

Verbatim transcript of difficult to read mission report. Written by 1Lt Joseph P. Phelan, RCC on HH-43 launched out of FOL at Quang Tri, on 2 March 1965. Two HU-16's are orbiting. Adman 63 is directly over Quang Tri. Adman 66 is orbiting feet wet, 15 miles east of the DMZ.

To Whom It May Concern

March 1965

SCENE – Two HH-43F and two H-34 helicopters at Quang Tri on strip alert. HU-16 (Adman 63) orbiting Quang Tri and HU-16 (Adman 66) orbiting 15 miles east of DMZ.

At 1538 local time the two HH-43F's were directed to scramble from Quang Tri on an aircraft reported down approximately forty miles north over land. After we became airborne we contacted the HU-16 on scene commander and we were directed to proceed north over the coastline and out over the water to a point just east of the survivors last known position.

During the flight we elected to remain at low altitude to avoid radar detection. At Approximately 1615 local we arrived in the area and set up an orbit awaiting rescap aircraft. After orbiting the area for a short time we spotted orange smoke a mile or two further out to sea. We immediately proceeded to the site and hoisted to safety a VNAF pilot from an A-1H which had been shot down. The Pararescue Specialist administered first aid at this time.

At about 1645 we made contact with our rescap Fortress A1H Navy Aircraft and the on scene commander advised that he had a parachute in sight approximately ten miles inland. With the A-1H escorting us and steering us around known unfriendly positions we penetrated the coastline of North Vietnam. Since our aircraft was already carrying a rescuee, we elected to have Major Ingraham's aircraft assume the lead. As we proceeded inland we encountered small arms and automatic weapons fire. The jets flying rescap reported that a lot of flak was seen above us. After we had flown ten miles or so inland we spotted a parachute on the side of a hill. With Major Ingraham flying cover we made an approach to the site. Establishing a hover the Pararescue Specialist was hoisted down to look for the pilot. During this time our rescap were making passes to suppress the

ground fire coming from the ridge line above us. The pilot could not be found in the area. The Pararescue man recovered his helmet.

While he was on the ground looking for the pilot we sustained a hit in one of our rotor blades and at this point we hoisted the Pararescue man back on board and were forced to leave the area because of the ground fire. Upon leaving this site we proceeded to fly cover for Major Ingraham's helicopter while they picked up another pilot about two miles southwest. After Major Ingraham's crew had made their recovery we climbed to altitude and proceeded to return to our staging area at Quang Tri. We landed at Quang Tri at 1815 local where the VNAF pilot we were carrying received further medical aid. We refueled and made a temporary repair of the damaged rotor blade.

Shortly afterward we departed for Danang. Enroute over Hue Citadel we experienced a severe vibration and out of track condition. We elected to land at Hue, transfer to the escort helicopters and leave our helicopter there until it could be repaired and flown back to Danang. We arrived at Danang at 2105.

The procedures which we are following at the present time are adequate, although it is imperative that everyone remain thoroughly familiar with them. Rescap and escort are a must in these type recovery missions and clear cut communications between rescap and rescue aircraft is a necessity.

I recommend that in the near future a twin engine, high speed combat equipped helicopter be provided for these type missions. The equipment we are working with at present is adequate but in the future missions of this sort our chances for success would be greatly enhanced with the addition of such a helicopter.

JOSEPH P. PHELAN
1/Lt, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

Summary Sheet

PARS Msn # 187, 2 March 65

HU-16 mission report from Detachment Provisional Fourth, Korat Thailand.
RCC Captain David P. Westenbarger

SAR area Laos. 20NM SE Tchepone.

Controlled two HH-43B's (Call signs Bandy 21 & Bandy 41) scrambled from NKP

Survivor: Major George W. Panas

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To Whom It May Concern

7 March 1965

SCENE – Two HH-43F and two H-34 helicopters at Quang Tri on strip alert. HU-16 (Adman 63) orbiting Quang Tri and HU-16 (Adman 66) orbiting 15 miles east of DMZ.

At 1538 local time the two HH-43F's were directed to scramble from Quang Tri on an aircraft reported down approximately forty miles north over land. After we became airborne we contacted the HU-16 on scene commander and we were directed to proceed north over the coastline and out over the water to a point just east of the survivors last known position.

During the flight we elected to remain at low altitude to avoid radar detection. At Approximately 1615 local we arrived in the area and set up an orbit awaiting rescap aircraft. After orbiting the area for a short time we spotted orange smoke a mile or two further out to sea. We immediately proceeded to the site and hoisted to safety a VNAF pilot from an A-1H which had been shot down. The Pararescue Specialist administered first aid at this time.

At about 1645 we made contact with our rescap Fortress A1H Navy Aircraft and the on scene commander advised that he had a parachute in sight approximately ten miles inland. With the A-1H escorting us and steering us around known unfriendly positions we penetrated the coastline of North Vietnam. Since our aircraft was already carrying a rescuee, we elected to have Major Ingraham's aircraft assume the lead. As we proceeded inland we encountered small arms and automatic weapons fire. The jets flying rescap reported that a lot of flak was seen above us. After we had flown ten miles or so inland we spotted a parachute on the side of a hill. With Major Ingraham flying cover we made an approach to the site. Establishing a hover the Pararescue Specialist was hoisted down

to look for the pilot. During this time our rescap were making passes to surpress the ground fire coming from the ridge line above us. The pilot could not be found in the area. The Pararescue man recovered his helmet.

While he was on the ground looking for the pilot we sustained a hit in one of our rotor blades and at this point we hoisted the Pararescue man back on board and were forced to leave the area because of the ground fire. Upon leaving this site we proceeded to fly cover for Major Ingraham's helicopter while they picked up another pilot about two mile southwest. After Major Ingraham's crew had made their recovery we climbed to altitude and proceeded to return to our staging area at Quang Tri. We landed at Quang Tri at 1815 local where the VNAF pilot we were carrying received further medical aid. We refueled and made a temporary repair of the damaged rotor blade.

Shortly afterward we departed for Danang. Enroute over Hue Citadel we experienced a severe vibration and out of track condition. We elected to land at Hue, transfer to the escort helicopters and leave our helicopter there until it could be repaired and flown back to Danang. We arrived at Danang at 2105.

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JOSEPH P. PHELAN
1/Lt, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

STATEMENT

To Whom It May Concern Classification (cancelled) (changed to UNCLASS) effective on 14-5-18, under the authority of March 1965, by 114

SCENE - Two HH-43F and two H-34 helicopters at Quang Tri on strip alert. HH-16 (Adman 63) orbiting Quang Tri and HH-16 (Adman 66) orbiting 15 miles east of DMZ.

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During this flight we elected to remain at a low altitude to avoid radar detection. At approximately 1615 local we arrived in the area and set up orbit awaiting our rescue aircraft. After orbiting the area for a short time we spotted orange smoke a mile or two further out at sea. We immediately proceeded to the site and hoisted to safety a VNAF pilot from an A-1H which had been shot down. The Pararescue Specialist administered first aid at this time.

