

14 DEC 67 15

MODE		
VECT		
VECTCA	TCL	MKO

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MISSION NARRATIVE REPORT (U): Det 10, 38th ARRSq, 10-38-57

(C)(Gp-4) On 13 Dec 67, at 0821L Det 10, 38th ARRSq was notified by Paddy Control that an F-4C had gone down and that the aircraft commander had been picked up. The co-pilot, however, was still missing. The coordinates given to Pedro 39 were WS 44,04. Pedro 39 scrambled at 0023Z and took up a westerly heading. The co-pilot was having problems in plotting the crash scene. Paddy had stated that the aircraft and both crew members had gone down in a large river, but there wasn't any large river near the coordinates given. The RCC asked Paddy for vectoring to the scene and they immediately gave a 180 degree turn. Further questioning of Paddy disclosed that the coordinates were XS 44,04. No further difficulties were encountered enroute. Contact was established with Bart 92, a FAC O-1, when Pedro 39 was five miles from the scene. Bart 92 was asked if there were any armed cover aircraft at the scene and stated there were numerous armed helicopters and river patrol boats. There were also fighters in the immediate area as strikes were being conducted within two miles of the scene. Pedro 39 attempted to contact both the FRR's and the other helicopters in the area but could not reach them on FM, VHF or UHF. Pedro 39 then began a creeping line search, at 1000 ft, from an LST anchored in the river, at the coordinates previously given, upstream for approximately three miles. Information previously given was that the aircraft commander had entered the water approximately 500 meters upstream from the LST. Pedro 39 had nearly completed his first search pattern when he passed over the tip of a large island. Pedro 39 started receiving light small arms fire at this point. Shortly thereafter Pedro 91, the secondary alert aircraft arrived and began searching down stream from Pedro 39 for approximately three miles. After about 55 minutes of searching, Pedro 91 was informed by Paddy Control that a C-7A had crashed two miles short of the Binh Thuy Runway. Pedro 91 departed the scene enroute to Binh Thuy and Pedro 39 continued the search covering both the river and the banks. After 1+15 hours of searching, Pedro 39 departed, enroute to Vinh Long for fuel and then direct to Binh Thuy. When Pedro 39 landed at Binh Thuy, Pedro 91 who was working on the C-7A crash, informed 39 that he had talked to the rescued aircraft commander, who had been brought to Binh Thuy via Navy helicopter shortly after Pedro 39 began its search. The aircraft commander stated he was sure the pilot had come down near the southeast bank of the island where Pedro 39 had received ground fire from. Pedro 39 returned to the scene and established contact with Maverick One, a flight of two Army armed helicopters. Pedro 39 initially concentrated the search on the large island, starting at the middle and running a creeping line down stream over the island. Pedro 39's altitude varied from 500 ft to 200 ft. During this time, the gunships were in trail with Pedro 39. At one point, 39 had just rolled out of a turn and flown a short distance when automatic small arms fire were heard. The crew chief spotted the muzzle flashes and returned the fire with his M-16. The gunships also fired on the area. Pedro 39 expanded the search to all islands that the pilot could possibly be on within the search area. Estimated search coverage is in excess of 85% as the islands were completely flat with a shallow line of trees along the shore. After a total of 3+35 hours of searching by both

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RECLASSIFIED AFTER 10 YEARS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Arch 5
38-10-67/0043

14 DEC 81

15 DECLASSIFIED

VPCC		
VPCO		
VHCO		
VKCO		
VNCA	VCI	RLO

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DECLASSIFIED

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 DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

Atch 5

38-10-67/0043

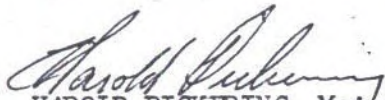
Pedro 39 and 91, with negative results, Pedro 39 returned to Binh Thuy. The weather throughout the mission was 3000 ft scattered, winds 045 at 15 knots. Visibility was 10 miles. The condition of the river was calm but extremely muddy.

(C)(Gp-4) On 14 Dec 67, Bart 92 was interviewed by Capt Precious and Capt Tollefsen. He stated he had seen both men enter the water. He saw the aircraft commander inflating his LPU but when he looked back at the pilot, all he saw was the chute sliding beneath the surface of the water. He is convinced that the pilot perished. In view of the extensive search coverage of the area by US Army, Navy and Air Force aircraft and ships, the mission has been suspended.

(U) CREWS: All Assigned to Det 10, 38th ARRSq

Pedro 39: RCC - Capt Thomas D Precious
RCCP - Capt Albert E Tollefsen
FE - Sgt Larry Hawkins
PJ - Sgt Ronald K Sholes

Pedro 91: RCC - Maj Harold Pickering
RCCP - Capt Leslie E Johnson
FE - SSgt Charles H Herring
PJ - Sgt Gary G Harold


HAROLD PICKERING, Major, USAF
Commander

Classified by _____
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS.
DECLASSIFIED ON 7 FEB 1977

~~GROUP 1~~
~~Downgraded at 8 year intervals,~~
~~Declassified after 15 years~~

CONFIDENTIAL

December 13, 1961

Dear Folks,

Thanks bunches for the tree; I had been looking for one & found a large one in B&K but was shabby & not worth the money. I really had no room to put a big one anyway. The smaller one sits atop of my tape recorder now and really sets an atmosphere in the room at night. I have cards hanging on lines across one wall behind the tree & everything looks real Christmasie here.

The book of etiquette and also a 5" tape of Christmas music came the other day. Thanks bunches.

Parks is back from Na Trang now & Pearson has gone back also. Harold is in Sidney on R&R & Parks & I are rotating primary, secondary every day. He is on primary now & I'll take it tomorrow giving up secondary to him till Gary gets back. We have 5 new P.T.'s coming in & one due on the 15th this month.

He'll be my replacement. The other two will be here around Dec 28th, or Jan 1st which will account for Jim Parks & Gary's replacements. 2

This morning two on primary & we got scrambled out on an ACR (Air crew Recovery, or Rescue). At first it was reported to be an OV-10 bird down & only one survivor picked up. The other missing. Then after we searched our first fuel load out we aborted & came back to Binh Thuy. Come to find out, a Caribou went down off end of Runway as landing approach. Only one more mile & he would have made it but he lost both engines when fuel ran out. The survivors were evacuated by land as both our choppers were out on the ACR. We were between Phu Vinh and Phan Phu due west of the base about 35 miles. The first time we went out ground fire was reported but exact location couldn't be determined. However, we were told after we returned

to Binh Thuy that our commander, 3
Major Pickering talked personally
with the rescued man & he said
his other copilot also had a good
chute. We were getting con-flicting
stories from every one & things
just didn't add up. O1E pilots
don't wear or carry chutes, neither
do the O2 pilots. So it was later
discovered that both pilot & copilot
of an F4C on bombing mission were
shot down. The rescued pilot said
him & his partner had good chutes but
didn't see this land. They now suspect
that he was unconscious and hit the
water & sank with all his gear. Well
we went back out anyway in search
for him & only picked up more fire.
Hawkins, flight mech aboard our
aircraft fired back. It sounds
like pop corn going off with the
bullet on. We didn't take any hits
but it was close cause last Lollyson
said he saw tracers right next to
the chopper.

We continued the search for another
hour & again called it off as a loss. 4
We are still trying to get more info
on him & maybe will go out again.

So I just thought I'd write
just to let you know I'm fine &
that every thing is O.K. If you
think it scares you, think how
I felt! Whew!

Love always, Kelly