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FROM: 1-370

SUBJ: Mission Narrative Report (2-3-09, 28 Jan 68) (U)

TO: 1-37C
3 ARRGp (JSARC)

30 JAN 1968

1. (U) This report is submitted in accordance with ARRSN 55-2/3ARRGp Sup 1, dated 15 June 1967.

2. (S) At 0030L, 28 Jan 1968, Jolly Green 16(L) and 09(H) were advised that Zorro 16 was down approximately fifty miles east of Channel 89. The two Jolly Greens and two Sandy escort aircraft were scrambled at 0035L but were immediately recalled. At 0520L on the same day, Sandy 5 and 6 were again launched from channel 89 to rendezvous with Nail 43, a FAC aircraft with knowledge of the recovery area and a possible fix on the downed pilot. Jolly Green 16 and 09 were off channel 89 at 0525L and rendezvoused with Sandys 7 and 8 over channel 89. All SAR forces proceeded to a point 115/46/89. Sandy 5 and 6 met Nail 43 in the vicinity of the downed pilot and almost immediately obtained voice contact with the survivor. Although it was still totally dark in the recovery area, Zorro 16 was able to tell Sandy 5 that he was in a clump of trees that was entirely surrounded by open fields. Sandy 5 reconnoitered the area as day began to break and he was able to note that a wide river, a well-traveled road, and two villages were in the vicinity of the downed pilot. At 0605L Jolly Green 16 and 09 arrived over the recovery area and immediately were in contact with Sandy 5 and the survivor. Nail 43 was able to pinpoint Zorro 16's position and he led Sandy 5 over the survivor. Since there seemed to be no movement of personnel on the ground, Sandy 5 advised Jolly Green 16 to begin a descent in order to be in position at first light to make the pickup. The terrain in the area was hilly with a maximum altitude of 3000 MSL. Zorro 16 was located just south of the river, about 50 yards from a good road. He was also about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the nearest village. The altitude of the field in which he was located was less than 1000 MSL. As Jolly Green 16 passed through 2500 feet he rendezvoused with Sandy 5 and was led to a position over Zorro 16 (113/45/89). Zorro 16 popped a smoke flare and was immediately spotted by Jolly Green 16. A high hover over the trees was commenced at 0615L and at 0617L Zorro 16 was on board. The pickup occurred in semi-darkness approximately twenty minutes before sunrise. The weather in the area was clear with patches of ground fog in some of the lower places. The return flight to channel 89 was uneventful and Jolly Green 16 and 09 landed at 0655L. No hostile activity was detected at any time during the mission.

3. (C) The name of the survivor was: Charles Brown, AFSN Unknown, Captain, USAF, 606th Air Commando Sq.

1-370-S-68-12

Downgraded to CONFIDENTIAL

25 MAR 1971

IAW AFR 205-2

Cy 1 of 9 Cys.

(Date)

68-AD-434

GROUP 1

DOWNGRADE AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFY AFTER 12 YEARS

Atch 2

ARODC # 680460

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4. (U) Crewmembers of the Jolly Greens.

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Jolly Green 16 (L)

RCC Capt Richard A. Orsini
RCCP Capt George W. Greer
FE SSgt Carl L. Warmack
RS Sgt Peter S. Harding

Jolly Green 09 (H)

RCC Capt David A. Richardson
RCCP Maj Dean H. Williams
FE Sgt Narciso A. Otero
RS MSgt Clarence R. Boles, Jr.

Richard A. Orsini Capt
RICHARD A. ORSINI, Capt, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

Classified by _____
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED ON 5/10/2016

