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20 Oct 65
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FROM: Det 6, 38th Air Rescue Squadron, APO US Forces 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

7 Oct 1965

TO: Hq Pacific Air Rescue Center (DOARO), APO US Forces 96553

1. Mission number 6-38ARS-898-5 Oct 65.
2. SAR alerted by 38ARSq
3. SAR aircraft used: 2 HH-43F's. All crewmembers from Det 6, 38ARSq.

PRIMARY ALERT CREW

RCC Capt Raymond L. Murden
CP Capt Dale L. Pötter
HM TSgt Kenneth L. Perkins
RS A2C Richard O. Steinert

SECONDARY ALERT CREW

RCC Capt Charles P. Nadler
CP 1/Lt Joseph T. Connell
HM TSgt Richard A. Connon
RS SSgt Leon Fullwood

4. Reaction time from initial notification to pickup of first load of casualties: 20 Minutes.
5. CAP assistance: Two Army UH-1B armed helicopters, 2 USAF A-1E's and one USAF Forward Air Controller in O-1F.
6. Area and type of pickup: 8 nautical miles northeast of Bien Hoa AB in dense jungle terrain in war zone "D" (11 05N - 106 53E).
7. Signalling equipment used: Smoke grenades.
8. Survivors names not available.
9. Summary of events:

At 1535L 5 Oct 65, 38th Air Rescue Squadron SARCC called informing us that the Army had thirty one casualties eight miles northeast of Bien Hoa AB. Primary and secondary alert HH-43F helicopters scrambled at 1540L. The third alert crew was called in to provide LER coverage while primary and secondary alert crews were on the mission.

Bien Hoa tower informed us that there was artillery firing in the northeast quadrant from Bien Hoa. We requested that artillery fire be stopped. We circled just north of the runway for approximately five minutes until tower informed us that the artillery fire had ceased. An

escort of two armed UH-1B helicopters scrambled from Tan Son Nhut AB as requested by 38th SARCC.

We were led to the site by an Air Force Forward Air Controller in an O-1F. As we approached the site we were joined by the armed Hueys. Personnel on the ground used smoke grenades to mark their location. They had blasted a small clearing from the dense jungle. The trees in the area were 125 to 150 feet high. The floor of the clearing was strewn with felled trees and stumps. Army UH-1B medical evacuation helicopters had evaluated the clearing and determined that it was too small for them to get into.

From initial evaluation of the clearing it appeared that it would be necessary to recover the casualties by using the hoist and stokes litter. I decided to descend as far as possible into the chimney like opening to reduce the length of hoist pickups. As we descended it was determined that we would be able to descend all the way to the ground. The landing was accomplished by straddling stumps and maneuvering the helicopter to avoid the many felled trees. The UHF/VHF antenna under the front of the helicopter was touching a stump in front and the bottom of the vertical stabilizers were resting on limbs of felled trees.

The diameter of the clearing was so small that on the first approach of each H-43, during the vertical descent into the clearing at about 75 feet, the rotor blades contacted light foliage. Three crew members, TSgt Perkins, TSgt Cannon and SSgt Fullwood remained at the site to assist with the wounded, enlarge the clearing, improve the landing area and direct the landings. Two chain saws were flown in on a subsequent sortie.

During the course of the mission we learned that the casualties were from "A" Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade and that the casualties had been suffered during the previous four hours in a battle with the Viet Cong 600 meters from the clearing. While operating at the site there were several explosions nearby of unknown origin. During one climbout the primary alert H-43 was thirty feet above the ground when it was blown several feet rearward by the concussion of an explosion.

The primary alert H-43 made six trips from the site to the Third Field Hospital and the secondary alert H-43 made three round trips. There was a total of eighteen landings, sixteen of which were on unprepared area. Total sorties: 18. Total flying time 4:30. Sorties and time of assisting aircraft unknown.

Inspection of the H-43's after completion of the mission revealed no damage. Green streaks were found on the outer portion of the right rotor blades of both H-43's caused by blades striking foliage. There was no damage to the blades.

10. Comments:

See mission report number 6-38ARS-898-5 for casualty information.

The day after the mission I called the three medical agencies that treated the casualties to obtain information to determine the number of saves. Third Surgical Hospital said that there were seven positive saves.

Raymond L Murden

RAYMOND L. MURDEN, Capt., USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

ACTIVITY	COORDINATION SHEET
CO	
W/C	
CR	

ORIGIN: Det 3, 38th Air Rescue Squadron, APO US Forces 96227.

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

7 Oct 1965

TO: Hq Pacific Air Rescue Center (SARCC), APO US Forces 96523

1. Mission number 6-32420-872-5 Oct 65.

2. SAR alerted by SARCC.

3. SAR aircraft used: 2 HH-43P's. All crewmembers from Det 6, 38ARCC.

PRIMARY ALERT CREW

HCC Capt Raymond L. Gordon
CP Capt Dale L. Fetter
SW Tgt Kenneth L. Perkins
RS A2C Richard O. Steinert

SECONDARY ALERT CREW

HCC Capt Charles P. Radler
CP 1/Lt Joseph T. Connell
SW Tgt Richard A. Cannon
RS S2gt Leon Falkwood

4. Reaction time from initial notification to pickup of first load of casualties: 20 Minutes.

5. CAP assistance: Two Army HH-19 armed helicopters, 2 USAF A-1E's and one USAF Forward Air Controller in C-119.

6. Area and type of pickup: 8 nautical miles northeast of Bien Hoa AB in dense jungle terrain in war zone "D" (11 GSN - 104 535).

7. Signalling equipment used: Smoke grenades.

8. Survivors names not available.

9. Summary of events:

At 1535L 5 Oct 65, 38th Air Rescue Squadron SARCC called informing us that the Army had thirty one casualties eight miles northeast of Bien Hoa AB. Primary and secondary alert HH-43P helicopters scrambled at 1540L. The third alert crew was called in to provide LAR coverage while primary and secondary alert crews were on the mission.

Bien Hoa tower informed us that there was artillery firing in the northeast quadrant from Bien Hoa. We requested that artillery fire be stopped. We circled just north of the runway for approximately five minutes until tower informed us that the artillery fire had ceased. An

ORIGINATOR (Typed Name and Grade)

ACTION AGENCY

PHONE NUMBER

TYPIST'S INITIALS

DATE PREPARED

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COORDINATION SHEET

escort of two armed UH-1B helicopters scrambled from Tan Son Nhut AB as requested by 36th SARCC.

We were led to the site by an Air Force Forward Air Controller in an O-1F. As we approached the site we were joined by the armed Hueys. Personnel on the ground used smoke grenades to mark their location. They had blasted a small clearing from the dense jungle. The trees in the area were 125 to 150 feet high. The floor of the clearing was strewn with felled trees and stumps. Army UH-1B medical evacuation helicopters had evaluated the clearing and determined that it was too small for them to get into.

From initial evaluation of the clearing it appeared that it would be necessary to recover the casualties by using the hoist and stokes litter. I decided to descend as far as possible into the chimney like opening to reduce the length of hoist pickups. As we descended it was determined that we would be able to descend all the way to the ground. The landing was accomplished by straddling stumps and maneuvering the helicopter to avoid the many felled trees. The UHF/VHF antenna under the front of the helicopter was touching a stump in front and the bottom of the vertical stabilizers were resting on limbs of felled trees.

The diameter of the clearing was so small that on the first approach of each H-43, during the vertical descent into the clearing at about 75 feet, the rotor blades contacted light foliage. Three crew members, 1st Lt Perkins, 1st Lt Cannon and 2nd Lt Fullwood remained at the site to assist with the wounded, enlarge the clearing, improve the landing area and direct the landings. Two chain saws were flown in on a subsequent sortie.

During the course of the mission we learned that the casualties were from "A" Company, 17th Airborne Brigade and that the casualties had been suffered during the previous four hours in a battle with the Viet Cong 600 meters from the clearing. While operating at the site there were several explosions nearby of unknown origin. During one climbout the primary alert H-43 was thirty feet above the ground when it was blown several feet rearward by the concussion of an explosion.

The primary alert H-43 made six trips from the site to the Third Field Hospital and the secondary alert H-43 made three round trips. There was a total of eighteen landings, sixteen of which were on unprepared area. Total sorties: 15. Total flying time 4:30. Sorties and time of assisting aircraft unknown.

Inspection of the H-43's after completion of the mission revealed no damage. Green streaks were found on the outer portion of the right rotor blades of both H-43's caused by blades striking foliage. There was no damage to the blades.

