arrived at the firing line. Also, many of them never returned and no accounting was given. A normally simple, tranquil population was mobilized, indoctrinated, trained and equipped to produce an effective fighting force. Toughened to their tropical jungle environment and knowing nothing more than what they were told, the energies, blood and lives of entire communities and the "armed children" soldiers served the purposes of their Communist decisionmakers.

In addition to the indoctrination and psychological manipulation of the population, certain events created easily supportive biases in the SEA people. Therefore it is wise to take a cursory look at some of the situations in each country.

## Geographic Combat Activity Areas

### North Vietnam

Without question, the heart and head of the SEA Communist activities was in Hanoi. Ho Chi Minh, founder of the Indochinese Communist party in 1930 and of the Viet Minh in 1941, was a wily politician who was the leader of North Vietnam until his death in 1969. Uncle Ho's Communists sporadically fought first the French and then the Japanese during the 1930s and early 1940's. However, it was not until 22 December 1944 that the Vietnamese People's Liberation Army (VPLA) was officially formed. On that day, 34 men paraded in a jungle clearing; some held rifles and one man grasped a flag pole. Before them stood a 32-year-old history teacher wearing a black Homburg hat, a city suit, and a revolver in a cowboy-style holster. The men were members of the first regular unit of the VPLA, and the man swearing them in was their commander-in-chief, General Vo Nguyen Giap. Under his inspired leadership, that army was to go on to defeat the French within ten years.<sup>4</sup> Giap's masterpiece was the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu.

Some sobering statistics about the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu are worthy of note. There were 16,000 defending the garrison at the time of the French defeat on 8 May 1954. Of that number, 11,000 were captured, but many

died on their march into captivity or during their "reeducation" in the prison camps. Only about 3,000 survived both the battle and subsequent captivity.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the French were still repatriating live soldiers and remains of the deceased in 1970.

The Geneva Agreements of 1954 left Vietnam divided by a demilitarized zone (DMZ) that generally followed the 17th parallel. An international control commission with representatives from Canada, Poland, and India had the duty of supervising compliance with the Geneva Agreements on both sides of the DMZ. Although the agreements called for free elections within two years resulting in the unification of Vietnam, no elections took place, and two separate states evolved. The Viet Minh regrouped in the Communist dominated North, and the U.S. inevitably allied itself with South Vietnam.

The Soviet Union, China and East European Communist states provided money, advisors, and material support to help organize and stabilize Ho's northern Communist empire. Hanoi became the mecca and training ground for the Communist goal of taking over all of Indochina. Although around 100,000 Viet Minh troops and sympathizers left South Vietnam for the North, in defiance of the Geneva Agreement, approximately 1,000 hard-core cadre were secretly detailed to remain in the South for future action. Training camps

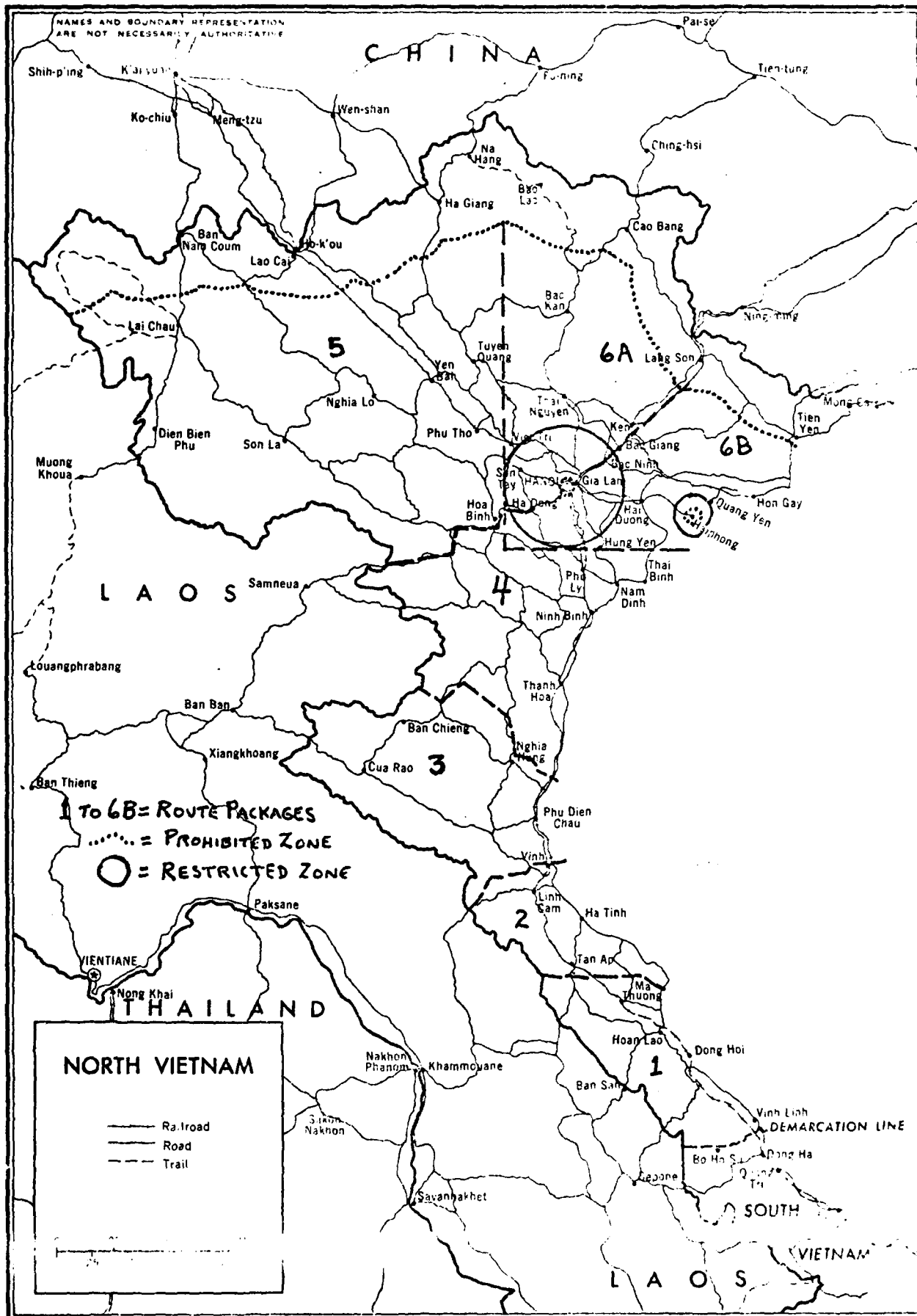
were set up in and around hanoi for Laotian, Cambodian, South Vietnamese, and Thai revolutionaries.

After 1964, when the war was taken to the North via the bombs of U.S. aircraft, North Vietnam was conveniently divided by the DOD planners into route-package areas designated 1 through 6B (Map 14). Route packages 4 and 6B were designated as primary Navy operations areas, and route packages 5 and 6A were primary for the USAF. However, all aircrews who flew over the North ultimately saw action against targets in all route-package areas sometime during their tour. Major targets allowable for striking and restrictions on the bombing, the rules of engagement, were tightly controlled and allocated by the Rolling Thunder target package control group in Washington.

As a reminder of information previously discussed, around 74 percent of all the U.S. PW returnees were released from Hanoi. Additionally most all the US remains returned since the ceasefire were sent home from the North. North Vietnam was and still is, even more so today, responsible for and the guiding hand of the war conditions in all the countries of SEA.

#### South Vietnam

The turmoil and conflicts in South Vietnam were constant and debilitating from the moment of its creation by the 1954 Geneva Agreements until the Communist takeover



Map 1-1

in Saigon on 30 April 1975. While the 1954 Geneva Conference was still in session, France reorganized the existence of the independent Vietnam ruled by the one-time emperor (1925-45) Bao Dai, who, after collaboration with the Japanese and a brief period as "Citizen Prince" under Ho Chi Minh, had fled the country in 1946 only to be returned as a French-backed puppet premier in 1949.<sup>6</sup> When Bao Dai took charge of the territory south of the DMZ, his choice for premier was Ngo Dien Diem.

Diem was recognized as a fiercely independent man who had not collaborated with either the Japanese or the Viet Minh. During his short term as a provincial administrator under the French and as Bao Dai's Minister of the Interior in the 1930s, he had earned a reputation for industry and honesty. Before WW II, he was convinced that France would not grant Vietnam self-government, so he resigned his post in control of the colonial regime. After the war, he was offered high administrative posts by both Ho Chi Minh and Bao Dai. He refused to commit himself to either party and went into voluntary exile. During this time, he spent two years in the U.S., where he met a number of influential fellow Catholics and others committed to the cause of a non-Communist Vietnam.

When Bao Dai approached him with the South Vietnam premier position, Diem insisted on full authority over both

the Army and the civil administration. Bao Dai agreed after receiving an oath of personal loyalty from Diem.

South Vietnam's administrative problems in setting up a government were profound, but its military situation was incredulous. Unlike the North, where Giap had control of a single army, the South was cursed with private military forces. Besides the regular South Vietnam National Army organized by the French, there existed three other independent forces. Two of them represented the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious sects while the third, the Binh Xuyen, fought on behalf of organized crime. These three independent armies represented an estimated 45,000 troops. Through the use of bribes, out of U.S.-supplied funds, and promises of influential positions for the leaders of these groups, Diem attempted to gain their allegiance. When his efforts failed, one by one, Diem attacked and soundly defeated them. Though these victories were decisive, they proved far from complete as infuriated survivors became potential allies of the Viet Minh cadres that had remained in the South.

Le Duan, the present secretary general of the Communist Party in Hanoi, was then the main cadre member opposing Diem. He directed the Communist subversion in South Vietnam from 1954 and was instrumental in forming the National Liberation Front in 1960. A founder member of the

Indochinese Communist party in 1930, he was a loyal cadre and a competent representative for Ho Chi Minh's purposes in the South.

Diem failed to materialize an effective administration as it was torn apart by the corruption, the Catholic-Buddhist religious conflicts and the Viet Cong attacks. He failed to respond to badly needed reforms and rejected warnings about his heavy-handed tactics driving more and more support away from him. His suppression of the religious sects and his program of fighting Communism by arresting anyone who opposed him alienated many anti-Communists. He ruled with a puritanical zeal and could be as ruthless as Ho Chi Minh, but he did not have the North Vietnamese leader's charisma. "Uncle Ho" mingled with the people and always preserved the illusion that he was carrying out their desires. He dressed like a peasant and projected an image of simple, selfless dedication. Diem, on the other hand, remained isolated from the masses, surrounded himself with openly self-seeking family members, and ruled by decree. He wore the white, western-style suits favored by the French colonial administrators.

A military coup overthrew Diem on 1 November 1963, and he and his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, were murdered. The chaos and uncertainty of successive regimes in the South made it virtually impossible to formulate an effective



opposition to the Communist's intent of domination. An influx of massive U.S. aid and military personnel failed to provide the transfusion necessary to keep the South Vietnam body alive.

The U.S. troops worked diligently with the South Vietnamese troops, but the ARVN often showed a great unwillingness to engage the Viet Cong. The soldiers were brave enough, but they lacked aggressiveness because they were not motivated by a certainty of why and for whom they were fighting. The South was divided into four US/ARVN Corps zones, where operations were incorporated with primarily traditional warfare means to try and drive the guerillas from the countryside (Map 15). Zone I received the greatest activity over the years in the attempt to oppose the infiltrating North Vietnamese troops coming across the DMZ and streaming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos. The southern portion of Zone III and all of Zone IV around Saigon were kept busy ferretting out guerillas and challenging the NVN regular troop penetrators making sorties from their sanctuaries in Cambodia.

The highest price paid for the U.S. attempts to bolster the saffing government and insure the independence and freedom of the South Vietnamese was the more than 50,000 U.S. servicemen killed and the multitudes who were wounded. Also, 1,407, or about 41 percent of the total POW/MISS in SEA were experienced in the South.



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Map 15

## Laos

Laos had never been a full-fledged country until the 1954 Geneva Agreements. The territory had always been under the domination of a separate or neighboring power. In more recent times, the Thais to the south had administered power and control over the kingdom until the French had incorporated the area into French Indo China during the 19th century. Separated from Vietnam by the Truong Son mountain range and defined on the south by the Mekong river as a border, Laos is rugged, poor, and sparsely populated by simple, primitive people.

The Geneva Agreements presented independence to both the Kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia. In Laos, Prince Souvanna Phouma tried to carry out the Geneva Agreements by fashioning a neutral coalition by balancing the Hanoi supported Communist Pathet Lao, under his half-brother Prince Souphanouvong, against Prince Boun Oum's American-supported faction. Boun Oum enjoyed the support of a 25,000-man royal army, commanded by General Phoumi Nosavan and paid for by the United States. While the Royal Army recruited and trained the lowland peasant peoples, Souphanouvong's Pathet Lao enlisted members of the more warlike mountain tribes such as the Meo. Eventually we Americans followed the example of the Pathet Lao and created our own Meo contingent under Colonel Vang Pao.

The U.S. pressured Souvanna Phouma into resigning his post as Prime Minister because of his ineffectiveness. Souphanouvong pulled the greatest number of votes in the 1958 election. His successor, the American-backed Phoui Sananikone, tried to continue the policy of neutrality. Early in 1959 Souphanouvong was arrested, and in response one of the Pathet Lao battalions scheduled for integration with the Royal Army fled northward and began a guerilla campaign along the North Vietnamese border. About a year later Souphanouvong escaped to join the Pathet Lao.

Fighting between the Royal Army and Pathet Lao continued and a Captain Kong Le's parachute battalion emerged as the best government unit. However, on 5 August 1960, Kong Le and his 600 paratroopers seized Vientiane, the administrative capital of Laos. Kong Le accused the U.S. of colonialism and demanded the formation of a truly neutral government under Souvanna Phouma. Phoui Sananikone had been deposed by a rightist army faction led by Phoumi Nosavan in December 1959. The General Assembly quickly directed Phouma to form a new cabinet.

Britain, France, and the Soviet Union supported Souvanna Phouma's new regime, but it was strongly opposed by Phoumi Nosavan and Boun Oum, who were supported by the U.S. and Thailand. The Soviet Union reacted to the crisis by using their transports to fly materiel from Hanoi to

Vientiane to help Kong Le repel the Royal Army, which was advancing to depose the neutralist regime. The two forces engaged in a long-range artillery duel which destroyed much of Vientiane and killed or wounded several hundred civilians. Kong Le had to retreat to the Plaine des Jarres in north central Laos, but since Phoumi Nosavan did not press his advantage, Kong Le was able to link up with the Pathet Lao.

