

is honored on Panel 30W, Row 58 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: JOHN TERENCE MCDONNELL
Wall Name: JOHN T MCDONNELL
Date of Birth: 12/14/1940
Date of Casualty: 3/6/1969
Home of Record: FT WORTH
State: TX
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: MAJ
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: THUA THIEN
Status: MIA



CPT McDonnell was the aircraft commander of an AH-1G helicopter from A Battery, 4th Battalion, 77th Artillery, 101st Airborne Division operating in Thua Tien Province, South Vietnam. On March 6, McDonnell's aircraft was the flight leader in a flight of two aircraft on a combat mission. During a firing pass, McDonnell's aircraft was observed receiving enemy ground fire. The aircraft disappeared into an overcast and crashed into a mountain side. The area was searched, but McDonnell could not be located. His co-pilot was rescued alive on March 7 but was unable to provide any information on the fate of CPT McDonnell.

During the search, McDonnell's helmet was found with no trace of blood along with pieces of equipment. It appeared that McDonnell's seatbelt had been unlocked and that he had left the aircraft on his own power. During the search effort, numerous deserted enemy positions were located indicating that CPT McDonnell might have been captured. The search continued for three weeks without success.

On a previous tour of Vietnam as a 2LT, McDonnell was attached as an artillery expert to Detachment A-324, 5th Special Forces Group.

CPT Michael Lee Woodside a, a graduate of FAOCS Class 4-67 lost his life while searching for CPT McDonnell. He was an observer in an OH-6A Cayuse helicopter Tail number 67-16025) from Battery A, 377th Artillery (Aviation), that was brought down by enemy fire, while conducting a low level search for McDonnell in bad weather.

From www.flyarmy.org

MCDONNELL JOHN TERENCE

Name: MAJ John Terence Mc Donnell

Status: Body Not Recovered from an incident on 03/06/1969 while performing the duty of Pilot.

Declared dead on 02/16/1977.

Age at death: 28.2

Date of Birth: 12/14/1940

Home City: Ft Worth, TX

Service: FA branch of the reserve component of the U.S. Army.

Unit: A/4/77 ARA 101 ABN

Major Organization: 101st Airborne Division

Flight class: 68-4

Service: FA branch of the U.S. Army.

The Wall location: 30W-058

Short Summary: Took hits on firing run went into overcast and crashed. 1LT Greenfield survived.

Aircraft: AH-1G tail number 67-15845

Service number: O5406346

Country: South Vietnam

MOS: 1193 = 11 Field Artillery Unit Commander

Primary cause: SVN-BNR

Major attributing cause: aircraft connected not at sea

Compliment cause: small arms fire

Vehicle involved: helicopter

Position in vehicle: aircraft commander

Vehicle ownership: commercial

Started Tour: 12/29/1968

"Official" listing: helicopter air casualty - other aircrew

The initial status of this person was: missing in action - bonified

Length of service: *

Location: Thua Thien Province I Corps.

Reason: aircraft lost or crashed

Casualty type: Hostile - died while missing

married male U.S. citizen

Race: Caucasian

Religion: Roman Catholic

The following information secondary, but may help in explaining this incident.

Category of casualty as defined by the Army: battle dead Category of personnel: active duty Army Military class: officer

This record was last updated on 08/20/1995

War Story:

I was the AC of the ship that hoisted Ron out after he was found. My medic went down on the hoist to put him on the jungle penetrator because he was too weak to get on himself. After that my medic searched the area for CPT McDonnell. I had transferred from A Btry 4/77 ARA in February to Eagle Dustoff. We had formed the unit at Ft. Sill and Ron was a good friend of mine. I had volunteered for the mission when I found out his aircraft was missing. I am not trying to take the credit but just get the facts straight. It may have been that the LOH pilot mentioned actually found the crash site. My crew and I were waiting at a firebase about 5 minutes away ready to rescue the crew after they were found. Sadly a LOH was shot down during the search phase and the pilot was killed. (OH-6A 67-16025) Incidentally, LTC Bartholomew, our battalion commander of the 4/77, was shot down and killed in December 1968 within a few kilometers of the same crash site. Colonel Vogel, the Divarty Commander, was riding jump seat. All aboard were killed. In 2000 I was interviewed for a piece about the disappearance of CPT McDonnell by the History Channel which aired I believe in 2002. John McDonnell had joined A Battery after we arrived in country. Of the original pilots that deployed from Ft. Sill with A Battery we lost 2; LTC Bartholomew and his copilot WO-1 Brinkmeyer. They were lost less than a month after arriving in Vietnam. LTC Bartholomew was a super leader and on his second tour. He purportedly told his wife he did not think he would return alive. From: Bob Black, LTC Retired This record was last updated on 11/23/2005

REFNO Synopsis:

South Vietnam John T. McDonnell (1402) On March 6, 1969, Captain McDonnell was the pilot of an AH-1G Cobra helicopter hit and downed by hostile fire in Thua Thien Province. His crew member, a First Lieutenant, was rescued alive on March 7 but was unable to provide any information on the fate of Captain McDonnell. A search mission was also unsuccessful. Captain McDonnell was declared missing and, in February 1977, was declared dead/body not recovered. Returning U.S. POWs were unable to shed any light on his fate. U.S. investigators in Vietnam during January 1991 interviewed witnesses who described the capture of an American pilot in the area where Captain McDonnell disappeared. They reported he had a broken and bleeding arm when taken prisoner and brought to a People's Army of Vietnam regimental headquarters which received instructions to transport him to the Tri Thien Hue Military Region Headquarters. He died en route, was buried, and the U.S. field team was shown his purported burial site. The site was excavated but no remains were located. The following was compiled by Homecoming II Project 15 May 1990 from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews. SYNOPSIS: Capt. John T. McDonnell was the aircraft commander of an AH1G helicopter from A Battery, 4th Battalion, 77th Artillery, 101st Airborne Division operating in Thua Tien Province, South Vietnam. On March 6, McDonnell's aircraft was the flight leader in a flight on two aircraft on a combat mission. During a firing pass, McDonnell's aircraft was observed receiving enemy ground fire. The aircraft disappeared into an overcast and crashed into a mountain side. The area was searched, but McDonnell could not be located. His pilot, Lt. Ronald Greenfield, was found and medically evacuated. Lt. Greenfield could recall nothing from

the point of impact to the following morning. During the search, McDonnell's helmet was found with no trace of blood along with pieces of equipment. It appeared that McDonnell's seatbelt had been unlocked and that he had left the aircraft on his own power. During the search effort, numerous deserted enemy positions were located indicating that Capt. McDonnell might have been captured. The search continued for three weeks without success. McDonnell was not a green soldier. On a previous tour of Vietnam then-2LT. McDonnell was attached as an artillery expert to Detachment A324, 5th Special Forces Group. It was at this time, on May 25, 1965, that he was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for Heroism. At that time McDonnell was an advisor to South Vietnamese paramilitary forces at Thanh Dien Forest, Republic of Vietnam. A fellow team member had been killed by a sniper, another had been wounded. A third was missing. McDonnell's tactical advice and bravery enabled the team to successfully complete their search for the missing team member in the face of intense enemy fire.