10. Comments:

See mission report number 6-32125-830-5 for casualty information.

The day after the mission I called the three medical agencies that treated the casualties to obtain information to determine the number of saves. Third Surgical Hospital said that there were seven positive saves.

RAYMOND L. MURPHY, Capt., USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

ARSH-65

ARSH-65

MISSIONSRESCUERSLOCATIONSSURVIVORSNameAircraftNameServiceAircraft

38-959-22 Sep	Capt Richardson	HU-16B	1700N - 10715E	Capt Tuong	VNAF	A1H
38-968-24 Sep	Maj Hollfelder	HU-16B	1708N - 10758E	Capt Graves	USAF	F4C
				Lt Nolan		
6-38-820-24 Sep	Capt Layman	HH-43F	5 NM E. Bein Hoa	Maj Barbena	USAF	F-100
6-38-898-5 Oct	Capt Murden	HH-43F	8 NM E. Bien Hoa	2 Soldiers	USA	
	Capt Nadler			5 Soldiers	USA	
6-38-929-9 Oct	Capt Cook	HH-43F	10 NM W. Bien Hoa	2 Soldiers	USA	
	Capt Potter			1 Soldier	USA	
38-1027-13 Oct	Capt Jennings	HH-3	2132N - 10317E	Maj Randall	USAF	F-105
38-1055-22 Oct	Capt Porter	HH-43F	37 NM SSW Pleiku	Maj Elliot	USAF	A1E
7-38-642-23 Oct	Capt Cunningham	HH-43F	12 NM W. DaNang	2 Marines	USMC	
38-1073-28 Oct	Capt Burdeaux	HH-43F	1635N - 10624E	LCDR Lindsey	USN	F-4B
	Capt McMillan	HH-43F	1635N - 10624E	LT Cooper	USN	F-4B
38-1084-1 Nov	Capt Westenbarger	HU-16B	2051N - 10729E	Capt Huggins	USAF	RF-101
38-1088-1 Nov		HH-3	1803N - 10540E	LCDR Wheat	USN	A4C
38-1110-6 Nov		HH-3	2029N - 10527E	2 Navy	USN	SH3
6-38-1047-6 Nov	Capt Murden	HH-43F	1104N - 10703E	1 Australian	Aust	
38-1111-7 Nov	Lt Kirby	HU-16B	1953N - 10614E	LCDR Wask	USN	A4C
38-1114-8 Nov*	Capt Henningson	HH-43B	1108N - 10657E	20 Soldiers	USA	
	Capt Nadler					
38-1138-17 Nov	Capt Richardson	HU-16B	1913N - 10748E	CDR Chew	USN	F8E
38-1141-18 Nov	Capt Reiderick	HH-43B	1814N - 10532E	Capt Mahaffey	USAF	F-105
38-1150-20 Nov	Capt Keesler	HH-43B	1113N - 10643E	2 Soldiers	USA	
7-38-671-21 Nov	Capt Graham	HH-43F	1 NM S. DaNang	Lt Rucker	USAF	C-123
				A1C Kelly		

* Recovered on 9 November

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28. 38ARS-1236-20 Dec 65 (C). Capt. John Ruffo was forced to eject from his F-105 after being hit by ground fire. He landed in a bay about one half mile off the North Vietnamese coast, and approximately the same distance from several islands. The survivor came under small arms fire from both the islands and the mainland. His day flare was spotted by the HU-16 crew which immediately water landed. The rescue technician jumped into the water and aided the survivor aboard. There was intense ground fire directed at the HU-16 at this time, and there were also numerous junks in the area. In order to take off, the HU-16 pilot, Major William Devitt, had to thread his way through the junks, and between two islands. As most of the fire seemed to be coming from the islands he directed RESCAP aircraft to bomb them, and as this was in progress the HU-16 took off. Immediately following take off the rescue technician, SSgt Dudley Peckingspaugh, treated the survivor for burns and shock, he was transferred to the waiting ambulance upon landing at Danang.

29. 38ARS-1239-21 Dec 65 (S). The HC-54 on prepositioned orbit was notified by a F-105 that his wingman had ejected over North Vietnam. As the HC-54 headed toward the incident site, two HH-3's were scrambled from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, along with A1E escort. The A1E's spotted the chute and a pen flare while the HH-3's were hovering above the clouds at 5000 feet. After looking without success for a hole to let down through, the HH-3 pilot, Capt Butera, asked the A1E pilot to give radio steeps so as to place them over a valley. They entered the clouds at 5000 feet and did not break out until they were less than 1000 feet above the terrain. Soon after, the chute was spotted, and the helicopter came to a hover over the side of a mountain covered by trees 60 feet high. The hoist was lowered and the pilot recovered. Due to the terrain a straight ahead take off was necessary although this meant flying directly over a village. Two bursts of automatic weapons fire were aimed at the HH-3 as it passed over the village. The two A1E's immediately returned the fire, successfully suppressing it. The survivor was taken to Udorn AB, Thailand. 25

30. Flying activities for mission listed in paragraphs 3 through 29.

<u>MISSIONS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF SORTIES(ARS)</u>	<u>OBJECTIVES</u>	<u>TYPES AND NR</u> <u>ARS ACFT LOST</u>	<u>ARS MENWIA,</u> <u>KIA, MIA</u>
6-898-50Oct 65	18	31 Btl Cas*		
6-929-90Oct 65	6	3 Btl Cas*		
38-1027-12Oct 65	6	1 F105 Pilot ✓		
38-1055-22Oct 65	2	1 A1E Pilot		
38-1073-28Oct 65	4	2 F-4B Crew ✓		
38-1081-30Oct 65	9	7 UH1B crew		
38-172-1 Nov 65	1	13 P2V Crew and Pax		
38-1084-1 Nov 65	2	1 RF101 Pilot ✓		
38-1088-1 Nov 65	4	1 A4C Pilot		

25 Append 5 page 13

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FROM: Det 6, 38th Air Rescue Sq, APO San Francisco 96227 8 Nov 65

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

TO: Hq Air Rescue Service, Orlando AFB, Fla 32813

1. Narrative report of save during mission Det 6/38-1047-6 Nov 65 in accordance with PACARESCUECEN Msg 00639 APR 65.
2. Detachment 6, 38th ARS was requested by a 173rd Forward Air Controller to evacuate two casualties from "D" zone, coordinates 1104 N, 10703 E.
3. At 1755 hours, 6 Nov 65, Det 6 scrambled the following HH-43F helicopters and crews: Primary Alert Crew in helicopter 63-1712, RCC Captain Raymond L. Murden, FV3087594, Co-Pilot Captain Karl G. King, FV3103564, Helicopter Mechanic ALC Gerald C. Hammond, AF11365690, Pararescueman ALC William H. Pitsenbarger, AF15680744. The secondary crew in Helicopter 63-1711 consisted of Captain Charles P. Nadler, FR32161, RCC, Captain Maurice G. Kessler, FV3024099, Co-Pilot, TSgt Kenneth L. Perkins, AF15466708, Helicopter Mechanic, and ALC Henry J. O'Beirne, AF12580938, Pararescueman.
4. Initial notification was received at 1752 hours. At 1755 hours the helicopters departed Bien Hoa Air Base and arrived over the general area at 1810 hours. Army helicopters marked a bomb crater with smoke, and ground personnel started moving the casualties toward the crater. Hoist pickups were started at approximately 1845 hours and completed at 1905 hours.
5. Upon arrival of the HH-43F helicopters, one army O-1F aircraft, and one UH-1B helicopter was capping the area. Three armed UH-1B helicopters and two A-1E aircraft arrived to cap the area, after arrival of the HH-43F's. The secondary alert HH-43F remained in orbit to provide back up.
6. The area was covered with dense undergrowth, with scattered trees up to 100 feet high. Hoist pickups were made from a bomb crater using the stokes litter.
7. Smoke bombs were dropped by the army helicopters to mark the area.
8. Survivors were Sgt A. J. McIvor, AD6310927 and Pvt Glen B. Woodward, 16293. Both were assigned to 1st Platoon, Company A, Royal Australian Regiment. Sgt McIvor was suffering from serious head wounds, Pvt Woodward from shoulder wounds.
9. After notification the HH-43F helicopters proceeded to the area, contact with the forward air controller aircraft and the army UH-1B helicopter was established. The UH-1B dropped smoke bombs in a bomb crater and reported that the ground personnel were moving the survivors toward the crater. The FAC aircraft reported seeing gunfire to the south of the area when the UH-1B

flew over. After survivors were moved to pickup spot the primary HH-43F, piloted by Captain Murden made an approach and lowered the stokes litter by hoist. The personnel on the ground disconnected the litter from the hoist cable, but they did not load the survivors into the litter. ALC Pitsenbarger was then lowered by hoist, and loaded the survivors into the litter. After the last survivor was hoisted aboard, ALC Pitsenbarger was hoisted aboard and the HH-43F's departed for Bien Hoa. The last two pickups were made after dark, and it was necessary to use the floodlights to remain clear of the trees and see the persons being hoisted. After returning to Bien Hoa, the survivors were released to the Army Third Mobile Evacuation Surgical Hospital. Hospital personnel later confirmed one save.

