



Seawolf (HAL-3)  
Association U.S.N.  
George R. Leduc

12-4-91

Hello Don,

I've been doing some renovations and had misplaced my note on art and the others. Here are copies of what was told to me over the phone. I think it might be a little more accurate than what I wrote from memory.

Also enclosed are the Bio's on all three "wolves" and a poem I had found a while back. In fact I had sent a copy of this poem to Dan to be put in the Wolfgram.

OK just a short note. Have a nice X mass.

George

"69-70 Det 4"

# JOHNSON, ROBERT DENNISON

Name: Robert Dennison Johnson  
Rank/Branch: O4/US Navy  
Unit: Helicopter Attack Squadron 3,  
Detachment 1, USS GARRETT COUNTY  
Date of Birth: 12 February 1934 (Bridgeport CT)  
Home City of Record: Dallas TX  
Date of Loss: 01 September 1967  
Country of Loss: South Vietnam  
Loss Coordinates: 093515E 1061812E (XR430600)  
Status (in 1973): Killed/Body Not Recovered  
Category: 5  
Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: UH1H

Other Personnel in Incident: Edward L. Ott III (missing)

*Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project 01 April 1990 from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews.*

## REMARKS:

**SYNOPSIS:** LtCdr. Robert D. Johnson was an assistant operations officer assigned to Light Helicopter Attack Squadron 3, Detachment 1, onboard the USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST 786). On September 1, 1967, he was scrambled on a pre-dawn emergency launch to interdict Viet Cong forces attacking a friendly outpost. The UH1H on which he launched carried a full crew, including Petty Officer Edward L. Ott III, a jet engine mechanic.

The helicopter was seen to lift off the deck of the USS GARRETT COUNTY and crash into the Bassac River. When the survivors of the crash appeared on the river's surface, Johnson and Ott were not among them. An immediate search was initiated using River Patrol Boats and other helicopter search aircraft. The search lasted for several days and nights, however, the results were negative.

The cockpit/cabin portion of the aircraft was located partially covered by mud, and debris was scattered over the river bottom. It was believed that the bodies of Ott and Johnson could not be recovered. Both were listed as Killed, Body Not Recovered.

Johnson and Ott are among nearly 2500 who remained unaccounted for at the end of the Vietnam War. The cases of some, like Johnson and Ott, can be simply stated. Other cases, however, are more complex. Many of the missing were known to have been alive in sight of the enemy the last they were seen. Others were actually photographed in captivity, only to disappear.

Since the war ended, nearly 10,000 reports relating to Americans missing in Southeast Asia have been received by the U.S. Government. Many authorities believe that there are hundreds of Americans still held captive today.

It is not likely that Ott and Johnson survived the crash of their helicopter to be captured under such closely observed circumstances. No doubt hope is lost for these two men. For unknown numbers of others, hope still exists. We must do everything we can to bring these men home while there is still time.

OTT, EDWARD LOUIS III

Name: Edward Louis Ott III

Rank/Branch: E6/US Navy

Unit: Helicopter Attack Squadron 3, Detachment 1, USS GARRETT COUNTY

Date of Birth: 12 March 1939

Home City of Record: Rockville CT

Date of Loss: 01 September 1967

Country of Loss: South Vietnam

Loss Coordinates: 093515E 1061812E (XR430600)

Status (in 1973): Killed/Body Not Recovered

Category: 5

Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: UH1H

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FACT SHEET

AVIATION MACHINIST'S MATE (JET ENGINE MACHANIC) PETTY OFFICER  
THIRD CLASS MOSER, Paul Kierstead, USN

Petty Officer Moser enlisted in the Navy on February 8, 1967 and was subsequently assigned to Fleet Support Squadron FIVE ZERO, based in Atsugi Naval Air Station, Japan. His C2-A cargo aircraft was performing delivery duties to aircraft carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin, when his aircraft went down for unknown reasons. He was serving on board the aircraft as an air crewman.

Petty Officer Moser has been listed as Killed In Action (KIA) since October 2, 1969. His body has not been recovered.

Petty Officer Moser was born May 2, 1946 in Hartford, Connecticut. His home of record was listed as Newington, Connecticut.

