

## **History of Eugene Henry DeBruin's Imprisonment in Laos**

### **5 September 1963 - Present**

Eugene Henry DeBruin, in a C-46, was shot down 2 kilometers West of Tchepone, Laos (XD 2748) over the village of Ban Nassong (XD 2448) on 5 September 1963. Survivors included: American, Eugene Henry DeBruin; Thais, Prasit Promsuwan, Prasit Thanee, Pisidhi Indradat; and Hong Kong Chinese, To Yick Chiu.

Fifteen days later, approximately 20 September 1963, the five were taken to Muong Phine Prison (XD 0927). The five were then taken to Ban Thaknong (XD 3146) and stayed there for approximately 79 days.

In early December 1963, the five were then moved to Ban Muong Angkham (XD 1976). In May 1964, the five were taken to Ban Long Khong (WE 7742). On 3 May 1964, the five escaped for three or four days but were recaptured by the Pathet Lao at a waterhole at WE 7043.

On 6 or 7 May 1964, the five were taken back to the prison at Ban Long Khong (WE 7742). In early July 1964, the five received a pilfered package which contained anti-dysentery medicine and some mail. This is the only known time that the five received any packages or mail.

On approximately 12 July 1964, the five were taken to a new prison called Ban Tha Pa Chon (WE 8705). The Pathet Lao photographed the five at this village and the photograph was published widely thus acknowledging that the five were indeed Pathet Lao prisoners. (See brochure for copy of photo.)

After being in Ban Tha Pa Chon (WE 8705) for 12 days, the five were taken to Ban Tam (XD 1395) and stayed there for about three months. They were then taken to Tham Pacham and were interrogated there in the latter part of 1965.

In December of 1965, an AF pilot named Duane Martin joined the five, increasing the group size to six. Immediately the six were transferred to Pha Keun Prison (XD 3192). On 16 January 1966, Navy pilot Dieter Dengler joined the group of six to make seven. In March 1966, the seven were taken to Ban Houai (Hoi) Het (XD 3089).

In June 1966, the seven escaped from Ban Houai (Hoi) Het (XD 3089) prison. Four groups were formed, each going different ways to avoid detection. Dieter Dengler and Duane Martin formed one group; Pisidhi Indradat went alone after separating from the group which included Prasit Promsuwan and Prasit Thanee; Eugene Henry DeBruin and To Yick Chiu (Y.C. To) went together in the fourth group. Dengler was picked up by a chopper 23 days later, Martin was killed on the fifth day after the escape, Indradat was recaptured after 43 days and was released with a group of Lao political prisoners as a result of a planned raid in January of 1967, near Mahaxay (WE 2225). Nothing had been heard about Prasit Promsuwan, Prasit Thanee, To Yick Chiu and Eugene Henry DeBruin until January 1968.

Shortly before TET, in January 1968, a report from an intelligence source indicated that Eugene Henry DeBruin arrived back at Muong Phine prison (XD 0927) in late June 1966. In early January 1967 he was taken to Muong Nong prison (XD 6010) arriving there on about 5 January 1967. He stayed at Muong Nong prison (XD 6010) for one year at which time he and 8 other Americans were moved "Northward" by a North Vietnamese officer named Ong Lui. The report given by the intelligence source is as follows:

Eugene Henry DeBruin arrived at Muong Phine (XD 0927) in late June 1966. On or about 3 January 1967 DeBruin was taken from Muong Phine and arrived at Muong Nong (XD 6010) on about 5 January 1967. The Muong Nong prison contained only eight other Americans at this time. While in Muong Nong, DeBruin was strictly guarded by the NVA and he suffered very much. The NVA did not torture him but kept him imprisoned and gave him propaganda lectures. PL General Khamkong and NVA General Tao, who speaks English, were the only high ranking officers to interview him. The NVA often displayed anger towards the prisoners because of the U.S. bombing in their area. DeBruin was allowed to eat his meals with, and talk to the other Americans but the villagers had no knowledge whether he ever received letters or packages. DeBruin never escaped from Muong Phine or Muong Nong, because he was strictly guarded. In early January 1968 Ong Lui and six NVA took DeBruin and eight other Americans away. The villagers did not know Ong Lui's rank and said he was not from that area, but probably came from NVN to get the prisoners. The villagers were told only that DeBruin and the others were being taken away for training. End of report.

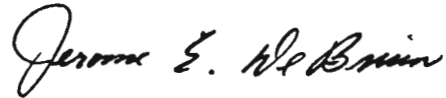
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On 27 September 1982, Lao Colonel Khamla Keophithoune of the Laos Ministry of Interior provided **unconfirmed** information of Eugene's possible death to a delegation from the National League of Families visiting Laos at that time. (Today, reports indicate that Col. Khamla Keophithoune was in error and was actually speaking of the death of Duane Martin, **not** Eugene Henry DeBruin.) Follow up requests to Colonel Khamla Keophithoune seeking clarification have been ignored.

Reports continue to surface that indicate Eugene Henry DeBruin, To Yick Chiu, Prasit Thanee and Prasit Promsuwan survived their ordeal and may be living in Southeast Asia. Further information needs to be gathered in an effort to confirm their current fate and whereabouts and seek their eventual release. Other crew members who reached safety include Thai Pisidhi Indradat who currently lives in Bangkok and American Dieter Dengler who wrote a book entitled *Escape from Laos* (Presidio) and now lives in California.

Our family would appreciate any information at all, regardless of how significant or insignificant it may seem, that would shed some light on the current fate and whereabouts of these missing men. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome E. DeBruin". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Jerome" and last name "DeBruin" clearly legible.

Jerome E. DeBruin