

FROM: Det 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq, APO US FORCES 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report of a Save

2 Mar 66

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Group (JSARRG), APO US FORCES 96307

1. Mission Number: 6-38-41-1 Mar 66.
2. SAR Alerted by: 173rd Airborne Brigade.
3. SAR Aircraft Used: 2 HH-43F helicopters.

Crewmembers of recovery aircraft were:

RCC Capt Ronald L. Bachman
 CP Capt Charles P. Nadler
 HM ALC Thomas S. Story
 RS ALC Henry J. O'Beirne

Lake Stevens, Wash
 Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Miami, Fla
 Dublin, Ireland

Crewmembers of the top cover aircraft were:

RCC Capt Dale L. Potter
 CP Capt Raymond L. Murden
 HM TSgt Kenneth L. Perkins
 RS ALC William H. Pitsenbarger

Joseph, Oregon
 Varnville, S.C.
 Lexington, Ky.
 Piqua, Ohio

4. Reaction time from initial notification to pick up: 0:33.
5. CAP assistance: None.
6. Area and type of pick up: 100+ ft jungle growth, hoist pick up.
7. Survivor located by coordinates and smoke grenades.
8. Survivors name: Sgt Larry Whiting, RA13704678, A-1/503, 173rd Airborne Brigade.
9. Summary of Events:

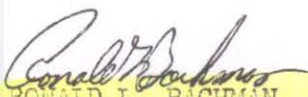
At 1147 hours, 1 March 1966, Det 6, 38th ARRS was alerted by the 173rd Airborne Brigade for the medical evacuation of an Army wounded from 1053 N 10703 E, 13 miles ESE of Bien Hoa AB, RVN. Two HH-43F helicopters were scrambled from Bien Hoa at 1155 hours. While enroute to the site we attempted contact with "Dumbo Uptake" on FM. When contact was made it was learned that "Dumbo Uptake" was not the operation that had the wounded. However, upon arrival at the designated area, Pedro 73, the lead aircraft spotted green

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smoke. As this was an area that we had previously operated in and was secure, a low pass was flown on the site to check the area. US Army personnel were observed carrying a litter patient. The stokes litter was lowered approximately 100 feet to the jungle floor and the patient was secured. As the patient was hoisted toward the helicopter it started to spin. The closer it approached the helicopter, the faster the litter would spin. All attempts to stop the rotation failed. The rotational velocity was estimated to be approximately 60 RPM. The rotation was finally stopped by allowing the stokes litter to contact the bear paw. The shock of this impact caused severe pain for the patient. It is the opinion of the personnel of this detachment that the spin is caused by the construction of the hoist cable. Previously problems with the hoist have occurred when cable twist caused a loop to form in the cable causing fraying and broken strands thereby rendering the cable unusable. The cable has been UR'ed before and a UR and OHR will again be submitted.

The patient was evacuated to the 93rd Med Evac Hospital at Bien Hoa at 1235 hours. His injuries consisted of a severed right leg below the knee.

No ground fire was encountered, weather was clear and 15. There was some difficulty with communications in that the initial frequencies obtained were for the wrong operation. However, the accuracy of coordinates for the location allowed the pickup to occur with out communications. Communications was established with the ground party just after the pickup was completed.


RONALD L. BACHMAN, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MISSION NARRATIVE 2 MAR 66

Notified by COMPRESS to scramble at 0151Z, 2 March 1966. Jolly Green 31 and 30 airborne at 0156Z. Immediately after takeoff contact was made with INVERT and a heading and distance of 090 degrees, 67 NM from Channel 65 TACAN was given to Jolly Green. Sandy 21, 22, 23 and 24 were scrambled and airborne at 0159Z. Enroute to the area contact was established with Crown 28 and Gombey aircraft. Gombey advised that there was a possible collision between an F-105 and 01F aircraft. Jolly Green was advised by Diamond Back flight that the crash site and one chute had been located and that they had picked up a beeper in the same area. Sandys 21 and 22 proceeded to the area and Sandy 23 and 24 escorted Jolly Green to the area. Sandy 21 and 22 confirmed crash site, chute and beeper and directed Jolly Green to the area. Jolly Green arrived on the scene at approximately 0230Z. Crown 28 advised Jolly Green 31 that we were clear to investigate the chute at pilots discretion. Jolly Green descended to approximately 1500 feet and made a pass over the chute and crash site. A strong beeper signal (appeared to be two beepers) was heard by Jolly Green in the immediate vicinity of the crash site and chute. The immediate area was approximately one eighth of a mile west of a river and approximately 40 yards from a dirt road. The trees were approximately 75 feet tall with dense underbrush. The chute was located approximately 30 yards south of the crash site. The pilot was not observed at this time. Jolly Green then descended to tree top level for closer search of the area around the chute. While approaching the site, a pen flare was observed near the chute. The pilot was not in sight. As Jolly Green hovered over the chute the downed pilot was transmitting on his survival radio trying to direct Jolly Green to him. However, his radio transmissions were drowned out by the strong beeper signals. At this time Jolly Green 31 requested clearance from COMPRESS to lower the pararescueman on the hoist for ground search of area near the chute. After being cleared by COMPRESS the pararescueman was lowered on the hoist at approximately 0305Z. Approximately 2 minutes later (0307Z) the flight mechanic spotted the pilot within the immediate area of Jolly Green. The tree penetrator was maneuvered to the pilot and a hoist pickup was accomplished. Jolly Green took off, circled the area, and directed the pararescueman by radio to return to the point where he was lowered on the sling. The pararescueman was then picked up on the hoist and Jolly Green departed the area to channel 65 on a heading of 270 degrees. In route the pararescueman and flight mechanic administered first aid to the pilot who had suffered burns, facial lacerations (eyes swollen shut) and was suffering from shock. Jolly Green landed at channel 65 with the injured pilot at 0312Z.

Pilot recovered: Capt Tastet.

Low Bird, Jolly Green 31
1st Lt Letton, RCC
Major Schmidt, RCCP
SSgt Chapman, HM
A2C Kellerman, PJ

ROBERT W. LETTON, 1st Lt, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

By Authority of

By AGENCY	ACT	INFO
ARCCO		X
ARODC	X	
ARPOC		X
ARBDC		X
ARMDC		X
ARDCS		X
ARXDC		X
ARCOI	X	
ARIIG		X
ARAMS		X

High Bird, Jolly Green 30
Capt Weekley, RCC
1st Lt Sans, RCCP
SSgt Barnes, HM
A2C Halvorson, PJ

DOWNGRADE AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

ARODC

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11A AFR-205-2

665-0137

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
Or Changed to UNCLASSIFIED

By Authority of (Date) 12-11-75

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Reg # 39903

P-F-1 *Paradise*
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MISSION NARRATIVE 7 MAR 66

At 0221Z COMPRESS notified shoestring that a pilot was down at 1754N, 10550E and scrambled Jolly Green 27 and 31. Jolly Greens were airborne at 0226Z and proceeded on a heading of 065 degree 70NM from channel 89. Sandy 21, 22, 23 and 24 were airborne prior to Jolly Green's takeoff and were enroute to the area. At 47NM out Jolly Green 27 and 31 switched to SAR frequency and contacted CROWN 29 and the Sandy's and arrived at the area at 0305Z. At that time a beeper had been heard but due to dense jungle area the downed pilot, Dodge 3, could not be seen. Sandy aircraft attempted to contact Dodge 3 while Jolly Green remained in orbit, at 0325Z Dodge 3 was raised by Sandy aircraft on guard and Jolly Green 31 went down to perform the pickup. Due to radio difficulties no further contact was made with Dodge 3 and Jolly Green 31 searched the immediate area of the beeper. At this time Sandy aircraft assured Jolly Green that there was no ground fire in the immediate area, but that there was a possibility of unfriendly forces in a valley about 4 miles away and across a large ridge. The terrain was very hilly and jungle type growth predominated. At 0340Z Dodge 3 came back on the radio and announced he was setting off a red smoke flare. This was spotted by Jolly Green 31 who punched tip tanks and went in for the pickup. Due to the blossoming of the smoke, the dense foliage and loss of survivors voice radio Jolly Green 31 hovered over the spot until 0355Z when voice contact was established and the survivor sighted. Normal hoist pickup was achieved and Jolly Green 31 left the area. The pilot Major Joseph L. Hutto was in good shape and the Jolly Greens and Sandy aircraft returned to shoestring arriving at 0440Z. At no time during the mission did anyone see or report ground fire although after landing Sandy 21 discovered bullet holes in his aircraft, also Major Hutto, when he landed in the trees heard automatic weapons fire from the valley to his northwest and had gone east over the ridge to the position where he was picked up. At all times during the mission jolly green were given excellent cover by the 4 Sandy aircraft and radio chatter was kept at a minimum until Jolly Green 31 went in for the pickup and then it was nonexistent except for Jolly Green and Dodge 3.

Thomas E. Kenny
THOMAS E. KENNY
1st Lt, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

Low Bird
Lt Kenny
Capt Henderickson
SSgt Schrader(HM)
SSgt Farrior(PJ)
TSgt Munch(Photo)

High Bird
Lt Letton
Major Schmidt
SSgt Chapman(HM)
A2C Poole(PJ)
TSgt Schaefer(Photo)

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
Or Changed to UNCLAS
By Authority of EDS
By HLG (Date) 12 MAR 70

DOWNGRADED
IAW AFR-205-2

12 MAY 1970

DOWNGRADE AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

ARODC #

661208

AGARS SC No.

661189

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

RCRC-66-0029
665-0143

7 MAR 66

THE DARING RESCUE OF A DOWNED COMBAT FLYER

It was one of those days. Maj. Joe Hutto had cratered the bedrock of the North Vietnam highway, made strainers of a batch of VC trucks, then got his F-105 punctured south of Vinh by ground fire.

He loved that F-105 *Thunderchief*, and parting was such sweet-sorrow. Part he did, however, and his chute lowered him gently into jungle that was 100 feet deep. "Hot Rockets," he thought. "How in Ho Chi Minh will they get me out of here?"

While he was thinking about it, an HH-3C from the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was doing something about it. The chopper hovered over the jungle, spotted Major Hutto, and lowered a hoist cable. Hutto grabbed it and was hauled back into the blue from whence he came.

Back at his home base, he nursed his only injury, a cut finger.

"One of those days!" he shrugged.

The Airman
JUN 66
EDITION

Pacific Edition

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昭和34年2月25日 郵政省特准
新聞紙類第185号 (毎週水曜日出刊)

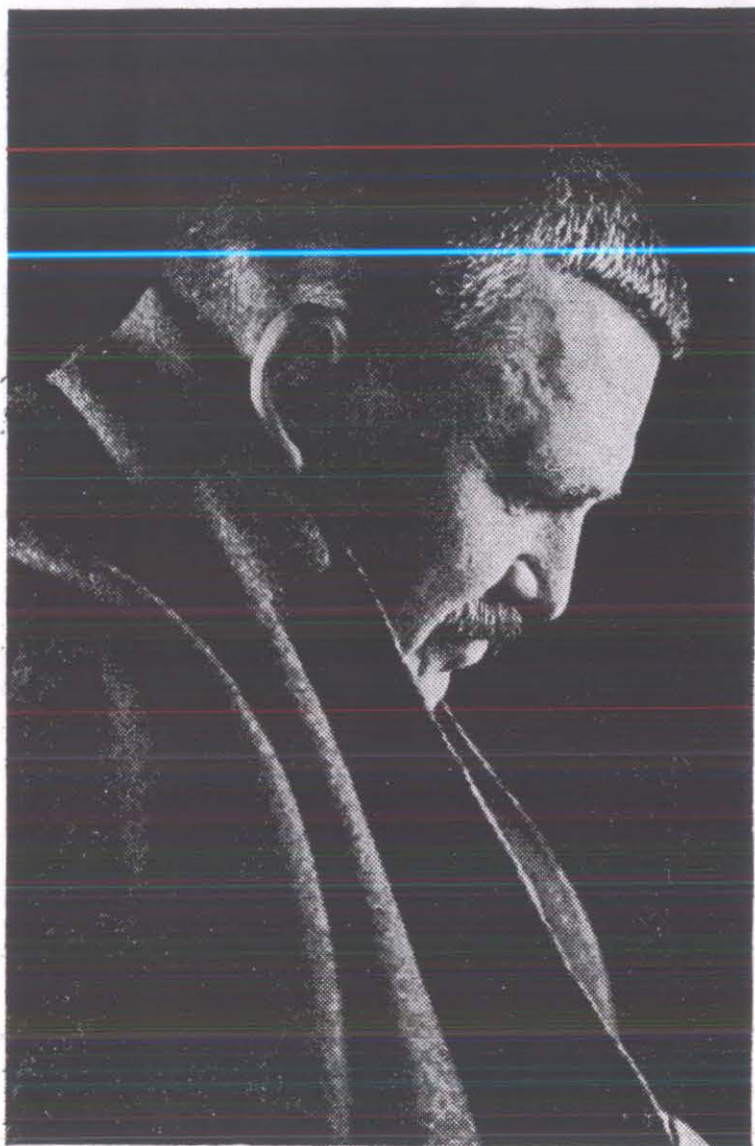
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I WAS LOW ON THIS ONE
After the Rescue

THE FACE of a downed Air Force pilot rescued from the jungles of North Vietnam tells its own story. Maj. Joseph Hutto forced to eject from his F-105 after it was hit by enemy

En

Copter Hauls Pilot to Safety

(See Picture Page 1)

By 1st Lt. Ron Marlar

I WAS LOW

SAIGON — Standing alone in a North Vietnam jungle, an Air Force F-105 pilot waved frantically at the HH-3C passing overhead. Someone in the helicopter waved back. For the first time since he ejected from his flaming plane, Maj. Joseph Hutto knew he was going to be rescued.

Less than two hours before, Hutto was bombing a segment of Route 1, south of Vinh, attacking a truck convoy moving military supplies toward infiltration routes to South Vietnam. He and three other Thunderchief pilots cratered the highway and made one bombing pass on the trucks.

One truck veered from the highway, crashed in a ditch and exploded in a brilliant, orange flash,

but three trucks remained.

Diving through a hail of anti-aircraft fire, Hutto made two passes over the camouflaged trucks spraying them with 20mm cannon fire. As he pulled up from the second pass, he felt the F-105 shudder. Seeing his cockpit fill with smoke, he radioed the other pilots in his flight and prepared to eject.

Thrown into the sky by catapult ejection, he blacked out for a mo-

ment, but recovered to feel the comforting jerk of an opening parachute. As he swayed from side to side under the silk canopy, he thought, "It is alarmingly quiet and yet very pleasant."

Awed by the silence of the skies and the beauty of the landscape, Hutto suddenly realized he was drifting toward the flat plain. He tugged on the parachute cords, tipping the canopy to carry him away from the cratered highway and still smoldering trucks.

Crashing through 100 feet of deep forest, Hutto landed on the side of a steep slope. He struggled out of his parachute, drank some water and tried to use his radio.

Realizing enemy gunners were coming after him, Hutto started moving through the brush. Using fallen teak trees and animal trails to quiet his movements, he climbed toward the crest of a ridge.

Exhausted by his scramble through the jungle, Hutto stopped to use his radio and learned a helicopter was coming after him. Not knowing his parachute could not be seen from the air, he tried to radio his position by estimating the distance he moved from the chute.

When the helicopter appeared, Hutto fired a smoke flare giving away his position to both his rescuers and the enemy. In a barely audible whisper, he called to the helicopter, "Do you see my smoke?"

"Positive," came the reply, but the helicopter, commanded by 1st Lt. Thomas E. Kenny, moved out of sight, then returned and dropped the hoist cable about 100 yards from Hutto.

Hutto realized the smoke had drifted down the hill and tried to make radio contact with the chopper crew again to bring them closer. By this time he had completely lost his voice and wasn't sure his transmission was heard.

Rescue crewmen SSgt Aaron D. Farrion, pararescue medic, and Harold R. Schrader of Satellite, Fla., crew chief, spotted Hutto.

Farrion and Schrader radioed instructions to their pilot, dropped the cable as the helicopter hovered and hoisted Hutto into the chopper.

No longer alone in the jungle, Hutto hugged everyone in sight and settled down for the flight to safety.

HUTTO FLEW F-105
SEE AIRMAN 1966 JUN

MISSION NARRATIVE

AC-47 CRASH AT A SHAN



At 1317 hours, 9 March 1966 Panama notified the Rescue Control Center at Danang AB that an AC-47 was down with seven survivors. Survivors were said to be in voice contact with an A-1 and C-1 aircraft in the crash area. The primary and secondary alert HH-43F helicopters were airborne at 1327. The initial location was given as 53 miles on the 169° radial from Danang. Approximately twenty minutes after the departure, JOI personnel changed the crash location to 53 miles on the 279° radial from Danang. We corrected course and headed 310° to return to the correct track. After several minutes on a heading of 310° it was necessary to climb IFR through cloud layers to get to VFR On Top at 9,000 feet MSL.

It was impossible to establish radar contact with the JOI due to lack of IFF, however after a short period radio contact was established with the on the scene control aircraft and an airborne DF was initiated. This airborne DF was later passed to the RESCAP aircraft as we approached the crash area. We were informed at this time that the area around the crash site was hostile and under ground fire, but as there were A-1 aircraft in the area for fire suppression we decided to continue the mission.

The weather in the crash area was overcast with a cloud layer from about 300 feet to 3,000 feet MSL. This layer had a few isolated breaks where it was just possible to see the ground. There was another overcast layer from 4,000 to 5,500 feet MSL. The upper layer also had occasional breaks.

The RESCAP A-1 aircraft climbed to the top of the upper layer through two of these breaks that were offset by a few miles. We made a rendezvous with the A-1 and started a decent with the secondary helicopter following. The primary alert helicopter was able to follow the A-1 through both layers with some intermittent IFR, however the secondary alert helicopter could not

find the break in the lower layer of clouds and become separated.

