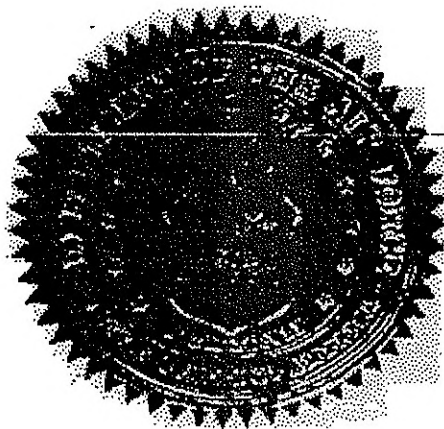


CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF  
THE AIR FORCE CROSS  
TO  
THOMAS A. NEWMAN

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Sergeant Thomas A. Newman for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E Helicopter Pararescue Specialist in Southeast Asia, on 30 May 1968. On that date, Sergeant Newman voluntarily descended into a hostile jungle environment to rescue a downed Air Force pilot. With complete disregard for his own life, and hampered by darkness and concentrated automatic weapons fire, he requested the rescue helicopter above him to enter a nearby orbit, both for the safety of the crewmembers, and to prevent the hovering aircraft from establishing the survivor's location for the unfriendly ground forces. When the rescue helicopter returned, he secured the injured airman to the forest penetrator and protected him with his own body as they ascended to the helicopter. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness, Sergeant Newman reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



SECRET

339

87

30 May 68      Crown 1      Mission I-3-56

At 1750H a report was received from Cricket that Master 02 was down at 116/102/89. Cause was believed to be 37mm. Nail 64 proceeded to the area and made contact with the survivor at approx 1805H. Position passed by Nail 64 was XD2635. JG 36 and 20 and Sandy 5 & 6 were launched to the area with a ETA of 1930H. Crown proceeded to the area and also made contact with the survivor since Nail 64 had picked up ground fire and his front engine quit. Nail 54 was then moved into the area and also made contact. Survivor stated that he had moved about 100 yards from his chute and that his arm and leg were broken and that he would need help getting into the forest penetrator. JG 70 was also directed into the area by Crown as a back up. JG 36 located the downed pilot and went in for the pick up no ground fire was received. The PJ was lowered into the forest to help the survivor. He was unable to hear the survivor due to engine noise of the JG. He then requested the JG to pull out of the area so that he could locate the downed pilot. JG 36 was unable to read the PJ or survivor so all instructions were relayed by Crown as requested by the JG. When he pulled out it was discovered that his hoist was not working. Crown then directed JG 70 in for the pick up. Since darkness was a factor time was important. The PJ directed JG 70 overhead and then lost contact and Crown then relayed again. Darkness had started falling and JG 70 had to hover in near darkness for approx 30 minutes until the pick up was complete. The survivor was recovered at 2000H. All forces were RTB at that time. Metric, Silver, Locust, Gun Fighter and Hoy fire were utilized by the SAR forces.

JOHN P. SVEC, Capt, USAF  
RCC, Crown 2

SECRET

68-0070

FROM: 4OARRS/Capt Montrem/2787

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report (4-9-56, 1968) (U)

TO: 4OARRS (O)  
4OARRS (C)  
3rd ARRGp (JSARC)  
IN TURN

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

8 June 1968

SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO  
YEAR INTERVALS  
DECLASSIFIED ON 31 DEC 74