Downgraded to CONFIDENTIAL

25 MAR 1971 IAW AFR 205-2
(Date)

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SUMMARY TABLE OF RESCUES

DATE	RESCUE NUMBER	SURVIVOR	TYPE AIRCRAFT	SERVICE	LOCATION	JOLLY GREEN CREW	UNDER ENEMY FIRE
3 Jan	218	Maj Pattee	T28	USAF	Laos	Maj Ferrell Lt Sichterman Sgt Grau ALC Taylor	No
6 Jan	219	Capt Brownlee	F-105	USAF	Thailand	Capt Walker Capt Canfield Sgt Otero Sgt Boles	No
6 Jan	220	Maj Gustafson 76th Mission 2nd pickup	F-105	USAF	Thailand	Lt Platt Capt Greer Sgt Keyes Sgt Lombard	No
16 Jan	221 222	Maj Lewis Lt Kelly	F4	USAF	NVN	Capt Greer Capt Canfield Sgt Warmack Sgt Harding	No
18 Jan	223	Capt Stovin	F4	USAF	NVN	Capt Conant Capt Greer Sgt Cole Sgt Allaire	Yes
28 Jan	224	Capt Brown	T28	USAF	Laos	Capt Otsini Capt Greer Sgt Warmack Sgt Harding	No
2 Feb	225 226 227	Lt JG Jacobs AP2 Forbski AT1 Arntzen	P2V	USN	Laos	Lt Platt Maj Williams Sgt Keyes Sgt Boles	No
27 Feb	228	AP1 Gonzales	P2V	USN	Laos	Capt Walker Maj Washington Sgt Parker Sgt Harding	Yes

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Atch 1

154



28 JAN 68 SAR

CHARLIE 1968 ZORRO, JPL

CHARLIE BROWN, JPL

1968 ZORRO SAR
~~1967 ZORRO SAR~~

27 JAN 68

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A LONG, LONG NIGHT

By Colonel Charles W. Brown, AKA "Charlie Brown"

US Air Force, Retired

One of the FACs (Forward Air Controller) pilots transmitted that I was about 4,000 feet above the terrain. I responded that I understood and that I had fire coming through the firewall. I transmitted for all to hear, swearing, like I was mad at the AT-28 for failing me, that I was going to "leave this SOB of an aircraft". I checked the trim for wings level, trimmed the nose up a little more, opened the canopy, pulled the throttle to idle (I don't really recall hearing the power change), and aimed at the trailing edge of the wing as I dove into the black of the night.

WHAM, I hit something. It seemed like the fuselage under the horizontal stabilizer, but I was not sure. All I knew for sure is it put me into a roll and I was rolling at a fairly fast rate. I remember thinking "I got to stop this fast"! I extended my arms to stop the roll and noticed that I could see the ground and make out some trees. After I was somewhat stabilized, I tried to pull my "D" ring, but to no avail. My "D" ring was stuck behind the pouch of .38 ammunition on the upper part of my vest.

I was rolling again, but not as fast. I stabilize again, noticing that the trees were more distinguishable and I could see a river and a road. This time after I was stable, I grabbed the "D" ring with both hands and jerked for all I was worth. I remember thinking, that my wife will really kill me if I screwed this up, as I yanked the "D" ring for the second time. I ripped the pouch and "D" ring off my vest losing the supply of ammunition for the piddling-assed 38 that I was required to carry. I felt a jerk, looked up, and saw I had a partially deployed parachute. I looked down and almost instantly I hit in a tree. I seemed to still be falling very fast.

I don't know far I fell, but it felt like a long way, banging into a few things on the way down. I hit the ground in something like a PLF (parachute landing fall), but it was such a hard landing that I flipped completely over and came down on my other side. The landing knocked the breath out of me, I was disoriented, and dizzy. While trying to gather my senses, I could hear explosions and see a glow in the sky down to my left. I looked up and could see a part of my chute hanging in the tree. Thinking it was a big white flag showing where I had landed, I stood up and tried to pull it down. The chute was very torn and appeared very scattered in the tree. The riser cords were tangled in the tree and I could not pull it down. As I moved, my legs tingled, my lower back burned, and my head throbbed; but I could move. I released my harness from the parachute risers and moved a few yards from my chute hanging in the tree. Then I heard voices.

The voices were coming from my right and again down in front of me. The voices moved towards the glow in the sky. I assumed the glow was my burning aircraft, but I was surprised that it seemed so close. After the voices moved away I used my emergency radio to call for help. The FAC responded that he was still in the area. The FAC said it was quite a few minutes from the time I left the aircraft until I called. I recall them saying later that they were beginning to think that I was in some trouble, since it took me so long to call them on my emergency radio. The FAC said would orbit a few miles to the east of my burning aircraft. They were worried they might draw attention, if they stayed directly overhead. It was not yet 2100 hours (9:00 PM) and the night had already really gone to hell.