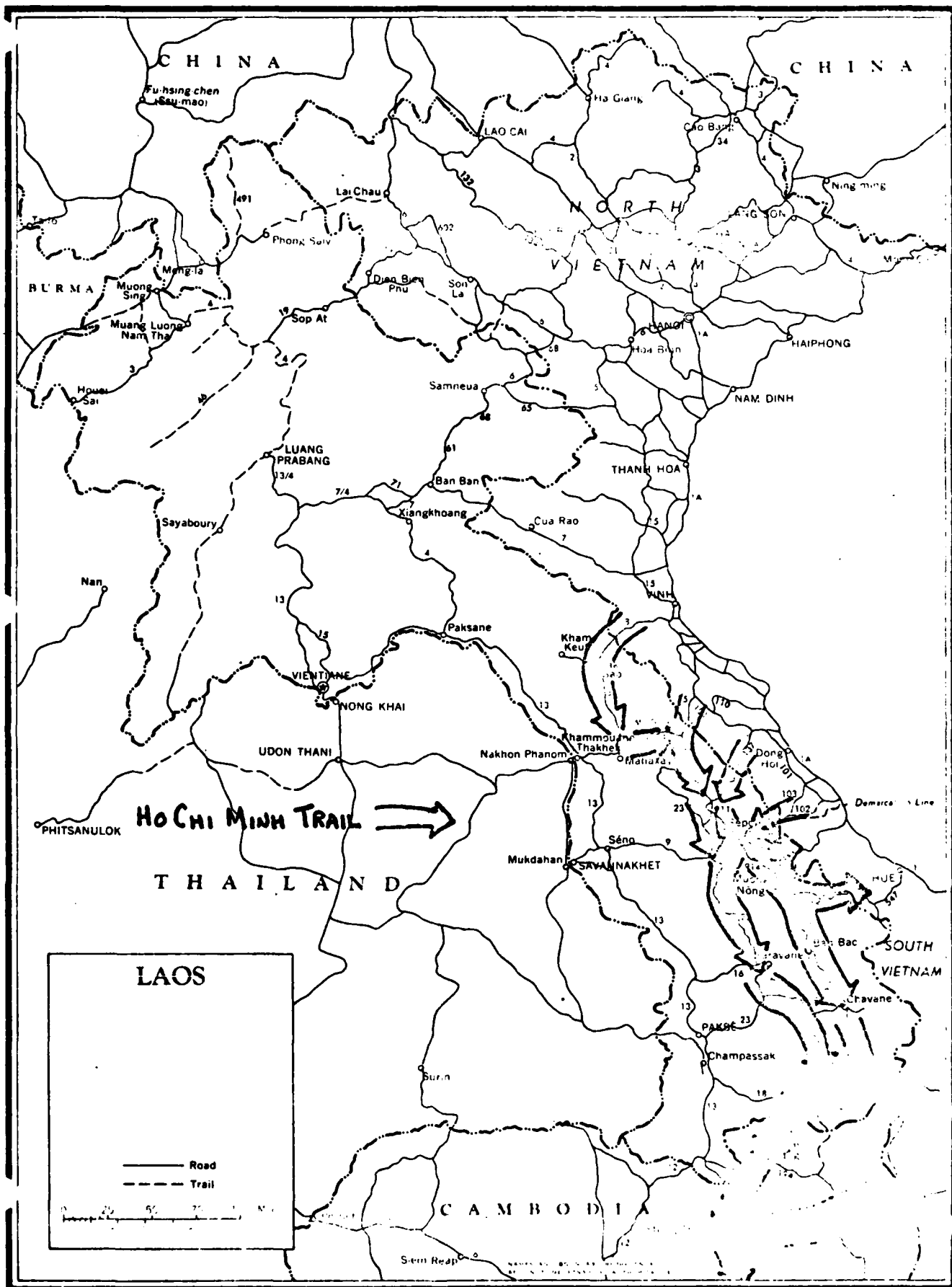
The Soviet Union then sent additional aid, including trucks and anti-aircraft guns, to the Pathet Lao-neutralist coalition. The U.S. increased its aid to Phoumi Nosavan. As well as paying and equipping all his troops, six World War II-vintage single-engine trainers were provided which served as fighter bombers in support of the Royal Army's sluggish advance toward the Plaine des Jarres. Also, U.S. Army Special Forces training teams tried to improve the skills of Phoumi's men, but the North Vietnamese matched this effort by assigning Viet Cong-seasoned cadres to Pathet Lao units.

Not wanting to commit American troops into the area and unimpressed with the capability of the Royal Army of Laos to control the situation, President Kennedy was persuaded to settle for a neutral Laos. Khrushchev, the Soviet premier, declared that Laos was not worth a war. North Vietnam's main concern was safeguarding the Ho Chi

Minh trail, the Pathet Lao felt that their victory was a matter of time, and China was concerned primarily with border security. As a result, all powers concerned agreed to another bargaining session at Geneva in May 1961, devoted to creating a neutral Laos.

Phoumi Nosavan, charged by the Communists as an American puppet, almost singlehandedly disrupted the neutrality plans for Laos. Confident that he had the backing of the U.S. military, he refused to cooperate in forming a coalition cabinet, as agreed in Geneva in mid-1962, and rashly massed his troops close to the Chinese border near Muang Luong-Nam Tha. On 6 May 1962, after three months of probing into the Communist-controlled northern areas, North Vietnamese forces attacked, and Phoumi's 5,000 defenders fled in panic; some went all the way south into Thailand. Phoumi Nosavan's humiliation enabled the Lao factions to agree on a coalition government including both Pathet Lao and rightist elements, headed by Souvanna Phouma.

The Kingdom of Laos remained a pawn in the larger struggle during the SEA war. North Vietnam used the Pathet Lao to maneuver Laos into a condition for Hanoi's eventual control and to help protect the Ho Chi Minh trail (Map 16). The U.S. used air attacks to try and stem the flow of supplies to the south and jabbed at the Communists on the



Map 16

ground with Vang Pao's Meo guerrillas. The feeble, ineffective administration under Souvanna Phouma was continued until 3 December 1975, when the coalition government was abolished and Laos was declared a Communist state with Souphanouvong as president. The Communist power play and self-fulfilling prophecy was complete.

Only 21 returned of the 585 U.S. personnel who became POW/MIAs in Laos (Chart 3). This horrendously low capture-indication-and return rate is open to suspicion. As evidenced by the previous discussion, the Pathet Lao, although primarily backward and primitive, were under the direct supervision and control of the North Vietnamese. Most U.S. losses occurred in the Tchepone-Mu Gia pass areas along the Ho Chi Minh trail where there was consistent traffic to and from Hanoi. A few people were carried North and eventually released, but what about all those others? The area was firmly established under Communist control, so a major prison facility to house the Americans could have been easily established. It is well known that some of the caves in the rugged remote area near Tchepone were large enough to be used as major supply depots. Could some of them have been retrofitted to hold prisoners also?

The U.S. has consistently pressed the Lao government for further information on our POW/MIAs. As mentioned previously, the Woodcock Commission visited Laos



in March 1977 as well as Vietnam. A number of congressional delegations have visited Laos since then and have stressed to senior Lao officials, including President Souphanouvong, the deep concern of the American people for a full accounting of the PW/MIAs. The Laotians have generally replied that "they hope for an improvement in U.S.-Lao relations." They expressed the difficulty in motivating their people to look for remains but claim they would continue to look. In February 1980 the Lao Foreign Ministry exchanged notes with the U.S. in which appeared the following response:

The LPDR (Lao People's Democratic Republic) has returned all American prisoners of war, and at present, to the knowledge of the Laotian government, there are no longer any Americans in Lao under the category of "deserters," such as criminal prisoners, "former Americans who have opted for Laotian nationality," or under any other such category.<sup>7</sup>

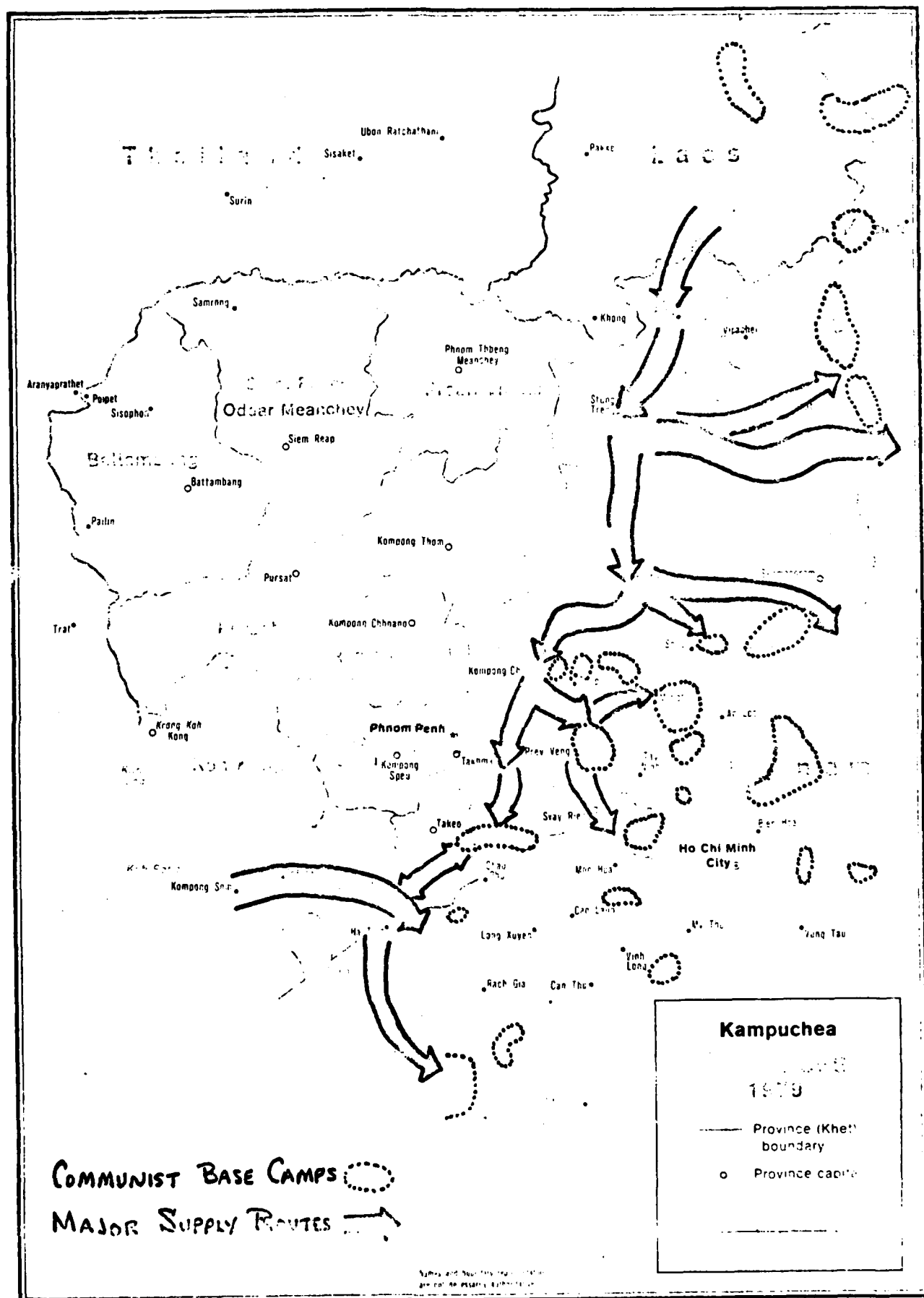
This statement considerably amplifies previous statements on Americans in Laos and covers other categories such as "deserters." How much of the statement is true? Of course, any such Americans could now be in Vietnam, where conditions have become more stable and controlled. Then the statement would be more close to accurate from the Lao Communist viewpoint.

#### Cambodia

In Cambodia, which had refused to sign the 1954 Geneva Agreements recognizing their independence, Prince

Norodom Sihanouk (king 1941-55; political leader 1955-60; head of state 1960-70) succeeded in walking a tightrope of apparent neutrality and avoided the major rigors of war. But he was forced to pay a price to the major combatants in the SEA war, especially to both North and South Vietnam. He had to allow the Communists to move supplies through his country, permit American bombing, and ignore ground probes that crossed the border from South Vietnam.

In the early 1960s, the Viet Cong gradually supplemented the long Ho Chi Minh trail through Laos with a similar system running north and east from the Cambodian port of Kompong Som to southern South Vietnam (Map 17). The "Sihanouk Trail," consisting of a network of roads, bicycle trails, footpaths and waterways, was operated and guarded by the Viet Cong. The system was later expanded to include regular NVN military training camps, rest and staging areas, and supply dumps close to the South Vietnamese border. These border base sanctuaries were greatly expanded around 1969. By 1970, there were mixed NVN and Viet Cong forces in Cambodia estimated to include some 5,000 combat and 40,000 support troops as well as thousands of transient soldiers and units. This military presence gave the Viet Cong control over the bulk of eastern and northeastern Cambodia. It also provided an advantageous condition for the guidance and direct support of the Khmer Rouge, Communist Cambodian, forces.



504.142 10-79

Map 17

Both the National Liberation Front and North Vietnam maintained diplomatic representatives in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, but the relationships with the Sihanouk regime fluctuated. Sihanouk tacitly allowed the Viet Cong to occupy sparsely populated parts of Cambodia, and clashes between Cambodian and VC troops were rare. So long as the VC kept to the remote jungles and border regions, populated mostly by Montagnards or ethnic Vietnamese, the anti-Communist Cambodian groups seemed little concerned. However, in 1967 the growing Communist presence caused Sihanouk to announce that the VC sanctuaries on Cambodian territory were not officially sanctioned by Phnom Penh, and indicated that he had no objection to American troops crossing the Cambodian border in "hot pursuit" of the guerrillas. With the apparent approval of Sihanouk, this right of pursuit was later extended to also include U.S. air strikes on VC base areas.

The steady buildup of Viet Cong troops and the escalated combat along the Cambodian border drove Sihanouk to make a trip to Moscow in March 1970 in an effort to reduce the Hanoi-directed Communist pressure on his country. While he was away, the Cambodian army general Lon Nol took power and deposed the prince as head of state. Lon Nol quickly made known his support for the U.S. and South Vietnam, and one of his first actions was to close Cambodian

seaports to the Viet Cong. The Communist reacted very quickly, for in less than a month full-scale warfare had broken out between the Viet Cong and the military forces loyal to Lon Nol. At first only Thailand and South Vietnam sent arms to aid the Lon Nol forces, since the U.S. determined to remain aloof, seeing "no need for hasty action." It was quickly evident that the Cambodian army was no match for the battle-hardened VC, who, with some help from the Khmer Rouge, had taken over most of rural Cambodia north and east of Phnom Penh. By May 1970 Lon Nol's troops had been forced back into the larger cities and towns. Phnom Penh was cut off from the sea and virtually isolated. Finally, the U.S. government abandoned its policy of noninterference in Cambodia and launched a program of direct aid. At the same time, a series of cross-border operations were planned into Cambodia from South Vietnam to eliminate the VC sanctuaries and take pressure off the embattled Cambodians.

The massive materiel and military aid and the cross-border attacks assisted Lon Nol in holding out and achieving a temporary stalemate. However, his forces never could launch a viable offensive. The Cambodian army showed little enthusiasm for the war, and the ill-trained, hastily-formed units tended to disintegrate in combat. But for some reason, the NVN and Viet Cong leaders failed to press their

advantage. Instead they expended much effort in building up the military potential of the Khmer Rouge.

Between 1972 and 1975, increasingly strong Khmer Rouge forces bolstered by Viet Cong cadres slowly overran the remainder of Cambodia. They occupied the lesser towns and cities one by one and confined Lon Nol's troops to the capital. After a long siege, and inspite of a dramatic U.S. airlift of supplies and the provision of extensive combat air support, Phnom Penh fell to the Communists on 17 April 1975.

Pol Pot, a hard core Khmer Rouge member, became Prime Minister of the newly named country of Kampuchea and immediately began a preplanned agrarian revolution movement by emptying the people from the cities. The Cambodian Communists, seemingly unrestricted in their actions by their VC helpers, pursued a policy of unprecedented genocide against their own people. Pol Pot advanced faster and farther than any other revolutionary of modern times toward the complete obliteration of an entire society. At the lowest estimate, 1,200,000 men, women, and children died between April 1975 and January 1977.<sup>8</sup> It is estimated that at least an additional two million of the original seven million people have expired since then. Many thousands of refugees spilled over into Thailand and Vietnam in their flight to escape Pol Pot's fanatical purification campaign.

Vietnam realized its mistakes in handling the Khmer Rouge as its relations with Kampuchea worsened. Finally in July 1978 Vietnam launched a major offensive with an estimated 80,000 Vietnamese troops backed up by Soviet tanks and MIGs and captured American F-5s. Incorporating their conditioned response to deceive, the Soviets and SRV officials loudly denied any involvement of regular Vietnamese troops and proclaimed that only Cambodia members of the newly formed "Kampuchea National United Front for National Salvation" (KNUFNS) involved in the fighting against the Pol Pot Khmer Rouge forces. It was the first Communist insurgency devised and designed to overthrow a Communist government. Their efforts were successful when the Vietnamese forces "liberated" Phnom Penh on 7 January 1979. The final domino in the SEA chain had fallen.

During all this long period of turmoil, there were 133 U.S. POW/MIA losses that occurred in Cambodia, or Kampuchea. Twenty-seven returnees came home from that area, but the rest are unaccounted for. It is doubtful that a full accounting can be accomplished in the near future. There is barely any dialogue between the U.S. and Kampuchean officials presently, as it is still being debated who is in charge of the country. The Vietnamese continue to stress that their puppet members of the KNUFNS are the legitimate government in Kampuchea, replacing the Pol Pot regime, while Pol Pot representatives still hold their seats in the U.N.

### Summary

The Communist government decisions on POW treatment had little relationship to the provisions of the Geneva Convention. During the entire SEA conflict, all prisoners were to be utilized, however possible, for the interest of the Communist war effort. If any prisoners were taken, the "humane and lenient" treatment instructions included guidance for persistent indoctrination and potential use of prisoners for propaganda purposes. Effective instructions and disciplinary methods were often left to the discretion and imagination of the individual interrogator. Returnees relate that when asked how they could term their barbaric, harassing treatment "humane," the standard answer given by their Vietnamese interrogators was, "We did not kill you." There was an obvious breakdown between either of the understanding or of the interpretation in the translation of the word from English to Vietnamese.

