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Mission 1-3-45

1 May 1968

At 2200 hours 1 May 1968, we were told to scramble. At 2235L 1 May 68, we were airborne and proceeding to Ch 109. We received our brief briefing in the air from Stoker to proceed to the Ch 109 area and contact Fairmont Bravo (Valley Forge) on 326.6 to take over as on scene commander for a SAR effort on Dimmer 1-0 a Marine CH-53 helicopter with 5 crewmembers. Dimmer 1-0 had ditched at 065/145 Ch 109 at 2054(H) and a helicopter had picked up 3 survivors and a small boat had recovered 1 survivor. The remaining crewmembers had been seen to exit the helicopter but were not seen nor heard of afterwards. The recovered crewmembers stated that the 5th man was equipped with flotation gear strobe light and pen flares or 2 day/night flares. He did not have an emergency radio.

When we arrived on scene at 2340L there was a Basketball 799 dropping flares in an uncoordinated effort to several small boats in the area of the last known position of the survivor. With the concurrence of Queen and Fairmont Bravo, Crown 6 assumed on scene commander at 1600Z 1 May 68.(2400Z) At this time, we anchored the small boats and stopped the flare dropping. 3 search areas were outlined and relayed to Fairmont Bravo to brief their helicopter crews. Two helicopters from Fairmont Bravo were requested at 1605Z and airborne in the search area at 1700Z. They were Welcome 5-1 and 5-2. The two choppers were briefed to search at 500-700' respectively and 100, for a strobe light or hand flare. No flares from Basketball 799 were utilized in the hope the choppers would spot a small light or flare better in the total darkness. Basketball 799 was utilized to search the same search areas as the choppers only at 1500-2000'. The search continued until the choppers bingo time of 1350Z with negative results. Due to

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incliment weather and low visibility and ceilings, it was not felt advantageous to renew the SAR effort until first light. Basketball 799 RTB at 1850Z and Crown 6 shortly afterwards RTB to Ch 83. Fairmont Bravo was rebriefed on the search areas for first light effort and said he would launch his helicopters at first light in the briefed search area. Crown 4 was to assume on scene commander on 2 May 68.

RICHARD E. PORTER, Major, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

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