On March 6, 1969, A Battery, 4/77th ARA, was called upon to take out enemy mortar installations on the north side of the Bach Ma mountain range in the Thua Tien Province of South Vietnam. Major Robert Graham requested volunteers as the Camp Eagle battery had already flown their missions that day. Cpt. John T. McDonnell and Lt. Ron Greenfield were assigned as the crew in the lead Cobra. McDonnell flew the craft for multiple runs with Greenfield manning the guns. At the refueling base, McDonnell gave the helm to Greenfield and took over the front seat manning the machine gun and rockets. The horseshoe-shaped valley held in the clouds that day forcing the aircraft to maintain a precarious altitude between the tree tops and the low cloud ceiling. While on their final rocket run, the Cobra took enemy fire and the last thing that Greenfield remembers is the stick going limp. He was extracted from the jungle roughly 24 hours after going in. Thirteen years later McDonnell's name was engraved into the black marble of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial on the 58th line of panel 30W. The cross prefix indicates that he is POW/MIA.

From his son,
John McDonnell



A Note from The Virtual Wall

CPT John T. McDonnell and 1LT Ronald Greenfield were flying AH-1G tail number 67-15845 when they were shot down. During the search for the AH-1 a second aircraft, OH-6A (tail number 67-16025), was shot down with the loss of two men:

- 1LT Billy Gene Creech, pilot, A Btry, 377th Arty Rgt
- CPT Michael Lee Woodside, observer, HHB, 2nd Bn, 320th Arty Rgt

While Greenfield was rescued on 07 March and the bodies of 1LT Creech and Captain Woodside were recovered, Captain McDonnell simply disappeared. There was ample evidence that he survived the crash without serious injury, but no evidence of McDonnell himself. He was carried as Missing in Action until a Presumptive Finding of Death was approved by the Secretary of the Army on 16 Feb 1977.

From www.pownetwork.org

McDONNELL, JOHN TERENCE

Name: John Terence McDonnell

Rank/Branch: O3/US Army

Unit: A Battery, 4th Battalion, 77th Artillery, 101st Airborne Division

Date of Birth: 14 December 1940

Home City of Record: Ft. Worth TX

Date of Loss: 06 March 1969

Country of Loss: South Vietnam

Loss Coordinates: 161346N 1075822E (ZC177968)

Status (in 1973): Missing in Action

Category: 2

Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: AH1G

Other Personnel in Incident: (none missing)

Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project 15 May 1990 from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews. Updated by the P.O.W. NETWORK.

REMARKS:

SYNOPSIS: Capt. John T. McDonnell was the aircraft commander of an AH1G helicopter from A Battery, 4th Battalion, 77th Artillery, 101st Airborne Division operating in Thua Tien Province, South Vietnam. On March 6, McDonnell's aircraft was the flight leader in a flight on two aircraft on a combat mission. During a firing pass, McDonnell's aircraft was observed receiving enemy ground fire. The aircraft disappeared into an overcast and crashed into a mountain side. The area was searched, but McDonnell could not be located. His pilot, Lt. Ronald Greenfield, was found and medically evacuated. Lt. Greenfield could recall nothing from the point of impact to the following morning. During the search, McDonnell's helmet was found with no trace of blood along with pieces of equipment. It appeared that McDonnell's seatbelt had been unlocked and that he had left the aircraft on his own power. During the search effort, numerous deserted enemy positions were located indicating that Capt. McDonnell might have been captured. The search continued for three weeks without success. McDonnell was not a green soldier. On a previous tour of Vietnam then-2LT McDonnell was attached as an artillery expert to Detachment A324, 5th Special Forces Group. It was at this time, on May 25, 1965, that he was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for Heroism. At that time McDonnell was an advisor to South Vietnamese paramilitary forces at Thanh Dien Forest, Republic of Vietnam. A fellow team member had been killed by a sniper, another had been wounded. A third was missing. McDonnell's tactical advice and bravery enabled the team to successfully complete their search for the missing team member in the face of intense enemy fire. There is every reason to suspect that McDonnell may have been captured. His fate following is a matter for speculation. Returned POWs would say that those who resisted most strongly were the most tortured and deprived. To a man, those 591 Americans who returned home at the end of the war cooperated at some point, in some way, with their captors. They all agree it is not a matter of whether a man can be broken -- but only how long it will take. Only a few were known to hold out to the end...and unfortunately, for them, it was the end. A few were known to have been literally tortured or starved to death for their

resolute refusal to cooperate. McDonnell's training and background may put him in that category. We may never know for sure. Nearly 2500 Americans were lost in Southeast Asia during our military involvement there. Since the war in Southeast Asia ended in 1973, thousands of reports of Americans still in captivity have been received by the U.S. Government. The official policy is that no conclusive proof has been obtained that is current enough to act upon. Detractors of this policy say conclusive proof is in hand, but that the willingness or ability to rescue these prisoners does not exist. McDonnell, if one of those hundreds said to be still alive and in captivity, must be wondering, "Where ARE you, America?" Where are we, America, when the life of even one American is not worth the effort of recovery? When the next war comes, and it is our sons lost, will we then care enough to do everything we can to bring our prisoners home?

PROJECT X SUMMARY SELECTION RATIONALE

NAME: MCDONNELL, John T, CPT, USA

OFFICIAL STATUS: MISSING

CASE SUMMARY: SEE ATTACHED

RATIONALE SELECTION: The other crewmember survived the aircraft crash and was subsequently found and medically evacuated. All signs indicated CPT

McDonnell left the aircraft under his own power. No correlated reports of Capt McDonnell's death have been received since the incident date.

