

## Missing in Action (MIA) in Laos for 47 Years

(A note from Jim [Moe] Moyer)

In the last century more than 20, 000, 000 (million) American Men & Women either have elected or were elected to defend this unique Republic in declared and/or un-declared war. Approximately 100,000 of these failed to return to their families. Their fate is truly Unknown. You need not be an Einstein (mathematician) to comprehend the percentage of Missing in Action/ Unaccounted For is a relatively small number in comparison to the whole, but a small percentage number should not be the excuse for ignoring our military ethos: ***Leave NO MAN Behind*** .

I understand that you may not have known Major Thomas Allen Duckett or even knew he was one of the 82,000 plus on DPAA's list of MIAs and because of that, I respectfully request you read his incident related biography (<http://pownetwork.org/bios/d/d008.htm>) then share the story below referencing the Forty-Seventh (47) Anniversary of Major Duckett's loss with all your friends and perhaps you can even ask them to join you in your effort to educate the American public on the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action issue and let them know that *WE Will NOT FORGET Until They ALL Come HOME!*

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Tom Duckett was shot down in Laos forty-seven years ago, today, 12/12/70; and, has been MIA since. What a shame that our government has never moved to locate him, or any of the other 1,602 Americans still listed by the Department of Defense (DOD) as unaccounted for in SouthEast Asia:

<http://www.dpaa.mil/Resources/Fact-Sheets/Article-View/Article/569613/progress-in-vietnam/>.

Why do so many of us keep up the effort to locate our POW-MIAs? Ans. Because most of us, except for luck or fate, could have been lost in the hell holes of Laos, Cambodia, or Vietnam, and forgotten by most U.S. citizens, as has Duckett, and the rest of our brothers abandoned there.

About Thomas Allen Duckett

Name:	Thomas Allen Duckett
Rank/Branch:	Major/US Air Force
Unit:	23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron, Nakhon Phanom Airbase, Thailand
Date of Birth:	12 November 1946
Home of Record:	La Grange, GA
Date of Loss:	12 December 1970
Country of Loss:	Laos
Loss Coordinates:	<a href="#">163900N 1061900E (XD410417)</a>
Status in 1973:	Missing in Action
Category:	2

Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground:[O2A "Super Skymaster"](#)

Other Personnel In Owen G. Skinner (missing)

REMARKS:

SYNOPSIS: The Cessna O2A Super Skymaster is a small twin-engine, light aircraft with the engines in line. The one in front drives a tractor propeller and the one in the rear a pusher prop. Its primary mission was as Forward Air Controller (FAC) to locate enemy targets and enemy terrain, and it often operated within easy range of hostile ground fire.

When North Vietnam began to increase its military strength in South Vietnam, NVA and Viet Cong troops again intruded on neutral Laos for sanctuary, as the Viet Minh had done during the war with the French some years before. This border road was used by the Communists to transport weapons, supplies and troops from North Vietnam into South Vietnam, and was frequently no more than a path cut through the jungle covered mountains. US forces used all assets available to them to stop this flow of men and supplies from moving south into the war zone.

Oscar Eight was the code name given to a sector of eastern Laos located in rugged jungle covered mountains approximately 25 miles northwest of the infamous A Shau Valley, Saravane Province, Laos. The area encompassed the junction of Highway 92, which was a primary north-south artery of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and Highway 922, which branched off and ran directly east where it crossed into South Vietnam at a strategic point near the northern edge of the A Shau Valley. Oscar Eight was also located at the southeastern end of a large and narrow jungle covered valley that had two primary roads running through it, one on each side of the valley. Highway 92 ran along the west side and Highway 919 along the east. A power line ran parallel to Highway 92 and sometimes crossed it. In addition to the roads and power line, the Hoi An River also flowed through the valley passing the road junction roughly 1 mile west of it.

More American aircraft were downed in the vicinity of the junction of Highways 92 and 922 than any other place in Laos. This was because burrowed deep in the hills of Oscar Eight and located just to the east of the road junction was North Vietnamese General Vo Bam's 559th Transportation Group's forward headquarters. It was also the Ho Chi Minh Trail's control center as well as containing the largest NVA storage facility outside of North Vietnam. Oscar Eight was defended by consecutive belts of anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) guns of all sizes that were not only stationed on the ground, but also mounted on platforms in the trees. All of these AAA batteries were expertly camouflaged.

At 1700 hours on 12 December 1972, then 1st Lt. Thomas a Duckett, aircraft commander; and Major Owen G. Skinner, navigator; comprised the crew of an O2A aircraft, call sign "Nail 84." They were conducting an evening Forward Air Control (FAC) mission to direct a cell of B52s against truck movement along the Ho Chi Minh Trail's Highway 19 as it ran to the east-southeast through a long narrow valley. Further, this primary infiltration route ran through the

northern sector of Oscar Eight and crossed into South Vietnam due west of the major American base of Khe Sanh.