Raymond L. Murden
RAYMOND L. MURDEN
Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

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FROM: Det 6, 35th Air Rescue Sq, APO San Francisco 96217 3 Nov 65

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

TO: Hq Air Rescue Service, Orlando AFB, Fla 32813

1. Narrative report of save during mission Det 6/35-1047-6 Nov 65 in accordance with PACAF/RESCUEEN Reg 00499 AFR 63.

2. Detachment 6, 35th ARS was requested by a 173rd Forward Air Controller to evacuate two casualties from "B" zone, coordinates 1104 N, 10703 E.

3. At 1755 hours, 6 Nov 65, Det 6 assembled the following HH-43P helicopters and crews: Primary Alert Crew in helicopter 63-1712, RCC Captain Raymond L. Burden, Co-Pilot Captain Karl G. King, FV3103564, Helicopter Mechanic ALC Gerald C. Hammond, Paramedic ALC William M. Eitsenberger. The secondary crew in Helicopter 63-1711 consisted of Captain Charles P. Hailer, ETC, Captain Maurice G. Kessler, Co-Pilot, TSgt Kenneth L. Perkins, Helicopter Mechanic, and ALC Henry J. O'Dairne, Paramedic.

4. Initial notification was received at 1752 hours. At 1755 hours the helicopters departed Bien Hoa Air Base and arrived over the general area at 1810 hours. Army helicopters marked a bomb crater with smoke, and ground personnel started moving the casualties toward the crater. Hoist pickups were started at approximately 1845 hours and completed at 1905 hours.

5. Upon arrival of the HH-43P helicopters, one army C-17 aircraft, and one UH-1B helicopter was capping the area. Three armed UH-1B helicopters and two A-1H aircraft arrived to cap the area, after arrival of the HH-43P's. The secondary alert HH-43P remained in orbit to provide back up.

6. The area was covered with dense undergrowth, with scattered trees up to 100 feet high. Hoist pickups were made from a bomb crater using the Stokes litter.

7. Smoke bombs were dropped by the army helicopters to mark the area.

8. Survivors were Sgt A. J. Melver, and Pvt Glen E. Woodward. Both were assigned to 1st Platoon, Company A, Royal Australian Regiment. Sgt Melver was suffering from serious head wounds, Pvt Woodward from shoulder wounds.

9. After notification the HH-43P helicopters proceeded to the area, contact with the forward air controller aircraft and the army UH-1B helicopter was established. The UH-1B dropped smoke bombs in a bomb crater and reported that the ground personnel were moving the survivors toward the crater. The F-4C aircraft reported seeing gunfire to the south of the area when the UH-1B

ORIGINATOR (Typed Name and Grade)

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COORDINATION SHEET

After survivors were moved to pickup spot the primary HH-43P, piloted by Captain Hurdon made an approach and lowered the Stokes litter by hoist. The personnel on the ground disconnected the litter from the hoist cable, but they did not load the survivors into the litter. ALC Pitsenbarger was then lowered by hoist, and loaded the survivors into the litter. After the last survivor was hoisted aboard, ALC Pitsenbarger was hoisted aboard and the HH-43P's departed for Bien Hoa. The last two pickups were made after dark, and it was necessary to use the floodlights to remain clear of the trees and see the persons being hoisted. After returning to Bien Hoa, the survivors were released to the Army Third Mobile Evacuation Surgical Hospital. Hospital personnel later confirmed two saved.

HAYMOND L. HURDON
 Captain, USAF
 Rescue Crew Commander

ORIGINATOR (Typed Name and Grade)

ACTION AGENCY

PHONE NUMBER

TYPIST'S INITIALS

DATE PREPARED

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COORDINATION SHEET

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DKSCP

FROM: Det 6, 38th Air Rescue Squadron, APO US Forces 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

9 Oct 1965

TO: Hq Pacific Air Rescue Center (DOARO), APO US Forces 96553

1. Mission Number: 6-38ARS-929-9 Oct 65.
2. SAR alerted by 173rd AB.
3. SAR aircraft used: 2 HH-43F's. All crewmembers from Det 6, 38th ARS.

PRIMARY ALERT CREW:

RCC Capt Darvan E. Cook
CP Maj William T. Hayes Jr.
HM TSgt Domenick J. Cocuzzi
RS AIC William H. Pitsenbarger

SECONDARY ALERT CREW:

RCC Capt Dale E. Potter
CP Capt Raymond L. Murden
HM TSgt Kenneth L. Perkins
RS SSgt George E. Schipper

4. Reaction time from initial notification to pick-up of first casualty: 50 minutes.
5. CAP assistance: Two Army UH-1B armed helicopters.
6. Area and type of pick-up: 18 nautical miles northeast of Bien Hoa AB in secondary growth jungle in war zone (D). (11° 07' N 106° 33' E).
7. Signalling equipment used: Smoke grenades.
8. Survivors names not available.
9. Summary of events:

At 1345L, 9 Oct 65, the 173rd AB called us to evacuate some wounded personnel from the jungle south of Ben Cat. The clearings they were in were too small for the army helicopters to land. Both HH-43's were airborne in 10 minutes and 20 minutes later landed at an army forward control site. There we picked up an army captain to show us where to go and 2 armed UH-1B's for escort. We proceeded to the evacuation sites which were marked by ground personnel with smoke grenades. The jungle growth was about 20' high but very

dense, so the hoist was used with the stokes litter. The armed UH-1B's circled continually during the pick-ups. In all, 3 hoist pick-ups were made. Two were made by the primary crew and both casualties airlifted to the forward army site. The secondary made one pick-up and transported him to the 173rd Field Hospital near Bien Hoa AB. Six (6) sorties, four (4) plus 40 hours.

DARVAN E. COOK, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

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28. 38ARS-1236-20 Dec 65 (C). Capt. John Ruffo was forced to eject from his F-105 after being hit by ground fire. He landed in a bay about one half mile off the North Vietnamese coast, and approximately the same distance from several islands. The survivor came under small arms fire from both the islands and the mainland. His day flare was spotted by the HU-16 crew which immediately water landed. The rescue technician jumped into the water and aided the survivor aboard. There was intense ground fire directed at the HU-16 at this time, and there were also numerous junks in the area. In order to take off, the HU-16 pilot, Major William Devitt, had to thread his way through the junks, and between two islands. As most of the fire seemed to be coming from the islands he directed RESCAP aircraft to bomb them, and as this was in progress the HU-16 took off. Immediately following take off the rescue technician, SSgt Dudley Peckingspaugh, treated the survivor for burns and shock, he was transferred to the waiting ambulance upon landing at Danang.