REFNO: 1402 21 Apr 76

CASE SUMMARY

1. (U) On 6 March 1969 CPT John T. McDonnell, aircraft commander, and ILT [blank] pilot, were aboard an AHLG helicopter, #67-15845), as flight leader in a flight of two aircraft on a combat mission in the vicinity of grid coordinates (CC) 170 960 in South Vietnam. During a firing pass over the target area, CPT McDonnell's aircraft: was observed receiving enemy ground fire. The aircraft disappeared into an overcast and crashed into a mountainside. At about 1500 hours the following day the wreckage of the aircraft was located in the vicinity of (CC) 177 968. The area was searched; however, CPT McDonnell could not be located. LT [blank] was found and medically evacuated, but he recalled nothing of the incident from the time of impact to the following morning. CPT McDonnell's helmet was found, (without a trace of blood), along with other pieces of equipment. It appeared that CPT McDonnell unlocked his seat belt and left the aircraft. During the search efforts, numerous deserted enemy positions were located in the area, indicating that CPT McDonnell could have been captured. The search continued without success through 26 March. (Ref 1)

2. (C) On 24 July 1973 a rallier reported that he had observed two U.S. Prisoners of War on three occasions. The prisoners was said to be officers who had been captured by the NVA 2nd Division in Quang Province. The POWs allegedly were collaborating with the division's political and military staff officer in a proselytizing effort directed toward U.S. soldiers. The rallier made no positive identification of CPT McDonnell's photo, but stated that his photo looked very similar to the POW who wore a large ring. (Information in this report correlated to CPT McDonnell.) (Ref 2)

3. (U) CPT McDonnell's name and identifying data were turned over to the Four-Party Joint Military Team with a request for any information available. No response was

forthcoming. In August 1973 JCRC proposed a Casualty Resolution Operation at this site. American consul, Da Nang, responded that he believed that because of nearby enemy activity, it would be "somewhat imprudent" to conduct an operation at this site "at this time." During the existence of JCRC, the hostile threat in the area precluded any visits to or ground inspections of the sites involved in this case.

4. CPT McDonnell is currently carried in the status of Missing.

(U)- REFERENCES USED:

1. RPT (U), AVHAG-CC, 12 Apr 69.
2. RPT (C), Saigon, RVN FVS 32,810, 24 Jul 73.

**From National Alliance of Families
For the Return of America's Missing Servicemen
September 11, 1999 Bits N Pieces - Part One**

Captain John T. McDonnell United States Army ONE OF THE MEN WE LEFT BEHIND
The next time someone asks you to name one American serviceman left behind in Southeast Asia, name just one.... Look them straight in the eye and say Capt. John T. McDonnell, United States Army, Last known duty station Vietnamese Prison Camp Location Ba To, Quang Ngai Province, South Vietnam. Last seen in mid to late February 1973, and he was not alone! Five (5) American NCO's were held at the same location with Capt. McDonnell. If you want the facts, if you want the details and evidence proving Capt. McDonnell was left behind, continue reading and be prepared to be outraged!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

"REFERENCED REPORT PROVIDED INFORMATION OF URGENT POLITICAL SENSITIVITY," so reads a Defense Intelligence Agency message sent to USDAO SAIGON VIETNAM on June 15, 1973. Only evidence of American POWs left behind in Vietnam would warrant a message of "Urgent Political Sensitivity." That was the situation facing DIA in June of 1973. On April 10th, 1973, two days before Assistant Secretary of Defense Dr. Roger Shields declared all the POWs home or dead, a North Vietnamese soldier defected to the south. The defector, who held the rank of "aspirant and was commanding officer for the 157 Co. 21st Bn, 2nd Div," provided stunning information that six (6) American POWs remained in a POW camp in Quang Ngai Province. He had seen the six (6) Americans as recently as late February 1973. The source, interviewed by U.S. investigators on May 22nd, (remember this date, it's important) described the six (6), as an American "Captain" and 5 NCOs The source never got a good look at the NCOs and could provide no descriptions. However, the source did provide a detailed description of the "Captain." The source said he saw and conversed with the Captain, on four (4) separate occasions between August 1972 and February 1973.

110900A Jun 73 -- From the Department of Defense National Military Command Center: "In August 1972, Source entered an MR-5 PW Camp.... Source contacted members of the 12th Artillery Bn (NVA) who were at the PW Camp location to study the operation of captured 105 MM Howitzers. Their instructor was a captured American Artillery Officer... who was captured (estimated 1968-1969) by the 459th Sapper Regt. in Binh Dinh Province. The PW was forced to give artillery instructions under threat of execution. In addition to the officer, there were five (5) American NCOs referred to as

sergeants and 200 ARVN PWs.... The Americans were segregated from the ARVN PWs. Source only caught a glimpse of the five NCOs and thus could provide no information concerning them. Source, however, conversed with the Artillery Captain on four different occasions, from August 1972 until late February 1973." "Source stated the American officer was approximately 75 inches tall, with blue eyes and blond hair. He had a high bridged nose and was thin but had a large frame. The artillery Captain had a small mole on the upper portion of his left lip and a scar approximately 1 1/2 inches long behind his left ear. Subject had two tattoos- one on his right forearm... the other on his upper left arm...The American was married and had one girl 11 and one boy aged 5. Source states that on the four occasions he conversed with this Captain, a Sr. LT. Hinh MR-5 interpreter assisted him. Source states the Captain was from Texas, the same place where President Johnson lived, and from source's imitation of the sound of his name it may be inferred that the officer's first name was John (sic)...." According to the source the POW "was forced to give artillery instruction under threat of execution." We would assume that the 5 American NCOs in camp with the "Captain" faced the same threat of execution, if the "Captain" failed to cooperate. "...Source shown DIA Photo Book... and stated that the shape of the face of photo no. W052 (James J. Wright) was similar to the Captain's. Source later indicated that Photo No. C166 (Phillip S. Clark, Jr.) looked more like the Captain, and could possibly be the same individual. Source claims that according to [NAME] the communists considered releasing the ARVN prisoners in Nhon Loc District in late February 1973, but could not do so due to heavy fighting in the area. When asked about the Americans, [NAME] claimed they had not been released yet because they were "needed" and added they would probably have to be taken North before being released."

June 13th, 1973 -- the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) narrowed down the identity of the Captain to one of two men. They were Captain John T. McDonnell and Sgt. Glenn E. Tubbs, both of the United States Army.

June 15th, 1973 -- the DIA issued their message regarding "INFORMATION OF URGENT POLITICAL SENSITIVITY." After declaring all the POW's home or dead, the Department of Defense faced a unique crisis. A first hand eyewitness provided a detailed description of an American POW alive in Quang Ngai Province in February 1973, and he was not alone. In DIA's words, "Analysis of the descriptive data of the "American Captain" has produced two candidates. Although neither fits the description Perfectly, both have enough of the reported characteristics that their photographs should be shown to the source. The two individuals are M133 (McDonnell J.T. Cpt, USA) and T046 (Tubbs, G.E. E5, USA)... Both families are being interviewed to determine what tattoos and scars the individuals may have had. Sgt. Tubbs is known to have had one tattoo on each arm. It is not known whether Cpt. McDonnell had tattoos. The scar behind the left ear fits Cpt. McDonnell. It is not known if Sgt. Tubbs had a similar scar."

