

GRAF, JOHN GEORGE

Name: John George Graf

Rank/Branch: O4/USN

Unit: Chief of Naval AD Group US MACV, South Vietnam

Date of Birth: 20 October 1927 (Los Angeles CA)

Home City of Record: Glendale CA

Date of Loss: 15 November 1969

Country of Loss: South Vietnam

Loss Coordinates: 094036N 1063437E (XR730700)

Status (in 1973): Prisoner of War

Category: 1

Acft/Vehicle/Ground: OV1C

Refno: 1523

Other Personnel in Incident: Robert Thomas White (Released 1973)

Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project with the assistance of one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews: 15 March 1990. Updated by the P.O.W. NETWORK 2002.

REMARKS: DIED ESCAPING 7000215; W/WHITE, R

SYNOPSIS: John G. Graf was a Tactical Observer attached to Chief of Naval AD Group, U.S. MACV, South Vietnam. On November 15, 1969, Graf was a crewmember aboard an OV1C aircraft flown by U.S. Army Capt. Robert T. White on a visual reconnaissance mission. The U.S. Army aircraft was hit by hostile ground fire and crashed some 20 miles southeast of Tra Vinh City, Vinh Binh Province, South Vietnam. Both the pilot and observer were observed by an American Coast Guard unit to eject safely. A local villager reported that National Liberation Front Forces captured both crewmen.

On March 29, 1973, the Viet Cong announced that White was to be released on April 1. He was the last American in the repatriation program dubbed "Operation Homecoming". In his debrief, Capt. White reported that he was held with Graf in various prison camps until late January 1970, when Graf escaped with another POW. Before his release, the National Liberation Front area commander told White to inform the U.S. authorities that Graf had drowned during an escape attempt in February 1970. Former residents of this area also reported this story to officials and that his remains were buried in the Long Toan area.

Viet Cong papers were found in a Viet Cong camp which contained the interrogation reports of both LCdr. Graf and Capt. White. Other captured documents stated that Graf had died in February 1970, and listed the location of his grave in Vinh Binh Province.

Although information concerning LCdr. Graf is still classified, it was given to the Vietnamese in hopes that they would be forthcoming with further information about his fate. The Vietnamese continue to deny any knowledge of LCdr. Graf.

Numerous declassified DIA documents indicate LCdr. Graf was sighted ALIVE at least 18 times in captivity. Document 2 724 0397 73 from the 500 MI GP dated 23 May 73 speaks of a live sighting of Graf. Other documents indicate the "drowning" was only a story related by the communists.

Nearly 2500 Americans remain missing or otherwise unaccounted for in Vietnam. Since the war ended, nearly 10,000 reports concerning these missing Americans have been received by the U.S. Government. Many experts are completely convinced that hundreds of Americans are now held captive.

One set of critics say that the U.S. has done little to address the issue of live POWs, preferring the politically safer issue of remains return. Others place the blame on the Vietnamese, for using the issue of POW/MIA to their political advantage. Regardless of blame, no living American has returned through the efforts of negotiations between the countries, and the reports

continue to pour in. Are we doing enough to bring these men home?