

DECLASSIFIED

ABBREVIATED JOINT MESSAGEFORM
and/or CONTINUATION SHEET

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

~~SECRET~~

PRECEDENCE

RELEASED BY

DROPPED BY PHONE

ACTION

PRIORITY

INFO

ROBERT E. FRESHWATER, LtCol ROBERT E FRESHWATER, LtCol 6104

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south position might not be the pilot in the first report also.

The most direct course required flying within close proximity of the hostile shore line. At 0310Z an ARA-25 bearing on the aircraft was received by Crown Alpha which at the scene confirmed radar position and course to the down pilot. At 0315Z weather at the scene was 500 ft broken to overcast; 3 to 5 miles visibility in intermittent

light rain, wind 090° at 5 knots. At 0315Z THE Co-pilot spotted the survivor in a raft under three circling A-1H aircraft within 250 yards of the shore.

Small fishing boats were observed in the area but they remained well clear of the scene. At 0318Z external fuel tanks were jettisoned a smoke bomb dropped and a sea evaluation completed. Sea conditions were moderate (2 systems 4 to 5 ft each with 5 knot wind)

but because of a low overcast a severe ground swell was not observed until after touch down. Crown Alpha landed at 0323Z. The aircraft

came to a stop with the survivor 20 yds forward of the left wing tip. During the landing runout intense automatic and artillery fire

was directed at the aircraft from the BEACH. The pararescue-man dove into the water upon sighting of the ROC and swam to the

position approximately (20 yds) to the survivor in his raft. The flight mechanic fed out the line attached to the pararescueman.

Continued fire from the beach laid a constant barrage of 20 ft gyrsers around the aircraft at distances as close as 20 yards.

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(Date) 12/27/72

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MESSAGE IDENTIFICATION

INITIALS

REGARDING INSTRUCTIONS

DO NOT REGRADE

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Mission Narrative 38ARPS 1-3-3

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

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FORM 173-1

REPLACES EDITION OF 1 MAY 63 WHICH MAY BE USED

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The navigator fired several bursts at the shore batteries from his M-16 Rifle and then attempted to sink the survivor's empty raft. He then assisted the flight mechanic in pulling the survivor and PJ into the aircraft's left hatch. Machine gun fire came within 5 ft of the survivor and PJ during the recovery operation. The radio operator was forward in the bow hatch but was unable to fire at the shore due to the aircraft's position. The Rescue Crew Co-Pilot rapidly performed the after landing and before takeoff check list and effectively directed the Navy aircraft's counter fire. As soon as the hatches were secure and the survivor in a seat a takeoff was started on a heading of 030° but aborted due to 8 ft ground swells. The acft was now well bracketed by fire. The pilot changed headings and completed the takeoff while still under fire on a heading of 330°
 qt
 At 0325Z Rescap meanwhile was suppressing fire from the beach but were forced to withdraw when AAA fire became too intense. The survivor who was in excellent condition was treated for minor bruises and abrasions when airborne. He had been flying a A-4E Skyhawk with the call sign of Garfish 407. At 0330Z Crown Alpha received a call from King advising "if able, proceed to 1830N - 10600E to conduct search for missing Spruce 2." At 0358Z Crown Alpha arrived at the search scene and started a creeping line search parallel to

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By Authority of EDSBy [Signature] (Date) 12 May 77

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REGRADING INSTRUCTIONS YEAR INTERVALS	DECLASSIFY DATE	SECURITY CLASSIFICATION			
		CONFIDENTIAL SECRET			

DD FORM 173-1

REPLACES EDITION OF 1 MAY 55 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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MESSAGEFORM ABBREVIATED JOINT CONTINUATION SHEET				SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	
SEQUENCE		RELEASED BY	DRAFTED BY	PHONE	
ACTION PRIORITY		ROBERT E FRESHWATER LtCol	ROBERT E FRESHWATER LtCol	6104	
INFO					
CONFIDENTIAL					
the shore 10 NM NW and SE of most probable position. Rescap was dispatched to search the shore line to five miles out. Since dropping the external fuel tanks fuel for continued search became a problem, but by operating at 1700 RPM Crown Alpha was able to remain on station until relieved by Crown Bravo. At 0504Z Crown Alpha was relieved by Crown Bravo at the search scene and proceeded to Danang. At 0629Z Crown Alpha landed at Danang and the survivor was turned over to AF medical authorities. 10. Comments: The excessive radio chatter on SAR freq 364.2 MC by strike aircraft hampered the relay of vital SAR communications during these two separate incidents. The cooperation of Navy acft at the scene was outstanding. Their willingness to attempt to surpress hostile ground fire directed at the Rescue acft despite extremely heavy AAA fire is commendable. It appears that ground fire was not directed at the Navy A-1H or A-4 aircraft nor the survivor until the HU-16 was on the scene. It further appears that a hostile forces held their fire until the arrival of the Rescue acft in the attempt to bag the HU-16 and the survivor. The record breaking 2 minute pickup is attributed to outstanding crew coordination and superior individual professional skill. GP-4 CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED Or Changed to <u>UNCLAS.</u> By Authority of <u>GDS</u> By <u>[Signature]</u> - (Date) <u>12 Aug 75</u> CONFIDENTIAL					
CONTROL NO.	TOR/TOD	PAGE NO.	NO. OF PAGES	MESSAGE IDENTIFICATION	INITIALS
		9	6	Mission Narrative 38ARRS 1-3-3	
REGRADING INSTRUCTIONS DECLASSIFIED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.				SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	
				SECRET	

