

Downed Twice in 1 Day

SAIGON (7thAF)—Many pilots have been shot down but few have gone through the experience twice in one day.

First Lt. Joseph E. Merrick of Whitehall, Mont., did.

After being forced to eject from his F-4C Phantom fighter, along with his aircraft commander, Maj. Lacy W. Breckenridge of Lufkin, Tex., and hanging helplessly in his parachute harness near the top of a 200-foot tree for over an hour, he was rescued by a helicopter. **Jolly Green 02**

The copter, badly damaged by ground fire during the rescue operation was forced down in a nearby clearing.

A second copter arrived soon and picked up Merrick and the downed crew.

Ground fire was so heavy during the entire ordeal that crew members of the downed Jolly Green Giant helicopter gave Merrick a flak vest and an M-16 rifle and told him, "... We'll have to run for it."

Merrick, with a small wound in one foot, dashed 100 yards to the waiting helicopter. Though he fell once in the 7-foot high elephant grass, he was the first aboard.

The second helicopter retrieved Breckenridge, who had waited and watched the ordeal, from the top of another tall tree.

Both pilots were returned to home base later the same day.

Merrick recalled telling the first rescue team "You'd better hurry or you won't be able to get to me." There was shooting all around him.

Breckenridge praised the courage of the rescue crew.

"I seriously thought the prop wash would blow me out of the tree," he said, "but Capt. (Lee) Kennedy, held that copter so steady, it was as if the penetrator was hanging from a limb."

Successful Rescue of Capt. Alan K. Rutherford, F-105 pilot in the Gulf of Tonkin after being damaged while engaged in a strike against North Vietnam near Hanoi. 17 September 1966. This was the first water landing pick up by a Jolly Green in Southeast Asia.

Jolly Green 24 A/C 65-12786 Low Bird

P.	Capt. Kenneth D. Murphy
C.P.	Capt. Thomas R. Johnson
H.M.	A1C. William T. Lowe, Jr.
R.S.	A1C. John F. Tobey

The Jolly Greens pass Hue on the way North.

