

Date: Fri, 06 Feb 1998 21:31:26 -0500
From: David Young

Subject: Duane D. Hackney Major Patrick Wood

Date: Tue, 03 Feb 1998 21:45:36 -0800
From: Steve Whitton
To: David Young
Subject: Re: Duane D. Hackney Major Patrick Wood

David Young wrote: Steve, Sorry, I didn't get into the Air Force until 1969 and went to Vietnam in June '71. I flew in HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant Rescue Helicopters with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sqdn at Da Nang. I can't add anything you don't already have. Try some of the older PJ's like Harold Harvey, Bill Vargas, Gene Nardi, George Schipper, or Udo Fischer. They were from that time frame. Good Luck, Dave Young

Steve Whitton wrote: Trying to help Wood family contact HH-3 crew that rescued Hackney after Hackney dusted off Heiskell. Since Duane D. Hackney is deceased, Wood family would like to contact some one on the scene at Mu Gui Pass. Can you help????

This is an extract from Survivor! an April 1984 Airman article by TSgt. Dan Allsup, Airman Staff Writer: For his bravery as a 20-year-old pararescueman during the Vietnam conflict, TSgt. Duane D. Hackney was presented the Air Force Cross, second only to the Medal of Honor. He was the youngest person, and the first living enlisted member, to receive the medal. That was in 1967, the year he also won the Cheney Award. Today, the barrel-chested Hackney carries the same 180 pounds on his 5-foot-10-inch frame as he did the day he stood at attention to receive the Air Force Cross. The once cherubic face has matured in the last 17 years, but his youthful appearance and candid brown eyes match his enthusiasm for life. To cover the fading burn scars on his arms - permanent reminders of that eventful day in Southeast Asia - 36-year-old us usually wears the long-sleeved uniform shirt with a tie. On his chest are eight rows of ribbons, which stretch from the top of his pocket nearly to the collar. The 54 medals make up enough fruit salad to serve lunch to a Jolly Green Giant helicopter crew.

TSgt. Hackney tells his stories with just the right mix of gusto, salty language, and humor laced with pathos. When recounting his Vietnam experiences he punctuates his tales with slicing hand gestures and rolling eyeballs. His emotions alternately soar, while remembering the adrenaline-pumping rush of combat, or plunge when remembers the friends left behind forever in a distant jungle.

{These are details of the attempted rescue of Cricket FAC, Captain Lucius Heiskell, who was shot down while flying an O-1 Bird Dog of the 23rd TASS at NKP. In addition to Sgt Hackney, other crewmen on the HH-3E helicopter included Major Patrick Hardy Wood, Donald J. Hall and Richard A. Kibbey.}

...on the morning of Feb. 6, 1967, near Mu Gia pass in North Vietnam. "Oh, man, that was so long ago," he says now. "We had just picked up our equipment to go on alert status when we heard a plane had gone down. They scrambled us about 9 a.m. "We were the primary rescue helicopter, an HH-3E Jolly Green Giant. As soon as we got near the area, we heard the downed pilot on the radio, but we couldn't see him. I was lowered to the ground on a hoist. I looked around and saw footprints all around - Vietnamese because the tread on their shoes was a lot different than the tread on our combat boots.

"We had lost radio contact with the pilot, so I figured the North Vietnamese were probably chasing him and he had to stop communicating for a while."

The PJ was in the jungle for nearly two hours, tripping over tangled vines and roots while trying to locate the downed pilot and avoiding contact with the enemy. Finally the poor weather got worse and the rescue

team was forced to abandon the search. They flew back to Da Nang and waited at base operations until late in the afternoon, when the downed pilot was heard from again.

"Once we knew the pilot was still alive, we decided to try it again - to go for it," TSgt Hackney continued. "We knew we had to get him out before dark, because after the sun dropped, our chances for getting him would drop from about 90% to 30%." "When we went in again, a Sandy [an A-1 Skyraider escort aircraft] told us not to go over this one ridge because of heavy AAA and small-arms fire. But we had to - that's where the pilot was! Once we got over the area, they lowered me on a hoist again, and this time I found the pilot. He was pretty messed up.

