



# Hero Found: The Greatest POW Escape of the Vietnam War

By Bruce Henderson

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From the #1 *New York Times* bestselling coauthor of *And the Sea Will Tell* comes *Hero Found*: the incredible but true story of Dieter Dengler, the only pilot to escape captivity from a POW camp in the Laotian jungle during the Vietnam War. This amazing story of triumph over seemingly insurmountable odds has been filmed by Werner Herzog as both a documentary (*Little Dieter Needs to Fly*) and a motion picture (*Rescue Dawn*, starring Christian Bale), and now receives its book treatment from Bruce Henderson, who served with Dengler in Vietnam.

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## **Hero Found: The Greatest POW Escape of the Vietnam War By Bruce Henderson Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Only a handful of Vietnam War POWs escaped captivity. One of those was Dieter Dengler, a German-born navy Skyraider pilot shot down on his first mission over Laos in 1966 and taken prisoner by the Pathet Lao in a remote jungle camp. Tortured and nearly starved to death, Dengler led his fellow prisoners in a daring escape, and he miraculously survived 23 days in the jungle before an inexperienced pilot spotted him frantically signaling from the dense jungle just over the border in North Vietnam. Dengler's harrowing and amazing story has been told before : in his 1978 memoir, *Escape from Laos*, and in two films, Werner Herzog's documentary *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* and a feature film, *Rescue Dawn*. Henderson, who served as a navy weatherman aboard Dengler's aircraft carrier, has crafted a worthy narrative that adds new material based on interviews with Dengler (who died in 2001) and his navy comrades, friends, and family, along with newly unearthed archival records. These include the official 78-page military Dengler Debriefing, which Henderson (coauthor, *And the Sea Will Tell*) obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. This often riveting account sheds new light on an oft-told true story. (June)

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### Review

"[McLaren's] animated involvement adds a special spark to a work already compelling from beginning to end." ---AudioFile

### From the Author

I grew up believing in heroes. For me, they were always pilots. I joined the U.S. Navy reserve while still in high school so I could go out to Alameda (Calif.) Naval Air Station for monthly drills and be around airplanes and pilots. After a restless year in college, I volunteered for two years of active duty. That is what brought me in June 1965 to the aircraft carrier *Ranger* (CVA-61). And while I was serving aboard ship as a weatherman -- taking observations, plotting maps, and launching weather balloons -- another pilot came into my life.

Things started off badly for *Ranger* pilot Ltjg. Dieter Dengler, however: shot down over Laos; a violent crash in the jungle; the wreckage of his plane found deep in enemy territory, but there was no sign of his whereabouts. For long months, we heard nothing of him. In 1966, off the steamy coast of North Vietnam, there were many pilots who went missing. Most did not return.

The fate of Dieter Dengler was to be different. In a surreal scene of brotherhood and celebration, he returned to *Ranger* six months after being shot down -- emaciated, ravaged with tropical illnesses but very much alive and joyous to be so. True, Dieter Dengler was but one lost pilot and hero found. Yet for his fellow fliers and shipmates, and for me personally, his story of unending optimism, innate courage, loyalty, and survival against overwhelming odds, remains our best and brightest memory of our generation's war.

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#### Janet Magnuson:

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