

92

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
37th AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SQUADRON (MAC)
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96337



1 JULY 66

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: 37th OPS

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Number 1-3-44

TO: 3rd ARRGp

1. While on an orbit mission I received a Mayday call on guard channel at 0327Z. I requested the position and nature of the emergency. The number two man of a flight of two F4C's was hit by ground fire. The aircraft was on fire and heading for the water, and the approximate position was nine miles north of the DMZ. I requested any available helicopters and rescap aircraft be sent to the area. I proceeded to the area at metro power and alerted the crew to prepare themselves and the aircraft for a possible water landing.
2. A firm position was given by the lead aircraft, Goose Lead, which was followed immediately by "Bail Out! Bail Out!" After a few seconds two good chutes were reported. The aircraft crashed approximately two miles off shore, and we sighted the smoke right after the impact. Goose Lead verified that the smoke was near the bailout position. A DF bearing was taken on Goose Lead, and this was checked by the navigator against the smoke and the original position.
3. Goose Lead directed our aircraft over the survivors and we soon spotted them in the water at 0348Z. There were numerous small surface craft in the immediate area of the survivors. One survivor was approximately 1 1/2 miles off shore the other one was approximately 1/2 mile off shore. We could see that the survivors were under constant enemy small arms and mortar fire from the beach.
4. By this time, other rescap aircraft in the area besides Goose Lead were two Navy A6's, four A4's and two A1E's. These aircraft were making continuous firing passes at the small craft, and attempting to suppress the hostile gun fire from the beach. During this action we saw at least one small craft completely destroyed.
5. The sea condition was confused due to the four foot high swell from 130°, and the effect of the ground swells close in to shore. The surface wind was 160°/12K. I landed the aircraft at 0350Z and taxied approximately 100 yards to the first survivor. Goose Lead directed us to the survivor until we sighted him visually. The survivor's position was not marked by smoke, because it would present a good target for hostile fire. A normal raft approach was made to the survivor. I directed the para-rescue man to enter the water to facilitate bringing the survivor to the entrance door and boarding the aircraft. With the pararescue man on board, the aircraft was taxied approximately 1 mile to the other survivor. During the raft approach the aircraft was maneuvered between the survivor and the beach to provide him some protection from hostile fire. During the maneuvering

on the water, the crew members returned the fire with their M16 rifles. The para-rescue man again entered the eater to facilitate the pickup. As soon as the survivor and para-rescue man were on board, I took off straight away from the beach at 0355Z. After becoming airborne Goose Lead reported mortar hits tracking directly across our wake. Time on the water was approximately five minutes.

6. During the flight to Danang both survivors complained of back injuries and were made as comfortable as possible. The one with the most intense pain was placed on the stretcher. Both survivors were given first aid and treated for shock by the para-rescue man with other crew members assisting.

7. I experienced no difficulty in establishing communications and On Scene Command control of all SAR forces. During the entire operation we received outstanding cooperation from all rescap aircraft. Without their assistance, the rescue would probably not have been accomplished. The total time from notification to landing at Danang was 1:15.

8. The crew members were:

RCC: Maj Jesse J. Anderson

CP: 1st Lt David C. Rechnitz

N: Capt Danny J. Welborn

FM: ALC George B. Davy

RC: SSGT Andrew J. Vest

PJ: SSGT Daniel L. Schmidt

9. The survivors were:

Capt Frank Lennon

Capt Thomas P. Weeks



JESSE J. ANDERSON, Maj, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

wounded counts unless he can be trailed 300 yards, with blood seen all the way.

The Aussies allow no Vietnamese inside their compounds, an inhospitality justified, they feel, on security grounds. Going into the jungle, they rarely wear helmets, strip the insignia from their uniforms. The average Viet Cong, they snort, is really "no jungle fighter; he uses trails, paths and villages. We don't. But you have to go out into the jungle to trap him. That's when we meet him on our terms instead of his."