1. (U) This report is submitted in accordance with ARRS 55-2 and 3rd ARRGp Supplement 1, dated 15 June 1967.
2. (S) Jolly Green 70, an HH-53B of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, departed Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base (SAR alert site) at 1640L to proceed direct to Udorn RTAFB (home base). At 1700L, information was received that an airplane (later identified as Master 02, an F-105 from Korat RTAFB) was down 88 miles, 083° from Savannaket, Laos (TACAN CHANNEL 99). Jolly Green 70 diverted from his position (317°/52 miles, CHANNEL 51), proceeding directly to CHANNEL 99 (50 miles, 040°) and from there to the rescue site. While enroute, a climb was established to 9500 feet, the aircraft made rescue ready, guns armed and calculations made to determine hover capability, the possible need to dump fuel, etc. Weather enroute and in the rescue area was no factor except for an isolated thunderstorm 25 miles east of CHANNEL 99, which was circumnavigated. Clearance into the rescue area was received from Crown 2 and at 1725L, Jolly Green 70 crossed the Mekong River south of CHANNEL 99. At 1740L, Jolly Green 36L and Jolly Green 20H (HH-3Es from CHANNEL 89) were visually spotted and radio contact established. With these helicopters on the scene, it was mutually agreed that Jolly Green 36 would attempt the rescue and be backed up by Jolly Green 70 and 20. At 1755L, the rescue helicopters and Sandy 7 and 8 arrived in the area to join a number of F-105 aircraft and one or more O-2 FACs (call sign Nail). A later TACAN fix of 088°, 88 miles from CHANNEL 99 had been received and this point proved to be 5 miles south of the survivor's actual position. His location later plotted to be 32 miles, 260° from Khe Sanh TACAN CHANNEL 85. The miniguns were test fired and the ramp gun experienced a feeder malfunction which made it inoperable for the mission. At 1810L, Nail 54 reported visual contact with the survivor's parachute and URT-10 contact was established. Jolly Green 36 descended at this time to join Sandy 7 and 8 and Nail 54 attempted to vector Jolly Green 36 to the survivor. Jolly Green 70, 20, other A-1 and F-105 aircraft began an orbit at altitude over the SAR effort. Jolly Green 70, maintaining a tight turn over the SAR position, was able to observe the low level aircraft and call out several ground fire sightings to the rescue force. Sporadic and often heavy ground fire was observed from the ridges above the survivor and from the valley and river to the west

Reproduced 8 Oct 68 by Auth  
of ARODC Reproduced \_\_\_cy  
of \_\_\_cy (a) Downgraded to CONFIDENTIAL

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals;  
Declassified after 12 years

18 AUG 1971

IAW AFR 205-2

(Date)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

68AD-1652

400-0023 68-AD-1567

AROCD # 681201

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of the survivor's position. The Sandys strafed and quieted the heavier concentrations of ground fire, but scattered enemy gunfire was observed to continue throughout the rescue effort. URT-10 contact with the survivor (Colonel Phillips) was valuable in that when the survivor could hear the search aircraft, he was able to direct them and the helicopter to his position. His calm directions helped immeasurably in his recovery. Late in the search the survivor was requested to fire a pen gun flare. He radioed that he was unable to do so because of a broken arm and he also requested ground assistance because of a broken leg. When the survivor's position was pinpointed, Jolly Green 36 made three passes (1827 to 1837L) before he was able to establish a hover in the heavily wooded, steep ravine (hover altitude 1600 feet MSL, OGE). In making three passes, Jolly Green 36 first dropped his external fuel tanks and then dumped fuel to reduce weight. On the third attempt the hover was successful and the Pararescueman (Sergeant Newman) was lowered to the ground (1837L). Upon touching the ground, the PJ reported he was being fired on and radioed for Jolly Green 36 to evacuate the area. Immediately after hearing these instructions, Jolly Green 70 observed two tracers come from a position within 100 yards of Jolly Green 36 and pass very close to the hovering helicopter. Jolly Green 36 pulled off the target, and as he departed, reported that his hoist was inoperative. With Jolly Green 36's rescue capability gone, Jolly Green 70 dove from his 9500 foot orbit directly above the survivor. During the fast descent, the PJ on the ground was called and asked to provide gunfire information and the advisability of Jolly Green 70 going in to hover over the survivor. No information was received and in the interest of getting over the target before complete darkness, an immediate straight in approach was executed. At this time, the forward right minigun was stowed because of its interference with the hoist. As the hover position was approached, Jolly Green 70 was hit by small arms fire. Hover information was then received from the PJ on the ground and Jolly Green 70, observing gun flashes from the right, returned gunfire from the rescue door with an M-16 while the Flight Engineer directed the hover and lowered the jungle penetrator into a small hole in the dark jungle canopy. After Jolly Green 70's return gunfire, additional ground fire while in the hover was not observed. The hover location was below the ridge line, in a steep ravine with heavily wooded slopes. Night time darkness and no lights on the helicopter provided Jolly Green 70 with cover and prevented receiving heavy concentrated ground fire. All 240 feet of the rescue cable was extended with no evidence that the penetrator had touched the ground. With the crew giving tree clearance information, Jolly Green 70 was turned 180 degrees, repositioned slightly and lowered 40 feet until the wheels were in the tree tops. In the complete darkness that followed (1855L), the hover was maintained by reference to a gray tree trunk immediately outside the pilot's window. No radio information was received from the ground for several minutes and the hoist was raised in response to what appeared to be a tug on the cable. A yell was received on the radio to "lower me" and this was done. Later it was learned that Sgt Newman had caught his foot in the excess coiled cable on the ground and was dragged feet first about 80 feet up into the trees. After being lowered, a call was soon received to "raise

