



Written by **Yvonne Becker**

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Americans In Captivity

The deceit of the Communist Vietnamese and numerous U.S. government officials on the accounting for approximately 5,000 American soldiers from the Vietnam War — culminating in abandonment — is appalling.

Now, 25 years since the first American soldier was made a prisoner of war in Vietnam — despite a string of Congressional delegations to “technical-level meetings” for “high-level negotiations” in Hanoi, Senate hearings, joint excavations of crash sites, national conventions, *ad infinitum* — precious little has really been done to bring *all* our men home alive.

There are those who claim that, due to the determination and diligence of the current U.S. Administration and the Vietnamese commitment to resolve the issue in 1987, we are closer to a final accounting than at any time since 1973. If officials devoted as much effort to extracting prisoners as they do to covering up their abandonment, those Americans would be alive, well, and home instead of being tortured and killed in slave labor camps in Asian and Soviet gulags. As for the “Vietnamese commitment,” when have Communists ever kept their word when it was to the benefit of the free world?

The U.S. government does not want to bring our men home alive because, on the one hand, it collaborates with our enemies, giving them the means to stay in power through Red trade and aid. On the other hand, it refuses to pay \$3.25 billion in war reparations (secretly promised by Nixon) in exchange for prisoners of war.

Shortly after Operation Homecoming in 1973, Robert McFarlane, Kissinger’s aide at the Paris Peace Talks and former National Security Advisor, was sent to North Vietnam by Nixon and Kissinger to offer \$100 million in medical aid for the return of the *remaining* prisoners. Hanoi refused the offer, insisting on the \$3.25 billion promised. Classified information indicates the Vietnamese approached the Reagan Administration through the Canadians shortly after Reagan took office. The asking price then was \$4 billion for approximately 50 American prisoners.

The number of Americans still alive is claimed to be 100-500. There are approximately 2,500 Americans officially acknowledged by our government to be missing or killed in action. There are another 2,000 to 2,500 men that our government will not admit were lost because they disappeared on secret missions, etc. The total number of MIAs then is close to 5,000, which helps explain the high number of sightings of Americans living in captivity in Vietnam and Laos even in 1986.

There are several Categories of prisoners: men shot down or captured by the North Vietnamese and held in North Vietnam; men shot down or captured and detained in Laos by the Pathet Lao, separate from the North Vietnamese and unknown to them; men shot down and/or captured in Laos and held jointly by the Vietnamese and the Laotians. Prisoners are also categorized as



turncoats, collaborators, or resisters. If the U.S. government ever repatriates the prisoners, some believe it is probable that the first to be returned will be turncoats — to deflate the issue.

U.S. Army Major Mark Smith and Sergeant First Class Melvin McIntire, after assignment to the Special Forces Detachment in South Korea, where they obtained evidence that removed any doubt from their minds that a significant number of Americans are being held as prisoners of war in Southeast Asia, were instructed to destroy the information. They filed a lawsuit accusing President Reagan, Defense Secretary Weinberger, Secretary of State Shultz and General James A. Williams of the Army Intelligence Agency — and anyone who held their jobs during and after American involvement in Southeast Asia — of violating Title 22 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for “failing to demand of the governments of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos the reasons why members of the plaintiffs’ class are being unjustly deprived of their liberty, failing to determine whether such deprivation of liberty is wrongful and in violation of the rights of American citizens, and failing to demand the release of such members of the plaintiffs’ class.”

Scott Barnes claims to have been part of a U.S. government-supported team of ex-Green Berets who crossed the Mekong River from Thailand into northern Laos in October 1981 to search for American prisoners of war. Upon locating and photographing two Caucasians in a prison camp, Barnes says the team received a code with the order to liquidate the prisoners. The team refused to follow the orders and disbanded. His life and those of others involved in this issue have been threatened. Attempts continue to be made to discredit Barnes and those who support the claims of Smith, McIntire, et al. Barnes submitted to polygraph tests, truth serum tests, and psychological evaluation by an expert who has since joined Smith, McIntire, and their supporters. The results revealed that he is sane and stable.

Americans are being held for several purposes: bargaining chips, terrorist propaganda and training, psychological warfare experimentation, sources of information about electronic warfare equipment on American combat aircraft, skilled labor to maintain captured U.S. military equipment, forced manual labor, English teachers, etc.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn stated in 1975:

If the government of North Vietnam has difficulty explaining ... what happened with ... your American POWs ... I, on the basis of my experience in the Archipelago, can explain There is a law in the Archipelago that those who have been treated the most harshly and who have withstood the most bravely, the most honest, the most courageous, the most unbending, never again come out into the world. They are never again shown to the world because they will tell such tales as the human mind cannot accept. A part of your returned POWs told you that they were tortured. This means that those who have remained were tortured even more but did not yield an inch. These are your best people. These are your first heroes, who, in a solitary combat, have stood the test. And today, unfortunately, they cannot take courage from our applause. They can't hear it from their solitary cells where they may die or sit 30 years....