At about 1645 we made contact with our rescue Fortress A-1H Navy Aircraft and the on scene commander advised that he had a parachute in sight approximately ten miles inland. With the A-1H escorting us and steering us around known unfriendly positions we penetrated the coastline of North Vietnam. Since our aircraft was already carrying a rescue, we elected to have Major Ingraham's aircraft assume the lead. As we proceeded inland we encountered small arms and automatic weapon fire. The jets flying rescue reported that a lot of flak was seen above us. After we had flown ten miles or so inland we spotted a parachute on the side of a hill. With Major Ingraham flying cover we made an approach to the site. Establishing a hover the Pararescue Specialist was hoisted down to look for the pilot. During this time our rescue were making passes to suppress the ground fire coming from the ridge line above us. The pilot could not be found in the area. The pararescue man recovered his helmet.

While he was on the ground looking for the pilot he discovered a mine in one of the rotor blades and at this point we aborted the rescue and went back on board and were forced to leave the area because of the ground fire. Upon leaving this site we proceeded to fly cover for Major Ingraham's helicopter while they picked up another downed pilot about ten miles southwest. After Major Ingraham's crew had made their recovery we climbed to altitude and proceeded to return to our staging area at Quang Tri. We landed at Quang Tri at 1815 local where the VNAF Pilot we were carrying received further medical aid. We refueled and made a temporary repair of the damaged rotor blade.

Def 3 PARC-K7-2 Mar '65
DOWNGRADED

ARODC # 654314

Hq PARC Log No. 0358-65

DOWNGRADED 14-5-18
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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JOSEPH P. PHELAN
1/Lt, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

DOWNGRADED
17W AFR-20512

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR SEC.10

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

Eight U.S. Crewmen Honored At Da Nang

DANANG, VIET NAM, April 4 (UPI)— Eight U.S. crewmen who flew two helicopters through anti-aircraft fire in a

daring mission to communist North Viet Nam to rescue two downed Navy pilots have been awarded America's third highest award for bravery.

The Silver Star medals were awarded by Air Force Maj. Gen. Joseph Moore in a flight-line ceremony at Da Nang air base.

Those receiving Silver star medals at the ceremony were:

Maj. Ronald L. Ingraham, 36, Miami, Florida; 1st Lt. Donald M. Walsh, 27, Boulder City, Nevada.

Eight U.S. Crewmen...

(From page 1)

S/Sgt. Larry K. Anderson, 34, Tampa, Florida; A1C John H. Moore, 21, Philadelphia.

1st Lt. Joseph P. Phelan, 27, Stamford, Connecticut; Capt. Clyde W. Lemke, 37, Utica, Michigan S/Sgt John Naregan, Jr., 30, Tampa, Florida; A1C John H. Young, 24, Portland, Oregon.

The citation accompanying their awards said the aviators "distinguished themselves with gallantry in combat against an opposing armed force on March 2, 1965, when they flew rescue missions totalling two and one-half hours over unfriendly territory in search of the two Navy pilots.

This was the first time that the United States has officially admitted that rescue helicopters flew into North Viet Nam to pick up downed pilots.

The citation said that both helicopters "encountered continuous anti-aircraft and small arms fire" during rescue operations.

"Lieutenant Phelan's crew rescued one pilot and made an approach to another parachute which had been spotted. While covering over the area in search of the pilot unfriendly ground fire was encountered and a hit was sustained in one of the rotor blades," the citation said.

It was at that time Young had been let down on the helicopter hoist to search for the pilot whose parachute equipment had been spotted.

"The brush was very heavy in the area, about nine feet tall," Young related following the awards ceremony.

"It appeared the pilot might still be in the area. I looked for him but could not find him. We were getting some fire into the area at the time but the planes flying protective over us did a good job suppress-

ing the fire. I was on the ground between the fire for ten minutes. But it seemed longer. It seemed like an eternity," Young said.

The area was near a village and he believed the villagers had captured the pilot just before rescue helicopters arrived.

The citation for Ingraham's crew said his craft also "encountered continuous anti-aircraft and small arms fire while picking up one of the pilots.

Ingraham said the fire was "extremely heavy in one area but we were fortunate one of the pilots flew farther into the jungle where things were not quite so hot."

Phelan, whose helicopter previously had picked up a Vietnamese Air Force pilot whose plane was downed at sea, described the mission:

"After we got word that the pilots were downed we headed into the search area with Navy planes flying cover. He asked planes to lead us around the concentration of people such as villages, barracks and so forth. The flak was fairly heavy. I decided to go in low because the radar couldn't get a lock of us. We went in at about two hundred, at about ten miles inland we spotted the chute downed pilot. That's when we Young down to search for him. We started picking up ground fire. We got a hit. We didn't know where the hit was at the time but it sounded big and bad. We checked the instruments and everything seemed to be working okay. We pulled Young up and went to area where another pilot was down. We knew where he was. He fired three tracer bullets into the air which were clearly visible even in the daytime."

Rescue

(Continued from 1)

The first HH-43 crew led by Maj. Ronald L. Ingram, flew rescue missions for over two and a half hours in search of downed pilots. After flying cover in North Vietnam coastal waters while another helicopter picked up the first pilot, Major Ingram proceeded inland for the second pilot.

Exposed to constant ground fire, the "Huskie" went fifteen miles into enemy territory where the pilot was spotted in the jungle and lifted one hundred feet for the safety of the aircraft.

The second crew, also in an HH-43 and led by 1st Lt. Joseph P. Phelan, had rescued a third pilot and made an approach to another chute that had been spotted.

while hovering over the area in search of the downed aviator, ground fire was encountered and the craft picked up a hit in one of the rotor blades.

The pararescue specialist was let down on the hoist to recover the missing pilot's equipment, after which the crew was forced to withdraw because of the steadily increasing ground fire.

Members of the two crews were: Major Ingram, 1st Lt. Donald M. Welsh, SSgt. Larry K. Henderson and A2C John A. Moore; Lieutenant Phelan, Capt. Clyde W. Lemke, TSgt. John G. Regan Jr. and A1C Jon B. Young.

2 MAR 65

Awarded Silver Star

Airman 2nd Class John A. Moore, son of Mr. and Mrs. P. John Moore, of 6704 Trinity St., was awarded the Silver Star last week in Viet Nam. Airman Moore was one of eight Air Force personnel who received the Award and were cited for their gallantry in carrying out Air Rescue Operations.

The twenty year old Airman is a January, 1962 graduate of John Bartram High School. He entered the Air Force in January, 1963.

Receive America's Third Highest Award

8 U.S. Airmen Cited for Bravery

DA NANG, Viet Nam (UPI) — Eight crewmen who flew helicopters through anti-aircraft fire to rescue two U.S. Navy pilots downed in Communist North Viet Nam have been awarded America's third highest award for bravery.

The Silver Star medals were

awarded by Air Force Maj. Gen. Joseph Moore in a flight-line ceremony at Da Nang Air Base. Newsmen invited to witness the ceremony by American Air Force officials were ordered off the base by Vietnamese deputy base commander Capt. Bao.