The Communists remained responsive to world public opinion because they understood the manipulation of news and twisted history to serve their purposes. Therefore when the American public reaction to the bad treatment of the POWs became an issue, a shift in plans and a greater visibility or exposure for some prisoners were required; and they were portrayed as being treated well and groomed for eventual release. This facade would have involved a major effort on



the part of the SEA Communist captors because it was probably difficult for them to comprehend how a nation could be so concerned about their individual members involved in a war. However, they were a bit insulated and prepared for the accountability contingency since they had kept most incidences of those captured by them secret. They wished to avoid bad publicity and at the same time keep prisoners alive and available as leverage for negotiations.

All the SEA countries involved in the war consisted of populations that were backward, even primitive in some cases, and uneducated. The conscripted or recruited soldiers of the Communist forces were young, impressionable products of the perpetual war around them. The Communists indoctrinated all those within their sway through the use of the controlled inputs, and initiated the energies and emotions toward a total war effort either by inducing rote memory response or applying harsh discipline for deviates. Without any doubt, all efforts were aimed toward a single goal as an end result. That goal, in spite of any disguise under a pretentious facade or slogan, was purely and simply to bring all SEA areas under Communist domination. Once an American combatant was captured then, according to the Communist dicta, he too was subject to their interpretation of truth, their ideas on culture and morality, their decisions as to who lives and who dies.

The evidence in the history of every SEA country involved in the Vietnam war points to the controlling influence wielded by the Vietnamese Communists in Hanoi. The Soviet Union provided the greatest support for the Communist takeover in the area from Ho Chi Minh's beginning. The war and its aftermath must have been highly satisfying to the Soviets, since two of their major foreign policy goals are to diminish the power and influence of the U.S. and to contain China.

Whether the Communist forces were named Viet Cong, Pathet Lao or Khmer Rouge, they all served the purposes of the same master. The takeover of three countries has been effected purposefully and methodically and woe betide Thailand should Hanoi's appetite be disposed to continue the "liberation" move and complete its web of control over all of Southeast Asia.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

Before I committed myself to attempt accomplishing this study, I had misgivings and reservations. I suspected that I might be probing in areas thoroughly covered before by expert analysts who also had been monitoring the POW/MIA episode all during the SEA war. It is always good to solicit a second opinion, but might my analysis be a bit shallow or short-sighted by comparison because of no corporate knowledge or continued access to certain privileged information? I knew there would be an extensive amount of additional reading and searching required, so my lazy disposition balked considerably when I thought of all that work I was letting myself in for. And would it really be meaningful and productive?

As the months rolled by, my readings, note taking, chart making and map plotting drew me frantically toward completing the study, like being drawn to the vortex of a giant whirlpool. I discovered that there was an overabundance of historical information on the SEA POW/MIA situation which has not been completely indexed or cross referenced. Many documents, perhaps because of classification or sensitivity, project the appearance of random notes kept by individuals while working a subject that were then thrust together and stuck in a record when the subject could not be resolved or higher priority projects

appeared. The DIA information is very thorough and detailed, so I established their POW/MIA data as my base and worked outward from there. I quickly found the work to be challenging and exciting. I became totally engrossed.

It was impossible for me to remain aloof and scientifically dispassionate on the subject, as an analyst should properly be, because of my personal experience. I became heavily involved and spent many restless nights hashing possibilities, testing hypotheses, and writing the final paper in my mind. A lot of memories surfaced which I did not realize were like still festering wounds. Several readings caused me to cross paths with many old friends that I had not realized were missing. So any reader should be reminded of the words in the disclaimer at the beginning that says, "This research report represents the views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Air War College or the Department of the Air Force.

My analysis surfaced some interesting conditions. The further an individual's loss point appeared from Hanoi, the lesser the probability was that he would be returned or accounted for. This condition was a bit different from what was expected because the prevailing opinion had conveyed the false idea that if a person were to be lost, it would be best if the loss occurred in the less-populated areas. It was felt that remote natives might not be as rigidly indoctrinated or controlled, so treatment would be better

and escape possibilities might be enhanced. As it turned out, those individuals fortunate enough to be transferred up North had a greater chance for survivability.

The aircrews of larger, low-altitude aircraft experienced a very low accounting. Because some individuals in these kinds of airplanes did bail out and were rescued, there is a high probability that some members of these types of aircraft were captured alive. It is illogical to me that 100 percent of these aircrews perished in the crashes.

I have little hope that the personnel lost at sea have any probability for further accounting. Survival in the jungle would be a formidable challenge, but the conditions for surviving very long without being picked up in the Gulf of Tonkin or the South China Sea are remote. The abundance of sharks and poisonous sea snakes combined with the heat of the tropical sun add stark emphasis to the assumption that these individuals are probably gone.

Every indicator points toward the fact that POW handling was changed after 1968. Greater losses were experienced in Laos and South Vietnam, with many fewer individuals proportionately indicated as taken captive. Because of the concern displayed for them by the American people, better conditions were experienced by those POWs in firmly established camps. But I believe a greater impact was made on the Communist POW system when the early releasees in 1968 testified about the bad treatment and had

extensive memorized lists of names of POWs they knew were in the camps with them. During annual torture sessions we called purges, the interrogators were always interested in whom you had been communicating with and whom else you knew in the rest of the camp. Their records were fairly complete, so they could cross reference the information to confirm which prisoners knew each other. Names of POWs confirmed as alive at the time a propaganda release was made could have designated that group for eventual release, thereby reducing their worth as possible pawns in special negotiations.

When I began this study, I had a firmly-held personal opinion that all the living POWs had been returned or completely accounted for as a result of the returnee testimonies. I do not believe that any more. It is my humble opinion, based on my research, common sense, personal experience, and a gut feeling, that there are still some live Americans pigeonholed by the Communists somewhere in Southeast Asia. Testimony by refugees and other people about live sightings of Americans are too numerous and accurately described to be complete fabrications. I feel that the identification question relating to specific identities having to be accurately tied to the reports of live sightings is irrelevant. If any nonindigenous personnel are currently sighted as groups in captivity there, the overwhelming probability is that they would be

Americans. Why should their presence be such a surprise? The list provided the U.S. by the Vietnamese just before the 1973 release contained 51 names that had been carried by the U.S. as MIA and one who had been carried as KIA. Those were the prisoners who "registered to come home." I do not believe all prisoners were given the opportunity to register.

Some will argue that if they have had these live prisoners, why haven't the SRV Communists surfaced them before to use as bargaining chips? Look again at the bit of history of the area and try to understand the basic attitudes of the people. The slogan that was repeated and repeated was, "Five, ten, twenty years or more--we will fight and we shall win!" It was 25 years from the 1954 battle at Dien Bien Phu, and the resultant Geneva Agreements, to the "liberation" of Phnom Penh in 1979. The area, however, is still unsettled and in a state of change and turmoil. What is it they desperately need from the U.S. at this point? The Soviet Union is still providing substantial aid to the Vietnamese, since they have continued fighting and consolidating their gains. They are a very patient and persevering people. The conditions have not obviously presented themselves wherein they feel the necessity to use their surprise trump card of live Americans to trade for what they want from the U.S.

I suggest that the situation requires great care and delicate handling on the the part of the U.S. Since the Communists have had such successes in the area, I can imagine their arrogance and inflated self-confidence could make them very difficult to deal with. Any obstinate or over-zealous demands about any live Americans could endanger them, since the SRV Communists could insure the permanent disappearance of any such individuals. A third-party country friendly to the SRV may have to be utilized to accomplish a secret arrangement for the quiet return of our people, similar to that of Algeria relative to the arrangements regarding the Iranian hostages. A ransom tied to reparation demands may have to be paid to accomplish their release. How much would they be worth? A hundred thousand dollars for each live American and \$1,000 for every body? Ten times that? Whatever the final settlement, those individuals involved in the negotiations must understand the culture and history of the area and must be completely familiar with the U.S. POW/MIA problem as well as be smooth patient diplomats. I doubt that any threats or application of force would produce results unless we reinstate the B-52 bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, which got their attention in 1973, and escalate from there.

Some careful, purposeful reconnaissance could be accomplished in an attempt to find evidence of POW camp locations. Interviews of the French Dien Bien Phu battle



releasees might provide leads by checking where they were kept all those years. By capitalizing on our better relations with China in contrast with its negative attitudes toward Vietnam, some well-placed questions might provide insights or new information on the subject. Every effort must be made to try and pry our Americans out of there, and they are definitely going to need outside help. Even their friend, Private-first class Garwood, who could walk through the streets, had to slip a note to a third-country representative in a bar in Hanoi asking for help to get out, a fact which serves as a reminder of the oppressive, controlled society existing there.

I well understand the feelings of despair, loneliness and hopelessness connected with thoughts on the remotest possibility of being forgotten and left to rot in a Communist cell in Southeast Asia. So, for all those Americans still to be accounted for, I must quietly say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." For those who have expired, I pray for their souls. For any who might be still remaining there alive, I pray for their rapid deliverance and pledge them a solemn promise--I will never forget.

APPENDICES

ALPHA SORT    124 Total Individuals

PAGE 1

A601 ACKLEY, JAMES H	MM	730307	195145N	1210202E	LA	C123
A602 ADKINS, CLYDEN	RR	680201	163330N	1273870E	VS/VN	GROUND
A604 AFFEL, CHARLES	RR	771014	102000N	1360000E	VS/JW	YACHT
A602 ANSON, ROBERT	RR	730303	122430N	1350400E	CB	AUTO
A603 AYRES, VICKI	RR	750227	203800N	1023700E	LA	CYCLE
B604 BAILON, RUBEN	MM	651225	163430N	1291300E	VS	GROUND
B602 BENGE, MICHAEL	RR	680128	124034N	1080313E	VS/VN	JEEP
B625 BLEWETT, ALAN L	XX	620714	175040N	1023400E	LA	NAVION
B601 BLOOD, HENRY F	KK	690201	124033N	1080330E	VS	GROUND
B606 BOYLES, HOWARD H	BR	730209	171600N	1045500E	LA	C123
B603 BRACE, ERNEST C	RR	650521	220345N	1012330E	LA/VN	PORTER
B602 BROOKENS, NORMAN J	RR	680204	104500N	1264000E	VS/CB	AUTO
C601 CAVIL, JACK W	BR	730209	171600N	1045500E	LA	C123
C604 CLARK, JAMES WILLIAM	MM	730421	094100N	1032900E	CB	YACHT
C600 COCHED, RICHARD NEWELL	PP	680131	101500N	1055870E	VS	GROUND
C603 CONWAY, ROSEMARY A	RR	750604	175800N	1023600E	LA	GROUND
D600 DAVES, GARY LAWRENCE	RR	680201	163300N	1073300E	VS/VN	GROUND
D735 DAWSON, DONALD	RR	650401	111000N	1064200E	VS	GROUND
D609 DEAN, CHARLES	XX	740910	181251N	1073300E	LA	GROUND
D601 DEBRJIN, EUGENE H	PP	630905	164245N	1061021E	LA	C46
D603 DEGNAN, JERRY L	MM	670829	170519N	1064130E	VS	GROUND
D613 DELLENBAUGH, CORNELIA	RR	771014	100000N	1080000E	VS/JW	YACHT
D612 DICKERMAN, LEELEND	RR	771014	102000N	1080000E	VS/JW	YACHT
D610 DILLON, MICHAEL	RR	750227	203800N	1023700E	LA	CYCLE
D608 DODD, JOE LEE	EE	651012	105000N	1272000E	VS	CYCLE
D611 DOLAN, EDWARD V	BB	750312	134800N	1075000E	VS	DC4
D602 DOWNEY, JOHN T	RR	521129	245959N	1125359E	CH	ACFT
D606 DRIVER, CLARENCE N	MM	730307	195145N	1210202E	LA	C123
D607 DUDMAN, RICHARD	RR	730507	111000N	1054200E	CB	AUTO
D605 DUFFY, CHARLES J	XX	610113	183000N	1030000E	LA	GROUND
D604 DUKE, CHARLES R	MM	720530	135710N	1071757E	VS	CYCLE
E601 EBY, ROBERT GINO	XX	670321	124356N	1092527E	VS/JW	C47
E602 ELM, HOMER L	RR	731006	092610N	1054612E	VS	TRUCK
E600 ERSKINE, JACK D	PP	681113	112352N	1085252E	VS	JEEP
F602 FACTEAU, RICHARD	RR	521129	245959N	1125359E	CH	ACFT
F601 FLYNN, SEAN LESLIE	PP	720406	110236N	1062419E	CB	CYCLE
F600 FRITZ, JOHN J	RR	690203	104936N	1065620E	VS/CB	AUTO
G603 GAY, ARLO N	RR	750430	120100N	1050500E	VS/VN	GROUND
G600 GERBER, DANIEL A	PP	620530	123200N	1075927E	VS	GROUND
G903 GUGELMANN, TUCKER P E	NR	750429	104500N	1264000E	VS	GROUND
G602 GRAINGER, JOSEPH W	KK	640809	125903N	1091047E	VS	GROUND
G601 GRZYB, ROBERT H	KK	671210	141211N	1075700E	VS	TRUCK
H602 HANSEN, WELLES	PP	720531	112519N	1064119E	CB	AUTO
H600 HAWKNESS, STEVEN	BR	680201	162721N	1073540E	VS	GROUND
H601 HENDERSON, ALEXANDER	RR	680201	162734N	1073551E	VS/VN	GROUND
H603 HERTZ, GUSTAV	KK	650202	105051N	1064031E	VS	GROUND
H605 HOLT, DEWEY THOMAS	EE	670823	102557N	1071022E	VS	GROUND
H900 HUDSON, HENRY M	EE	651223	105703N	1064420E	VS	AUTO
H604 HUNTING, PETER A	BR	651112	104500N	1264000E	VS	GROUND
J601 JAMESON, BRADWOOD L	RR	640301	101000N	1001000E	VS	GROUND
J602 JOHNSON, SANDRA	RR	680201	163300N	1073300E	VS	GROUND
J603 JONES, DIANE	RR	740122	151000N	1095300E	VS	GROUND
J900 JONES, EDWIN D	EE	651223	105703N	1064420E	VS	AUTO

