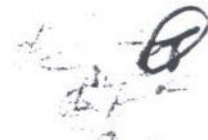


71 
FROM: Det 1, 3 ARRG (Capt Melvin E. Kapsen)

5 June 1966

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative No. 1-3-35, 3 June 1966

TO: 3 ARRG APO 96307

On 3 June 1966 we departed from Da Nang AB, RVN at 0455 hours, in an HU-16B aircraft, to perform a precautionary combat rescue orbit over the Gulf of Tonkin and the coast of North Vietnam.

At 0825 hours a U.S. Naval Destroyer informed us that they were painting a May Day squawk about 30 miles south west of our orbit position. The destroyer then gave us radar vectors to the area of the distressed aircraft.

En-route to the scene of action we made UHF contact with the leader of a flight of F-105 aircraft who told us that his number three wingman had been hit by AA over the target, in the Dong Hoi area, and had punched out over the water.

He informed us that the downed pilot was $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles off the beach and two miles north of the river at Dong Hoi, that he had radio contact with the downed pilot who was drifting towards the shore and that the downed pilot was experiencing severe enemy gunfire from the shore in the form of small arms, recoilless rifle and mortar fire. We requested the F-105 flight to make a fire suppression run over the beach and they then informed us that the enemy fire had ceased.

I made a call in the blind over guard channel to the effect that we were a rescue aircraft on an emergency mission and for any aircraft in the vicinity to come to our assistance for the purpose of suppressing enemy ground fire. This call was immediately answered by Air Force and Navy aircraft among which we identified four A1F's, three F-105's and four F4C's.

Contact was made on guard channel with the downed pilot who was instructed to light a smoke flare and immediately upon his doing so, we made positive identification of his exact location.

The open sea condition consisted of a primary swell, five feet in height moving in the direction of 300° , a secondary swell, two to three feet in height moving in the direction of 220° and the wind out of the south at about 5 to 8 kts. In order to keep from overflying the coastline we elected to land on a heading of 200° , which was almost parallel to the primary swell but quartering into the secondary. This gave us a few bad moments on touchdown and as a result the aircraft experienced a badly damaged right elevator during the landing at 0845 hours.

Immediately after touchdown, all hell broke loose in the form of extremely severe enemy fire from the shore, several large explosions occurred within 50 yards of the aircraft and the sound of small arms fire was almost continuous. As we approached the downed pilot, the pararescue man dove into the water and with a rope tied around his waist, swam to the pilot, grasped the pilot in his arms and then the two of them were pulled to the aircraft by the flight mechanic and the flying crew chief. As they attempted to pull the pilot into the HU-16, it was found that the rope which fastened his one man dinghy to his chute harness was tangled around his legs and they couldn't pull him inside. The radio operator raced back and with his knife, cut the rope and then assisted in bringing the pilot and the pararescue man aboard.

During the entire period on the water, the rescues continued to pound the shore line. Although the enemy fire did not stop or even slow down, after the first flurry the accuracy of the fire deteriorated to about 10% of what it had been initially.

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As soon as all were securely aboard the aircraft, a high speed taxi run was initiated directly away from the shore and almost directly into the face of the primary swell. After about a half mile, someone in the aft of the aircraft reported surface explosions rapidly approaching the aircraft from the rear. As we made a quick 60° turn to the left, we observed an explosion about 50 feet in front of the aircraft and in line with our original direction of movement. Our new heading of 360° placed us on a quartering heading to the both swell systems and going down wind however a successful take off was accomplished and a routine return was made to Da Nang.

All the crew members performed their duties in an extremely competent fashion. I have never before seen such outstandingly professional cooperation, and know full well that without this excellence on the part of all the crew members, this mission could not have been successful.

Special notice must be taken of the excellent support provided by the rescue aircraft who reported in after our call on guard channel. As we departed the area I looked back and saw about a three mile stretch of shore that was completely blacked out by smoke, dust and flying debris. Smoke billows up to three or four thousand feet indicated the intensity and high explosive power of the support we received.

Malvin E. Kapson
Captain USAF
RCC

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for deployment to Southeast Asia.

(3) This quarters total of 81 orbit/escort missions was 16 below last quarters.