The ceremony was over by the time Bao discovered the reporters and the Vietnamese officer sharply rebuked the U.S. Air Force public information officer for bringing in the newsmen. Receiving Silver Star medals at the ceremony were:

Maj. Ronald L. Ingraham, 36, Miami, Fla.; 1st Lt. Donald Welsh, Boulder City, Nev.; S. Sgt. Larry K. Anderson, 34, Tampa, Fla.; and A2C John H. Moore, 21, Philadelphia, Pa.

The crew of one of the 43 twin rotor helicopters. The second crew receiving Silver Stars were: 1st Lt. Joseph P. Phelan, 27, Stamford, Conn.; Capt. Clyde W. Lemke, 30, Utica, Mich.; S-Sgt. John T. Regan, Jr., 30, Tampa; and A1C John H. Young, 24, Portland, Ore.

The citation accompanying their awards said the aviators "distinguished themselves with gallantry in combat against an opposing armed force on March 2, 1965," when they flew "rescue missions totalling two and one-half hours over unfriendly territory" in search of the two Navy pilots.

This was the first time the United States has officially admitted that rescue helicopters flew into North Viet Nam to pick up downed pilots.

From: Jay Strayer <mrslick@in-touch.net>
 To: Robert LaPointe <rlapointe@gci.net>
 Date: Friday, August 27, 1999 7:55 AM
 Subject: Re: SEA SAR

I don't know about the Thailand mission, but I do know about the one in Laos as it came from our outfit at NKP in early March -- after a long lull, NVN bombing began anew in early March 65 -- we were bored after being at NKP since 2 or 3 Jan -- all of us came from separate USA dets and did not know each other till then -- we teamed into pairs, hard crews if you will, and began putting together some combat rescue flying rules since we had no training at all of same -- we had heard of formation flying and quickly decided we should always fly in pairs as the fighter guys did -- not sure we were the first, but we called the lead bird the low bird and the second the high bird -- the DETCO was Capt Warren Davis who commanded only because he was the ranking officer -- we moved into the first hooches built -- NKP was primarily a radar site and commanded by Major (first name not remembered) diamond -- knowing our priorities, we promptly designated the first hooch the officers club, the second the rescue det officers' living quarters (6 of us) and the third the fire dept in which those members lived -- because we were bored and none of us had "seen the world", it occurred to us it was a good idea to travel around the country -- we did fly the flight surgeon and a dental tech into surrounding Thai villages to help with medical problems -- I recall we did this on our own initiative -- we also drew straws to see in what turn we could take the twice weekly C-123 courier to to visit Bangkok on the pretense of having one of the HH-43s battery's checked over -- not all that much of a pretense for we had no aux power units for engine start, only the battery -- I drew the number one slot for such a visit and unknown to me, air attacks on the North were under way as the C-123 I was aboard was taking off for Bangkok, thus I missed all the activity that day -- Rescue rules were such we could not fly the HH-43 without a copilot so the det was a pilot short because of my absence -- Capt Fred Glover and 1Lt McCutchen were directed to fly to Ubon AB and stand alert so that left only one HH-43 at NKP -- later that nite, the det was ordered into Laos to rescue a downed USAF pilot and in so doing made the first nite rescue of that campaign -- after a quick test hop to bring the 3rd HH-43 into ops status, the two birds left for the rescue -- there were 3 pilots with the flight surgeon in the CP seat of the high bird -- I believe Capt Israel (Izzy) was the low bird lead with Capt Jim Rosenberg his CP and Capt Davis was flying the high bird with the fit surgeon -- anyway, it was during the rice paddy burning season and with no moon or stars and the limited instruments of the HH-43, the mission was one requiring the utmost in piloting skills -- but Izzy was successful -- being ignorant and without guidance about award nominations, I wrote them all up for an Air Medal -- in retrospect, it should have been for a Silver Star for they landed under such tuff flying conditions into an unknown guerrilla camp having only a campfire to guide them -- (as note, I was in attendance a year later when a SSgt PJ was awarded a DFC while flying as an observer on an HU-16 while flying escort on the HH-43s at an altitude of 16,000 ft!!! -- have no idea what the pilot crewmembers were awarded) --

As for Ron Bigoness, Capt James Rodenberg was my CP, SSgt Farmer (first name John I believe) and SSgt Boothby (do not recall his first name) HM were with me -- the photo I sent you was taken by Capt Davis from the high bird and I do not recall who was with him -- you may know that Davis was later killed while covering a crashed B-52 at the base near Bangkok) -- there is more to the NKP story much of which you can pickup at the below web site -- I also have McCutchen's and Freedman's e-addresses which I shall give you -- Izzy, by the way, got out of the service and flew helis for a good bit for Air America -- liked that part of the world so well he remains there today, living in Bangkok -- hope this all helps you --

McCutchen, Neil
 E-mail Address(es):
neiljmc@aol.com
 Freedman, Izzy
 E-mail Address(es):
freeizzy@ksc15.th.com

...and before you correspond with either of these two, check out this HH-43 web site which both McCutchen and I have contributed to including photos as well as more NKP stories -- of special interest should be my account of Fred Glover's idea of 55 gal fuel drums inside the HH-43 for range extension -- as an aside, we were very proud of that initiative for it saved some fighter pilots' butts including Ron Bigoness ---

08/27/1999

Robert LaPointe

From: "megan"
To: "Bob LaPointe" <rlapointe@gci.net>
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2001 6:51 PM
Subject: Fw: Jon H. Young pj

----- Original Message -----

From: Ronald L. Ingraham
To: blossomhed@prodigy.net
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2001 5:52 PM
Subject: Re: Jon H. Young pj

Hi Jon,

I can be of some help. My last contact with Colonel Lockhart was in 1997. I tried to get some details on his whereabouts when you were on the ground looking for him. I'll try to copy the letters he sent me and attach them to a later message.

Hayden J. Lockhart
14159 Cutlass Avenue
Corpus Christi, TX 78418-6423
(512) 949-9862

The saddest thing I got from his letters was that he evaded for 7 or 8 days - almost made it to the DMZ -
and got caught by a farmer.

I guess you saw that Pits was awarded the Medal of Honor.

My address is

Ronald L. Ingraham
9570 South Tropical Trail
Merritt Island, FL 32952-6906
(321) 777-2578

I've pretty much lost track of most of the Danang bunch. Joe Phelan left the AF and went back to work for a chemical company he'd been with before entering service. Maybe I'll think of the name.

Don Welch left service and went back to Boulder, Co. Larry Henderson was in Gainesville, FL the last I heard. John Moore was around at Hill AFB while I was there, possibly Regan, too.

My sons set me up for a reunion with Robert V. (Boris) Baird, the guy we were able to

pick up that day.

We got together in Tucson for a couple of days about 2 years ago.

If I can be of any help to you in gathering info for the book, let me know.

It's good to hear from you.

Ron

On Mon, 8 Jan 2001 16:40:49 -0800 "megan" <blossomhed@prodigy.net> writes:

Calling for Jon H. Young USAF Para Rescue

request any email or address & phone # on Haden J. Lockhart - 2/mar/'65 -

Jon still alive and well and living in Sacramento CA.

just made contact w/ Red Lemke, want to contact H.J. for info on book written on PJ's South East Asia.

we need to get together some time.

