

June 17, 1994

THE U.S. VETERAN DISPATCH

U.S. PRISONERS OF COMMUNIST VIETNAM





A003



C016



C065



G018

CHAMBERS, JERRY LEE

Name: Jerry Lee Chambers
 Rank/Branch: O4/USAF
 Unit: 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron,
 Ubon RTAFB
 Date of Birth: 12 October 1932
 Home City of Record: Muskogee OK
 Date of Loss: 22 May 1968
 Country of Loss: Laos
 Loss Coordinates: 162000N 1063000E (XC843858)
 Status (in 1973): Missing In Action
 Category: 4
 Ground: C130A

Personnel in Incident: John Q. Adam; Calvin C. Glover; Thomas E. Knebel; William H.
 William T. McPhail; Thomas B. Mitchell; Gary Pate; Melvin D. Rash (all missing)

Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project (919/527-8079) 01 April 1991 from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews. Copyright 1991 Homecoming II Project.

REMARKS: CONTACT LOST - NFI

SYNOPSIS: The Lockheed C130 Hercules aircraft was a multi-purpose propeller driven aircraft, and was used as transport, tanker, gunship, airborne battlefield command and control center, weather reconnaissance craft, electronic reconnaissance platform; search, rescue and recovery craft. In the hands of the "trash haulers", as the crews of Tactical Air Command transports styled themselves, the C130 proved the most valuable airlift instrument in the Southeast Asia conflict.

One of the bases from which the C130 flew was Ubon, located in northeast Thailand. C130 crews from this base crossed Laos to their objective location. One such crew was comprised of LtCol. William H. Mason and Capt. Thomas B. Mitchell, pilots; Capt. William T. McPhail, Maj. Jerry L. Chambers, SA Gary Pate, SSgt. Calvin C. Glover, AM1 Melvin D. Rash, and AM1 John Q. Adam, crew members.

On May 22, 1968, this crew departed Ubon on an operational mission in a C130A carrying one passenger - AM1 Thomas E. Knebel. Radio contact was lost while the aircraft was over Savannakhet Province, Laos near the city of Muong Nong, (suggesting that its target area may have been near the DMZ - Khe Sanh). When the aircraft did not return to friendly control, the crew was declared Missing In Action from the time of estimated fuel exhaustion. There was no further word of the aircraft or its crew.

The nine members of the crew are among nearly 600 Americans who disappeared in Laos. Many are known to have been alive on the ground following their shoot downs. Although the Pathet Lao publicly stated on several occasions that they held "tens of tens" of American prisoners, not one American held in Laos has ever been released. Laos did not participate in the Paris Peace accords ending American involvement in the war in 1973, and no treaty has ever been signed that would free the Americans held in Laos, and not one of them has returned home.

William Mason was a 1946 graduate of West Point. Thomas Mitchell was a 1963 graduate of the Air Force Academy.

John Adam and Gary Pate were promoted to the rank of Senior Master Sergeant; William Mason to the rank of Colonel; William McPhail and Thomas Mitchell to the rank of Major; Jerry Chambers to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel; Calvin Glover, Thomas Knebel, and Melvin Rash to the rank of Chief Master Sergeant, during the period they were maintained Missing in Action.