As I settled down a little the feeling was returning to my body, but my back and legs were hurting

more. I could see that I was on a hill above the terrain to the east and south. Again I heard voices and they are moving. I moved a few more yards away from my parachute and slipped into a hole in the ground, where a tree had been uprooted as it fell to the ground. I curled up in this depression, with my back to the roots and faced the direction of the voices, and waited. I heard the voices go past me again. They sounded like they were over the rise, but I saw nothing and no one. As they were almost out of my hearing my survival radio came alive, making all kinds of racket. I turned the emergency radio off. I thought that they must have heard my radio, so I lay very still and very quiet.

After a few minutes of hearing nothing, I put the speaker part of the radio in my mouth. I rolled the volume back up and after a little while, I could hear the FAC calling me. I am not sure, but I guess I could hear the radio through the ear bones while holding the speaker in my mouth. Anyway it worked and the sound didn't blast out in the jungle for all to hear. I was able to tell the FAC that I could hear voices moving around, so if he or anyone needed to talk to me they should orbit in the same area to the east and change their engine power setting a couple of times and I would try to come up and talk to them. The FAC said that the staff at NKP were considering a night rescue attempt, because the FAC could see what appeared to be activity in my area. He indicated that there were three groups of campfires along a road in a valley that was west and south of the burning aircraft.

The aircraft burning a few hundred yards to my left was an AT-28 (Call sign "Zorro"), the FAC was an O-2 (Call sign "Nail") and we both operated out of Nakhon Phanom, (NKP) Royal Thailand Air Force Base. We who spent some time there called it NKP, Naked Fanny, and few others terms of endearment. NKP was the current home of Air Commando units flying missions in Laos, North Vietnam, Cambodia, and South Vietnam, but mostly on "The Trail". The correct name was the Ho Chi Min Trail and it consisted of a network of roads and trails from North Vietnam through Laos and Cambodia into South Vietnam. NKP had squadrons assigned for direct interdiction and night Forward Air Control (FAC) support for the high flying, fast movers that also worked "The Trail". In addition to the Zorros and Nails, NKP also had B-26K's (call sign "Nimrod") and A-1's (Call sign "Hobo") Air Commando units stationed there during this period. Those of us flying the AT-28s worked with others on "The Trail" to find and stop the supply convoys moving down "The Trail" at night. We were required because the high flying, fast-movers had trouble seeing trucks at night. The objective was for us to stop and jam-up the trucks by get the first and last trucks burning and then have the fast movers work on the convoy.

The Zorro mission was almost all night flying, since not much moved on "The Trail" in the daylight. I had been flying this mission for a few months having received a few hits from ground fire, but successfully avoiding the 12.5 mm, 37 mm, 57 mm, etc. that they threw at us. We had lost a few aircraft and crews over the months, with only then-Major John Pattee surviving a night bailout in Laos. A Jolly Green pick-up Major Pattee from a tall tree after he had spent the night there. However, on that fateful night of January 27, 1968 my luck changed and I got to see some of Laos as a ground-pounder or in what some of my friends called "commando tourist mode".

This mission on the night of January 27, 1968 started out just like the many that had gone before. My take off time was set for just after sunset as the second Zorro for that night's business. So the hours before the mission included a shave and shower, before climbing into a flight suit and having a light breakfast at the "O" (Officers) club. While eating at the "O" club I watched the "normal folks" begin their evening activities, and then reported to the briefing facility on the flight line. The briefing sessions varied, but it was not unusual to have a number of crews that would fly during the first few hours of the night at a group briefing. We were assigned our primary and secondary areas on "The Trail" and they advised about who else was expected to be in the area. Our intelligence briefings used a number

of sources, but our own Intel shop provided the most current from debriefings of the recent, local missions. The briefings included reported sightings of vehicles, ground fire areas and weapon types, and the reports from the highly secret sensor system, managed by Task Force Alpha. These briefings were fairly detailed and we paid close attention to them, well at least I thought I did. I also recall hearing the crew of the first downed F-111 talking about how much more detail our Intelligence Shop had on the ground fire on "The Trail". They indicated that they had almost no information on ground fire. They also said they were hit over a spot that our Intel shop showed as having very heavy anti-aircraft fire for three nights prior to their mission. They had used that very same point as their initial turn point for their bombing run.