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400-0023

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me slowly" and this was accomplished (1901L). Both survivors emerged from the tree tops and were quickly pulled on board (1902L). Before moving off the hover it was necessary, because of the darkness, to establish between RCC and RCCP the direction to move in order to clear the surrounding wooded hillsides. The blackout departure was successful and instructions to climb south to avoid heavy ground fire were received from Sandy 7. After attaining altitude, a direct course was established for CHANNEL 89, the nearest medical facility. Emergency medical treatment was administered to Colonel Phillips immediately upon his being pulled on board. His left arm was broken in two places and his right arm was dislocated. Pneumatic splints were applied and morphine administered in addition to first aid treatment of his minor scratches and wounds. Sandy 7 joined up to escort Jolly Green 70 and Sandy 8 joined and escorted the slower Jolly Green 20. Enroute to CHANNEL 89 at 9500 feet, Jolly Green 20 reported sighting gun flashes at both his and Jolly Green 70's position. At 1942L, Jolly Green 70 experienced a Second Stage Servo Out Warning Light, but all systems operated normally and an uneventful landing was made at CHANNEL 89 (2005L). The survivors were released to the medical facility and, following a careful inspection to determine battle damage and the cause of the Servo Out Light, Jolly Green 70 departed for home base, arriving there at 2300L. Aerial refueling was not utilized and no fuel was dumped. The one extra crew member on board was a mechanic being transported home after being TDY at Ubon. Battle damage consisted of one small arms hit which entered the bottom of the left sponson forward of the internal fuel tank, passed up through the cabin and out the upper right side of the fuselage just aft of the number two engine.

3. (C) The names of the survivors are:

- a. Colonel Norman P. Phillips, 469TFSq, Korat RTAFB.
- b. Sergeant Thomas A. Newman, Detachment 1, 40th ARRS,  
Nakhon Phanom RTAFB.

4. (U) Jolly Green 70 crew:

RCC, Captain Alfred C. Montrem  
RCCP, Major Aharon Aharonian  
FE, Technical Sergeant Robert E. Hollen.  
RS, Sergeant Larry E. Palmer  
RS, Sergeant David A. Kratz  
HM, Sergeant Richard B. Laverty

*Alfred C. Montrem*  
ALFRED C. MONTREM, Captain, USAF  
Rescue Crew Commander

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~~SECRET~~

400-0023

DECLASSIFIED

79

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: Det 1-409

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report (1-3-56, 30 May 68)

TO: 1-40C  
JARRGP (JSARC)

Classified by  
SUBJECT TO JARRGP DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AND  
RECLASSIFIED AT 5 YEAR INTERVALS  
DECLASSIFIED ON 31 Dec 74

1. (U) This report is submitted IAW ARREG 55-2/3 ARRGp Sup 1, dated 15 June 67.

