

Huntingdon Copter Pilot In Daring Viet Rescue

Word coming out of Viet Nam today praises the skill and courage of a Huntingdon, R. D. 1, helicopter pilot who rescued two downed U.S. jet airmen from the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Viet territory.

Capt. David E. Dickey, 29, of Hartslog Valley, Huntingdon, R. D. 1, took only 29 minutes for the "picturebook rescue operation" in which the Akron, Ohio, and a Chicago, Ill., airmen were saved from capture by the Viet Cong.

Dickey is a son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Howard Dickey, Huntingdon, R. D. 1. His father has been construction engineer at the Owens - Corning Fiberglas Corporation plant at Huntingdon since 1959.

Sources in Viet Nam note that the Akron pilot previously had been shot down and rescued three times, while the Chicago jet flier had been downed and rescued twice.

Dickey has been in Viet Nam only one month, but during that time he has flown many mis-

sions. Most of the time he has been the "top" man as the rescue copters fly in on their dangerous missions. He got his big chance on Friday when he was the bottom man on the mis-



CAPT. DAVID DICKEY

sion by the 38th Military Air Rescue and Recovery Service. In "storybook" fashion he set his whirlbird down in the DMZ and snatched the two Yank pilots from the hands of the enemy.

Sources in Saigon were loud in their praise of the work of the Huntingdon, R.D. 1, flier who has been in the Air Force since 1959.

Capt. Dickey's wife, the former Helen Sparhawk of Lincoln, R.I., and their two children, David, 4, and Pamela, 2, are residing at the pilot's parental home in Hartslog Valley while he is in the service. Capt. Dickey has visited his parents on numerous occasions since they moved to Huntingdon County from Lincoln, R.I., in 1959.

Capt. Dickey was the command pilot flying a giant Sikorsky HH3E helicopter, Jolly Green Giant, on the Friday mission.

He took his basic training at San Antonio, Texas, and got his wings at Vance AFB, Enid, Okla. He has been flying helicopters for the past four years and has been stationed at numerous other bases in the U.S. and was at Little Rock, Ark. prior to being sent to Viet Nam.

Dickey's wife said she never dreamed that newspaper would tell her of her husband's first successful rescue mission. She remarked that he writes almost daily and she expects a letter soon telling her of the mission which has received wide publicity in the states.

The two rescued fliers were shot down in the buffer zone when their F4C Phantom Jet was hit by ground fire in the southern panhandle of North Viet Nam.

Dickey described the rescue for newsmen and said the two airmen were hiding in elephant grass about six feet high. The area was surrounded by rice paddies and low shrubbery.

He added, "As they ran toward our aircraft, our hoist operator lowered the hoist. The pilots were able to get into the hoist unaided. They were only about 50 yards apart at the two pickup points."



HUNTINGDON AND MOUNT UNION, PA., MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1966.

THE DAILY NEWS