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P-F-1 64  
narrative

FROM: Det 5, 38th Air Rescue Sqd, APC San Francisco 96237

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

31 DEC 1954

TC: Hq Air Rescue Service, Orlando AFB, Fla.

1. Mission Number: 38ARS-1239-21 Dec 65
2. SAR alerted by: Invert Radar (GCI Nakhon Phanom)
3. ARS Aircraft used: 1 HC-54, 2 HH-3C

Members of Rescue Helicopter were:

RCC Captain Butera, James L.,  
CP Captain Cowell, William E.,  
HM TSgt Heywood, Spence C.,  
PJ ALC Birtell, Harry W.,

Members of Cover Helicopter were:

RCC Captain Kamhoot, Norman B.,  
CP Captain Rush, Charles P.,  
HM SSgt Youngblood, Theodore M.,  
HMC ALC Crites, Robert E.,

| STAFF AGENCY | ACT | INFO |
|--------------|-----|------|
| ARCCO        |     | ✓    |
| ARODG        | ✓   | ✓    |
| ARPDG        |     | ✓    |
| ARBDG        |     | ✓    |
| ARMDG        |     | ✓    |
| ARDAS        |     | ✓    |
| ARXDC        |     | ✓    |
| ARCOI        |     | ✓    |
| ARIIG        |     | ✓    |
| ARAMS        |     | ✓    |

+ ALL CEN & Sqds except Pacific

4. Reaction time from initial notification to pickup: 0:50
5. CAP assistance:

a. USAF F-4C

b. USAF ALE (Sandie)

c. USN ALH

6. Area of pickup: Approximately 200 feet down the side of a mountain in 50 to 60 foot trees, and in heavy undergrowth.

7. Survivors name: Captain James Sullivan

8. Summary of events: While on alert at Nakhon Phanom AB, Thailand we received notice from Invert at 0725 local that an aircraft was down at 18N 10550E. Received instructions from Compress (Udorn RCC) to scramble. Jolly Green 27 and 33 were airborne at 0730 local. We proceeded on the 090° radial for 40 miles to avoid flak area ENE of Nakhon Phanom. We then proceeded 090° for another 40 miles to the target area.

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Or Changed to

By Authority of

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2 (Date) 14-3-75

DATE: 10/10/1964

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660039 11/7/11

**59-1823 F-105D**

**Shot down by 57mm AA on a bridge strike over Route Pack 3. Captain James V. Sullivans aircraft was hit in the aft fuselage. Fire was observed from his aircraft as it went down. Captain Sullivan ejected from his aircraft and was rescued by a USAF helo. 21/12/65. Call sign-Cedar,.**



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## NARRATIVE OF RESCUE MISSION

On 21 December 1965 at 0025Z, the Jolly Green aircraft pulling strip alert at Nakhon Phanom Air Base were notified by local GCI radar unit that an aircraft was down at coordinates 18 00 N, 105 50 E, a position in North Vietnam. The two helicopters, Jolly Green 27 and Jolly Green 33, scrambled and established a course to take them around some of the heavier known concentrations of hostile AA. Upon reaching the objective area, the weather was found to be extremely poor for a crew recovery operation. The mountains were obscured by a layer of clouds which stretched east all the way across the "panhandle" of the DRV. One of the A-1E aircraft found a hole in the undercast and dropped down to begin an electronic search while both helicopters orbited above. The A-1E reported a firm position on the downed pilot, but the problem of descending to execute a pickup had been seriously compounded by the fact that the holes in the undercast had closed up. The A-1E aircraft gave the helicopters steers by UHF-DF and a description of the terrain below the undercast. The Jolly Green helicopters entered the clouds at 5,000 feet and broke out at 2,500 feet with mountains on both sides and about 900 feet above the valley floor. The A-1E lead the helicopters to the area of the downed pilot, and the lead helicopter saw a pen flare. A high speed, low altitude pass over the spot revealed a chute but due to the tall trees and dense vegetation, they were unable to see the pilot. A hover was established over the chute and the flight mechanic spotted the downed pilot almost immediately. The pilot was picked up out of the dense undergrowth from a point on a steep slope, about 200 feet from the top of a mountain. Due to the terrain, the pilot of the helicopter had to make his takeoff over a small road and a village. Just before reaching the village, a double burst of AA fire made the helicopter lurch violently into an extreme nose down attitude, knocking all occupants in the cabin to the floor. The pilot regained control of the aircraft and employing evasive flying techniques, made a maximum performance climb and departure. The climb back through the clouds and the remainder of the trip back to Nakhon Phanom was completed without incident.