2. (S) This mission was initiated on 30 May 68 at 1705L when Compress scrambled Jolly Greens 36L and 20H and Sandys 3 and 4 to a position 083/88/99, to attempt recovery of F-105 Master 02. While enroute the position was updated to 117/98/89. The latter fix placed the survivor in an area where the possible ground fire was not as highly concentrated. Although cloud cover enroute proved to be no factor the visibility was restricted to approximately 6 miles due to haze and approaching darkness. Jolly Green 36 and 20 arrived on scene at 1805L with HH-53 Jolly Green 70, staging out of Ubon. At this time Nail 54 was in the area and believed he had pinpointed the survivor's position. Jolly Green 36 was then called in for an attempted pickup but was unable to establish visual contact with the survivor due to the fact that he was wounded and unable to pop a flare. At 1825 Sandy 5 vectored JG 36 to another ridgeline and the survivor reported visual contact with the helicopter. Jolly Green 36 came to a hover over the survivor at 1836 and lowered the Pararescue Specialist to assist the disabled crew member. Immediately upon reaching the ground the PJ advised the pilot to retract the penetrator and leave the area due to the fact that he was receiving ground fire. The copilot then reported a string of tracers had passed the cockpit. During this time JG 36 had been experiencing inter-phone difficulties between the Flight Engineer and both pilots. The pilots could read the FE but were unable to talk to him. They attempted to tell the FE to retract the hoist for about three minutes and, when this failed, the pilot took control of the hoist and started to retract it, while at the same time increasing hover height. The penetrator then snagged a tree and, when it broke loose, lashed upward and wrapped itself on the right main gear. The PJ on the ground then advised JG 36 that he heard unfriendlylies in the area and was going off the radio. He strongly advised JG 36 to depart the area. At this time Jolly Green 36 was Bingo fuel and advised Compress that he was returning to Channel 89. Due to the fact that it was getting dark, Jolly Green 70 was immediately called in by Sandy 5. Prior to JG 70 going in, the Sandys were able to pinpoint the ground fire and made several firing passes. Jolly Green 70 then established a hover and proceeded to lower his hoist. By this time, the PJ from JG 36 had made contact with the survivor and directed JG 70 to lower his hoist. After approximately 5 minutes the hoist was retracted with the survivor and PJ on the penetrator. Both men were brought aboard at 1900 and all forces returned to Channel 89, landing at 2001L. Aerial refueling was not utilized. Radio discipline was good

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18 AUG 1971 IAW AFR 205-2  
(Date)

Cy 4 of 9 copies

1-40D-68-3-40

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 68-10-1512

ATCH 2

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 5 year intervals;  
Declassified after 12 years.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

except for JG 36 intercom difficulties mentioned above. Condition of the survivor was mild shock, fractured left arm and wrenched right shoulder.

3. (C) The name of the survivor was: Colonel Norman T. Phillips, PB3A373, 388th Cmbt Spt Gp, Korat AB, Thailand.

4. (U) The crew members of Jolly Greens were:

JOLLY GREEN 36 (LOW)

RCC Capt James H. Platt  
RCCP Maj Paul M. Reagan  
FE A1C Narciso A. Otero  
RS Sgt Thomas A. Newman

JOLLY GREEN 20 (HIGH)

RCC Maj Edward B. Russell  
RCCP Maj Milton S. Washington  
FE SSgt Bernard W. Grew  
RS Sgt J. T. Lombard

JAMES H. PLATT, Capt, USAF  
Rescue Crew Commander

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

ROUTINE

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* UNCLASSIFIED E F T O \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

PT 00293

RTTEZYUW RUSQSNA1205 3650953-EEEE--RUCIEUA.

ZNY EEEEE

R 300901Z DEC 68

FM 3ARRGP TSN AB RVN

TO RUCIEUA/ARRS/AR00PC/SCOTT AFB ILL

RUMHABA/PAC ARRC/PROCP/HICAKM AFB HI

INFO RUMHPD/OL1 3ARRGP SON TRA RVN

RUMOSRA/OL2 3ARRGP UDORN RTAFB THAI

RUMOSRA/40ARRS UDORN RTAFB THAI

BT

UNCLAS E F T O 3USARC

SUBJ: CORRECTION OF SAVES STATISTICS.

THE FOLLOWING ERRORS EXIST IN THE NUMBER OF SAVES CREDITED TO THE 40ARRSQ.