While the A-1 returned to the crash site to provide fire support against the VC, we orbited below a break in the lower overcast while the secondary helicopter made a DF steer to our position. We then joined up below the lower layer.

The crash site was about three miles down a valley from the point where we penetrated the lower layer. A-1 and O-1 aircraft were flying in the area and the A-1's were strafing VC positions. Although jet aircraft were in the area and VFR On Top, it was not possible for them to descend as the valley was only about one mile wide where the base of the clouds intercepted the side of the mountains. This provided extremely limited maneuvering space even for the A-1 aircraft.

When we initiated our dash for the 7 survivors, the REDCAP informed us that there was heavy VC automatic weapons and small arms fire in the area. He also told us that we would have to fly over the VC positions to reach the crash site. The valley floor was a dense jungle with trees about 100 feet tall. We went toward the crash "on the deck" at 95 knots and below the level of the tallest trees, dodging them enroute. The O-1's then reported small arms fire all along our path, however, I feel the combination of low altitude, speed, surprise, and tree cover, kept us from being hit. The O-1's further reported the VC to be about 30 to 40 meters west of the crash and moving in for another attack. I knew we would have to land as we couldn't take time for hoist operations and the helicopter would be an easy target while hovering above the crash. I wanted to put the AO-47 between the helicopter and the main VC force during the pickup. We flew directly toward the location where the AO-47 was expected to be and as soon as it came in sight we executed a quick stop maneuver, which

carried us slightly beyond the crash to a small hill about 75 feet away. The secondary aircraft was just to our left and behind us. After hovering over the hill momentarily, we moved closer to the AC-47 and placed the nose wheels of the helicopter against the side of the hill and hovered with our rear wheels off the ground. This maneuver kept the AC-47 between the helicopter and the attacking VC forces for possible protection from the automatic weapons fire. At this time, 3 survivors ran from the crash and entered the rear of the helicopter. As the Helicopter Mechanic (HM) and the Rescue and Survival Technician (RS) helped the survivors into the helicopter, they made visual contact with the VC about 40 meters away. The crew did not attempt to fire on the VC as they were helping the survivors into the helicopter.

The original plan was to effect recovery of 4 survivors in the first helicopter and the remaining survivors in the second helicopter. After the first group jumped into the helicopter the HM said, "let's go," and the second helicopter moved in as we moved out. When the remaining survivors did not appear, the HM and RS of the second bird deployed to the crash to investigate while the A-1's made a fire suppression run on the advancing VC. The HM and RS reached the downed aircraft while under heavy small arms fire. They entered the AC-47 and searched it from the cockpit to the tail. During this search they were subjected to intense fire from an unknown position. The search resulted in the location of two deceased crew members. While attempting to return to the helicopter, they were again fired on and pinned down by a machine gun and small arms outside the AC-47. An A-1 made a close straffing pass which dispersed the enemy, and during the confusion the HM and RS made another run for the helicopter. One more machine gun burst tore up the ground between

them as they ran, however another A-1 pass suppressed the fire. The HM and RS returned safely to the helicopter after expending 40 M-16 rounds to cover their escape.

While the crew of the second helicopter was on the ground, the first group of survivors informed us that the remainder of the AC-47 crew were dead. We immediately alerted the secondary aircraft to depart. With two crewmen out of the second aircraft the secondary ROC picked his helicopter up to a high hover over the crash to try and alert his crew. After noting the helicopter landing again, the HM and RS returned to their aircraft as described above. Lack of communications with the crew on the ground could have been disastrous as the higher hover compromised the helicopter protection from the trees, hill, and the crashed AC-47. Bodies were not recovered because of the heavy ground fire nor was an attempt made to locate the missing crewmen.

Both helicopters made an immediate departure into the clouds and climbed IFR to VFR On Top; the climb was made at a low airspeed and high rate of climb in the general direction of the valley to avoid contact with the mountains. When reaching VFR On Top, I relayed to the OGI agency the fact that there were only six crewmembers on the AC-47, three were saved, two were dead, and one missing. We also asked for a vector to Daring AB as our fuel was short and we couldn't afford to search.

The severity of the ground fire is evidenced by the fact that although all six crewmembers survived the crash, two of the crewmembers were killed by ground fire and the other three were wounded. The missing man was presumed to be dead. Two of the wounded were serious and one was critical due to a severed artery in his arm and loss of blood. Enroute, the survivors were given medical aid for shock.

One of the survivors, Sgt Turner, stated that the VC had made four attacks on the crash and had been driven off by their fire and the A-1 fire. Two of the men had been killed on the fourth attack and a third had been caught outside the crash. When they could not locate the third man orally or visually, the remaining survivors figured that he was also killed on the fourth attack wave, and told us that all three were dead when we recovered them. The survivors were told by an O-1 that the helicopters were on the way in but that the VC were also advancing with their fifth attacking wave, and were then only 40 to 50 meters out. The survivors were prepared to dash to the helicopter but carried their weapons for defense enroute, as it was debateable as to the helicopter or the VC arriving first. The survivors believe we picked them up before the VC got into position as there was only sporadic small arms fire from the advancing VC during the first pickup. This can be generally confirmed by the fact that there was no automatic weapon fire until after the second aircraft was on the ground.

The excellent cover provided by the A-1's was very important to the success of this mission. It would not have been possible to conduct the mission without their fire support while we made our approach and pickup. The A-1 fire delayed the fifth VC attack long enough for our helicopters to dash in and out making the save. The higher speed jet aircraft which were on top could not operate in the confined airspace nor provide the very close support we had and badly needed. Another factor that contributed to the success was the speed of the approach and pickup and the close coordination between the primary and secondary aircraft that allowed the secondary aircraft to depart no longer

than four minutes after we first spotted the crash. If we had been in the area another five minutes or arrived five minutes later the VC would have prevented a successful conclusion.

CREWS:

PRIMARY:	Capt Donald J. Couture,	RCC, Oak Harbor, Ohio
	Capt Harold A. Solberg,	CP, Spokane, Washington
	SSgt David L. Lancaster,	EM, Lava Hot Springs, Idaho
	A2C Albert W. Foster III,	RS, Virginia Beach, Virginia

SECONDARY:	1st Lt Arthur F. Machado,	RXC, New Bedford, Mass.
	Capt John B. Kneen,	CP, Burlington, Vermont
	SSgt Curtis F. Yancy,	EM, Odessa, Texas
	SSgt David J. Wheeler,	RS, Salina, Kansas

DONALD J. COUTURE, Capt, USAF
RCC

3. We've all read and heard vivid accounts of the battle at As Han Special Forces Camp on 9 Mar 66. For the men of Det 7, 38th ARRSq, that battle will live in their memories. Two HH-43F's and their crews wrote their names in the books of heros that day. Braving heavy gunfire they saved the lives of 3 crewmembers of the AC-47 that was shot down there. For their efforts the following men have been awarded the Silver Star.

Capt Donald J. Couture of Oak Harbor, Ohio, RCC of first helicopter

Capt Harold A. Solberg of Monroe Wash., RCCP

A2C Albert W. Foster III of Virginia Beach, Va, Pararescue

SSgt David L. Lancaster of Springfield, Ill., Crew Chief

Secondary Helicopter 1/LT AF MACHADO RCC

Capt John B. Kneen of Burlington Vt., RCCP

SSgt David J. Wheeler of Salina, Kan., Pararescue

SSgt Curtis F. Yancy of Odessa, Texas, Crew Chief

Our sincere congratulations on a job well done.

Silver Stars Go to Crewmen at DaNang for Rescue in Red Sector

DA NANG AB, Vietnam—Eight crewmen from the rescue helicopters of Det. 7, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq. have been awarded the Silver Star for rescuing three survivors of a downed AC-47 gunship in VC-held territory.

The primary copter, with Capt. Donald V. Couture and Harold A. Soldberg at the controls and SSgt David L. Lancaster and A2C in the crew, rescued the three surviving members of the downed aircraft.

The secondary copter landed and tried to find the other members of the crew until it became apparent that they had been killed by the VC. Crewmembers are Lt. Arthur F. Machado, Capt. John B. Kneen and SSgts Crutis F. Yaney and David S. Wheeler.

Successful rescue of three aircrewmembers of AC-47 under fire at A Shau, Republic of Vietnam 9 March 1966. HH-43F

Low Bird

P. Capt. D. V. Couture

C.P. Capt. H. A. Solberg

R.S. H.M. A2C A. W. Foster III

H.M. R.S. SSgt D. L. Lancaster

High Bird

P. 1st Lt A. F. Machado

C.P. Capt. J. B. Kneen

H.M. SSGT. C. F. Yancy

R.S. SSGT. D. S. Wheeler

AEROSPACE RESCUE and RECOVERY SERVICE

NEWSLETTER

15 August 1966

Office of Information

➔ **SILVER STARS FOR HEROISM.** Eight members of Det 7, 38th ARRSq, have been awarded the Silver Star for "extraordinary heroism" in rescuing three survivors of an AC-47 gunship downed by enemy fire. The rescue took place on 9 March, near the A Shau Special Forces Camp. The Da Nang RCC was notified that the armed version of the C-47 transport had been shot down, and within minutes, two rescue crews were on their way. Arriving at the valley leading to the crash site, they found the weather extremely bad and Viet Cong troops heavily concentrated in the area. Both helicopters dropped to below tree top level to take advantage of tree cover and the element of surprise. The primary crew with Captains Donald V. Couture and Harold A. Soldberg at the controls raced to the embankment above the aircraft and hovered, their front wheels touching the side of a slope and their rear wheels in the air. Three crewmen raced from the wreck under a hail of fire and dived into the rear section of the Huskie. The chopper lifted off, and immediately the second, piloted by Lt Arthur F. Machado and Captain John B. Kneen, moved in to pick up the rest of the crew. When no one emerged from the wreck, flight mechanic SSgt F. Yaney and pararescue-man SSgt David S. Wheeler leaped from the waiting helio and darted into the AC-47. There they found two crewmen who had been killed by enemy fire. While the rescuemen searched for the last missing crewman, the survivors in the lead chopper told the secondary pilot that the AC-47 co-pilot, in trying to blast open an escape route, had charged the enemy's fire; he was missing and presumed dead. Hearing this, the secondary Huskie pilot lifted his bird into the air to draw the attention of the rescuemen inside the wreck. They saw the warning and attempted to return to the Huskie, but were caught in a hail of machine gun fire and pinned down. An A-1E pilot, seeing their plight, dived on the source of enemy fire. His strafing pass, less than 30 yards away, allowed the two rescuemen to complete their dash to the waiting chopper,

With heavy cloud cover above and mountains on both sides, and outnumbered and outgunned by a superior enemy force on the valley floor, the gallant defenders of the Special Forces camp at A Shau on the Vietnamese-Laotian border held out last March for two incredible days. The full use of US airpower might well have spelled the difference between victory and defeat. Valiant US airmen did their best. But their best was not good enough, and after two days of savage fighting the fortified outpost fell, though once again the character of those who fight the air war in Vietnam was demonstrated . . .

THE FALL OF A SHAU

By Kenneth Sams

HISTORIAN, SEVENTH AIR FORCE



Map shows location of A Shau outpost, strategically located on border of Vietnam and Laos. The fortress was overrun in March by a Viet Cong force after a two-day pitched battle.

WITHOUT air support, the US Special Forces camp at A Shau—on the Laotian-Vietnamese border, about 375 miles northeast of Saigon and some thirty miles southwest of the coastal city of Hué—could not have existed in the first place.

The triangular fortress outpost with its 1,800-foot airstrip was built in 1964 from material flown in by C-123s. Ammunition, fuel, food, barbed wire, medical supplies—everything needed to keep an outpost going—had to come by air. When things looked rough, airplanes brought in troop reinforcements.

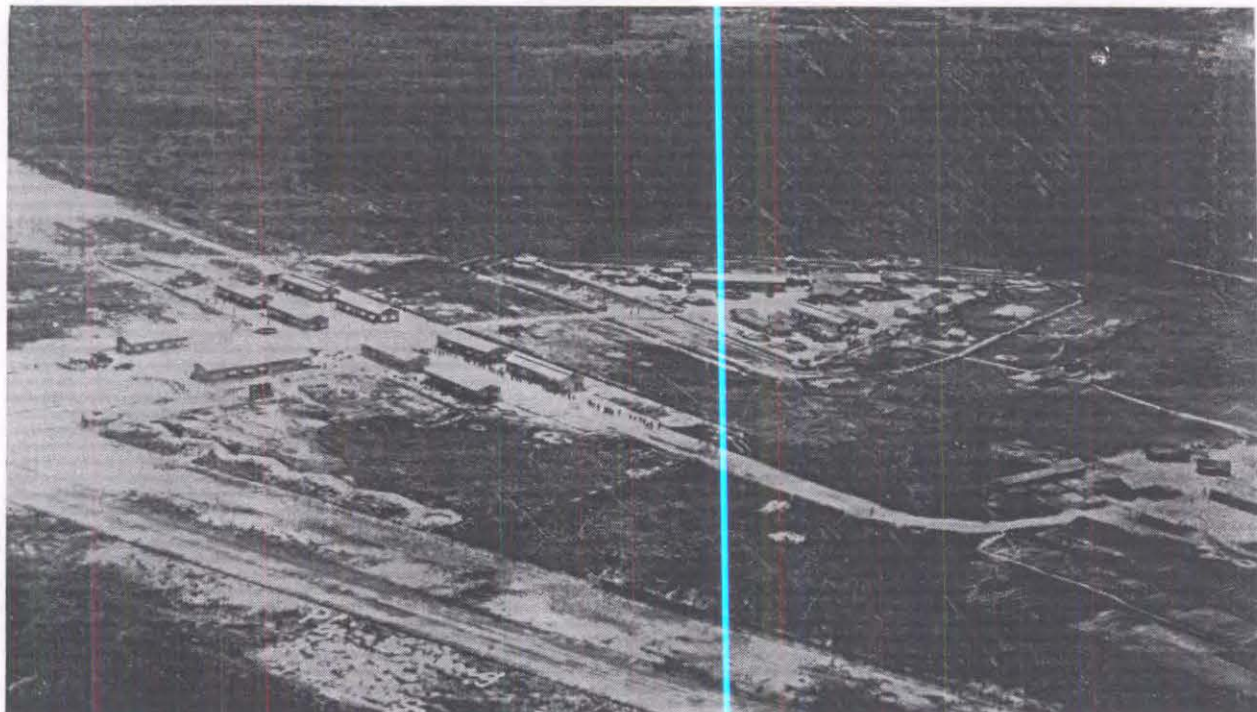
A group of such reinforcements reached A Shau on Monday afternoon, March 7, 1966. An AF transport touched down and, with its engines churning in reverse, roared to a bone-jarring halt. Aboard were seven members of the US Special Forces, 149 Nung troops (the Nungs are a Vietnamese sect of Chinese descent who, as topnotch fighters, enjoy much the same reputation as the Green Berets), and nine interpreters. These men had arrived to reinforce the outpost's usual complement of ten Americans and 210 Vietnamese Civil Indigenous Defense Group (CIDG) militiamen.

They spent the rest of Monday and all day Tuesday strengthening the camp's fortifications. But no matter how many more trenches were dug, how many more sandbags were added to the double steel-plate outer walls, or how the bunkers were strengthened, the 385 defenders of the camp knew that only if they were backed up by airpower could they hope to survive a major enemy attack.

The Viet Cong knew this too.

That was why a multibattalion force of North Vietnamese, estimated at from 3,000 to 5,000 hard-core troops, picked March 9 to attack A Shau. On that day the clouds were at 200 feet in places, and the 1,800-foot-high mountains that straddled the valley three-quarters of a mile apart were in the clouds. This created a "box" over the camp, which the enemy was sure would not permit airplanes enough room to maneuver. The enemy was right.

This photo, made before the battle of A Shau, shows the airstrip in the foreground with the triangular compound behind it. The barracks buildings were destroyed early in the battle, which centered on the compound. Rugged mountainous terrain, combined with low clouds, made air support hazardous.



The camp at A Shau was overrun on March 10. Most of its survivors were taken out by air. Aircraft did take a heavy toll of enemy soldiers. But there was just not enough opportunity for air support.

There are pilots in Vietnam today who believe that, if the defenders of A Shau had been able to hold out for one more night, the camp could have been saved. The treacherous weather cleared on March 11, but by then it was academic. A Shau had fallen. The defense of this remote outpost sitting on one of the main enemy infiltration routes into South Vietnam put airpower to perhaps its most difficult test of the war. And it provided one of the best examples yet of the caliber of Air Force people fighting the Vietnamese War.

The battle for A Shau started at 2:00 on the morning of March 9. One of the Americans in a trench on the perimeter of the camp heard the thud of mortar shells being dropped into tubes. Seconds later, white phosphorous shells began saturating the living quarters and supply dump, setting buildings ablaze and driving the US Special Forces troops and Chinese Nung irregulars to cover. The barrage continued until daylight, killing two Americans, wounding four others, and causing dozens of casualties among the Vietnamese.

The first requests for air were received at 9:08 on the morning of March 9. Aircraft reached the area but found themselves weathered out.

At 11:20 a.m., with the ceiling lifting slightly, an AC-47 "Magic Dragon" was ordered to the area. When he reached the camp, the pilot, Capt. W. M. Collins, was told by the fort's defenders that they were in imminent danger of being overrun. He made two attempts to go under the ceiling under visual flight conditions but without luck. Listening on his radio to the ground forces' calls for help, the pilot tried a third time at almost treetop level and broke through. He saw the river valley below at about 300 feet. He maneuvered up the valley a few miles until he saw the camp, with clouds of smoke and dust rising above it,

and, through the smoke, the red tracers of anti-aircraft fire.

Collins, with his copilot, 1st Lt. Delbert R. Peterson, at his side, made one sweep over the enemy forces attacking the fort, and poured out thousands of rounds of 7.62-mm. cannon fire. Enemy anti-aircraft fire followed the plane as it swung around. On the AC-47's second pass, at about 1,000 feet, several .50-caliber rounds ripped into the aircraft, tearing the right engine from its mounts. Seconds later, the left engine also was knocked out.

