

## **CAROL'S COMMENTS**

**The summary of facts comes from the Air Force Casualty file. There is a casualty file kept on every man who was lost during the war. Each of the services Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy had their own casualty file and at the beginning of the war the individual services were tasked to keep files on their losses.**

**David's original casualty reports are included. Note on the final casualty report it is stamped POW MIA to KIA. The question here is how does a man in captivity go missing from a prison system? Do you think the enemy would just lose their captives? Note that the reason given for declaring David dead is for "termination of pay and allowances".**

## SUMMARY OF FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Lieutenant Colonel David L. Hrdlicka, 476-28-0663FR, was the pilot of the lead aircraft in a flight of four F-105s which departed Takhli Air Base, Thailand, at 0735, 18 May 1965, on an interdiction/bombing mission of a segment of road in the vicinity of Sam Neua, Laos. The flight arrived in their assigned target area without incident and was forced to circle the area for approximately 15-20 minutes until the low cloud cover abated and allowed recognition of the target. Colonel Hrdlicka descended through the cloud cover and initiated his attack on the target, followed by the other flight members. As he was completing his pass, Colonel Hrdlicka radioed that he had a fire warning light on and the pilot of the number two aircraft confirmed that his aircraft was on fire. The aircraft continued climbing until reaching approximately 10,000 feet and at about 0850 Colonel Hrdlicka ejected and deployed a good parachute. The pilots of the number three and four aircraft attained a higher altitude to alert search and rescue forces while the wingman remained in close proximity to the lead aircraft and observed Colonel Hrdlicka descend in his parachute. He was seen to land in a valley clearing near a small village located approximately nine miles east-southeast of Sam Neua, Laos. The wingman flew toward the downed member but was driven back to a higher altitude by intense flak. Circling at 9,000-12,000 feet, he could not see any movement on the ground, but after about 10-15 minutes, the wingman noticed that Colonel Hrdlicka's parachute was being folded up. In a low level pass over the area he caught a fleeting glimpse of approximately six to eight people standing as though they were looking in his direction. One person had the parachute under his arm. The people were dressed in dark colored clothing and one person, taller than the others, was dressed in a flying suit. It was impossible to determine if the taller person was walking with the others or if he was being supported by them in an upright position. The wingman watched the group enter the village and disappear. The wingman refueled and returned to base; and when he reentered the area to assist in the search for the downed member, two helicopters and four T-28 aircraft were at the scene. The T-28 flight circled the area at a low altitude, but the members did not see any signs of life in the village. One of the helicopters landed near a friendly village about eight to ten miles from where Colonel Hrdlicka had parachuted, and the villagers reported that the downed pilot had been captured by the Pathet Lao. Although Colonel Hrdlicka carried electronic emergency equipment, no distress calls were received from him after ejection. Due to negative findings the search was terminated. On the basis of the above information, Colonel Hrdlicka was placed in a detained status on 24 May 1965. The term "detained" was later changed to "interned" as directed by the Department of Defense. Colonel Hrdlicka was continued in an interned status at the expiration of the initial 12-month period of absence in accordance with the provisions of Section 1005, Title 50, USC (comparable to Section 555, Title 37).

2. Beginning on 22 May 1966, a number of reports emanated from the Pathet Lao telling of the capture of Colonel Hrdlicka, including on two occasions the playing of tape recordings allegedly made by Colonel Hrdlicka. In addition, two letters purported to be from Colonel Hrdlicka to Prince Souphanouvong, decrying US involvement in Laos and asking to be released, were propagandized.

3. A Hanoi publication, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, printed a photograph on 22 July 1966 of an individual in a flight suit being closely followed by an armed enemy soldier, presumably a Pathet Lao. The article identified the individual in the photograph as Colonel Hrdlicka. Positive identification was made by the next of kin. The same photograph appeared in the 31 August 1966 issue of the Soviet newspaper, Pravda.

4. On 5 May 1967, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva, Switzerland, was advised by a Laotian representative that the Pathet Lao reported the capture of two Americans, Colonel Hrdlicka and Mr. Ernest C. Brace, a civilian. Mr. Brace was repatriated during Operation HOMECOMING and in his debriefing he reported having no knowledge of the capture or the fate of Colonel Hrdlicka. Although several of the repatriates recalled seeing the photographs of the individual identified as Colonel Hrdlicka in Pravda and Quan Doi Nhan Dan, none of the returnees saw or heard of Colonel Hrdlicka while in captivity.


5. Mr. Sot Pethrasi, the Lao Patriotic Front representative in Vientiane, was contacted numerous times through the International Committee of the Red Cross concerning an accounting for missing and captured Americans in Laos, without results. He stated that it was very difficult to get information from the Lao Patriotic Front headquarters at Sam Neua, Laos. Consistent with North Vietnam's position, he and other Lao Communist officials claimed that US pilots did not have the legal status of prisoners of war because there was no declaration of war; therefore, their acts were "piratical" or "criminal." He claimed that US prisoners were treated as well as the situation permitted and in most cases they were kept under guard within the confines of a village. Subsequent to the signing of the peace agreement with North Vietnam, Mr. Pethrasi stated publicly on numerous occasions that there are no American military prisoners in Laos.

