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17V AFR-20542/5

MISSION NARRATIVE 24 FEB 66

12 MAY 1970

Notified to scramble at 0322Z. Airborne at 0326Z. Arrived in area, coordinates 106° 20', 1641 at 0420Z. Four Sandies already there, orbiting the area. Prior to our arrival, the wing man for the F4B that was shot down had stated that he had visually followed one of the pilots to the ground and that after landing, the survivor had waved at him from a clearing. No beeper was heard except for the first 30 seconds. When Jolly Greens arrived, we were informed that there was no beeper, no voice contact, and no visual sighting. One of the chutes, (all white), was in a large cleared area near a prominent road. The other chute (also all white), was any one of approximately 15 white chutes scattered all through the area. There had been no indication from the second survivor, either voice or visual.

Both Jolly Greens had figured an original Bingo at 0530Z that was based on a return to Nakhom Phanom. Due to negative contact with survivors, both Jolly Greens remained at altitude, Low Bird orbited at 7000', High Bird at 9000'. Crown 06 asked the Sandy flight if they had flares aboard, thinking that perhaps, by dropping a flare in the clearance, the crewman would show himself again. Sandy answered negative flares. Jolly Green 31 was asked and answered affirmative flares. We were then asked to make a low pass and drop one. After a few moments, 31 made a high speed pass at 1000 feet above the area and dropped a smoke bomb. One of the Sandy's fired a rocket into the clearing, and Jolly Green 31 climbed back up to 7000 feet. It was at this time that the co-pilot and Flight Engineer on Jolly Green 31 spotted about 2 or 3 trucks moving along the road. The trucks had pulled off onto a secondary trail and disappeared under a clump of thick trees. Sandy's were informed and directed to the area, about one mile from the clearing with the possible survivor. No contact was made on the trucks.

At approximately 0445Z, Jolly Green 33 called 31 and informed that his Bingo time was now changed to 0510Z. This change was due to the fact that 33's right tip tank had failed to feed. This new Bingo time was still figured for a return trip to Nakhom Phanom. At 0450Z, Hillsboro control called the JG's and informed them that there was a forward operating site available for recovery if necessary. This site was given as Khe Sauh, 098° from our position, 34 miles distant. After orbiting for 40 minutes, JG 31 decided to take one last look, at altitude. An approach was flown at tree top level and high speed. A very faint beeper was heard intermittently as we passed over the chute, but ADF homing proved impossible, with the needle swinging erratically. Still at low altitude, 31 circled the area, avoiding the road and the area where the trucks had been spotted. Incidentally, there had been no ground fire reported for the immediate area. Still receiving the weak beeper, but no visual on the pilot. Suddenly, one of the Sandys reported that there was a man in the clearing, waving a red flag. The time was 0510Z, and both JG's were initiating a departure due to Bingo fuel. At this point, 31 returned in a tight circle and spotted the survivor waving a large panel of red cloth. He would not wave out into the clearing, so we had to move into a hover over the trees at the edge of the clearing.

by Authority of

(Date) 12 May 1970

(Date)

12 MAY 1970

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A hovering pick up was completed at 0520Z. While 31 was making the pick up, JG 33 was informed by Crown 61 that Compress did not want us to recover at Khe Sauh and that a recovery at Savauakhet was desired. JG 33 recomputed Bingo time to Savauakhet as 0535Z. After getting the first survivor aboard, we asked him if he knew and whether he could direct us to where his crew mate was. He directed us to the general vicinity, about 400 yards SW of the clearing. We flew very slowly at tree top level, inspecting all the white chutes. SSgt Barnes, the crew chief, spotted one chute that seemed larger than the others, also all white, and we moved into a hover over it. By moving back and forth and blowing the canopy aside, we were able to determine that this was definitely a personnel chute. The harness was empty and from our hover we were unable to see any sign of a survivor on the ground. At 0530Z I informed 33 that I thought that there was a strong possibility that the man had fallen to the ground and might be injured. I also informed 33 to relay to Crown 61 and Hillsboro that I was going to lower the paramedic to investigate. This was done in full awareness that we'd fly past our Bingo to Savauakhet, but I decided to recover at Khe Sauh, only 34 miles away. The PJ was lowered and almost immediately reported that he had found the pilot and that the situation was critical due to several possible bone fractures. We decided to lower the stokes litter. While this was being done, I asked Hillsboro to determine the availability of JP 4 at Khe Sauh and to get medical assistance started on the way immediately, to meet us at Khe Sauh. The PJ got the man in the litter and he was brought aboard. At 0550Z we had the PJ, back aboard and make an immediate departure. Crown 61 and Hobo aircraft escorted us to Khe Sauh. We arrived there at 0635Z. After determining that a Doctor would not arrive for 1½ hours, 31 asked Crown 61 to see if there was any station nearby that had a doctor.