"I got him into the hoist, but on the way back up, the helicopter started drawing more fire, so the Sandy dropped in and knocked them out. Then the enemy's anti-aircraft gun picked us up on radar. The first hit jarred us pretty bad and there was a lot of fire and smoke. I knew we had to get out of the chopper."

In the confusion, TSgt. Hackney managed to find his parachute and strap it on the rescued pilot before helping him out of the HH-3E. Groping around in the heavy smoke looking for the fire extinguisher, the PJ found another parachute, this one oil-soaked. He has his arms through the harness when the second enemy round hit. The anti-aircraft shell severed the fuel line and blew the PJ through the closed door of the helicopter, 200 feet above the ground. Semi-conscious, and weakened by shrapnel wounds and third degree burns, TSgt Hackney managed to pull the rip cord and hug the unbuckled parachute to his chest. He fell into a tree, which probably saved his life, but from there he plummeted downward onto a ledge in a crevasse about 80 feet below the jungle floor.

"When I came to on the ledge I could look up and see the Vietnamese jumping from one side of the ravine to the other looking for me. If they had ever looked down, they would have spotted me. I saw four of them, but I figured there were more in the area. A little later I heard an A-1E Skyraider over me and popped a flare. He saw my smoke and called in a Jolly Green Giant that came in and picked me up. I guess I was probably on the ground less than an hour the entire time."

The PJ later learned he was the only survivor of the aborted rescue effort. His four fellow crewmembers and the pilot he had pulled out of the jungle were never heard from again. For giving the pilot his own parachute at great risk to his own life, then Sgt Hackney was presented the Air Force Cross by Gen. Howell M. Estes, then commander-in-chief of the Military Airlift Command.

In the ceremony, conducted during an 800-man military parade at Scott AFB, IL., Gen. Estes also presented the young pararescueman the Silver Star, the Bronze star, and the Purple Heart. Sgt Hackney added those medals to the Distinguished Flying Cross with three oak leaf clusters, and an Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, awards he had earned on previous missions.

... His heroics that day in February 1967 also won him the 1967 Cheney Award presented to airmen who perform an "act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian mission in connection with an aircraft."

WOOD, PATRICK HARDY

Name: Patrick Hardy Wood

Rank/Branch: O4/US Air Force

Date of Birth: 23 January 1931

Home City of Record: Kansas City MO

Date of Loss: 06 February 1967

Country of Loss: North Vietnam

Loss Coordinates: 174600N 1054800E (WE847643)

Status (in 1973): Missing in Action

Category: 2

Acft/Vehicle/Ground: HH3E

Other Personnel in Incident: Donald J. Hall; Richard A. Kibbey; Lucius L. Heiskell (all missing)

Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project 15 March 1991 from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews. Copyright 1991 Homecoming II

SYNOPSIS: On February 6, 1967, Capt. Lucius L. Heiskell was a pilot and was flying an O1F aircraft on a visual reconnaissance mission with another O1F aircraft on a visual reconnaissance mission with another O1F when his aircraft was struck by enemy fire forcing him to bail out. His parachute was followed to the ground and voice contact with him indicated that immediate rescue was not feasible due to enemy troops in the area.

Beeper signals continued and later an HH3E helicopter flown by Maj. Patrick H. Wood was dispatched to recover Heiskell. He was at this time located near the border of Laos and North Vietnam about 5 miles from the Mu Gia Pass. Wood's crew that day included Capt. Richard A. Kibbey and SSgt. Donald J. Hall.

Heiskell was hoisted aboard, but as the helicopter was departing the area, it was hit by ground fire causing it to explode and crash. The helicopter pararescueman survived and was treated for burns. The remainder of the crew, Hall, Kibbey and Wood, as well as Heiskell, were not located.