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AUTHORITY: 25X

K620 KALIL, TANDS E	KK 692208 104936N 1065629E VS	AUTO
K623 KAY, EMMET JAMES	RR 732507 191233N 1034030E LA	PORTER
K622 KESSEE, BOBBY JOE	RR 720913 181030N 1061733E VN	ACFT
K621 KJOME, MICHAEL H	RR 687131 134502N 1064203E VS/CB	GROUND
K625 KOSH, GERALD E	RR 742119 163145N 1113633E VS/CW	ISLAND
K624 KRAUSE, ARTHUR E	RR 632608 150020N 1097033E VS	GROUND
L620 LEWIS, JAMES F	RR 753416 113420N 1065923E VS/VN	GROUND
M619 MACNAMARA, LEN	MM 720421 094120N 1030000E CB	YACHT
M626 MAHEL JAMIE A	BR 632374 134520N 1061000E VS	GROUND
M623 MANHARD, PHILLIP W	RR 682231 162736N 1073302E VS/VN	GROUND
M623 MARK, KIT T	MM 720532 135712N 1071757E VS	CYCLE
M625 MATTHEW, SAM	RR 721027 162620N 1061202E LA/VN	GROUND
M612 MCCOMBS, PHILLIP A	RR 742430 150200N 1092902E VS	GROUND
M624 MCKAY, CLYDE WILLIAM	AA 701104 113447N 1044859E CB	GROUND
M621 MEYER, LEWIS E	RR 682271 162730N 1073602E VS/VN	GROUND
M614 MILLER, CAROLYN P	RR 750312 124000N 1092302E VS/VN	GROUND
M618 MILLER, GEORGE C	BB 750312 134800N 1075000E VS	DC4
M613 MILLER, JOHN D	RR 750312 124000N 1092302E VS/VN	GROUND
M615 MILLER, LUANNE	RR 750312 124000N 1092302E VS/VN	GROUND
M622 MITCHELL, ARCHIE EMERSON	PP 620530 123253N 1075927E VS	GROUND
M616 MITCHELL, BETTY J	RR 750312 124000N 1092302E VS/VN	GROUND
M628 MONAHAN, ROBERT W	RR 662527 103500N 1070000E VS	JEEP
M627 MORALES, FRANK ADRIAN	KK 681206 175803N 1062923E VS	GROUND
M610 MOREAU RON	RR 730523 091100N 1060800E VS	BOAT
M629 MORROW, MICHAEL	RR 720507 111000N 1064000E CB	AUTO
M622 NELSON, MARJORIE	RR 682201 162734N 1073551E VS	GROUND
M620 NEWINGHAM, JAMES A	RR 692208 104936N 1065629E VS/CB	AUTO
M621 NICHOLSON, DANIEL LEE	KK 661125 110730N 1071340E VS	AUTO
M623 OLAUGHLIN, STEPHEN M	MM 661225 163420N 1091300E VS	GROUND
M620 OLSEN, BETTY ANN	KK 692201 124040N 1092235E VS	GROUND
M621 OLSEN, ROBERT F	RR 682201 163300N 1073800E VS/VN	GROUND
M620 PAGE, RUSSELL J	RR 692201 163300N 1073800E VS/VN	GROUND
M625 PHILLIPS, LILLIAN M	RR 752312 124000N 1092302E VS/VN	GROUND
M624 PHILLIPS, RICHARD L	RR 750312 124000N 1092302E VS/VN	GROUND
M623 POND, ELIZABETH	RR 720507 111000N 1064000E CB	AUTO
M621 PRUNER WILLIAM R	BR 662114 124500N 1064000E VS	GROUND
M620 QUINN-JUDGE SOPHIE	RR 742122 151000N 1095300E VS	GROUND
M624 RASDALE, THOMAS	BR 682202 162730N 1073600E VS	GROUND
M620 RAMSEY, DOUGLAS	RR 663117 110100N 1062629E VS/CB	AUTO
R114 RAPP, JEFF	RR 792515 093300N 1082600E VS/CW	YACHT
R103 RAWLINGS, JAMES	KK 752103 121500N 1091100E VS	C123
R625 REYNOLDS, PERRY L	KK 720426 112250N 1061451E CB	AUTO
R623 RITTER, GEORGE L	MM 711227 193357N 1012225E LA	C123
R622 ROLLINS, JAMES U	RR 682205 104436N 1063953E VS/CB	CYCLE
R621 RUSHON, THOMAS	RR 682201 162734N 1073551E VS/VN	GROUND
S626 SCALES, THOMAS R	RR 662527 103500N 1070000E VS	JEEP
S610 SCARBOROUGH, JAY	RR 750312 124000N 1092302E VS/VN	GROUND
S614 SEIDL, ROBERT	BB 750312 134800N 1075000E VS	DC4
S624 SHIMKIN, ALEX	MM 720712 164500N 1071100E VS	GROUND
S613 SIMMONS, VILLIE E	RR 750916 175800N 1023000E LA	GROUND
S623 SIMPSON, JAMES EDWARD	KK 681106 112100N 1060000E VS	JEEP
S244 SMITH, EMET QUIMBY	RR 792515 093300N 1082600E VS/CW	YACHT
S245 SMITH, KAREN	RR 792515 093300N 1082600E VS/CW	YACHT

S750 SMITH, LINDA  
 S612 SMITH, MICHELLE L  
 S630 SPAULDING, RICHARD  
 S628 SPRAGENS JOHN  
 S621 STARK, LAWRENCE J  
 S602 STONE, DANA  
 S639 STRUHARIK, PAUL A  
 T600 TAVARES, JOHN R  
 T601 TOWNLEY, ROY F  
 J630 JECHE, RICHARD W  
 V630 VIETTI, ELEANOR A  
 W624 WALDHAUS, RICHARD G  
 W625 WALSH, BRIAN  
 W620 WEAVER, EUGENE  
 W603 WEISSENBACK, EDWARD J  
 W602 WILLIS, CHARLES E  
 W134 WOLFKILL GRANT  
 Y630 YIA, JOHN SUNG

EE 750317 124777N 1083600E VS GROUND  
 EE 750313 124730N 1083600E VS GROUND  
 RR 683201 163330N 1073827E VS/VN GROUND  
 RR 740430 167200N 1042900E VS GROUND  
 RR 680201 162731N 1073551E VS/VN GROUND  
 PP 700408 113735N 1067410E CB CYCLE  
 RR 750313 124730N 1083600E VS/VN GROUND  
 MM 650518 167420N 1071210E VS GROUND  
 MM 711227 193357N 1012220E LA C123  
 RR 683204 104500N 1064300E VS/CB AUTO  
 PP 622532 123201N 1070927E VS GROUND  
 RR 710834 113722N 1063600E VS/CB GROUND  
 MM 750425 113300N 1040500E CB GROUND  
 RR 683201 163373N 1073900E VS/VN GROUND  
 XX 711227 193357N 1012220E LA C123  
 RR 683201 163373N 1073900E VS/VN GROUND  
 RR 613515 193000N 1060000E LA 134  
 MM 750425 113300N 1040500E CB GROUND

END OF REPORT

# 1 NAMES ON DRV, PRG, LAOS LISTS

The following is an alphabetical list, by Service, of those men who have been identified on the DRV, PRG and Laos lists for repatriation, as well as those on the DRV and PRG lists that have been identified as having died in captivity:

Those on the lists of returning prisoners-of-war whose names are underlined were formerly carried as MIA.

Those whose names are asterisked were on the Laos list.

## ARMY RETURNEES

Albert, Keith A., SP4  
 Allwine, David F., SSgt  
 Anderson, John T., MSgt  
 Anshus, Richard C., Capt  
 Anton, Francis G., CW2  
Astorga, Jose M., SP5  
 Baird, Bill A., SSgt  
 Branch, Michael P., SP4  
Brande, Harvey G., MSgt  
 Carlson, Albert E., Maj  
 Cavaiani, Jon R., Sgt  
 Chenoweth, Robert P., SSgt  
 Chirichigno, Luis G., Capt  
 Crowson, Frederick H., SP5  
 Daley, James A.J., Sgt  
 Daugherty, Lenard E., SP6  
 Davis, Thomas J., SSgt  
Drabic, Peter E., Sgt  
 Dunn, John G., Capt  
 Elliott, Artice W., Lt. Col  
 Ettmuller, Harry L., SSgt  
Flora, Carroll E. Jr., SFC  
Frank, Martin S., SSgt  
 Gostas, Theodore W., Maj  
 Gouin, Donat J., MSgt  
 Guggenberger, Gary J., SP5  
 Hardy, William H., Maj  
 Harker, David H., SSgt  
 Hefel, Daniel H., Sgt.  
 Henry, Nathan B., SSgt  
 Hestand, James H., CW2  
 Horio, Thomas T., SP5  
 Jacquez, Juan L., SP5  
 Johnson, Bobby L., SSgt  
Kerns, Gail M., MSgt  
 Kobashigawa, Tom Y., SP5  
 Kushner, Floyd H., Maj  
 Lenker, Michael R., SSgt

Leopold, Stephen R., Capt  
 Lewis, Robert III., SP6  
 Long, Julius W. Jr., SSgt  
 MacPhail, Don A., Sgt  
Malo, Isaac F., PFC  
 Maslowski, Daniel F., CW2  
 McMillan, Isaih R., SSgt  
 McMurray, Cordine, SFC  
McMurry, William G. Jr., SSgt  
 Mehrer, Gustav A., PFC  
Miller, Roger A., CW2  
 Neco-Quinones, Felix V., SSgt  
 Newell, Stanley A., SSgt  
 Nowicki, James E., CW2  
 O'Connor, Michael F., CW2  
 Parsels, John W., Capt  
 Perricone, Richard R., SSgt  
 Pfister, James F. Jr., SSgt  
 Prather, Phillip D., CW2  
 Purcell, Benjamin H., Col  
 Rander, Donald J., SFC  
 Ray, Johnnie L., Capt  
 Rayford, King D. Jr., SSgt  
Reeder, William S., Capt  
 Rodriguez, Ferdinand A., PVT  
 Rose, Joseph III., SSgt  
 Schrupp, Raymond C., Maj  
 Smith Mark A., Capt  
 Sooter, David W., CW3  
 Sparks, John G., SP6  
 Springman, Richard H., SP4  
Tabb, Robert E., SSgt  
Thompson, Dennis L., SFC  
Thompson, Floyd H., Maj  
 Young, John A., SSgt  
 Wallingford, Ken, Sgt  
 Wanat, George K., Capt  
 Ziegler, Roy E. II., CW2

## NAVY RETURNEES

Agnew, Alfred H., LCDR  
 Alcorn, Wendell R., LCDR  
 Alvarez, Everett, Jr., LCDR  
 Anderson, Gareth L., LCDR  
 Bailey, James W., LT  
 Baldock, Frederick C., LCDR  
 Beeler, Carrol R., LT  
 \*Bedinger, Henry J., Lt

Bell, James F., CDR  
 Black, Cole, CDR  
 Brady, Allen C., CAPT  
 Brunhauer, Richard M., LCDR  
 Burns, John D., CDR  
 Butler, Phillip M., LCDR  
 Carey, David J., LCDR

Carpenter, Allen R., LCDR  
 Chauncey, Arvin R., CDR  
 Christian, Michael D., LCDR  
 Clower, Claude D., CDR  
 Coffee, Gerald L., CDR  
 Coker, George T., LT  
 Coskey, Kenneth L., CDR  
 Crayton, Render, CDR  
 Cronin, Michael P., LCDR  
 Daigle, Glenn H., LCDR  
 Daniels, Verlyne W., CDR  
 Davis, Edward A., LCDR  
 Denton, Jeremiah Andrew Jr., CAPT  
 Doremus, Robert B., CDR  
 Doss, Dale W., LCDR  
 Eastman, Leonard C., CDR  
 Ensch, John C., LT  
 Estes, Edward D., CDR  
 Everett, David A., LTJG  
 Fant, Robert S., LCDR  
 Fellowes, John H., CDR  
 Franke, Fred A.W., CAPT  
 Fuller, Robert B., CAPT  
 Gaither, Ralph E., LCDR  
 Galanti, Paul E., LCDR  
 Gillespie, Charles R., CAPT  
 Glenn, Danny E., LCDR  
 Goodermote, Wayne K., LT  
 Haines, Collins H., CDR  
 Hall, Thomas R., LCDR  
 Halyburton, Porter A., LCDR  
 Hardman, William M., CDR  
 Heilig, John LCDR  
 Hickerson, James M., CDR  
 Higdon, Kenneth H., LT  
 Hoffman, David W., LCDR  
 Hutton, James L., CDR  
 Hyatt, Leo G., CDR  
 James, Charlie N., CAPT  
 Jenkins, Harry T., CAPT  
 Kernan, Joseph E., LTJG  
 Key, Wilson D., LCDR  
 Knutson, Rodney A., LCDR  
 Kopfman, Theodore F., CDR  
 Latendresse, Thomas B., LT  
 Lawrence, William P., CAPT  
 Lerseth, Roger G., LT  
 Lesesne, Henry D., LCDR  
 Lewis, Earl G., JR., LCDR  
 Martin, Edward H., CDR  
 Masterson, Frederick J., LT  
 Mayhew, William J., LT  
 McCain, John S., III, LCDR  
 McDaniel, Eugene B., CDR  
 McGrath, John M., LCDR  
 McKamey, John B., CDR  
 McSwain, George P., LT  
 McCleary, Read B., LCDR  
 Mehl, James P., CAPT  
 Metzger, William J., LT  
 Miller, Edwin F., LT

Molinare, Albert R., LT  
 Moore, Dennis A., LCDR  
 Moore, Ernest M., JR., CAPT  
 Mullen, Richard D., CDR  
 Mulligan, James A., CAPT  
 Nakagawa, Gordon R., CDR  
 Naughton, Robert J., LCDR  
 Nichols, Aubrey A., LCDR  
 Norrington, Giles R., LCDR  
 Osborne, Dale H., CDR  
 Paige, Gordon C., LCDR  
 Penn, Michael G., LTJG  
 Pirie, James G., CDR  
 Plumb, Joseph C., LCDR  
 Polfer, Clarence R., CDR  
 Prorillet, Leo T., CAPT  
 Purrington, Fred R., LCDR  
 Raebel, Dale V., LCDR  
 Randall, Robert I., LT  
 Ratzlaff, Richard R., LCDR  
 Rehmann, David G., LT  
 Rice, Charles D., LT  
 Rivers, Wendell B., CAPT  
 Rollins, David J., LCDR  
 Rudloff, Stephen A., LT  
 Russell, Kay, CDR  
 Rutledge, Howard E., CAPT  
 Schoeffel, Peter V., CDR  
 Schulz, Paul H., CDR  
 Schweitzer, Robert J., CDR  
 Shankel, William L., LCDR  
 Shumaker, Robert H., CDR  
 Shuman, Edwin A., III, CDR  
 Smith, Bradley E., LCDR  
 Souder, James B., LCDR  
 Southwick, Charles E., CDR  
 Spencer, Larry H., LCDR  
 Stackhouse, Charles, LCDR  
 Stafford, Hugh A., CDR  
 Stark, William R., CDR  
 Stier, Theodore G., LT  
 Stockdale, James B., CAPT  
 Stratton, Richard A., CDR  
 Sullivan, Timothy B., LT  
 Tangeman, Richard G., LT  
 Tanner, Charles H., CDR  
 Terry, Ross R., CDR  
 Thornton, Gary L., LT  
 Triebel, Theodore W., LCDR  
 Tschudy, William M., LCDR  
 Volden, Raymond A., CDR  
 Wheat, David R., LCDR  
 Wideman, Robert W., LT  
 Wieland, Carl T., LT  
 Wilbur, Walter E., CAPT  
 Williams, Lewis I., LT  
 Woods, Brian D., CDR  
 Woods, Robert D., LCDR  
 Zuhoski, Charles P., LT

Abbott, Joseph S., Maj  
 Abbott, Robert A., Capt  
 Abbott, Wilfred K., Maj  
 Acosta, Hector M., 1Lt  
 Alexander, Fernando, Maj  
 Albers, John H. Jr., Capt  
 Anderson, John W., Capt  
 Andrews, Anthony C., Capt  
 Arcuri, William Y., Lt  
 Austin, William R., Capt  
 Ayres, Timothy R., Capt  
 Bagley, Bobby R., Lt Col  
 Baker, David E., Capt  
 Baker, Elmo C., Lt Col  
 Ballard, Arthur T., Lt Col  
 Barbay, Lawrence, Maj  
 Barnett, Robert W., Lt Col  
 Barrett, Thomas J., Capt  
 Barrows, Henry C., Capt  
 Bates, Richard L., 1Lt  
 Baugh, William J., Maj  
 Bean, James E., Col  
 Bean, William R. Jr., Capt  
 Beekman, Will D., Capt  
 Beens, Lynn R., Capt  
 Berg, Kile D., Maj  
 Berger, James R., Maj  
 Bernasconi, L. H., Lt Col  
 Biss, Robert I., Maj  
 Black, Arthur H., TSgt  
 Blevins, John C., Maj  
 Bliss, Ronald G., Capt  
 Bolstad, Richard E., Maj  
 Bomar, Jack W., Lt Col  
 Borling, John L., Capt  
 Boyd, Charles G., Maj  
 Boyer, Terry L., Capt  
 Brazelton, Michael L., Capt  
 Breckner, William J. Jr., Lt Col  
 Brenneman, Richard C., Capt  
 Bridger, Barry B., Capt  
 Brodak, John W., Maj  
 Brown, Charles A. Jr., Capt  
 Browning, Ralph T., Capt  
 Brudo, Edward A., Capt  
 Brunson, Cecil H., Lt  
 Brunstrom, Alan L., Lt Col  
 Buchanan, Robert E., Capt  
 Burer, Arthur W., Maj  
 Burns, Donald A., Col  
 Burns, Michael T., Capt  
 Burroughs, William D., Col  
 Butler, Jack M., Capt  
 Butler, William W., Capt  
 Byrne, Ronald E., Jr., Col  
 Byrnc, William G., Capt  
 Callaghan, Peter A., Capt