ADJ3 PAUL K. MOSER  
USN 10-2-69 NVN-DW

CASE SYNOPSIS: OTT, EDWARD LOUIS III  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 Name: Edward Louis Ott, III  
 Rank/Branch: E6 First Class Petty Officer, USN  
 Date of Birth: 12 March 1939  
 Home City of Record: Rockville, CT  
 Loss Date: 01 September 1967  
 Country of Loss: South Vietnam  
 Status: Missing in Action  
 Acft/Vehicle/Ground: USS Garrett County (LST-786)

SYNOPSIS: The following information was provided by George Leduc, CT NFMNA member, Vietnam Veteran, and a member of the Seawolf (HAL-3) Association U.S.N.:

Aviation Machinist's Mate (Jet Engine Mechanic) First Class Petty Officer Edward Louis Ott, USN, was assigned to Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron THREE, DET ONE, on board USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786). On September 1, 1967 while performing as a gunner on a pre-dawn, emergency scramble, the helicopter in which Petty Officer Ott was flying, was observed to lift off the deck of the USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786) and crash into the Bassac River. When the survivors of the crash appeared on the river's surface, the pilot of the aircraft and Petty Officer Ott were not among them. An immediate search was initiated using River Patrol Boats (PBRs) and helicopter search aircraft. The vigil lasted for several days and nights in the fervent hope that Petty Officer Ott might be located. His body was not recovered.

Petty Officer Ott and his pilot were initially placed in a casualty status of Missing in Action (MIA) and later changed to Reported Dead on September 9, 1967.

On August 31, Ed told his friend, Joe Mount, that he had a very bad feeling about his next mission; a feeling that he wouldn't make it.

REARDON, RICHARD JOHN

Name: Richard John Reardon  
Rank/Branch: O2/US Navy Reserves  
Unit: Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron 3, Detachment 3  
Date of Birth: 24 February 1944 (Brooklyn NY)  
Home City of Record: Huntington NY  
Date of Loss: 28 April 1969  
Country of Loss: South Vietnam  
Loss Coordinates: 104747N 1060442E (XS179936)  
Status (in 1973): Killed/Body Not Recovered  
Category: 1  
Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: UH1B

Other Personnel in Incident: (two crew remains recovered, one crewman rescued)

Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project 30 June 1990 from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews.

REMARKS: 700200 CREW REMAINS RECOVERED

SYNOPSIS: LTJG Richard J. Reardon was a pilot assigned to Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron 3, Detachment 3 "Seawolves" in Vietnam. He flew the UH1B "Huey" attack helicopter gunship with his co-pilot LTJG Castle, and two enlisted gunners.

On April 28, 1969 the Detachment 3 fire team was based at the Special Forces Camp, Moc Hoa, and sent on a patrol of the Vam Co Tay River. This location is in Kien Tuong Province, right on the Cambodian border. The river was notorious as a Viet Cong infiltration route and a large number of abandoned sampans were targeted.

During the attack run, intense enemy fire was encountered and suppression fire was called for. LTJG Reardon was seen to impact in a near-vertical crash and become engulfed in flames. One enlisted crewman was either thrown or crawled clear of the wreckage and was later rescued by the lead helicopter only after engaging heavy ground fire.

With the crash circumstances as they were, and the visual consensus of other helicopter crews in the flight, there was little to no likelihood that anyone else could have survived. The crew, including Reardon, was listed Killed in Action. In later recovery attempts, the remains of two crewmembers, including Castle's, were recovered. Reardon's remains were never found.

The U.S. is certain that the Vietnamese could tell us more about LTJG Reardon, although his name did not appear on the list compiled in 1973 as "discrepancy" cases on which the Vietnamese could provide information. Other than the presence of the enemy at the location, there is nothing in the Navy account to indicate why the U.S. specifically believes Reardon's fate is known to the enemy.

591 American Prisoners of War were released in 1973, but nearly 2500 were not. Thousands of reports have been received by the U.S. Government that indicate hundreds of Americans are still alive and held captive in Southeast Asia, yet the government seems unable or unwilling to successfully achieve their release. Policy statements indicate that "conclusive proof" is not available, but when it is, the government will act. Detractors state that proof is in hand, but the will to act does not exist.

Whether Reardon was found and removed by the enemy is not known. Whether he could be among those believed to be still alive today is unlikely. What cannot be questioned, however, is that America has a moral and legal obligation to secure the freedom of those who may still be illegally held by the communist governments of Southeast Asia. It's time we brought our men home.

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OTT, Louis Edward III

— Mike Caudill Det. 7 Chicago  
Listed OTT, Johnson & Douglass were  
on crew did NOT remember co-pilot name.

