

# POWs: SOME STILL SURVIVE HELP BRING THEM HOME

There were 480 POW/MIAs lost in Laos. Colonel David Hrdlicka is one of over 60 known American Servicemen captured in Laos during the Vietnam War that were never negotiated for. American Prisoners of War (POWs) have since been reported alive in Laos for over three decades. Through thirty years of covert actions, political miscalculations, self-serving careerism, and cover-ups the US Government has been ineffective in bringing about their release. At the end of the Vietnam War the US government informed America that the Vietnamese would be responsible for all POW/MIAs including those in Laos and Cambodia. *That was not true.*

## HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

Declassified transcripts of the Paris Peace Accords "Secret Negotiation" reveal that the Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho would not take responsibility for POWs other than those held by the Vietnamese. He insisted that Laos was a sovereign country and that the US must negotiate with the Pathet Lao [Laotian communists] for the POWs they held. Henry Kissinger told Le Duc

Tho that if the Vietnamese would neither object – nor accept responsibility for all POWs publicly when he [Kissinger] said they would be responsible for all POWs in Indochina – that the US would not hold the Vietnamese to it. Laos was not part of the Paris Peace Accords; we never negotiated for POWs in Laos.

In January 1973 the US agreed to pay the Vietnamese \$4.25 billion in reconstruction aid for the list of POWs in Laos. The Department of Defense (DOD) negotiators received the names of only 10 POWs captured in Laos by the Vietnamese. When the 591 POWs released from Vietnam returned and informed the Congress how they were tortured and some killed the Congress refused to authorize payment of reconstruction Aid. This con-founded the problem of unreturned POWs from Laos.

In an interview with former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Tom Moorer (1995) he stated there was a rescue planned for 60 POWs known captive in Laos at the end of 1972. The rescue was canceled because of the Paris Peace Agreement. When questioned why the POWs were not rescued after the Vietnamese gave back their last returned POWs on March 28th 1973, Admiral Moorer maintains that there was no current intelligence at that time on which to launch rescues. They could not be sure the POWs were still at the last known locations and would not risk a rescue. Following are some of these POW/MIAs that have been sighted in recent years, there are others.

## SOME STILL SURVIVE

POW/MIA Colonel David Louis Hrdlicka (USAF), an F-105 pilot, was born in Minnesota and shot down in Laos. He was photographed in captivity and reported alive in the Russian Newspaper Pravda during the war. There have been numerous reported live sightings of David Hrdlicka throughout the 1980s and 1990s. His wife Carol who now lives in Kansas still seeks his return through the Defense POW Office (DPMO) and would like the Congress to use their legislative powers to require government to get him out before he dies in Laos and the government settles for his bones. She states they have done nothing constructive to locate him.

Colonel Frank Gould a navigator aboard a B-52 from the Bronx NY parachuted over Laos with the rest of his crew after



Col. David Louis Hrdlicka (USAF)



Col. Frank Gould



CWO William Milliner



Army Special Forces  
Sgt. Charles Huston

being hit during a bombing run over Hanoi. He was the last man on the ground, the helicopter rescued the other crewmen. Gunfire at the helicopter and nightfall prevented his recovery. The following day rescuers could not locate him. Reports that Frank was alive and wanted to come home have come out throughout the 1990's. His wife Marie resides in California and would like to know why Congress is not exercising their oversight ability to assure the Department of Defense gets him home.

CWO William Milliner, from Kentucky, was flying a Cobra helicopter Gun Ship over Laos in March 1971 when he was last heard from. A businessman in Thailand with contacts inside Laos gave information to US officials (1989) that "Milliner" is alive and can be brought to the Thai border. When the Laotians requested a reward they were turned away. His father Joe a returned WWII POW and his mother Mary travel to Washington annually trying to get the government to bring him home. Their plea's bring no response.

Army Special Forces Sgt. Charles Huston from Ohio was on a reconnaissance mission in Laos in 1968. He was left on the ground along with Sgt. George Brown, and Sgt. Alan Boyer when their extraction helicopter came under fire and had to leave. In 1989, an oriental prisoner captured by the Vietnamese in Laos escaped and made his way to Thailand where he was interviewed by US officials. He stated that he spoke with UY-STON [Charles Huston] who told him if he ever got free to let the world know "that my name is Huston, and there are other American's held with me." His brothers John and Robert strive to have the DOD get him out.

The Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO) has historically excluded the living unreturned POW/MIAs from constructive consideration. They either refuse to negotiate for those known to have survived, or they are completely ineffectual in doing so. The DPMO was in Southeast Asia on October 23rd and 24th, 2003 to negotiate with the Cambodians, Vietnamese, and Laotians on POW/MIA matters because these countries want improved trade relations. **Individual cases, where live POW information exists was NOT discussed.** Hundreds of classified documents on live POWs are still denied the public. The field investigators that

implement POW policy don't have negotiating authority, access to senior Communist officials, or knowledge of all classified material.

## WHY ACT NOW

The Laotians want improved trade relations. We previously normalized trade relations with Vietnam and a road map for an accounting of POWs known alive in communist hands at the end of the war is still not productive. It is ineffective and individual live sight-

ing cases are ignored at the Defense POW office. The DPMO does negotiate for remains from battle and crash sites, a worthy effort in itself, but DOD always drops the live POW matter and compromises on live POWs. The DOD repeatedly falls for the communist "remains" tactics and has not made any headway on the POWs last known or reported alive. It is easier and less embarrassing to discuss dead bodies, rather than discuss who may still be alive. The DOD is not performing due diligence in accounting for live POW/MIAs; and Congress is not using their oversight authority.

The policy makers are satisfied with the quick fix accounting acceptance for remains. An accounting that does not seek out unreturned survivors distorts the truth. The POW/MIA families want action taken for recovery and POWs returned home. Do not let negotiator's come up with another road map that does not assure the return of our live American servicemen left and still alive in Southeast Asia.

## YOU CAN HELP BRING THESE MEN BACK

Contact your Senators; the Senate Intelligence Committee, Armed Services Committee, and Foreign Relations Committee need to initiate legislation to require live POW negotiations. The Congress must then exercise oversight authority assuring qualified negotiators secure release and return of surviving POWs. Let the Laotians return POWs and join in improved trade relations.

## WHAT TO DO

**Send letters to:** The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington, DC; your Senators, the Chairman and members of the Senate Intelligence Committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Armed Services Committee. There is already a reaction from the Department of Defense to the Senate. Be part of the solution in bringing surviving POWs home from the Vietnam War. **Make it happen!**

**Donation information:** [www.powfoia.org](http://www.powfoia.org)  
**POW/MIA FOIA Litigation Act.**  
**8715 First Avenue, Suite 1131C**  
**Silver Spring, Maryland 20910**