Crown checked it out and said that Quang Tri had one and it was only 28 miles away. We decided to go there as I thought it imperative to get medical attention for the injured man. Our PJ had determined that the man had a possible fracture of the pelvis or the femur. We flew to Quang Tri and made an instrument let down through a 5500' layer of cloud, breaking out at 500'. Both JG's landed at 0730Z with minimum fuel. The survivors were treated and air evacuated. One drum of fuel for each JG was flown to us by a Pedro from Dong Ha, 6 miles distant. We "refueled" and took off for Dong Ha at 0900Z, arrived Dong Ha 0910Z. We completed refueling there at 0925Z, and had to wait till 0955Z so we could pick up a Sandy escort to go home. Arrived at Nakhom Phanom at 1125Z.

Low Bird, JG 31
 Capt Weekley, RA
 Lt Sans, RJ
 SSgt Barnes, J Sr
 A2C Kellerman, LW Jr

High Bird, JG 33
 Capt Matthews, RH
 Lt Rice, LC
 SSgt Loughry, BD
 ALC Hunt, G.E.

Pilots recovered: Lt John Pierce and Lt Billy Ellis, VMFA 314, A/C F4B

Total time flown: JG 31 5:30 JG 33 5:40, 4 sorties each.

Comments:

1. It is imperative that aircrews be informed on helicopter rescue techniques. Twice in the space of one month we have had a case of a downed crewman not wanting to show himself to the helicopter.

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This almost resulted in a sad situation, ie, having to leave the area due to low fuel.

2. The Navy chutes are all white. We spent valuable time looking at flare chutes on this mission, when we could have better spent the time making an early recovery of a severely injured man.

3. m364.2 was used extensively throughout this mission and it was at times completely jammed.

James C. O'Dell Capt Adm Off
ROBERT A. WEEKLEY
Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

STAFF AGENCY	ATT	ADJ
ARCCO		X
ARCCO	X	
ARPOC		X
ARBDC		X
ARMDC		X
ARGAS		
ARADC		X
ARCOI		X
ARHIG		X
ARAMS		X

*All Centype and
Ag's Except in PACAF*

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DET 2-3-13-19 Feb

(U) USAF F-105 pilot on strike mission in Laos was forced to bail out. A good chute was observed by wingman. Heavy ground fire was reported in the area and weather prevented fighter aircraft from striking at the ground positions. HH-3C used forest penetrator to lift pilot out of the area while the HH-3C crew members returned enemy fire using personal M-16's. The helicopter took several hits during the rescue operation and escort aircraft reported that anti-aircraft bursts made the helicopter look as if it was in a cotton field.

DET 2-3-14-20 Feb

(U) USAF F-4C was hit by ground fire while on a gunnery pass in Laos. Wingman saw two good chutes but visual contact on the ground was lost due to darkness. A first light hoist pick-up was made by HH-3C. The men were on the side of a steep slope, so steep that the rotor blade clearance was only two to three feet.

DET 2-3-16-24 Feb

(U) USMC F-4B crew ejected over Laos. SAR aircraft arrived on the scene but could not establish contact with either crew member. After searching for about an hour one crew member was located and recovered. A short time later the second chute was spotted but no pilot. The paramedic was lowered to the ground and located the injured crew member who was lifted with the aid of a stokes litter.

DET 2-3-17-26 Feb

(U) USAF F-105 on a strike mission in Laos was forced down by ground fire. Voice contact was established and HH-3C made a hoist pick-up.

DET 2-3-18-27 Feb

(C) USAF F-105 pilot returning from a bombing mission in North Vietnam was forced to eject from his aircraft near the Thailand border. An HH-3C was dispatched, landed and picked up the uninjured pilot.

DET 2-3-20-1 Mar

(U) False Mission.

DET 2-3-20-1 Mar

(C) USAF F-105 on strike mission in Laos burst into flames. The pilot was recovered by HH-3C helicopter. Later investigation indicated a mid-air collision between the F-105 and a FAC aircraft. No wreckage was ever located and the pilot of the FAC aircraft is reported as missing.

DET 2-3-21-7 Mar

(U) USAF F-105 on strike pass in Laos was forced down. The pilot was recovered by HH-3C and reported in good condition. Rescue aircraft received several hits from ground fire during the operation.

DET 2-3-22-7 Mar

(C) Two USAF RF-101's were forced down in North Vietnam. Aircraft were reported to have exploded in the air and search aircraft were unable to make any visual or electronic contact with the pilots. No chutes were observed and the mission was suspended.

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