Collins and Peterson brought the plane to a crash landing on a mountain slope about seven miles north of the camp. The plane slid down until it came to rest at the base of the slope. One crewman, SSgt. R. E. Foster, suffered two broken legs, but the other men were relatively unhurt. Since Foster could not be moved, the crew decided to throw up a defensive perimeter around the plane. One crewman got on the radio in an effort to direct air strikes while another looked after Sergeant Foster.

Fifteen minutes later, enemy troops attacked the tiny perimeter but were repulsed by automatic-rifle fire from the five crewmen. Then the VC brought up a .50-caliber machine gun and attacked again from undergrowth toward the right rear of the aircraft. In this attack, the pilot, Captain Collins, and Sergeant Foster were killed, and Lt. J. L. Meek, the navigator, was seriously wounded.

There was another lull. Then the enemy opened up again as a rescue helicopter approached the area. The hail of bullets was so heavy that it looked as if the chopper could not land. Realizing there was little chance of rescue until the machine gun was knocked out, Peterson went after it alone, armed only with his AR-15 and a .38-caliber revolver. His attack silenced the machine gun, permitting the chopper to land long enough to remove the three surviving members. But the helicopter could not wait to pick up Lieutenant

(Continued on following page)

Peterson; he and the bodies of the two dead crew members had to be left behind.

While the AC-47 crew was fighting for survival, a pair of A-1E Skyraiders from Pleiku, led by Maj. Bernard F. Fisher, was sent to the camp. Arriving at A Shau, Fisher looked down on the practically solid cloud layer underneath. He scouted around until he found a hole in the clouds about five miles to the northwest. Leading his wingman through the hole and down the narrow valley toward the fort, he approached at almost ground level against intense automatic weapons and 12.7-mm. AA fire that filled the sky in the tiny canyon "box."

An orbiting C-130 airborne command post directed Fisher to destroy what was left of the AC-47. Fisher assigned his wingman this task while he went to help the defenders in the compound. Realizing that more planes were needed, he went up through the overcast, found another flight of A-1Es and brought them in through the hole he had used earlier. He then directed their strike on enemy positions less than half a mile from the fort. Then he helped direct in the CH-3C/HH-43 helicopter that landed at the AC-47 crash site and brought out the three survivors.

With only limited air support overhead, the friendly ground forces at A Shau were still holding the camp. At Phu Bai outside Hué, two reinforcement companies were standing by to board Marine helicopters for airlift into A Shau. Two Army Caribous (CV-2B) flew over the camp and dropped supplies that fell outside the drop zone but were recovered by friendlies. Major Fisher, meanwhile, made another trip in his Skyraider up through the overcast to lead two C-123s into the valley to drop more supplies to the defenders.

This turned out to be an extremely dangerous operation. The planes had to stay close to Fisher's A-1E, descending through the various cloud layers at a rate of 4,000 feet a minute. During the descent, the pilots, Capt. William C. Devoe, and Capt. Ronald E. Trickey, had to make rapid and steep turns to avoid mountains, throwing the crew members all about the aircraft. Both planes were forced down to about fifty feet, just above the treetops, with a forward visibility of less than half a mile. Both planes started drawing enemy fire about seven miles north of A Shau and were under constant fire until they left fifteen minutes later.

As they entered the narrow portion of the valley just north of A Shau, both planes were caught in a crossfire from .50-caliber automatic weapons. Reaching the drop zone, each plane made two drops on the first pass. Still under fire, they made 180-degree turns and dropped another eight bundles, each weighing 1,800 pounds. The cargo, mainly ammunition and medical supplies, fell inside the camp and was retrieved by the defenders.

During pull-up, Captain Trickey's plane took multiple hits, one cutting a six-inch hole in the center of the cargo floor. This knocked out several electrical wires, making the engine, flight, and navigation instruments and the compass system inoperative. Devoe's plane took no hits, and both planes made it safely back to Da Nang.

While these drops were taking place, Major Fisher's wingman, Capt. Francisco Vazquez, noticed .50-caliber fire coming out of the overcast from the mountains to the southeast. This meant that the planes flying in the closed "box" were being fired on from above, even though the gunners were apparently having difficulty spotting the planes through the mist.

By now dangerously low on fuel, Fisher made one final trip through the overcast, this time to help a Forward Air Controller lead two B-57s down the valley where they could attack the target. Fisher and his wingman, in their A-1Es, covered and directed the C-123s out of the valley. In all, Fisher had spent some two hours under the clouds in highly dangerous terrain facing some of the war's heaviest antiaircraft fire.

As it turned out, this was only the beginning for Fisher. The enemy attack had left a lot of damage. Friendly casualties were heavy. USAF and USMC helicopters evacuated twenty-seven wounded before 7:15 p.m. A Marine H-34 was shot down inside the compound at 6:30 p.m., but its crew was evacuated. The Communist barrage had leveled buildings and cut up some of the camp's barbed-wire defense. The triangular-shaped fort, with its 480-foot-long walls, was hit hard but still in friendly hands. It was entirely possible that the enemy had withdrawn as he had done after attacks on other bases. But just in case, the defenders set up their communications to call in air strikes at first light.

At 1:30 on the morning of March 10, troops in the perimeter trenches heard the VC digging in about 100 yards away. Another enemy mortar attack was launched, and by 3:35 a.m. the camp was fighting off a full-scale assault. Moving over the shattered barbed wire, the VC broke the perimeter and entered parts of the camp. US and government troops fired at the enemy and, according to Specialist Five Wayne H. Murray, enemy bodies were being stacked up on the wire. "They came in mass formation, fifty or sixty at a time," he said. As the defenders pulled back, their supply of explosive shells used up, they threw grenades at the attackers. The enemy soldiers were wearing blue-green uniforms, civilian clothes, and camouflage fatigues, much like those worn by government troops in the camp, which made the task of identification difficult. In the radio bunker, a USAF communications sergeant reported that they were badly cut up and could not last much longer without air support. He directed air strikes on the camp itself.

At 5:15 a.m. radar bombing began through the overcast. Nineteen of these sorties were flown up to 6:30 a.m. Three C-123s and one AC-47 provided flare support to the camp during the hours of darkness. A Marine A-4 was reported lost shortly after 7:00 a.m. He was last observed by the FAC plunging into the overcast, and he never came back up.

Hand-to-hand fighting was taking place in the shambles of A Shau with the defenders pushed into a single bunker in the northern corner of the triangular fort. At 7:30 a.m., direct radio contact with the fort was lost. The FAC in the O-1F Bird Dog overhead also lost radio contact about this time. Bombing was still taking



Photo-diagram shows where Maj. Dafford Myers' Skyraider stopped after he crash-landed on the A Shau airstrip. "X" marks his hiding place off west edge of the strip. Maj. Bernard F. Fisher brought his A-1E under enemy fire onto the debris-littered, 1,800-foot runway, taxied to Myers, and succeeded in taking off in a daring and spectacular rescue feat.

place through the overcast, but neither the FAC nor the fighters could see the ground. About an hour later, the FAC again reestablished contact with the ground and was told that the fighter strikes were keeping the enemy back and that the northern section of the camp was still intact. The defenders occupied the wall where the radio was located and wanted incendiary on the southern wall held by the VC. The east wall of the triangle was half occupied by friendlies and half by the enemy. The defenders wanted fighters overhead continuously. Incendiary strikes were placed on the south wall and on enemy troops who were reported massing to the east of the A Shau runway, which was on the east side of the fort.

Although the bombing was continuous, weather slowly deteriorated, and by 10:20 in the morning the ceiling was down to less than 800 feet. By now the situation was getting desperate, and the trapped ground forces radioed that they could hold out only another hour and a half. They said it was useless to airdrop ammunition as they would not be able to retrieve it.

Around 11:30 a.m. Major Fisher, his wingman, and two other flights of A-1Es were over A Shau, diverted from another mission. Fisher led his flight to the target area by radio navigation and, as on the previous day, located a hole in the clouds and brought his flight in. Contacting the personnel in the fort, Fisher was told that all friendly forces were now in the bunker in the north corner and that his flight should strafe the walls of the fort. Enemy AA fire, which had downed two planes on the previous day, was more intense and accurate than ever, but these attacks were essential.

Fisher led off with a strafing attack on the walls, spraying them with 20-mm. cannon fire. After he and Vazquez made two passes, he heard Maj. Dafford W. Myers, leader of another flight of A-1Es from the 602d Air Commando Squadron, ask the FAC for the way into the target. Fisher climbed over the overcast, radioed Myers to follow him, and brought this additional flight down into the narrow canyon. Myers made two passes over the target, firing his 20-mm. cannon. On his third

pass, at about 800 feet, he took at least three .50-caliber hits, one in his engine. The engine caught fire, smoke filled the cockpit, and within a minute, the plane was engulfed in flames. Myers was too low to bail out and could not see. Fisher followed alongside Myers, giving directions for a landing on the enemy-held airstrip. First, Myers jettisoned his 100-pound bombs and then, following flight directions from Fisher, brought the plane into a wheels-up landing on the strip. The belly tank exploded on impact, and the plane skidded along the jagged, wreckage-strewn runway for several hundred feet before it slid off the west side, near the embankment, with enemy troops on the other side.

Fisher called for a rescue helicopter, then circled the burning aircraft. He saw Myers climb out of the plane, his clothes still trailing smoke from the burning cockpit. Myers jumped into a small ditch off the runway among a clump of weeds.

At this time Fisher's flight was joined by another flight of A-1Es from the 1st Air Commando Squadron, flown by Capt. Jon I. Lucas and Capt. Dennis B. Hague. Fisher was told it would take fifteen to twenty minutes for the rescue chopper to arrive. Believing that Myers had been seriously injured, Fisher decided the chopper would be too late, and anyway he doubted that it could make it in against the intense enemy fire. Therefore, he decided to land and rescue Myers himself. "I'm going in," he radioed Hague.

"We're here to cover you," Hague replied.

The A Shau strip was not considered safe for A-1Es even under normal conditions. With fifty-five-gallon oil drums, cans, and debris from Myers' aircraft strewn along the 1,800-foot runway, and gaping holes caused by mortar blasts, the chances of landing a Skyraider and bringing it up were slim.

Fisher went in on the north approach end, which was blacked out with smoke and dust. He touched down through the smoke and quickly realized he could not stop in time so lifted off again. Doing a 180-degree turn with enemy guns trained on him all the time, he

(Continued on following page)



All smiles after one of the most dramatic rescues of the Vietnam War are Majors Bernard Fisher (left) and Daford Myers. Fisher landed his Skyraider on the A Shau runway during the Viet Cong attack and succeeded in picking up his fellow pilot, whose A-1E had been shot down earlier.

landed on the south end and, dodging debris as well as he could, barely halted the plane at the runway edge. He turned the plane around in the dirt off the runway and started taxiing at full speed to avoid enemy fire, all the time looking out his right window for Myers.

Streams of tracers came toward him, and he could hear the bullets tearing the fuselage. About three-quarters of the way down the runway, he spotted Myers waving to him. He stopped about 150 feet beyond and started to unharness to go after what he believed to be a wounded pilot. He could not see well out of the right empty seat side of the plane, but Myers, who was relatively unhurt, was making a fifty-yard dash for the plane. Just before he could get out, Fisher saw Myers, pulled him head first into the plane, turned around, and took off.

Flying at treetop level till he gained speed, Fisher finally got out of the murderous barrage and into the clouds. Minutes later he landed safely with his passenger at Pleiku.

It was a miraculous feat. All the maneuvering had to be done in a tight, socked-in area. The A-1Es providing suppressive fire had run out of ammunition at the time Myers was making his dash to the plane. Enemy automatic-weapons fire was coming from the camp area as well as from the hills above the camp. The runway was jagged with tire-puncturing metal ripped by mortar blasts. When Fisher landed at Pleiku, his plane had nineteen bullet holes in it. His wingman, Captain Vazquez, had taken twenty-two hits. Lucas took eight hits, and his plane was severely damaged. Myers' wingman, Capt. Hubert King, had to return to Pleiku before Myers was hit, due to a direct hit on the canopy which blurred his vision. Hague's Skyraider took no hits.

Commenting later on the operation, Captain Hague said: "It was like flying inside Yankee Stadium with the people in the bleachers firing at you with machine guns." Captain Lucas, who also provided cover for Fisher and who took a .50-caliber hit which knocked out his hydraulic system and started a fire in his cock-

pit, said: "I gave him [Fisher] a hundred-to-one chance of pulling it off." Both pilots speculated that the North Vietnamese had thought Fisher's plane had been shot down and were concentrating on the planes still flying, saving Fisher until later. Myers himself told Fisher when he was pulled into the cockpit: "You dumb son of a gun! Now neither of us will get out of here!"

Despite the valiant effort of USAF and USMC pilots, the decision was made to evacuate the camp. At 4:30 that afternoon, sixty-nine of the survivors, most of them wounded, were lifted out by Marine H-34 choppers. Another thirty men, including two US Special Forces personnel, left the camp by foot with radio equipment around 5:00 p.m. The camp was officially closed at 5:45 p.m. In bringing out the wounded men, the Marines lost two helicopters. One crashed and burned in the camp, but its crew was picked up. Another with four men aboard took off and was listed as missing, believed to have crashed nearby.

In the two-day action, 213 close-air-support sorties were flown by USAF, USMC, US Navy, and Vietnamese Air Force planes. Six aircraft were shot down—the AC-47, A-4, A-1E, and three Marine helicopters. On the following day, March 11, another USAF A-1E attacking the enemy-held camp was shot down, but its pilot was recovered. Friendly losses at A Shau were heavy, and an important Special Forces camp astride a primary enemy infiltration route was lost. Five US Special Forces personnel were killed, in addition to the four Marine crew members of the H-43 and the two USAF dead in the AC-47 incident (plus the man who had to be abandoned). Nevertheless, in the fighting against an overwhelming force of crack North Vietnamese troops, airpower, despite incredibly poor weather, was devastating. Although it will never be known for certain, survivors reported that 300 enemy troops were killed by defenders and possibly another 500 killed by air strikes.

Some have suggested that the camp could have been saved if the defenders had been able to hold out for one more night. Weather improved on the morning of March 11, and it would have been possible to bring airpower to bear more effectively on the enemy. Still, despite the loss of this important outpost, the US Air Force wrote a new and glowing chapter in its history. The valiant performance of men like Fisher, Peterson, Myers, and the crews of every aircraft committed to this action matched anything in aviation history, according to Gen. William C. Westmoreland, Commander of the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.

"Without the air support you provided, we couldn't have lasted one day." These were the words of US Army Capt. Tennis Carter. He added: "If you hadn't flown at all, the Special Forces wouldn't have blamed you. It was suicidal, but you carried out your mission anyway."—END

The author, Kenneth Sams, is an experienced military historian who has served at Hq. 2d Air Division (now redesignated Seventh Air Force) in Vietnam for more than a year. He has contributed a number of articles on the Vietnamese War to AF/SD, most recently in the March issue.

FROM: Det 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq, APO US Forces 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

14 Mar 66

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Gp, (JSARC), APO US Forces 96307

1. Mission Number: 6-38-52-13 Mar 66.
2. SAR Alerted by: Hot line from 3rd JSARC.
3. SAR Aircraft Used: 1 HH-43F,

Crew:

RCC	Capt Ronald L. Bachman
CP	Capt Harold D. Salem
HM	TSgt Richard A. Cannon
RS	SSgt David E. Milsten

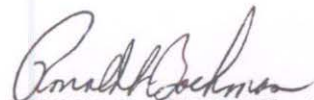
4. Reaction time from initial notification to 1st pickup: Approximately 35 minutes.
5. CAP Assistance: 2 UH-1B armed helicopters, 4 F-100, artillery.
6. Summary of Events:

① At approximately 1450 hours, Det 6 was notified by 3rd JSARC on the hot line that an unknown number of army casualties required evacuation from 1114N 10659E. They requested our one HH-43F assist one UH-1B Med Evac helicopter in extracting the casualties. The helicopter was refueled to 1000# fuel, two stokes litters were placed on board and Pedro 97 launched at 1500 hours. An attempt was made to contact Dunbar uptake on the FM frequency. Pedro 97 was able to receive on this frequency but unable to transmit. I then landed at the battalion forward command post at 1114N 10656E and obtained a UHF frequency and a VHF frequency on which to contact RESCAP aircraft. I proceeded to the pickup point at 1114N 10659E with two armed UH-1B helicopters as RESCAP. At this time artillery was lifted, smoke was put out to mark the spot, the UH-1B's checked the area for security and I made the first approach into the spot. A stokes litter hoist pickup was made from approximately 120 feet from a bomb crater. During the 1st pick up the RESCAP received sniper fire to the North. After the pick up the casualty was flown back to 1114N 10656E (LZ 12) and transferred to an army med evac helicopter. Three more stokes litter pick ups were made with sniper fire received during two of the operations with no hits on the aircraft. The

2

last four casualties were ambulatory so the pick ups were made with the forest penetrator. During the final 6 extractions air and artillery strikes were hitting within approximately 200 meters of the pick up point in an attempt to suppress the sniper fire. The last four casualties were transported directly to Phuoc Vinh medical facility where Pedro 97 was refueled. At the request of the medical personnel at Phuoc Vinh, we transported two patients and one passenger to the 93rd Med Evac hospital at Bien Hoa. Pedro 97 then returned to the alert pad at Bien Hoa.

Pedro 97 flew 13 sorties for 2:35 hours. Eight combat saves were claimed, two patients evacuated and one passenger carried. All equipment on the HH-43F operated satisfactorily.



