

In the Sea and Out-Safe

SAIGON (UPI) — For Pete Kruger, the difference between freedom and either death or capture measured only five minutes, when, last week, he realized the fear of all U.S. pilots—being shot down over communist territory.

But within five minutes after he made his worrisome plunge into the water off the coast of Vietnam, Marine Capt. Peter Kruger was home free—aboard a U.S. "Jolly Green Giant" helicopter.

"It was a real smooth pickup," Kruger said of the chopper lift by the HH3E, piloted by Air Force Capt. Robert E. Prince, 36, of Camden, Ark.

"And I knew I had it made..."

There were a few anxious minutes when Kruger, pilot of a Marine A-4 Skyhawk on a strike mission over north Vietnam, was far less certain of that.

Communist guns in the demilitarized zone separating the two Vietnams had erupted and battered his jet. Frantically heading to the open sea, Kruger steered his stricken craft out to the South China Sea.

He bailed out, his plane crashed, and Kruger landed about five miles from the DMZ and over the South China Sea.

Prince said he and his crew were returning to Da Nang from emergency standby duty at Quang Tri to the north when they received a call from Kruger.

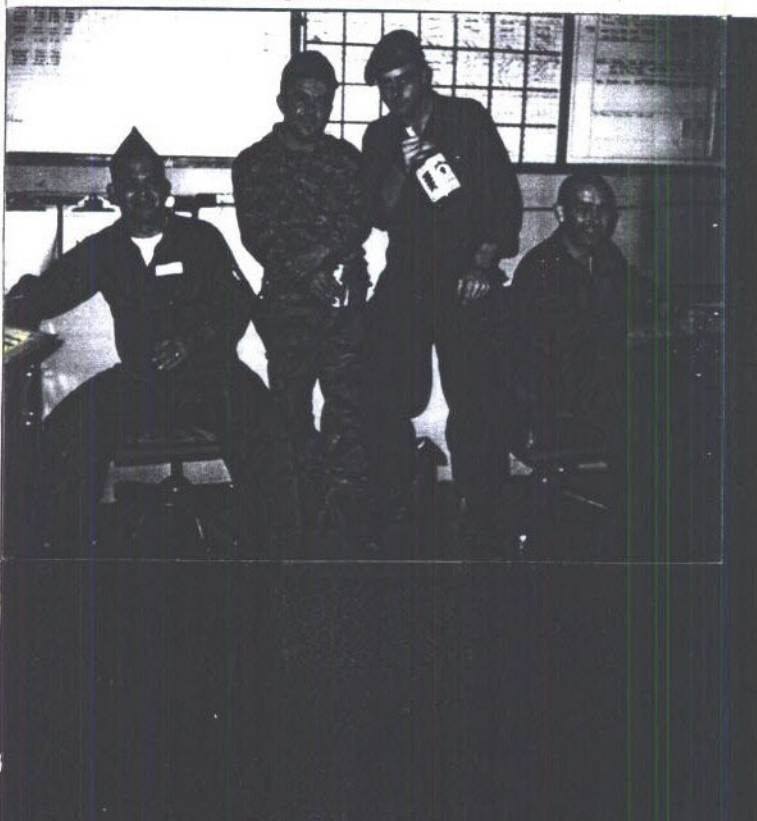
"We turned our helicopter around and headed for the area

...we spotted the Marine's wingman circling, then we dropped down and picked the pilot out of the water.

"It was approximately three to four minutes from the time the pilot hit the water until he was rescued," said Prince.

Prince's crew, all assigned to

Det. 7, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq. at Da Nang, included 1st Lt. Warren E. Walter, 25, of Baltimore, Md., pilot; A1C Francis E. Greinier, 29, of Hyde Park, Mass., flight mechanic; and A2C Joseph M. Duffy, 21, of Kansas City, Mo., pararescue man.



Marine Pilot Races Fire, and Wins

CHU LAI, Vietnam (ISO)—Bailing out over enemy territory or staying in a plane that could explode any second is a decision a pilot hopes he'll never have to make.

Capt. Pete Krueger, 28, of Milwaukee, of Marine Attack Sq. 223, found himself in that situation recently after his A4E Skyhawk was hit by enemy ground fire.

Krueger had just rolled out of his second pass over Viet Cong gun emplacements, when tracers laced the belly of his Skyhawk.

"You're hit and on fire," radioed his wingman, Capt. Wes Phenager, 30, of Chicago.

Krueger could see the flames

in his rear view mirror as he headed his crippled plane toward the sea, four miles away.

"I'm going to get rid of my ordnance and try for Da Nang," he radioed. But his bomb release mechanism failed. The fire became more intense.

It was either eject now or try for the sea. Krueger chose to gamble on the latter. Meanwhile, an Air Force helicopter from Da Nang, which had picked up his distress signal, headed for the scene.

Krueger was over the beach at 8,000 feet when he received another radio message from his

wingman. "That fire is really going now. You'd better punch out while you still can."

A veteran of 214 combat missions, Krueger pulled his face curtain and ejected.

His plane exploded before it hit the water.

The rescue helicopter was in the area while the captain was still in the air.

