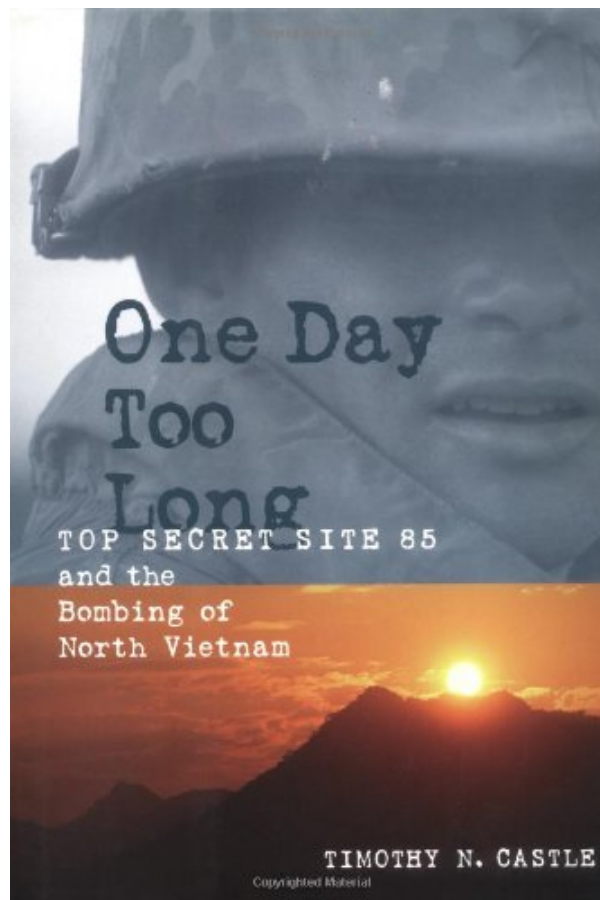
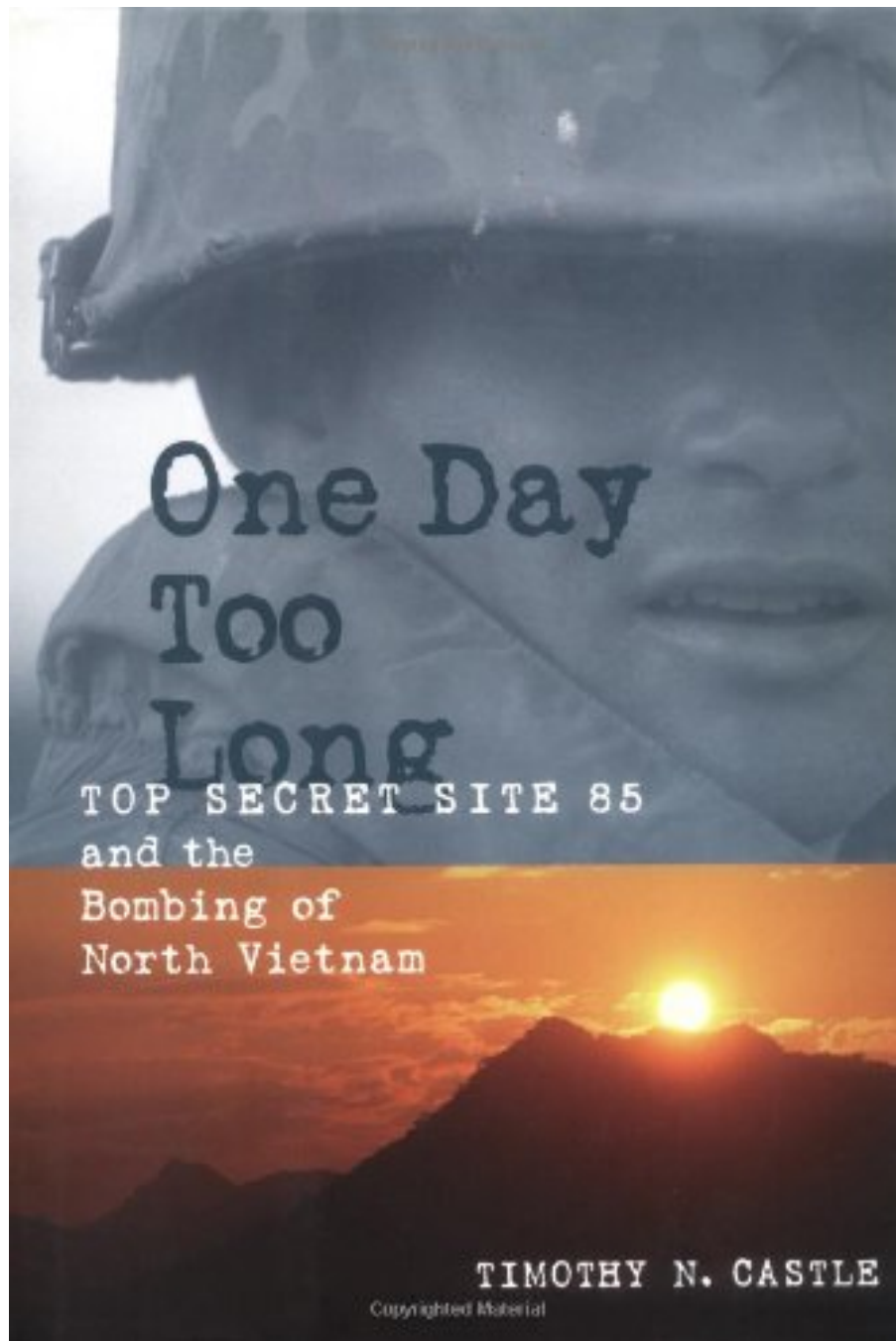


**ONE DAY TOO LONG: TOP SECRET SITE 85
AND THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM
BY TIMOTHY N. CASTLE**



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Amazon.com Review

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PDF

One of the Vietnam War's most closely guarded secrets—a highly classified U.S. radar base in the mountains of neutral Laos—led to the disappearance of a small group of elite military personnel, a loss never fully acknowledged by the American government. Now, thirty years later, one book recounts the harrowing story—and offers some measure of closure on this decades-old mystery.