33rd Ends an Era

Last week at Da Nang AB, Vietnam, the 33rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq. filled another page of history, when they flew the last Grumman HU-16 Albatross out of Vietnam.

Piloting the Albatross was Lt. Col. Roy E. Jacobsen, commander of the 33rd ARRS. The 33rd was picked for the distinction of making the last flight because of the fact that they were the first to land in Vietnam in June of 1964.

During the three years that HU-16 crews have been working off the shores of Vietnam they have been credited with recovering 62 survivors from the hostile waters of the Tonkin Gulf and the South China Sea. Leading the crews operating the craft "down South" the 33rd alone is credited with having saved 32 personnel, including 21 American airmen downed in combat.

In its recent visit to Da Nang Brig. Gen. Allison C. Brooks, commander of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, stated that the HU-16 has done an outstanding job in Southeast Asia. He further added that the number of combat saves attributable to the HU-16 is comparable to the combine aircrew complements of two fighter squadrons.

Moving in to take over the responsibilities of "Albert," as the craft is known to its crews, is the HH-3E helicopter, more commonly known as the "Jolly Green Giant."

Upon establishing the initial rescue amphibian program in Southeast Asia, the 33rd ARRS continued as the primary HU-16 agency. After the 37th ARRS was formed at Da Nang in the spring of 1966, aircrew and maintenance assistance from the 33rd were significantly reduced. But this didn't mean the end to the 33rd's action in Vietnam, as they still supplied aircraft and crews to bolster the mission. In April of 1967 the 37th ARRS became an exclusive HH-3E unit, and the 33rd was again needed to maintain an HU-16 operation, pending the development of air-to-air refueling for the "Jolly Green" and that its range was not sufficient to enable it to take its scheduled missions and relieve the HU-16.

In the beginning, only one aircraft was deployed to the operation in Vietnam, but the commitment quickly accelerated to the point where there were at least three and frequently four or five aircraft required.

"Albert" came to his own after February of 1965 when bombing of North Vietnam began and full scale coverage over the Gulf of Tonkin became its priority function.

Presidential Unit Citations.

Highlighting the combat activities of "Albert" and the 33rd ARRS are such missions as occurred on Sept. 24, 1965 when Maj. Donald C. Hollfelder and his crew pulled two F-4C pilots from the Gulf of Tonkin less than a mile from the coast of North Vietnam. Shore batteries quickly found the range of "Albert" and shells exploded within 15 yards of the aircraft. With the survivors safely abroad, Major Hollfelder performed a difficult cross-swirl take-off to avoid enemy fire and was airborne in a few seconds.

Another mission occurred on Jan. 31, 1966 when Col. Robert E. Freshwater and his crew landed just one mile from the coast line at Dong Hoi to recover a downed A-1E pilot. Both the landing and the take-off were complicated by a treacherous ground swell not noted from the air, and while waterborne, intense gunfire from well-defended on-shore emplacements was directed against the vulnerable H-16. Crew members armed with M-16 rifles and two A-1E rescue cover aircraft combined to suppress the hostile fire long enough to bring the downed pilot on board. Minutes later, the Albatross was climbing into the air, the mission accomplished.

Tragedy struck on March 14, 1966 as Capt. David P. Westenbarger landed "Albert" in the Tonkin Gulf, between Hon Me Island and the North Vietnam mainland where two downed F-4C pilots were frantically awaiting recovery.

Suddenly, amid a barrage of explosions, a howitzer round literally ripped the amphibian apart and set it ablaze, killing two of the crew, Airmen First Class James E. Pleiman and Robert L. Hinton (A2C Steven H. Adams, 33rd ARRS is also listed as missing in action in another mission). It was following this calamity that the navigator, Capt. Donald S. Price, heroically risked his own life to save one of the original survivors, an act which earned him the Air Force Cross.

The four remaining crew members and the two fighter pilots were later picked out of the churning water by Navy helicopters, while armed fighters flying cover kept approaching junks and sampans at bay.

