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MISSION REPORT:

Msn No. 1-3-191 (reopening report.)

On 5 Dec 1967 Crown 4 was launched at 0545 hrs, an early departure, purpose to coordinate the extraction of a Marine Ground recovery team of 9 persons. This team had been engaged in the recovery of remains and equipment, remnants from a previous aircraft crash. The team location was established from the previous days activities and posed no problem, with a Forward air Controller to be provided who had also engaged in the previous days work. Call Sign of the Ground party was "Stanley Looker 06" and the FAC call sign was "Big 03". ~~Nx~~ A Routine operation was anticipated. Upon arrival in the area at 0700 an overcast condition tops at about 5000 ft was observed and it seemed unlikely that a pickup could be accomplished. Big 03 confirmed that the weather was marginal. However intermittent breaks could possibly permit completion of the mission. Two Gunships "Hostage" 30 and "Hostagee32" Marine UH-1 helicopters were in the area to provide close support and Jolly Green 03 and 28 launched from DaNang at 0810. All arrived in the vicinity of the site (170° 20 miles from Channel 94) but were unable to work because of the weather, 2000 ft broken and lower scattered clouds. No ground fire or enemy contact of any kind was reported by either the aircraft ~~or~~ the ground party. All forces except Big 03 withdrew to await further improvement in the weather, at 0835. At 0900 Big 03 reported the weather workable and the Jolly greens and Hostage aircraft were again launched from DaNang. The hostage aircraft preceded the Jolly greens by several minutes. This was considered of little significance because all had just previously been over the route and encountered no difficulty. However about 10 miles out of DaNang both Jolly Greens encountered ground fire and both were hit. Jolly Green 28 flight mechanic was wounded in the leg. Both aircraft were able to proceed to Danang and landed at 0935. Since the terrain and forrest conditions were such that a hoist equipped helicopter was required to complete the mission and none were now available, ~~the aircraft were again directed to withdraw.~~ Big 03 remained until

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0950 when fuel supply required that he withdraw. Hostage 30 and 32 remained in the area to deliver "C" rations to the ground party in anticipation of some delay in further attempts at extraction. Last contact with the "Hostages" was at 0955 when they stated that they would stay a few more minutes and then withdraw. Crown 4 began to proceed to normal orbit. At 1000 an emergency transmission was received on ~~243.0~~ ^{243.0} MCS from Hostage 32, he stated that both aircraft had crashed on a mountainside that his aircraft was completely destroyed and that Hostage 32 was about 75 meters away burning furiously. He was OK but his gunner had a broken leg and the co-pilot was in serious condition with ~~serious~~ internal injuries. It was further determined that he was in the overcast and unable to give his exact position but believed he was about 220° for 12 miles from Channel 94. Using this position other hostage aircraft in the area were able to locate the general position and were directed to try to contact Hostage ~~32~~ 32 on emergency frequency. The downed pilot was instructed to actuate his beeper for 30 second intervals on demand for homing. Considerable difficulty was encountered in establishing the precise location because of the overcast condition.

In the meantime Big 03 had ~~been replaced~~ ^{BEEN REPLACED BY BIG 04} for the scene and had located the wreckage through a ~~xxx~~ hole in the overcast, at about the same time that Hostage 40 landed at the scene. Hostage 40 was some distance from the wreckage and cloud cover ^{and distance} prevented his getting the casualties aboard. Hostage 10 was then directed into the vicinity by Big 03 and landed some distance down hill from the scene. He dispatched his crew chief up the hill, about 500 meters, to the area to reconnoiter and pick a landing site, and then proceeded under the crew chief's direction to land at the ~~AT 1154L~~ wreckage. He picked up the wounded and with barely 15 minutes of fuel proceeded direct to Danang. "Carstairs 1", the Marine command post, had been receiving regular reports on the proceedings, and was much concerned over the effort because of reported

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enemy activity in the area. Artillery had been shelling in the immediate vicinity but had been shutoff at Crown 4 request. ~~At 1210 Hostage 40~~ At about this time Carstairs demanded that all aircraft prepare to leave the area. Hostage 40 could not comply because he was still in the clouds although he started engine. At 1200 Hostage 40 was able to get off and proceeded to the crash site, picked up the 2 uninjured survivors and 2 of his crew who had walked to the site and immediately departed for Danang. He reported that there were no survivors from Hostage 30. AT 1212 attention was again returned to "Stanley looker 06". A hoist aircraft was still needed primarily to lift out some classified equipment that had been recovered. then it was planned that the ground party would proceed to a suitable landing zone to be picked up. Big 04 was given 2 H46s ~~and~~ (Marine) with the support of 2 Army ~~in~~ UH-1s. However prior to their arrival Big 04 contacted one of the aircraft from another mission (on FM) and vectored him (another Marine H-46) to the scene. Before any recovery was made his hoist jammed and it was necessary to land at An Hoa for repairs. At 1305 "Alley Cat" 05 and 06 Army UH-1 and ~~Hostage~~ "Hostage" 30 and 32, H-46 (note the same call sign as the 2 destroyed aircraft) Marine helicopters arrived in the area, they also encountered hoist trouble and landed at An Hoa for repairs. They were able to recover the classified equipment prior to landing. At 1330 Crown 5 was directed to proceed to the area to assume mission control. At 1350 Big 04 departed due low fuel at 1410 Crown 4 returned to base.

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