July 1, 1973 - Dept. of Army Staff Communications Division – Message discusses a photo identification by the source. The document reads "Source" on two occasions selected photo L035, Page A391, as closely resembling the American, he spoke to prior to rallying GVN. He stated POW has grey or light hair, but facial features in L035 closely resemble POW in question." The message also discusses efforts to "surface other sources from Ba To area, to develop additional information."

July 11, 1973 - Major C.W. Watson adds a comment to the above referenced message which states: "Photo #L035 is of LTC Carter Luna, USAF, lost 10 Mar 69 over Laos

(XD028815). For source to have seen Luna in grid square BS, the PW would have had to have been moved several hundred KM SE from his loss location - something which experience has shown was simply not done. Photo of McDonnell in DIA photo book does not resemble photos in OACSI files but does have similarities with LTC Luna's photo. OACSI is sending additional photos of McDonnell and Tubbs (another Army Candidate) to USDAO Saigon for possible ID by source." Photographs of Capt. McDonnell, provided to the National Alliance of Families, do show a passing resemblance to the photo of LTC Luna in the Pre-Capture Photo Book. It should also be noted that LTC Luna's photo appears on page A391, Captain McDonnell's photo appears on page A390. Both pages face each other. Can you identify the photos of Capt. McDonnell???? Visit our web page and view the photos.

Capt. McDonnell and Lt. Ronald Greenfield were pilots aboard an AH-1G helicopter. On March 6, 1969 their chopper was hit by ground fire and crashed 50 kilometers southeast of Hue and 3 kilometers southeast of Thon Thuy Cam, Thua Thien Province. U. S. search teams operated in the area from 1600 hours (4 P.M.) March 6th to March 12th. They found no sign of Capt. McDonnell. On March 7th, at approximately 1330 hours (1:30 P.M.) American search teams located Lt. Greenfield, near the downed helicopter. Lt. Greenfield was seriously wounded and had no memory of events after the crash. Examination of the downed helicopter revealed that Capt. McDonnell's seat belt and harness were open and placed neatly on the seat. Search teams located McDonnell's helmet. There was no sign of blood in the helmet. Also located at the crash site were maps, weapons, and survival equipment. According the "JTF-FA Narrative" presented to the Vietnamese in 1989, this suggests "he either had to quickly flee the area or was captured."

Sgt. Glenn Tubbs was a rifle man on a Long Range Reconnaissance patrol. During a river crossing, Sgt. Tubbs lost his grip on the safety line. The current was strong and he was swept away. Search efforts were complicated when helicopters received enemy fire. Early records list Sgt. Tubbs loss location as South Vietnam. The actual loss location, corrected years later, was Cambodia. Recently, we spoke with Pamela Tubbs, wife of Sgt. Glenn Tubbs. She remembers being contacted by the Army in mid 1973. She was asked to provide additional photos and a detailed physical description of her husband. When we asked her if she knew why they were requesting this information, she said she was told it would help with identification should remains be recovered. She was never told of a possible live sighting. Mrs. Tubbs confirmed her husband did have a tattoo, on the right forearm. Official documentation obtained by the National Alliance of Families shows that the tattoo described by the source does not match Sgt. Tubbs. Mrs. Tubbs also confirmed that Sgt. Tubbs did not have a scar behind the left ear. Based on the information we provided her, she does not believe the "Army Captain" could be her husband.

Both Captain McDonnell and Sgt Tubbs are from Texas and married. Capt. McDonnell has three children. Sgt. Tubbs has two. The physical description fits Capt. McDonnell, with one possible discrepancy. There is no record of Capt. McDonnell having tattoos. It is interesting to note that in discussing descriptions involving tattoos, official documentation indicates that many servicemen acquired tattoos while in service, and therefore official records may not be accurate in this matter. As one analyst wrote, regarding another investigation; "Files should not be considered foolproof because service members might not have entered all tattoos." Therefore, the presence of a tattoo

or tattoos should not negate a source's information. Records available to the National Alliance of Families confirm Capt. McDonnell has a scar, as described by the source, behind the left ear. In addition to the physical description, the first name, the time frame of capture, rank of the POW, the fact that the POW was an ARVN advisor and artillery officer all match Capt. McDonnell. It should be noted that Capt. McDonnell was on his third tour of duty. His first two tours were served with the Green Berets as an ARVN advisor.

In reviewing this material one must remember that all four conversations were conducted through an interpreter. Minor errors of translation may have occurred regarding the number of children. It should also be remembered that the number of children is a minor detail which the source may have been confused. It is critical to remember that all major facts relating to the American "Captain" correlate to John McDonnell. Under ordinary circumstances the absence of a tattoo on each arm would raise concerns as to our conclusion, that Capt. McDonnell was the POW in Quang Ngai, if it were not for one additional fact. This was not the first sighting of Capt. McDonnell in captivity. This first sighting provides a physical description almost identical to the description of the "Captain" in the Quang Ngai POW camp. The Joint Casualty Resolution Center correlated that report to Capt. McDonnell, also.

February 16th, 1973 -- another North Vietnamese rallied to the GVN. This source was a former NVA sergeant. He served as squad leader with the 5th Company, 14th Antiaircraft Battalion NVA 2nd Yellow Star Division. A report, generated by the Central Intelligence Agency on July 24th, 1973, provides a firsthand observation of two U.S. Prisoners of War with the North Vietnamese Army 2nd Yellow Star Division in Laos, on three different occasions, between May and July of 1971. The first sighting took place "in early May or June 1971 when he saw the two POWs eating lunch with personnel of the Military Staff and political offices, North Vietnamese Army (NVA) 2nd Yellow Star Division [word unreadable] Doan 2 Sao Vang, at the 13th Commo-Liaison Station (WD876558), 33rd Binh Tram, NVA 559th infiltration line (Doung Day 559) in Savannakhet Province Laos. He observed them for about 30 minutes." "The second time source saw the same POWs was for about two minutes in July 1971."