Camerota, Peter P., Capt  
 Campbell, Burton W., Capt  
 Carrigan, Larry E., Capt  
 Cerak, John P., Capt  
 Certain, Robert G., Capt  
 Chambers, Carl D., Capt  
 Cheney, Kevin J., Capt  
 Cherry, Fred V., Lt Col  
 Chesley, Larry J., Capt  
 Clark, John W., Capt  
 Clements, James A., Lt Col  
 Collins, James Q., Lt Col  
 Collins, Thomas E., III, Maj  
 Condon, James C., Maj  
 Conlee, William W., Lt Col  
 Cook, James R., TSgt  
 Copeland, H. C., Lt Col  
 Cordier, Kenneth W., Maj  
 Cormier, Arthur, SMSgt  
 Craner, Robert R., Lt Col  
 Crecca, Joseph, Jr., Capt  
 Crow, Frederick A., Col  
 Crumpler, Carl B., Col  
 Curtis, Thomas J., Lt Col  
 Cusimano, Samuel B., Capt  
 Cutter, James D., Capt  
 Daughtrey, Robert N., Maj  
 Davies, John O., Capt  
 Day, George E., Col  
 DeSpiegler, Gale A., Maj  
 Dingee, David B., Capt  
 Donald, Myron L., Capt  
 Doughty, Daniel J., Lt Col  
 Dramesi, John A., Lt Col  
 Driscoll, Jerry D., Capt  
 Drummond, David L., Capt  
 Duarte, David H., Lt Col  
 Dutton, Richard A., Col  
 Elander, William J., Jr., Maj  
 Ellis, Jeffrey T., Capt  
 Ellis, Leon F., Capt  
 Everson, David, Lt Col  
 Fer, John, Capt  
 Finlay, John S., Col  
 Fisher, Kenneth, Maj  
 Fleenor, Kenneth R., Col  
 Flesher, Hubert K., Maj  
 Flom, Fredric L., Capt  
 Flynn, John P., Col  
 Forby, Willis E., Lt Col  
 Ford, David E., Capt  
 Fowler, Henry P., Capt  
 Francis, Richard L., Capt  
 Fraser, Kenneth J., Capt  
 Fulton, Richard J., Capt  
 Gaddis, Norman C., Col  
 Galati, Ralph W., Lt



Gault, William A., Capt  
 Geloneck, Terry M., Capt  
 Gerndt, Gerald L., Capt  
 Gideon, Willard S., Lt Col  
 Groux, Peter J., Capt  
 Gough, James W., MSgt ← \*Gotner, Norbert A., Maj  
 Granger, Paul L., Lt  
 Grant, David B., Capt  
 Gray, David F., Capt  
 Greene, Charles E., Maj  
 Grutters, Guy D., Capt  
 Guarino, Lawrence M., Col  
 Guenther, Lynn, Capt  
 Gutterdon, Laird, Col  
 Guy, Theodore W., Col  
 Hall, George R., Lt Col  
 Hall, Keith M., Maj  
 Hanson, Gregg O., 1Lt  
 Hanton, Thomas J., Capt  
 Harris, Carlyle S., Lt Col  
 Hatcher, David B., Lt Col  
 Hawley, Edwin A. Jr., Capt  
 Heeren, Jerome D., Capt  
 Heiliger, Donald L., Maj  
 Henderson, William J., Capt  
Hess, Jay C., Maj  
 Hildebrand, L. L., Maj  
 Hill, Howard J., Capt  
 Hinckley, Robert B., Capt  
 Hines, James E., Lt Col  
 Hivner, James O., Lt Col  
 Hoffson, Arthur T., Capt  
 Horinek, Ramon A., Maj  
 Hubbard, Edward L., Capt  
 Hudson, Robert M., 1Lt  
 Hughes, James L., Col  
 Hughey, Kenneth R., Lt Col  
 Ingvalson, Roger D., Lt Col  
 Jackson, Charles A., Capt  
 James, Gobel D., Maj  
 Jayroe, Julius S., Lt Col  
 Jeffcoat, Carl H., Maj  
 Jeffrey, Robert D., Maj  
 Jensen, Jay R., Maj  
 Johnson, Harold E., Maj  
 Johnson, Kenneth, Maj  
 Johnson, Richard E., Maj  
 Johnson, Samuel R., Col  
 Jones, Murphy M., Maj  
 Jones, Robert C., Capt  
 Kari, Paul A., Maj  
 Kasler, James H., Col  
 Keirn, Richard P., Lt Col  
 Kerr, Michael S., Capt  
 Kirk, Thomas H., Jr., Col  
 Klinger, J. W., Jr., Col  
Klomann, Thomas J., Capt  
Kramer, Gerald D., Capt  
 Kula, James D., Capt  
 Labeau, Michael H., Capt  
 \*Leonard, Edw W. Jr., Maj

Lamer, James L., Col  
 Lane, Michael C., Capt  
 Larson, Gordon A., Col  
 Lasiter, Carl W., Maj  
 Latella, George F., Lt  
 Lebert, Ronald M., Capt  
 Leblanc, Louis E., Jr., MSgt  
 Lengyel, Lauren R., Capt  
 Lewis, Frank D., Capt  
Lewis, Keith M., Capt  
 Ligon, Vernon P., Col  
 Lilly, Warren R., Maj  
 Lockhart, Maylen J., Maj  
 Logan, Donald H., Capt  
Lollar, James L., SSgt  
 Luna, Jose D., Capt  
 Lurie, Alan P., Lt Col  
 Madden, Percy, Jr., SSgt  
 Madison, Thomas M., Lt Col  
 Makowski, Louis F., Lt Col  
 Marshall, Marion A., Capt  
 Martini, Michael P., Lt  
 Mastin, Ronald L., Capt  
 Matsui, Melvin K., Capt  
 Mayall, William T., Lt  
 McCuiston, Michael K., Maj  
 McDaniel, Norman A., Maj  
 McDow, Richard J., Lt  
 McKnight, George G., Lt Col  
 McManus, Kevin J., Capt  
McMurray, Frederick C., Capt  
 McNish, Thomas M., Capt  
 Means, William H., Jr., Lt Col  
 Mechenbier, Edward J., Capt  
 Merritt, Raymond J., Col  
 Meyer, Alton B., Maj  
 Milligan, Joseph E., Capt  
 Moe, Thomas H., Capt  
 Monlux, Harold D., Capt  
Morgan, Gary L., SSgt  
 Morgan, Herschel S., Lt Col  
Mott, David P., Capt  
Murphy, John S., Jr., Capt  
 Myers, Armand J., Lt Col  
 Myers, Glen L., Capt  
 Nagahiro, James Y., Lt Col  
 Nasmyth, John H., Jr., Capt  
 Nevens, Martin J., Capt  
 Newcombe, Wallace G., Capt  
 Nix, Cowan G., Maj  
 Norris, Thomas E., Maj  
 North, Kenneth W., Lt Col  
 Odell, Donald E., Lt Col  
 O'Neil, James W., Lt Col  
 Padgett, James P., Maj  
 Parrott, Thomas V., Maj  
 Peel, Robert D., Maj  
 Perkins, Glendon W., Maj  
 Peterson, Douglas B., Maj  
 \*Long, Stephen G., Capt

Pitchford, John J., Lt Col  
 Pollack, Melvin, Capt  
 Pollard, Ben M., Lt Col  
 Price, Larry D., 1Lt  
 Purcell, Robert B., Lt Col  
 Pyle, Darrel E., Capt  
 Pyle, Thomas S., II, Maj  
Ratzlaff, Brian M., Capt  
 Ray, James E., Capt  
 Reich, William J., Lt  
 Reynolds, Jon A., Maj  
 Ringsdorf, Herbert B., Capt  
 Risner, Robinson, Col  
 Robinson, Paul K., Jr., Maj  
 Robinson, William A., Msgt  
 Rose, George A., Capt  
 Ruhling, Mark J., Capt  
 Runyan, Albert W., Col  
 Sanduick, Robert J., Lt Col  
 Sawhill, Robert R., Col  
 Schierman, Wesley D., Maj  
 Schwertfeger, W. R., Capt  
 Seeber, Bruce G., Lt Col  
 Seek, Brian J., 1Lt  
 Sehorn, James E., Capt  
 Shanahan, Joseph F., Maj  
 Shattuck, Lewis W., Lt Col  
Shingaki, Tamotsy, Maj  
 Shively, James R., Capt  
 Sienicki, Theodore S., Lt  
 Sigler, Gary R., Capt  
 Sira, Thomas W., Lt Col  
 Simonet, Kenneth A., Col  
 Simpson, Richard T., Capt  
 Singleton, Jerry A., Capt  
 Smith, Dewey L., Lt Col  
 Smith, Richard E., Maj  
 Smith, Wayne O., Capt  
 Spencer, William A., Capt  
Sponeyberger, R.D., Capt  
 Spoon, Donald R., Capt  
 Stavast, John E., Col  
 Sterling, Thomas J., Lt Col  
\*Riess, Charles F., Capt

Stirm, Robert L., Lt Col  
 Stockman, Herve S., Col  
 Storey, Thomas G., Maj  
 Stutz, Leroy W., Capt  
 Sullivan, Dwight E., Lt Col  
 Sumpter, Thomas W., Lt Col  
 Talley, Bernard L., Maj  
 Talley, William H., Lt Col  
 Temperley, Russell E., Maj  
 Terrell, Irby D., Lt Col  
 Thorsness, Leo K., Lt Col  
 Tomes, Jack H., Lt Col  
 Torkelson, Loren H., Capt  
 Trautman, Konrad W., Maj  
 Trimble, Jack R., Lt  
 Tyler, Charles R., Maj  
 Uyeyama, Terry J., Maj  
 Van Loan, Jack L., Lt Col  
 Vaughn, Samuel R., 1Lt  
 Vavroch, Duane P., 1Lt  
 Venanzi, Gerald S., Capt  
 Vissotzky, Raymond W., Lt Col  
 Vogel, Richard D., Lt Col  
 Waddell, Dewey W., Capt  
 Waggoner, Robert F., Maj  
 Walker, Hubert C., Capt  
 Waltman, Donald G., Lt Col  
 Ward, Brian H., Lt  
 Webb, Ronald J., Maj  
 Wells, Kenneth, Lt  
 Wells, Norman L., Lt Col  
 Wendell, John H., Maj  
 Williams, James W., Capt  
 Wilson, Glenn H., Maj  
 Wilson, Hal K. III., Capt  
Wilson, William W., Lt  
 Winn, David W., Col  
 Writer, Lawrence D., Capt  
 Young, James F., Lt Col  
Young, Myron A., Capt  
 Yuill, John H., Lt Col  
Zuberbuhler, Rudolph U., Capt  
\*Stischer, Walter M., Lt Col

#### MARINE CORPS RETURNEES

Angus, William Kerr, Capt  
 Anzaldua, Jose Jesus, Jr., Sgt  
 Archer, Bruce R., 1Lt  
 Brown, Paul Gordon, Capt  
 Budd, Leonard R., Jr., Sgt  
 Burgess, Richard G., Sgt  
 Chapman, Harlan P., Lt Col  
Cius, Frank E., Jr., SSG  
 Dibernario, James V., Capt  
 Deering, John A., SSgt  
 Dunn, John H., Lt Col  
 Elbert, Frederick L., Jr., Pvt  
 Friese, Laurence Victor, Capt  
 formerly listed KIA

Helle, Robert R., Sgt  
 Kavanaugh, Abel L., Sgt  
Kroboth, Alan J., 1Lt  
 Marvel, Jerry Wendell, Lt Col  
 Miller, Edison Wainwright, Lt Col  
 Montague, Paul J., Maj  
 Riate, Alfonso, Sgt  
 (1) Ridgeway, Ronald L., PFC  
 Swindle, Orson G., Maj  
 Tellier, Dennis A., Sgt  
Thomas, William E., Jr., CWO-2  
Walsh, James P., Jr., Capt  
 Warner, James Howie, Capt

In addition to names of those held as prisoners, the DRV and PRC lists stated that the following U. S. servicemen had died while held:

#### ARMY

Arroyo-Baez, Gerasime, SFC  
Bennett, Harold G., Sgt  
Cannon, Francis E., Cpl  
DeLong, Joe L., SSG  
Eisenbraun, William F., Capt  
Ferguson, Walter, Jr., Sgt  
Knight, Billy, Sgt  
Parks, Joe, SFC  
Port, William D., Sgt  
Ray, James M., SSG  
Roraback, Kenneth M., MSgt  
Salley, James, Jr., MSgt  
Schuman, John R., Maj  
Shark, Earl E., SSG  
Smith, William M., Sgt  
Souitier, James J., PFC  
Tadio, Lenard M., SSG  
Varnado, Michael B., CWO-2  
Versace, Humbert R., Capt  
Walker, Grier J., Maj  
William, Richard F., 1SG  
Young, Robert M., Capt

#### NAVY

Abbott, John, CAPT  
Cameron, Kenneth R., CDR  
Connell, James J., LCDR  
Dennison, Terry A., CDR  
Griffin, James L., CDR  
Hartman, Richard D., CDR  
Smith, Homer L., CAPT  
Stamm, Ernest A., CDR  
Walters, Jack, Jr., LCDR

#### AIR FORCE

Adams, Samuel, SMSgt  
Atterberry, Edwin L., Maj  
Burdett, Edward B., Col  
Cobeil, Earl G., Maj  
Diehl, William C., Maj  
Dodge, Ward E., Col  
Dusing, Charles G., SMSgt  
Grubb, Wilmer H., Lt Col  
Heppen, Keith E., Lt Col  
Moore, Thomas, SMSgt  
Newsom, Benjamin E., Col  
Pemberton, Gene T., Col  
Schmidt, Norman, Col  
Sijan, Lance E., Capt  
Storz, Ronald E., Lt Col  
Weskamp, Robert L., Capt

#### MARINE CORPS

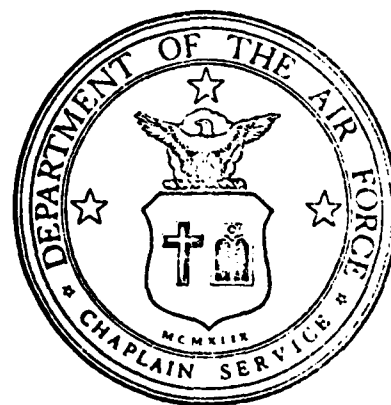
Burns, Frederick, J., Sgt  
Cook, Donald G., Maj  
Frederick, John W., CWO-4  
Grissett, Edwin R., Sgt  
Hammond, Dennis W., Sgt  
Sherman, Robert C., Sgt  
Weatherman, Earl C., Pvt  
Zawtock, Joseph S., Sgt

# **"JUST A CLOSER WALK"**

**A Study of the Religious Experiences of USAF POWs**

**By Chaplain, Major, Franklin D. Hartsell  
Chaplain, Major, Frank D. Metcalf  
Chaplain, Major, John P. McDonough  
Air Command and Staff College, 1974-75  
Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama**

**Edited by the USAF Chaplain Board**



During the first debriefings of the American Prisoners of War (POWs) from the Vietnamese conflict, the religious experiences of the POWs spontaneously emerged. The significance of religion's role in the POW experience was first noted by the work of the USAF Prisoner of War Experience Analysis Program. This information was relayed to the Chief of Chaplains, USAF, who requested the available debriefing data be read and analyzed to evaluate the importance of religion in the lives of the POWs during their imprisonment. In response, three students at the Air Command and Staff College (whose work form the body of this paper) submitted a research study of the religious experiences of many Air Force POWs.

One hundred and eighteen of the three hundred and twenty three verbatim transcripts of Air Force POWs were studied to determine the effect of religious factors upon their lives. Although every POW did not express his feeling concerning religion, the study indicates religion was an affirmative psychogenic force which helped many POWs to survive and to resist.

The authors' major objectives were to provide insights to assist chaplains in their ministry to flying personnel, and to offer chaplains an important background tool in their preaching, ministry of presence and visitation to those who face the possibility of confinement in a future conflict. Secondary objectives were: to determine how the morale of the POW was affected by his religious observances in isolated confinement and as a member of a worshiping group; to evaluate the role of ecumenism among the POWs; and to investigate the place of religion in fostering peer forgiveness among the POWs.

## 1. THE "WORLD" OF THE POWS

When the USAF Vietnam POW ejected from his aircraft he suddenly found himself thrust into an unbelievable world—a world of pain, hunger, torture, guilt, uncertainty, isolation, emptiness, and meaninglessness. Even though he had been in a war zone, the POW had experienced most of the ordinary comforts of a very high standard of living. He ate hot meals, slept in an air-conditioned dormitory, and could occasionally call his family. This world of comfort vanished at the moment of capture. One POW describes the change this way, "The drop from a high plateau of comfort to the abysmal depth of backward, or at best, retarded social environment creates a traumatic atmosphere."

Captivity began for most of the men in similar ways. Each felt good about his ejection procedures and attempts for evasion. Most were amazed that they were able to follow the training procedures automatically. Some of the POWs were captured at the moment they touched ground while others were able to evade the enemy for several days. Each person, however, shared the belief that somehow he would miraculously be rescued even though he could not see how it would be humanly possible.