Robert LaPointe

From: "Robert LaPointe" <rlapointe@gci.net>
To: "Ingraham, Ron" <ron.ingraham@juno.com>
Cc: "Young, John via Megan"
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2001 8:38 PM
Subject: Vietnam SAR 2 March 1965

My name is Robert LaPointe. I was a PJ from 1969-1995 and did two tours in Vietnam. After separating from the AF in 1995, I returned to school and spent 4 years at the University of Alaska majoring in history. I was not pleased at the way histories of the Vietnam War reported the actions of Americans during the war. I was also amazed the Air Force had never written a comprehensive history of Air Rescue in Vietnam.

I decided to write the missing history myself. Complete details of my motivation can be found on my website "PJ's in Vietnam"
<http://home.gci.net/~rlapointe/>

I collected 1,679 mission reports, unit histories and other documents from the Air Force Historical Research Agency. I have a final draft of volume one that covers the period of 1964 through Tet in 1968.

Jon Young and I flew together out of DaNang. He provided me your e-mail address. One of the stories in my book is about the first SAR in NVN, the one you flew. I have pasted it below this message. I had been unaware that Colonel Lockhart had evaded capture for several days. This is a significant omission in the story and I would like to correct it. I would like to obtain copies of the letters from Col Lockhart that you referred to in your e-mail to Jon. They are considered primary source material and I could use them to correct omissions and as a source to be cited.

If you have corrections or additions to the story printed below, I would be glad to revise the text. be advised that the story was written from the SAR mission reports written in 1965. I have one that you wrote on 7 March 1965. I would gladly trade you copies of all the mission reports used to construct the below story for a copy of the referenced letter. A scanned copy of the letter sent by e-mail would best. Be advised that there are too many pages in the mission reports to send them by e-mail. I would need your U.S. postal address to get them to you.

I am going to the printer in the next 60 days, so time is an issue here.

Thank you for your time

Story from book follows:

On 2 March 1965, operation "Rolling Thunder" began. This was a systematic bombing campaign, starting at the DMZ and gradually moving northward. It initially targeted NVN fuel and supply depots. "Rolling Thunder" had a restricted target list. During the Johnson Administration, politicians inside the White House approved specific targets. President Johnson himself was actively involved in target selection. He hoped "Rolling Thunder" would force NVN to the conference table. However, he did not want to see this regional conflict become a global war. President Johnson specifically wanted to ensure that Communist China would not intervene as they had during the Korean War.

Prior to the initiation of "Rolling Thunder" air rescue was placed on alert. They were informed that on 2 March, approximately one hundred AF jets and several VNAF A-1's would attack the Xom Bang ammunition depot. The target was 35 miles north of the DMZ. Rescue mission planners developed a SAR plan. On the day of the attack, two HH-43F's assigned to DaNang AB forward deployed to a soccer field adjacent to the MACV facility at Quang Tri. Quang Tri was approximately 17 miles south of the DMZ and 75 miles north of DaNang. In January and February of 1965, the HH-43's assigned to DaNang had made a habit of conducting local training flights up to MACV Quang Tri. It got them familiar with the route heading north and perhaps more importantly they had better chow than at DaNang.[i]

On the day "Rolling Thunder" began good food was not an issue. By pre-positioning, the rescue choppers were within their fuel range, of the target area in North Vietnam. It also, and more importantly, significantly reduced their response time to potential SAR's. The helicopters were using the call signs "Bandy 95 and Bandy 96." Bandy 95 was crewed by 1Lt Joseph Phelan (pilot), Capt Clyde Lemke (co-pilot) SSgt John Regan (FE) and Jon Young (PJ). Bandy 96 was crewed by Maj Ronald Ingraham (pilot), Lt Donald Welsh (co-pilot) Sgt Larry Anderson (FE) and A1C John Moore (PJ). Two HU-16's launched out of DaNang and set up SAR orbits. The first HU-16, call sign Adman 63, was overall on scene commander. Piloted by Major Edward Ladow[ii], Adman 63 set up an orbit feet wet. About ten miles north of the DMZ and about 8 miles offshore is a small island. It became a checkpoint used by aircrews and was nicknamed "Tiger Island." Adman 63 used Tiger Island as an orbit point. The second HU-16, call sign Adman 66 was piloted by Major Luther Waechter. Adman 66 was orbiting directly over Quang Tri. Two HH-43's assigned to NKP and two more at DaNang were on strip alert.[iii] A third HU-16, Adman 44 would establish a SAR orbit over NKP. The USAF was not sure of how much an anti-aircraft defense the North Vietnamese were going to be able to mount. During the only other U.S. air attack on NVN, on 5 August 1964, the North Vietnamese had shot down two U.S. Navy A-1's. Were these downings lucky shots, or were they an indicator of a real threat?

Robert LaPointe

From: "Ronald L Ingraham"
To: <rlapointe@gci.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2001 3:23 AM
Subject: Re: Vietnam SAR 2 March 1965

The mission report came thru OK - a slight smear, but readable. Not only did it bring back memories, but jogged my recollection of forgotten details (not too serious for a guy on the downslide to 73). It did confirm some of my suggested changes to your narrative, as well refute some of them, which I've removed from the text below.

Unfortunately I am using a phone modem. The cable company wants \$950 to run a line from their main cable to my house. To add insult, our phone lines rarely support connections above 44000.

Thanks for the report, I'll try to get Lockhart's to you. If I OCR it or retype it, would it destroy its value to you as documentation?

On Tue, 9 Jan 2001 17:30:55 -0900 "Robert LaPointe" <rlapointe@gci.net> writes:

I am certainly interested in your inputs. Attached is the mission report you wrote about this mission. I am going to sent it in 2 e-mails so it will be easier to get through your internet service. Are you using a phone modem or cable modem?
I suspect this report will bring back some memories.

----- Original Message -----

From: Ronald L Ingraham
To: rlapointe@gci.net
Sent: Tuesday, January 09, 2001 9:00 AM
Subject: Re: Vietnam SAR 2 March 1965

Hi Robert,

I'm very pleased to hear that you're undertaking the task of writing the history of the PJ's in Vietnam.

I've been threatening to do the story of the first mission to NVN for Air and Space Magazine. I had seen a picture in one of their issues of a Robert V. (Boris) Baird, who at that time was manager of the US Aerobatic Team. I inquired of A&S if he was the same one downed over Xom Bang in 1965. They confirmed this and said they might be interested in doing the story, should we get together. We did get together, but I've not done the story. Baird lives in Tucson, and is still an active aerobatic pilot.

I scanned the letters from Hayden Lockhart, but saved them as .tif files, for the best print quality.

They're pretty large for e-mail. I'll keep working with them to see what would be the best for your purposes. I just printed them as a graphic insert in a word document and they're readable, but a little faint.

As I said, I'll work with them a little more to see if I can do better.

I've scanned a few of the photos taken by SSgt Regan and saved them as jpg's. I'll attach them now.

There are some time variations from your account, but my recollections are just anecdotal, as are Hayden's. I had thought that we launched soon after noon -- I thought we got the radio reports of the first downed aircraft while we were having lunch.