"The third time he saw the POWs was for about ten minutes in July 1971, while POWs were sitting in a hut in the division's base camp area." The source was told that the POWs "had been captured by the NVA 2nd Division in Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam. Source observed the POWs the first time from at a distance of about two meters. Both were Caucasian, one was about 30 years old, about 1.8 meters tall, and weighed about 90 kilos. He had a heavy build, a pink complexion, long face, short brownish blond hair, a receding hairline, a high straight nose, brown eyes, white regular teeth, a round mouth, and a red mole under his lower left lip. He was wearing a green NVA uniform consisting of a short-sleeved shirt and trousers. He was also wearing a white metal "Seiko" wrist watch and a large gold ring with a red ruby on his left hand." "In about October 1972, servant (sic) NAME, a radio operator in the NVA 2nd Division, told Source that the two POWs had been sent to North Vietnam.

(According to JCRC "no correlation could be made on the second POW cited in the report.") With regard to the first POW, JCRC stated in the "Field Comment" -- "Records indicate that source probably observed Capt. John T. McDonnell, USA (JCRC Nr. 0176).... There is an indication that McDonnell may have been captured.... McDonnell's description follows: age in 1971 was 31, height: 1.77 meters; weight 75 kilos; hair; brown; race; Caucasian; wears white silver Seiko watch and large ring on

left hand." A photo of Captain McDonnell wearing such a ring was provided to the National Alliance of Families by the McDonnell family. JCRC re-contacted the source. He was shown McDonnell's photo "mixed with 15 other photographs. However source was unable to make an identification. Then he was shown McDonnell's photographs. After five minute of study, source said that the photograph looked very similar to the POW who wore the ring, except that his hair was longer and that his nose was long and nostrils were less pronounced. He said that the shape of the face, the eyes, and the mouth were similar to the man in the photograph, but stopped short of making a definite identification because of the difference in the hair style and nose." It is important here that we remember Major C.W. Watson's comments regarding photos of Captain McDonnell. Major Watson stated; "Photo of McDonnell in DIA photo book does not resemble photos in OACSI files."

By June 20th, 1973, the Army was busy contacting men who served with Captain McDonnell, in an effort to obtain additional information regarding scars and tattoos. There is no indication of such an effort regarding Sgt. Tubbs.

April 23, 1976 -- The next record, available to us, comes in a report compiled by the Joint Casualty Resolution Center. The report is titled "Project X." "Project X" was a study to "evaluate the possibility of any of the unaccounted for being alive. The conclusion reached is: There is a possibility that as many as 57 Americans could be alive...." Among the 57 Servicemen mentioned in "Project X" is Capt. John T. McDonnell. The Case Summary on Capt. McDonnell cites the 1971 sighting of McDonnell stating "information in this report correlated to Cpt. McDonnell." There is no mention of the 1972 - 1973 sightings in Quang Ngai." A Joint Casualty Resolution Center Biographic report, as 2 Oct 1986 summarizing Captain McDonnell's loss incident, makes no mention of the BaTo sighting. Of the Lao sighting the Biographic report states "The rallier made no positive identification of Cpt McDonnell's photo, (sic) but states that his photo looked very similar to the PW who wore a large ring. (Information in this report correlated to Cpt. McDonnell)."

In the late 1980's the name of John McDonnell was placed on the "Original 119" Vessey Discrepancy List. What was the significance of being on the "Original 119" Vessey Discrepancy List? In a November 15th, 1989 letter to then Congressman Bob Smith, General John W. Vessey Jr. writes "The discrepancy cases I presented to the Vietnamese were those in which Americans were known to have survived the incident in which they were involved. We believed they came into Vietnamese hands and probably were prisoners of the Vietnamese. These individuals did not return during Operation Homecoming in 1973, nor were their bodies returned in the intervening years and no explanation was provided by the Vietnamese. Because these cases may shed light on the fate of an American serviceman believed to have been alive after his loss, they are the priority of our efforts."

On April 25th 1991, Kenneth Quinn, then Chairman of the Administration's POW/MIA Inter Agency Group testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs. In response to a question from Senator Alan Cranston, Mr. Quinn stated "In terms of actually conducting investigations on the ground, General Vessey has focused on 119 discrepancy cases, which is to say those cases, which represent, from looking at all the information we know about them, represent the greatest possibility that the men involved might still be alive. We had evidence that they were alive after the incident occurred where the plane was shot down or they were lost

on the ground and we don't know what happened to them and what their fate was." "So those represented to General Vessey the possibility where it is most probable or most likely that they might still be alive." Statements by General Vessey and Mr. Quinn re-enforce our position that Capt. McDonnell, listed as an "Original 119" Vessey Discrepancy Case, was alive in February 1973.

The United States Government possessed strong evidence placing John McDonnell in captivity. That evidence shows John McDonnell alive in February 1973. With the exception of "Project X," we were unable to locate any information or intelligence dated after July 1973. In fact, as demonstrated by Project X, the 1972- 1973 sighting was not even considered in the evaluation of John McDonnell case. Why?

1992 - JTF-FA all but ignored the two sightings in case narratives, presented to the Vietnamese. Of the three JTF-FA Narratives dated, August 1989, July 1990, and Jun 1993, only the July 1990 Narrative mentions the 1972-1973 sighting. None mentions the 1971 sightings, in which JCRC concluded "that source probably observed Capt. John T. McDonnell."

JTF-FA ignored the strong evidence of John McDonnell's capture. They ignored evidence of his imprisonment and survival along with five (5) enlisted men.

Instead, in 1992 JTF-FA chose to interview witnesses supplied by the Vietnamese. All claimed to have witnessed the helicopter crash. None, however, saw Captain McDonnell. None witnessed his capture. None witnessed his death or participated in his supposed burial on March 7, 1969.

September 30, 1992 -- In their field activity report JTF-FA said, of the Vietnamese witnesses, "Although none of the witnesses actually took part in the capture and burial of the American, they all provided hearsay information that he died while being escorted probably to the Tri Thien Hue Military region Headquarters..." According to the hearsay information the POW sustained a leg wound and died the next day. Note: Lt. Greenfield suffered a severe leg wound. Based on the hearsay of 4 Vietnamese the 1993 Narrative incorporated the "corroborating hearsay testimony concerning the crash of a U.S. helicopter in 1969 and the subsequent capture and burial of an American." We wonder, would "corroborating hearsay testimony" be admissible in a court of law? In other words, since the Vietnamese witnesses all told the same story, it was true.

During Joint Field Activities in conducted in April 1998, JTF-FA surfaced witnesses who supposedly participated in the burial of Capt. McDonnell. The summary reads, in part; "witnesses emphatically asserted the location previously excavated was in fact the burial location, but bombing during the war and subsequent heavy rains and flooding completely wiped out all evidence or remains or a grave site. Consequently, the witnesses claimed it would be impossible for them to more accurately locate the burial site."