Shortly after capture the "world" of pain began to appear. During the period of evasion, many of the men ignored or were not even aware that they had serious injuries or broken bones. The reality of the injury became very apparent when the injury became the target for harassment. As a POW was put on "display" and paraded through a village, the North Vietnamese civilians would strike the injury, poke it with a stick, or throw rocks at it if they could get within range. Even though many of the POWs had serious injuries, they were not treated enroute to a camp. Many had open wounds which needed cleaning and closure. Others had broken bones which needed setting and immobilizing. These injuries coupled with the danger of infection caused tremendous physical pain and severe mental anxiety.

Anxiety was also created by the uncertainty of the situation. Throughout the early portion of captivity the prisoner never knew what the next minute held. Even though he was not killed at the time of capture, the POW had no assurance that he would ever survive the trip to a permanent camp. Many times it appeared rather doubtful based upon the menacing gestures made by some of the captors and civilian populace.

After arriving at a permanent camp, the "world" of uncertainty continued. Most of the men were isolated and could not discover from other POWs what to expect. Several men described the fear which welled up within some when they heard footsteps coming toward their rooms since this would probably be someone coming to "quiz" or interrogate them. The clank of handcuffs was an especially terrifying sound since this was usually accompanied by more severe treatment. One POW expressed a feeling of guilt if the guard opened someone else's door since he had wished that the guard would not be coming for him, and he now knew that someone else would have to suffer.

In describing the suffering experienced by the men, one of the POWs said, "It was the most barbaric, senseless, and inhuman treatment that man can inflict upon man and still keep that mistreated human alive." During the period from 1964 through 1969, there appeared to be a policy of extreme physical and mental abuse used upon the POWs to extract information and to exploit them for political propaganda. Even after 1969 a high percentage of all POWs were tortured.

The North Vietnamese used many forms of torture and appeared to be adept at selecting the one most cruel for the particular POW. The injuries of many POWs were aggravated and became the objects for pressure to get results. One prisoner suffering from claustrophobia was rolled up in a bamboo mat and left to scream. Some of the men were hung from the ceiling by ropes while others were tied in such a fashion as to pull muscles and cut blood circulation. Many POWs lost the use of their arms for several weeks after a torture session. Some POWs were burned with cigarette butts while others were beaten with rubber hoses or the butt of a rifle. Some men were forced to crouch on a stool surrounded by hungry mosquitoes for as long as three days. It was not uncommon to be deprived of sleep or food for several days. The amazing thing to these writers is the tremendous amount of pressure which the POWs were able to withstand before "breaking."

Many of the POWs considered isolation and inactivity as the worst torture of all. During isolation the prisoner usually could not contact other POWs so he was unable to identify himself to them or to find out what was expected of him. Many of the men described this as a period of emptiness and meaninglessness. One POW said, "During prolonged periods of isolation, I earnestly believe that without faith in God that I would have lapsed into insanity."

## 2. ALONE WITH GOD

"We all went on the philosophy that God had told us that if 'two or more met in my name, there will I be also.' We believed He would be present if one guy would kneel down and pray." — (A POW)

It was during his incarceration that the POW fought what may have been his most difficult battles. Perhaps the POW's greatest struggle was against loneliness — the aloneness of one against everyone and almost everything.

In an effort to better control their American prisoners, the North Vietnamese isolated the POWs from one another. From August 1964, when the first American aircrew member was imprisoned, until late 1969, the North Vietnamese made maximum use of the principle of isolation. Immediately after their capture, most of the POWs were closeted in box-like rooms which confined them to a few small square feet of space and left them without anyone with whom to be close. A world of numbing nothingness began. For many of the POWs this battle against aloneness lasted for years, and the 24-hour-a-day struggle to survive and resist the enemy became increasingly difficult. Alone, tempted to self-pity brought on by the crudest of living conditions, frustrated by uncertainty, and weakened by interrogation, the POW sought ways to survive.

This struggle and the burden of aloneness was lightened for some POWs through their individual worship experiences. Stripped of each other, the scriptures, prayer books, and other worship aids, these POWs stood alone before their God. For some of these men, this presented a problem of how to approach God. As one POW pointed out, "All of a sudden, here you are in the jungle, how do you go about your religious beliefs?" In most instances, the approach taken by the individual POW was influenced by his religious training, or by the lack of it. Those with religious backgrounds were able to cite from memory some scripture, prayers of the church, hymns, or utilize other portions of the liturgies of their church. These men were able to assist those without religious training in their worship experiences. They also were to become religious leaders and teachers, both during times of individual worship and organized worship services which began later in the POW camps. Regardless of the approach used, whenever these POWs reached out in faith to God, they discovered that they no longer stood alone before God, but that they stood alone with God.

In an effort to combat the suffocating monotony of their daily routine, some of these men prayed time after time. One POW stated that he prayed often each day as a way of getting through the day. Another POW was more specific in describing his prayer habits and their results. He said, "I prayed a lot in solo. I said the Lord's Prayer sometimes a thousand times, no, not a thousand, probably — I counted 700 times in one day. With nothing else to do, you were bored and depressed, I just started praying." When asked if these prayers helped him, he answered, "It was a strength and a salvation. I was solidified through this experience. Without it, I don't think I would have done the job I did." This incessant prayer life helped fill the void of daily nothingness. But, more importantly, it brought to these men a real source of strength. Regardless of how often they prayed, they felt, as one expressed it, that "God was there when you needed him."

As they prayed, no concern seemed to be too small or too great to seek the help of God. Concerns about brooms and the need for shoes were intermingled with prayers for strength to withstand torture and for the desire to go on living. Quite often, the praying POW interpreted ensuing events as direct answers to his prayers and as assurances that God was indeed present with him. One POW, upon his capture, was stripped of all his clothing except his underwear and socks. When told that he was to walk to an unknown destination of undetermined length over unfamiliar and rough terrain, the POW quickly prayed, "Oh God, boy, I can't go very far without my shoes." He said that within 20 seconds after that prayer the guard turned around and brought his boots back to him. This experience had a profound effect on this pilot who spoke at length of the strength which religion gave him while in prison.

Another pilot, after a severe interrogation session, was returned to the aloneness of his private cell. He stated that this moment proved to be the psychological and physical lowpoints of his incarceration. His arms, torn and bleeding, hands swollen with agonizing pain, body exhausted and dehydrated, and feeling no hope, he knelt and prayed for an instant sign of hope. When he opened his eyes, they focused on a "small, insignificant carving of a cross above the door" left there by some previous occupant, but never noticed by this particular POW. He described this experience:

I opened my eyes right up and right onto a cross—, and that gave me the most comfort I had ever received before then at that time. I actually smiled and I said, "Thank you, Lord." And that is all I needed, and I can stand anything that is going to come from this time on.

He cited this experience as one which restored his courage, built up his morale, and brought about a change in his confidence. Similar incidents were related by numerous other POWs. Several spoke of an irritating loudspeaker with blaring Vietnamese music and propaganda which suddenly became inoperable after prayers had been offered that God "please get that radio off the air." Others told of lengthy and harsh interrogation sessions ending immediately after praying for God to intervene. These men who told of such experiences felt them to be a lasting source of strength and encouragement throughout their captivity.

Although isolated from each other, the POWs were able to take advantage of their crude but effective communication techniques to share their faith in God with one another. It truly was religion communicated through the walls. Those who had religious training and could remember portions of scripture, prayers, litanies, or hymns took the initiative to share this with others. At specific times during the day, signals were communicated and several POWs, although unable to see one another would pause to pray. One man described the covert prayers, "There were ten of us living in the pool building, all of us solo. Every single day at noon when everybody received their chow, I would give the bang on the wall, and we would all say, in our rooms, the Lord's Prayer and bless our food." This same POW further stated, "On Sundays, at a specific time, I would give the signal and we would kneel down and pray. . . . This was in our rooms, but just as if we were in unison." Thus, for many of the POWs, religion fostered a sense of oneness which even the walls that divided them could not block.

Religion played a significant role in helping the POW win his battle with aloneness. For some, religion played the key role. One POW, a colonel, claimed that his religion was the only thing that saved him. "I was going to pot literally," he said, "both physically and mentally. The only thing that kept me going was faith in God and my prayers." Another colonel said:

I found that when the going was very hard that you came to the conclusion that you were basically a pretty weak person. . . . And I found that you can reach a point where the body begins screaming to the mind, "Let's stop this!" . . . There have been a number of times when I felt that perhaps my belief in God was the only thing that continued to sustain me.

For other POWs, religion was equal to such morale bolstering factors as faith in America, confidence in the POW leadership organization, and belief in one another. These factors were sufficient to offset all the negatives which accompanied the POWs' days and years in isolation. In conditions which encouraged despair, the POW responded with a courage (certainly for many a courage bolstered by his religious beliefs) that won the battle for him.

By late 1970 much of the total isolation was eased for most of the POWs as they were confined together in larger groups in a detention rather than a punitive atmosphere. These POWs who had stood alone with God, joined with each other in standing together with God.

### 3. UNITY IN FAITH

Group worship was one of the most significant morale bolstering factors in the lives of the POWs since it met

two of their greatest needs. First of all, it gave the POWs an opportunity to communicate with other people which helped to alleviate the devastating loneliness which plagued them. Secondly, it gave them a chance to share their beliefs and to receive encouragement from others concerning their faith in God. One POW, in response to a question about religion, expressed it this way:

It was definitely an assistance and definitely one of the most important items for my personal survival. Some people who had little or no faith found that when they asked for help, that they received help. Some of them who had no faith, found faith during our religious services.

The opportunities to conduct religious services changed during different periods of confinement and were different at the various POW camps. One thing is very obvious, though, the POWs were determined to have some form of worship service in spite of the roadblocks presented by the North Vietnamese. The form or structure ranged from individual worship during isolation, as described in Chapter Two, to all the residents in the compound participating in a joint service just before release in 1973.

An example of how clever the POWs were in exploiting every opportunity was the annual Christmas Eve service. The North Vietnamese set it up to be used for propaganda purposes, to "show how benevolent they were in their concern for the welfare and religious needs of the POWs." Some POWs would not attend the service because they did not want to aid the enemy with his propaganda. Other POWs, however, recognized what the enemy was trying to accomplish, but felt that the advantages of attending were greater than the disadvantages—they had needs that could best be met at the service.

One reason for attending was to let the world know that they were POWs. Many of the men were listed as Missing in Action (MIA), since no one knew where they were. In fact, several families recognized their husbands, sons, or fathers on the television shots taken at the service and knew for the first time that they were alive. Due to the North Vietnamese position of classifying the prisoners as "war criminals," the POWs felt it was imperative that their status as Prisoners of War be established in the eyes of the world.

Another reason for attending the Christmas Eve service was to learn which POWs were confined at that particular camp. Several men expressed the joy they experienced upon learning that a friend had been able to survive a seemingly impossible situation during capture. Since the North Vietnamese set up a service for the Catholics and the Protestants, one person said that he elected to attend the service of the opposite faith from his own so that his roommates would have the benefit of knowing who was at the camp at that particular time.

To communicate with other fellow Americans was a strong motivation for attending the service. Even though the North Vietnamese required them to sit far apart, the men found ways to communicate. During the service, while the television cameras were on them, the men talked with each other, realizing that the North Vietnamese would rather have the picture of them talking rather than the guards taking measures to make them quiet.

Another reason for attending the Christmas Eve service was to provide some input for conversation back in their rooms. After an extended period of time, stimulus for good conversation among the men in their rooms became a thing of value. The Christmas Eve service provided an outside stimulus to awaken new interests and thought patterns within the men.

Along this same line, one person mentioned how much it meant to him to enjoy the stars as he walked back to his cell. This was the only time that he had been outside at night. He was surprised to discover that the guard was either caught up in the spirit of Christmas or had his mind on something else as he permitted the POW to walk slowly and soak up the beauty of the stars.

Some people attended the service to worship. One man said that he was in a deep state of mental depression and was asked if he wanted to see a Catholic priest for Christmas Eve. After attending the service and receiving absolution and communion, he was amazed at the effect it had on him. Another POW indicated that he did not attend for religious reasons, but his attendance had an emotional effect upon him, "While singing the patriotic songs, which had been slipped into the agenda by the POW choir director without the knowledge of the North Vietnamese, everyone seemed to gain some self-assurance—the old cocky fighter pilot feeling returned."

Even before the annual Christmas Eve service, the POWs set up weekly, and some even had daily services. At "Heartbreak," the severe punishment isolation cells at the Prison in Hanoi, and at most of the other camps during the early period of confinement, all worship was done in solo. Many of the men set up a particular hour on Sunday morning for prayer and meditation. This became a period for deep meditation in an attempt to find out what was really valuable. This is how one man expressed it.



I had more than adequate time for self analysis and thinking about religion, life, children, and mistakes that I had made in the past. I turned to religion, prayed a lot, believed in God, and I found this religious experience to be what I needed. There were no angels appearing before me, no visions or anything like that. I didn't get religion in a flash. It was my own concept, and I further developed it in captivity.

After a communication system was developed in camp, the men began to have services in different cells at the same time. Though the men were still in individual cells, there was a feeling of unity in realizing that they were worshipping at the same time.

It was a tremendous morale booster when the POWs were put into rooms with other men. They secretly held services each Sunday morning. One person would remember a verse of scripture and the group would discuss it. They asked for a Bible, but it was denied. (The excuse was given that the Bible contained words which should be deleted, but they were not permitted to censor it; therefore, they could not give one to the POWs.) Here is how one POW expressed it when they were finally permitted to have short ten-to-fifteen minute services:

These were a tremendous source of strength for me. You can pray personally and stuff like that, but it was surely nice to have a couple of guys sing songs with you. We really felt strongly about having services. I think religious training is very important because it became a great source of strength up there. It was obvious no one else could help us, but God could. We had a lot of peace up there. Personally, I was a lot more peaceful and happier than any time previously in my life.

When the men were moved to the larger cells which contained nine or more men, a chaplain was appointed. Each week one of the men volunteered to give the sermon. The chaplain would coordinate the events and assist the volunteer to assure that the service came off right. One POW described the result:

We had some interesting and inspiring services. Between the music and things said, I was certainly inspired. The men did an outstanding job even though some of them leading the service had never spoken before a group, let alone spoken in church.

During the first of the year in 1971, the POWs had a "church riot" which will be described in the next chapter. As a result of this "riot," the rule was made by the North Vietnamese that there would be no more group meetings. However, the men did continue to conduct services in their rooms even though they had to sit down to lead the group to avoid detection.

Just a few months later, permission was given to have a choir of eight to ten voices in the services. The choir was also permitted to rehearse once or twice a week. Since some of the men did not know all the words to some of the songs, songbooks were made from toilet paper. Two guitars were also added to the choir just before the men were released.

In 1972 some of the POWs were finally given a Bible. Prior to this time, the men had to rely upon the parts which they could recall from memory. After the communication system was organized, each person added to the pool of knowledge which resulted in large blocks of scripture being written. The Bible was first given to the POWs in October 1970 to prepare for the Christmas service. It was meted out sparingly from time to time after that. The men took advantage of every opportunity to copy as much from the Bible as possible on toilet paper even though they knew that even these bits of paper would be taken from them during the next inspection. Needless to say, it was really a thrill to get the Bible in 1972.

The format or order of worship varied somewhat in each cell and during various periods of time. During the early periods of isolation, on a given signal, the men would say a minimum of the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. In later years, in the larger cells, a much longer service was conducted. It usually consisted of singing hymns, someone leading in prayer, a period of silent prayer, and a talk by one of the POWs. Most of the talks were related to personal experience concerning their situation as a POW or a personal experience in some other area. At the end of the talk, a patriotic song was usually sung, and each one gave the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

At the "Hanoi Hilton" and the Plantation Camp, just before the POWs were released, the entire compound was able to get together for a worship service. At this time, they were able to have scripture read from the Bible, group singing, a choir, and someone to bring the message. As someone expressed it, "We had the full works!"

It is quite apparent to these writers that group worship had a positive effect in bolstering the morale of the POWs and in uniting them in faith. The results can best be expressed by several POWs themselves:

It gave us all strength to endure the daily trials each of us faced. . .

When I joined the group which had church services, I faithfully attended every Sunday. I felt that they were of tremendous value. There is no doubt in my mind that religion is obviously helpful to someone in that situation. It was for me and for many others. . . .

Our church services were a big morale factor especially in the bigger groups when the guys would get up and say a few words. I think it helped us all tremendously, and I personally drew a great deal of strength and relied heavily on my religion during these years. . . .

I've always been a devout Christian. I've always felt strongly about Christianity and my belief in God. I don't think I ever showed it like I did up there and as a result, I feel much closer to religion now and am willing to show it a little more. So, in that respect, it drew me closer and, I might add, it gave me considerable strength, strength that I had to have and perhaps would have never found if I did not believe in God and Christianity. . . .