29. 38ARS-1239-21 Dec 65 (S). The HC-54 on prepositioned orbit was notified by a P-105 that his wingman had ejected over North Vietnam. As the HC-54 headed toward the incident site, two HH-3's were scrambled from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, along with A1E escort. The A1E's spotted the chute and a pen flare while the HH-3's were hovering above the clouds at 5000 feet. After looking without success for a hole to let down through, the HH-3 pilot, Capt Butera, asked the A1E pilot to give radio steers so as to place them over a valley. They entered the clouds at 5000 feet and did not break out until they were less than 1000 feet above the terrain. Soon after, the chute was spotted, and the helicopter came to a hover over the side of a mountain covered by trees 60 feet high. The hoist was lowered and the pilot recovered. Due to the terrain a straight ahead take off was necessary although this meant flying directly over a village. Two bursts of automatic weapons fire were aimed at the HH-3 as it passed over the village. The two A1E's immediately returned the fire successfully suppressing it. The survivor was taken to Udorn AB, Thailand. 25

30. Flying activities for mission listed in paragraphs 8 through 29.

<u>MISSIONS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF SORTIES(ARS)</u>	<u>OBJECTIVES</u>	<u>TYPES AND NE</u>	<u>ARS MENWIA,</u>
			<u>ARS ACFT LOST</u>	<u>KIA, MIA</u>
6-898-50Oct 65	18	31 Btl Cas*		
6-929-90Oct 65	6	3 Btl Cas*		
33-1027-12Oct 65	6	1 F105 Pilot ✓		
39-1055-22Oct 65	2	1 A1E Pilot		
38-1073-28Oct 65	4	2 F-4B Crew ✓		
38-1081-30Oct 65	9	7 UH1B crew		
38-172-1 Nov 65	1	13 P2V Crew and Pax		
38-1084-1 Nov 65	2	1 RF101 Pilot ✓		
38-1088-1 Nov 65	4	1 A4C Pilot		

25 Append 5 page 15

~~SECRET~~

FROM: Det 6, 38th Air Rescue Squadron, APO US Forces 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

9 Oct 1965

TO: Hq Pacific Air Rescue Center (DQARO), APO US Forces 96553

1. Mission Number: 6-38ARS-929-9 Oct 65.

2. SAR alerted by 173rd AB.

3. SAR aircraft used: 2 HH-43's. All crewmembers from Det 6, 38th ARS.

PRIMARY ALERT CREW:

RCC Capt Darvan E. Cook
CP Maj William T. Hayes Jr.
HM TSgt Dominick J. Cocuzzi
RS ALC William H. Pitsenbarger

SECONDARY ALERT CREW:

RCC Capt Dale E. Potter
CP Capt Raymond L. Marden
HM TSgt Kenneth L. Perkins
RS SSgt George E. Schipper

4. Reaction time from initial notification to pick-up of first casualty: 50 minutes.

5. CAP assistance: Two Army UH-1B armed helicopters.

6. Area and type of pick-up: 18 nautical miles northeast of Bien Hoa AB in secondary growth jungle in war zone (D). (11° 07' N 106° 33' E).

7. Signalling equipment used: Smoke grenades.

8. Survivors names not available.

9. Summary of events:

At 1345L, 9 Oct 65, the 173rd AB called us to evacuate some wounded personnel from the jungle south of Ben Cat. The clearings they were in were too small for the army helicopters to land. Both HH-43's were airborne in 10 minutes and 20 minutes later landed at an army forward control site. There we picked up an army captain to show us where to go and 2 armed UH-1B's for escort. We proceeded to the evacuation sites which were marked by ground personnel with smoke grenades. The jungle growth was about 20' high but very

ORIGINATOR (Typed Name and Grade)

ACTION AGENCY

PHONE NUMBER

TYPIST'S INITIALS

DATE PREPARED

19

Return to action agency for signature if checked

FORM 149 PREVIOUS EDITIONS MAY BE USED

COORDINATION SHEET

damage, so the hoist was used with the Stokes litter. The armed UH-1B's circled continually during the pick-ups. In all, 3 hoist pick-ups were made. Two were made by the primary crew and both casualties airlifted to the forward army site. The secondary made one pick-up and transported him to the 173rd Field Hospital near Bien Hoa AB. Six (6) sorties, four (4) plus 40 hours.

DARVAN E. COOK, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

~~SECRET~~

76

NARRATIVE OF RESCUE MISSION

On 13 October 1965, a CH-30 helicopter departed a classified forward operating base in Laos for the purpose of locating and recovering a downed pilot whose jet was shot down while on a mission over North Vietnam. Enroute to the area, it was discovered that radio direction finding systems were inoperative which made it impossible to home in on radio signals transmitted by the downed pilot. While being directed by a rescue C-54 to the general vicinity of the downed pilot, the aircraft encountered anti-aircraft fire, but the pilot placed the aircraft behind a protective ridge. The pilot was forced to fly three low passed very slowly over the extremely dense and hazardous tangle of forest and brush in order to get a visual contact on the downed pilot. It was discovered that the hoist would not work and that a hovering pickup therefore would be impossible. Radio contact was made with the downed pilot and he was instructed to move into an open area so a landing could be made. The helicopter was fired upon by ground troops and fighter cover was called in and they provided suppressive fire actually keeping the hostile ground party pinned down while the helicopter maneuvered for a pickup. The downed pilot was spotted and the rescue pilot landed in a tangle of vines, crushing them down with the aircraft untill the downed pilot was within reach of the para rescue crewmember stationed at the door of the helicopter. The downed pilot was bodily pulled into the aircraft and the helicopter departed. The C-54 and fighter cover directed the helicopter back to its classified landing site. During the return trip th friendly territory, the helicopter was again subjected to anti-aircraft fire.

Crew Members:

RCC Capt Jerry W. Jennings
CP Capt James C. O'Dell
HM S/Sgt Harold R. Schrader
PJ T/Sgt William G. Daniels

~~SECRET~~

'Giants' Are Welcome Sight If You're Down in North

SAIGON—"Ask any man in my outfit, and he'll tell you we have the best mission in the Air Force." Speaking a bit too loudly for the size of the room, Air Force Maj. Baylor R. Haynes, commander of an Air Force rescue helicopter unit, begins to talk about the men who are responsible for rescuing downed pilots in communist north Vietnam.

"Every last one of them, and I mean the support people — clerks, supply men, the lot—as well as the chopper crews will tell you their job is to recover downed aircrew members," he continues in a loud grating voice—a result of flying helicopters since the early 1950s.

In his fatigue uniform, the burly Texan looks like the character whose name his unit bears—the "Jolly Green Giant." A veteran of World War II and the Korean War, Haynes typifies the spirit and morale of his men. He is an experienced rescue pilot with over 70 missions in H-5 and H-19 helicopters during the Korean War.

"We are called the Jolly Green Giants," Haynes says, "because of the size and coloring of our helicopters and the giant-size job my people are doing."

The rescue crews fly camouflaged HH-3C rescue helicopters, a modified version of the large, powerful CH-3C transport chopper.

For rescue work, the helicopter is equipped with armor plating, extra fuel tanks and a powerful winch with a jungle-penetrating hook for pick-ups. On rescue missions, the huge green chopper carries a crew of four—two pilots, a flight engineer and a pararescue man.

"We've got some of the most-experienced chopper men in the rescue business. They know their job and work as a team to get it done."

Over the jungles of communist north Vietnam, pilots are often forced to hover at tree-top level or even go into thick undergrowth to pick up a downed pilot. As the pilot lowers into the trees, the other crew members watch for limbs which can wreck the helicopter.

October 65
Last November, a crew on its first rescue mission over the communist north actually landed in thick elephant grass to pick up a downed pilot.

for their 250-foot cable would not work. It had worked during pre-flight and in another test just before the helicopter reached the pilot.

The rescue crew made two passes over the pilot and picked up more ground fire each time. They called for more help from the A-1E pilots flying air cover.

After the Skyraider pilots again strafed the area, Jennings dropped the big rescue chopper into the brush next to the trapped pilot. The flight engineer and pararescue man pulled the pilot to safety, and Jennings took off, clipping the deep brush with his rotor blades and barely missing a hill. **MAT RANDALL F105**

"Although it takes team work to do the job," says Haynes, "the individual heroism of my men never ceases to amaze me. I've got one man (SSgt Berkeley E. Naugle, 32, a flight engineer) flying over north Vietnam right now who spent seven hours up there scrambling through the bushes last November."

Naugle bailed out of a burning HH-3C when it was shot down about 40 miles southwest of Hanoi, Nov. 6. He suffered severe burns, but was rescued at night by another helicopter crew.

Flying over Naugle's position, the rescue helicopter pilot asked him if he had anything to pinpoint his location. Naugle had lost his survival gear during bail out, but he lit his cigaret lighter as a last hope.

The rescue crew spotted the dim, flickering light through the jungle canopy and made the rescue.

"The pararescue boys are some of the damndest characters you've ever met," Haynes says. "They'll go anywhere and do anything, and they act like they're spring loaded to go down the line (eager to descend on the hoist to aid a downed pilot)."

Recently, one of the pararescue men did "go down the line" to find a Navy A-4 pilot.

Hovering directly over the pilot's position, the rescue crew could hear his beeper and voice radio, but they could not locate him in the thick jungle cover.

The pararescue man rode the cable into the trees and walked around until he located the Navy airman. He then directed the HH-3C to their position and a safe rescue was made.

Like other rescue crew members, pararescue medics are among the best trained men in the Air Force. Each is a qualified parachutist, SCUBA diver and medical corpsman.