RONALD L. BACHMAN, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

33rd ARRS, Jan - Mar 1966

life raft and dropped smoke. A second smoke was dropped to mark the exact spot. At this time a C-3A chopper was arriving on the scene. The chopper recovered #1 and #2 survivors. The HU-16 crew continued the search because they were advised it was a B-66 with six people aboard that had gone down. The navigator eventually picked up beeper to the left, turned 90 degrees left and survivor #3 was spotted in an LPU. A smoke bomb was dropped to mark location of #3 survivor. As the chopper was rescuing #3 survivor a Navy P-3A pilot advised he had seen a raft but lost it. The HU-16 made an electronics run and survivor #4 was spotted on the first pass. Smoke was dropped and the chopper moved in position to make its 4th pick-up. Survivor #5 was spotted by the ALE but visual contact was lost. The HU-16 made another electronics run, #5 survivor was spotted in an LPU. Smoke was dropped again to mark location. Survivor #5 was picked up at 1850 local. Search was continued for survivor #6 until 2010 local before the HU-16 had to return to "home base". The missing man was the last one to leave the aircraft (maybe he didn't). The HU-16 received no damage.

CREW	RCC	Captain Gary L. Nelson
	CP	Captain Frank J. Linseisen
	NAV	1st Lt Lynn E. Martinson
	RO	ALC James C. Davis
	FM	TSgt Lyle E. Martinie
	PJ	A2C Jerry L. Coy

(5) Mission #1-3-18-14 March 1966. 1 sortie. An HU-16 on orbit over the Gulf of Tonkin was notified that an F-4C crew had been downed by hostile gunfire. There were two survivors in the water and the HU-16 crew proceeded to and landed for a water pick-up. The HU-16 was drawing heavy fire from shore batteries as the first F-4C pilot was being pulled aboard. The Albatross was hit by artillery fire and immediately burst into flame. The crew abandoned the HU-16 and the two survivors were picked up by U.S. Navy helicopters. Two HU-16 crewmen were killed by the artillery burst and/or resulting explosion. The F-4C pilots, Captain Bryant and Major Pearson, received back injuries. The pilot and copilot of the HU-16 escaped unhurt. The navigator and Flight Mechanic sustained serious injuries and were evacuated to U.S. Naval vessels for medical treatment.

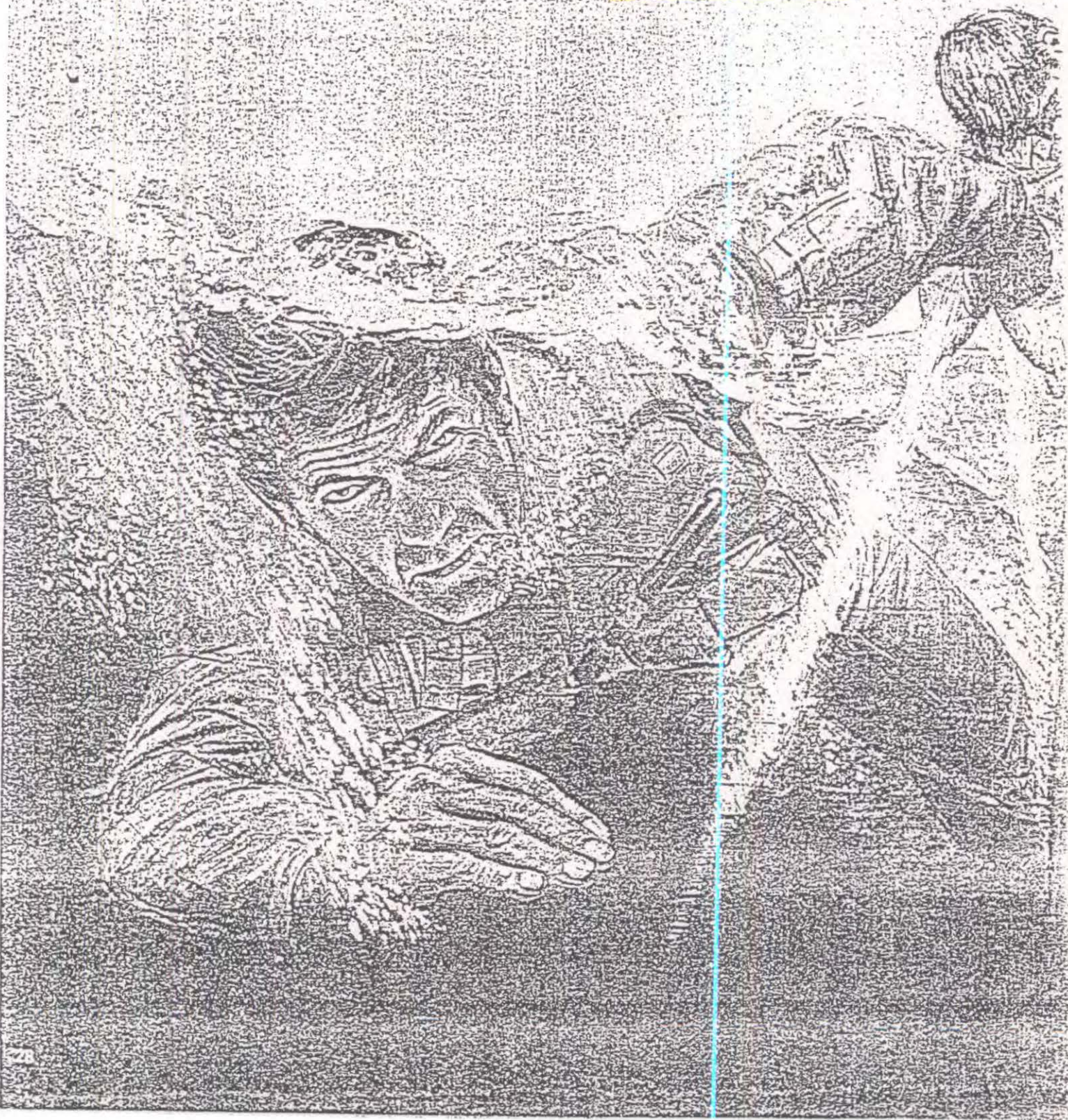
CREW	RCC	Captain David P. Westenbarger
	CP	1st Lt Walter E. Hall
	NAV	Captain Donald S. Price(Wounded in Action)
	RO	ALC Robert L. Hilton (Killed in Action)
	FM	SSgt Clyde W. Jackson III(Wounded in Action)
	PJ	ALC James E. Fleiman (Killed in Action)

On many missions, the HU-16's have encountered ground fire, but, to date, only one aircraft has been destroyed. On 14 March 1966, two USAF F-4C pilots ejected and landed about two miles from shore. Crown Bravo, piloted by Captain Westenbarger, landed to make the recovery. As the aircraft taxied toward the downed crew, it was hit by a mortar shell. The explosion killed the radio operator instantly and the aircraft began to sink. Four of the crew members got out. They and the F-4C crew were rescued by helicopters from the Yorktown and the England. The pararescue-134/ man was not recovered and is presumed to have gone down with the plane.

RESCUE MISSION IN TONKIN GULF

WOUNDED, CAPTAIN PRICE
HAD NO CHOICE EXCEPT
TO KEEP PULLING
THE RAFT AWAY
FROM FLAMING OIL
AND ENEMY GUNS.

by GLENN INFELD



CAPTAIN DONALD S. PRICE, of Pennsauken, New Jersey, released his safety belt as soon as the HU-16 Albatross amphibian touched down in the Gulf of Tonkin. Leaning far forward in his navigator's compartment, he saw the downed USAF jet pilot bobbing in his bright orange life raft, a few yards to the right of the tail section of the Albatross.

"He's right behind the tail section and a little to the starboard," Price called over the intercom to Captain David Westenbarger, the aircraft commander.

"Roger. Reversing engines."

As he waited for the familiar roar of the propellers to go into reverse pitch, Price glanced nervously at the nearby enemy shore of North Vietnam. It wasn't the first time he had landed in the Gulf of Tonkin in an Albatross. In November, 1965, his crew had pulled a RF-101 reconnaissance pilot out of the water and returned him to his base in South Vietnam. Still, Price couldn't get accustomed to being so close to the enemy coast, to be bobbing up and down in a vulnerable, slow-moving amphibian that was practically under the barrels of Communist guns.

The loud roar of the engines jerked Captain Price's eyes from the enemy shoreline back to the downed jet pilot. The HU-16 eased closer and closer to the raft, then stopped.

"All right, Pleiman, let's get him aboard," pilot Westenbarger called.

Price saw the pararescueman, A1C James E. Pleiman of Russia, Ohio, leap from the rear hatch of the Albatross and swim towards the raft. Captain Price could see that the downed pilot was injured; blood stains speckled the side of the bright orange raft.

WHEN Pleiman reached the raft, the flyer grabbed the line and held on tight. *Good, Price thought. Now as soon as we get the co-pilot, we can get out of here. I wonder—*

Then the barrage of enemy shells began . . .

The amphibian raised out of the water several inches, its nose higher than its tail. Before he could get a grip on a fuselage brace, Price tumbled backwards to the floor. A fire extinguisher broke loose from its bracket and fell on his stomach; simultaneously, the flare gun smashed against his head. Dazed and confused, the navigator tried to get back on his feet.

Red shells slammed into the hull of the amphibian, tearing jagged holes in the metal. Price, finally managing to struggle to his knees, saw geysers of water fountain skyward alongside the Albatross as the North Vietnamese gunners lobbed 105mm shells at the plane. Stitches of machine-gun fire turned the area into froth, and as Westenbarger gunned the engines of the plane, he added to the deafening blasts of the enemy guns.

"Do you have him inside yet, Pleiman?"

Price heard the pilot frantically trying to contact the pararescuemen on the intercom, but Pleiman didn't answer. Price tried to spot the pararescuemen from his compartment window but the erupting water, and smoke from the exploding shells, disturbed his view.

RESCUE MISSION IN TONKIN GULF

continued

Grabbing the microphone, Price called, "I'll check on him, Captain."

He ran towards the rear of the amphibian, bounced from one side of the fuselage to the other as near-misses rocked the Albatross. It was obvious that the Communist gunners had held their fire until the amphibian touched down and was most vulnerable, then had opened up with everything they had—from automatic rifle fire to 105mm howitzers. As he fought his way towards the rear hatch to help the pararescuer drag the injured jet pilot into the plane, Price knew that in a matter of minutes the Albatross would be past the flying stage, that it would be shot to pieces unless it could get out of the target area.

At the rear hatch, navigator Price saw the flight mechanic, Sgt. Clyde William Jackson, of Fort Royal, Virginia, leaning far outside the plane in an attempt to help Pleiman drag the downed jet pilot inside the plane. Turning to A1C Robert Hilton, the radio operator, Price bellowed, "Help him! Help him!"

Hilton, however, had already moved to the hatch and was reaching out to grab the side of the raft.

"Try and get him close. We'll pull him in as we take—"

Suddenly, a crashing shell exploded. Price had seen other 105mm shells hit the water, had heard machine-gun bullets thud into the Albatross, but this time there had been no warning. One moment he had been yelling instructions to the men at the hatch; the next, he had been flying through the air towards the aft bulkhead of the amphibian. The 105mm shell had entered the HU-16 just aft of the right wheel housing, exploded, and opened up a nine-foot hole in the fuselage. Price, not certain of what had happened, had smashed into the bulkhead and fallen to the floor, momentarily stunned.

He fought to open his eyes, to clear his brain, but it was several seconds before he succeeded.

The inside of the plane was a roaring inferno. Gasoline poured from ruptured fuel lines and flamed instantly. A JATO bottle exploded, hurling pieces of metal through the plane like shrapnel. Price could barely breathe in the stifling heat and the billowing smoke.

"Hilton... Hilton, where are you?"

When there was no answer Price crawled toward the hatch. He had gone only a short distance when he saw the radio operator. One look was enough. Hilton was dead, victim of a direct hit.

"My God!"

THE flames were now threatening to cut off his escape through the hatch so the dazed navigator tried to move faster. As he neared the hatch he grabbed a fuselage brace and started to pull himself to his feet, knowing that his best chance of survival was to dive as far from the amphibian as possible. It was obvious that the plane was going to explode.

As he regained his feet he saw a dark object floating in the water beside the aircraft, not recognizing it until an enemy shell hit nearby and a wave turned it towards him.

"Pleiman!"

The pararescuer was dead, too. Approximately five feet from the dead airman, Price spotted the orange raft with the injured jet pilot still inside it.

The flyer was staring at him helplessly.

"I'll get you if—"

At that moment, as Price tensed to dive out of the burning amphibian, a second JATO bottle exploded. The flash of fire hit the navigator in the face, searing his hair, face and eyebrows. It also blinded him, and before the stunned captain could regain his balance, he tumbled out of the hatch and into the water, into the mids of flaming oil and gasoline and the exploding enemy shells...

The fine work of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service in Southeast Asia is well known. The pickup rate for downed USAF, Navy and Marine pilots is high; some flyers barely get their feet wet before an air rescue aircraft plucks them from the water. Sometimes, however, it is not quite so easy, and the mission of March 14, 1966, was one of the most rugged yet experienced.

When it ended an HU-16 amphibian had been sunk for the first time since 1949, when the HU-16 originally went into service, and one member of the rescue crew received the Air Force Cross—the nation's second highest military award for valor.

The mission began routinely. A Phantom F4B jet, operated by Air Force Major James M. Peerson and his copilot, Captain Lynwood C. Bryant, was hit by enemy ground fire as it came off target in North Vietnam, about 50 miles west of the Gulf of Tonkin. Peerson immediately guided his crippled plane towards the water, and radioed for help.

"Mayday, Mayday! Crown Alpha this is Pluto Lead. Hit by ground fire. Heading for the gulf to eject. Present position is 20 miles southwest of Thanh Hoa."

THE amphibian carrying navigator Price and his crew had been circling over the Gulf of Tonkin when the distress call had been picked up. The pilot had immediately banked his Albatross southwest and raced to the area at full speed. Meanwhile, another Phantom jet notified the 4500-ton destroyer USS Berkeley, sailing in the Gulf of Tonkin to coordinate rescue efforts, of the position of the damaged aircraft.

"This is Pluto Two. Two-man crew ejecting now. Estimated touch-down position is seven miles offshore near Hon Me Island."

When Price heard the position report he studied the map on his navigation table for several seconds before calling his aircraft commander on the intercom. Price didn't like what he saw on the map.

"Captain, if they land near Hon Me Island as reported, we may be in trouble. The Communists have enough guns on the island to fight a major battle."

Westenbarger agreed, but both men knew they had no choice. If their plane reached the scene first, it was their duty to go down after the flyers.

"The Yorktown is sending three helicopters to the scene," the captain told Price, "but they're still a long way off."

Ten minutes later the amphibian orbited two miles south of Hon Me Island, the crew searching the waters below

for some sign of Peerson and Bryant.

"Are you picking up their beeper?" Price asked.

"Roger. We hear it. They're in the area. Now, if we can just spot them."

Two Navy Skyraiders were also circling in the vicinity, flying protective cover for the downed men. In the distance Price saw the helicopters approaching from the Yorktown and, farther south, the Berkeley was heading toward Hon Me Island. It was obvious that all airborne and sea rescue units expected trouble in the rescue attempt because of the proximity of the enemy guns on the island. The only salvation would be if the two downed pilots had drifted away from the area after their parachutes opened.

"I don't see them anyplace," Pleiman called from the rear of the aircraft. Perhaps they are further away from—"

Suddenly the pararescuer stopped talking for several seconds; then he yelled, "I see them! Right below us!"

"Near the island."

"Yeah. Too close, Captain. Too close to the Reds. Look directly east of the sharp point of Hon Me."

Price looked down at the island, spotted the point of land referred to by Pleiman, and moved his eyes east. Suddenly he saw the bright orange raft, barely the size of a penny from altitude. "Mighty close to those guns," he muttered. "Mighty close."

Westenbarger spotted the downed Air Force pilot about the same time and made the only decision possible. "Pilot to crew—going down. Jettisoning external fuel tanks now."

"Roger."

"We won't have much time," he continued. "Pleiman, as soon as we touch down, go out the hatch. The others will give you a hand. Price, have you seen any gunfire from the island yet?"

"Not one burst," the navigator said, searching the dot of land in the Gulf of Tonkin with his glasses. "According to Intelligence the Reds have the island packed with guns, but so far it appears that S-2 might be wrong."

"I hope so."

Price continued to watch Hon Me Island as pilot Westenbarger eased the Albatross towards the water. When he flew close to the island, Westenbarger steepened his dive to avoid the expected enemy fire, but no shells came their way. It was as though the island was deserted. A few feet off the surface of the gulf, Westenbarger broke his glide, held the nose high, cut the throttles, and full-stalled the amphibian into the water. As soon as he brought the amphibian to a complete stop, Price began directing him to the downed jet pilot in the raft.

"He's right behind the tail section and a little to the starboard."

Still no gunfire came from the Communist-held island. Price, tense and expectant, was amazed at the lack of resistance. By the time Pleiman reached the raft, Price decided that the briefing officers had overrated the enemy capabilities. "Now as soon as we get the copilot, we can get out of here. I wonder..."

Seconds later the first enemy shell hit the Albatross and within five minutes two of the crew were dead, and the others were floundering in the waters of the Gulf of Tonkin. As for the amphibian, it had disappeared beneath the surface...

Price was still underwater when he opened his eyes. The navigator felt as if his lungs were about to burst. Fighting



PRICE

"Over here..."

the instinct to inhale, knowing that he would choke, the captain tried to force his way to the surface of the gulf. When he raised his arms, however, sharp pains knifed through his back. It was his first indication that he was wounded. Despite the pain, Price used his arms to propel himself up until his head finally broke through the surface and he could once again breathe.

"Help! Help!"

Price heard the plea above the steady roar of the enemy gunfire, but he was so exhausted that several seconds elapsed before he regained enough strength to turn toward the man in trouble. When he did, he saw jet pilot Peerson in his raft, only a few feet away. At the same instant oil from the amphibian, floating on the surface of the gulf, caught fire. Realizing that both he and the jet pilot would be trapped in the flames if they didn't clear the area, Price swam to the raft and started pushing it east, to the middle of the Gulf of Tonkin and away from Hon Me Island. Peerson looked at the navigator and muttered weakly, "You're wounded."

