

ROBERT A. REARDON

May 20, 1969

Prince Samdech Norodom Sihanouk  
Chief of State of Cambodia  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Dear Sir:

On May 3, 1969 the U. S. Navy Department reported that my son LTjg Richard J. Reardon was Pilot of one of two Navy Helicopters that crashed in Cambodia and was killed. He was in the trail helicopter that evidently crashed and burned. One person was rescued from his helicopter.

According to the San Francisco Sunday Examiner of 5/4/69 a newspaper in Phnom Penh, Cambodia reported that three bodies were taken there. I have also read a newspaper report from San Francisco of the report of the incident made by the Cambodian Ambassador Huot Sambath to the United Nations.

There may be a duplication of effort because my brother had already phoned and written your Ambassador Huot Sambath without my knowledge, but he is trying to be helpful and what can I do. He reported that the office of your Ambassador was most kind and considerate, but their information is confined to limited dispatches sent to them by your government.

My information is limited to telegrams sent to me by my government. The information is "Killed in action 4/28/69, remains not recovered". On the basis of this information, I am sure you must realize what questions now come into my mind as to what happened, how it happened and the details.

I had three sons when I went into World War II and my youngest son "DICK" was two months old and I thought this would be the end of this world mess. I had a reason for serving my country because I had three sons to make the world safe for. My two older boys and the youngest "DICK" went in because their country needed them.

There is no reason why a loyal American and a loyal Cambodian can't converse together over a sad situation, the loss of my son. I know you have also had sad losses of your fellow countrymen.

I have just got to appeal to you as a father, man to man for all the information you might have on my son "DICK". I think this has precedent over all problems between governments. My wife will not believe our son is dead because no one has come up with any proof that he is dead. My Navy Dept. reports killed in action, but no one to date has come forward with any concrete evidence that this is so. Nothing as to who saw the body, how they definitely know he is dead and where is the proof that he is dead.

As you can understand this is tearing my wife and myself to pieces, not knowing and having hopes he is alive. Someone has to draw the final curtain on this and Prince you are the one that can do it.

If DICK is really dead and you have the body that proves it. That's all we want to know. If he received a burial, we would be most grateful to know this.

I would appreciate any information you might have as to what happened. I would like to know how he went down, why he went down and what happened when he went down.

If DICK is buried in Cambodia, I would like your permission for my wife and I to come to see some day where he is buried. I am sure my State Department would give their approval, if not now, maybe later on.

I can't offer anything to you but the love for a son by a father and mother. They say faith moves anything and I have faith in you for your compassion for a cried out hopeful father and mother.

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT A. REARDON  
EVELYN REARDON

CC : Huot Samboth,  
New York, New York.