It took two passes for the helicopter to pick him up, but Krueger said he didn't mind the wait.

"Once that chute opened up, I knew I had it made. It took me about five minutes to descend, and what a ride!" he said.

15 March 1967

F-100D 56-3277 3 TFW, USAF, Bien Hoa
1Lt Victor Hugo Thompson (KIA)

An F-100 was lost and its pilot killed on the 15th during an attack on a VC base camp near the mouth of the Cua Soirap River, 20 miles south of Saigon. 1Lt Thompson was making his first strafing run against the camp when his aircraft ran into a hail of ground fire and dived straight into the ground allowing no time for the pilot to escape.

F-105D 59-1825 357 TFS, 355 TFW, USAF, Takhli
Lt Col Peter Joseph Frederick (KIA)

A flight of two F-105s on a road reconnaissance along Route 7 came under fire near the Bartholemey Pass, on the Laotian border with North Vietnam. The leading aircraft dived to attack a target on the road and was followed by Lt Col Frederick. However, after the attack the leader could not see Lt Col Frederick's aircraft and could not raise him on the radio. No beeper was heard and the wreckage could not be found but it was assumed that the aircraft had either been hit by flak or flew into the ground during the attack. At 42, Peter Frederick was one of the older fast jet pilots in Southeast Asia and was actually approaching his retirement point when he volunteered for combat duty.

F-8C 147027 VF-24, USN, USS *Bon Homme Richard*
Lt(jg) Dean Smith (KIA)

The *Bon Homme Richard* arrived back on Yankee Station on 26 February for its third tour of duty off Southeast Asia. The cruise started badly as on the next day after taking up position one of its UH-2B Seasprite SAR helicopters crashed into the sea when it was taking off from the carrier's deck and four crewmen died. The ship's first loss on a combat mission took place during a coastal reconnaissance mission on 15 March. Two Crusaders were flying just off the coast south of Thanh Hoa at 1,500 feet when they flew over several fishing boats. The wingman, Lt Smith, started to turn and descend so the leader warned him to watch his altitude but the Crusader continued to descend until it hit the water near the island of Hon Me. No flak was seen at the time and it was surmised that the pilot may have been fixated on the fishing boats as potential targets and did not realise he was losing altitude despite his leader's warning.

A-4E 151188 VMA-223, MAG-12, USMC, Chu Lai
Capt Stanley P Krueger (survived)

VMA-223 arrived back at Chu Lai on 1 March after a well-earned three-month break at Iwakuni. During a night-time armed reconnaissance mission just north of the DMZ a section of Skyhawks spotted and attacked an automatic weapons site. At 3,000 feet in the dive, Capt Krueger's aircraft was hit in the starboard wing but, although the aircraft caught fire, he was able to reach the sea and fly south before he was forced to eject about 15 miles off the coast. He was picked up safely by a USAF helicopter.

MARCH 15 1967

J. G's - Duffy, Weddel (C-46)

HH-43 also - Scurry

Hu-16 Alpha - Resco

Duffy made pickup of
F-105 pilot north of DMZ. His
first.

"Old Charlie" paid us another
visit last night. About 14
rounds of rocket (140mm) and mortar
hit Da Nang.

N. Viets Shoot Down 2 U.S. Jets

S&S Vietnam Bureau

SAIGON — Two U.S. jets were shot down by north Vietnamese ground fire over "MIG alley" Wednesday in strikes up the Red River Valley and near Haiphong.