1. MISSION 2-3-02, 5 JAN 68. OL-2 OPENING/CLOSING REPORT STATES, >NO SAVES CLAIMED.> MISSION NARRATIVE REPORT JUSTIFIES TWO NON-COMBAT SAVES.
2. MISSION 2-3-24, 18 MAR 68. OL-2 STATES, >NO ARRS SAVES.> NARRATIVE JUSTIFIES ONE NON-COMBAT SAVE.
3. MISSION 1-3-56, 30 MAY 68. OL-1 REPORT REFLECTS ONLY ONE COMBAT SAVE. NARRATIVE PROVES JG-70 ALSO SAVED PJ FROM JG-36 WHO WAS STRANDED ON GROUND IN EXTREMELY HOSTILE AREA AND COULD NOT BE

PAGE 2 RUSQSNA1205 UNCLAS E F T O

RECOVERED BY HIS OWN AIRCRAFT AFTER THE HOIST BECAME FOULED ON THE LANDING GEAR.

4. REQUEST ALL ADDRESSEES CORRECT THEIR RECORDS OF THE ABOVE MISSIONS TO REFLECT THE ONE ADDITIONAL COMBAT SAVE AND THE THREE ADDITIONAL NON-COMBAT SAVES TO BE CREDITED THE 40ARRS.

5. FOR 40ARRS. YOUR CLAIM OF 32 SAVES FOR EXFILTRATING A GROUND RIGGING PARTY AND PERIMETER DEFENSE GUARDS ON 23 JUNE 1968 CANNOT NOW BE CREDITED AS THE REQUIRED RESCUE INFORMATION REPORTS WERE NOT SUBMITTED. YOUR 25 JUNE NARRATIVE REPORT IS WITHOUT A MISSION NUMBER AND DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY CLAIM SAVES. REQUEST THAT IN THE FUTURE YOU COORDINATE CLOSELY WITH COMPRESS TO INSURE THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF YOUR ACTIVITIES NOT CONTROLLED BY THEM AND THAT MISSION NUMBERS ARE ASSIGNED AND OPENING/CLOSING REPORTS SUBMITTED BY MESSAGE AS REQUIRED BY ARRSM 55-2 AND AFM 55-11.

BT

#1205

NNNN#

ROUTINE

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* UNCLASSIFIED E F T O \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

30 DEC 68 21 10

DECLASSIFIED

SEA Declassification &amp; Review Team MEET

| ROUTING/COORDINATION |       |           |                                  | PHONE NO.                                                    | DATE           |
|----------------------|-------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
|                      | GRADE | SIGNATURE | DATE                             |                                                              |                |
| 1                    |       |           |                                  | DOCC                                                         | 4114 31 May 68 |
| 2                    |       |           |                                  | TYPED NAME/GRADE/SIGNATURE OF ACTION OFFICER                 |                |
| 3                    |       |           |                                  | RICHARD Y. MERTON JR., Lt Col, USAF<br>Chief Analysis Branch |                |
| 4                    |       |           |                                  | TYPED NAME/GRADE/SIGNATURE OF DCS DIRECTOR                   |                |
| 5                    | CS/   | /Bdgh/    |                                  | Lawrence W. Atkinson, Lt Col                                 |                |
| 6                    | VC/   | /Mgh/     |                                  | W. ATKINSON, Colonel, USAF                                   |                |
| 7                    | C     | Gen       | WILLIAM W. MOMYER, General, USAF | Asst Chief, Command and Control Division                     |                |

SUBJECT: CommanderAircraft Loss - 30 May 1968 (U)

1. (S) BACKGROUND: Master/KRT/2 F-105 was fraggd and executed primary to strike in SVN under Peacock Control with a TOT of 1645H. At 1800H, the 7AF CC was advised that Master 02, piloted by Colonel Norman P. Phillips, was down in Steel Tiger Sector Foxtrot at a point 33 miles west northwest of Khe Sanh. After expending primary ordnance in SVN, the flight had been cleared by Cricket to strafe trucks reported by FAC, Nail 64. Master 01 had made one pass and did not observe any ground fire. He reported that Master 02 was hit as he began his roll in on his first pass. The aircraft caught fire as it ogressed the area to the northwest. After approximately 10-15 miles, the aircraft went out of control and the pilot ejected.

a. FAC/Nail 64/0-2 established beeper and voice contact with Colonel Phillips and remained in the area until he lost an engine due to ground fire. Nail 64 recovered safely at Nakhon Phanom. Other aircraft were in the area and maintained a continuous CAP.

b. At 1910H, Jolly Green 36 reported visual contact with Colonel Phillips' parachute. Sunset was at 1928H and last light was 1950H. Due to light conditions and jungle canopy, the helicopters had difficulty visually locating Colonel Phillips. At 1935H, Jolly Green 36 lowered a pararescueman to find the pilot. Both men were on board the helicopter at 2004H. No ground fire was reported during the pickup.

c. Colonel Phillips was taken to Nakhon Phanom for treatment. A late report revealed that he is in good condition, except for suffering from a fracture of the left arm.