When 591 Americans were released in 1973, the crew of the HH3E was not among them. They were numbered with nearly 3000 Americans who remained missing, prisoner, or unaccounted for at the end of the war. Since American involvement in Vietnam ended in 1975, over 10,000 reports relating to Americans missing, prisoner, or otherwise unaccounted for in Indochina have been received by the U.S. Government. Many officials, having examined this largely classified information, have reluctantly concluded that many Americans are still alive today, held captive by our long-ago enemy.

Whether Wood and the crew of the HH3E survived the crash of their aircraft to be captured is not known. It is not known if they might be among those thought to be still alive today. What is certain, however, is that as long as even one American remains alive, held against his will, we owe him our very best efforts to bring him to freedom.

Patrick H. Wood was promoted to the rank of Colonel during the time he was maintained Missing in Action.

Reply: Thanks for your mail. If you know how I could get a hold of these guys, I would appreciate you posting it from me. It looks better from a fellow PJ.
I have contacted Bill Vargas. I appreciated it. Steve Whitton
Phormer Phantom Phixer

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date: wed, 18 feb 1998 16:01:39 -0700
from: oliver o'mara

subject: narrative w/correction

I have sent a letter to David Wood in which I speak of my long association with his dad Pat and my deep and sincere regard for his dad's friendship; our mission of 6 Feb 67 and others, of his outstanding ability as a pilot and teacher (instructor at Turner AFB) and of his appearance and portrayal of an Air Force officer. I thought then and think now that Pat would have some day been a general officer. I think all of you would approve of my letter and hope that it eases David's and his family's minds. I also sent him my mission and citation report (for Pat) and a picture of Jollies and Sandies heading north-----I hope and think you would all approve of my package.

Correction: I have one (1) Air Force Cross for a mission previous to 6 Feb and was nominated for another for 6 Feb unbeknownst to me ---- I submitted no paperwork for it and learned a long time after I was home that it was downgraded to a DFC---never knew why and never tried to change it -- wouldn't know how, but I do resent it.

I guess there is always some humor in even tragic events -- I remember pulling out with Hackney aboard going like hell, low with blades just clearing the valley sides and its getting dark-- stayed down for about 5 miles then pulled up twisting and turning just knowing we were going to take a hit ---- dark now and smooth---climbed to about 12,000 and headed to NKP alone; no Sandies. PJ called from the back saying Hackney's pulse was over 200-- I said give him a brandy-- he doesn't want it---- Send it up to me!! And so back to NKP with terrible mixed emotions---So distraught at losing Pat, his crew and Nail 65, yet so tired and so glad to be alive.

So goodnight all; I've enjoyed our association immensely. Cheers! Ollie O'Mara
oscar-oscar

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From: Steve Whitton

Tally Ho Again: Found the surviving wife of SSgt Hall and spent 45 minutes conversing about the details found out about the 6-Feb-67 crash in the Mu Gui Pass. She was very thankful that people still care and remember her husband. I told her that many people still remember the crew's valiant effort in the rescue of "Luke Heiskell". Like the Wood family, she never knew about Duane D. Hackney. The Hall family knew of a survivor but that was it. She mentioned that the mother of the pilot (I believe she meant Heiskell) had wrote her a letter of thanks and condolences. Mrs Hall, now age 54, remembers that she received one letter from the Pentagon and the majority of the communication comes from Randolph AFB. She said that Randolph sent recon pictures of the crash but wanted them right back. So, she sent them back. She occasionally receives information from some informational updates from Randolph. She inticated that in the early 80's someone from Hawaii had contacted her regarding bones and an ID tag. But because of inconclusive data, would not release ID tag/card. She has never followed up nor does she have the number to contact for further information. Sometime ago at Tinker AFB, she was at a veteran's parade in which they had an oil portrait of her husband. She would like to find it for her family. Back in '63 they adopted a daughter that is now 33 years old. She has only seen pictures of her dad, "Donnie Joe". Isabel Hall, now remarried goes by Mrs. Smalley. She was very appreciative of the memories shared by all of the folks out there. I am going to call the people at the AIIPOWMIA and ask for information on her husband's ID tag/ card referenced to her in the 80's. Donald Joe Hall was 29 when he crash with the others on 6-Feb-67.
Steve Whitton

