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<https://www.pownetwork.org/bios/c/c387.htm>

**BIO, CHRISTIAN, DAVID MARION**

Remains Returned      April 10, 1986 (See Text)  
Name:                      David Marion Christian  
Rank/Branch:            O2/US Navy  
Unit:                        USS MIDWAY  
Date of Birth:            15 January 1941  
Home City:                Lane KS (family in CA)  
Date of Loss:             02 June 1965  
Country of Loss:        North Vietnam  
Loss Coordinates:      194258N 1054959E (WG919815)  
Status (in 1973):      Killed/Body Not Recovered  
Category:                2  
Acft/Vehicle/Ground: A4E  
Refno:                    0092-1-01  
Accno:                    6006

Other Personnel In Incident: Thomas L. Plants (missing); William H. Amspacher; M.D. McMican; Gerald M. Romano (remains returned); John B. McKamey (on a second A4E, released POW).

Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project 30 June 1990 from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews.  
Updated by the P.O.W. NETWORK 2020.

**REMARKS: WRECK FOUND - NO SIGN SUBJ - J**

SYNOPSIS: On June 2, 1965, an EA1F "Spad" electronics aircraft launched from the USS MIDWAY for assistance in a search and rescue mission over North Vietnam. The crew of the Spad was LTJG M.D. McMican, pilot; LTJG

Gerald M. Romano, navigation officer; Petty Officer Third Class William H. Amspacher, Electronic Countermeasures Operator, and ATN 3 Thomas L. Plants.

While circling the scene of an [unnamed] A4E pilot's ejection over the South China Sea, the Spad was hit by enemy fire and was observed to crash land and burn on the nearby coast. While still over the water, a crewmember was seen to bail out, but his parachute did not open, and he fell into the sea. A week later, the body drifted ashore, according to an intelligence report. This body was not recovered by U.S. forces at that time.

[NOTE: The loss location given by Defense Department is not over the South China Sea, but some five miles inland, in Nghe An Province, near the city of Sam Son. At best, if the loss occurred over water, it occurred in the Gulf of Tonkin.]

The crew of the Spad was placed into the category Killed In Action/Body Not Recovered. It was assumed the three perished in the crash of the plane and the fourth (unspecified in the report) perished just prior to the crash in his unsuccessful ejection attempt.

On June 2, 1965, two Navy A4E aircraft were shot down in the general area that the EA1F rescue aircraft was circling. One of them was flown off the USS MIDWAY by LTJG David M. Christian, and is most likely to be the subject of the search by the Spad because the accounts seem to match. Navy accounts do not specify the identity of the downed pilot, nor do they indicate if he was ever rescued.

David Christian was born in California, and in the early 1960's his family moved to Kansas. Three years later, they moved back to California, but David stayed to attend Kansas State University, then Emporia State University, where he graduated after majoring in sociology and psychology. David learned to fly jets in the Navy after college. In Vietnam, he was stationed aboard the USS MIDWAY and was an A4E attack jet pilot. On June 2, 1965, Christian left the carrier on a mission over the Tonkin Gulf on the shoreline of North Vietnam.

His commander witnessed his plane going down at sea, with David possibly ejecting. No emergency radio beeper signals were heard, and the pilot was not seen after he left the aircraft.

On October 11, 1965, a Pravda article referred to Christian and James Stockdale, who was shot down and captured in the same area as Christian three months later. The report gave the Christian family hope that David survived and would be released.

When Christian did not return in the prisoner release in 1973, the Christians were shocked and hurt. James Stockdale was released and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions as a POW. Over the years, the Christian family has written and called CDR Stockdale to ask about the report, but he has never replied.

The second A4E lost on June 1, 1965 was flown by LT John B. McKamey. His aircraft was shot down some fifty miles south of the crash location of the EA1F. McKamey was captured by the North Vietnamese and held prisoner for the next eight years. He was released in Operation Homecoming on February 12, 1973.

In 1986, the Vietnamese returned the remains of 21 American servicemen lost in Vietnam, including those said to be those of David Christian. They could not forget the Pravda article and its details about David. They had the remains independently examined. The conclusion was that the probability is greater that it IS David Christian than it is not. But still, there is no proof that David died and doubts remain. Until there is proof that he died, David's friends and family "would not be at all surprised" to see him come home -- alive.

In July 1988, the Vietnamese returned remains they stated were those of 25 American servicemen. Three of the remains were positively identified as being those of Amspacher, McMican and Romano. Plants' remains were not recovered. It is not known if the body which was reported washed ashore could have been Plants' or that of David Christian.

A Vietnamese defector stated in Congressional testimony that Vietnam stockpiles hundreds of sets of remains. Congress believed him. He also testified that Vietnam holds live American prisoners. Congress says he is lying, although over 10,000 reports help substantiate that Americans are being held alive. The U.S. and Vietnamese "progress" at a snail's pace, while totally ignoring the tremendous weight of evidence that their priority should be those Americans still alive as captives. Meanwhile, thousands of lives are spent in the most tortured state imaginable - unable to grieve, unable to rejoice. They wait.

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LTJG DAVID MARION CHRISTIAN Return to Service

Member Profiles

Conflict	VIETNAM WAR
Service	UNITED STATES NAVY
Status	Accounted For
Date of Accounting	04/20/1987

On April 20, 1987, the Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii (CILHI, now DPAA) identified the remains of Lieutenant Junior Grade David Marion Christian, missing from the Vietnam War.

Lieutenant Junior Grade Christian entered the U.S. Navy from Kansas and was a member of Attack Squadron 23, Carrier Air Wing 2. On June 2, 1965, he piloted an A-4E Skyhawk (bureau number 151144) that took off from the USS Midway (CVA-41) on a shoreline reconnaissance mission over Thanh Hoa Province, North Vietnam. While over the Tonkin Gulf, the aircraft crashed for

unknown reasons and LTJG Christian did not survive. His body was not recovered at the time of his loss. In 1986, the Vietnamese government repatriated human remains that U.S. analysts identified as those of LTJG Christian.

Lieutenant Junior Grade Christian is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

If you are a family member of this serviceman, you may contact your casualty office representative to learn more about your service member.

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