I'd like to explain our operational setup. I was the commander of the detachment. Because all of our assigned pilots were qualified rescue crew commanders, I established a policy to rotate them between the pilot and copilot positions every other day. I also had them act as lead or cover aircraft on alternate missions. Finally, I allowed absolutely no crew substitutions except for sickness or R&R. (I didn't want to have it on my conscience should someone be injured or killed from an arbitrary change in schedule.) It just happened that it was Joe Phelan's turn in the barrel on 2 March. Although Waechter was designated on-scene commander for the feet dry missions, he stayed at altitude well to the south. I handled the coordination with the CAP aircraft and asked the Navy A-1's to reconnoiter the inbound route for us, to steer us around villages and possible sources of ground fire. This became the basis for the later use of the Sandy's by the Air Force to cover rescue missions. AOD

If I may, I'll try to note what I believe to be corrections to your draft.

I guess Jon must have done a second tour, since you began in 1969.

I'll follow up with the copies of the letters as soon as I can.

Cheers,
 Ron Ingraham
 9570 South Tropical Trail
 Merritt Island, FL 32952-6906
 (321) 777-2578

On Mon, 8 Jan 2001 20:38:43 -0900 "Robert LaPointe" <rlapointe@gci.net> writes:

 Story from book follows:

On 2 March 1965, operation "Rolling Thunder" began. This was a systematic bombing campaign, starting at the DMZ and gradually moving northward. It initially targeted NVN fuel and supply depots. "Rolling Thunder" had a restricted target list. During the Johnson Administration, politicians inside the White House approved specific targets. President Johnson himself was actively involved in target selection. He hoped "Rolling Thunder" would force NVN to the conference table. However, he did not want to see this regional conflict become a global war. President Johnson specifically wanted to ensure that Communist China would not intervene as they had during the Korean War.

Prior to the initiation of "Rolling Thunder" air rescue was placed on alert. **<Actually, myself as unit commander, and Captain Lemke as my Intelligence Officer, were the only ones aware that the mission that day could be vastly different from the normal routine.>** They were informed that on 2 March, approximately one hundred AF jets and several VNAF A-1's would attack the Xom Bang ammunition depot. The target was 35 miles north of the DMZ. Rescue mission planners developed a SAR plan. On the day of the attack, two HH-43F's assigned to DaNang AB forward deployed to a soccer field adjacent to the MACV facility at Quang Tri. Quang Tri was approximately 17 miles south of the DMZ and 75 miles north of DaNang. In January and February of 1965, the HH-43's assigned to DaNang had made a habit of conducting local training flights **< These flights were scheduled in-country SAR standby missions, which saw activity in support of the ARVN troops in the area>** up to MACV Quang Tri. It got them familiar with the route heading north and perhaps more importantly they had better chow than at DaNang.[i]

On the day "Rolling Thunder" began good food was not an issue. By pre-positioning, the rescue choppers were within their fuel range, of the target area in North Vietnam. **<Our aircraft were equipped with an auxiliary bladder fuel tank [capacity I forget] in the cabin area>** It also, and more importantly, significantly reduced their response time to potential SAR's. The helicopters were using the call signs "Bandy 95 and Bandy 96." Bandy 95 was crewed by 1Lt Joseph Phelan (pilot), Capt Clyde Lemke (co-pilot) SSgt John Regan (FE) and Jon Young (PJ). Bandy 96 was crewed by

ADD

DDD

Maj Ronald Ingraham (pilot), Lt Donald Welsh (co-pilot) Sgt Larry <K. Henderson> Anderson (FE) and A1C John Moore (PJ). Two HU-16's launched out of DaNang and set up SAR orbits. The first HU-16, call sign Adman 63, was overall on scene commander. Piloted by Major Edward Ladow<sp Ladou>[ii], Adman 63 set up an orbit feet wet. About ten miles north of the DMZ and about 8 miles offshore is a small island. It became a checkpoint used by aircrews and was nicknamed "Tiger Island." Adman 63 used Tiger Island as an orbit point. The second HU-16, call sign Adman 66 was piloted by Major Luther Waechter. Adman 66 was orbiting directly over Quang Tri. Two HH-43's assigned to NKP and two< this should be one, we only had three> more at DaNang were on strip alert.[iii] A third HU-16, Adman 44 would establish a SAR orbit over NKP. The USAF was not sure of how much an antiaircraft defense the North Vietnamese were going to be able to mount. During the only other U.S. air attack on NVN, on 5 August 1964, the North Vietnamese had shot down two U.S. Navy A-1's. Were these downings lucky shots, or were they an indicator of a real threat?

At approximately 1535, Adman 63 received the first report of a downed pilot. Two F-100's were capping the downed pilot. The F-100 pilots reported to Adman 63 that they had the downed pilot in sight. He was alive and in his life raft. Numerous enemy fishing boats were nearby. The F-100 pilots said they would stay on scene and keep the boats away from the pilot. [iv] In rapid succession, five additional airplanes were shot down. One bailout took place in Thailand, another in Laos, and the remaining four in North Vietnam. The JRCC at Tan San Nhut AB directed Adman 63 to proceed to the pilot being capped by the F-100's.[v] Adman 63 proceeded north to the downed pilot in the Gulf of Tonkin. Major Ladou radioed Adman 66 and told Major Waechter to take on scene command for the feet dry SAR's in NVN.

At 1538, the two HH-43's at Quang Tri were scrambled. They proceeded north bound, flying a course a mile or so offshore. This feet wet course would keep the crews safe from ground fire, at least until they headed feet dry into NVN. Adman 66 radioed the HH-43 crews. Major Waechter told them that their objective was an F-100 pilot shot down near Dong Hoi, NVN. A few minutes later the helicopter crew learned that another F-100 was

down near Xom Bang, NVN. A few minutes later they learned that an F-105 was down in the same area. The rescue crews had plenty of time to think about what they were getting into. The North Vietnamese were shooting high performance jets out of the sky at an alarming rate. What chance would a slow moving, unarmed helicopter have in this threat environment? The HH-43 crewmembers kept their thoughts to themselves and pressed on. They knew that the only chance these downed pilots had was their helicopters. They were going to try regardless of the enemy threat.[vi]

As the HH-43's passed between Tiger Island and the NVN coastline several crewmembers simultaneously sighted red smoke, coming from their two o'clock position. This was unexpected as no one was reported down in this area. The two helicopters headed to the location the smoke was emanating from. They soon flew overhead someone floating on the ocean, in a U.S. military style life raft. Lt. Phelan's crew entered a low hover over the raft. A1C Young was lowered into the water to recover the pilot. While Bandy 95 was in the hover, they received a radio call. Major Ingraham copied a message informing the HH-43 crews to be on the lookout for a downed VNAF pilot, who had ditched his A1H in the Gulf of Tonkin. A few minutes later A1C Young and a slightly injured VNAF pilot were on board the HH-43. With one survivor rescued, both HH-43's again headed north. To avoid enemy radar they descended to 100 feet above the water.[vii]

Undoubtedly the VNAF pilot was very happy to be picked up. But, he certainly could not have been thrilled to learn that his rescue helicopter was now going to take him feet dry into NVN, in an attempt to rescue a downed American pilot. As the helicopters penetrated the enemy coastline, they came under heavy ground fire. This ground fire was to continue throughout their mission in NVN.[viii]

The terrain from the beach to the reported downed pilots positions was over lowlands for the first 15 miles. The rescue helicopters were being escorted by four USN A-1H pilots, call signs Fortress 5, 6, 7, and 8. Fortress 5 had reconnoitered the area and found a parachute hung in some trees. He orbited this position awaiting the choppers. Fortress 6 was flying ahead of the HH-43's. He radioed back vectors to the helicopters, making sure they avoided known anti-aircraft gun positions. Because of the threat from these weapons, the flight was done at low level, just above the

treetops. The low level flight minimized the time enemy gunners had to track the HH-43's. With utter disregard for their own safety, these brave crews pressed on to the downed pilots position. Fortress 7 reported that each area over flown by the helicopters "lit up" with small arms and anti-aircraft fire.[ix] Fortunately, the AAA was airbursting high above the ingressing helicopters. Helicopters are noisy machines. Over the din of their rotors and engine, the crewmen could frequently hear this ground fire. The pulse rates of all involved were racing. This was not going to be an easy pickup.