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Narrative Statement Feb 67
Nail 65/Jolly Green 05 Mission
Oliver R. O'Mara, Capt. USAF, RCC Jolly Green 36

On 6 February 1967, I witnessed a display of bravery by Major PATRICK N. WOOD, FR60158, the RCC of Jolly Green 05 that was without a doubt above and beyond the call of duty. On that date, Jolly Green 05 as Low Bird, and myself as RCC of Jolly Green 36 the High Bird, were launched from Nakhom Phanom RTAFB at approximately 0830 hours to effect the pickup of Nail 65, a FAC pilot, who had bailed out after being hit by ground fire, at a position approximately 3 miles northeast of Mu Gia Pass, North Vietnam. Flight time to the area was approximately 1 hour. During this time, Major Wood, as the lead RCC, briefed me over our discrete FM frequency on his proposed tactics. He directed me to stay in a safe area, since Mu Gia is notoriously known as one of the most heavily defended areas in North Vietnam. Upon our arrival in the area, voice and beeper contact was established with Nail 65. Sandy 5 and 6 immediately descended to pinpoint the survivor, and shortly thereafter called down Jolly Green 05. Major Wood made his descent to the east away from Mu Gia and proceeded up the karst valleys in to the area. During his descent, Major Wood was advised by Sandy that they had observed 37mm fire from a ridge to

the north. I observed several air bursts during the time at about 8,000 feet. Major Wood remained low, keeping below and between ridges, which protected him from enemy guns. At this time, Nail 65 advised that he had heard some noises and was terminating his radio transmission for fear of being observed. Major Wood knew that this might mean capture for Nail 65 and elected to press home his search of the karst in a vain attempt to locate the pilot. At one point during the search, he observed chaff in the jungle trees and lowered his PJ to the ground in the hope that this was a signal from the downed pilot. After several more 37mm rounds were lobbed into the area and no further contact was made with the pilot, all forces were recalled and returned to NKP for further developments.

At approximately 1630 hours, an airborne fighter pilot in the area of Mu Gia reported resumed voice contact with Nail 65. Major Wood in Jolly Green 05 and myself in Jolly Green 36 were again launched to the area as low and high bird respectively. Approximately an hour and a half remained until darkness. Major Wood expedited his entry into the general area, overflew Mu Gia and stationed himself in an area where he could make a let down. Sandy 5 and 6 had preceded us into the area and had established voice contact with Nail 65. However, because of a low overcast which in some areas covered the mountain tops, they were unable to descent and pinpoint the downed pilot. At this time, with darkness approaching and weather deteriorating, Major Wood elected to descent unaccompanied below the overcast in an attempt to retrieve Nail 65. Again 37mm air bursts were observed in the general area at about 7,000 feet. At this time, Major Wood would have been completely justified as Mission Commander and because of the elements and enemy presence to terminate the mission. However, knowing that this meant almost certain capture during the night for the downed pilot, he again elected to pursue the pickup. he announced that he was under the overcast and in contact with Nail 65. After a short time, after receiving directional headings from Nail 65, Major Wood transmitted that he had the pilot in sight and was going in for the pickup. After radio silence of approximately 3 minutes, Major Wood transmitted that he had Nail 65 aboard and was pulling out. Almost immediately, his tragic transmission, "We're hit — we're hit and on fire!" was heard. I descended into the area, conformed the crash and after three passes ascertained no sign of life, other than the bailed out PJ (Duane Hackney), whom I picked up and returned to base.

My own association with Major Pat Wood began in the same Rescue Group, the 3rd, while in Korea 13 years ago. I knew him then as a young dedicated rescue pilot. He remained dedicated in the highest tradition of the Air Rescue Service. My finest tribute to him is to know and say that Major Patrick H. Wood, after calculating the risk, truly risked his life in an attempt to save another. Failure to give proper recognition to Major Patrick H. Wood for his gallant valor would be a grave injustice to him and to members of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service.