(4) The NQRS rate for the HU-16 aircraft for the quarter was 0. This extends the zero NQRS rate to seven consecutive months. The NQRS rate for the HH-43 aircraft was .83.

(5) Loudspeakers were installed on one of the squadrons HH-43B's on 10 June making this aircraft a more effective rescue vehicle.

b. Missions of Special Interest During the Quarter.

(1) Combat missions involving personnel recovery:

3 June 1966 - Southeast Asia mission. While on precautionary orbit an emergency call was received by an HU-16 which immediately proceeded toward the area. When the albatross was twenty-five miles from the scene, a signal from the downed pilots emergency radio was received. The flight leader of the downed aircraft reported the pilot in a raft in the water two miles from shore. The raft was under fire from the shore. The HU-16 landed parallel to the shore on the water. Upon landing, shore batteries opened up and the HU-16 came under very heavy fire. The pararescueman jumped into the water and swam to the downed pilot, attached a rope to the raft and both were then pulled aboard the HU-16. The HU-16 then took off amidst heavy fire from the shore. Several near misses during the take-off made two attempts necessary. The survivor was successfully delivered to the air base where his condition was described as good. Crew: Rescue Crew Commander Capt Melvin H Kapson; Co-Pilot Capt David W Haines; Navigator Capt Robert V Maybury, Flight Mechanic SSgt Dennis L Rioux; Radio Operator SSgt Ralph S Schreiner; Pararescueman A2C Henry C Kirk; Crew Chief A2C Trevor W Lloyd.

(2) Other missions of Special Interest.

(a) HU-16 Search Mission 31-016-11 April. Notified by 13th Air Force Joint Search and Rescue Center (13JSARC) of man overboard from USS Monitor. An HU-16B was airborne at 0605 to participate in the search; however negative results. Mission was suspended on 11 April. Crew: Rescue Crew Commander Capt David W Haines; Co-Pilot Capt Danny J Roberson; Navigator Capt John M Gilreath; Flight Mechanic SSgt Ronald O Dunagan; Radio Operator A1C Barnard F Wood.

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Det 1-3-28-11 May

(C) F-105 crashed at 1743N 10638E; SAR efforts suspended due to negative contacts or leads, and the high possibility that pilot perished in the crash.

Det 1-3-30-14 May

(U) Rescue HU-16 was diverted from SAR orbit to look for an F4C last reported at 1745N 10628E. Area covered completely but mission suspended when no valid leads were uncovered.

Det 1-3-31-14 May

(U) VNAF A1H crashed and badly burned at 1718N 10634E. Use of helicopters impossible due to small arms fire and proximity of AA fire. SAR efforts suspended.

Det 1-3-32-15 May

(U) SAR helicopters located the crash of a USMC helicopter at 1551N 10608E. No survivors discernible in burned out wreckage.

Det 1-3-34-31 May

(C) A C-130 on a classified flight plan had a last known position in the Gulf of Tonkin. Extensive SAR efforts produced negative leads or contacts with the missing aircraft or crew.

Det 1-3-35-3 June

1966

(C) An HU-16 made an open sea pickup of a downed F-105 pilot at 1735N 10640E. During the recovery small arms and mortars were fired at the aircraft from shore but it was not hit. Survivor returned to DaNang.

Det 1-3-36-7 June

(C) An F-105 pilot ejected from his aircraft 10 NM off shore at 1723N 10653E. An HU-16 flying a precautionary orbit in the Gulf of Tonkin was vectored to the scene and made a normal open sea landing. The pararescueman with a ring line attached swam to the pilot in his raft; both were pulled aboard and the aircraft recovered at DaNang.

Det 1-3-37-10 June

(C) Deceased pilot of O1E recovered from burned out aircraft by HH-43 helicopter at 1628N 10622E.

Det 1-38-1-4 May

(U) Seven wounded Vietnamese civilians airlifted by HH-43's from Tuy Phong to Phan Rang hospital.

