This book uses impressive spadework to tell the story of what its subtitle calls the last secret of the war in Vietnam, namely, what really happened in the case of Marine Private Bobby Garwood, the last soldier to return from the war alive. He returned in 1979, after 14 years missing in action. Jensen-Stevenson, a former Sixty Minutes producer, managed to get on the record people who have spent years staying off it: several well-placed military intelligence figures and Garwood (court-martialed for consorting with the enemy upon his return) himself. The main contentions of the book are that Garwood didn’t desert but was captured after a firefight, that despite the sorts of lapses that virtually all Vietnam POWs fell prey to from time to time, he remained a loyal American throughout an incredibly arduous captivity, and most explosively of all: that before his return, based on the idea that he was a defector, there was an organized effort by U.S. forces to assassinate him. Readers will conclude that the Garwood case needs re-opening.

When I met my husband in 1979. He had just escaped Vietnam the year before. He was one of the boat people. He told me way back in 1979 that he had seen American POW’s as late as 1978 with his own eyes on more then one occasion. He was riding his scooter far out in the country side and saw a group of tall, long haired and bearded Caucasian men working the rice paddy fields under Vietnamese armed guard. When he looked a little too long and too hard the guards aimed their rifles at him so he looked away and kept driving.

He said the Caucasian mens faces were very sad.

My husband wouldn’t lie to me. He still insists it true and we have told many people about it
Since then I made it a point to question every Vietnamese refugee I met. Several had told me they saw them with their own eyes as late as 1982.

I was also told that it was common knowledge in Vietnam that American POW's were still there. They were surprised that most Americans didn't know about it. They just figured maybe we didn't want them back or didn't care.

I don't know the real truth about Bobby Garwood. But, I believe what my husband and other Vietnamese have told me.

I don't know if there are any POW's left alive now. It's been so long. But, I believe there were as late as 1982 and I pray for them every night.

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