Price had already noticed that the water around him was stained red. This fact, added to the pain when he raised his arms and the burning sensation in his back, made it obvious that fragments of the same shell which had sunk the Albatross had also hit him. Wounded or not, Captain Price knew he had no alternative except to keep swimming away from the flaming oil and the enemy guns.

It was slow, arduous work for Price as he fought to keep his head above water and at the same time push the raft with the downed pilot in it. The Communists were lobbing their mortar shells at the raft in a steady stream, and as they burst and sent geysers of water skyward, the resulting waves lapped over Price's head. They also rocked the raft and threatened to dump pilot Peerson into the gulf.

"Help! Help!"

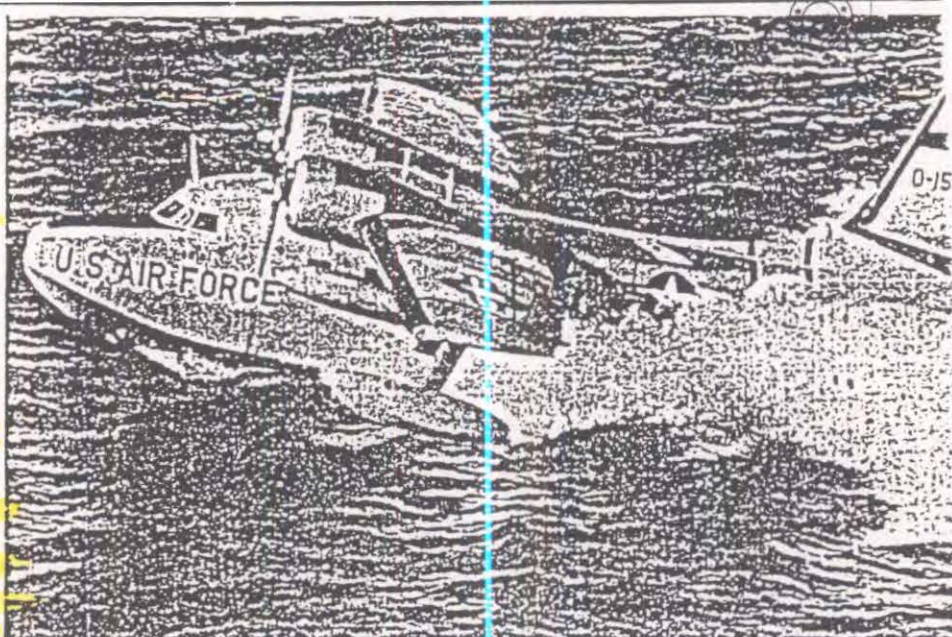
Again Price heard someone in distress. Holding onto the raft with one hand he searched the surrounding water. Finally he saw a head bob out of the water, then disappear again. It was the flight mechanic, S/Sgt. Clyde W. Jackson, of Fort Royal, Virginia. Price knew that he had neither the strength nor the time to help Jackson. The man was too far away. At that moment, however, Price saw the co-pilot of the Albatross, William E. Hall, swimming a few yards south of the mechanic. Evidently the wind had carried the flight mechanic's plea for help away from Hall, since he wasn't even looking in Jackson's direction.

"Get that man right behind you!"

Price screamed.

The co-pilot looked up, a startled expression on his face as the navigator's words reached him through the din of the exploding shells. Price saw Hall turn, spotted the bobbing head of the flight mechanic and move quickly to the man's side.

SATISFIED that Jackson was getting the aid he so desperately needed, Price turned his attention back to Peerson and the raft. He had never been so tired in his life. His eyes and face, burned by the blast of the JATO bottle, hurt. So did the shell fragments in his back, and the loss of blood, plainly evident by the red trail which marked his path in the water. His strength sapped, Price looked at the injured jet pilot in the raft; he wondered how much longer he would be able to help him.



Albatross similar to one which put Price down in Gulf of Tonkin lands in water.

Suddenly a deafening noise clogged Price's ears and he felt a heavy weight on his back, and the navigator was convinced that he was having hallucinations. He was, that is, until the weight lifted momentarily and hit him again with a resounding thump. Surprised, Price looked around behind him and couldn't believe his eyes.

"It can't be..."

It was. The throbbing noise, filling his ears along with the blasts of enemy shells, came from an SH-3 helicopter hovering directly above. The chopper's rescue sling was the "weight" on his back! Grabbing the sling, Price threw it into the raft and yelled, "Put it on... put it around you!"

Price watched the struggling jet pilot attempt to slip inside the rescue sling, but Peerson was too weak. Boosting himself up on the side of the raft, Price forced the sling over Peerson's head and motioned for the helicopter to pull up the major. An instant later Peerson was lifted from the raft and hoisted towards the door of the chopper.

A few yards away Price saw another helicopter picking up the remainder of the Albatross crew and the other jet pilot. Holding onto the side of the small raft that Peerson had been in, Price felt better despite the heavy gunfire still directed at him from the island. As soon as the chopper lowered the sling and picked him up, they could clear the scene and get back to the nearby carrier. It seemed to Price that he had been in the water for hours.

"Here! ... Over here!"

The captain heard the voice and recognized it instantly. He spotted Sergeant Jackson a few yards away, alone and floundering in the water. Later, Price learned that co-pilot Hall had tried to carry the chopper rescue sling over to the flight mechanic, but before he reached Jackson the whirlybird crew had hoisted Hall out of the water, leaving the crewman behind.

"Hold on, Jackson... I'll get you."

Price hated to leave the raft, but he had no choice. He swam to the injured Jackson, slipped an arm around him and started to dog-paddle back to the raft. At that moment he spotted the SH-3 heading toward them and he stopped. He watched the rescue sling swoop down, made a desperate grab as it started past, and snagged it.

"Get this on, Jackson," Price said.

Quickly he put the injured, exhausted flight mechanic in the sling, and before he could even wave, the chopper crew was pulling Jackson out of the water. Price saw several bullets penetrate the side of the helicopter but it remained airborne, pivoting in the sky as only a chopper can and head for a nearby ship.

Captain Price was now alone in the water. All the others, except the two dead crewmen, had been picked up. For a few minutes the navigator thought that it was only a matter of time until he, too, would be hoisted to safety... But as the two rescue helicopters disappeared from the scene he began to wonder. He saw them touch down on the ships, but they didn't take off again. Had he been forgotten? Was it possible that he had been given up for dead, too? One man in the Gulf of Tonkin was almost indiscernible to the human eye. Perhaps in the confusion of the rescue attempt there had been a miscount. Certainly after a head count was taken the rescuers would learn that he was unaccounted for, but by then it would be too late. Much too late.

Using nearly all his remaining strength Price climbed into Peerson's raft, only to discover that he was drifting dangerously close to the shore of Hon Me Island. Warily he slid back into the water and started swimming toward the open sea, dragging the raft behind him. Exhausted, bleeding, discouraged, he still refused to give up. He was determined to keep trying—until he blacked out or was hit by one of the Red shells.

Suddenly the entire sky seemed to explode. Two Air Force F-4s roared across the Gulf of Tonkin at wave-top level, firing their rockets and machine guns at the enemy gunners on the island. Two junks that were heading in Price's direction suddenly burst into flames and sank. A Skyraider followed the jets and bombed the beach. Smoke and debris flew skyward and the concussion even jolted Price in the water.

"They didn't forget me," he muttered, fighting to keep his head above water.

A minute later Price saw a small UH-2 helicopter flying slowly through the curtain of fire towards him, a rescue sling dangling behind. The chopper came lumbering in, oblivious of the enemy shells. The rescue collar dropped only a few feet (Continued on page 74)

Rescue Mission

(Continued from page 31)

from the navigator and the helicopter crewman in the hatch yanked it into Price's arms. Quickly, Price slipped it under his arms. This time he ignored the pain as he waved his arms, signaling them to lift him out of enemy waters.

As they pulled him inside the chopper, the crewman at the winch grinned. "Better late than never!"

Price could only nod and mutter, "Thanks."

The navigator was taken to an aircraft carrier where a doctor picked out the shrapnel and stitched his wounds. After two weeks in the hospital, Donald Price was back on Okinawa with the 33rd Aerospace Rescue and Recover Squadron, ready for action. He doesn't say much about his experience, but the men he saved made certain that Washington was told about his heroic action. Consequently in September, 1966, six months after the mission, Captain Donald S. Price was awarded the Air Force Cross, the first navigator to receive the nation's second highest military medal for valor.

No man deserved it more.



FROM: Det 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq, APO US Forces 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

15 Mar 66

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Gp, (JSARC), APO US Forces 96307

1. Mission Number: 6-38-53-14 Mar 66.
2. SAR Alerted by: Bien Hoa Tower.
3. SAR Aircraft Used: 2 HH-43F helicopters.

Crewmembers of Primary Alert Aircraft Were:

RCC	Capt Ronald L. Bachman
CP	Capt Harold D. Salem
HM	TSgt Richard A. Connon
RS	ALC William H. Pitsenbarger

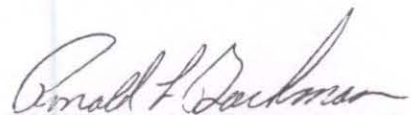
Crewmembers of the Secondary Alert Aircraft Were:

RCC	1/Lt Mark C. Schibler
CP	Capt Edwin A. Henningson
HM	ALC Gerald C. Hammond Jr.
RS	ALC Henry J. O'Beirne

4. Reaction time from notification to pickup: 35 minutes.
5. GAP Assistance: 4 UH-1B, 4 F100, 2 O1F.
6. Area and type of pickup: Forest penetrator hoist pickup from the river bank for the survivor and a stokes litter hoist pickup from 130 foot jungle for the deceased.
7. Survivor located by a pen gun flare. Deceased located by a ground party lowered to the wreckage by hoist from the helicopters.
8. Survivors name: 1st Lt Schneider, U.S. Army. Deceased name: unknown.
9. Summary of Events:

① Det 6, 38th ARRS was notified by Bien Hoa tower at 0650 of an O1-F crash 30 miles, 060 degrees from Bien Hoa. The primary alert helicopter was scrambled at 0700 hours and the secondary alert helicopter was scrambled at 0720 hours. Upon arrival at the area a USAF O1-F and two armed UH-1B helicopters reported seeing a pen gun flare about 200 meters from the river bank. No personnel could be spotted on the ground because of the dense

jungle. While searching, a second flare was spotted nearer the river. I lowered my paramedic to the ground on the bank of the river where he contacted the survivor by shouting. The survivor emerged from the jungle onto the bank of the river where he and the paramedic were picked up by the forest penetrator. The survivor was questioned about the other occupant of the downed aircraft. He stated that the observer was still trapped in the aircraft wreckage and when he touched the mans leg it felt cold so he assumed him to be dead. I did not believe this was conclusive evidence that the man was dead. My paramedic examined the survivor and determined that his injuries were not severe. I decided to keep him on board the helicopter and attempt to recover the observer. The wreckage was located and I lowered the paramedic to the ground by hoist. Although he was lowered right to a part of the wreckage, the brush was so thick he could not locate the cockpit portion. I hoisted him back on board the helicopter so he could take another look from above and also confer with the survivor. He was then lowered back to the ground where he located the cockpit portion. He requested the assistance of the paramedic of the 2nd helicopter who was lowered by hoist to the ground. Together they were unable to recover the observer. Both helicopters were approaching minimum fuel at this time so the secondary helicopter picked up the two paramedics. As they were lifted above the brush on the forest penetrator they started to spin. As they approached the helicopter their rate of spin increased. They were finally spinning at about 60 RPM and one paramedic reported to be starting to grey out by the time they reached the helicopter. They were then pulled on board the helicopter. The two helicopters then proceeded to Xuan Loc to refuel and deliver the survivor to the medical facility there. After consulting the two paramedics it was decided there still was a possibility the observer was still alive. They also stated that a minimum of 6 people were required to remove him from the wreckage. The Army provided 10 Special Forces personnel to assist in the operation. Because all personnel had to be lowered by hoist, I decided the minimum of 6 people would be used. Another 6 would stand by in case they were needed for security. The two paramedics and 4 Special Forces people were lowered to the wreckage by hoist, two at a time. While the second alert helicopter was lowering their two people they noticed the hoist cable was badly kinked (apparently from the extreme spinning) and would not be safe for hoisting personnel. Therefore when the observer was recovered and found to be deceased the secondary alert helicopter hoisted the body and some of the equipment out with the stokes litter while the primary alert helicopter hoisted the 6 people out in two separate loads using the forest penetrator. The air cover remained on scene through the whole operation. The two rescue helicopters returned to Xuan Loc and refueled. The primary alert helicopter returned the body and an escort of two Army personnel to Saigon while the secondary alert helicopter returned to Bien Hoa to replace the hoist cable. The two rescue helicopters flew 25 sorties for 9+55 hours.


RONALD L. BACHMAN, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

Dog Rescued, Too

Day Packed With 'Saves'

BIEN HOA AB — Air Force helicopter crews recorded one of the busiest days in rescue annals, snatching wounded soldiers, a downed air crew and a dog from Viet Cong territory recently.

An emergency call sent the first HH-43 crew racing to U.S. Army troops wounded in "Operation Silver City" — and a search and destroy operation in Zone "D." Under enemy fire, a rescue crew commanded by Capt. Ronald L. Bachman, lifted eight soldiers to safety.

Bachman later flew to the site of a downed O-1 spotter plane about 30 miles east-northeast of this base. Orbiting over the dense jungle, he and his rescue crew searched for the downed plane and two crew members. After 20 minutes, they spotted two flares rising from the undergrowth.

A1C William H. Pitsenbarger, pararescue man on the mission, rode the hoist cable down into a river near the crash site. He waded ashore and moved through the jungle, calling for the downed pilot. In a few minutes, the pilot emerged from the jungle several yards upriver. With Pitsenbarger, he was hoisted into the helicopter and helped the rescue men locate his airplane. The pilot told the helicop-

ter crew his spotter was killed in the crash, but they decided to recover the body.

* * *

DESCRIBING his second descent into the enemy-infested jungle, Pitsenbarger said, "We soon spotted the wreckage, and again I was lowered into the jungle for a close look. The trees were so thick I couldn't penetrate two feet without cutting my way through. This is very hard to do while you're looking over your shoulder for the enemy."

Pitsenbarger decided he needed help and asked A1C Henry J. O'Beirne, a pararescueman on a second chopper in the area, to join him.

The two men struggled through the thick jungle but they were unable to remove the downed flier. They returned to the chopper and flew to a nearby Special Forces camp for more help.

Returning to the crash site, the rescue men and soldiers were lowered into the jungle. Some took up defensive positions while others removed the spotter's body.

* * *

WITHIN an hour after returning to Bien Hoa, Bachman's crew went on another Zone "D" evacuation mission. It was joined by another helicopter crew under the command of Capt. Raymond L. Murden.

The two crews removed six wounded soldiers and a sentry dog from the jungle battlefield.

"We were really surprised," said Pitsenbarger, "when we saw the dog coming up with a wounded Vietnamese soldier. The dog added a little humor to our work."

Vietnam Reports

FROM: Det 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq, APO US Forces 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report of a Save

14 Mar 66

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Gp, (JSARCC), APO US Forces 96307

1. Mission Number: 6-38-54-14 Mar 66.
2. SAR Alerted by: 3rd JSARC.
3. SAR Aircraft Used: 2 HH-43F helicopters.

Crewmembers of Primary Helicopter Were:

RCC	Capt Raymond L. Murden
CP	Capt Charles P. Nadler
HM	AIC Alexander Montgomery
RS	SSgt David E. Milsten

Crewmembers of Secondary Helicopter Were:

RCC	Capt Ronald L. Bachman
CP	Capt Harold D. Salem
HM	TSgt Richard A. Connon
RS	AIC William H. Pitsenbarger

4. Reaction time from initial notification to pickup: 46 minutes.
5. CAP Assistance: 2 UH-1B's (Falcon 81 and 87).
6. Area and type of pickup: Jungle area in "D" Zone with 125 foot trees, hoist/stokes litter and forest penetrator pickups. 1114N, 10654E.
7. Survivors located by smoke grenades thrown from the ground.
8. Survivors names: Unable to be determined.
9. Summary of Events:

At 1304, 14 March 1966, 3d JSARC informed us that the 173rd Airborne Brigade had requested evacuation of casualties from war zone "D" 18 miles northeast of Bien Hoa AB, RVN. Immediate refueling was requested for primary and secondary alert helicopters. The response was excellent. The fuel truck arrived within two minutes of the radio request. Stokes litters

chain saws and ropes were loaded onto the helicopters. The hoist cable on Pedro 74, the primary alert helicopter was being replaced when we were alerted for the mission. The cable had been damaged on a previous mission today. Pedro 97, the secondary alert helicopter took off at 1325. Upon completion of replacement of the hoist cable Pedro 74 took off at 1340. We proceeded to 1114N, 10654E and alternated hoist pickups. The casualties were in a small bombed out clearing in 125 foot trees. We could only pickup one casualty at the time due to the power required for hovering out of ground effect. To expedite the pickups Pedro 97 lowered two stokes litters on the first pickup so the ground party could be loading a litter while waiting for the next pickup. Pedro 97 made four pickups of four wounded personnel and one scout dog. Pedro 74 made two pickups of two wounded personnel. The wounded were taken to a forward aid station four miles west of the pickup point. CAP assistance was two UH-1B's, Falcon 81 and 87 with Casper control coordinating activities from the ground. All radio calls were on UHF. Radio discipline was good. No ground fire was encountered. Crew coordination was excellent. We flew a total of 14 sorties with 3:30 flying time and are credited with 6 combat saves.