Today, the case of John McDonnell is considered fate determined. This determination is based, in part, on 4 hearsay accounts of Vietnamese witnesses who claimed they heard about a captured American, who died the next day. JTF-FA routinely ignores hearsay information about live POWs. Yet, in this case they are willing to believe hearsay information regarding the death of a POW. A POW, who by their own records and correlations, was alive in February 1973.

One must wonder, if these same four Vietnamese provided information that Capt. McDonnell was in the Quang Ngai POW Camp at Ba To, would JTF-FA investigators be so willing to believe them.

In a memo dated 23 August, 1994, we get a glimpse of how a "determination of fate" is made. In the case of Capt. McDonnell, the memo reads; "JTF-FA did not agree with DPMO, argued there was sufficient information to confirm fate." In the end, the "panel voted 3 - 0 to confirm fate." We were pleasantly surprised to find that someone at DPMO realized there was enough evidence to keep this case open. However, that analyst was overruled. In the end, DPMO management prevailed, along with JCS and JTF-FA and voted 3-0 to confirm fate. It is our opinion that when in doubt, the presumption should be in favor of the POW and the case in question should remain open. Instead, cases are routinely stamped "fate confirmed" in spite of evidence and objections. We, at the National Alliance of Families, believe that based on the information cited above, there can be only one conclusion. Capt. John McDonnell was alive as a Prisoner of War at least until February 1973. We further believe that Capt. John McDonnell survived in captivity, as the Nixon Administration was declaring him, and the 5 NCOs with him, dead. We believe that this case is ample evidence that the Vietnamese government is not "cooperating in full faith" on the POW issue. How many other cases, like this, are ignored?

We have been unable to locate any documentation that would indicate a follow-up on the 1972-73 sightings. We have found no record of attempts to investigate the MR-5 Prison Camp, referred to by the source. We have found no indication of any intelligence gathering efforts by the intelligence agencies of the United States government. And, sadly we have found no record of an official inquiry of the Vietnamese regarding the 6 POWs held at the Quang Ngai POW Camp.

However, DPMO states, in a memo dated 9 July 1998, that "our records indicate that the source was reinterviewed several times in 1973." Requests, by the McDonnell family, for copies of these reports remain unanswered. The United States and the Vietnamese Government must be held responsible for the fate of John McDonnell and the 5 NCOs with him.

Additionally, we are extremely concerned about the misrepresentation of information on this case contained in the February 14, 1996 – Comprehensive Case Review issued by Defense POW/MIA Office and in letters from DPMO dated 17 April 1998 and 9 July 1998.. Of the 1971 live sighting, the Case review describes it as "A wartime source reported observing 2 U.S. POWs in 1971 in Laos. He reported the POWs were collaborating with the NVA. He picked a photo of Cpt McDonnell as possibly resembling one of the POWs he observed. Correlation to case 1402 is based solely on the tentative photo ID. It is highly unlikely that Cpt. McDonnell was seen two years after his incident in Laos. The source was very hesitant in picking out a photo of McDonnell."

**From National Alliance of Families
For The Return of America's Missing Servicemen
September 11, 1999 Bits N Pieces - Part Two**

In a letter dated 17 April 1998, a Defense Casualty Liaison Officer stated; "In 1973 the Joint Casualty Resolution Center correlated the report to Captain McDonnell based primarily on the jewelry described in the report. During a reinterview the source was shown Captain McDonnell's photograph mixed with those of 15 other missing servicemen, but he was unable to make a positive identification." The actual document states that the source would not make a positive ID based on photos because of length of hair and nose. Those who have reviewed the pre-capture book of American servicemen, Prisoner and Missing, will agree that, many of the photos are of poor quality. Clearly, Major Watson recognized the problem with the photo book, in 1973. Shadowing could account for a difference in the length of a nose. Certainly, a POW's hair length would very likely change, in captivity. The Comprehensive Case Review ignored the physical description of the POW and JCRC's own comments which read: ""Records indicate that source probably observed Capt. John T. McDonnell, USA (JCRC Nr. 0176)...." Of the 1973 live sighting the Case review describes it as "A different source reported observing 6 POWs in an MR5 POW camp. The personal details provided for one of the POWs superficially matches McDonnell. However, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest he was ever a POW in MR5 given his loss in Thue Thein." The information provided in that second live sighting, of February 1973, is far from superficial. Judge for yourself:

Category	John McDonnell	Ba To POW - as described by source
First Name	John	John
Rank	Capt./Arty	Capt./Arty
Captured	March 6, 1969	Captured 1968 - 1969 time frame
Loss Location	Thua Thien	Binh Dinh
Height	70"	75"
Weight	175 lbs	described by source as thin
Hair	Light Brown	Blond
Eyes	Hazel	Blue
Scars	behind left ear	behind left ear
Tattoos	unknown	2
Home of Record	Texas	Texas
Married	Yes	Yes
# of Children	3, sons 11 & 9	2, daughter 11, & son 5 Daughter 8

Long discussed within the POW/MIA issue was information regarding a press conference held in Saigon in June 1973. During this press conference, a defector provided information regarding POWs not released. Until now little was known about what went on during that press conference as it was rumored that the story was "spiked" at the request of the American Embassy.

That defector was Nguyen Thanh Son, source of the sighting of the American "Captain" and 5 NCOs in Quang Ngai Province between August 1972 and February 1973. During the Saigon interview, in June of 1973, attended by members of the media representing Associated Press, United Press International and NBC, Son spoke of POWs. To our knowledge there is only one record of that interview. It is a short Associated Press Article from the Baltimore Sun, dated June 9th, 1973. In that article,

