

5 March 1967

Airman Helps Rescue 28 in 2 Vietnam Tours

DA NANG, Vietnam (7thAF)—"The most rewarding job anyone could have," says A1C William J. Flowers.

The 22-year-old native of Milwaukee has helped rescue 28 persons in two tours here, with 24 picked up in a recent 7-day period.

Assigned to Det. 7 of the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq., Flowers is a pararescue technician on a HH-1E Jolly Green Giant helicopter.

The first of the recent rescues took place on Jan. 11 when six U. S. Navy personnel were picked up from a powerless large in choppy seas 12 miles south of here.

"We made the pickup during heavy rains and high winds which made it difficult for the aircraft commander to hold the helicopter till," Flowers said.

The next rescue came four days later when Flowers picked up 9 U.S. servicemen in about one hour.

At 5:50 p.m., two Jolly Green Giants were returning to Da Nang when one was forced to crash-land due to mechanical difficulties in Da Nang Bay, 10 miles north of the base. The second helicopter, with Flowers aboard, went to the scene and made the pickup.

The second rescue of the day came at 8:55 p.m. when an emergency call was received from a U.S. Navy tug with 5 persons aboard that had run aground in Da Nang Bay. The pickup was accomplished in 30 minutes after the helicopter reached the scene.



FLOWERS

On Jan. 17, Flowers was aboard a Marine Chinook helicopter as a volunteer crewman when they received a call to pick up 4 Army aviators from a UH-1E helicopter which had crashed 3 miles from Quang Tri.

Reflecting on his most memorable rescue operation which came during his first tour here, Flowers said, "Our sister ship had been shot down by enemy fire and I was lowered to the ground to give aid to the crew."

"After receiving medical attention they were taken aboard the chopper and flown to the nearest base for further medical attention."

Due to weight limitations, Flowers was left behind.

"I didn't know I was going to be left," he said, "and was surprised when the helicopter took off without me."

"I had no way to contact them as my radio was out and I felt a little apprehensive as I knew there were enemy forces in the area. But I knew they would come back and get me, so I moved about 30 to 40 yards away from the downed helicopter and hid in the bushes."

The helicopter returned in about an hour to pick him up.

17 JAN 67 FLOWERS FLIES SAR
ON CH-47 RESCUES
UH-1 CREW

11 MAR BARGE

15 MAR 67 H-3 IN BAY

15 MAR 67 NAVY TUG AGROUND

'Most Rewarding Job' Claims Pararescueman



PARARESCUE TECHNICIAN — A1C William J. Flowers of Milwaukee poses in front of a HH-3E Jolly Green Giant helicopter. Airman Flowers, who is assigned to the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron's Detachment 7, participated in the rescue of 19 persons in a seven-day period recently.

DA NANG — "The most rewarding job anyone could have," is the way A1C William J. Flowers describes his work.

The 22-year-old native of Milwaukee is well qualified to make such a statement. Of the 28 persons he has rescued in two tours here, 19 were picked up in a recent seven-day period.

Assigned to the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron's Detachment 7, the young airman is a pararescue technician on a HH-3E Jolly Green Giant helicopter.

The first of the recent rescues in which he was involved took place on Jan. 11 when six U. S. Navy personnel were picked up from a powerless barge in choppy seas 12 miles south of here.

"When we got them aboard, however, all the sailors were in good shape except for being wet and cold," he continued.

The next rescue came four days later when Airman Flowers picked up nine U. S. servicemen in the span of about one hour.

At 5:50 p. m., two Jolly Green Giants were returning to Da Nang when one was forced to crash land due to mechanical difficulties in the Da Nang Bay some 10 miles north of the base. The second helicopter, with Airman Flowers aboard, went to the scene and made the pickup.

Due to weight limitations, Airman Flowers was left behind.

"I didn't know I was going to be left," he said, "and was surprised when the helicopter took off without me.

"I had no way to contact them as my radio was out," he continued, "and I felt a little excited and apprehensive as I knew there were enemy forces in the area. But I knew they would come back and get me.

His confidence was confirmed when the helicopter returned in about an hour to pick him up.

Airman Flowers' first tour in Vietnam was also at Da Nang

where he was a pararescue technician aboard an HH-43 Huskie helicopter. He departed here in 1965 and served a year at Prestwick Airport, Scotland, before volunteering to return.

When asked why he volunteered, Airman Flowers said, "I never really gave it much thought. I heard they were looking for volunteers and it seemed like the right thing to do — so I volunteered."

Airman Flowers has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star and the Air Medal with 11 oak leaf clusters.

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The second rescue of the day came at 6:55 p. m. when an emergency call was received from a U. S. Navy tug with five persons aboard that had run aground in Da Nang Bay. The pickup was accomplished within 30 minutes after the helicopter reached the scene.

On Jan. 17, Airman Flowers was aboard a U. S. Marine Corps CH-47 Chinook helicopter as a volunteer crewman when they received a call to pick up four U. S. Army aviators from a downed UH-1E helicopter which had crashed three miles from Quang Tri.

"It was a relatively simple mission," said Airman Flowers. "The downed crew was shook up a little and pretty excited, but in good shape," he concluded.

Reflecting on his most memorable rescue operation which came during his first tour here, Airman Flowers said, "Our sister ship had been shot down by enemy fire and I was lowered to the ground to give aid to the crew.

"After receiving medical attention they were taken aboard the chopper," he continued, "and flown to the nearest base for further medical attention."