Raymond L. Murden

RAYMOND L. MURDEN, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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MISSION NARRATIVE, 15 March 66

2-3-23

Jolly Greens 55 and 51 were scrambled from Nakhom Phanom at 0705, takeoff was at 0710 local. The coordinates of the downed pilots were given as 16° 32' North 106° 20' East. When Jolly Green 55 became airborne, Crown 57 was contacted and a briefing on the situation was given to the Jolly Greens. An aircraft had gone down the evening of the 14th and an electronic search since early morning of the 15th had produced beeper signals from the area of the downed aircraft. Jolly Green 55 advised Crown 57 that since the possibility of a trap existed it would be necessary to have voice contact or a positive identification on the pilots before Jolly Greens would be committed. This information was passed to Compress by Crown 57.

Jolly Green 55 and 51 continued out the 130° radial of Channel 89, skirting known flak position enroute to the area of the downed aircraft. The weather enroute was scattered clouds with visibility approximately 2 miles in haze. As the Jolly Greens approached the area, Crown 57 had established voice contact with one pilot on the ground, and the pilots authentication was correct. Smoke flares were ignited by the survivors on the ground and there positions pinpointed by the Sandy aircraft. They were separated approximately 200 yards and were unaware of each others position, because only one had voice contact.

Due to the bad visibility the Sandys were requested by the Jolly Greens to send one flight of Sandys to 8,000 feet above the scene, to aid the Jolly Greens in finding the location. Jolly Green 55 and 51 made visual contact with the Sandies at 0825, a descent was started over the downed pilots position. One pilot set off another smoke flare at this time making his position readily known. The descent was continued and during the first fly by the pilot on the ground was contacted by voice and asked to let the Jolly Green know if there was any ground fire as Jolly Green flew over him. A high speed pass was made because of the close proximity of villages to the downed pilot. The tip tanks were dropped when the fuel load was at the proper load. Jolly Green 51 was advised of Jolly Green 55's fuel load as Jolly Green 55 came to a hover over the downed pilot who had voice contact with the Jolly Greens. The tree penetrator was lowered with the seats out, because the pilot had reported that he was injured and unable to use his hands very effectively. As the penetrator hit the ground the seats folded up. The pilot attempted to pull them out again, but he was unable to do so because of injuries. The penetrator was brought up and the pararescueman (A1C Kraft) was lowered to assist the injured pilot. Airman Kraft and the injured pilot were brought up on the penetrator at the same time. Meanwhile the other pilot had seen the helicopter come to a hover presumably to pick up his buddy and he hiked over to our position and was waiting to be picked up also. The penetrator was again lowered and the second pilot was

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
By Authority of *[Signature]*
Or Changed to *[Signature]*
By Authority of *[Signature]*

(Date) *2 May 73*

DECLASSIFIED AT 3 YEARS
AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

14W 2-3-23
12 MAY 1970

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

29

brought on board. The pick up was completed at 0841, at 1000' terrain elevation, requiring approximately a five (5) minute hover. While in the hover one village could be seen with clarity some 150 yards at our 1 o'clock position. No ground fire was heard nor was any villagers seen. A climb back to 9000 feet was accomplished and the return trip was uneventful.

The survivors were: Major Eddie Paige Jr.
WO D.D. Redmond, USMC

Low Bird

RCC Captain Jerry W. Jennings
RCCP Captain William R. Uhl
HM SSgt Michael R. Holloway
PJ ALC Dennis J. Kraft

High Bird

RCC Major Ealum L. Stearman
RCCP 1st Lt Lawrence C. Rice
HM TSgt Spence C. Heywood
PJ A2C Robert Williamson

J. Edward A. Moore May
JERRY W. JENNINGS
Captain, USAF
RCC Jolly Green 55

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
Or Changed to *UNCLASS*
By Authority of *[Signature]*
By *[Signature]* (Date) *12 June 73*

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AFR-235-2

Hq ARRS SC No. 662661

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29

Det 5, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq
APO US Forces 96237

31 Mar 66

c/23

SUBJECT: Mission Recommendations

9/24

TO: Commander
38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq
APO US Forces 96307

In the attached mission narrative of 15 Mar 66, the second pilot had been located and was pin pointed. In electing to leave his position he could have been lost for contact and as he had no radio, relocating him would have been time consuming at least. The man could have been fired upon by the helicopter crew or he could have run into hostile action in coming to the helicopter. I recommend that the 3rd ARRGp publish a pamphlet each month that is sent to all fighting units in SEA and that it include all helpful unclassified information (or we could classify the paper and maybe should). The use of the 150 foot of nylon cord by the F-105 pilot to lower himself down the cliff on our latest pickup is another worthy idea.

0724

Taylor R. Haynes
TAYLOR R. HAYNES
Major, USAF
Commander

1 Atch
Mission Narrative, 15 Mar 66

DOWNGRADED
11V AFR-205-3
12 MAY 1977

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
Or Changed to UNCLASS
By Authority of GDS
By *[Signature]* (Date) 122m/73

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5100.10

ARO DC # 662463
Hq ARRS. SC. No. 662661

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

66-AP-0529

~~66-0757~~

WORLDWIDE AIR FORCE NEWS IN BRIEF

AIC Dennis Craft almost jumps right out of his skin when someone taps him on the shoulder.

Craft, pararescue medic aboard an HH-3C helicopter of the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron in Vietnam, had descended by cable into the jungle in enemy territory to rescue two downed F-4B crewmen. WO D. D. Redmonds, injured when he and Maj. Eddie C. Paige ejected from their *Phantom*, was being strapped into the helicopter's hoist chair by Craft after spending the night in the jungle.

While he was strapping Mr. Redmonds in, Craft felt someone tap him on the shoulder. Not knowing that Major Paige was in the area too, the rescuer got quite a shock. Both fliers were evacuated safely by the HH-3C crewmen and the story had a happy ending.

Just don't tap Airman Craft on the shoulder, that's all!

A class of Air Training Command student pilots fill Arizona skies in their T-38 *Talons*, which have marked five years of use in supersonic pilot training. More than 3,700 fliers have trained in the 800-mile-per-hour *Talon*, which, during the past five years, has compiled the most outstanding safety record of any supersonic aircraft in the Air Force.

On Top & On Tap

- The aeromedical evacuation system in the Pacific is expanding from one aeromed evac squadron to an aeromed evac group and three squadrons.

- An Air Training Command plan would move Air Force's Chaplains School from Lackland AFB, Tex., to Maxwell AFB, Ala.

- A team of Air Force Medical Services officers at Lackland's Wilford Hall USAF Hospital has developed a new dental appliance that increases the effectiveness of radium therapy for oral cancer.

- The Air National Guard is airlifting some 10 percent of patients being moved through Air Force's aeromedical evacuation system.

- The late Gen. H. H. (Hap) Arnold, World War II leader of the Army Air Forces, will be the subject of a biography now being written. Publication by Random House is expected "sometime in 1967."

- Maj. Gen. Robert P. Taylor, Chief of USAF Chaplains, retires on September 1. His replacement will be Brig. Gen. Edwin R. Chess, who has been nominated by the President for promotion to two-star rank.

- Vietnam-bound officers and airmen curious about housing conditions there will find the answers in a special four-page report scheduled for the October issue of THE AIRMAN.

Our congratulations to TSgt. Loren Leonberger, editor, and his staff on the Bolling AFB *Beam*, base newspaper. The *Beam* topped all other Air Force base newspapers in the 1965 American Heritage Contest, judged by *Newsweek* Magazine editorial staffers. Earlier this year the *Beam* was cited by the Air Force for its "exceptional journalistic contribution to the US Air Force information program and the Air Force mission."

Vests designed for stock car drivers are being coupled with ice chests as a possible means of keeping aircrews cool in tropical heat and humidity. Test results of the device are under study by the Aerospace Medical Research Laboratories. Twenty-five pounds of ice will keep one man cool for four hours.

Air Training Command prevented what could easily have been a serious morale problem for over 3,000 recruits at Amarillo AFB, Tex.

When a limited outbreak of meningitis occurred at Lackland AFB in February, ATC sent the recruits to Amarillo for training. To meet the payroll requirements, an additional computer was leased and airlifted to Amarillo.

Because it acted quickly, ATC



15 Mar 1966

Pictures here show actual rescue in North Vietnam. HH-3E (top), flanked by A-1Es, heads for spot where F-4B was downed. F-4B crew is found, and HH-3E hovers while paramedic Dennis Craft (with helmet) attaches hoist to Warrant Officer D.D. Redmond (second from top). Moments later, Maj. Eddie Paige, F-4B commander is lifted. Craft reports on condition of men (second from bottom) while Redmond, wounded, sprawls on HH-3E cabin floor. They relax a little (bottom) on way home.



AF Museum Photo

15Mar66.jpg

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FROM: Det 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq, APO US Forces 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

17 Mar 66

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Gp, (JSARC), APO US Forces 96307

1. Mission Number: 6-38-58-15 Mar 66.
2. SAR Alerted by: 3rd TFW Command Center.
3. Type SAR Aircraft Used: One (1) HH-43B and two (2) HH-43F helicopters.

Recovery Helicopter Crews:

Pedro 74 (3 saves)

RCC	Capt Edwin A. Henningson	Det 6, 38th ARRS
CP	1/Lt Mark C. Schibler	Det 6, 38th ARRS
HM	A1C Thomas C. Story	Det 6, 38th ARRS
RS	A1C Henry J. O'Beirne	Det 6, 38th ARRS

Pedro 97

RCC	Capt Raymond L. Murden	Det 6, 38th ARRS
CP	Capt Maurice G. Kessler	Det 6, 38th ARRS
HM	A1C Alexander Montgomery	Det 6, 38th ARRS
RS	SSgt David E. Milsten	Det 6, 38th ARRS

Pedro 79 (2 saves)

RCC	Capt Joseph E. Symonds	38th ARRS
CP	Capt Louis J. Pottschmidt	38th ARRS
HM	SSgt James M. Fitch	38th ARRS
MT	SSgt Howard L. Mott	38th ARRS

4. Reaction time from initial notification to pick-up: 25 minutes.
5. CAP assistance: One (1) USAF O-1F FAC; Rescort: Two (2) U.S. Army UH-1B helicopter gunships.
6. Area and type of pick ups: Day recoveries with rescue hoist and stokes litter from hostile area heavily wooded with trees 50-150 feet high.
7. Signalling equipment used to locate wounded evacuees: Smoke grenades.
8. Survivor's names and serial numbers: Neither available nor possible to obtain

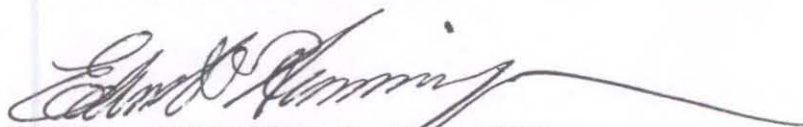
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9. Summary of Events:

At 1345 hours word was received that an estimated 16 U.S. Army casualties were located in a heavily wooded jungle 105 degrees at 15 miles from Bien Hoa AB (coordinates 10° 55'N, 107° 05'E). Hoist and stokes litter operations would be required to recover them from this area which had a predominant tree line height of 125 to 150 feet. Pedro 74 was refueled, scrambled and airborne at 1355 hours for a reaction time of ten minutes. Pedro 79 was to be scrambled from Tan Son Nhut to act as our top cover ship; they were airborne a short time thereafter. Pedro 97 was experiencing maintenance difficulty and would scramble to the scene as soon as their situation permitted. Shortly after take off, radio contact was established with the USAF Forward Air Controller (FAC) who was orbiting the scene; he conducted a situation briefing for us during the enroute flight. Though the pick-up area was not described as secure, there were numerous "friendlies" in the vicinity, and ground fire was not observed at any time during the mission. There were only scattered clouds in the area and visibility was excellent, so weather was not a factor. Pedro 74 rendezvoused with the FAC over the scene a few moments later. He was able to point out exact pick up locations, and arranged to have them marked for us with smoke grenades. This assistance was invaluable and expedited the process considerably because the casualties were widely dispersed and without radio equipment. In only one instance was it necessary for us to lower a paramedic to the ground to determine if assistance was required. The first and second casualties to be picked-up were recovered from a "bowl" (low spot) in the jungle canopy approximately 50 to 75 feet below the rim of tree tops surrounding the immediate area. The initial survivor was hoisted aboard and secured in the cabin without incident and the crew proceeded to recover the second wounded man from the same spot. Then, while the helicopter was hovering at approximately 65 to 70 feet altitude with a casualty 50 feet off the ground in the hoisted stokes litter, a power loss occurred. Hover power settings had been a steady 36 psi torquemeter setting with 255 to 257 rotor RPM. The co-pilot confirmed that all performance instruments had been indicating "in the green". Without any noise, vibration or other indication of difficulty, except for a gradual settling of the aircraft, rotor RPM dropped to 230. Efforts to increase RPM with the engine speed governor switch were unsuccessful. A portion of the hover-clearance above the trees was sacrificed in an effort to regain RPM by lowering collective slightly; this technique was likewise unsuccessful. What little hover-clearance above the trees remained was "traded and played" in a desperate last-ditch effort to keep the helicopter airborne by sliding into translational lift. By a series of gentle turns to take advantage of low saddles in the tree tops the helicopter was nursed in a shallow climb up and out of the heavily wooded jungle. From the time that the power loss occurred until the helicopter had climbed out above the trees the rotor RPM never varied from 230 RPM. This 230 RPM remained constant despite the many and varied combination of factors, any of which should have produced a change, i.e., efforts to "beep" it up, the transition to forward flight (translational lift) and increased collective power settings to 39 psi of torque. Only after the trees had been cleared, the helicopter was accelerated to above 40 knots, and the collective power

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5 SAVES

setting was reduced by 10 or more psi of torque was it possible to regain rotor RPM to the normal operating range, and even then it seemed a slow process. It appeared as if the rotor RPM responded very sluggishly to efforts at restoring it to 248 RPM. The helicopter was flown to the nearest clear area, landed, shut-down and inspected. No damage or deficiencies were noted and so the helicopter was thoroughly run-up, checked in emergency fuel, etc., and then flown back to home base with minimum crew and a UH-1B gunship escort. Pedro 74's two recoveries had been transferred to Pedro 79 who evacuated them to the 93rd U.S. Army Field Hospital. Pedro 79 then returned to the pick-up area to recover two more casualties who were awaiting evacuation. After dropping off 2 of Pedro 74's crew members at Bien Hoa AB, Pedro 97 also returned to the pick up scene, but recoveries had been temporarily secured in the area while the ground search for additional casualties continued. Both Pedro 79 and Pedro 97 then recovered at Bien Hoa AB to refuel and await further developments/instructions. At 1745 hours a request was received from the incident site for the recovery of one deceased which was supposed to have represented the final casualty in the area. However, a short time later it was determined that there was another injured survivor for pick-up. Pedro 74's crew took off (in another helicopter) for the scene at 1800 hours, arriving in the area approximately 10 minutes later. As before, the FAC directed the helicopter to the exact pick-up site, and except for the complication of strong and gusty 15 knot surface winds in the area, the final survivor and the deceased were hoisted out without difficulty. Both were then flown to the 93rd U.S. Army Field hospital near Bien Hoa, after which Pedro 74's crew returned to home base, mission completed. The coordination and support from rescap (FAC) and rescort (UH-1B) crews during this mission was outstanding; both parties were very cooperative and responsive to our needs. This was especially true during the period complicated by Pedro 74's in-flight emergency. The rescort and rescap personnel were also instrumental in simplifying identification of pick-up locations through radio instructions, smoke drops, etc. Their assistance made possible a smooth running operation free from confusion and excessive radio chatter. The crews of the three rescue (Pedro) helicopters performed very well; cooperation among them was excellent. Especially worthy of note was the skillful performance of Pedro 74's hoist operator. He was faced with an extremely critical and difficult set of circumstances when the in-flight emergency occurred as he was hoisting a casualty. His quick-thinking and professional response to this situation were vital factors in preventing further injury or loss of the survivor during the sequence of events that followed. With regard to the in-flight emergency, it should be noted that it was necessary to evacuate the helicopter (if at all possible) for two reasons: First, in an unsecure area such as that, the helicopter might likely have been destroyed by hostile forces. Second, maintenance activities at that forward area would have been enormously complex. The return flight to home station was uneventful, and the malfunction did not reappear. However, no real effort was made to duplicate the situation; every effort was made to "baby" the helicopter power-wise in order to make it home successfully. An engine fuel control malfunction was the suspected cause of Pedro 74's emergency. The fuel control has been replaced, and OHR and EUR reports have been/will be submitted.


EDWIN A. HENNINGSON, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

FROM: Det 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq, APO US Forces 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

18 Mar 66

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Group, (JSARC), APO US Forces 96307

1. Mission Number: 6-38-62-16 Mar 66.

2. SAR Alerted by: 3rd JSARC.

3. SAR Aircraft Used: 2 HH-43F.

Crewmembers of Primary Aircraft Were:

RCC	Capt Harold D. Salem
CP	Capt Ronald L. Bachman
HM	AIC Gerald C. Hammond Jr.
RS	SSgt David E. Milsten

Crewmembers of Secondary Aircraft Were:

RCC	Capt Edwin A. Henningson
CP	1/Lt Mark C. Schibler
HM	AIC Thomas C. Story
RS	AIC Henry J. O'Beirne

4. Reaction time from notification to pickup: 30 minutes.

5. CAP Assistance: 1 Ol-F, 1 C-47, 2 UH-1B

6. Area and type of pickup: Helicopter landed in a clearing in a rubber plantation. Casualty and deceased were litter loaded on board.

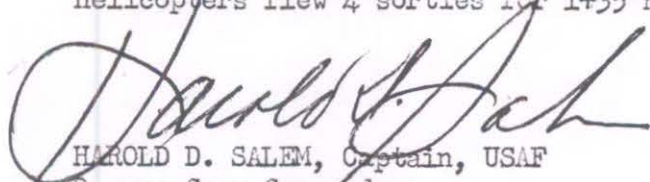
7. Casualties were located by flare and radio directions.

