

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTONSPECIAL ORDER
GB-104

20 April 1966

The Aviators' Valor Award for 1965 is awarded to CAPTAIN ANTHONY A MUEHLING JR, , who distinguished himself as pilot of an amphibious aircraft on the South China Sea, on 18 June 1965, in the rescue of five personnel from a mid-air collision between two B-52 aircraft. The collective acts of CAPT MUEHLING were responsible for saving the lives of the survivors of the mid-air collision as well as his fellow crew members. Arriving in the impact area shortly after dawn, CAPTAIN MUEHLING spotted one man lying motionless in a life raft in extremely rough seas generated by a passing typhoon. He accomplished an open sea landing near the raft. This man was recovered and found deceased due to wounds suffered during ejection. CAPTAIN MUEHLING then water-taxied the amphibian and recovered two other survivors. Enroute to a fourth survivor, progressively rougher seas swamped the HU-16, causing an electrical fire on the flight deck. All electrical power was turned off and the fire extinguished. However, the single side band radio and two inverters were rendered inoperative. The fourth survivor was then recovered and given medical attention. By this time, prolonged taxiing, extremely rough seas, and extreme heat in the aircraft caused physical exhaustion and sea sickness among the crew members and survivors alike. CAPTAIN MUEHLING, although fatigued, maneuvered the HU-16 to permit the opening of windows and hatches to ventilate the aircraft and dissipate the extreme heat. An assisting aircraft, however, spotted a fifth survivor and CAPTAIN MUEHLING taxied to and recovered this man. He then attempted to return to base. Several water takeoffs were attempted, but an engine power loss, high seas and wind prevented liftoff. An aircraft was contacted and surface vessels requested for assistance. The closest vessel, however, was over two hours distant and no alternative remained except to maintain directional control by use of engine power in the face of ever mounting seas. All hatches were closed to prevent water entry and as sea conditions worsened, all personnel aboard suffered from sea sickness, dehydration, and exhaustion. While CAPTAIN MUEHLING was physically laboring to maintain directional control, a large swell struck the propeller of number two engine, bending one blade and forcing it into a full reverse position. Takeoff was impossible and CAPTAIN MUEHLING strenuously fought to control the amphibian with the one remaining engine until help arrived. A merchant vessel arrived at mid-day and all survivors and crew members, less the pilot, co-pilot and one pararescueman were transferred. Later, a U. S. Navy vessel arrived and these personnel were transferred to this vessel. The attempt to hoist the HU-16 commenced. The remaining crewmen entered a raft while CAPTAIN MUEHLING stayed aboard the HU-16 for hoisting to begin. While holding the raft close to the HU-16 by means of a life line, a large swell tossed the amphibian up and then suddenly dropped it, snapping the hoisting cables. Seeing the drop tank about to crush the crew members in the raft, CAPTAIN MUEHLING physically pulled the raft clear of the drop tank, narrowly averting injury to these crew members. The Captain of the Navy vessel ordered all crewmen removed from the amphibian and the HU-16 rigged for towing. However, due to extremely rough seas and damage incurred during the attempted hoisting,

SO GB-104, DAF, 20 April 1966, continued:

the HU-16 sank during the night. CAPTAIN MUEHLING had spent over fourteen hours on the open sea under extremely adverse conditions of rough seas, physical exhaustion, dehydration, and aircraft malfunction. His individual acts of heroism, and disregard for his own personal safety, coupled with sheer determination, made possible the saving of four lives, the recovery of a deceased pilot, and insured the safety of his crew. By his extraordinary courageous actions and humanitarian regard for his fellowmen, CAPTAIN MUEHLING has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE:



J. P. McCONNELL, General, USAF
Chief of Staff

R J PUGH, Colonel, USAF
Director of Administrative Services

DISTRIBUTION
GO

Briggs, 18 June

(Unofficial)

At 2103Z 17 June, 2 B-52's had a mid-air collision approximately 100 miles West of Clark AFB. An HU-16 from the 31st ARS made an open sea landing and took aboard 4 survivors and 1 deceased. Due to rough seas, the HU-16 could not take off therefore, Naval Helicopters were dispatched from CUBI PT to make a hoist pick up. Apparently before the choppers arrived, and LST arrived on the scene, took the survivors and the Para Rescuemen aboard and took the HU-16 in tow. ~~There is some question~~ Plans are to turn the tow over to a Navy Destroyer when it arrives on scene. The status of the search as of 0850Z is as follows. Signals have been heard on a URC-21. ^(1500 hours) As of 0740Z the 31st had 7 acft in the air and planned to keep two acft up all night. At first light they plan to launch 9 acft. The 31st has requested assistance from the 79th and that unit has dispatched two HC-54's to assist. An H6-97 already en-route to Clark for normal 31st Spt will take minimum crew rest at Wake and proceed ASAP to Clark.