The HH-43's now came upon some foothills. They finally spotted the parachute found by Fortress 5. As warned, it was hung up in some trees. Lt Phelan's helicopter entered a hover. SSgt Regan stated on the aircraft intercom that he thought he could see the pilot, but the pilot was not moving. Lt. Phelan told A1C Jon Young to ride the penetrator down and get the pilot. Jon momentarily thought to himself that this might not be too good an idea, but he got on the penetrator anyway. After he reached the ground, he discovered that what SSgt Regan had seen was only a helmet, a parachute harness and some miscellaneous survival gear. The missing pilot was nowhere to be seen. Sgt. Young assumed that the missing pilot had either evaded away from the area, or had been captured. About this time the hovering helicopter came under small arms fire. Major Ingraham in "Bandy 96" radioed the **<high CAP F-105's and F-100's, not A-1's>** Navy A-1's and requested they lay down suppressive fire for "Bandy 95." The A-1 pilots started to rain down a hail of 20mm cannon fire, all around the hovering helicopter. Despite enemy ground fire and now the nervously close suppressive fire, Lt Phelan continued to hover, until he recovered A1C Young. On his way back up on the hoist, A1C Young wondered if the Navy A-1's were going to shoot them down, in their zeal to provide very close air support. ~~The only damage done so far to Lt Phelan's helicopter were a few AK-47 holes~~ **<actually only one>** in the rotors. With A1C Young back on board, both helicopters proceeded further inland. They headed to the area where an F-105 pilot was reported to be shot down.[x]

The third SAR objective was about five more miles inland, on mountainous terrain that was mostly dense jungle. At 1715, it was "Bandy 96's" turn to make a pickup. Major Ingraham's crew spotted a parachute hung up in the trees. **<While in a descending circle, we saw faint smoke**

ADD

coming from a stream bed in the bottom of the valley. The downed pilot was burning all documents in his flight suit. As we turned away from him in our descent, he fired three tracer rounds from his pistol to attract our attention. ~~[I have some grainy photos taken by SSGT Regan as they orbited above us]~~ ^{ADD} They came to a hover ^{<above>} 125 foot high trees. Because of the dense jungle foliage, the rescuemen could not see through the jungle, to the ground below. While Maj Ingraham was contemplating his next move, Sgt Anderson ^{<Larry K. Henderson>} (FE) and A1C Moore (PJ) shouted on the intercom that someone was standing in a nearby opening and was frantically waving a white cloth at them. When the helicopter hovered over the top of this person, the crew could see that the man on the ground was in a flight suit. Sgt. Anderson ^{<Henderson>} lowered a horse collar and reeled in Capt R. ^{<Robert V. (Boris) Baird}, the "Thud" pilot. It was extremely fortunate that the downed pilot had found this opening. He had lost all his survival gear as he climbed down from the trees his parachute became hung up in. A white handkerchief ^{<and his pistol, with some tracer shells>} was the only signaling equipment he retained.

With the second survivor rescued, the two HH-43's egressed the area, to the relative safety of the Gulf of Tonkin. Having more than earned their pay for the day, the helicopters proceeded back to South Vietnam. The HH-43's landed at Quang Tri at 1815. They had just completed the first feet dry SAR in North Vietnam. Two happy survivors and eight very lucky rescuemen were glad to be back at a friendly base. It was a 2 hour and 45 minute flight they would all remember for the rest of their lives[xi] ^{ADD} ^{A BULLET} ^{<After refuelling from bladder tanks maintained in the Quang Tri Citadel, and wrapping duct tape over the loudly whistling hole in Bandy 95's rotor blade, they departed for Danang. When approaching Hue, Phelan reported a severe vibration in the rotor system, so a landing was made at an air strip at Hue Citadel. The duct tape had rolled into a large clump near the tip of the blade. It was decided to leave the aircraft there overnight and replace the rotor blade the next day. Phelan's crew and passenger were taken aboard a Marine H-34 for the rest of the trip. >}

Meanwhile, in the Gulf of Tonkin 1st Lt James Cullen was floating in his survival raft, approximately ten miles offshore Dong Hoi. A few minutes earlier he had been flying his F-100 on a bombing run in NVN. He felt his jet shudder from hits of ground fire. All sorts of warning lights illuminated in the

cockpit. He turned his plane feet wet and ejected when the ocean was below him. Lt Cullen landed in the midst of a large number of North Vietnamese fishing boats and armed junks. Many of them began firing at him. Others were speeding in his direction, to capture or kill him. Two wingmen were overhead and provided CAS. Because of their high speed, the jets were unable to attack boats within ½ mile of Lt Cullen. Had the F-100's attempted to attack the boats nearest the downed pilot, they risked killing him also. To make himself a smaller target, Lt. Cullen climbed out of his raft and slid back into the warm ocean. Later, he said, *"This was an act of desperation. I thought I was finished."*

He would have been, except that seven U.S. Navy A-1 Skyraiders, from a nearby aircraft carrier, suddenly appeared. They swooped in so low that the men in the boats dropped to their bellies, in fear of being run over. They had good reason to fear for their lives. The men in the boats stopped heading for Lt. Cullen. Instead, they started firing at the A-1's. This was a serious mistake. The A-1's started attacking all of the boats.

Adman 63 now arrived overhead. The mêlée in the water below was obvious. Finding Lt. Cullen was easy. He had released high visibility fluorescent green sea marker dye into the water. His URT-21 beeper was on, but it had a broken antenna. Still, the radio operator in Adman 63 could DF the occasional beeps. Adman 63's pilot, Major Ladou, did not need radio DF cuts to find Lt. Cullen. The Lt. was the center of attention, on the waters surface. Some of the fishing boats were firing on the survivor. Perhaps they hoped that if they killed him, the A-1's would leave the area. The A-1's continued low level attacks on the boats. Occasionally, F-100's swooped down on firing passes. The HU-16 crew disregarded the obvious danger from the hostile boats and decided to water land the amphibian. Five-foot swells made the landing risky and difficult. The Albatross set down without mishap in the choppy gulf. The crew used a a high speed water taxi to get to Lt. Cullen and pulled him aboard. Many of the boats were now firing on them. They took off without delay. Lieutenant James Cullen had been in the water for only 30 minutes. He rushed throughout the HU-16 hugging each of the rescue crewmembers, exclaiming *"I love you guys! I love you guys!"*^[xii] Air Rescue had one more satisfied customer.