My mission was in the area a few miles south of where the main road out of North Vietnam turned south. This was very often a hot area for trucks and ground fire. Long before I got to my area, I could hear a Nail being a FAC for some aircraft (Marines, I think) in the area. I talked to the Nail and he asked that I stay to the south of the area he was working as he had more inbound traffic. I held above 8,000 feet and to the south as I watched the FAC work some trucks with only fair success. Most of the ordnance was not hitting close enough to the road. There was only limited anti-aircraft fire visible as I watched the ordnance hit the ground.

As the fast-burners departed, the O-2 FAC said he had no more ordnance or flares and if I had the area insight I was cleared in "Hot" (permission to expend ordnance) to work the area. He indicated that he would hold off to the west to assist. I roger'd (acknowledged) his message and was moving into position to take a look for trucks moving south of the strike area. I saw strings of 37 mm fire in the area where I thought the O-2 was holding. I was about to call him when my aircraft shook, jumped, and burst into flame. Even the FAC noticed, saying "what in the hell was that?" I replied, I had no idea but my aircraft was on fire. The FAC indicated he was heading my way and could see a fire that he guessed was my burning aircraft. He asked "What are your intentions?"

I was quickly trying to determine my intentions ... in a burning aircraft, at night, on the Ho Chi Min Trail in Laos; about 6,500 feet above the terrain, ... these were not the ingredients for a good night. What was I going to do next? I had control of my aircraft, both wings were still there and I could not see any visible damage. I jettisoned my ordnance "hot" (armed to explode) and the FAC reported seeing some explosions and some more 37 mm firings from the impact area. I rechecked my controls, while turning the aircraft to head west, when the FAC said that the heading to the "Rooster Tail" (an area of rough terrain that had no reported military activity southeast of "The Trail") was at something like 230. My aircraft's response to the controls seemed Okay. My engine and prop were still turning, but I didn't try changing the power setting. I was indicating 140 knots and losing altitude, but not very fast. The wind screen was covered with oil, but I could see out the sides and top of the canopy reasonably well. However, the aircraft was burning brightly, with flames licking both sides of the aircraft. About this time, I decided and told the FAC that I was going to stay with the aircraft as long as power and altitude would allow, to move away from "The Trail". I ask the FAC how far to the "Rooster Tail" and he responded about 50 miles. I started reviewing my checklist and preparing for a night bailout on the wrong side of the bomb-line in Laos.

The FAC indicated that he was behind me, had my aircraft in sight, that he would follow, and keep me advised of my estimated height above the terrain and the distance to the "Rooster Tail". I contacted the radar facility at NKP, gave them my position, told them my aircraft was on fire, and indicated I was going to ride my aircraft as far away from the target in the direction of the "Rooster Tail" as was possible. They confirmed my position, that they had radar contact, and would report my condition to my unit and the Air Rescue and Recovery Service. I stayed with the aircraft for a few minutes. Even

though it seemed like a lifetime, I don't think it was more than 7 or 8 minutes after my problems began. I guess the two pilots in the FAC aircraft could know better how long it was. All I know for sure is that I didn't make it to the "Rooster Tail" and that the hours that followed were what one might call "a real challenge".

As I waited from my position at the uprooted tree, I can hear voices again. I could hear a number of them coming from the direction of my burning aircraft. They moved on by to my right and passed out of my hearing. I removed my parachute harness, put it in the hole, pulled some dirt over it, and moved further away from my point of impact. An hour or so later, I heard voices again and this time they were coming from my right towards me. I could see the shadows of what appeared to be two individuals with may have been rifles, but the light from the burning aircraft was fading and I could not tell for sure. They were moving along the edge of the rise in front of me, some 40 or more yards away. These voices were just out of hearing, when I heard some yelling and the two came back through a little closer to me this time. I decided I was not in a very good location and that last group could have been working a search pattern, looking for me. I moved a little farther away to the north east, I think, and a little more back over the hill into a small bamboo thicket. Things were quiet for a while, then I heard an airplane jazzing an engine. I got out my emergency radio, turned it on, put the speaker in my mouth, and listened. The FAC was trying contact me. I made contact and he indicated that the staff at NKP had decided against trying a night rescue, but they would be out shortly after first light in the morning.