~~18-19 June 1965~~



~~18/1200/~~

18/1350/GCP

Called Clark AFB and made contact with Maj Clark, Det 2, PARC (13th AF JROCC) RE. B-52 Mid-air. The HU-16 that made an open sea landing was piloted by Capt Muehling. PJ did not jump. Confirmed pick up of 4 survivors and 1 deceased. All were taken from HU-16 by Norwegian Motor Ship, Argo. The US Naval ship, Point Defiance, a sub-tender (modified LST), took the survivors and decesasee aboard from the Argo. The Point Defiance is attempting to hoist the HU-16 on board. If unable, will tow to port. HU-16 reportedly bent a prop blade but did not lose an engine. Prop blade reportedly bent by water contact. Search status: Still have 7 personnel mission. Plan to launch following at 2200Z: 8- C-130, 3- HU-16, 2-KC-135, 2-B-57, 2-C-47, 3-P3A, 1-HC-54, and 3-HC-97. The C-130 will probably split the period - 4 & 4. The HC-54 from the 79th and the HC-97s may get off late. The 79th could only furnish one HC-54 due to other missions. Last position of HU-16 and Point Defiance was 1655N 11750E. This puts him approx 200 miles NE of Cubic.

TBSHA229ZCVC313
PP RUCOSH
DE RUMABA 12F 19/0500Z
P 190208Z

FM DET2 PACARESCUECEN CLARK AB PI
TO RUEAHQ/HQ USAF
RUCDAA/HQ MATS
RUHLKM/PACIFIC AIR RESCUE CENTER HICKAM AFB HAWAII
RUHLKM/HQ PACAF
RUCSC/HQ SAC
RUCOSH/HQ ARS ORLANDO AFB FLA
ZEN/13AF CLARK AB PI
ZEN/405TH CSG CLARK AB PI
ZEN/31ST ARS CLARK AB PI
RUMRDA/3 ADIV GUAM
BT

DOWNING
IAW AFR-205-2
13 MAY 1970

SECRET 130AR 50010. 19 JUNE 65. HQ USAF
(AF-YOPGF), HQ MATS (MAOCO), HQ ARS (ARS-CP), HQ PARC (COMMAND
POST), HQ PACAF (PFOCO-H), HQ SAC (COMMAND POST).
THE FOLLOWING SECRET SECRET MSG IS RETRANSMITTED FOR YOUR INFORMATION
AND DISSEMINATION. QUOTE:
FOR BASE COM

SECRET

SAR SITREP NR 2 (U)

1. FOLLOWING SURVIVORS OF CREW E ZERO 9 ABOARD AND UNINJURED:
CO-POLIT 1ST LT KENNETH D. HARTEN

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ELECTRONIC WARFARE OFFICER 1ST LT J. L. ERBES 76854A
NAVIGATOR 1ST LT J. A. COLLIER III
2. FOLLOWING SURVIVOR OF CREW E ZERO 4:
RADAR NAVIGATOR LT COL C. P. ANDERMAN A0439897 POSSIBLE RIB
FRACTURES PROGNOSIS GOOD.
3. 1ST LT HARTEN AND 1ST LT ERBES BELIEVE THEY SIGHTED ONE EACH
OTHER PARACHUTES
4. 1ST LT COLLIER STATES THE RADAR NAVIGATOR CAPT LOWERY SHOULD
HAVE GOTTEN OUT UNLESS THERE WAS A SEAT MALFUNCTION.
5. LTCOL ANDERMAN INDICATED SIGHTING FOUR OTHER PARACHUTES
THESE ARE PROBABLY THOSE OF OTHER SURVIVORS.
6. COURSE OF AIRCRAFT TAIL NO 047 BELIEVED PASSING THROUGH 105
DEG, IN A TURN THIS IS ESTIMATE OF CREW E ZERO 9.
7. COURSE OF OTHER AIRCRAFT TAIL NO 179 BELIEVED TO BE 285 DEG,
THIS IS ESTIMATE OF CREW ZERO 4.
8. CAUSE OF ACCIDENT MID AIR COLLISION BETWEEN AIRCRAFT NO 047
AND NO 179.
9. CAPT ROBERTSON AIRCRAFT COMMANDER OF CREW ZERO 4 DEAD WHEN
PICKED UP FROM WATER BY HU-16.
10. SURVIVAL CHANCES OF OTHER CREW MEMBERS UNKNOWN BY SURVIVORS.

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11. LT SLOCOMBE NAVIGATOR OF HU-16 STATES THAT ALL SURVIVORS WERE
PICKED UP WITHIN AN AREA OF 4 TO 5 SQUARE MILES.
12. EFFORTS TO TAKE ABOARD HU-16 ABORTED WHEN LIFTING PAD STRIPPED
DUE TO EFFECT OF SUDDEN SWELL WHEN PLANE SUSPENDED FROM HOOK
ONLY ALTERNATIVE NOW APPEARS TO BE TOWING, ATTEMPTING TO TAKE
PLANE IN TWEM DESIRE GRAPPLE RDVU WITH ME AND ACCEPT TOW.
GP-4.
BT