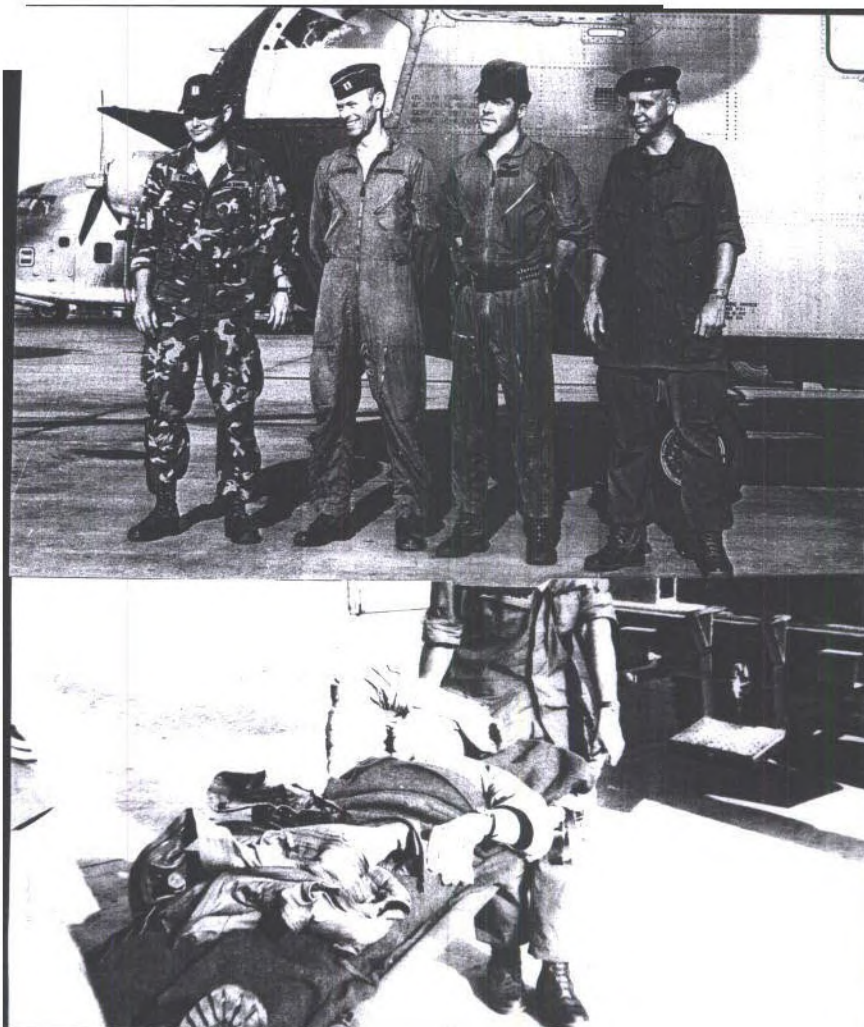
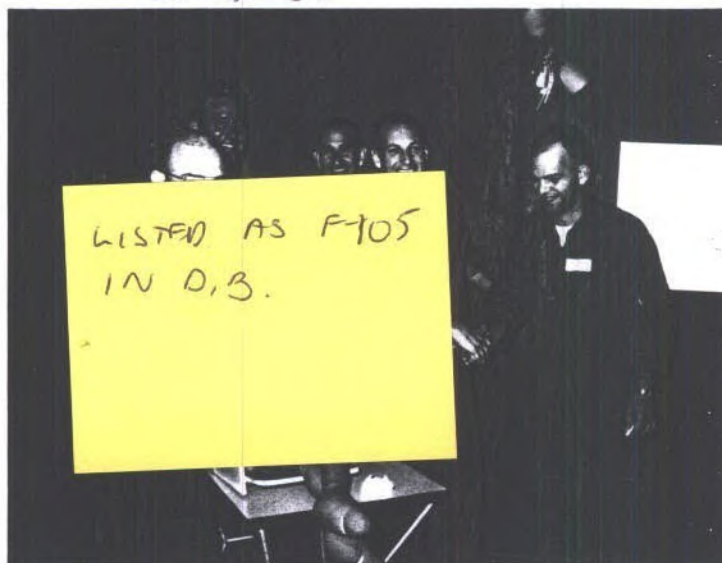
Spokesmen said the pilot of a Marine A4 Skyhawk, Capt. Peter Kruger, was pulled from waters just below the DMZ barely five minutes after his plane was shot down.

The other pilot, flying a Navy F8 Crusader, was listed as missing in action.

In raids over the south, Air Force and Marine pilots flew 427 sorties. An Air Force F-100 was downed by enemy fire 30 miles southeast of Saigon Wednesday and the pilot is missing.

B-52s struck three times Wednesday and Thursday near Hue, bombing a communist headquarters and suspected troop concentrations in a drive to cut enemy routes from the DMZ.

15 MAR 67



Supporting Document# 16

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<u>SAVE NO</u>	<u>SURVIVOR'S NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SERIAL NO</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
29-36	6 ARVN UNK, 2 ARMY UNK	UNK		12 Mar 67	1-3-41
37	M.F. Guy	Cpl-M		13 Mar 67	1-3-42
38	Peter Kruger	Capt-M		15 Mar 67	Sq Scrapbook
39	Jack C. Spillars	Maj-AF		26 Mar 67	1-3-54 M.N.
40	Lyle W. Townsend	Maj-M		1 May 67	1-3-62
41	D.S. Brachins	Capt-M		1 May 67	1-3-62
42	James H. Holland	Cpl-M		1 May 67	1-3-62
43	Thomas E. Hughes	Cpl-M		1 May 67	1-3-62
44	Edward F. Townley	Maj-M		4 May 67	1-3-64
45	L.E. Alexander	Maj-A		10 May 67	1-3-70
46	H.E. Burke	Capt-M		10 May 67	1-3-70
47	J.L. Murphy	1/Lt-M		10 May 67	1-3-70
48	M.W. Leftridge	Cpl-M		10 May 67	1-3-70
49	E.J. Ferraira	Pfc-M		10 May 67	1-3-70
50	Robert Powell	Lt-N		10 May 67	Sq Scrapbook
51	O.E. Hoy	Capt-M		16 May 67	1-3-73
52	Mike Carson	1/Lt		16 May 67	1-3-73
53-56	UNK-ARVN	UNK		21 May 67	1-3-76
57	Charles C. Rhymes	Maj-AF		25 May 67	1-3-78
58	Ronnie E. Randolph	1/Lt-AF		25 May 67	1-3-78
59	Clarence Kough	Maj-AF		5 Jun 67	1-3-83
60	Charles A. Colton	Maj-AF		9 Jun 67	1-3-85