Awarded for this mission was the Aviator's Medal for 1966. The award went to Captain Westenbarger for his courage during the mission. The presentation is made by the American Legion and is a national presentation.

Ending their stay in Vietnam, the crews and "Albert" will now devote their full time to its mis-

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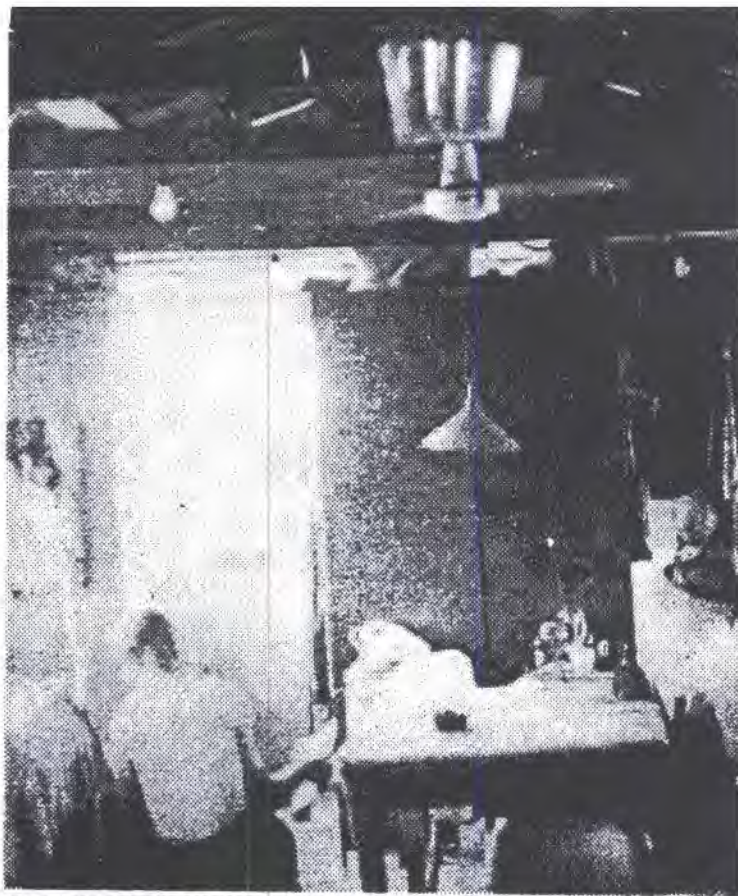
The four remaining crew members and the two fighter pilots were later picked out of the burning water by Navy helicopters, while armed fighters flying cover kept approaching junks and sampans at bay.

Also awarded for this mission was the Aviator's Honor Award for 1966. The award went to Captain Westenbarger for his courage during the mission. The presentation is made by the American Legion and is a national presentation.

Ending their stay in Vietnam, the crews and "Albert" will now devote their full time to its missions on Okinawa, those being normal search and recovery and NASA support. Even though the Southeast Asian situation put a major drain on the unit, its two missions here never were neglected.

"Albert" and his crews stand alert for any calls which may require them, from a sick Ryukyuan national to full-scale coverage as was given for the Gemini 8 which was recovered by men of the 33rd.

Although the rescue era of the HU-16 and the 33rd is over in Vietnam, its memory as well as those who died there will not long be forgotten by the crews that flew so that others may live.



GLAMOUROUS LIVING—An airman takes a break in one of the messes set up for the rescue men. Temporary duty assignments like this make this place to live.



WORKSHOP — Men working on maintenance of the HU-16's "dow shack" for a workshop. Even though the conditions were limited the shop has been in use for several years from this facility.



Pilot Saved At Sea off N. Vietnam

SAIGON (UPI) — A U.S. Air Force rescue plane flew through heavy antiaircraft fire off the north Vietnamese coast Monday to pick up a downed U.S. Navy pilot.

The pilot, Lt. Cdr. Sylvester G. Chumley, of Lemoore, Cal., flew an A-4 Skyhawk in one of the first bombing missions over north Vietnam in more than 37 days. He was from the Seventh Fleet carrier Ranger.

His Skyhawk crashed into the sea one-half to three-quarters of a mile east of Dong Hoi, 35 miles north of the demilitarized zone. It was not immediately known if the Skyhawk had been hit by ground fire, but pilots reported heavy antiaircraft fire.

Minutes after the Skyhawk plunged into the sea, the rescue plane, an HU-16 Albatross, was on its way.

Commanded by Lt. Col. Robert E. Freshwater, of Canton, Ohio, the plane was at the scene in 30 minutes.

North Vietnamese coastal surveillance ships poured round after round at the rescue aircraft, but Freshwater picked up Chumley within three minutes.

Freshwater was not hit.