[i] Interview of Jon Young by Robert LaPointe, 17 September 1999

[ii] Det 3 PARC Mission Report #187 – 2 Mar 65 and HQ PARC Log entry # 0357-65. In USAF Collection, AFHRA card catalog K318.2411-6.

[iii] Conn B Anderson, Captain USAF Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia 1961- 1966, tab 6 (Maxwell AFB: Project CHECO Report, HQ PACAF, 24 October 1966). In USAF Collection, AFHRA

[iv] Ibid.

[v] Ibid.

[vi] Young interview and Anderson tab 6

[vii] Detachment Provisional Fourth Mission Report # 187, 2 March 65. Written by 1Lt Joseph Phelan. In USAF Collection, AFHRA card catalog #318.2411-6

[viii] Young interview and Anderson tab 6

[ix] Ibid.

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[xi] Ibid.

[xii] Anderson, USAF Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia 1961- 1966, tab 6

Robert LaPointe

From: "megan"
To: "Bob LaPointe" <rlapointe@gci.net>
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2001 6:51 PM
Subject: Fw: Jon H. Young pj

----- Original Message -----

From: Ronald L. Ingraham
To: blossomhed@prodigy.net
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2001 5:52 PM
Subject: Re: Jon H. Young pj

Hi Jon,

I can be of some help. My last contact with Colonel Lockhart was in 1997. I tried to get some details on his whereabouts when you were on the ground looking for him. I'll try to copy the letters he sent me and attach them to a later message.

Hayden J. Lockhart
14159 Cutlass Avenue
Corpus Christi, TX 78418-6423
(512) 949-9862

The saddest thing I got from his letters was that he evaded for 7 or 8 days - almost made it to the DMZ - and got caught by a farmer.

I guess you saw that Pits was awarded the Medal of Honor.

My address is

Ronald L. Ingraham
9570 South Tropical Trail
Merritt Island, FL 32952-6906
(321) 777-2578

I've pretty much lost track of most of the Danang bunch. Joe Phelan left the AF and went back to work for a chemical company he'd been with before entering service. Maybe I'll think of the name.

Don Welch left service and went back to Boulder, Co. Larry Henderson was in Gainesville, FL the last I heard. John Moore was around at Hill AFB while I was there, possibly Regan, too.

My sons set me up for a reunion with Robert V. (Boris) Baird, the guy we were able to

ARMED FORCES

Operation Rescue

2 MAR 65
U.S. Air Force 1st Lieut. James A. Cullen of Winchester, Mass., could hardly have been in a tighter spot. Hit by Viet Minh gunners during a bombing run over Quangkhe during last week's raids, Cullen bailed out of his F-100 Super Sabre into the Gulf of Tonkin—and practically into the midst of a flotilla of armed Communist junks and torpedo boats. Muzzles flashing, the Red vessels sped toward Cullen as he desperately sought cover behind his life raft. Said he: "I thought I was finished."

He very well might have been, but seven U.S. Navy Skyraiders from a nearby Seventh Fleet carrier suddenly swooped in almost low enough to get their bellies wet, buzzed the Red vessels. Meanwhile, an amphibious Air Force HU-16 "Albatross" that had been circling off Quangkhe in case of just such an emergency, zeroed in on a radio homing beacon built into Cullen's life belt and sighted a brilliant orange marker dye that the downed pilot had released into the water. Defying 5-ft. waves, the Albatross set down without mishap in the choppy gulf, taxied up to Cullen, and was flying him back to South Viet Nam only 30 minutes after he hit the water.

"I Love You." Cullen's rescue was a dramatic but by no means unique example of a highly effective U.S. operation in Viet Nam. Since last October, when the Fifth Air Rescue Detachment was set up at South Viet Nam's Danang airbase with Albatrosses and H43-I "Huskie" helicopters, as many as 15 U.S. and South Vietnamese pilots have been plucked from Red-infested jungles in Viet Nam and Laos and from waters off the coast; the exact figure is classified. In the series of raids against North Viet Nam since last Feb. 7, the efficient rescuers have racked up an

enviable batting average—out of ten pilots shot down, seven have been saved.

The operation calls for extraordinary precision and coordination, often involves Army and Air Force helicopters from as far off as Thailand, Air Force escorts from all over South Viet Nam, Navy fighters from carriers in the South China Sea.

In last week's renewed aerial action, a Huskie helicopter was whirring over the Gulf of Tonkin in search of Cullen when Vietnamese 1st Lieut. Nguyen Van Phu, who ditched his flaming Skyraider near the spot where the U.S. pilot went down, fired a smoke signal to attract its attention. The Huskie, flying out of Danang, dropped to within 3 ft. of the pitching wave crests, plucked the wounded pilot out of the water and started back toward South Viet Nam.

On the way, it joined another Huskie and an escort of American fighters that had picked up yet another urgent distress call—from a U.S. captain whose Thunderchief jet was shot down over the tangled jungle near Quangkhe. Sighting a signal fire that the captain had resourcefully lighted on the bank of a stream, one Huskie descended to 100 ft., hauled the captain into the chopper with a steel cable and winch. As he scrambled gratefully aboard, the rescued pilot cried to the crew, "I love you. I love you."

Good Haul. The other U.S. pilots were picked up in equally daring operations. An Air Force helicopter based at Nakhon Phanom in northeast Thailand zipped over to Tchepone, a Laotian town overrun by Pathet Lao and Viet Minh regulars, picked up the pilot of a downed U.S. Thunderchief from the jungle. In a night operation inside North Viet Nam, another hovering helicopter used electronic strobe lights and flares to find a U.S. pilot in the jungle and rescue him.

Time - 12 Mar 65

office for visits that sometimes ran for three hours or more, persuaded impressive numbers of them that his way is the right one. Sympathetic Congressmen were quietly advised by White House aides that the State Department was only too ready to crank out Viet Nam speeches for them to deliver. In a series of White House receptions for members of Congress and their wives, the President invariably took the lawmakers aside for lengthy and intensive briefings on Viet Nam.

A Chat with Frank. But persuasion was not his only weapon. There was, for example, a widely attested (and publicly denied) conversation with Idaho's Democratic Senator Frank Church, who had been making headlines with his Senate speeches suggesting U.S. withdrawal from Viet Nam.

At one of the White House receptions, Johnson spotted Church, went over to him and said: "Frank, you've been making some speeches that haven't been very helpful." Said Church: "Well, Mr. President, if you read the speech all the way through, it isn't the same as the headlines." Said the President: "The headlines are all I read and all anybody reads. When you were in trouble out in your state, Frank, I used to come out and give you a hand, didn't I?" Answered Church defensively: "Mr. President, what I've been saying isn't much different from what Walter Lippmann has been writing." The President had the last words. "Walter Lippmann," he said, "is a fine man. I admire him. Next time you're in trouble out in Idaho, Frank, you ask Walter to come help." Church has since noticeably modified his criticisms of U.S. policy in Viet Nam.