8. Survivors name: Captain Kent Miller, U.S. Army. Deceased name: unknown.

9. Summary of Events:

Det 6, 38th ARRS was notified by 3rd JSARC at 2050 hours, 16 March 1966, that several Special Forces personnel were seriously wounded and needed to be evacuated by helicopter from an insecure area (1053N, 10713E) as soon as possible. The primary alert helicopter was airborne at 2100 hours, the secondary helicopter at 2110. Shortly after take off communications was established between the Forward Air Controller and a light fire control team. At approximately 2110 the forward air controller had the personnel on the ground fire a flare to help guide us to the area. Once in the area I asked the flare ship

to drop a flare to mark the spot and to drop it on the north side of the landing area, as the wind was from the south and would drift the flares away from us and also put the light to our back, making the approach much easier. Personnel on the ground pinpointed the area with flashlights. With the fire control team close by, I descended and landed in the small clearing at 2117 hours. The Rescue Specialist was escorted by 3 camouflaged Vietnamese special forces personnel about 100 yards into the jungle where one of the casualties lay. The helicopter mechanic immediately began loading the other casualty (he had been killed instantly) aboard the helicopter. Working with extreme speed and efficiency they had both casualties aboard the helicopter in less than 4 minutes after our landing. After take off we received instructions to take the casualties to 93rd Field Hospital near Bien Hoa. The Rescue Specialist gave first aid on the way to the hospital. The casualty, Capt Kent Miller had been shot in the right arm and in both legs, breaking them below the knees. The primary and secondary helicopters returned to Bien Hoa at 2155 hours. The two rescue helicopters flew 4 sorties for 1+35 hours.



HAROLD D. SALEM, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

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NARRATIVE OF MISSION BY JOLLY GREEN 51, 20 Mar 66

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11-11 AER-20
13 MAY 66

Following an urgent request for help, two Jolly Green (HH-3E) which were standing strip alert in a remote area of Southeast Asia, were directed to recover 13 friendly troops cut off and surrounded by the Pathet Lao forces. The Jolly Greens first had to defuel auxiliary tanks and then the internal in order to configure the aircraft for the recovery effort.

Upon joining with additional recovery aircraft, four Skyriders of the USAF (Sandys), the team proceeded to our recovery area located 062/2 from Lima Site 48A. This particular area is infested with hostile troops and has known locations of quad 50's machine guns. Prior to our entry to the area, we were advised that the minimum safe altitude to avoid enemy ground fire was 6500 MSL.

Upon arrival of the recovery team at the scene, a white "T" was to be displayed as a recognition signal. The signal was finally located in just about the most inaccessible area a person could get. It was later determined that the government troops were forced into the area by the unfriendly forces. It is a mountainous, rugged area, and a landing was impossible. I flew Jolly Green 51 into the canyon expecting retaliatory fire but none was evident. Prior to this, the Sandy crews had flown over the area to examine and possibly detect enemy ground forces. I am sure the presence of the Sandy aircraft prevented any ground fire from being aimed in our direction since friendly aircraft had reported ground fire just prior to our entry to the pickup area.

On my first entry to the canyon I was forced out due to lack of available power. I next asked Sandy for a smoke bomb to help determine wind direction. This they readily supplied and it only showed that there was no wind at all. Another trip into the canyon was made in a different direction and a power check was performed, followed by a hover over the trapped men. The hoist was lowered and recovery initiated. Throughout this maneuver, the Sandy aircraft maintained a race track pattern around the hovering Jolly Greens to discourage any would be sniper from shooting. I elected to hover high in order to have altitude to execute an emergency exit out of the confined area. This altitude was over 200 feet above the terrain and out of ground effect. I picked up three men in my first attempt and was about to hoist the fourth when my #2 engine fire warning light illuminated. I informed Jolly Green 56 that I would like to leave the hover to check things over and allow him to continue with the recovery. He retrieved one man only and experienced some difficulty with his aircraft. Loss of RPM was eminent if he continued and I asked if we could land nearby and I would transfer my passengers to his aircraft and continue with the pickups with Jolly Green 51. In the mean time I went back for a fourth attempt. Following pickup of the 4th man it was evident that further pickups would endanger the Jolly Green crew of 4 plus the 5 passengers I had aboard the aircraft, due to the limited power available. We proceeded to Site 33 after being advised that the closest friendly forces

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were located there and we could safely land and offload the passengers and return for the remaining eight surrounded soldiers.

Upon return to the pickup area, Jolly Green 56 recovered four more men by hoist, and I recovered the remaining four via the same method. Again, the Sandy aircraft provided rescap for the Jolly Greens and kept the enemy away from our area. I would like to point out that this was not a normal "EXTRACTION" but a rescue and that a pickup from over 200 feet takes an eternity, if not on the clock, in my mind. No doubt the rescues felt somewhat apprehensive about coming up such a long way also. Quite possible to, the helicopter is quite vulnerable to ground fire but in a situation which we encountered, a low hover and loss of rotor rpm could prove to be disastrous since the escape route was over a ridge and thus necessitated a climb with an already deteriorating situation resulting from rotor drop. My high hover paid off during my 4th pickup, first go-around. The engines were topped and we experienced rotor drop with a man in the hoist. I started a gradual descent to obtain additional rpm and airspeed thus enabling us to recover the man in forward flight of 25 knots airspeed.

The mission was performed as requested and was successful. The thirteen government troops were returned to friendly forces.

The three crewmembers of Jolly Green 51 which was assigned Low Bird, performed in a commendable manner. I would like to single them out and commend them for their performance of duty during an extremely difficult mission into known hostile territory with known gun emplacements.

Captain Dale V. Hardy,	Co-Pilot
A1C Robert E. Crites,	Helicopter Mechanic
A2C John J. Dagneau III,	Paramedic

Technical Data: OAT 28°C, Pressure Altitude 3000', Fuel on board 2400 lbs. Five persons on board for first 4 pickups, thus total of nine personnel. Over 200 feet of hoist cable used for each pickup.

ROBERT D. FURMAN, FR69302
Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

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12 MAY 1976

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MISSION NARRATIVE
20 March 66

Jolly Green 51 and 56 were scrambled from a forward operating site to recover a group of friendly forces who's position had been overrun. After adjusting our fuel load for the mission we proceeded to the recovery area with four Sandy (A-1H's) as escort. An Air America Helio Carrier acted as Forward Air Controller. The area was hostile and position was within two miles of known hostile gun emplacements.

Jolly Green 51 proceeded in for a pickup with Sandys providing cap and smoke plus firing a few well placed rockets to discourage unfriendly forces located on the ground.

The pickup area was in extremely rugged terrain at 3,000 feet MSL elevation. A 200 foot hover was necessary and our operation was at our maximum power limits. Jolly Green 51 recovered 3 personnel and then received two fire warning lights. He transitioned into forward flight and we (Jolly Green 56) proceeded into the area to attempt a pickup. We came to a high hover and lowered the hoist. Just after one of the personnel mounted the bree penetrator we experienced rotor decay and started to settle. I was forced to lower the nose attempting to regain translational lift in forward flight. The next few seconds were harrowing for both the people in the aircraft and our passenger on the hoist. We lost altitude until we had regained sufficient forward speed and narrowly missed damaging the rotor blades on the canyon walls. The man on the hoist had managed to stay on the hoist. Sgt Youngblood continued the hoist pickup and I held the airspeed down to 25 knots until he was safely in the aircraft. He sustained a few minor scratches and bruises.

It was obvious we were too heavy to continue the pickups. I coordinated with the FAC to lead us to the closest safe landing area to off-load the personnel already picked up and to burn off additional fuel, reducing the gross weight. Both Jolly Greens proceeded to a nearby Lima Site, off-loaded our passengers and returned to the pickup area. Jolly Green 56 proceeded in first and picked up 4 more personnel on the hoist followed by Jolly Green 51 who picked up the remaining 5 personnel. One more moment of terror, one of the passengers in Jolly Green 56 dropped a hand grenade in the cabin compartment. Both Jolly Greens plus escort proceeded back to our forward operating site without incident with the personnel recovered.

Low Bird - Jolly Green 51
RCC Robert D. Furman, Capt
RCCP Dale V. Hardy, Capt
HM Robert E. Crites, A1C
PJ John J. Dagneau III, A20

High Bird - Jolly Green 56
RCC Norman E. Kamhoot, Capt
RCCP Donald A. Vavra, Major
HM Theodore M. Youngblood, SSgt
PJ William G. Daniels, MSgt

NORMAN B. KAMHOOT
Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

ARODC # 661210
PARC Log No. 1105-66
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ARS SC No. 661290

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MISSION NARRATIVE #31

Low Bird - Captain Cowell

High Bird - Captain O'Dell

At 0835Z Jolly Green 54 (Low Bird) and 53 (High Bird) were scrambled out of Nakhon Phanom AB by Compress for a reported beeper contact at coordinates 1747N 10542E 065° Radial 64 NM Channel 89.

We were airborne in 8 minutes and flew out the 030° radial of Channel 89 to 40 NM DME then turned east to an orbit point north of the rescue area. We arrived at the orbit point, 65-73 NM on 062° radial Channel 89, at 0915Z and remained there awaiting the outcome of the electronic triangulation operation conducted by the Sandy aircraft. A later research of intelligence data revealed that our orbit pattern placed us over the Ho Chi Min Trail in an AAA defended area. We were at 7,300' in heavy haze and could not distinguish terrain features.

At 0940Z Sandy flight 31 reported that they had voice contact and a good fix on the survivor to a small geographical area. We then went into the area under the direction of Sandy 31 and he showed us the gorge the survivor was in.

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After reconnoitring the area and evaluating possible approach routes Jolly Green 54 jettisoned tip tanks and attempted the first approach. This approach and five subsequent approaches were aborted due to extreme turbulence and a down draft encountered along the cliff where the survivor was. These conditions provoked a loss of aircraft control and loss of rotor RPM that forced us on each occasion to make a rudder turn to the right and dive away down the gorge. After escaping the down draft normal aircraft control was regained. Each approach was executed at a different route, angle, and altitude seeking an entrance to the survivors position. At this time Jolly Green 54 was final bingo. Jolly Green 53 then assumed low bird and Jolly Green 54 departed for Channel 89.

Jolly Green 53 also made several passes at the survivor and when he also could not get into the gorge he decided to drop a package of E & E equipment. He did this with the survivor directing the drop with his emergency radio. He later reported that the package landed quite close to him but rolled down the mountain and he couldn't recover it.

An attached report covers Jolly Green 53's activities on this mission. Jolly Green 54 landed at Channel 89 at 1125Z

Jolly Green 53 continued to fly over the area of the downed pilot looking for a suitable area for him to either climb or descend to for a rescue attempt. Sandy 31 and Sandy 32 continued to circle the area for cover protection. Several fly over's were made over the top of the ridge looking for a suitable landing area in hopes he may be able to climb up on top. The turbulence, down drafts, and updrafts were so severe that we had to depart the area on top. We did not locate any suitable area on top. Attempts were made to hover into a position over him, but the turbulence was so severe, we had to

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break off. We made voice contact with the pilot and suggested to him to try and climb down the slope as far as possible and we would make another attempt the following day. He agreed and was very cooperative in doing anything he could to help. He didn't think he could climb any further up slope, but thought he could make it down slope. All indications were that the pilot was in excellent condition, mental and physical, and that he did not need immediate assistance. We suggested since it was getting dark, for him to find a safe area and bed down for the night. Crown 57 and us discussed the possibility of dropping some water, food, and emergency items to the pilot. We assembled a kit which included 1 M-16, 1-38, 2 radios, 1 navy knife, 1 canteen of water, 1 Beacon Light, 1 blanket, and 10 in-flight rations. We contacted the pilot and told him we had a kit with water, food, and survival items that we would drop him. He was very pleased to hear this. We told him we were making a fly over and if he could see us to guide us over his position and tell us when to drop. We proceeded in and with his directions guided us directly over him. On his signal, we made our drop. He said it was a good drop and that he thought he could get to it. It was determined later that the kit rolled down the mountain. Darkness was setting in and because of the severe turbulence, further attempts to rescue him for the day were called off. We informed the pilot that we would be back the next morning. He said Okay and that he would come up at 0600 local on his radio. Jolly Green 53, Sandies 41 and 42, and Crown 57 departed the area at 1145Z for Alfa. Jolly Green 53 landed at 1235Z.

Planning for recovery of the downed pilot on the morning of 24 March 66 was accomplished on the evening of 23 March. An HH-43B helicopter was requested from Udorn AB and arrived at NKP on the evening of 23 March 1966. The downed pilot's position was approximately 200 feet down from a ridge at an altitude of 5400 feet. Two possible methods of recovery were planned. One was the recovery of the pilot by HH-43B aircraft, winds permitting. It was the opinion of all the Jolly Green pilots that the HH-43B, with its excellent high altitude performance, would be a better aircraft for making the pick up at 5400 feet. The next method planned for making the pickup, if the HH-43B could not accomplish the mission, was to land a Pony Express CH-3C on a level spot on top of the ridge with two pararescue men. The pilot was located about 200 feet down the steep ridge and it was felt that the two pararescue men could get him to the top where he would be picked up and flown out. The CH-3C was utilized because of its lighter weight and reduced fuel load. Jolly Green aircraft, to accomplish this phase of the mission, would have had to blow his tip tanks before landing. He would then have had insufficient fuel to loiter in the area until the PJ's had brought the pilot to the ridge top. In addition the CH-3C (Pony Express) was utilized as escort for the HH-43B. The rescue effort was planned for a dawn recovery as it was thought that the turbulence would be less at this time of day. Sandy 31 flight launched from NKP just prior to 0500 hours, 24 March, 2 Jolly Greens launched at 0505 hours and Pony Express and Pedro at 0530 hours. The plan called for the Sandys to accomplish an electronic search to determine if the pilot had left the area. It also called for the Jolly Greens to pinpoint the downed pilot for the HH-43B attempt. Both plans were unsuccessful because of the severe turbulence

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experienced in the area.

24 Mar, 2205Z. Jolly Greens 53 (low bird) and 54 (high bird) departed CH 89 for SAR area.

24 Mar, 2250Z. Arrived area and Jolly Green 53 entered canyon to try recover the pilot. The mountain was covered with clouds and visibility was restricted with haze to about 2-3 miles. The wind was still gusting from 35 to 55 knots around the mountain peaks with extreme turbulence within the canyon area with no definite wind direction. The downed pilot had spent the night on the ledge and was on the air to talk to the Jolly Green. Several passes were attempted to his position with no success. Jolly Green 53 moved out to let Pedro 05 try.

24 Mar, 2230Z. Pedro 05 and Pony Express 06 departed CH 89 to SAR area.

24 Mar, 2330Z. Pedro 05 and Pony Express 06 arrived rescue area. Pedro 05 received situation briefing from Jolly Green 53 and made attempt into downed pilots position, Pony Express 06 orbited area with Jolly Green 54 (high bird) on first attempt in Pedro 05 lost N₁ TAC and moved out due to extreme turbulence and down drafts. Second attempt also failed and low fuel state required he return to CH 89. Jolly Green 54 started escorting him home with Sandies 41 and 42. Pony Express 06, with two pararescue men aboard, attempted to land on the mountain top to let the PJ's out to repel to the downed pilot. High winds and extreme turbulence terminated his efforts and he started home to escort Pedro 05 to CH 89. Jolly Green 54 returned to act as high bird. Jolly Green 53 gave instructions to the downed pilot as to the direction to start walking out of the canyon. Jolly Green 53 then started searching the lower portion of the canyon for a possible suitable area to let off PJ's to intercept the pilot and assist him out. After searching the area it was decided that no area within walking distance of downed pilot was safe to put out PJ's. Jolly Green 54 had checked the surrounding vallies and found five villages within four or five miles of the rescue area and a trail ran within three miles of the pilot. At 0015Z both Jolly Green 53 and 54 departed the area to return to CH 89 and landed, at 0110Z.

25 Mar, 0245Z. Jolly Green 53 and 54 departed for another rescue attempt. We arrived in the area at 0330Z. Contact was made with the pilot and he was still in good condition and making progress down hill. He said he had found some fresh water. Jolly Green 53 and 54 made several fly bys along the ridge area where he was. The turbulence was still too severe at the location he was at. Sandies 41 and 42 flew several low passes near the area and confirmed our report of the turbulence. Crown 57 asked us what the possibility was of letting pararescue men down by hoist at a lower level and have them walk up slope to rendezvous with the pilot. After discussing it with our pararescue man and the crew members of Jolly Green 54, we all agreed that we would be risking the lives of two more crew members, and as long as the downed pilot was in good condition, it was determined by all that the most sensible thing to do was to have him walk down the slope as far as possible to a lower

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altitude. Then we could possibly get out of the severe turbulence and also have better aircraft performance in order to make a hoist pickup. Compress relayed a message through Crown and suggested a possible para drop of two pararescue men and have them rendezvous with the pilot. This suggestion was considered, but was determined by all that a para jump into mountainous jungle with severe winds was not feasible. First of all, conditions would of had to have been ideal. The pararescue men would of needed tree suits, jump chutes, spotter chutes, and a qualified Jump Master. Several attempts were made by Jolly Green 54 to approach the area from different directions and altitudes and each time the terrific winds caused us to abort our approach. We were in voice contact every half hour with the pilot and he gave us his progress. We kept on telling him to continue on down hill as far as he could go to get out of the turbulent area he was in. He was eager to try anything we suggested. He was in very good spirits with sufficient water and food to last him awhile. We told him to keep moving down hill and we would make another attempt in the afternoon. Crown 57 suggested he come up every hour on the hour. Jolly Green 54 had been experiencing a lateral vibration and due to the severe turbulence we suggested to Crown 57 that we RTB and try it later in the afternoon. Crown 57 gave us permission to return to Alfa. We departed the area at 0515Z along with Sandies 41 and 42. Jolly Green 53 and 54 landed at 0610Z. Jolly Green 54 was out of commission after landing at Alfa.