2. (C) SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:

a. 1800H - 7AF CC was notified that Master 02/F-105D/KRT was down 33 NM WNW of Khe Sanh.

b. 1805H - Jolly Greens 20, 36, 70; Landys 5, 6, 7, 8; Spads 11, 12, 13; Gunfighter-F4s were scrambled.

c. 1812H - Nail 64 has beeper and voice contact. Downed pilot has broken arm.

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVAL  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
DOD DIR 5200

DECLASSIFIED

SEA Declassification &amp; Review Team

00527207

3-5336-30

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d. 1818H - Silver/2 F-4/UBN and Hayfire/2 F-105/KRT were diverted to the area for RESCUE. Locust flight is in area with 20MM.

e. 1819H - All SAR forces were airborne. Estimating area at 1850H.

f. 1827H - Nail 64/O-2/NKP has one engine shot up. RTB NKP.

g. 1849H - Nail 54 replaces Nail 64.

h. 1851H - Sandy aircraft are in area.

i. 1855H - Nail 54 and Jolly Green 70 still have voice contact.

j. 1900H - All 3 Jolly Greens are in area.

k. 1910H - Jolly Green 36 has visual contact with parachute.

l. 1914H - Jolly Green 36 going in for pickup.

m. 1920H - Having trouble getting visual.

n. 1935H - Pararescueman lowered to assist in the pickup.

o. 1940H - Nail 64 lands safely at NKP.

p. 1945H - Jolly Green 36 has inoperative penetrator. Jolly Green 70 moving in.

q. 1952H - Jolly Green 70 is lowering penetrator.

r. 2001H - Both men are on penetrator.

s. 2004H - Both men are on board chopper. Downed pilot has a possible broken left arm.

t. 2105H - Jolly Green 70 arrived at NKP.

## 3. (C) AIRCRAFT AND AIRCREW DATA:

### a. Aircraft:

- (1) Call Sign - Master 02
- (2) Type Aircraft - F-105D
- (3) Tail Number - 600511

### b. Aircrew:

- (1) Pilot - Phillips, Norman P., Colonel, FR34373
- (2) Total Time - 4858 hrs

# SECRET

SECRET

Doc-1-35122

DE RUMBDFB 3354 / 15 11202  
ZNY SSSSS ZOR JPCOO  
Z P 301145Z MAY 68  
FM 8TFW USON RTAFB THAI  
TO RUEOJFA/MCC  
RUEOJFA/JCS  
RUHKA/CINCPAC  
RUHLKSP/PACAFCC  
RUMSAL/7AF CO TON SON NHUT AB RVN  
RUMBDF/DEP COMOR 7/13AF UDORN RTAFB THAI  
RUMALB/13AFCC CLARK AB PI  
INFO RUNTEJA/USAFSS  
RUEFHQA/CSAF  
RUCSBB/SAC  
RUHKB/CINCPACFLT  
RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
RUMOTLA/COMUSMACV  
RUMTBK/AMEMB BANGKOK THAI  
RUMSMA/DOO SPEC REF MACV  
RUMSAH/12TFW CAM RANH BAY AB RVN  
RUABBS/JOINT SOME PROCESSING CENTER FORT BUCKNER OKI  
RUEBADA/TAC CP

12242  
FLASH

12-32  
CHABTLEE

4-DO AT  
2-DUSAL  
2-TAC  
2-DS  
7-DO C  
6-DI  
SS6  
NITEE

PAGE 2 RUMBDFB 3354 S E C R E T  
RUMSAGP/356TFW DANANG AB RVN  
RUMBDF/388TFW KORAT RTAFB THAI  
RUMBDF/355TFW DOI YANGLI RTAFB THAI  
RUMBDF/432 TRW TUOC UDORN RTAFB THAI  
RUMBDF/56ACN TUOC NKP RTAFB THAI