Crew Members "Jolly Green 27"  
RCC Capt James L. Butera  
CP Capt William E. Cowell  
HM T/Sgt Spence C. Heywood  
PJ A/1C Harry W. Birtel

Crew Members "Jolly Green 33"  
RCC Capt Norman B. Kamhoot  
CP Capt Charles P. Rush  
HM S/Sgt Theodore M. Youngblood

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a. There was a complete overcast from the border mountains east across the pan handle of DRV. We arrived in the target area at 0815 local. Sandies found a hole in the overcast and dropped down to begin an electronic search. Sandie 13 spotted the downed airman's chute and notified us at about 0835 local. Both Jolly Greens were still above the overcast and no holes were visible.

b. After taking radio bearings off the Sandie aircraft we positioned ourselves NE of his position, distance unknown. Sandie described the area below the overcast and directed us over a valley where the ceiling was 700 to 1000 feet. We took up a heading down the valley and descended thru the overcast entering the clouds at 5000 and breaking out at 2600 indicated, which was approximately 900 feet AGL. We made immediate visual contact with sandie who led us around known flak positions along a mountain ridge to the area.

c. As we arrived I observed a pen flare. We flew a low altitude, high speed pass over the spot and saw a chute but were unable to see the pilot due to tall trees and the indigenous type forest in the area. Just as I passed over the chute I received a faint call from the downed pilot which was blocked out almost immediately. I made a 180° turn coming to a hover above the chute. At this time the flight mechanic spotted the pilot and talked me into position. The pick up was made at 0845 local, 200 feet down the side of a mountain in 50 to 60 foot trees, and heavy undergrowth.

d. The terrain dictated that I take off straight ahead which took me near a road and a village. We received two bursts of fire just below the chopper which made our tail lurch up knocking the crew in the cabin to the floor. Sandies immediately returned the fire as we turned left away from the village. No further fire was observed. The Sandies looked us over and reported no visual damage. We then took up a heading towards a valley and climbed up thru the overcast.

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e. Communications between the SAR aircraft was excellent. The downed pilot's use of the pen flare aided us of his location and reduced our time in the area to a minimum. The Sandies rapid reaction to the ground fire reduced the ground fire to a minimum. We returned the pilot to Udorn at 1025 local. Actual pick up was at 1801N 10543E.

*James L. Butera*  
JAMES L. BUTERA  
Captain, USAF  
Rescue Crew Commander

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
Or Changed to *Unclassified*  
By Authority of *GDS*  
By *248* (Date) *14-3-75*

Cy to: PARC

*only 1 crew member in F-4-C ?*

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*A-10 was F-105*

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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 3000 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 3000 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 NR</u><br><u>ARS ACFT LOST</u> | <u>ARS MENWIA</u><br><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 ✓      |                                             |                                      |
| 33-1055-22Oct 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         |                                             |                                      |

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| <u>MISSIONS</u>  | <u>RESCUERS</u> |                 | <u>LOCATIONS</u>        | <u>SURVIVORS</u> |                |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
|                  | <u>Name</u>     | <u>Aircraft</u> |                         | <u>Name</u>      | <u>Service</u> | <u>Aircraft</u> |
| 38-1167-26 Nov   |                 | HH-43B          | 30NM SW Tan Son<br>Nhut | 6 Soldiers       | USA            | UH1B            |
| 38-1174-28 Nov   | Maj Higginson   | HU-16B          | 20 NM NE Thanh<br>Hoa   | LTJG Harrington  | USN            | F8E             |
| 9-38-1-28 Nov    | Capt McFarlane  | HH-43F          | 1403N - 10802E          |                  | USAF           | F4C             |
|                  | Capt Hill       | HH-43F          | 5 NM NE Pleiku          |                  | USAF           | F4C             |
| 38-1188-2 Dec    | Capt Murden     | HH-43F          | 1139N - 10632E          | LTJG Schmikt     | USN            | F4B             |
|                  |                 |                 |                         | LTJG Potter      | USN            | F4B             |
| 6-38-1059-7 Dec  | Capt Kessler    | HH-43F          | 1054N - 10648E          | Capt O'Conner    | USAF           | 01E             |
| 7-38-682-13 Dec  | Lt Brown        | HH-43F          | 1528N - 10740E          | MSgt Forrester   | USMC           | UH1B            |
| 38-1220-15 Dec   |                 | HU-16B          | 2040N - 10724E          |                  | USAF           | F-105           |
| 6-38-1065-19 Dec |                 | HH-43F          | 1039N - 10711E          | 1 Soldier        | USA            |                 |
| 38-1236-20 Dec   | Maj Dewitt      | HU-16B          | 2055N - 10715E          | Capt Ruffo       | USAF           | F-105           |
| 38-1239-21 Dec   | Capt Butera     | HH-3            | 1752N - 10543E          | Capt Sullivan    | USAF           | F-105           |
| 6-38-1068-21 Dec | Capt Nadler     | HH-43F          | 1044N - 10704E          | 1 Soldier        | USA            |                 |
| 7-38-681-29 Dec  |                 | HH-43F          | 1537N - 10815E          | 1 Pilot          | USMC           | HE1E            |
|                  |                 |                 |                         | 4 Marines        |                |                 |

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