Nguyen Thanh Son is represented as a "junior North Vietnamese officer" not the "commanding officer for the 157 Co. 21st Bn, 2nd Div," as described in the DIA message. Mr. Son spoke of North Vietnamese plans to infiltrate the South and discussed a North Vietnamese "plan not to launch a general offensive until 1976 - before the U.S. presidential elections." "Right now, they don't want to launch an offensive. They're afraid of the reaction of world opinion as well as President Nixon," he said. Perhaps the Nixon resignation in August of 1974, allowed the North Vietnamese to move up their time table. On the subject of POWs Mr. Son, according to the AP article, stated "he also believes the North Vietnamese are still holding some American prisoners in effect as hostages to insure that all mines are removed from North Vietnamese waters and that Hanoi receives United States reconstruction money. They want to keep U.S. prisoners because there are many problems to be settled with the U.S. government. They want to keep prisoners in case the U.S. government launches war again, they will have some prisoners." That quote is followed by standard DoD debunking -- "Defense Department officials said they had no information from returned prisoners or any other source to support the defectors claims concerning U.S. POWs." The article went on to say that "Mr. Son refused to elaborate further," on the subject of POWs. If Mr. Son did not have information deemed credible, why did the Defense Intelligence Agency, on June 15th, 1973 issue their message of "URGENT POLITICAL SENSITIVITY." Why did the Embassy in Saigon go to extreme lengths to have the story killed? The bigger question is why did the media in the person of UPI and NBC agree and kill the story. A telegram dated June 11th, 1973, from the American Embassy Saigon to the Secretary of State Washington D.C., states "NVA rallier/defector Nguyen Thanh Son was surfaced by GVN to Press June 8 in Saigon. In follow on (sic) interview with AP, UPI and NBC American correspondents, questions elicited information that he had seen six prisoners whom he believed were Americans who had not yet been released. American officer present at interview requested news services to play down details; AP mention was consistent with embargo request, while UPI and NBC after talk with Embassy Press Officer omitted item entirely from their stories." "Details on rallier's account being reported septel (sic) through military channels by Bright Light Message today, [word missing] White House." Nowhere in the Associated Press article is the number of POWs mentioned. Nor is it mentioned that Mr. Son actually saw the POWs over an extended period of time. Or that he spoke with one of them on 4 different occasions. Instead a carefully crafted sentence states "he also believes the North Vietnamese are still holding some American prisoners..." When questioned about the Baltimore Sun article, DPMO stated, in the 17 April 1998 letter; "We are not familiar with the referenced newspaper article." We find that interesting, as the article was discovered by a member of the McDonnell family, during a routine review of the casualty file, while in Washington D.C. for the annual briefings. That's correct! The article DPMO claims no knowledge of is in Capt. McDonnell's Army Casualty file. Not only do we have our first clear evidence of Americans left behind but we now have evidence of media complicity in government efforts to "play down" details of Americans left behind. The U.S. and Vietnamese governments know what happened to John McDonnell and when it happened. Only his family and the American public remain in the dark. In their 9 July 1998 memo, DPMO discussed Nguyen Thanh Son's press conference. According to DPMO; "Of note, during his first interview this source never mentioned seeing six American prisoners.... It was not until his news conference a few days later that the source came up with the story of the six American POWs at the MR-5

camp. Following the new conference he was reinterviewed, resulting in the data reported in IR 6 918 5058 73. "This statement is completely untrue. The information contained in IR 6 918 5058 73, regarding six American POW was obtained by U.S. officials on May 22, 1973. The press conference referred to, was held on June 8th, 1973. That is 17 days after the information was acquired by U.S. officials. Records indicated that the information released during the press conference was reported back to Washington D.C. on June 11th, 1973. That June 11th report clearly reads; "Place and date of AQN; Saigon, RVN, 22 May 1973." The DPMO attempt to make Nguyen Thanh Son's disclosure of POWs at Ba To look like some stunt to draw publicity, is at best incompetent, at worst it is criminal. Almost 25 years later, on November 19, 1997, a Freedom of Information Act request filed with the Central Intelligence Agency for the National Interrogation Center debriefing report of Nguyen Thanh Son, was denied. (It is interesting to note that in a 17 April 1998 letter, to the McDonnell family, DPMO claimed no knowledge of National Interrogation Center Records, stating; "This request is somewhat confusing. Although the United States and our allies had interrogation facilities in Vietnam during the war, they did not maintain files on missing U.S. Servicemen." Again, this statement is misleading, at best.)

According to the CIA, they could "neither confirm nor deny the existence or nonexistence of records responsive to your request on the basis of Freedom of Information Act exemptions (b) (1) and (b) (3)." (Note: Exemption (b) (1) applies to material which is properly classified pursuant to an Executive order in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Exemption (b) (3) applies to the Director's statutory obligations to protect from disclosure intelligence sources and methods, as well as the organization, functions, names, official titles, salaries or number of personnel employed by the Agency, in accord with the National Security Act of 1947 and the (1A Act of 1949, respectively ;) While we have no documentation to prove it, we believe it possible, that Nguyen Thanh Son was working for the United States Government as a "Controlled American Source" (CAS). That might explain the "defection" of an NVA officer after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords. Perhaps his defection was actually an extraction. This would also explain the CIA denial of our FOIA based on "... Director's statutory obligations to protect from disclosure intelligence sources and methods, as well as the organization, functions, names, official titles, salaries or number of personnel employed by the Agency..." Since Nguyen Thanh Son spoke publicly of his defection and the intelligence information he provided, denial based on protection of source and methods is ridiculous. Denial of the debrief is also in direct violation of two Presidential Executive Order signed by Presidents Bush and Clinton to declassify all POW/MIA related material. On April 12th, 1998, the Central Intelligence Agency denied our FOIA appeal. The Agency Release Panel determined that the CIA "must neither confirm nor deny the existence or nonexistence of any records.... Such information, that is, whether or not any responsive records exist, would be classified for reasons of national security.... the fact of the existence or nonexistence of such documents would relate directly to information concerning intelligence sources and methods..." Is this document truly classified for reasons of national security or is it classified based on national embarrassment? During the 1997 government briefings, held in Washington D.C., representatives of Army Casualty and the Defense POW/MIA Office were presented the information relating to Nguyen Thanh Son. Also provided was the name of the camp interpreter. The family requested that an effort be made to locate these men for the purpose of a re-interview. The response of the DPMO's representative was an

incredulous "you mean you want us to do a live sighting investigation?" Information was also requested on the live sighting report from Laos and the reason John McDonnell was among the 57 missing servicemen evaluated as "possibly alive" by the Project X study. The response came in November of 1997. According to DPMO the first sighting, in Laos was a fabrication. They came to this conclusion, stating "JCRC analysts believed one of the POW's described was Captain McDonnell. They apparently based this belief upon the physical description and the source's agreement that one of the POWs resembled a photo he was shown of Captain McDonnell. Aside from the identity of the alleged POWs, in looking at the substance of the sources claims our analysts question the validity of the information. At the heart of the report, and most particularly suspicious, is the source's claim that the two American POW officers were clad in PAVN uniforms, wearing "Seiko" watches and gold rings..." In conclusion DPMO stated "Based upon the information contained in the report, DPMO analysts have not correlated it to any American and view it as a fabrication on the part of the source." However, in 1973, JCRC stated in the "Field Comment" -- "Records indicate that source probably observed Capt. John T. McDonnell, USA (JCRC Nr. 0176).... There is an indication that McDonnell may have been captured.... McDonnell's description follows: age in 1971 was 31, height: 1.77 meters; weight 75 kilos; hair; brown; race; Caucasian; wears white silver Seiko watch and large ring on left hand." In 1986, JCRC maintained its position that "information contained in the report correlated to Cpt. McDonnell." No mention was made of "Project X."