Thus President Johnson managed to diminish the number of domestic political bullets whizzing around his head, and to proceed calmly in increasing the military pressure in Viet Nam.

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Of the six pilots downed during the week's raids, the only one still missing at week's end was 1st Lieut. Hayden J. Lockhart Jr., who was seen parachuting into the southwest corner of North Viet Nam after his Super Sabre was hit by ground fire. U.S. reconnaissance jets flew over the area daily, taking photographs and listening for radio signals, while rescue choppers made risky low-level runs. On several occasions, the choppers drew fire from Viet Minh patrols in the area—an indication that the Communists too might be looking for Lieut. Lockhart.

Games, but Grim

The first U.S. Marines to land on the shores of Lancelot are met by cheering natives. Lancelot's sovereignty is imperiled by guerrilla bands that have infiltrated from the neighboring country of Merlin, and the U.S. has sent the Marines to the rescue. The natives throng around their American saviors, tug at the Marines' packs, playfully grab their



RESCUED PILOT CULLEN & COMRADES AT DANANG AIR BASE

With wet bellies and strobe lights.

"Actually," says Colonel Arthur W. Beall, former commander of the 3rd ARRS Group at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Air Base, "a man can hardly bail out anywhere in South Vietnam without a helicopter following him down, especially if he can broadcast any kind of warning at all. When a pilot warns us, we'll follow him in."

"We've never missed anyone when we saw the parachute and knew they were alive," Beall adds. So many planes are in the air over Vietnam at all times, he estimates that most downed pilots can get cover fire within ten minutes and most rescues can be accomplished in less than an hour.

In Southeast Asia today there is no *typical* rescue mission. Crews never know, when the alert sounds, what they will face. It might be a plane crash only a few miles from the base, or perhaps it is a downed pilot in an enemy stronghold a hundred miles away. It may be one man or twenty—on a mountainside, in the jungle, or far out at sea. Once scrambled, a crew may be up five minutes or three days.

Thus the men of ARRS must be ready to meet any emergency, and they must be available on a moment's notice. To be airborne in three minutes, as Master Sergeant Blier says is necessary, requires quick reflexes and the ability to limber up and get moving on the spot. Under such conditioning there is, obviously,

little time for solid rest. Men sleep virtually with one eye open, prepared to jump into boots at the first blare of an alarm. There are no sleepyheads, no slow risers. Even a second's tardiness can mean a man's life, and the crews know it.

Although there are no typical missions as such, the flights made by Major Ronald L. Ingraham and Captain Joe Phelan on March 2, 1965, provide an outstanding example of the coordinated and courageous efforts that go into rescue operations in Vietnam daily. Their flights, in Huskies, were also historic, being the first ones made into North Vietnam.

Here's how Major Ingraham describes the action:

"This was the day of the first mass bombing attacks on North Vietnam, and Joe and I were positioned with our crews at a forward post near the 17th parallel. We knew the skies would be filled with flak and small arms fire and that there was a good likelihood some of our planes would be shot down, so we were standing by.

"It wasn't long before our conviction was borne out. By radio we got word an F-100 was down near Dong Hoi, a port area about sixty miles north of the 17th. Then another report came in of an F-100 ditched over land about twenty-five miles north of the 17th, near Xom Bang, a supply depot target for the day's bombing runs. An F-105 was also said to be down in that area.

"Right after this we got scrambled out and headed

north, flying low over the sea to avoid detection. When we got to Dong Hoi, we were greeted by Navy pilots in Skyraiders who were to fly cover for us over land. Before we went in, though, Joe spotted a red flare a little farther out in the gulf and went to investigate. It was a South Vietnamese pilot who had belly-whopped his aircraft at sea and was floating in a dinghy about eight miles out. Phelan's crew lowered their hoist and picked him up. Except for a few minor burns and slight shock, he was okay, and since time and fuel were running short, we decided to take him with us on the inland pickups rather than drop him off at an aid station.

"The Skyraiders led the way for us. We knew there were heavy antiaircraft guns in the area, so we chose to fly very low, just above treetop level. This way we could swoop over a gun emplacement and be out of range before anyone could zero in on us. The Navy pilots also steered us around most of these emplacements.

"We cleared the sand dunes on the beach, hit the first tree line and then flew over small villages, rivers, open rice paddies, and fields. About fifteen miles in, we approached some foothills, and one of the Skyraider pilots reported sighting a parachute. Phelan was closest, so he went down to investigate. When we saw no movement on the ground, pararescueman Jon Young rode the hoist down to check things out. He

found a helmet with blood on it but no trace of the pilot. He figured the man might be wounded and he searched the brush but couldn't find him. Then Viet Cong popped up and began firing at Phelan's Huskie. We called on our covering aircraft for help and they strafed the hillside. Before Young was hauled back in, Joe took a hit that rocked the helo, so we got out of there as fast as we could. We had to assume the pilot was either killed or captured. Had he been anywhere near the crash area, Young would have seen him.

"We elected to go farther inland, where a second chute had been sighted. Three miles away, halfway up a ridge in an isolated valley, we saw smoke rising through the trees. Then we spotted the pilot. He was burning his papers. I made a circling pass and then came into a hover and we lowered our hoist 150 feet and scooped him up. He wasn't hurt, but was he ever happy to see us! He didn't think we'd find him this far north of the enemy line.

"Our next problem was getting home. Our covering aircraft reported heavy flak, so we figured the best thing to do was take the Huskies up to six thousand feet and try to dodge it. Luckily, we did. Most of it hit right behind us. En route to Da Nang we stopped at our forward area to examine Phelan's Huskie for damage. It had taken a hit in the rotor blades; and we decided to leave his bird there, so his crew and the Vietnamese pilot piled in with us. When we got back

to home base it was pitch dark and there was a heavy cloud cover, but I found a hole and dropped through it. It had been a long, hard day, but worthwhile. We had recovered two pilots in the first rescues made far behind enemy lines."

For their heroic work under fire the crews of both helicopters were awarded the Silver Star.

"That was the day we grew up over there," says Colonel Krafka. "We proved how effectively we could carry out a rescue mission under extremely hazardous conditions. It jelled our team." Krafka says he has never seen such enthusiasm, such motivation and high morale as attained by men of the 38th.

"They trained for years and they know they are really doing something good in Vietnam, fulfilling the role for which they were handpicked. This has promoted a high degree of esprit de corps."

And, in turn, the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service has won the admiration and respect of every fighting man in Southeast Asia. Pilots fly with more confidence than ever, knowing if their plane is shot out from under them ARRS teams will only be minutes away.

3 □ A NEW HERO EVERY DAY

Percentagewise, men of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service are the most decorated. The very nature of their mission decrees this. They are never called upon unless someone is in trouble, quite often in imminent danger of losing his life or his freedom. Most flights are made past enemy lines, and many pickups are performed within rifleshoot of onrushing Viet Cong.

Even in peacetime a rescue attempt can be hazardous. Flying conditions are frequently miserable and landing areas inaccessible. But in wartime such difficulties are compounded by the ever-present threat of enemy fire. Add to this the fact that most ARRS aircraft—by today's jet-paced standards of speed—are