

19,000-FOOT DROP INTO SEA

Lady Luck Stands by Downed Flyers

WASHINGTON, D. C. EVENING STAR

SAIGON (UPI)—It is bad enough to lose control of an airplane nearly four miles above the earth. It is a shade worse when it happens over North Vietnam. But Lady Luck still opened for two U.S. fliers.

Air Force Maj. Charles A. Colton, 32, of Greenville, Miss. and Lynn, Mass. and copilot 1st Lt. Ralph E. Frank, 24, of St. Petersburg, Fla. had just finished a bombing run Friday—one of 99 by U.S. pilots over North Vietnam—when automatic weapons just north of the demilitarized zone ripped holes in their F4C Phantom jet.

"We felt a bang on the bottom of the aircraft and noticed loss of utility pressure," said Colton.

At that instant the Phantom was about to become America's 577th airplane loss of the war over North Vietnam. Colton and Frank were sure of that.

The trick now was to keep from joining the scores of other U.S. pilots imprisoned in North Vietnam.

"When some of the gauges went to zero," said Colton, they headed desperately out to sea. Then, abruptly at 19,000 feet, everything came apart.

Colton tugged at the control stick, and nothing happened.

"The flight controls locked and the plane became uncontrollable," he said. "Then we punched out (ejected)."

As the two parachutes

blossomed above the Gulf of Tonkin, other pilots on the flight radioed for rescue service.

Colton and Frank hit the water and climbed aboard a raft. But the sea was "extremely rough," said Colton. Waves 20 to 30 feet high doused them and they "almost flipped out of the raft."

Then came luck in the form of a "Jolly Green Giant" HH3-E helicopter piloted by Maj. James F. Hicks of High Point, N.C. Hicks zeroed in on the bobbing pair near a speck of land called Tiger Island.

"We had trouble picking up the first man (Colton)," said Hicks, "because he was tangled in his parachute lines, which also were around his dinghy."

While Hicks kept the chopper hovering about 25 feet above the water, his crew—including copilot Lt. Mark H. Mutchler, 24, of San Leandro, Calif., T. Sgt. Andrew Benton, 32, of Buffalo, N.Y., and Airman 2C Walter White III of El Paso, Tex.—pulled the pilot and the raft aboard.

"We cut away the parachute

line and the dinghy," said Hicks.

A second later the helicopter swung over another 100 yards and plucked Frank from the sea.

The pilots were in the water only about 15 minutes, said Mutchler. The rescue took about 45 minutes.

"Our entire mission took only four hours, including an unexpected swim and a short trip to the hospital. The Jolly Green Giant really looked good coming in after us," Colton said.

SURVIVOR

MAJ CHARLES COLTON

HAVE PHOTO

9 JUN 67. JPK

JOLLY GREEN PICKS UP TWO
DA NANG BASED F-4C PILOTS
FROM H₂O NEAR TIGER ISLAND

RCC Maj James F. Hicks
RCCP 1LT Mark H. Mutchler
FE TSGT Andrew Benton
RS A2C Walter White III



9 June 1967

RCC Major James F. Hicks
RCCP 1 Lt Mark H. Mutchler
FE TSgt Andrew Benton
RS A2C Walter White III