Of the 4 sightings reported by Nguyen Thanh Son, DPMO stated "In regard to the analyst notes comparing Captain McDonnell with Army Sergeant Glenn Tubbs, the notes refer to a scar behind Captain McDonnell's left ear, but do not list any tattoos." Ignored is the fact that two independent sources provided almost identical descriptions of a POW, whom we believe the evidence shows is Captain John McDonnell. As of this date, DPMO has deemed both source reports as fabrications. Requests to have Nguyen Thanh Son and the camp interpreter, Sr. Lt. Hinh, located and reinterviewed were denied. In the words of DPMO, "The camp where Lt. Hinh allegedly worked didn't exist at the time and location cited by the source, thus the existence of the interpreter is moot." The Camp - DPMO insists that the camp we believe existed in the Ba To area of Northwestern Quang Ngai Province was not operational in 1973. Yet, CIA "Intelligence Information Cable" #314/03268-73, distributed 10 April 1973, the very day Nguyen Than Son rallied, states, in part; "As of early March VC Prisoner of War Camp centered on BS3128 was located in Kontum Province to the West of Gia Vuc in Ba To District, Quang Ngai Province. This camp held both GVN Military and civilian official prisoners from Quang Ngai Province. This camp was subdivided into eight compounds. Some of the prisoners, the total number of whom is unknown, were used as laborers on nearby agricultural production sites. The camp was managed and guarded by a staff of about (unreadable) 5 people." Another CIA "Intelligence Information Cable" #311/01523-73, distributed 6 April 1973, discusses activities in the Sa Huynh area during the period 28 January - 15 March 1973. The cable states the camp held "Government of Vietnam (GVN) prisoners who had been captured at Sa Huynh in Duc Pho District Quang Ngai Province, during late January and early February 1973. On three different occasions between 28 January and 14 March POW's arrived at the POW camp. The first group, consisting of 83 Prisoners, arrived at the POW camp on 29 January 1973. The second group, consisting of 100 POWs arrived on 2 February. En route to the camp two POWs from this group were shot and

10 died from injuries. The third group, which included 80 prisoners arrived on 13 February...." During his Press Conference, Son stated that; "the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government plans to establish its capital in South Vietnam in Ba To district of Quang Ngai Province, about 20 miles northwest of Sa Huynh." In the limited reports available to us, Nguyen Thanh Son describes the Ba To camp as housing 200 ARVN military (GVN Military), who were housed separately from the American POWs. According to Son the American NCOs were required to grow their own food. Growing their own food might indicate "agricultural production sites," described in the CIA "Intelligence Information Cable," distributed 10 April 1973. By our calculations 251 GVN POWs were at the camp described in the CIA cable distributed 6 April 1973. This is reasonably close to the figure of 200 reported by Nguyen Thanh Son. The cable goes on to say; "...The whole camp was located under dense jungle foliage to prevent aerial observation, there was only one trail leading to the camp. The trail originated in Nghia Hanh District and terminated at the camp...." Clearly, a POW camp, or camps, existed in the Ba To area. Could one of these camps be the camp described by Nguyen Thanh Son, as holding 6 American POWs?

On June 9th, 1973, the day the Baltimore Sun Article was published, records indicate that the Navy flew a reconnaissance mission in the area, we believe the Ba To camp was located. The only written reference to this mission comes in the form of a handwritten note which reads; "Aerial photographs: An area [blacked out] photograph, classified [whited out], is available in CDD-PT for viewing in addition those pictures in the target folder." Two photocopies of the photographs available to us are of extremely poor quality. With no experience in photo analysis, we would describe these photos by saying they show a large dark area (perhaps dense jungle canopy) with pinpoints of light escaping. These pictures show no evidence, to our untrained eye, of a POW camp. However, this does not mean the camp did not exist! It simply means, as the CIA cable states; "...The whole camp was located under dense jungle foliage to prevent aerial observation..." DPMO's dismissal of the Ba To camps existence is premature. It is a fact that during the war U.S. intelligence was unaware of several operational POW camps. This was discussed in a study done in May 1982 by Colonel Harold E. Johnson USAF. The study titled "I will never forget.... An Analysis of the POW/MIA Episode in the War in Southeast Asia" was done for the Air War College. Col. Johnson's credentials are impressive. According to his biographical sketch Col. Johnson is a "graduate of the USAF Squadron Officer School (1964), the Air Command and Staff College (1974), and the Air War College (1981.)" In addition to his impressive credentials, Colonel Johnson has firsthand experience with the Vietnamese, having spent almost six (6) years as a Prisoner of War, in North Vietnam. Colonel Johnson describes how after the unsuccessful POW rescue attempt, at Son Tay on November 21, 1970, prisoners throughout North Vietnam were consolidated. He goes on to describe what happened about one (1) year later. Col. Johnson stated "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-tipped walls and building made of solid stone. It had been obviously constructed especially as a permanent prison facility. There was not any surrounding barbed-wire-tipped walls and building 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 returned to Hanoi to be released. The U.S. did not know the location of this camp until after the returnee debriefing." Col. Johnson discussed the brutal treatment of POWs and the constant threat of trial as "war criminals." His study also mentions how in 1968, all references to trials stopped. Col. Johnson hypothesized as to why the Vietnamese dropped their threat of trial against the known POWs. According to the study, Col. Johnson stated "... perhaps the communist captors made other arrangements." Col. Johnson continued "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 references 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." Col. Johnson acknowledges this is "pure conjecture" on his part but continues "... but it makes sense from my experience in looking at it from a Communist viewpoint." In his conclusion Col. Johnson writes; "during annual torture sessions we call purges, the interrogators were always interested in whom you had been in communication with and who 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." Col. Johnson continued "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 Communist 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 non-indigenous 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?" Indeed, why should their presence be such a surprise and why should we be surprised to learn that "Codeword Classified" information may exist relating to Capt. McDonnell. A partial index of documents from Capt. McDonnell classified file contains the notation "This Material Contains Codeword." Could that be a reference to Codeword Classified Intelligence on Capt. McDonnell?



IN MEMORY OF
JOHN
TERENCE
MCDONNELL

MAJ
US ARMY
VIETNAM
DEC 14 1940
FEB 16 1977