RALSTON, FRANK DELZELL III

Name: Frank Delzell Ralston III
Rank/Branch: O3/US Air Force
Unit: 43rd Tactical Fighter, Squadron (Satan's Angels)
Date of Birth: 02 March 1941
Home City of Record: Denver CO
Date of Loss: 14 May 1966
Country of Loss: North Vietnam
Loss Coordinates: 172900N 1062300E (XE504390)
Status (in 1973): Missing In Action
Category: 4
Acft/Vehicle/Ground: F4C
Refno: 0338

Other Personnel In Incident: Donald L. King (missing)

Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project 15 October 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 1998.

REMARKS: NO SUB INTEL INFO

SYNOPSIS: Donald King had been in the Air Force 13 years when he went to Vietnam to fly with "Satan's Angels" out of Ubon, Thailand. His 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron was among the first fighter squadrons sent to Vietnam. His wife and four children were accustomed to his frequent absences, but eagerly awaited his return. King was regarded as a top pilot and had been invited to join the Air Force aerial performance team, the Thunderbirds. He was a former test pilot, and had learned Russian in a Naval intelligence school.

Frank Dalzell Ralston III had a promising career in the Air Force. A 1963 graduate of the Air Force Academy whom classmates called "Brank", Frank was well liked and excelled in athletics. When he shipped out to Vietnam and a young officer, he joined "Satan's Angels" fighter squadron.

On May 14, 1966 King was the wing commander and the pilot of an F4C aircraft sent on a night mission over North Vietnam. He and back seater Frank Ralston were about 10 miles behind another F4 Phantom when a flash of light streaked across the predawn sky and the aircraft vanished.

A garbled radio message from King's aircraft prompted one jet pilot in the formation to change course over the Gulf. Heading back, he spotted the intense light shooting 20 degrees above the horizon. King's plane, carrying a full load of bombs, was last tracked in the air 20 miles west of the coastal city of Dong Hoi North Vietnam.

King and Ralston are among nearly 2500 Americans who did not return from Southeast Asia at the end of the war. Some were known to have been taken prisoner. Most can be accounted for by the communist governments of the region.

The Vietnamese have continually raised the issue of accountability in the context of aid and/or diplomatic and trade relations, but the U.S. Government has been reluctant to negotiate on this basis, preferring instead to maintain a strict "humanitarian" level of discussion, which has resulted in the return of a few remains, but no American prisoners of war.

Our American soldiers go to war prepared to be wounded, taken prisoner, even prepared to die. They do not go prepared to be abandoned. If there is even ONE American alive, we must do everything possible to bring him home.

Donald L. King was promoted to the rank of Colonel and Frank D. Ralston III to the rank of Major during the period they were maintained Missing in Action.