"That Others May Live"

U.S. fighter-bombers last week continued to hammer at Hanoi's roads, bridges and fuel depots. As in the week before, Hanoi responded with the most sophisticated weaponry in its defensive armory—and again found it useless. Twenty SAM ground-to-air missiles were fired. All missed. Supersonic MIG-21 fighters rose to tangle with U.S. Air Force F-4C Phantoms flying bomber escort north of Hanoi. North Viet Nam is thought to have only 15 of the advanced Russian jets, and the encounter cost them two of those, knocked down by the Phantoms' Sidewinder missiles—the second and third MIG-21 kills of the air war.

Ordinary antiaircraft fire proved something else again. So densely has Hanoi ringed likely targets that in the past month ground fire has claimed an average of one U.S. plane a day over North Viet Nam. Last week five U.S. planes were downed. One of them was an Air Force Phantom. Set afire by flak, the Phantom's two-man crew sent out a distress signal, then radioed that they were going to try to reach the Gulf of Tonkin.

Hostile Land & Unforgiving Sea. Pilot Jesse J. Anderson, 39, had been orbiting his HU-16 amphibious Albatross

over the Gulf for nearly seven hours when he picked up the Phantom's cry for help. Gunning his motors, Anderson sped toward the crippled plane. Before he arrived, the crew bailed out: one pilot dropped into the waters of the Gulf barely half a mile from the North Viet Nam coast, the other a mile farther out. Both were soon under heavy shore fire from machine guns and mortars as they bobbed helplessly in the water. Six U.S. fighter planes zoomed in to blast the shore batteries while Anderson set his Albatross down in the rolling swells. While mortar shells fell within 30 yds. of the amphibian, first one pilot, then the other was pulled to safety. Within an hour after they had bailed out, both were safe at Danang Air Base.

Anderson and his Albatross are part of the 650 men and 45 planes and helicopters of the Third Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group. Their primary mission: retrieving U.S. airmen shot down over the North. Their motto: "That Others May Live." Commanded from Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport, the Third's mercy craft are scattered at radio readiness from Danang to Thailand. Since they set up shop in Viet Nam at the end of 1964, they have rescued, from hostile land and unforgiving sea, 453 Americans—287 this year alone, 31 in the past month. Since the air war began, the Communists have downed 291 U.S. planes. Roughly 80% of the crews manage to eject and parachute away from their doomed aircraft; thanks to the Third, and the Navy's own rescue service, most are soon in U.S. hands. Of 325 who have gone down, 34 U.S. airmen are known to be prisoners in North Viet Nam.

Transceiver & Beeper. Pilots who are hit head for open water if they can. "Our chances of rescuing a pilot who falls in the Gulf of Tonkin are 99%,"

says the Third's commander, Colonel Arthur W. Beall, 50, of Orlando, Fla. Even over North Viet Nam itself, the Third estimates that it pulls out 60% of downed airmen, excluding those who fall directly into populous or heavily garrisoned zones. Rescues are effected by a combination of coordination, technology and guts. Each airman is equipped with a \$2,400 survival kit containing, among other things, 400 ft. of nylon rope, a tracer pistol, flares, food, water, a raft and a desalting kit. The key gadget is a small mercury-battery radio that is both a voice transceiver and a beeper providing a radio fix for search and rescue planes to home in on.

A recovery mission is a formidable task force, often dedicated to finding and retrieving just one man. High overhead circles the "Crown," a C-130 command plane that coordinates the rescue. Then come four A-1 fighters to bomb and strafe any North Vietnamese on the ground around the pilot. Two helicopters, either twin-jet HH-3 "Jolly Greens" or HH-43 "Pedros," move in for the pickup. Each chopper carries a crew of four: pilot, copilot, crew chief (who acts as hoist operator, gunner and mechanical expert), and a pararescue man expert at parachuting, scuba diving, jungle survival and medical care.

Petal-like Penetrator. It's a rare mission that is not shot at, and a still rarer one in which the helicopter can actually land to bring an airman aboard. If the downed man is seriously disabled, the pararescue man goes down and stays with him until they can get out—which can mean as long as a day or more in enemy territory. Most often an airman is lifted out of difficult terrain by hoist. Each rescue copter has a 240-ft. cable



RESCUING NAVY PILOT FROM GULF OF TONKIN
Coordination, technology and guts.