The voices were moving again, I don't know if they heard something while I was talking to the FAC or not, but I could hear them again. I was in a bamboo thicket, back in about 3 or 4 feet, but I was not well hidden and the voices seemed louder. As they came closer I could see some of them had some type of lights. As they moved closer one person with a light was coming almost directly toward my location. I got out the piddling-assed .38, thinking that even though I didn't want to, I might have to use it as the very last resort. I could not see the person with the light very well, but he kept coming towards me. I tried to get as small as could and thanked god that I had listened to what the road watch team guy had said about not wearing deodorant, after shave, or cologne, because some people could use them to smell you out and find you even if they could not see you. (Yeah, I guess by this time I might have grabbing for straws.) About the time I thought the next couple of swings of his flashlight would hit on me, the next guy down the line yelled out something. The individual in front of me turned about 90 and they spoke for a few seconds.

In the silhouette, I see he is carrying a hand gun. Damm just my luck an officer or an NCO! From the silhouette the hand gun looks like a Russian hand held 7.62 machine pistol. Damm with my luck tonight, he would be carrying one of those things! It can knock a truck engine off it's motor mounts and me with 38 caliber pea shooter and six rounds. (After the 9 mm Browning and 9 mm Madsen that I had carried in 1962, it seemed so useless.) As I am watching, listening and thinking to myself "be quiet and so stay put", this guys meanders toward the other person. They talk a little more and then he moves back towards me, but stops short, not quite all the way back to his previous line of march. He walks past the end of the bamboo thicket where I was hiding. It is now almost 0300 hours (3:00 AM) and I can take a breath again, but I was wishing I could slow my heart down a little to reduce all of the noise it was making.

Dumb or not (I guess that it is your call) I decided to move again, this time around the hill a little and more to the east. I found a heavier stand of bamboo and some fallen trees. I decided to move into the bamboo, close to a log from one of the fallen trees. By this time the need to take a piss was very noticeable, but the idea them following my smell keeps me from relieving myself. The rest of the hours

of almost total darkness goes by with no major problems. My biggest concerns during this period, beside the need to a whiz, was a sound on the other side of the log. I decided it sounded like some kind of an animal, but I didn't investigate. At the first sign of light, I looked around checking the stand of bamboo and area around me and then I look up.

OH MY GOD - I can see I am under something. It looked like a guard or observation tower and it is almost directly above me. Someone has pulled a number of the larger bamboo poles together and tied them into a small observation tower some 10 or 12 feet up in the air. I can not see anyone or hear anything. I try throwing a couple of sticks out in the bamboo, and I listen, look, and pray a little, but I don't hear or see any kind of movement. After three or four attempts to draw some movement, I hear an aircraft changing the power of it's engines. I listen for motion in the tower for a little longer, then I move very slowly along the log until I can see enough of the tower to be fairly sure it is empty.

I try to catch my breath again, before I put the speaker of the emergency radio in my mouth and listen. It was the same FAC that I had talked to during the night. He says that a rescue force will departing very soon. He asks how I am doing and if I know where I am located. I tell him that I am cold, sore, and need to piss very badly, but I will make it. I say that I think that I have moved mostly to the east and that I would guess that I have moved some 600 to 700 yards from where I hit the ground. I tell him that I am currently in an area of fairly big bamboo with some larger trees down on the ground. The whole thing appears to be a depression or something on what I think is a hill or ridge. He responds in the affirmative and that the rescue force is air borne and enroute. The FAC comes a little closer to the area and indicates he can still see some of my chute and about 400 meters to the east he see an area where an explosion has blown down a circle of trees and bamboo. Boy, I would have sworn I had moved farther than 400 meters. But, I agree that it sounds like what I see and I think that is where I am located. The FAC say get ready for a pickup, get out my smoke, and wait for the Sandy to call for smoke.

I hear the drone of the A-1's (really sounded good) and I can also hear the sounds of some jets. As I listened, I hear parts of the conversations between Sandy Lead (commander of the rescue effort) the other Sandys, the Jolly Greens (rescue helicopters) and some other aircraft (later learned they were F-4's). YES!, they are coming to get me. I hear the A-1's get louder and realize that someone, probably the Sandy aircraft are getting closer. I look up and see two A-1s making spiraling vapor trails in the damp morning air, as they are turning and descending to come in from the east.

