

MASCARI, PHILLIP LOUIS

Name: Phillip Louis Mascari
Rank/Branch: Major/US Air Force
Unit: 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron
Nakhon Phanom Airfield, Thailand
Date of Birth: 03 December 1944
Home of Record: Caldwell, NJ
Date of Loss: 02 May 1969
Country of Loss: Laos
Loss Coordinates: [161500N 1064400E \(WD450850\)](#)
[Click coordinates to view maps](#)
Status in 1973: Missing In Action
Category: 4
Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: [O2A "Skymaster"](#)
Other Personnel in Incident: (none missing)



REMARKS:

SYNOPSIS: The Cessna O2 Skymaster was the military version of the civilian Model 335 Skymaster. The twin-engine, twin-tailboom O2 had greater endurance and a little more speed than the more familiar O1 Bird Dog, but still remained essentially unarmed carrying only smoke rockets. Like its predecessor, the low flying, slow moving Skymaster was used primarily as a Forward Air Control (FAC) aircraft to mark targets for both attack aircraft and ground troops.

On 2 May 1969, then 1st Lt. Phillip L. Mascari was the pilot of an O2A, call sign "Nail 110," on a Forward Air Control (FAC) mission. The mission identifier was Steel Tiger. He departed Ubon Airfield, Thailand on his 33rd mission at 1200 hours and proceeded to Sector 5 of Steel Tiger. At the conclusion of this mission, he was to return to Ubon.

Weather conditions in the area consisted of scattered thunderstorms and rain showers. The cloud cover was with bases from 2,500 feet to 10,000 feet scattered and to 25,000 feet broken. Visibility was 7 miles.

The last radio contact with 1st Lt. Mascari was at 1455 hours. At that time there was no indication of any trouble. He was due to make radio contact again at 1600 hours, but it was not made. No undue concern was felt when Phillip Mascari failed to report in as scheduled because radio contact was frequently lost when aircraft were flying low in mountains.

When the command and control center suspected Nail 110 might be in trouble, extensive visual and electronic search and rescue (SAR) effort was immediately initiated. During the search, no trace of the aircraft or its pilot was found. No ground search was possible because of the lack of knowledge of a specific loss location. By 1800 hours when the fuel in his aircraft would have been exhausted, Phillip Mascari was listed Missing in Action.

At the time of the last radio contact, the Skymaster was operating deep in enemy held territory approximately 47 miles southeast of Tchepone, Laos. That also placed him in a mountainous and heavily forested region approximately 100 kilometers northeast of Xepon, 40 kilometers north-northwest of Muang Atsaphangtong and 3 kilometers south of Xe Noy, Savannakhet Province, Laos.

Phillip Mascari is one of nearly 600 Americans who disappeared in Laos. Many of these men were known to be alive on the ground. The Laotians admitted holding "tens of tens" of American Prisoners of War, but these men were never negotiated for either by direct negotiation between our countries or through the Paris Peace Accords which ended the War in Vietnam since Laos was not a party to that agreement.

Since the end of the Vietnam War well over 21,000 reports of American prisoners, missing and otherwise unaccounted for have been received by our government. Many of these reports document LIVE America Prisoners of War remaining captive throughout Southeast Asia TODAY.

Pilots in Vietnam and Laos were called upon to fly in many dangerous circumstances, and they were prepared to be wounded, killed or captured. It probably never occurred to them that they could be abandoned by the country they so proudly served.

Phil Mascari graduated from Rutgers University.