						(returned)				
596	20 May 1967	RF-101	NVN	Maddox N. G.	Maj	MIA				
597	21 May 1967	A-1E	SVN	Holler J. C.	Maj	Rescued				
598	21 May 1967	F-100D	SVN	Lindberg D. C.	Capt	KIA				
599	22 May 1967	O-1E	NVN	Holmes L. E.	LtCol	KIA				
600	22 May 1967	F-4C	NVN	Perrine E. L.	Capt	MIA		Backus K. F.	1Lt	KIA
601	22 May 1967	F-4C	NVN	Vogel R. D.	Maj	POW (returned)		Baldwin D. L.	1Lt	Rescued
602	25 May 1967	F-4C	Sea	Rhymes C. C.	Maj	Rescued	USAF Helo	Randolph R. E.	1Lt	Rescued
603	27 May 1967	F-105D	NVN	Blackwood G. B.	Capt	MIA				
604	30 May 1967	F-4C	Sea	Schrupp W. C.	Maj	Rescued	USN Ship	MacDougall T. R.	Capt	Rescued
605	31 May 1967	F-4C	Sea	Fulcher M. C.	Maj	Rescued	USN Helo	Wolff A. E.	Capt	Rescued
606	2 June 1967	F-105D	NVN	Smith D. L.	Maj	POW (returned)				
607	2 June 1967	F-4C	NVN	Rockett A. C. Jr	Capt	MIA		Carrier D. L.	1Lt	KIA
608	3 June 1967	B-57B	u	Springston T.	Maj	MIA		Kearns J. T.	Capt	MIA
609	4 June 1967	A-1E	LAOS	Robinson L. M.	LtCol	KIA				
610	4 June 1967	F-105D	Sea	Kough C. J. Jr	Maj	Rescued	USN Helo			
611	5 June 1967	O-1G	SVN	Butterfield D. H.	Capt	KIA				
612	6 June 1967	F-100D	SVN	Baker D. S.	Capt	KIA				
613	6 June 1967	RF-4C	LAOS	Owens J. L.	Maj	MIA		Sale H. R. Jr	1Lt	KIA
614	8 June 1967	F-4C	NVN	Apodaca V. J.	Capt	KIA		Busch J. T.	1Lt	KIA
615	8 June 1967	F-4C	Sea	Colton C. A.	Maj	Rescued	USAF Helo	Franks R. D.	1Lt	Rescued
616	8 June 1967	B-57B	SVN	Busch E. H.	Capt	KIA		Morrison P. W.	1Lt	KIA
617	11 June 1967	A-1E	NVN	Rausch J. F.	Maj	Rescued	USAF Helo	Russell R. L.	Maj	Rescued
618	11 June 1967	F-4C	NVN	Stockman H. S.	LtCol	POW (returned)		Webb R. J.	Capt	POW (retur
619	11 June 1967	F-4C	NVN	Klemm D. M.	Maj	KIA		Pearson R. H.	1Lt	KIA

Supporting Document# 16

48

<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

Supporting Document# 16

49

<u>SAVE NO</u>	<u>SURVIVOR'S NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SERIAL NO</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
61	Ralph D. Frank	1/Lt-AF		9 Jun 67	1-3-85
62	Bruce A. Martin	Maj-M		2 Jul 67	1-3-97
63	Michael P. Dean	Cpl-M		2 Jul 67	1-3-97
64	Ralph E. Brubaker	Maj-M		7 Jul 67	1-3-105
65	Robert R. Headley	Capt-AF		18 Jul 67	1-3-109
66	Gregory Kushner	Capt-AF		18 Jul 67	1-3-109
67	R.W. Kuhl	Lt-N		20 Jul 67	1-3-111
68	C.W. Kinney	Sfc-A		21 Jul 67	1-3-112
69	J.R. Kinshaw	Sfc-A		21 Jul 67	1-3-112
70-78	UNK ARVN	UNK		21 Jul 67	1-3-112
79-98 NC	UNK U.S. Navy	UNK		29-30 Jul 67	1-3-115
99	James E. West	1/Lt-AF		29 Jul 67	1-3-116
100 NC	Walter N. Webb	Sgt-M		1 Aug 67	1-3-118
101-103	UNK U.S. Army	UNK		6 Aug 67	1-3-120
104	Vollmer	Maj-AF		17 Aug 67	1-3-123
105-112	UNK USMC	UNK		21 Aug 67	1-3-127
113	Russel W. Naugle	Pfc-M		22 Aug 67	1-3-128
114	M.A. Silva	1/Lt-AF		23 Aug 67	2-3-61
115	Corwin M. Kippenhaw	Capt-AF		26 Aug 67	1-3-131
116 NC	J.F. Gray	Lcpl-M		28 Aug 67	1-3-132
117 NC	F. Hurado	Pfc-M		28 Aug 67	1-3-132
118 NC	J.M. Dructor	Lcpl-M		28 Aug 67	1-3-132