All rescue crew members are trained in escape and evasion and jungle, desert and water survival, as well as rescue techniques. Most are trained at Stead Air Force Base, Nev.

Haynes' rescue crews were formed and trained at Stead and came to Southeast Asia to replace a temporary unit in October, 1965.



RANDALL = 13 OCT 65

REPRINTED FROM THE STARS AND STRIPES NEWSPAPER, PACIFIC EDITION, 1965
SIAGON

"Ask any man in my outfit and he will tell you we have the best mission in the Air Force." Speaking a bit too loudly for the size of the room, Air Force Maj. Baylor Haynes, commander of an Air Force rescue helicopter unit, begins to talk about the men who are responsible for rescuing downed pilots in communist North Vietnam.

"Every last one of them, and I mean the support people, clerks, supply men, the lot -as well as the chopper crews will tell you their job is to recover downed aircrew members," he continues in a loud grating voice a result of flying helicopters since the early 1950's. In his fatigue uniform, the burly Texan looks like the character whose name his unit bears - The "Jolly Green Giant"

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Last November, a crew on its first rescue mission over the communist north actually landed in thick elephant grass to pick up a downed Air Force F-105 Thunderchief pilot.

Capt Jerry W. Jennings, 35, was aircraft commander on the flight, and Capt James ("Digger") O'Dell, 31, was co-pilot. As the rescue crew neared the downed pilot, it received heavy flak. Jennings called for an Air Force A-1E Skyraider pilot to attack the enemy gun positions.

Firing over the heads of the downed pilot, the Skyraider pilot silenced the communist guns, but the rescue crew's problems weren't over.

When they went in to pick up the pilot, they discovered the hoist for their 380 foot cable would not work. It had worked during preflight and in another test just before the helicopter reached the pilot.

The rescue crew made two passes over the pilot and picked up more ground fire each time.

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~~SECRET~~

10. 38-1027-13 Oct 65 (S). Maj James Randell was making a second pass on the bridge he had just bombed in North Vietnam for assessment when he encountered an emergency and was forced to eject. His wingman notified the HC-34 pilot on precautionary orbit of the bailout. The HC-34 proceeded toward the bailout scene and requested that the CH-3C, and A1E's be scrambled. Maj Randell had landed in a valley near a village. He began climbing a nearby hill, and at this time saw two men with rifles coming toward his position. Upon reaching the top of the hill he made contact with his flight via radio. Upon being told that the helicopter would require one hour to arrive at his location he requested that the orbiting aircraft leave his immediate area so as not to compromise his position. The helicopter made one low pass upon arrival and drew ground fire. Maj Randell directed the A1E's to his position and they suppressed the ground fire for the CH-3C. Due to a hoist malfunction, the helicopter had to land to pick up the survivor. The high shrubbery resulted in damage to the rotor tips of the CH-3C; however, an uneventful return journey followed. The pilot of the CH-3C was Capt Jerry W. Jennings.

11. 38-1055-22 Oct 65 (U). Capt Melvin C. Elliot was on a strafing mission against VC forces attacking the Plei Me Camp in South Vietnam when he was forced to bailout. His bailout took place at approximately 0100H, and he landed 200 meters from the perimeter of the camp. A large VC force that had the camp surrounded, were located between Capt Elliot and the camp perimeter. Capt Elliot made radio contact with both his wingman and the camp. A patrol that was sent out to locate him ran into heavy opposition and was forced to return. After daylight additional patrols were dispatched, but all failed to make contact with the survivor. That evening an Army Helicopter attempted to make the pickup but was driven off by heavy automatic weapons fire. Two HH-43's were sent from Bien Hoa to be in place at Pleiku for a first light attempt the following morning. The plan was for two fighter aircraft to make strikes in the vicinity, followed immediately by two more fighters laying smoke and the two HH-43's coming in to make the pickup. However, during the night it became necessary for Capt Elliot to change his hiding place due to increased VC activity in his immediate area. Later that morning Capt Elliot transmitted his new location, and the HH-43's along with armed UH-1B's proceeded to the area and made the pickup. The pilot of the HH-43 making the pickup, Capt Dale Porter, flew the survivor to Pleiku.

12. 38-1073-28 Oct 65 (S). A USN F-4B crewed by Lt Cmdr A. M. Lindsey and Lt Robert W. Cooper encountered difficulty while on a mission over Laos and ejected. His wingman notified the prepositioned HU-16, that in turn notified the ECC at Udorn AB, Thailand. Two A1E's and one HC-34 were scrambled from Udorn AB, and two HH-43's took off from Nakhon Phanom. While SAR Force was enroute, a Navy A1H that had been diverted into the area picked up an emergency beacon, and shortly thereafter sighted two chutes. Each of the two HH-43's picked up one crewmember, as the two had landed about one mile apart. The pilots of the two HH-43's, Capt Bureaux and Capt McMillan, flew the survivors to Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. 17

17 Append 3 page 9

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Detachment 5
Pacific Air Rescue Center (IATS)
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
APO U.S. Forces 96337

*Vandenberg Air 97-
20 OCT 65
Pangine*

REPLY TO
ATTN CF: DET 5 PARC

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative

TO: DET 3 PARC

HU-16 No. 15302 took off from Danang at 1330H to cover an ocean orbit position at 19 30N 106 10E, arriving on station at 1500H. Shortly after 1530H a call received from "Chevy" flight stated a pilot had ejected. His chute was good, and they were following him down. When asked on the location, they stated they were about 10 miles off shore. DF bearings were taken, all giving random bearings, showing the transmissions were in the immediate area. Another call was received that they had the 16 in sight, just to the south. A turn was made to the north, and the chute sighted. The HU-16 orbited under the chute as it descended. Sea evaluation was rechecked, and 020 was selected as possible heading. As the chute approached 1000' (estimated), the landing pattern was established. Drop tanks were jettisoned on down wind. The survivor made contact with the water as we turned on final. Landing run-out was within 200 feet of the survivor, and the 16 maneuvered for normal recovery. Landing time was 1545H, location 19 35N 106 05E. The survivor had not released his canopy prior to pick up, thus it was cut loose by the para-rescue team as the survivor was brought aboard. An immediate take off was made in a northeasterly heading, and then first aid treatment was administered to wounds on the right arm of the survivor after airborne. Reason for expediting take off was numerous small craft in the immediate area. Several of which were destroyed by Rescap while the 16 was on final approach and on the water. The 16 landed at Danang at 1805 H, and the survivor was released to the Danang Station Hospital. X-Rays revealed foreign metallic objects in the arm, which were removed by the Marine Surgeon.

Survivor Major Lambert, Robert L., 354th Fighter Sq., Downed Aircraft F-105. HU-16 Crew - RCC, Capt Richard F. Reichardt, Pilot, 1st Lt David W. Haines; Navigator, Capt Alexander F. Stewart; AM, SSgt Paul El Lucier, all of the 31st ARS, Clark. RADIO Operator, Robert M. Shinamoto, 76th ARS. PJ's, TSgt William V. Vargas and SSgt Donald G. Smith, Both 31ARS.

Richard F. Reichardt
RICHARD F. REICHARDT
Capt., USAF
RCC

~~SECRET~~

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17 Append 5 page 9

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The problems encountered in ACR in South Vietnam and NVN-Laos differ in many respects. U.S. Army and ARVN ground units are operating in many parts of South Vietnam. There is no danger of a MIG attack. The Allied Forces have over a thousand helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft flying over the country. Even in the remote areas, a downed pilot is never more than 50 kilometers from a Special Forces camp. The Viet Cong are not equipped with radar-controlled air-burst weapons. ^{141/} Major Kessler, Commander of Det 6, has indicated that he has never encountered a problem in locating and identifying a survivor. ^{142/}

Recoveries are, however, often made under hostile fire and the proximity of friendly ground forces does not guarantee that a downed pilot will be rescued by them. During the siege of the Plei Me Special Forces Camp, in October 1965, Captain Melvin Elliott bailed out of his crippled A-1E and spent the next 34 hours evading the Viet Cong. Rescue patrols sent from the camp ran into stiff opposition and were unable to recover him. On 23 October, he was rescued by an HH-43 a half-mile from the camp. ^{143/}

Locating and identifying the survivor can occasionally cause difficulty. On 14 June 1966, a VNAF A-1H went down near the coast south-east of Saigon. A search was conducted for the plane and the pilot. The



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FROM: Det 6, 38th Air Rescue Squadron, APO US FORCES 96227 28 Oct 65

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

TO: Hq PARE (DOARO), APO US FORCES 96553

1. Mission number 38-1055-23 Oct 65.
2. Notifications: Det 6, 38th ARS first notified by Bien Hoa COC. Coordination and dispatch made by 38th Air Rescue Center.
3. SAR aircraft used: 2 HH-43F's. All crewmembers from Det 6, 38th ARS.