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6 Feb 67: Nail 65/Jollies 05 & 36 Mission

Narrative Statement

Nail 65/Jolly Green 05 Mission

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(from the book: 50 YEARS PARARESCUE)

AIRMAN SECOND CLASS DUANE D. HACKNEY - On 6 February 1967, two HH-3 helicopters, "Jolly Green 05" and "Jolly Green 36," launched from the 37th ARRS at Danang AB, RVN. They were attempting to recover a downed O-1F pilot, "Nail 65," northwest of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam. After Airman Hackney had made one unsuccessful trip to the ground in search of the pilot, both "Jollys" returned to base because of foul weather. Later in the day, the helicopters launched again and were able to locate the survivor. Airman Hackney was lowered to the ground by hoist from "Jolly 05's". After loading the survivor into the Stokes Rescue Litter, they were both lifted out. As soon as they were in the door of the helicopter the crew reported ground fire. As they exited the area the helicopter was hit with a 37mm round and caught fire. With complete disregard for his own life, Airman Hackney took off his parachute and fitted it to the survivor. "Jolly 05" reported that it was on fire, which was confirmed by a "Sandy" A-1. In an instant, just as Airman Hackney had gotten another parachute over his arms, he was blown out of the aircraft by an explosion. He managed to pull the ripcord, with the chute opening just prior to hitting the trees. "Jolly 36" immediately made a run in to locate the downed aircraft. When they arrived they found burning wreckage and a person waving his arms. Miraculously, it was Airman Hackney. He was the only survivor and he was recovered and returned to the base. Airman Hackney became one of the most decorated enlisted men in the conflict, he retired as a Chief Master Sergeant and died of a heart attack in September 1993.

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More on Hackney from the PJ Book:

13 March 1967: Demilitarized Zone. Airman Duane D. Hackney is one of two PJs aboard an HH-3E Jolly Green that is flying deep into Viet Cong territory just south of the DMZ, to rescue survivors of a downed USMC H-34. Survivors report enemy forces are closing in for the kill. A second USMC helicopter a CH-46, overhears the radio transmission and also races to assist the beleaguered men. Hackney's Jolly Green arrives just in time to witness the horror of '46 falling out of the sky onto the downed '34.

On the ground the Marines gather their injured and establish a defensive perimeter against the closing enemy forces. At a distance, from the door of the H-3, Airman Hackney watches as A-1s dart in to blast Viet Cong units. With a white phosphorous smoke screen, laid down by the Skyraiders, shielding it, the H-3 cautiously enters the pickup area and hovers over the battle scene. This draws groundfire. Hackney rides the Stokes litter to the ground and loads as many injured men as he can onto it. Knowing the hoist operator will require his assistance at the door, he rides back up with the wounded. Just as he gets in the door, hydraulic warning lights begin to flash, indicating a system has been hit. Bullets smash into the fuselage as it departs the extraction area, Hackney, already treating the injured, suddenly slumps dead-weight to the floor. An enemy bullet has ricocheted off his helmet, knocking him out. He soon regains consciousness and continues to set fractures, tend head wounds, and apply tourniquets. Airman Duane Hackney is later to receive the Air Force Cross for his combat exploits. He becomes one of the most highly decorated pararescuemen to serve in Southeast Asia and is credited with a combat record which makes him legendary in the world of combat rescue. That in itself is quite an accomplishment as pararescuemen earn more decorations than any other group of USAF men serving in Indochina.

PJ Book Author's Note: It is difficult for laymen, especially nationwide television audiences, to believe the modest and shy, baby-faced young man named Hackney could accomplish so many daring feats. An example of such misconception occurred at Travis AFB, California, when Hackney was returning from a combat tour. A Security Policeman, believing he was encountering a "clothing store war-hero"-- one who wears medals without having earned them--apprehends the ribbon-bedecked PJ and places him under confinement. Hackney politely explains who he is and that is authorized to wear such refinement, all to the disbelief of the doubting man. Acquiescing to demands, Hackney provides a telephone number which clarifies the matter: it is to HQ USAF, the Pentagon. In a consummate economy of words, the man is told, not only who the confinee is, but that every respect and protocol is to be rendered. The ever-humble Hackney takes it all in stride, even to the point of genuinely expressing regret for the hapless law enforcement official.