S E C R E T / JPCOO/JOINTREP. REF. FASTEL. 05 30/1145Z MAY 68  
8TFW OPREP/PINNALE 008

0-1 ACFT LOSS  
0-2 30 MAY 68

11-1 AT APRX 36/0945Z MAY, A 301 TACFIRAC F-105D, CALL SIGN  
MASTER 02, WHILE ON A STRAIGHT PASS ON 2 TRKS IN FOXTROT  
SECTOR UNDER THE CONTROL OF 11-1 64, WAS BY GROUND FIRE.  
SIZE UNK. ACFT CAUGHT FIRE. PILOT FORCED TO EJECT 10NM  
SW OF TGT AREA IN VIC 1635.10 5. GOOD CHUTE OBSVD. GROUND  
CONTACT MADE WITH PILOT WHO STATED HE HAD A BROKEN LEFT  
ARM. SAR IN PROGRESS. ACFT IN DANGER. CAPT. NORMAN B. PUGH IPS.  
BT

SECRET

SECRET

22. UNCLASSIFIED

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ZZ RUEKOA RUMKA RUMKSP

DE RUMBOFF 85A) 1511527

ZNY 85358

Z R 301523Z MAY 68

FM 56 AOW TUDC NAKHON PHANOM RTAFD THAI  
TO RUEKOA/BMCC

RUMKA/CINCPAC

RUMKSP/PACAF DC

RUMSAL/7AF CG TSN AD RVN

RUCSBB/SAC/RP/COM/7AF/103 LAOS

RUMFBB/3AD/RP/COM/7AF/103 LAOS ANDERSEN AFB GUAM MI

INFO RUEFHQA/CSAF

RUMKB/CINCPACFLT

RUMHFA/COMUSMACV

RUMTK/ANEMB BANGKOK THAI

RUAQRL/Joint Staff Processory Center, JSC, ONYAWA

RUEBDA/7AF CG LAOSLEY AFB TX

RUMJAG/DIR OF AFPOC LA 200 AFAP/INCON AFB CALIF

RUMBOFF/USAIN/103 LAOS COM/7AF/103 LAOS

RUMMYKA/3AF/15AF A/COM/15AF

RUMBOFF/7/15AF/15AF A/COM/15AF RTAFD THAI

RUMHFA/COMUSMACV/JPRC

RUMOTL/COMUSMACVTHAI

PAGE 2 RUMBOFF 85 S E C R E T

RUMGUL/COMUSMACVFLT

RUMQW/CG FMFPAC

RUMFUE/CTF 77

RUMJIR/ANEMB SAIGON RVN

RUMTEJA/AFSPE SAN ANTONIO TEX

BT

SECRET 170000Z MAY 68 1000-05 36AOW/PINNACLE/811

1. REFERENCE 338YFW OFREP-1/015, DTG 301025Z MAY 68.

A1. INCIDENT: RECOVERY OF DOWNED AIRCRAFT.

A2. 30 MAY 68.

H. COLONEL NGUYEN P. PHUONG, FR3837, WAS RECOVERED AT 1700Z  
BY JOLLY GREEN 70, AN F4C, ASSIGNED TO 30ARR. HE WAS RETURNED TO  
NAKHON PHANOM RTAFD AT 1700Z. HIS CONDITION IS DESCRIBED AS VERY  
GOOD. HE HAS A SEVERE FRACTURE OF THE LEFT ARM AT THE ELBOW DUE  
TO THE PAIN FROM THE WOUND. THE DOCTOR HAS HIM UNDER MEDICATION  
AND ASKED THAT ANY FURTHER INFORMATION INTO THE DETAILS OF THE  
INCIDENT BE FURNISHED TO THE COMMANDING.