DECLASSIFIED

patrol. According to Captain Arauj, a controller at the RCC, coordination and cooperation between the USAF and USN SAR forces in the prosecution of missions in the Gulf of Tonkin has been excellent.

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.

The mission of 1 July 1966 illustrates recovery procedures used in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Rescue Crew Commander, Major Jesse Anderson, received a Mayday call from the wingman of a damaged F-4C. The crew made it out over the water, but not very far. One pilot landed a mile and a half off shore, while the other landed within a half-mile of the coast. The RCC homed on the radio signal of the orbiting wingman and requested available helicopters and RESCAP sent to the area.^{135/}

When the HU-16 arrived, there were small boats converging on the downed crewmen who were under constant enemy small arms and mortar fire from the beach. The RESCAP, consisting of two A-6's, four A-4's, and two A-1's, made firing passes at the small craft and suppressed the

DECLASSIFIED

██████████

DECLASSIFIED

hostile gunfire. During the action, Major Anderson reported that he saw at least one small craft completely destroyed. After taking into account the wind direction and the size and direction of the swells, the RCC landed and taxied a hundred yards to the pilot closest to shore. Because of the hostile fire the pilot had not marked his position with smoke; therefore, the HU-16 was directed by the orbiting wingman. The pararescueman entered the water to aid the survivor and they were both retrieved. (Pararescuemen are trained as scuba divers, as well as parachutists and medical corpsmen.) The RCC taxied a mile out to sea and again ordered the pararescueman into the water for an easier pickup of the second survivor. After being on the water approximately five minutes, the RCC took off, away from the beach, with both survivors. The orbiting aircraft reported mortar hits tracking directly across the wake of the aircraft. 136/

B. Summary

Combat recoveries in the Gulf of Tonkin by USAF HU-16 aircraft: 137/

1 July - 31 December 1965

14

1 Jan - 26 July 1966 138/

12

DECLASSIFIED

JUNE 30

19 6 PLANES DOWN TODAY. WE COULD
ONLY GET 1 OF THEM. BERRY ON
PICK-UP BY 98 - F105 PILOT.

19

19

19

19

JULY 1

19 5 PLANES DOWN TODAY.
HITTING THE OIL FIELDS AROUND
HANDI. LISTENED TO HU-16 MAKING
A PICK-UP IN THE GULF, THE P.J.

19 HAD TO GO IN THE WATER AFTER
THE PILOT. MAJ. WILLIAMS, SANDY
PILOT GOT IT TODAY OVER AT MU'GIA
PASS WHILE SEARCHING FOR A105

19 JOCK. OUT OF 70 A105'S THAT
CAME OVER HERE LAST SEPT,
THERE ARE 42 LEFT.

19

19

105
1-3-39-1 July

1) SAR

F-105

On 1 July 1966, at 1050H the crew heard the first distress call from "Lightning Two". We had taken off at 0450H that morning from Danang and had been at our preplanned orbit position since 0630H. We immediately responded with an answering call on guard frequency and asked the wingman to identify the downed pilot, to squawk emergency on his transponder and to then leave his radio keyed for an additional ten seconds for us to obtain a DF bearing.

The first bearing indicated that he was to the south and the wingman referred to the name of his target. We turned south and increased our air speed by using climb power and a descent. Lightning Two, the wingman, informed us that Lightning Lead was hit and was headed out to sea. At approximately 1055H Lightning Lead bailed out and his wingman reported a good chute and beeper. We were about 75 nautical miles north west of the bailout site at that time and we could hear the beeper periodically. The wingman reported that he was in contact with Lightning Lead during the parachute descent to the water and that he lost his dinghy during seat separation.