PRIMARY ALERT CREW

RCC Capt Dale L. Potter
 CP Capt David C. Henry
 HM TSgt Richard A. Cannon
 RS SSgt Leon Pullwood

SECONDARY ALERT CREW

RCC Capt Raymond L. Marden
 CP Capt Raymond H. Matthews
 HM TSgt Domenick J. Cocuzzi
 RS ALC William H. Pitsenberger

4. Cover aircraft used during pilot pickup. Two (2) USAF A-1E's, 3 army UH-1H armed helicopters, one USAF forward air controller in an O-1F.
5. Location of pickup: One half (1/2) mile SW of Flet He Special Forces Camp. 1336 N 107 ESE.
6. Terrain and type of pickup utilized: Small jungle clearing covered with dense elephant grass and small bushes. Pilot picked up from a two foot hover.
7. Signaling equipment used: URG 10 radio was used by downed pilot and smoke rockets used by FAC to mark pickup location.
8. Recovered pilots names: Captain Melvin C. Elliott.
9. Summary of events:

At 0030L, 23 Oct 65, two Det 6, 38th ARS HH-43F helicopters were dispatched by the 38th Air Rescue Squadron SARCC to the Pleiku area for the purpose of recovering Captain Melvin C. Elliott who had bailed out of his A-1E at 0130 hours on 22 Oct 65. The bailout has occurred while Captain Elliott was participating in the air to ground action around the Plei Me Special Forces Camp.

Because of the long distance involved between Pleiku and Bien Hoa (218 N.M.) and the lack of navigational equipment in the HH-43F a FAC O-1F was sent to accompany the 43's. Because of fuel limitations the flight was to stop at Ban Me Thout for refueling.

At departure time the weather between Bien Hoa and Pleiku was reported 2500' scattered 10,000 feet broken to overcast with scattered rain showers. Fifteen minutes after departure from Bien Hoa the flight was in weather at 7000' indicated. A climb was made to 9,500' and the rest of the first leg to Ban Me Thout, Vietnam was 50% on top and 50% in weather. Turbulence and sporadic rain showers were encountered in the clouds. The cloud deck ended at Ban Me Thout and a VFR approach was made and refueling accomplished. Due to the weather the first leg required 2:00 of flying. Departing Ban Me Thout at 0245 the last leg again was made in weather at 5000' indicated, arriving Pleiku at 0400 hours.

At Pleiku contact was made with TASC-TWO, for final briefing on the pilot pickup. The recovery operations plan called for the pickup to be made shortly after day light at approximately 0715 hours. Because of the large Viet Cong force around the Plei Me Camp and the concentration of automatic weapons, three air strikes were planned for between 0645 and 0715 to silence as much ground fire as possible. At this time I was briefed on Elliotts location in the jungle outside the Plei Me camp by a FAC who had just returned from there.

Departing Pleiku at 0530 hours we proceeded to Army Holloway for refueling and coordination with the Huey Fire Control Team. At Holloway their COC directed us to a 0600 briefing for army chopper personnel who were going to participate in the recovery. At this briefing I was informed that the Army was going to use one of their slick UH-1B's for the pickup and that the plan had been approved by the TASC-2 Commander. I was invited and volunteered to proceed with the Hueys to Plei Me and watch the show.

Departing Holloway at 0630 hours 23 Oct 65 in company with 4 armed UH-1B's and 1 slick UH-1B we proceeded to the Plei Me area. The air strikes were made as scheduled but the FAC on scene became unsure of Elliotts position so the pickup attempt was called off. The uncertainty of Elliotts position at this time stemmed from the fact that the night before (22 Oct 65) the army had made an unsuccessful attempt in recovering him and in doing so had revealed his position to the V.C. This forced Elliott to change his position, and caused a temporary situation where

his exact location was unknown. Heavy automatic weapons fire was still prevalent in the pickup zone at this time.

With the pickup postponed indefinitely all helicopters returned to Holloway Field at 0815 L 23 Oct 65. After landing at Holloway the recovery of Elliott went into a hold status until the FAC's could again pin point his location.

At 1030L the FAC's again made radio contact with Elliott and were able to plot his position. At this time Elliott said the location he was now in seemed relative quiet and he believed a successful pickup could be accomplished. At this time I was at TASC-TWO Headquarters discussing the situation with the senior TASC-TWO controller. With the new information I decided to shoot for a 1130L pickup of Elliott. A call was made to the army COC at Holloway and arrangements made for a 3 ship MH-1B fire control team to provide cover for the pickup.

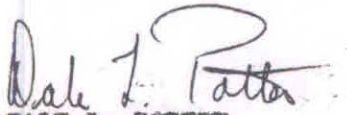
At 1110L we departed Holloway in company with the three armed Hueys for the Plei Me Camp. Arriving over Plei Me at 1120, contact was made with the FAC who was to mark Elliotts position for the pickup. The FAC informed us that a C-123 which was making supply drops to the camp was receiving heavy fire from a point close to Elliotts position. Before the pickup could be made this gun position would have to be neutralized. At 1130L two A-1E's that were flying CAP over the site were called in to strike the gun position. A double napalm drop was made and the ground fire ceased.

At 1135L all helicopters, the FAC, and Elliott went to guard channel for communicating. During the pickup the FAC marked Elliotts position with a smoke rocket and we made our approach in over the Plei Me Special Forces Camp to his position which was $\frac{1}{2}$ mile SW of the camp. The location of the pickup was a 300' by 35' opening in the jungle. This opening was carpeted with 6' elephant grass and various small trees. When we were about 2/3 of the way down the length of the clearing Elliott was spotted coming out of the trees on the left. I made a rudder turn to the left to put the side cabin door on his side. Because of the grass and small trees a landing was impossible but we were able to hover at a 2 foot altitude. Elliott crawled through the grass and vines to the helicopter and was pulled into the cabin by the crew chief and the pararescuer. Take off was immediate and we departed the area by the same route used for the approach. Time in the clearing was 2-3 minutes. Throughout the approach and while we were hovering, the army MH-1B's were laying down a solid blanket of rocket and machine gun fire around our position. Their coverage was outstanding.

The MH-1B formation commander said we received ground fire on take off but it was not effective. We were probably not in sight of the V.C. gunners and they were only firing at sound.

At the time of his pickup (1143L), Captain Elliott had spent 34 hours hiding from the Viet Cong who surrounded the Plei Me Special Forces Camp. Several times during this period the Viet Cong had made intensive searches for him. Captain Elliott is to be commended for the initiative and patience that he exhibited while waiting for rescue. The conditions that he faced were quite hostile.

Once the actual rescue pickup was started coordination and timing among the different parties was outstanding and the mission was completed in minimum amount of time.


DALE L. POTTER
Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

Rescue at Plei Me

by Kevin Generous

At 2:00 A.M. on the pitch-black morning of October 22, 1965, U.S. Air Force Captain Melvin Elliott of Glendale, Arizona, flew his A-1E Skyraider at 10,000 feet over North Vietnamese ground units surrounding Plei Me Special Forces Camp in South Vietnam's central highlands. Elliott and his wingman had rendezvoused with a C-123 flareship and were awaiting the arrival of an army CV-2 Caribou cargo ship on an aerial resupply mission to besieged Plei Me. Although the primary mission of Elliott's 1st Commando Squadron—based in Bien Hoa, 325 kilometers south—was to train South Vietnamese pilots in the propeller-driven fighter-bombers, when necessary the squadron flew close air support for isolated Special Forces camps in the mountains near the Laotian border. During his ten months in South Vietnam, Captain Elliott had racked up over 200 such combat missions.

Three days before, 2,200 troops of the North Vietnamese Army 33d Regiment had assaulted Plei Me in the initial phase of a dry season offensive designed to expand Hanoi's control over the strategic central highlands before American combat forces arrived in strength. However, Plei Me, a dusty border camp 345 kilome-

ters from Saigon, was proving to be a tough nut to crack; the NVA failure to overrun quickly the crude triangular fortress would soon turn the tactical initiative over to the newly arrived U.S. Army 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). By late November, the 1st Air Cav would engage and defeat three NVA regiments—including the 33d—in the bloody battle in the Ia Drang Valley.