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recoveries from the Gulf. Only one case could be cited where an attempted combat recovery failed.²⁸ On that occasion, the aircraft was destroyed by shore based mortar fire after landing and while effecting the recovery. The two downed crew members and the HU-16 crew, minus the radio operator and pararescueman who were killed, were later recovered by a Navy helicopter.²⁹ The aircraft's outstanding success, in a hostile environment, was largely due to the RESCAP provided and the proficiency of the HU-16 aircrews. Recoveries were made where as little as two minutes elapsed between touchdown and takeoff.³⁰ The following account of a typical water recovery in the Gulf of Tonkin was provided by a mission narrative report:³¹

On 3 June 1966 we departed from Da Nang AB, RVN at 0455 hours, in an HU-16B aircraft, to perform a precautionary combat rescue orbit over the Gulf of Tonkin and the coast of North Vietnam.

At 0825 hours a U.S. Naval Destroyer informed us that they were painting a May Day squawk about 30 miles south west of our orbit position. The destroyer then gave us radar vectors to the area of the distressed aircraft.

En-route to the scene of action we made UHF contact with the leader of a flight of F-105 aircraft who told us that his number three wingman had been hit by AA over the target, in the Dong Hoi area, and had punched out over the water.

He informed us that the downed pilot was 1 1/2 miles off the beach and two miles north of the river at Dong Hoi, that he had radio contact with the downed pilot who was drifting towards the shore and that the downed pilot was experiencing severe enemy gunfire from the shore in the form of small arms, recoilless rifle and mortar

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CORONA HARVEST VOL IV AIRCREW RECOVERY IN SEA
1965 - MAR 60

fire. We requested the F-105 flight to make a fire suppression run over the beach and they then informed us that the enemy fire had ceased.

I made a call in the blind over guard channel to the effect that we were a rescue aircraft on an emergency mission and for any aircraft in the vicinity to come to our assistance for the purpose of suppressing enemy ground fire. This call was immediately answered by Air Force and Navy aircraft among which we identified four A1E's, three F-105's and four F4C's.

Contact was made on guard channel with the downed pilot who was instructed to light a smoke flare and immediately upon his doing so, we made positive identification of his exact location.

The open sea condition consisted of a primary swell, five feet in height moving in the direction of 300⁰, a secondary swell, two to three feet in height moving in the direction of 220⁰ and the wind out of the south at about 5 to 8 kts. In order to keep from overflying the coastline we elected to land on a heading of 200⁰, which was almost parallel to the primary swell but quartering into the secondary. This gave us a few bad moments on touchdown and as a result the aircraft experienced a badly damaged right elevator during the landing at 0845 hours.

Immediately after touchdown, all hell broke loose in the form of extremely severe enemy fire from the shore, several large explosions occurred within 50 yards of the aircraft and the sound of small arms fire was almost continuous. As we approached the downed pilot, the pararescueman dove into the water and with a rope tied around his waist, swam to the pilot, grasped the pilot in his arms and then the two of them were pulled to the aircraft by the flight mechanic and the flying crew chief. As they attempted to pull the pilot into the HU-16, it was found that the rope which fastened his one man dinghy to his chute harness was tangled around his legs and they couldn't pull him inside. The radio operator raced back and with his knife, cut the rope and then assisted in

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bringing the pilot and the pararescueman aboard.

During the entire period on the water, the rescap continued to pound the shore line. Although the enemy fire did not stop or even slow down, after the first flurry the accuracy of the fire deteriorated to about 10% of what it had been initially.

As soon as all were securely aboard the aircraft, a high speed taxi run was initiated directly away from the shore and almost directly into the face of the primary swell. After about a half mile, someone in the aft of the aircraft reported surface explosions rapidly approaching the aircraft from the rear. As we made a quick 60° turn to the left, we observed an explosion about 50 feet in front of the aircraft and in line with our original direction of movement. Our new heading of 360° placed us on a quartering heading to the both swell systems and going down wind however a successful take off was accomplished and a routine return was made to Da Nang.

All the crew members performed their duties in an extremely competent fashion. I have never before seen such outstanding professional cooperation. and know full well that without this excellence on the part of all the crew members, this mission could not have been successful.

Special notice must be taken of the excellent support provided by the rescap aircraft who reported in after our call on guard channel. As we departed the area I looked back and saw about a three mile stretch of shore that was completely blacked out by smoke, dust and flying debris. Smoke billows up to three or four thousand feet indicated the intensity and high explosive power of the support we received.