At 0815Z, Jolly Green 53 and Pony Express 06 again departed CH 89 to attempt another rescue and arrived in the area at 0900Z. The Sandies, 31 and 32, made an electronic search of the canyon and after determining the area within 100 or so yards called in Jolly Green 53. The canyon was still extremely turbulent. The pilot had worked his way out of the cliff area and was now definately into DRV side of the mountain. He was still not visable to any of the search forces, but good radio communication was possible. Several high altitude passes were made in the general area at about 5000' and he was pinpointed in the bottom of a small canyon about 400 yards long and 600' deep. The sides at the top were about 250' apart narrowing to 120 feet at tree top level. The turbulence was still extremely bad on the rim of the canyon and aircraft control was very difficult. Four more approaches into the canyon were made, each one lower until the wind currents could be evaluated. On the first of the four approaches the HM sighted the pilot. After the fourth pass the tip tanks were jettisoned and one more pass over the pilot was made before rescue was attempted. The canyon had about a 30° down hill slope in the stream bed and each approach was over shot. The final attempt was made up the canyon to its end at "0" airspeed with a flat rudder turn within the helicopters own radius clearing the end of the canyon by only a few feet before starting down in a steep approach. The turbulence was moderate in this area. A hover was made just down slope from the pilot and the helicopter was backed up to set into position to effect a recovery. There was about 20' clearance on either side of the rotor and 30' at the tail. The HM did an outstanding job of directing the helo positioning and used 240 feet of cable plus a few more feet by lowering the helicopter

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Hq ARRS SC No. 662663

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a little. The pilot was on a 20' rock and was the maximum height he could get to. The forrest penetrator was let down thru a 10' hole in a tree canopy to where the pilot calmly unzipped the harness strap, put it on and climbed onto the seat. Seconds after starting up with the pilot the engine fire warning lights came on, nothing could be done at that time. As soon as the pilot was aboard takeoff was made and fire warning lights went out.

Return to CH 89 was uneventfull. The pilot was given first aid by the PJ and did not seem to worse for wear from his ordeal. When he came up on the hoist he brought a goodly portion of his survival equipment with him. This pilot displayed extremely good judgement during the entire SAR operation. Through his efforts our forces were able to recover him with no loss of personnel. If he had panicked after landing or if he had attempted to climb up the cliff after egress he surely would have injured himself, requiring the further risk of a ground rescue force. He never displayed the slightest fear or apprehension in these trying circumstances. It was clearly the most spectacular display of raw courage and cool headed thinking I have ever witnessed.

Frank A. Schmidt
FRANK A. SCHMIDT
Major, USAF

Downgraded to CONFIDENTIAL
12 MAY 1970

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(Date)

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By *JE* (Date) *RM 75*

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Mission Sorties and Flying Time:

23 March 66

Low Bird - Jolly Green 54: T.O. 1535 - Land 1825 (1 sortie 2+50)
Captain Cowell, William E.
Captain Henry, David C.
SSgt Watson, Robert J.
A2C Kellerman, Laverne W. Jr.

High Bird - Jolly Green 53: T.O. 1535 - Land 1935 (1 sortie 4+00)
Captain O'Dell, James C.
Captain Drangstweit, Erling R.
SSgt Gladish, William R.
A2C Brotton, William D.

Pony Express 06: T.O. 1655 - Land 1935 (1 sortie 2+40)

Jacobs, Clyde C. Jr., Captain, Pilot
Lightner, George W., Captain, Co-Pilot
Sparks, Jimmie C., SSgt., HM
Williamson, Robert, A2C PJ (Det 5, 38th ARRSq)

NOTE: Pony Express utilized as High Bird when Jolly Green 53 departed area.

24 March 66

Low Bird - Jolly Green 53: T.O. 0505 - Land 0810 (1 sortie 3+05)
Major Stearman, Ealum L.
Captain O'Dell, James C.
SSgt Gladish, William R.
A2C Kellerman, Laverne W. Jr.

High Bird - Jolly Green 54: T.O. 0505 - Land 0810 (1 sortie 3+05)
Captain Cowell, William E.
Major Schmidt, Frank A.
TSgt Heywood, Spence C.

Pedro 05: T.O. 0530 - Land 0730 (1 sortie 2+00)
Captain McMillian, Charles E.
Captain Berdeaux, Donald R.
A2C Paprella, Andrew C.

Pony Express 06: T.O. 0530 - Land 0730 (1 sortie 2+00)
Jacobs, Clyde C. Jr., Captain, Pilot
Lightner, George W., Captain, Co-Pilot
Hoosier, Terrell, TSgt., HM
A2C Brotton, William D., PJ (Det 5, 38 ARRS)
A2C Williamson, Robert., PJ (Det 5, 38 ARRS)

NOTE: Pony Express escort for Pedro.

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26

Mission Sorties and Flying Time

24 March 1966

High Bird - Jolly Green 53: T.O. 0945 - Land 1310 (1 sortie 3+25)

Major Stearman, Ealum L.

Major Schmidt, Frank A.

TSgt Heywood, Spence C.

A2C Williamson, Robert

A2C Kellerman, Laverne W. Jr.

Low Bird - Jolly Green 54: T.O. 0945 - Land 1310 (1 sortie 3+25)

Captain O'Dell, James C.

Captain Drangstveit, Erling R.

SSgt Gladish, William R.

A2C Brotton, William D.

Low Bird - Jolly Green 53: T.O. 1515 - Land 1715 (1 sortie 2+00)

Captain Cowell, William E.

Captain Henry, David C.

SSgt Watson, Robert J.

A2C Kellerman, Laverne W. Jr.

High Bird - Pony Express 06: T.O. 1515 - Land 1715 (1 sortie 2+00)

Captain Jacobs, Clyde C. Jr.

Captain Lightner, George W.

SSgt Sparks, Jimmie C.

A2C Brotton, William D. (Det 5, 38ARRS) PJ

HELICOPTER

Total Sorties Flown and Time on This Mission:

TOTAL SORTIES: 11

TOTAL TIME: 30+30 hours

Jolly Green - 7 sorties - 21+50 hours

Pony Express - 3 sorties - 6+40 hours

Pedro - 1 sortie - 2+00 hours

23 March 66

Sandy 31 and 32 low and 41 and 42 high element.

24 March 66

Sandy 31 and 32 low and 41 and 42 high at first light. 41 and 42 escorted Pedro and Pony Express back to Alfa and refueled. 31 and 32 returned with Jolly Green to Alfa about 45 minutes later. 41 and 42 escorted Jolly Green back to the scene at 0255Z. Returned to Alfa at 0610Z. 31 and 32 returned to site at approximately 0745Z along with Jolly Green and Sandy 11 and 12 from Udorn. All four Sandys remained on scene until pickup was accomplished.

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By [Signature] (Date) 12 May 1970

Downgraded to CONFIDENTIAL

12 MAY 1970 LAW AFR 205-2
(Date)

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

7

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Hq ARRS SC No. 662663

30 Aircraft and 40 Men Help Save U.S. Pilot in N. Viet Nam

SUN MAY 1st 66

Downed Flyer Outruns Reds, Is Rescued by Copter Next Day

American Airman Hides in Hills in North Viet Nam Through Night

SAIGON, South Viet Nam, May 2 (AP) — A United States Air Force pilot outran Communist pursuers afoot in the mountains of North Viet Nam last night and rescue helicopters plucked him to safety at dawn today.

Three helicopter attempts late yesterday afternoon to rescue Capt. James M. Ingalls of Palo Alto, Calif., were driven off by Communist ground fire. Ingalls had parachuted into the mountains at 3:45 p.m. after ground fire shot down his A-1E Skyraider when he was flying a forward air control mission over North Viet Nam.

He was the 48th pilot brought out of North Viet Nam by the U.S. Air Force's Third Aerospace Rescue Recovery Group since Jan. 1. The group rescued 120 downed pilots in the last three months of 1965.

Ingalls made immediate radio contact with search Skyraiders who flew overhead after he went down along the North Viet Nam-Laos border. They were led to him by the radio "beeper" that all pilots carry in their survival kits.

Ingalls landed at the base of a cliff and two Air Force H-3E Sikorsky helicopters told him to move a mile down the mountain slope. There was no sign of the enemy as one helicopter hovered over Ingalls. Suddenly, hidden gunners opened fire from the surrounding jungle, driving the helicopter off.

Ingalls, carrying his radio, was instructed to run farther west. The helicopters flew down to another clearing. More ground

fire opened up.

This happened once again late in the afternoon, with bullets slicing through the cockpit of one helicopter.

A flareship was called in to aid in a night pickup, but Ingalls did not want his position pinpointed by the flares.

Air Force Col. Arthur W. Beal, from Orlando, Fla., commander of the Third Aerospace Recovery Group, was controlling the rescue via a radio hookup with Saigon.

"We were certain the Communists would zero in on Ingalls," said Beal. "The had him surrounded on the ground. I guess they were looking to shoot down one of our ships."

Ingalls spent the night on the mountain, constantly on the move. Helicopters found him at dawn at a spot far from where he had been the previous afternoon.

They went straight in and picked him up without a shot being fired. Ingalls had successfully evaded his pursuers.

The helicopter that picked up Ingalls was from the aerospace group's Fifth Detachment, known as "the Jolly Green Giants" because of the green camouflage paint covering their aircraft.

The rescue ship was piloted by Maj. Ealmon L. Stearman, Sulphur Springs, Tex., and Capt. David C. Henry of Philadelphia, Pa. The crew chief was Staff Sgt. Theodore H. Houghblood of Skidmore, Mo., the pararescue crewman was Aircraftsman William D. Brothen of Scotland Neck, N.C.

SAIGON, South Viet Nam, March 28—As a farm boy, Air Force First Lt. Kenneth D. Thomas Jr. of Mount Auburn, Ill., never thought he could be the center of so much attention.

For more than a day, 30 American aircraft and 40 airmen hovered over the mountains of North Viet Nam to try to pluck the 25-year-old jet pilot from deep in enemy territory.

They got their man, adding another heroic chapter to the story of the air rescue men who go after downed American pilots in the North Viet Nameese heartland.

Thomas had just finished a strike last Wednesday against some trucks in the Mugia pass, 75 miles north of the seventeenth parallel, when his plane was hit.

"The shot damaged my control system and I headed west toward the mountains away from the valley," Thomas told reporters today. "Then I lost control and I was upside down when I ejected."

Mask Ripped Off

"The wind ripped my helmet and oxygen mask off. A gust carried me over the crest of a mountain and I came down in very rugged terrain."

The Third Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group was alerted to Thomas's distress. Capt. William E. Cowell, of Kailua, Hawaii, and his crew went to their "Jolly Green Giant," a helicopter equipped with a winch, and headed north. Flying with them were four Sky-

raiders—two to search for the pilot and two to suppress enemy ground fire—and a C-130 transport with electronic gear to aid the operation.

Jets were called in to provide air cover.

Within a half hour, Thomas had been found and Cowell piloted his helicopter in toward the mountain.

"He (Thomas) was on a thin ledge of a cliff and the air was very turbulent," Cowell said. "I tried five times to get in and then ran out of fuel. A second helicopter tried and then a third was called in. When it couldn't make it he dropped food and provisions."

Second Effort

As darkness settled, the rescue task force flew back to the base and planned the next day's operation.

Thomas: "During the night I heard some people shout and a few gun shots. I crawled under the ledge and cat-napped."

"At 6 in the morning I started hiking. I wore out the seat of my flying suit getting down that mountain. I knew they would try to rescue me."

The search planes quickly regained contact with Thomas, who climbed and crawled to a narrow box canyon where he found a clearing about 4 p.m.

Cowell: "I hadn't seen him but I was talking to him and he was in good spirits. He was in a 10-foot clearing through trees about 240 feet high. We dropped the hoist (on which the cable is 20 feet long) to the pile of rocks where Thomas was standing."

DOWNED 23 MAR 66

FROM FARRIOR

THIS FILED UNDER
1 MAY 66

AI # 32620

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MISSION NARRATIVE MISSION 23 MAR 66

At 0800L Compress scrambled Jolly Green 52 and 53 from Nakhom Phanom AB to a crash site coordinates 18°48'N 105°13'E. At forty seven miles northeast the mission was cancelled and we started an orbit awaiting RTB, about forty three miles northeast of channel 89 at 0840L we intercepted a distress call from Honda flight while orbiting. The call stated that Honda lead had sustained battle damage and would have to bail out but would try to fly back across the river at 14,000 feet before ejecting. He stated the flight position as 250° R 67NM Channel 89. We notified crown that we had intercepted this call, coordinated with Sandy 41, and requested an intercept vector from invert to Honda Flights flight path. We received the vector and continued inbound to channel 89. The Sandy aircraft chased Honda flight across the river and were in the area before Honda lead hit the ground in his parachute.

Approximately five minutes after Honda lead got on the ground, Sandy 41 lead Jolly Greens to the chute. Due to the short time on the ground before rescue contact the survivor did not seemed recovered from the shock of his experience and was therefor not as helpful through voice directions to his position and signaling as he could have been.

After apporximately 4 minutes on the scene we spotted his chute. Jolly Green 52 then dropped his tanks came a hover above a 150 foot tree canopy and esecuted a tree penetrator hoist pick-up. Jolly Green 52 then returned to channel 89 and delivered the survivor to the dispensary for treatment of minor facial scratches and a bloody nose sustained in the ejection. Jolly Green 53 remained airborne an additional 20 minutes looking for the crash site without success.

Low Bird

RCC Capt Cowell
RCCP Capt Henry
HM SSgt Watson
PJ A2C Kellerman

High Bird

RCC Capt O'Dell
RCCP Capt Drangstveit
HM SSgt Gladish
PJ A2C Brotton

William E. Cowell
WILLIAM E. COWELL
Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

LOW-CLASSIFIED

177 AFR-205-2

MAY 1970

DOWNGRADE AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED

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(Date) 12 May 75

ARODC #

662464 JEM

Hq ARDC SC No. 662662

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~~66-0154~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ #32620

MISSION NARRATIVE 28 MARCH 1966

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9/24

A telephone call was received in the rescue barracks at 0400L, 28 March 1966. Captain Hardy took the call and was informed that an aircraft was down on the 104 degree radial of Channel 89, 80 NM out. The survivors were allegedly in good condition, there was radio contact and their strobe beacons were also visible. I reported to Invert Ops at 0415L and got a very comprehensive briefing from the controllers on duty. Contact with Major Haynes (at TACC), revealed that we were to commence a SAR effort at 0500L or as soon thereafter as possible. All Jolly Green crewmembers were at their stations, along Sandy 41 and 42, at 0500L. Jolly Green 56 experienced an APU clutch malfunction and a delay was incurred while waiting for an external power unit to be located. Jolly Greens were airborne at 0519 and Sandys at 0521L. Contact was established with Invert and Crown 57 and a course was set by Lt Sans which would take us south of some known flak areas. Jolly Greens ETA to the area was 0605L and Bingo time computed as 0815L. Upon reaching a point 15 miles west of the objective area, Crown 57 informed us that the survivors were reporting no hostile activity in the vicinity, and that, according to the sound of the beepers, the two men were located approximately one mile apart. Crown also reported the weather as good, and terrain information indicated that the area was fairly open. We arrived in the area at 0605L and immediately were able to establish voice contact on guard with one of the survivors. Crown 57 requested that one of the men turn on his beeper to assist the Sandys in locating their exact position. Jolly Greens remained at 7,000 and 7500 feet respectively while Sandys began their low level search. Sandy lead asked the downed pilot to set off some smoke if he had it. Within seconds we all observed some red smoke coming from the edge of what looked like a relatively cleared area on the slope of a small hill. The Sandys had re-reported no ground fire so we started our descent. We made a rapid (140K) descent, approaching the area from the south. We jettisoned our drop tanks when 1/2 mile from the smoke. Just as Sergeant Barnes and I sighted the survivor standing by the smoke, airman Halvorson reported that we were passing directly over the other man. We continued our approach to the man whom we had first sighted, and after three minutes of hovering, had our first man aboard. The time was 0620L. We then made a closed pattern to the left to keep away from a road and a nearby village. The second man fired a pen flare as we came in on final approach. He was sighted standing on the edge of a small clearing, in grass approximately ten feet tall. The second pickup was completed at 0627L. We informed Crown 57 and the Sandy flight that the men were aboard and that we were departing the area. We began a turn to the left (West), climbing as rapidly as possible. At a point approximately one mile from the pickup area and at approximately 750 feet AGL we suddenly received several bursts of sustained automatic fire from a hillside on our right (North). Executing a sharp climbing turn to the South, we called the Sandys and informed them of the situation. One of the Sandys immediately went in and expended some ordnance in the area. Sgt Barnes checked the aircraft for hits and reported no visible damage. None of the aircraft occupants received injuries. The remainder of the flight was concluded without incident at 0720L at Nakhom Phanom. Inspection upon landing revealed one hole in the left sponson, presumed caused by a .50 caliber.

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By Authority of GDS

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DOWNGRADED

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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED

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Hq ARRS SC No. 662664

12 MAR 1970

ARDC # 662465

662664

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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Crewmen recovered: Captain Delbert G. Rokes, FV3038249 and 1st Lt Jesse Q. Ozbolt,

Low Bird

Capt Robert A. Weekley, RCC
1/Lt Richard J. Sans, RCCP
SSgt Joe Barnes Sr, HM
A2C Michael L. Halvorson, PJ

High Bird

Capt Robert D. Furman, RCC
Capt Dale V. Hardy, RCCP
A1C Robert E. Crites, HM
A2C John Dagneau III, PJ

Robert A. Weekley
ROBERT A. WEEKLEY
Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

DO NOT REGRADE AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 1 YEAR

DOWNGRADED
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18 MAY 1970

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED

Or Changed to UNCLAS

By Authority of GDS

By *[Signature]* (Date 12 May 73)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Hq ARRS SC No. 662664