During the sharing of beliefs in group worship, the POWs naturally became aware of various religious backgrounds.

#### 4. ECUMENISM AND THE POWS

For the newly captured POWs who saw their world reduced in size and spirit to a single cell and rare glimpses of fellow prisoners, little concern or support could be expected to be shown by them to the newly revived attempt among Christian religious bodies to restore the unity willed by its Founder. The division among churches openly contradicted the will of Christ and provided a stumbling block to the world's acceptance of His teachings. Spurred by the hopes, prayers, and dialogues among Christians, religious leaders sought to encourage the truth among the followers of Christ that there was the need and the ability for mutual and common worship of God. What millions prayed for, what thousands studied, less than a thousand men put into practice without a church in the harsh solitude of North Vietnam: Christians of different faith groups worshipping as one.

This chapter will discuss this spirit of ecumenism, the style or ritual of worship, and the external difficulties posed by the North Vietnamese and the internal challenges faced by the American POWs. Warned by the prisoners themselves, care should be taken not to look upon them as men heroic by nature nor the world in which they lived as having the prison camp in the palm of their hands. They must be seen as normal airmen who strove to act in a professional manner in a prison world that was unpleasant, routine, lonely, and at times, petty. This scene alone justifies the honor paid to the actors, the POWs revered as great Americans, defenders of our American heritage.

From the early shoot-down period to late 1970, the form of worship was private in nature because of solitary confinement, yet public by means of a tapping code calling the men to worship. Each Sunday, at a definite period of time,

. . . before we were in rooms large enough to have what we would consider a group, we had Sunday church calls. Usually initiated by the senior man in the building, we would just tap on the wall a certain prearranged signal: church call or cc. We would pause in whatever we were doing — generally would say the Lord's Prayer and our own personal prayer.

The men shot down from 1964 to 1969 approached their religious life under the only conditions permitted: alone, tortured, and seeking the strength to survive. This drive to survive encouraged the POWs to support one another by the communication of their names, the names of other prisoners, and often times, the transmission of scriptural verses. The singing to one's self of hymns familiar from childhood, the daily recitation of the Rosary, the attempt to recall scriptural verses and to pass them on by the tapping code to the next cell, all these gave support to the inner life of the prisoners. The separate but common worship service bolstered the spirit of unity among the men

in the face of North Vietnamese attempts to divide them. The words of this POW tell us clearly, "Over a period of time, I think that religious activity was one particular areas that helped us through more than anything else because it was both personal to the individual and yet important to everyone as a group."

The threat of a repeated Son Tay raid (U.S. attempt to release prisoners at Son Tay) forced the enemy in late 1970 to bring in the American prisoners from outlying camps to prisons around Hanoi. Now a regular Sunday Service was held in rooms which held many more men. One of the prisoners was chosen as a chaplain whose role it was to organize or assign the different parts of the worship service. From the beginning of this period of captivity, the service was ecumenical: "We found ourselves with almost every imaginable religion that we have in the United States, and yet we were all performing the same service."

The assigned chaplain would accept the task for about six months at a time. His role was basically as a director. The order of worship was that of a Protestant worship service: hymns, prayers, scripture, a brief sermon, and a closing hymn. Prior to each service, there would be the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag or a patriotic hymn. The music at these services was sung by the whole room or by the choir from the POWs which would rehearse during the week. The directors and the choir came from different faith groups as witnessed in this statement:

He (the director or chaplain) would ask one man to say an opening prayer and scripture, memorized or rarely from a Bible. I think we had the Bible three times in the seven years I was there . . . and a final prayer. In between we sang some hymns. We had a choir—we had the atheist, the Jew, Baptists, Catholics, and Protestants, Christain Scientists, the Mormon—we had the whole nine yards.

The message given at these services by a POW would range in time from five to thirty minutes with an overall average of about fifteen minutes. The content of the sermon could be the person's private thoughts on his faith or an attempt to inform the congregation about a different religion. With a few exceptions, the intent of these sermons was "to enlighten, it was not a missionary type work in any way." Although at times the Catholics attempted to work out the structure of the Mass and "have" a Catholic Mass among themselves, they attended all the services and acted as leaders and speakers in their turn. The purpose of the Sunday service was to unite in worship as a community with only a rare suggestion of an attempt to proselytize.

To properly evaluate the ecumenical aspect of worship in the POW camp, note must be made that the enemy never encouraged or supported religious services during these years of captivity. In the early years of imprisonment, the North Vietnamese brought some of the Catholic prisoners to midnight Christmas Mass at the cathedral in Hanoi and arranged for a Vietnamese minister to hold a Protestant service in the camp. But, on each occasion, the religious service was used as a propaganda ploy to strengthen their claim that the rights of the prisoners were being observed. After the 1970 filming of the Christmas service, the POWs would no longer attend these services.

Harassment continued in other ways with the Communists limiting the number who could sing in the choir, withholding Bibles needed for the service, or limiting the time one could keep the Bible when it was given to the POWs. It was the enemy order forbidding any type of sermon or homily that produced "the only organized vocal response in the history of the camp when they tried to break up church services in room number seven." The North Vietnamese could not accept the idea that a speaker could talk to a group without some political indoctrination being involved. Although the American prisoners invited them to take part in the services and to listen to the message given by the speaker, they refused to participate and ordered no one to speak at the service. On 7 February 1971, as the senior ranking officer began the worship service, prison guards entered room seven and forcibly took the leader. The next senior officer stepped in to continue the service, and he was also taken out and placed in solitary. This was repeated for the third time before the service was an issue about which a position should be taken. The men began to sing patriotic songs as loudly as they could in violation of the rule of silence. The North Vietnamese captors reacted in panic to the situation by bringing in bayonet-fixed, riot-control, trained riflemen to quiet the POWs. The issue was decided in favor of continuing the worship services with a sermon, but at the price of men placed in solitary confinement for weeks. The cost of the ecumenical service must be considered in judging the value placed on unified public acts of devotion.

The value of this witness by the POWs increases when the normal routine life of the prisoners is studied more closely. Excluding the periods of torture, the daily living pattern was routine and ordinary, reflecting the style of life exercised by the majority of people. This would include the religious character of the community. The prison camp included in its religious spectrum the presence of agnostics, atheists, strong believers, indifferent believers, and evangelizing believers with only one exception from a civilian viewpoint: no attempt was made to discourage or stop the worship exercised by the majority. From the small minority who gained strength from their own person or felt

no need to worship, no pressure was placed on stopping or curtailing the religious program. All men in the prison camp reacted in some way to the situation of public worship, but each reaction supported, by cooperation or silence, the truth that the common unified worship of the majority needed to be respected. If men wished not to worship, or to be indifferent on this point, there was enough support for them to do so. That the large majority of POWs chose to worship in an ecumenical setting, speaks eloquently of the intent and desires of these men. For,

... apart from joking by atheists, agnostics, or perhaps anger because of constant choir practice, there never was any attempt to stop or cut short the religious value of religion in the POW situation. It didn't manifest itself in anybody expressing that they didn't want it to take place.

From these debriefings, there is a strong testimony about the ability of men without ordained clergy to join in a unified common ritual of worship. These POWs and their spirit of wanting to worship as a group are symbols of encouragement for all the world who seek to fulfill Christ's prayer that all should be one. Their spirit was not generated by a miracle nor crisis, nor the encouragement of their captors. They were ordinary men who lived their life of worship in an extraordinary manner. No better models can be offered to the religious leaders seeking a union among different Christian churches than the POWs who suffered for years in North Vietnam.

## 5. SENSE OF FORGIVENESS

When shot down and captured by the enemy, the POW did not cease to act as a professional airman. Only the field of his duty had changed, from following orders, checklists, and flying requirements to the duty of keeping the Code of Conduct. Although the Code of Conduct and especially the fifth article is brief, the Code and this particular article produced much torture, long periods of isolation, and even death for men who believed in the obligation to fulfill their duties in a wartime environment:

When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am proud to give only name, rank service number, and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause.

Hurled against this principle was the judgment of the North Vietnamese that the POWs were not participants in a war but "murderers" or "war criminals," and thus were not to be treated under the Geneva Convention of 1949 concerning the treatment of prisoners of war. In contravening the Articles of the Convention, they sought information and conformity through the use of torture, solitary confinement, and psychological pressure. For the POWs shot down between 1964 and 1969, the tortures would vary but normally included: (1) arms and legs bound together and then lifted by ropes until the arms of the POWs were almost pulled from their sockets, (2) weeks, months, and even years in solitary confinement, (3) lack of food, bathroom facilities, and medical care, and (4) the good-bad guy system of questioning, lasting for long periods of time. Isolated and in pain, the ability to answer only the basic four questions and to evade any further questioning was severely limited or exhausted. When men failed to live up to this duty, there was a sense of guilt, of having made a mistake.

One of the hardest things to live with up there was your conscience. Every man felt that he had stabbed his country in the back by giving any information at all. Some men I have lived with had guilt complexes for years.

... men who made mistakes — and most did at one time or another due to pressures. ...

This chapter will discuss the sense of guilt inflicted by the POWs on themselves and the manner in which this guilt or punishment was relieved by the prison community. The external punishments of torture, isolation, and deprivation of basic human rights produced the inability to avoid violations of Article V, and in turn, this produced a self-inflicted, internal punishment of guilt feelings.

**My other problem (the first was pain) psychologically was that I had let the rest of the men down, I let myself down, my country down, and I wanted to fight again. Well, now I was confused as to exactly how I would go about it.**

The resolution of the way to "go about it" was divided into two time periods, from the early shoot-down of 1964 to late 1970, and the return in early 1971 to a more formal military structure with the attendant regulations and chain of command. In both periods, the result was to free the sense of guilt imbedded in the POW and to strengthen him in his duty as an airman in conditions of captivity.

For the men in the early shoot-down period, spending long hours of time in solitary confinement, the weight of guilt could not be lifted. Only when the enemy permitted small clusters of men to live together could one find the remedy for this sense of guilt: communication with another American, a need to tell another POW of the torture, the inability to observe Article V. A brother, listening to and accepting the trials and limitations of another POW, gave a sense of relief and a restoration of a military outlook toward this duty as a professional airman in a prison milieu. This recognition that he alone had not failed, that many others had transgressed, aided the American prisoner to face future threats of torture; but, it was the initial acceptance by a brother that gave a measure of peace to their lives.

I found that if the V (North Vietnamese) worked at it hard enough, they invariably got what they wanted. I can't tell you just what a boost in morale . . . to talk to another American. That gave me a great boost because, as I said earlier, I was very dejected that I had been unable to do as well as I felt I should.

The spirit of forgiveness and acceptance continued when all the prisoners were brought from scattered camps to one camp in Hanoi in late 1970. At this time, the Fourth Allied POW Wing was formed and seven basic Wing Policies were given to the men. Two sections of the Policies are relevant to this paper:

**Wing Policy #1, Paragraph B**

It is neither American nor Christian to nag a repentant sinner to the grave.

**Wing Policy #3, Paragraph C,2**

A PW who writes a statement (for the enemy) for either reason above (urgent reasons of health or to minimize the net gain to the enemy) must justify his actions ASAP to WPO in a Conduct Exception Report (CER).

The intent of these Wing Policies was to reestablish a bond which was actually broken or felt to be broken between the POW who transgressed the Code and his brothers in captivity. The Policies said in essence that a POW was not to talk about his fellowmen, his behavior, nor to pass judgment on any of his actions.

If you don't agree with some of the behavior of a PW, stall, file it.

. . . it is so important to maintain some sort of rapport with your fellowman if you're going to get anything done.

One of the most valuable lessons we learned is embodied in the statement, "It is neither Christian nor military to nag a repentant sinner to his grave." This gave the men who made mistakes . . . a bridge back to us. Most of these men who came across the bridge to us became excellent POWs.

No definitive statement can be made from the study of these statements to support the thesis that the need to talk about a transgression was, in fact, a spiritual search for forgiveness. The need for acceptance, the human need to tell about problems, a recognition of weakness, and the resultant search for support, these and other human factors can be offered as causes for these acts. But, the study of these debriefings does offer many instances where repentance and conversion in a religious sense did take place. The following statement exemplifies the sense of

forgiveness sought and given in the POW environment:

If you wrote a statement for the books, if you violated any of the Policies, you had to write Colonel Flynn a CIER, and state what you did, why you violated the Policies, and what the reasons were behind it. These were privileged communications, of course. In a lot of cases, the guys that wrote them chose to have them read as a standard communication, so the guys would possibly understand the situation a little better. Or maybe they felt like they were going to confession, so to speak.

From a spiritual viewpoint, the men captured in Vietnam displayed in practice the command of the Lord: "Forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us." (Matthew 6:12)

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The research team attempted to study the lives of the POWs only from the point of view of the role which religion played in their captivity. The experience and knowledge of the chaplains who studied the POW debriefings, served as constant reminders that the faith life of the POWs could not be evaluated alone by the presence or absence of certain religious customs or practices. An additional reminder to the reader from the research team is that the study of the POWs' faith life is not complete since only the debriefings of Air Force personnel were studied, and only 118 out of the 323 transcripts available were reviewed. With these two restraints recognized, the authors still were able to reach certain definite conclusions from the study which could be of great interest to the Air Force chaplaincy.

The major conclusion is that the spiritual life of these POWs did much to develop an inner strength or reservoir to face the threats of loneliness, fear, punishment, and disappointment. From the early period of isolation and torture to the later time when group unity was being developed, the role of private and public worship sustained the will of the POWs to survive and to resist the enemy. The strengthened faith from this worship encouraged them to develop a positive approach to living each day of prison life. Note must be made of the drive to communicate and to share fellowship, for these were desperate needs of the POWs in North Vietnam. In the judgment of the research team, the religious faith of many POWs was a strong factor in living each day. The extent to which the other needs of communication and social contact encouraged this display of religion cannot be drawn from the study of the debriefings and can be determined only by personal consultation with the POWs themselves.

A second inference describes the importance of the early religious training of the POWs. The POW camp life portrays the sudden change from normalcy before shootdown to an unbelievable world of pain, isolation, hunger, and guilt. To bolster his spirit in this change of life style, the POW had to look within himself. To develop the virtues of patience, courage, perseverance, and hope that were so important in prison life, the POW fell back to the religious training and find strength, oftentimes used this training and strength to teach and bolster their fellow POWs. Rarely did this prison life bring about a brand new strength or style in living. More commonly, it was the habits and virtues of religion and church, resurrected so often by the pain, torture, loneliness, and despair of prison life, which gave strength to the POW in his ordeal.

A third conclusion centers around the role of the chaplain in his ministry to flying personnel. The debriefings studied contained no mention of any spiritual direction or guidance given by chaplains to aircrew members. Although this establishes no ground for any inference that chaplains have been ineffective in their ministry to aircrew members (it must be remembered that the debriefings did not address this subject), it does serve as a point of challenge to chaplains to develop a program and an active ministry for the flying personnel they serve.