6. No accounting for Colonel Hrdlicka was ever received from the North Vietnamese government, the Neo Lao Hak Sat (Pathet Lao) or their allies.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON 25, D-C.

<b>REPORT OF CASUALTY</b>		REPORT NUMBER AND TYPE M-19 - Final	DATE PREPARED 21 May 1965
1. SERVICE IDENTIFICATION (Name, Service Number, Grade or Rate, Component, Branch and Organization)			
HRDLICKA, David L., 72 541 A, Captain, Regular, USAF - 563rd Tactical Fighter Squadron McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas			
2. CASUALTY STATUS <input type="checkbox"/> BATTLE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NON-BATTLE - Missing			
Missing in flight over Laos 18 May 1965			
3. DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH, GRADE OR RATE, BRANCH AND ORGANIZATION			
4. DATE AND PLACE OF LAST ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY IN CURRENT STATUS AND HOME OF RECORD AT TIME			
5. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, PAY GRADE, LENGTH OF SERVICE FOR PAY, BASIC PAY, INCENTIVE PAY			CHECK IF APPLICABLE
Incentive pay - Yes			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CREW <input type="checkbox"/> NON-CREW
6. DUTY STATUS Active duty			
7. INTERESTED PERSONS (Name, Address, Relationship)			
Mrs. Carol A. Hrdlicka, wife, 1010 Wicker Lane, Wichita, Kansas * Mr. Theodore J. Hrdlicka, father, 6486 South Crocker Street, Littleton, Colorado Mrs. Maxine F. Hrdlicka, mother, address same as father			
8. REPORT FOR VA TO FOLLOW <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		9. REPORTING COMMAND AND DATE REPORT RECEIVED IN DEPARTMENT Not used	
10. SELECTIVE SERVICE NUMBER, LOCAL BOARD, AND LOCATION (If unknown, enter date and place of first entry in Armed Services)			
11. PRIOR SERVICE DATA <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO PRIOR SERVICE NUMBER (S)			
12. REMARKS * Designated as person to receive allotment of pay while in missing status.			
NOTE: THIS FORM MAY BE USED TO FACILITATE THE CASHING OF BONDS, THE PAYMENT OF COMMERCIAL INSURANCE, OR IN THE SETTLEMENT OF ANY OTHER CLAIM IN WHICH PROOF OF DEATH IS REQUIRED.			
FOOTNOTES: <sup>1</sup> Adult next of kin. <sup>2</sup> Beneficiary for gratuity pay in event there is no surviving wife or child - as designated on record of emergency data. <sup>3</sup> Beneficiary for unpaid pay and allowances - as designated on record of emergency data.			
13. DISTRIBUTION		14. BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE <i>L. F. Scott</i> L. F. SCOTT CWO, USAF Directorate of Military Personnel	

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20330

<b>REPORT OF CASUALTY</b>		REPORT NUMBER AND TYPE I-540	DATE PREPARED 11 May 73
		Corrects Report Number - I-1 (1968)	
1. SERVICE IDENTIFICATION (Name, Service Number, Grade or Rate, Component, Branch and Organization)			
HRDLICKA, David Louis, 476-28-0663FR, Lt Col*#, Regular, USAF - 563 Tac Ftr Sq, McConnell AFB KS; TDY TO: APO San Francisco 96273			
2. CASUALTY STATUS <input type="checkbox"/> BATTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NON-BATTLE			
Laos 18 May 65 <b>INTERNEED</b>			
3. DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH, RACE, RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE			
30 Dec 31 - Stewartville MN			
4. DATE AND PLACE OF LAST ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY IN CURRENT STATUS AND HOME OF RECORD AT TIME			
5. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, PAY GRADE, LENGTH OF SERVICE FOR PAY, BASIC PAY, INCENTIVE PAY			CHECK IF APPLICABLE
476-28-0663			Yes ** <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CREW <input type="checkbox"/> NON-CREW
6. DUTY STATUS			
Active - On Duty			
7. INTERESTED PERSONS (Name, Address, Relationship)			
Mrs Carol A Hrdlicka		1013 Blackwill, Wichita KS 67207	wife
David M Hrdlicka		same	son
Denise M Hrdlicka		same	dau
Damian M Hrdlicka		same	son
Mr Theodore J Hrdlicka		6486 S Crocker St, Littleton CO 80120	father
Mrs Maxine F Hrdlicka		same	mother
8. REPORT FOR VA TO FOLLOW <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		9. REPORTING COMMAND AND DATE REPORT RECEIVED IN DEPARTMENT TAKHLI RTAFB THAILAND - 18 May 65	
10. SELECTIVE SERVICE NUMBER, LOCAL BOARD, AND LOCATION (If unknown, enter date and place of first entry in Armed Services)			
11. PRIOR SERVICE DATA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO FR72541			
12. REMARKS: TDY FROM CONUS *Promoted to temporary Lt Col effective 1 May 73, Special Order AB-735, Department of the Air Force, 1 May 73. # **Hostile Pay: Yes Individual was reported missing in action on 18 May 65. Sufficient evidence was received on 24 May 65 to warrant placing him in an interned status. A determination under the provisions of Section 555, Title 37, USC, was made to continue him in an interned status following the expiration of twelve months' absence, effective 19 May 66.  # Indicates Change			
FOOTNOTES: 1 Adult next of kin. 2 Beneficiary for gratuity pay in event there is no surviving wife or child - as designated on record of emergency data. 3 Beneficiary for unpaid pay and allowances - as designated on record of emergency data.			
13. DISTRIBUTION		14. BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE	
		 BOBBY D. BALLARD, Major, USAF Ch, Casualty Rprtg & Survivor Assistance Br	