This was Elliott's second trip over Plei Me. Following the initial North Vietnamese assault, Elliott had led a flight of four Skyraiders in support of the twelve American Green Berets and 450 montagnard irregulars inside the Plei Me compound. After seeing North Vietnamese infantry hurl themselves in human waves against Plei Me's walls, Elliott was only mildly surprised by the camp commander's desperate instructions to the Skyraiders: "Bomb our perimeter ... use napalm if you have it." The Skyraider pilots obliged, dropping their canisters within yards of the defenders—at times from altitudes of only 100 feet—temporarily breaking up the Communist attack.

Now, on Elliott's second mission three days later, the situation at Plei Me was still critical. NVA mortars and rockets had zeroed in on the camp's dirt airstrip, preventing resupply or reinforcement by helicopter. With ground reinforcements bogged down by a North Vietnamese ambush thirty kilometers east, resupply consisted of parachute drops by CV-2 Caribou aircraft. Elliott grew impatient as he circled over Plei Me for ninety minutes awaiting the nightly Caribou run. And, with his fuel tanks nearly empty, Elliott discovered the Caribou mission had been scrubbed. The captain radioed the C-123 flareship of his intention to drop his load of two 750-pound napalm and six cluster bomb unit canisters—standard ordnance for night missions—on enemy positions and head back to base at Bien Hoa.

Even with the sky lit by flares, Elliott "could only see the outline of the compound—nothing else" as he eased his

heavy plane into a strafing run, firing 20MM cannon bursts from his four wing-mounted cannons. As the thirty-six-year-old pilot pulled the Skyraider out of the low-level run and away from the target, he thought, "God, it's awfully bright." Glancing to his left, Elliott saw his engine's left wing erupt in flames, caused either by a well-directed antiaircraft burst or, perhaps, by leaking hydraulic fluid ignited from the muzzle blast of his own guns.

"I'm on fire," the captain told his wingman, who was still a mile behind Elliott starting his own run. Realizing his chances of limping to the nearest base thirty miles away at Pleiku, were nil, Elliott radioed, "... will attempt to maneuver over the compound and bail out." The flames rapidly burned off the wing's surface panels, searing through the control cables. Wrestling in vain with the controls, the veteran pilot realized "there was nothing left of the ailerons." As the heavy airplane slowly began rolling onto its back, Elliott slid back the canopy and sent his last transmission to the nearby C-123: "Mayday, mayday ... fire and abandoning aircraft."

Popping open the seat harness, Elliott felt the wind blast tear off his flight helmet as he dropped like a stone from the stricken aircraft. Clearing the plane's wreckage, Elliott opened his chute at 800 feet, conscious only of his extremely low altitude and the bright glow of a newly dropped flare.

Elliott's parachute snagged on a tree, leaving him dangling thirty feet above the jungle floor. "I swung over, caught a branch and climbed to the ground," he said. In his haste to avoid capture, he abandoned the survival gear strapped to his parachute harness, taking only a .38 revolver with five rounds, a battery-operated strobe light, and a two-way radio. Elliott's maps and M16 rifle—with all his extra ammo—had gone down with the Skyraider. His most prized possession, however, was his survival radio. Elliott realized that he had been lucky on this

Normally, A-1 pilots in Elliott's squadron were not guaranteed two-way radios. Because of an acute shortage, radios were usually issued only to homing pigeons.

The downed flier contacted his wingman, who protectively stayed overhead, but, perilously short of fuel himself, he flew off in the direction of Plei Me. Thus alerted, Elliott intended to walk into the relative safety of the compound. After hiking through dark jungles seeking the abandoned camp, the pilot suddenly found himself in the center of "the biggest firefight I'd ever heard." Amid zinging bullets and crumping mortars, he scrambled for refuge inside the top of a thick tree blown down by mortars. He burrowed in for the night.

The next day, U.S. Army Captain William Rainey, circled Plei Me at 10,000 feet in a single-engine O-1 Bird-Plane. A FAC with the 219th Aviation Company in Pleiku, Rainey's job was to direct tactical air strikes over the camp and provide observation of enemy troop movements at a safe distance away from anti-aircraft guns. Rainey also flew several utility missions and performed tactical radio relays for outlying Special Forces camps like Plei Me. In fact, Rainey had the distinction of flying the last aircraft off Plei Me's dirt airstrip only hours before the North Vietnamese attack. That evening, the small O-1's powerful radios were routinely monitoring frequency 121.5—the air emergency channel.

"Birdog, Birdog ... this is Elliott," he crackled the radio. Although ended in his FAC duties, Rainey heard the desperate message. "You could tell he was talking at a whisper," Rainey recalled. He heard the transmission twice before realizing that the message was directed at his aircraft. Rainey answered Elliott, quickly fixed his position, and rocked his wings in recognition. "We're going to get you out," Rainey assured the downed flier.

Over the next twelve hours, the FAC

helped direct the air force pilot across the scarred landscape, from crater to crater, skirting the fierce firefights waged around Plei Me. At times the Green Berets inside Plei Me compound witnessed Elliott scampering near the jungle's fringe to reach a pickup zone southwest of the camp perimeter. An attempt by the Green Berets to link up with the pilot failed because of heavy North Vietnamese gunfire.

Shortly after dark Elliott heard the distinctive sound of a U.S. Army Huey helicopter combing the area. Emerging from the jungle and standing on an exposed trail, Elliott held up the bright strobe light. The chopper circled once in the darkness, then turned on its spotlight. Elliott could see a rope dangling from the Huey's door. Just as rescue appeared imminent, an enemy machine gun erupted, its tracers stabbing toward the hovering chopper. Both man and machine "got the hell out of there," recalled Elliott, who dove back into the jungle.

Lying still in the bush, with one arm flung over his face, Elliott heard an investigating North Vietnamese patrol along the trail. A crisscrossing search beam passed perilously close—within twenty feet—to the camouflaged pilot. The patrol reversed direction and swung the beam again close by, then receded into the jungle. Elliott spent a second night nestled at the base of a giant tree.

The familiar sound of a twin-engine C-47 greeted Elliott at dawn. Scanning the sky, the captain spotted an AC-47 Spooky gunship, its gunports open, about to fire on the area. Elliott "tore around that tree like a squirrel," putting it between himself and the gunship. But the AC-47 fired only a few rounds and departed. Elliott later discovered that engine trouble had aborted its mission.

By afternoon the flier had raised another O-1, whose pilot insisted on marking Elliott's position with smoke grenades. "You really don't need to do that," said Elliott, who feared that the smoke would only attract the NVA. But the O-1 pilot

missed his mark and soon departed. Elliott hunkered down to await the chopper that he had been told was "en route," only to be informed shortly afterward that his rescue chopper had been "diverted to a higher priority." By now Elliott's situation was no longer unique; other U.S. pilots had been downed near Plei Me as more U.S. aircraft had been committed to the camp's relief.

Discouraged for the moment at not being "a higher priority," Elliott washed up in a creek and felt better. As he continued to walk through the jungle, his heart nearly stopped as a 150-pound wild boar suddenly charged out of a bamboo thicket. Running in the other direction, Elliott found a patch of tall elephant grass and passed the time eavesdropping on his squadron mates' radio chatter as the Skyraiders flew past to drop napalm on nearby North Vietnamese emplacements.

Elliott's turn for rescue at last arrived. A twin-rotored U.S. Air Force HH-43 Husky rescue helicopter lumbered over the clearing escorted by two Huey gunships firing their rockets. Nearly blown over by the terrific prop wash, scratched up and punchy from his thirty-six-hour ordeal, Captain Elliott climbed onto the Husky's wheel and was hauled aboard the chopper for the short trip to Pleiku.

After his recovery, Elliott was whisked away to 1st Special Forces Group headquarters in Nha Trang for detailed debriefing. There he was asked by a curious intelligence officer whether he "was scared at any time" while surrounded by a full regiment of North Vietnamese regulars in pitched battle.

"Only for about thirty-six hours," Elliott replied wearily.

Kevin Generous, a defense policy analyst in Washington, D.C., has researched and written extensively on America's early involvement in the Vietnam War, including the battle of the Ia Drang Valley in 1965.

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deceased were recovered by the marine search E-34.

(3) Mission 7-38-640, 23 October 1965. Alert helicopter crew was scrambled by Base Operations personnel at 1340L to air evacuate one seriously injured litter patient from a marine C-130 on the Air Force ramp to the Marine hospital.