He said there was a SCRAMBLE, on the  
LST GARRET County. they didn't wait for  
ship to turn into wind, lost lift upon  
TAKE OFF, went into Bassac River

Two crewmen recovered AT Time, copilot  
& Doug.

Later on in (Bihn thay I think He said) He  
overheard some seals TALKING ABOUT Finding  
two bodies - sexwolves, and that they were  
Tortured & mutilated.

— Glen Wilson Det. 2 California  
Confirmed that Johnson & OTT were on  
GARRET County & Douglass was one  
of the gunners. couldn't recall co-pilot name  
either.

— Duane Bell Det. 1 West Germany  
Said he thought the Copilot name was  
LT. AL BACACUS. who was TRANSFERRED TO  
DET 7 AFTER the accident.  
He said the Huey was found by seals



the next day, AT the mouth of the river  
and it was full of sand no bodies

SAID He never heard about bodies  
being found. He also thought that both  
Leaf & Copilot were not wearing chicken  
plates & that Ott & Johnson were

— Joe Mount AR2 Washington  
(Alexandria)

Said he talked to Ott the day before  
& that Ott had a bad feeling about the next  
mission. Joe said that as far as he knows  
they were both KIA bodies returned.

He said He would do some checking.

— C. Taburg XO-HAL-3

He told me He thought for sure that  
His wife had attended Johnson Funeral  
(It could have been just a memorial service  
that would explain that) but neither him  
or His wife were certain.

Doug Leaf

net 3

Alma Colara

1-719-836-3177

was not scheduled to fly, but did. He confirmed how the accident happened. He was trapped on bottom with Huey. till He finally could inflate his mace west He also said that him & Ott were not good swimmers, and never told anyone. He also could not remember the pilot name, and Bacacus didn't ring a bell.

He believed that Johnson & Ott swam to shore, I'm not sure but I think He said it happened AT night.

He was asked to accompany the bodies home but was too shaken up. so he didn't know what became of bodies.

He called me back a few minutes later to explain what really happened (He said He never told anyone until this time, kept it to himself)

AFTER He recovered He Had A conversation with the SEAL TEAM leader a Captain He couldn't remember His name the seal told Him that both bodies were Found Tortured & Killed.

He (Davey) didn't know about the association so I gave Him info

the Ott Family

Rockville, CT.

Talked to Mr & Mrs Ott.

as far as they know He was listed as a change from MIA. He has 2 brothers in Navy. They didn't know or remember too much about the Squadron or what Doug was doing.

Sure would be curious to read what the government has on the incident.

Talked to Mrs Ott again a week ago. Told her about the Reunion and scholarship to be started. She couldn't go and she hasn't seen or heard from Louis wife or kids since about a year after he died.

She also told us that her other son's told her to "leave it alone" that she did not want to know how he died, because it was awful. - this was not too long after he died, so it sounds like they might have known.

## Gunships

Guilt

for not getting there soon enough to save some  
for having to leave station too soon and losing more  
for killing so many  
for not killing more of them to save more of us  
for living while they all died  
for leaving comrades behind without cover, while I went  
home  
for forgetting the names of my friends who died  
for turning away from those who meant so much to me  
in the Nam—  
after our return—because they knew me too well.

Only now am I able to begin to mourn  
for those I couldn't cover  
for my enemy, whom I killed and whom I now can only  
think of as other men  
for my friends lost to my isolation.

We were boys revelling in the terrible power of our  
gunships.  
Alive and living by our wits and our skills.  
Knit close in our dependency yet each alone with his  
fears and unable to show them to anyone—  
not even his wingman.  
Not able to ask for help and support from anyone—not  
even his wingman.  
Alone.

After returning home, forced by a country that didn't  
care, to put all these things away, to collect interest.  
So that now, when debts must finally be paid, the price  
is so very dear.  
Costing friends, a wife and years without living fully—  
and doing it without the cover of a wingman.  
Alone.

Only now, 15 years later, I'm learning that I have  
feelings.  
The first to come are hurt for all the losses, past and  
present, and fear that people will turn away in horror  
and disgust if they see the real me, without all my  
defenses in place—  
a killer without absolution.

I don't wish to forget. I only want to be rid of the guilt  
and be comfortable with the memories—bad and  
good.  
By starting to mourn, I start down a path that will allow  
me to forgive myself and make it unimportant that  
this country failed to bring its soldiers home.  
I will bring myself home.  
Not alone, but with the help of others who were there—  
we'll bring each other home.

*Dave Paduan*