



Son Tay Raid: American POWs in Vietnam Were Not Forgotten, Revised Edition (Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series)

John Gargus

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In May 1970, aerial photographs revealed what U.S. military intelligence believed was a POW camp near the town of Son Tay, twenty-three miles west of North Vietnam's capital city. When American officials decided the prisoners were attempting to send signals, they set in motion a daring plan to rescue the more than sixty airmen thought to be held captive. On November 20, a joint group of volunteers from U.S. Army Green Berets and U.S. Air Force Special Operations Forces perfectly executed the raid, only to find the prisoners' quarters empty; the POWs had been moved to a different location. Initially, the Son Tay raid was a devastating disappointment to the men who risked their lives to carry it out. Many vocal critics labeled it as a spectacular failure of our nation's intelligence network. However, subsequent events proved that the audacity of the rescue attempt stunned the North Vietnamese, who implemented immediate changes in the treatment of their captives. The operation also restored the prisoners' faith that their nation had not forgotten them. John Gargus not only participated in the planning phase of the Son Tay rescue, but also flew as a lead navigator for the strike force. This revised edition incorporates the most recent information from raid participants and also includes recent translations of North Vietnamese perspectives. No previous account of this top-secret action has given such a full account or such insight into both the execution and the aftermath of Son Tay.



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