(4) Mission 7-38-641, 23 October 1965. The alert helicopter crew was scrambled by the hospital commander at 1420L to air evacuate a USAF airman from the Air Force ramp to the Marine hospital.

(5) Mission 7-38-642, 23 October 1965. Recovered eight wounded marines from jungle by using hoist through 200 foot trees. Two aircraft hits were taken while over the area.

(6) Mission 7-38-648, 26 October 1965. Two helicopter crews were scrambled from quarters by Base Operations at 2150L for two marine F-43's observed to crash on Monkey Mountain. The UH-1 pilot managed to hover within 50 yards of the crash site. Clouds spilling over the mountain top obscured the crash site and prevented closer inspection by any of the helicopter crews. One HH-43F landed half way up the mountain and conferred with the ground party commander. The pilots had evidently flown into the mountain top which was hidden in the clouds. The four deceased were recovered by ground party at 0700L 27 October 1965.

(7) Mission 7-38-651, 26 October 1965. Two HH-43F crews were scrambled by the Command Post at 0230L to air evacuate two seriously wounded marines from the Air Force ramp to the Marine hospital.

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NARRATIVE OF RESCUE MISSION

On 28 October 1965, two HH-43F helicopters departed Nakhon Phanom Air Base to locate and recover two pilots whose jet aircraft had been shot down while on a mission over North Vietnam. Immediately upon reaching the area, the lead helicopter checked in with the HU-16 which was directing the operation, and received vectors to one of the downed pilots chute. While "Pedro 1" (lead helicopter) proceeded with the recovery of the downed pilot, the HU-16 spotted the second parachute and directed "Pedro 2" to the area. Pedro 2 made three low passes over the immediate area before the second survivor was sighted. The distressed pilot was standing in elephant grass approximately twelve feet tall, with 100 feet trees surrounding him. The hoist was lowered and the survivor was brought safely into the helicopter. The pilot had to exceed the torque limitations of his aircraft in order to be able to maintain his precarious hovering position over the tall trees. While leaving the area, Pedro 2 was fired upon by hostile forces, but was able to escape undamaged. Enroute back to Nakhon Phanom, the flight mechanic did an outstanding job of administering first aid to the rescued pilot who had suffered several cuts and burns. The only paramedic on the scene was in the lead helicopter, Pedro 1.

Crew Members "Pedro 1":

RCC Capt Donald R. Berdeaux
CP Capt William R. Uhl
HM A/1C Lyle J. Tadewald
PJ A/1C Harry W. Birtel

Crew Members "Pedro 2"

RCC Capt Charles E. McMillan
CP Capt Charles P. Rush
HM A/2C Andrew C. Paparella

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10. 38-1027-13 Oct 65 (S). Maj James Randell was making a second pass on the bridge he had just bombed in North Vietnam for assessment when he encountered an emergency and was forced to eject. His wingman notified the HC-34 pilot on precautionary orbit of the bailout. The HC-34 proceeded toward the bailout scene and requested that the CH-3C, and A1E's be scrambled. Maj Randell had landed in a valley near a village. He began climbing a nearby hill, and at this time saw two men with rifles coming toward his position. Upon reaching the top of the hill he made contact with his flight via radio. Upon being told that the helicopter would require one hour to arrive at his location he requested that the orbiting aircraft leave his immediate area so as not to compromise his position. The helicopter made one low pass upon arrival and drew ground fire. Maj Randell directed the A1E's to his position and they suppressed the ground fire for the CH-3C. Due to a hoist malfunction, the helicopter had to land to pick up the survivor. The high shrubbery resulted in damage to the rotor tips of the CH-3C; however, an uneventful return journey followed. The pilot of the CH-3C was Capt Jerry W. Jennings.

11. 38-1055-22 Oct 65 (U), Capt Melvin C. Elliot was on a strafing mission against VC forces attacking the Plei Me Camp in South Vietnam when he was forced to bailout. His bailout took place at approximately 0100H, and he landed 200 meters from the perimeter of the camp. A large VC force that had the camp surrounded, were located between Capt Elliot and the camp perimeter. Capt Elliot made radio contact with both his wingman and the camp. A patrol that was sent out to locate him ran into heavy opposition and was forced to return. After daylight additional patrols were dispatched, but all failed to make contact with the survivor. That evening an Army Helicopter attempted to make the pickup but was driven off by heavy automatic weapons fire. Two HH-43's were sent from Bien Hoa to be in place at Pleiku for a first light attempt the following morning. The plan was for two fighter aircraft to make strikes in the vicinity, followed immediately by two more fighters laying smoke and the two HH-43's coming in to make the pickup. However, during the night it became necessary for Capt Elliot to change his hiding place due to increased VC activity in his immediate area. Later that morning Capt Elliot transmitted his new location, and the HH-43's along with armed UH-1B's proceeded to the area and made the pickup. The pilot of the HH-43 making the pickup, Capt Dale Potter, flew the survivor to Pleiku.

12. 38-1073-28 Oct 65 (S). A USN P-4B crewed by Lt Cdr A. M. Lindsey and Lt Robert W. Cooper encountered difficulty while on a mission over Laos and ejected. His wingman notified the prepositioned HU-16, that in turn notified the ECC at Udorn AB, Thailand. Two A1E's and one HC-34 were scrambled from Udorn AB, and two HH-43's took off from Nakhon Phanom. While SAR Force was enroute, a Navy A1H that had been diverted into the area picked up an emergency beacon, and shortly thereafter sighted two chutes. Each of the two HH-43's picked up one crewmember, as the two had landed about one mile apart. The pilots of the two HH-43's, Capt Bureaux and Capt McMillan, flew the survivors to Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. 17

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13. ~~38-1081-30 Oct 65 (c)~~. At 1209H the radio operator at Quang Tri, RVN, intercepted a May Day from an Army UH-1B that had crashed. Two HH-43 helicopters that were on alert at Quang Tri scrambled, and an HU-16 was diverted to the incident scene. The downed helicopter was located and the crew taken to a forward Army outpost. The two HH-43 pilots, Capt John Keen and Capt Arvo then returned to alert duty at Quang Tri. 18

14. ~~38-1081-172-1 Nov 65 (c)~~. On 1 Nov 65 the tower at Tan Son Nhut AB informed the 13th unit of a P-2V landing with one engine out. One HH-43B scrambled with a fire suppression kit and intercepted the aircraft on final approach. The P-2V blew a tire on landing, and as the aircraft came to a stop on the runway a magnesium fire broke out in the left wheel well; the flames engulfing the entire wing. The HH-43B hovered and directed its rotor wash so as to keep flames from igniting the fuel tanks or the paraflares that were mounted on the wing. They continued this until the fire trucks arrived and extinguished the flames. Due to the action of the HH-43B pilot, Capt Alden, the 13 crewmembers of the P-2V escaped without injuries.

15. ~~38-1081-1 Nov 65 (3)~~. On 1 Nov 65, Capt Huggins was forced to eject from his RF-101 over the North Vietnamese coast. He hit the water approximately 100 yards from shore. Fortunately, another RF-101 was in the area and was able to immediately locate the raft. The HU-16 along with two USN A1H aircraft proceeded to the scene. As the pilot was spotted the HU-16 began an approach for a water landing; however a go-around was initiated because a sampan was approaching the downed pilot. The A1H RESCAP aircraft were directed by the HU-16 to fire across the bow of the sampan. This was done; however, the sampan continued toward the survivor. On the next pass the sampan was sunk approximately 100 yards from the survivor. The HU-16 then water landed, and as it was taxiing to the survivor noted three armed swimmers also attempting to reach the downed pilot. During this entire time machine gun fire from the shore was being directed at both the survivor and the HU-16, and Capt Huggins was engaged in a pistol duel with the swimmers. The HU-16 called for the RESCAP aircraft to make a pass at the swimmers and taxied to the survivor. The uninjured survivor was taken aboard, and flown to Danang by the HU-16 ECC, Capt David Barger.

16. ~~38-1081-1 Nov 65 (3)~~. On 1 Nov 65, Lt Cdr Billy V. Wheat ejected from his A4C over North Vietnam. His wingman noted the successful bailout and alerted the HU-16 on precautionary orbit over the Gulf of Tonkin, which in turn alerted the rescue center at Udorn AB, Thailand. An HC-54 was diverted to the scene, and two HH-43 aircraft were scrambled from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. Occasionally beacon signals were heard, but no visual nor voice contact was made by the time the HH-43's had reached their bingo fuel time.

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