

DECLASSIFIED

R# 43122

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cub/18

2-3-44
MISSION NARRATIVE 20 APRIL 1966

Following scramble notification by TACC, both Jolly Greens 51 and 53, along with four sandy aircraft, became airborne at 0834L. We proceeded to the downed pilot's position. The first position given was 060/68 channel 89. In order to avoid known gun positions we tracked outbound on the 050°, channel 89. Upon arrival over the general area, we were advised of heavy ground fire in the area. Rescap aircraft also advised of ground fire in the general vicinity of the downed pilot. Verified position of the downed pilot was 068°/70 channel 89.

This is located in the area of the infamous Mugia Pass in North Vietnam. Coordinates were 17 45N, 105 43E. This particular area is known to possess many automatic weapons of various caliber. Sandy advised of ground fire in the valley near the downed pilot and advised approaching from the east. We planned on this course of action and as we proceeded inbound we asked for an estimate of the altitude of the downed pilot. They replied with an estimate of 2200'. As we crossed east of the valley at 8000', moderate and very accurate flak was observed. The flak bracketed us nicely but no hits were experienced. We also saw many tracers and golfballs pass by our right side. Jolly Green 53 elected to remain north of the pickup area to provide assistance and witnessed the flak bursts and muzzle blasts from the ground. Major Haynes estimated that there were two or more batteries and about sixteen bursts minimum on the left, right above and below Jolly Green 51. Sandy 41 witnessed at least six bursts at our 6 o'clock level position and about 200 feet aft. The crew members could feel the bursts and we took what little evasive action we could and cleared the flak area. Fifty caliber tracer shells were seen passing on our right side just prior to and during the flak bursts. When we arrived in the pickup area we flew over the area for a low reconnaissance pass, checking for additional ground fire or small arms fire from the position of the downed pilot. None was encountered and, after making contact with the downed pilot on Guard and passing over him, we dropped our tip tanks and turned inbound toward the pilot's chute which was entangled in tall trees in very rugged terrain consisting of karst and jungle type growth. As we came to a hover we could see the pilot and the hoist was lowered. The parachute was billowing from the rotor wash and finally fell to the ground. The pilot was hoisted aboard the helicopter. During the recovery maneuver Sandy reported ground fire to our west, but since we were below the ridgeline we felt that it would not prevent us from making the pickup. Once the pilot was hoisted aboard the aircraft, we initiated a max performance climb over the ridge of karst to obtain altitude in order to get over the flak we had encountered on the way in. A team of F-105's arrived during the recovery phase and helped suppress the flak. We continued our climb, with Sandy escort, and crossed a valley at 12,000' to avoid additional ground fire, we were then informed by Crown 23 that they had spotted flak up to 13M on the 070/55 channel 89. We changed course to avoid that area and proceeded to channel 89 without further incident. During exit from the recovery area Jolly Green 53 gave valuable assistance enabling us to circumnavigate the flak

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ARCCO-00C

DOWNGRADE AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS

DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

DOD DIR 5200.10

ARODC #

661586

Hq ARRS SC No.

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area in the shortest possible time. The crew members of Jolly Green 51 performed in an exemplary and professional manner during this mission into a known extremely dangerous and high risk area.

Pilot Recovered: Capt John E. Abernathy, FR , 421st TFS(Elm F-105)
Korat AB, Thailand.

LOW BIRD-JOLLY GREEN 51

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

HIGH BIRD-JOLLY GREEN 53

Major Baylor R. Haynes, RCC
Capt William Uhl, RCCP
SSgt Michael Holloway, HM
A1C Dennis Kraft, PJ

Robert D. Furman

ROBERT D. FURMAN
Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

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173-205-2

18 MAY 1970

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'Green Giants' Effect Another Daring Rescue

20 Apr 66 *Capt Furman + Hardy*

SAIGON, South Viet Nam (AP) — The "Jolly Green Giants" went to the rescue again today and daringly plucked a U.S. Air Force pilot out of North Viet Nam's jungles under the muzzles of Communist guns.

Rescued was Capt. John B. Abernathy, 29, of Wichita, Kan., leader of a flight of F105 thunderchiefs on an armed reconnaissance mission in the southern panhandle area of North Viet Nam.

His plane was hit by ground fire and he ejected from the burning fighter-bomber about 65 miles south of Vinh.

After dropping into the mountainous jungle Abernathy managed to establish radio contact with the rest of his flight.

Then the "Jolly Green Giants," an H3C helicopter crew from the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, were called in. The rescue crews have earned their nickname because of the size of their craft and their green camouflage colors.

While the husky chopper worked its way in, four Air Force Skyraiders joined the other jets in Abernathy's flight in laying down a blanket of fire on the North Vietnamese gun positions.

"We were drawing moderate

57mm fire when we went in to drop the rescue hoist," said Capt. Robert D. Furman, 33, of Great Falls, Mont., the pilot of the Air Force helicopter. "Although the fire was pretty accurate and we had to hover for a few minutes, we didn't take any hits."

Abernathy was reported in good condition, suffering only minor burns and bruises.

Other members of the rescue crew were Capt. Dale V. Hardy, 27, of Enfield, N. H.; Airman 1/C Robert E. Crites, 23, of Little Rock, Ark., and Airman 2/C John J. Dagneau 3rd, 19, of Detroit, Mich.



*Capt John B. Abernathy F105 pilot
After rescue with Capt Robert (Bob)
Furman*

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20 Apr 66 Capt Furman & Hardy

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