Sandy lead calls "Smoke NOW"! I popped my orange smoke and laid it on the downed tree and almost immediately Sandy Lead say's I have a single, orange smoke. I confirm a single, orange smoke, next to a large down tree.. Sandy Lead confirmed my location and tells me to get my head down and keep it down until I hear the Jolly Green coming in for the pickup. I look up to see an F-4 aircraft roll in on a pass and then all hell breaks loose a few seconds later. I stayed down behind the log, but I could hear many explosions and gun fire as a number of passes delivering ordnance were made around my position. I guess I missed a real show, because later I found out that I was very near a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Battalion base camp. I was told that the rescue force was composed of 4 A-1's, 4 F-4's and 2 Jolly Greens, a larger than normal force with more standing ready to assist if required. They were expecting a real battle, maybe even a trap, since the NVA had all night to move in anti-aircraft and other equipment into the area.

After the area was beaten down, I looked up to see two A-1s strafing and dropping a string of smaller bombs. "OK", I thought "Willie Pete (white phosphorus) for smoke and fire." A few seconds later, there was a wall of white smoke on both side of me and a Jolly Green moving into position to pick me

up. I stood up so they could see me and the door gunner motioned me to stay down. As the Jolly Green came to a hover, the tree penetrator was on it's way down, and I was moving to meet the penetrator. I had put all of my gear away and my flight helmet on, so all I had to do was pull down the seat, zip open the bags holding the body straps, climb into the straps, and onto the seat. I heard a few rounds of small arms fire, but the penetrator ride up was fairly quick. In no time the pararescuemen (PJs) had me laying on the floor of the chopper. I asked the nearest PJ if I could lay by the door for a minute, as I need to take a piss real, real bad. The PJ shook his head, laughed, and held on to me as I relieved myself on that section of Laos that had been my home for the night.

The flight back to NKP seemed fairly quick, what with all of the hugging, shaking of hands and just plain old Charlie Brown happy times on that Jolly Green. WOW, both of the Jolly Green pilots were friends from my past, that I hadn't seen for some time. The PJs finally got me under control and strapped into a seat, they didn't want a wild man falling out of door after all of the trouble they had gone to rescue him. At least I guess that was their reason. Anyway one of the PJs asked if I was a scotch or bourbon drinker and when I replied scotch, he put two of the little bottles of scotch in my hand. The scotch burned a little going down, I felt the effects very quickly, but it reduced the pain. I am not sure why they thought this was necessary, because I am certain the Jolly Greens didn't have very many dissatisfied customers. Little did I know that this pain was to become a part of my life. The years since this experience has acquainted me with many kinds of pain, spinal surgery to remove a disk and a half, surgery to rebuild my right shoulder, arthroscopic surgery on both knees, and the prognosis of an artificial hip and possibly both knees in my future. Of course I must remember what my father used to say, the worse day of your life, is far better than the alternative.

I was amazed when we landed at Naked Fanny and most of the squadron as well as a bunch of other people were on the parking ramp to welcome me back. God, that was a sight to my tired eyes. A guy named Mobley (Billie Mobley) even put his flight jacket on me, because I was shaking and shivering. I know this because in the photograph by the Jolly Green at NKP, I am wearing a flight jacket with the name Mobley on it. I am sorry that I can not recall the names of each and every person that gave of themselves to assist me through this long, long night. Although I can not recall their names, I remember the faces of the two pilots in the O-2 that gave so much to help me through that night. I found out later they had requested and were allowed to lead the rescue forces to my location, even though they were on crew rest.

I know in my heart that there are many great and courageous friends who acted and prayed to help me return that January day in 1968. For many years I was treated to their remembrances about where and what they were doing as they thought about me that night. It is in thanks and memory of the selfless acts of all involved that I have written my recollection of these events. It is my hope that reading this account will remind each of you of all the good people that have worn the Air Commando, and many other, colors who did not get the opportunity to experience the fantastic feeling of being rescued from hostile territory. The few and lucky of us that have survived such encounters salute all of our comrades who have fallen in all the conflicts over the years. And I thank you Lord for seeing me through my ordeal.