The HU-16's flew a total of 2,658 sorties in SEA during this time and only two were lost. (Ref Tab A, page 36.) One of those lost

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FROM: Det 1, 3 AEWG (Capt Melvin E. Kapsen)

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative No. 1-3-33, 3 June 1966

TO: 3 AEWG APO 96307

DO NOT DESTROY
UNRECORDED
3 June 1966
CATALOGED
No 0002786

On 3 June 1966 we departed from Da Nang AB, RVN at 0635 hours, in an F-4C aircraft, to perform a precautionary combat rescue orbit over the Gulf of Tonkin and the coast of North Vietnam.

At 0825 hours a U.S. Naval Destroyer informed us that they were painting a May Day squawk about 30 miles south west of our orbit position. The destroyer then gave us radar vectors to the area of the distressed aircraft.

En-route to the scene of action we made UHF contact with the leader of a flight of F-105 aircraft who told us that his number three wingman had been hit by AA over the target, in the Dong Hoi area, and had parachuted out over the water.

He informed us that the downed pilot was $\frac{1}{2}$ miles off the beach and two miles north of the river at Dong Hoi, that he had radio contact with the downed pilot who was drifting towards the shore and that the downed pilot was experiencing severe enemy gunfire from the shore in the form of small arms, recoilless rifle and mortar fire. We requested the F-105 flight to make a fire suppression run over the beach and they then informed us that the enemy fire had ceased.

I made a call in the blind over guard channel to the effect that we were a rescue aircraft on an emergency mission and for any aircraft in the vicinity to come to our assistance for the purpose of suppressing enemy ground fire. This call was immediately answered by Air Force and Navy aircraft among which we identified four F-4's, three F-105's and four F-40's.

Contact was made on guard channel with the downed pilot who was instructed to light a smoke flame and immediately upon his doing so, we made positive identification of his exact location.

The open sea condition consisted of a primary swell, five feet in height moving in the direction of 300°, a secondary swell, two to three feet in height moving in the direction of 220° and the wind out of the south at about 5 to 8 kts. In order to keep from overflying the coastline we elected to land on a heading of 200°, which was almost parallel to the primary swell but quartering into the secondary. This gave us a few bad moments on touchdown and as a result the aircraft experienced a badly damaged right elevator during the landing at 0845 hours.

Immediately after touchdown, all hell broke loose in the form of extremely severe enemy fire from the shore, several large explosions occurred within 50 yards of the aircraft and the sound of small arms fire was almost continuous. As we approached the downed pilot, the paramedic man dove into the water and with a rope tied around his waist, swam to the pilot, grasped the pilot in his arms and then the two of them were pulled to the aircraft by the flight mechanic and the flying crew chief. As they attempted to pull the pilot into the F-4, it was found that the rope which fastened his one man dingy to his chute harness was tangled around his legs and they couldn't pull him inside. The radio operator moved back and with his knife, cut the rope and then assisted in bringing the pilot and the paramedic man aboard.

During the entire period on the water, the rescue continued to pound the shore line. Although the enemy fire did not stop or even slow down, after the first flurry the intensity of the fire deteriorated to about 10% of what it had been initially.

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As soon as all were securely aboard the aircraft, a high speed taxi run was initiated directly away from the shore and almost directly into the face of the primary swell. After about a half mile, someone in the aft of the aircraft reported surface explosions rapidly approaching the aircraft from the rear. As we made a quick 60° turn to the left, we observed an explosion about 30 feet in front of the aircraft and in line with our original direction of movement. Our new heading of 360° placed us on a quartering heading to the both swell systems and going down wind however a successful take off was accomplished and a routine return was made to Da Nang.

All the crew members performed their duties in an extremely competent fashion. I have never before seen such outstandingly professional cooperation, and know full well that without this excellence on the part of all the crew members, this mission could not have been successful.

Special notice must be taken of the excellent support provided by the rescop aircraft who reported in after our call on guard channel. As we departed the area I looked back and saw about a three mile stretch of shore that was completely blacked out by smoke, dust and flying debris. Smoke billows up to three or four thousand feet indicated the intensity and high explosive power of the support we received.

Malvin K. Kapeon
Captain USAF
R03