Because of the covert nature of the mission at Lima Site 85—providing bombing instructions to U.S. Air Force tactical aircraft from the "safe harbor" of a nation that was supposedly neutral—the wives of the eleven servicemen were warned in no uncertain terms never to discuss the truth about their husbands. But one wife, Ann Holland, refused to remain silent. Timothy Castle draws on her personal records and recollections as well as upon a wealth of interviews with surviving servicemen and recently declassified information to tell the full story.

The result is a tale worthy of Tom Clancy but told by a scholar with meticulous attention to historical accuracy. More than just an account of government deception, *One Day Too Long* is the story of the courageous men who agreed to put their lives in danger to perform a critical mission in which they could not be officially acknowledged. Indeed the personnel at Site 85 agreed to be "sheep-dipped"—removed from their military status and technically placed in the employ of a civilian company.

Castle reveals how the program, code-named "Heavy Green," was conceived and approved at the highest levels of the U.S. government. In spine tingling detail, he describes the selection of the men and the construction and operation of the radar facility on a mile-high cliff in neutral Laos, even as the North Vietnamese Army began encircling the mountain. He chronicles the communist air attack on Site 85, the only such aerial bombing of the entire Vietnam War.

A saga of courage, cover-up, and intrigue *One Day Too Long* tells how, in a shocking betrayal of trust, for thirty years the U.S. government has sought to hide the facts and now seeks to acquiesce to perfidious Vietnamese explanations for the disappearance of eleven good men.

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[Amazon.com Review](#)

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Most helpful customer reviews

35 of 36 people found the following review helpful.

More than 5 stars

By D. C. Carrad

This is an extraordinarily powerful, interesting and well written book. It covers the entire history (1965-date) of an obscure (to some) chapter in America's war in Southeast Asia -- the loss of Lima Site 85 in Laos to communist attack. The whole history is fascinating -- from the decision to set up this site, to what it (briefly) did, the decisions from the squad level all the way up to the US Embassy in Vientiane and the President in Washington about its mission, operation and defense, to the current efforts to get the truth out of the Lao and Vietnamese governments about MIAs. The author has the background to write this fascinating history and writes compellingly. He's not afraid, where appropriate, to use blunt language like "shameful toadying" and "fraud". I've been a sceptic in the past of some of the distrust of the US government shown by POW/MIA families and partisans, but this book opened my eyes. Phou Pha Thi should have been better defended or abandoned earlier. A great account of (mostly) good intentions and (too often) flawed execution. The author writes convincingly of 1960's combat and 1990's political maneuvering. The treatment of COL Clayton, the commander of the site when it was overrun, by the current "investigators" was particularly revealing and chilling. I was a US Army Signal Corps officer during the Vietnam war and know all too well what it's like to have to be visible on a mountaintop to perform your mission and the need for good defense. I've spent the last 4 years as a civilian in Cambodia. So I have some parallels with the authors' experiences. A great book no matter what your view on the war.

27 of 28 people found the following review helpful.

I WAS THERE.

By J. Panza

As one of the pilots of Jolly Green 67 I simply want to thank Dr. Castle for his comprehensive and historical accurate account of the events at Lima Site 85. This is a story that begged to be told; Dr. Castle pulls no punches, providing a riveting and revealing account. His work was a key factor in the eventual recognition of the heroic efforts of Sgt. Etchberger at the Enlisted Heritage Hall, Maxwell AFB Annex (formally Gunter AFS), Montgomery AL. A great read.

24 of 27 people found the following review helpful.

An American tragedy in Laos.

By Walt Sunderman

Congratulations to Dr. Castle for this fine book. A meticulously researched historical work of the finest order that reads like a Tom Clancy action novel. A bombshell that exposes one of the most egregious and hitherto publicly undisclosed tragedies of the Vietnam War. In March 1968 an NVA sapper team avoided detection and attacked a top-secret radar bombing facility (code name Jolly Green) which was manned by sixteen "civilianized" Air Force technicians. The site, LS 85, was located on a mountain top in Laos less than twenty-five miles from the North Vietnam border. The attack caught the technicians off guard and resulted in the loss of the site to the communist forces. Two of those dedicated volunteers manning the site were confirmed killed, five were rescued alive (one died on the evacuation flight) and the remaining nine have never been accounted for and their status remains unknown. This incident holds the distinction of being the largest single loss of Air Force ground personnel during the entire Vietnam War. Why did the Air Force continue to operate this site in the face of considerable evidence the site would soon fall under bombardment and attack by large NVA forces gathering in the area? Was it incompetence or was the site considered so essential to the North Vietnam bombing effort that the loss of the men was an acceptable risk? Dr. Castle looks at these questions in detail. One Day Too Long chronicles the history of Site 85 from its initial concept of operations through the tragic consequence of this miscalculation. But the story does not stop there. It also relates the stoic efforts by one widow to find answers to questions about her husband's death at this site the

government was unwilling to provide. This book should be mandatory reading for all future military leaders.

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