149



150

# W

WADDELL, Dewey Wayne, Maj., 54772  
 WAGGONER, Robert Frost, Maj., 345117  
 WALKER, Herbert C., Jr., Capt., 3145724  
 WALKER, Michael Stephen, Capt., 43543117  
 WALKER, Samuel Franklin, Jr., TSgt., 13706143  
 WALLACE, Robert M., Jr., Maj., 345117  
 WALLACE, Michael John, Sgt., 1645748  
 WALLER, Thurman Morris, TSgt., 12613586  
 WALLING, Charles Milton, Capt., 83147  
 WALSH, Richard Ambrose, Jr., LTJG, 22372  
 WALTERS, Jack, Jr., LTJG, 64454  
 WALTZMAN, Donald Glenn, Maj., 53495  
 WARD, Neal Clinton, 1st Lt., 3214256  
 WARNER, James Howie, 1st Lt., 002814  
 WARREN, Arthur Leonard, Capt., 3161127  
 WARREN, Ervin, 1st Lt., 13742  
 WARREN, Gray Dawson, Capt., 42504529  
 WATERS, Samuel Edwin, Jr., Capt., 53427  
 WATSON, Jimmy Lee, CWO, W3155156  
 WEBB, Ronald John, Capt., 72828  
 WEISSMUELLER, Courtney Edward, Maj., 31545  
 WELCH, Robert John, Maj., 2222491  
 WELLS, Norman Laurits, Maj., 3037386  
 WELSH, Larry Dan, Sgt., 5447113  
 WELSHMAN, John Thomas, Capt., 3148947  
 WENAS, Gordon James, Maj., 3022714  
 WENDELL, John Henry, Jr., Maj., 41974  
 WERDENHOFF, Michael Ray, Ssgt., 15634864  
 WESKAMP, Robert Larry, Capt., 3152424  
 WESTBROOK, Donald Elliot, Maj., 22378  
 WHEAT, David Robert, LTJG, 677374  
 WHITE, Charles Edward, Ssgt., 1547446  
 WHITE, Robert T., 1st Lt., 27534874  
 WHITEFORD, Lawrence W., Jr., LTJG, 72104739  
 WHITMIRE, Warren Taylor, Jr., CWO, W3159734  
 WIDDIS, James Wesley, Jr., Capt., 83185  
 WIDEMAN, Robert Earl, LTJG, 659953  
 WIDNER, Danny Lee, Ssgt., 5455132  
 WIGGINS, Wallace Luitreil, Capt., 3154307  
 WILBER, Walter Eugene, CWO, 539459  
 WILBURN, Woodrow Hoover, LTJG, 2077107  
 WILKE, Robert Frederick, Col., 20258  
 WILKINS, George Henry, LCDR, 604405  
 WILLETT, Robert Vincent, Jr., 1st Lt., 377849  
 WILLIAMS, David Richard, LTJG, 35523  
 WILLIAMS, Eddie Lee, Maj., 1444478  
 WILLIAMS, Howard Keith, Maj., 2731770  
 WILLIAMS, James Ellis, TSgt., 1944753  
 WILLIAMS, James Randall, SSGT, 14793709  
 WILLIAMS, Lewis Irving, Jr., LTJG, 656443  
 WILLIAMS, Richard Frank, FSGT, 54216672  
 WILLIAMS, Roy Charles, Ssgt., 54511350  
 WILLIAMSON, Don Leo, Maj., 45728  
 WILLIAMSON, James D., Ssgt., 2901288  
 WILLING, Edward Arlie, LCDR, 2347019  
 WILSON, Glenn Hubert, Maj., 34567  
 WILSON, Gordon Scott, Capt., 64145  
 WILSON, Wayne Vester, LCDR, 2160506  
 WINN, David William, Col., 36646  
 WINSTON, Charles C., Jr., Capt., 77244  
 WINTERS, David Marshall, Ssgt., 15446762  
 WISTRAND, Robert Carl, LTJG, 202460  
 WOGAN, William Michael, Sgt., 5275519  
 WOLFEKIE, Wayne Benjamin, Maj., 45652  
 WOLOSZYK, Donald Joseph, LTJG, 672522  
 WOOD, Don Charles, Maj., 54163  
 WOOD, Patrick Hardy, Maj., 60158  
 WOODS, Brian Dunstan, LCDR, 618063  
 WOODS, Robert Deane, LTJG, 637730  
 WORCESTER, John Bowers, LTJG, 659593  
 WORRELL, Paul Laurence, LTJG, 674989  
 WORTHAM, Murray Lamar, Capt., 3174501  
 WOZNIAK, Frederick Joseph, Capt., 76158  
 WRIGHT, Arthur, Ssgt., 5547455  
 WRIGHT, Gary Gene, LTJG, 52724  
 WRIGHT, James Joseph, LTJG, 653959  
 WRIGHT, Jerry Albert, Jr., Maj., 3040629  
 WRIGHT, Thomas Thawson, Maj., 2034978  
 WRITER, Lawrence Daniel, Capt., 3156989  
 WRONSKI, Walter Francis, CWO, W1154733  
 WRYE, Biggie Charlton, Maj., 2223977  
 WYNN, Patrick Edward, Capt., 74364

# Y

YARRROUGH, William P., Jr., LCDR, 60744  
 YOUNG, Charles Luther, Ssgt., 51414747  
 YOUNG, James Paul, Maj., 4411  
 YOUNG, John Arthur, Sgt., 16767512

# Z

ZAWTOSKI, Joseph S., Jr., Col., 2100889  
 ZIEGLER, Roy Edgar, Jr., CWO, W3157248  
 ZOOK, David Horst, Jr., Maj., 47101  
 ZOOK, Harold Jacob, Capt., 3172501  
 ZUMOSKI, Charles Peter, LTJG, 691540  
 ZUKOWSKI, Robert John, Capt., 3190334

## THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR

Tuesday, December 9, 1969

### Obsession and apathy

To the Editor: Much has been said and written about the ghastly My Lai tragedy. More will be forthcoming. If one-quarter the attention were devoted by our moral and political leaders and the mass media to the comparable tragedy of the treatment of American prisoners of war in North Vietnam, we might persuade the North Vietnamese, through the weight of public opinion, to comply with the Geneva Convention concerning humane treatment of war prisoners.

For those of us personally affected by the North Vietnamese cruelties and atrocities to our men in captivity, it's difficult to comprehend America's obsession with self-condemnation as contrasted with its relative apathy concerning the inhuman treatment of our men by others.

St. Paul. —Mrs. Patrick Murray.

## STATEMENT OF MISSION OF THE TASK FORCE ON POW/MIA's, 96th CONGRESS

The Task Force on POW/MIAs was established by Chairman Lester L. Wolff of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, to provide a bipartisan group to assist in fulfilling the task of the Subcommittee of oversight of the POW/MIA issue.

### Purposes

(1) To require the Administration to seek from the government of Vietnam a full accounting for Americans last known to be prisoners or missing in Indochina.

(2) To require the Administration to make full disclosure of all appropriate information in the possession of the U.S. government with regard to the fate of American prisoners and missing.

(3) To assist in more effective communication between the Administration, various departments of the Executive Branch, and the Congress, and between the U.S. Government and the families of American prisoners and missing.

### Methods

(1) Under the aegis of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, conducting hearings with witnesses from the Depts. of Defense and State to clarify and if possible to improve administrative procedures affecting POW/MIA concerns.

(2) Recommend changes in policies and procedures on the basis of testimony by both interested persons and government witnesses.

(3) Seek available information from all reliable sources which may cast light on the fate of deceased POW/MIAs, or the whereabouts of any survivors.

(4) Obtain best possible evaluation and dissemination as appropriate of such information.

(5) Recommend legislation as appropriate.

To achieve these purposes, and to use these methods, the Task Force welcomes comments and suggestions from any person who has an interest in this subject.

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Extracted from Hearings and Markup before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-sixth Congress, First Session on H. Con. 10, April 10, May 7, and June 5, 1979. POW/MIA's: U.S. Policies and Procedures. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979, p. 65.

[COMMITTEE PRINT]

THE GENEVA CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE  
TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR

With Reservations, if Any, by Governments  
Participating in Hostilities in Vietnam,  
Cambodia and Laos

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PREPARED FOR THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY  
AND SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



MAY 1970

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Appendix 6

## FOREWORD

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MAY 22, 1970.

The history of modern warfare reveals two seemingly paradoxical trends. On the one hand, weapons have become vastly more sophisticated, fearsome, and destructive. On the other, there have been concerted efforts to make warfare as humane as possible for those taking no part in the conflict, including members of the Armed Forces who are sick, wounded, captured or who surrender.

A series of agreements, stretching back for more than 100 years, have sought to protect prisoners of war. From an initial prohibition against the slaughter of captives, mankind has moved to describe the rights and privileges of those held captive and to set down the obligations of their captors.

The culmination of this trend was the Geneva Conventions of 1949. On August 12, 1949, 61 nations, including the United States, completed work under the sponsorship of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and signed four treaties known collectively as the Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims.

Of the four treaties perhaps the most important, and certainly the most relevant at this time, is the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Following its approval by the Senate, the convention came into force for the United States on February 2, 1956, and from that time has been binding on our own Nation and its Armed Forces. Today 123 nations accept the Geneva Convention, including all the nations participating in hostilities in Southeast Asia, on both sides.

Since every country participating in the Vietnam war has signed or acceded to the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War, the treatment of prisoners ostensibly should be no issue. Unfortunately, it is an issue, and one of the most pressing of the conflict, because the North Vietnamese have refused to abide by the provisions of the convention and have been guilty of inhumane treatment of the American servicemen they hold captive.

The full nature of Hanoi's unjustifiable and illegal acts against American prisoners should be understood by all Americans. In an effort to focus attention on the problem the Subcommittee on National Security Policy and Scientific Developments has, on two occasions, held hearings on the plight of our American POW's. Last November the subcommittee reported a resolution calling on Hanoi to live up to its responsibilities under the Geneva Convention. That resolution was passed unanimously by both Houses of Congress.

Another consequence of our deliberations has been recognition of the need to inform all Americans about the provisions for humane treatment which are provided in the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. It was discovered, however, that the

(III)

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text of the convention has not been readily available for public distribution to interested individuals and organizations.

In order to remedy that situation and to give the widest possible dissemination to the convention, I asked officials of the Department of State to prepare a text together with reservations or interpretations held by all of the governments participating in the Vietnam conflict. They responded favorably and this document is the result.

It is my hope that every American will become familiar with the provisions of the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War, and will match the wretched performance of North Vietnam against the obligations which it accepted in acceding to the treaty. The result must certainly be to banish any apathy about the plight of U.S. prisoners and to engender a thunderous protest against Hanoi's inhumane conduct.

In this way, we all can help turn the spotlight of adverse world opinion on the North Vietnamese and thus influence them to live up to their international obligations by providing humane treatment and ultimate release for all American prisoners, as required by the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to Treatment of Prisoners of War.

CLEMENT J. ZABLOCKI.

*Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security Policy  
and Scientific Developments.*

**RESERVATIONS, IF ANY, MADE TO THE 1949 GENEVA  
CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE TREATMENT OF  
PRISONERS OF WAR BY GOVERNMENTS PARTICIPAT-  
ING IN HOSTILITIES IN VIETNAM, CAMBODIA AND  
LAOS**

**AUSTRALIA**

No reservation.

**CAMBODIA**

No reservation.

**CHINA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF**

"Regarding Article 10 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of August 12, 1949, the People's Republic of China will not recognize as valid a request by the Detaining Power of prisoners of war to a neutral State or to a humanitarian organization, to undertake the functions which should be performed by a Protecting Power, unless the consent has been obtained of the government of the State of which the prisoners of war are nationals. Regarding Article 12, the People's Republic of China holds that the original Detaining Power which has transferred prisoners of war to another Contracting Power, is not for that reason freed from its responsibility for the application of the Convention while such prisoners of war are in the custody of the Power accepting them. Regarding Article 85, the People's Republic of China is not bound by Article 85 in respect of the treatment of prisoners of war convicted under the laws of the Detaining Power in accordance with the principles laid down in the trials of war crimes or crimes against humanity by the Nuremberg and the Tokyo International Military Tribunals."

**KOREA, REPUBLIC OF**

Now, Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Korea do hereby accede to the same and undertake faithfully to perform and carry out all the stipulations therein contained, subject to the following reservations:

*ad article 118* of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War:

"The Republic of Korea interprets the provisions of Article 118, paragraph 1, as not binding upon a Power detaining prisoners of war to forcibly repatriate its prisoners against their openly and freely expressed will."

And, Furthermore, the Government of the Republic of Korea do hereby declare that it is the only lawful Government in Korea, as set forth in General Assembly Resolution No. 195(III) of 12 December 1948, and its accession to the present Convention shall

(79)

not be construed as recognizing any Contracting Party thereto which the Republic of Korea has not hitherto recognized.

**LAOS**

No reservation.

**NEW ZEALAND**

No reservation.

**THE PHILIPPINES**

No reservation.

**THAILAND**

No reservation.

**UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS**

"On signing the Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics makes the following reservations:

*Article 10:* "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will not recognize the validity of requests by the Detaining Powers to a neutral State or to a humanitarian organization, to undertake the functions performed by a Protecting Power, unless the consent of the Government of the country of which the prisoners of war are nationals has been obtained."

*Article 12:* "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics does not consider as valid the freeing of a Detaining Power, which has transferred prisoners of war to another Power, from responsibility for the application of the Convention to such prisoners of war while the latter are in the custody of the Power accepting them."

*Article 85:* "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics does not consider itself bound by the obligation, which follows from Article 85, to extend the application of the Convention to prisoners of war who have been convicted under the law of the Detaining Power, in accordance with the principles of the Nuremberg trial, for war crimes and crimes against humanity, it being understood that persons convicted of such crimes must be subject to the conditions obtaining in the country in question for those who undergo their punishment."

Reservations made at time of signature confirmed with ratification.

**UNITED STATES**

No reservation, but with the following statement: "Rejecting the reservations which States have made with respect to the Geneva convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, the United States accepts treaty relations with all parties to that convention, except as to the changes proposed by such reservations."

**VIETNAM, REPUBLIC OF (SOUTH)**

No reservation.

**VIETNAM, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF (NORTH)**

With respect to the Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war dated August 12, 1949:

In Article 10: The request of the Detaining Power, either to a neutral State or to an organization which offers all guarantees of



impartiality and efficacy, to assume the duties incumbent on the Protecting Powers by virtue of the Convention shall be recognized as legal by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam only in the event that the State on which the prisoners of war depend has approved such request.

In Article 12: The Democratic Republic of Vietnam declares that the transfer of prisoners of war by the Detaining Power to a Power which is a party to the Convention does not free the Detaining Power from its responsibility for the application of the Convention to prisoners.

In Article 85: The Democratic Republic of Vietnam declares that prisoners of war prosecuted and convicted for war crimes or for crimes against humanity, in accordance with the principles laid down by the Nuremberg Court of Justice shall not benefit from the present Convention, as specified in Article 85.

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NOTES ON CHAPTER I (Pages 1-7)

1. The author was a Wild Weasel Electronic Warfare Officer in an F-105F shot down by a MIG air-to-air missile on his 93rd combat mission over North Vietnam on 30 April 1967. He and his pilot, then Major Leo K. Thorsness, were released on 4 March 1973.

2. Major General John K. Singlaub, USA (Ret.), "Let's Find Our Missing Men!" The American Legion, 30 August 1980, p. 11.

3. "Operation Homecoming," DOD Commanders Digest, 1 March 1973, pp. 5,6.

4. "Captured or Lost in 4 Wars." Air Force Policy Letter for Commanders; #9-1979, Supplement p. 29.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III (Pages 42-75)

1. McLeod, Hugh S. III, Major, USA, and Mears, Noel N., Jr., Major, USAF. ACSC Student Research Report. Analysis of Academic and Military Background of Released U.S. Prisoners of War and Those Unaccounted For. Spring 1981. #1685-81.
2. Dieter Dengler, Escape From Laos (San Rafeal, Cal.: Presidio Press, 1979), p. 148
3. Heather David, Operation Rescue (New York: Pinnacle Books, 1971), p. 61.
4. Hearings and Markup Before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. House of Representatives Ninety-Sixth Congress, April 10, May 7 and June 5, 1979. POW/MIAs: U.S. Policies and Procedures. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 8.
5. Information supplied by AFMPC/PA, 4 December 1981.
6. Hearings and Markup Before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. House of Representatives Ninety-Sixth Congress, April 10, May 7 and June 5, 1979. POW/MIAs: U.S. Policies and Procedures. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 47.
7. Ibid., p. 66
8. Publicized on TV 8 December 1980 Today Show. DIA officials interviewed Mr Gudding at length in private, voluntary meeting.
9. Publicized on TV ABC Nightline, 12 February 1981.
10. Chicago Sun Times. 9 February 1981, p. 16.
11. Air Force, Military Airlift Command. Combat Aircrew Recovery Analysis. (Scott AFB, Ill.: 1968), p. 53.
12. Air Force, Pacific Air Forces. Search and Rescue Operations in SEA 1961-1966, (Hickam AFB, Hawaii, 1972), p. 88.
13. Ray Bonds, editor. The Vietnam War (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1979), p. 13.

14. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. House of Representatives Ninety-Sixth Congress, October 17, 1979. POW/MIA's Policies and Procedures. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980), p. 5.

15. Hearings and Markup Before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. House of Representatives Ninety-Sixth Congress, April 10, May 7 and June 5, 1979. POW/MIAs: U.S. Policies and Procedures. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 8.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV (Pages 76-118)

1. Carl Von Clausewitz. On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 608.
2. Ibid, p. 595.
3. James N. Rowe. Five Years to Freedom (Boston: Little, Brown Pub., 1971), p. 114.
4. Ray Bonds, ed. The Vietnam War (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1979), p. 47.
5. Ibid., p. 55.
6. Ibid., p. 10.
7. Michael A. Armacost. "Accounting for MIA's: A Status Report," East Asia, State Department Bulletin, October 1980, p. 30.
8. John Barron and Anthony Paul. Peace With Horror. The Untold Story of Communist Genocide in Cambodia (London: Hodder and Stoughton, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1979), pp. 14, 15.

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