While we proceeded to the bailout area we asked for rescap and additional high cover to proceed immediately to the bailout site to assist the wingman until we could get there. When we were about 20 NM north of the area two Navy Al-E's passed us and moved ahead to begin the search. Shortly thereafter, Condor 8-1 flight checked in as high cap and reported 45 minutes endurance on station. By this time we were down to 200' over the water hoping to avoid radar tracking by shore batteries and to stay below their gun depressing angle. DF continually revealed our direct course to the site would take us between Hon Gia Isle and the Mui Ron peninsula and since the Al-E's were directly ahead of us we maintained our heading and passed between the island and the shore. Within three minutes we saw the Al-E's start to circle. We joined their sweep of the area and spotted an oil slick. Lightning Two reported that the chute entered the water not very far to the east of the slick so I began a creeping line towards the slick. The slick was straight up wind when we started the search and on the third turn on a heading of 140° I spotted a patch of red smoke at my 1:00 O'clock position. I altered course slightly and dropped a marker just up wind of the red smoke but as we passed over the red smoke we couldn't see the survivor.

The surface winds were from 230° at approximately 20 knots. We could not detect any swell pattern but the wind wave was well defined and profusely white capped. Its height was estimated at 3 to 4 ft with 20 ft between crests. I elected to land near my smoke marker and continue search on the water while the Al-E's orbited me. The drop tanks were jettisoned on base leg. The right tank dropped away clean but the left tank swung side ways and its nose cone slammed into the inboard side of the left float. I decided that the damage was slight and would not endanger the aircraft for I could only see a small dent and the primer paint was not scratched away.

We entered the water at 1124H on a heading of 230° and the landing was uneventful. I taxied towards my marker smoke and began a zig-zag course up-wind. Waves were breaking over the bow and the wind spray considerably reduced cockpit visibility. We tried putting the radio operator into the bow but we took on too much water through the bow hatch for us to continue. The radio operator was directed to secure the hatch and return to his position and the flight mechanic and pararescue man were scanning from the rear hatches.

The flight mechanic spotted the survivor first and called out the position. At the time I was tracking to the left of the wind and was in good position for an approach. I could not approach slowly at a 45° angle because of the wind speed and when the survivor passed the left wing I immediately put both engines into reverse and ordered the pararescue man into the water in case the survivor needed assistance. The aircraft pivoted into the wind and only backed up 20 ft. When the survivor was pulled into the left rear entrance hatch, the left engine was in idle reverse at the time and sometime during the recovery of the survivor the left prop dug into a wave crest and stalled the engine. I re-started without any difficulty and awaited word that the crew and survivor were prepared for take off. A quick examination by the pararescue man revealed no broken bones or serious lacerations. The survivor was then buckled in a seat and I took off on the same heading that we used for landing. We were airborne at 1135H and flew direct to Danang and landed at 1235H. The survivor was stripped of his wet equipment after take off, wrapped in a parachute canopy and gladly accepted a hot cup of coffee. He was dressed in the pararescue man's fatigues when he was released to the flight surgeon.

Post Mission Comments: The initial distress call, like many previous missions, originally gave the bailout site in reference to the target name. Our initial heading from our orbit was based on a DF bearing utilizing the ARN 25. A few minutes later the wingman confirmed the position with latitude and longitude coordinates which we later confirmed as only being off by two minutes of longitude. Weather was clear with unlimited visibility.

The wingman handled himself throughout the mission with cool professionalism as did our crew. I have a high regard and respect for all individuals.

CREW: Capt. Duane A. Miller,
Capt. Walter C. Hickman,
Capt. Hal P. Lansing,
SSgt Daniel L. Schmidt,
SSgt Paul L. Fait,
ALC Robert Johnson,

Aircraft Commander
Co-pilot
Navigator
Para-rescue
Radio Operator
Flight Mechanic

1 July 1966

F-105D 59-1722 354 TFS, 355 TFW, USAF, Takhli
Capt Lewis Wiley Shattuck (survived)

The area around the mouth of the Sou Giang River 20 miles north of Dong Hoi was proving to be a graveyard for USAF aircraft. The Nam Lamh road bridge, which spanned the river, was the target for a raid by a flight of Thunderchiefs on the first day of the month. Capt Shattuck's aircraft was hit by groundfire and burst into flames forcing him to eject just offshore. He was rescued by a USAF HU-16B Albatross amphibian but 10 days later was shot down again and captured.