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Date: Thu, 26 Feb 1998 00:57:53 -0700
From: Oliver O'Mara
To: "LUKE HEISKELL"

Subject: NAIL65/YOUR DAD --- Dear Luke: Great hearing from you. It's good finally to bring all of us together who have been involved for so many years in the saga of Nail65. I never knew your dad personally, Luke, but he has been a part of my life for many years -- I remember well the day (6 Feb 67) he came up on the air by voice and with his beeper after being shot down and was heard by a fighter pilot passing overhead, who then passed the word to our command to scramble the Jolly Greens at NKP --- We, Pat Wood in JG05 as low bird, and myself high or backup in JG36, were airborne in minutes, followed by two Sandy aircraft (A-1Es), heavily armed prop aircraft, who acted as mission commanders and gave us gun and missile support.

Your dad was pinpointed in an area close to Mu Gia Pass, a heavily armed and notoriously dangerous North Vietnamese supply route. It took us about an hour to get into the area and as we did the sky began to fill with anti-aircraft bursts at about 6,000 feet. We both stayed high until we got a good beeper (a tone put out by your dad's radio that we can home in on). Then I stayed high and Pat Wood went low in an effort to get close to Nail 65 without getting hit --- Your dad came up on voice and told us he could hear us. A short time later, he reported hearing voices and said he was going off the air (for what he had already gone thru his voice was strong). Pat Wood, fearing he'd be captured pushed his luck and thinking he saw

some evidence of a chute in the trees. Her hovered low and put Hackney (a PJ) on the ground for a search --- the chute turned out to be a some chaff and after a short time on the ground, Hackney was pulled aboard. Pat climbed to a safe altitude and we all circled in a safe area for about a half hour. We then returned to NKP for fuel and further contact with your dad.

At about 3 that afternoon, another fighter reported a strong beeper in the Mu Gia area, then had voice contact with your dad, Nail65. Again, cards and magazines were flying all over our alert shack. We ran to our cocked birds (all but battery switch on) and scrambled for Mu Gia v--- Pat Wood wanted to be low bird again; so I stayed high --- Same scenario: AA bursts as we entered Mu Gia airspace and a heavy under-cast had developed --- Your dad's beeper was strong again and Pat in JG 05 went for it, and with the beeper came your dad's voice: "Nail65—Nail65!"

I stayed high (JG 36) and watched Jolly Green 05 (Pat Wood's crew) descend into the undercast. Then came silence, except for a faint beeper at my altitude, for about 15 minutes --- Then came the call we were all waiting for from Pat: "We've got Nail 65 on board and pulling out!" --- Silence again for a few minutes and then a tragic screaming call: "We're hit! We're hit! On fire!" --- Almost immediately, a thick plume of black smoke rose through the clouds. --- After recovering some composure, I headed down toward the smoke into the clouds, staying low in the valleys --- I soon came to the crash site, which was to As I started around again, spotted a man standing in a pathway, frantically waving his arms. I hovered over him and lowering the hoist, then we brought him aboard --- I then circled the crash in a very slow hovering attitude twice all eyes looking for any signs of life --- Seeing none and expecting an enemy presence any moment, I pulled out reluctantly into a valley toward the south and headed in the general direction of NKP, arriving there in darkness.

Luke, as I wrote before, I never knew your dad, but I got to know him that day as a very brave man of whom you and your family can be extremely proud! He gave his life with three other brave souls one of whom was a very dear friend, Pat Wood. Take care of yourself, Luke. Please, contact me if you have any questions at all and please give my warmest regards and best wishes to your mother and sister. Ollie

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