<b>REPORT OF CASUALTY</b>		1. REPORT NUMBER AND TYPE 1140 - Final	2. DATE PREPARED 23 Nov 77
3. SERVICE IDENTIFICATION (Name, Social Security Number, Grade or Rate, Component, Branch and Organization). (MOS/ NJC) HRDLICKA, David Louis, 476-28-0663FR, Colonel*, Regular, USAF - 563 Tac Ftr Sq, McConnell AFB KS TDY TO: APO San Francisco 96273 AFSC: 1115E			
4. CASUALTY STATUS a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BATTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NON-BATTLE b. COMMENCED TOUR DATE: TDY from CONUS			
c. STATUS: <input type="checkbox"/> DEATH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KIA <input type="checkbox"/> MISSING <input type="checkbox"/> MISSING IN ACTION <input type="checkbox"/> CAPTURED <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____			
d. DATE: ** e. PLACE: Laos (Specify)			
f. CAUSE & CIRCUMSTANCES: Pilot (F-105 Aircraft)			
5. a. DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH 30 Dec 31 - Stewartville MN	b. RACE Caucasian	c. SEX Male	d. RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE Roman Catholic
6. DATE AND PLACE OF LAST ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY IN CURRENT STATUS AND HOME OF RECORD AT TIME 30 Oct 56 - Littleton CO - Littleton CO			
7a. PAY GRADE O-5	b. BASIC PAY	c. INCENTIVE/ADDITIONAL PAY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	d. CHECK IF APPLICABLE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CREW <input type="checkbox"/> PASSENGER
8. DUTY STATUS Active - On Duty SGLI: Public Law 93-289 Applies. No certificate on file \$20,000 Deduction in amount of \$3.40 verified by AFAFC.			
9. INTERESTED PERSONS (Name, Address, Relationship)		DATE OF RECORD OF EMERGENCY DATA FORM: 17 May 65	
Mrs Carol A. Hrdlicka Rt 2, Box 236A, Derby KS 67037 wife (3)			
Denise M. Hrdlicka same dau			
Damian M. Hrdlicka same son			
Mr Theodore J. Hrdlicka 6486 Peroker street Littleton CO 80120 father			
Mrs Maxine F. Hrdlicka same mother			
10. REPORT FOR VA TO FOLLOW <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	11. REPORTING COMMAND AGENCY AND BRANCH CHANGED FROM DEPARTMENT NOT USED Section 555, Title 37, USC Applies		
12. PRIOR SERVICE DATA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO A0306574 : 2511A			
13. REMARKS * Under the provisions of Section 1521, Title 10, USC, subject officer was posthumously promoted to the grade of Colonel, effective 21 Nov 77, by Department of the Air Force Special Order AB-3383, dated 22 Nov 77. This promotion is subject to the provisions of Section 1523, which states that no increased pay or gratuities may be derived from such action. ** Under the provisions of Section 555, Title 37, USC, and upon direction and delegation by the Secretary of the Air Force, the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel for Military Personnel finds this individual to be dead. He was officially reported as missing in action on 18 May 65. Sufficient evidence was received on 24 May 65 to warrant placing him in a captured status. He was continued in this status until 21 Nov 77, the date death is presumed to have occurred for the purpose of termination of pay and allowances, settlement of accounts, and payment of death gratuities as stated in Section 555, Title 37, USC. FY 78 Fund Cite: 578350) 328 5781.0* S503725 (off)			
NOTE: THIS FORM MAY BE USED TO FACILITATE THE CASHING OF BONDS, THE PAYMENT OF COMMERCIAL INSURANCE, OR IN THE SETTLEMENT OF ANY OTHER CLAIM IN WHICH PROOF OF DEATH IS REQUIRED.			
FOOTNOTES: 1. Adult next of kin. 2. Beneficiary for gratuity pay in event there is no surviving wife or child--as designated on record of emergency data. 3. Beneficiary for unpaid pay and allowances--as designated on record of emergency data.			
14. DISTRIBUTION NOT USED	15. BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  DEAN M. MURPHY, Lt Colonel, USAF Ch, Casualty Rptg & Survivor Assistance		