GP-4

BT

SECRET



30/309

3 APR 64 / DAR-A  
DO  
- 37cc  
bi  
sp  
Lead  
10 7.7cc

1. RESCUE OPENING/CLOSING RPT. 1.  
2. 1-3-56/30 MAY 68.  
3. A. F-105/1 P.O.B.  
4. B. TACTICAL.  
5. C. CLASSIFIED.  
6. D. USAF/MASTER 2/600511.  
7. E. USA.  
8. F. 388 TFW KORAT RTAFB T. NO.  
9. G. COL. NORMAN P. PHILLIP 388 TFW.  
10. H. 1 P.O. B.

5. ORICKET/1002Z 50 MAY 68. 012.
6. 1002Z.
7. 2/111/5E/55ARRS/1000Z; 2/111/5E/55ARRS. 004Z; 2/111/602TFS/1004Z; 3/111/602TFS/1004Z.
8. SCRAMBLED 3 JOLLY GREENS AND 5 SPADS AT 1004Z.
9. 16-41N 106-15E.
10. A. NOT A FACTOR.
11. OL-1, 3ARRS CAPT CLY. 1, SSGT - G. KONIECZKO.
12. OL-2, 3ARRS, 2TFS, 3ARRS, 39 ARR, 39 ARR, 6 ACS, 602 TFS, 29TASS.

ANAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 3 RUMHPO 323 G O N F I D E N T I A L

13. JG-36/1123Z/16-AIN 106-15E.

14. 40 ARRS/MH-533/FOREST PENETRATOR/1200Z.

15. A. 1/1/1/1/0/0 B. 1/1/0/0/0/0.

16. RECOVERED TO NAKKON PHANOM.

17. 2/5PLUS40/38ARRS/MH3E: 1/2PLUS55/40ARRS/MH53B: 1/3PLUS30/30ARRS/

HG150P: 3/7PLUS42/6ACS/A1E: 2/3PLUS10/602TFS/A1E.

19. A. RCC: MONTREAU, A. C. CP: ANANONIAN, A. MAJ. F. E. MULLER

R.E. TSGT: PH: PLAUER, L. GT: PJ: KATY, D. A. SGT. AL: OF 20

ARRS. PJ: NUEMAN, Y. A. DET 1 43 ARRS.

D. PHILLIPS, NORMAN E. C. L. 353 T-1 FIGHTER SQDN.

20. H. 1 ARRS COMBAT SAVED OR REFUELING/AIRCRAFT WAS DOWNED BY

HOSTILE FIRE/ONE PJ DEPLOYED. JG36 MADE FIRST ATTEMPT TO PICKUP

SURVIVOR AND AT THIS TIME WAS DEPLOYED. THE HOSTILE BROKE ON

JG36 SO JG70 CAME IN AND TO UP THE SURVIVOR AND PH. THE

SURVIVOR HAS ONE BROKEN ARM AND ONE BROKEN LEG. OTHERWISE HE

WAS IN GOOD SHAPE.

GP-4.

BT

20/309

CONFIDENTIAL

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20. 11  
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MASTER 02  
Super

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

Section Title = Master 02 SAR

*Dear Mrs. Newman,*

*I had the good fortune of meeting your son, Thomas, recently in Southeast Asia. Our meeting was unexpected, but needless to say, very fortunate for me. I am the Vice Commander of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing based in Korat, Thailand. We fly the F-105, a single seated fighter used to bomb and strafe enemy forces in North Vietnam. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of May, I was hit by enemy fire during a strafing attack. Shortly after being hit, my aircraft burst into flames and went out of control. I was required to bail out over enemy held territory. I ejected at about 500 mph and as a result, the windblast broke my right arm and dislocated my left arm at the elbow. While descending in my parachute I crashed through tall trees. This injured my left leg and made it extremely difficult to stand. Upon reaching the ground, I used my emergency radio and learned that the air rescue helicopter was enroute to my position. Since there were enemy troops near me, I left the area where I had landed and hid myself in the dense jungle.*

*Your son, Thomas, arrived overhead in a helicopter about an hour and a half later. Because I was unable to ride the lifting cable unassisted, I requested help. Tom volunteered to be lowered through the dense tree coverage into unfriendly territory with no idea of what he could expect underneath. After he was on the ground, the helicopter which lowered him was forced to withdraw. Tom and I were alone on the ground with enemy troops drawing closer and closer. He calmly directed a second helicopter to our position and meanwhile made me comfortable and maintained an alert eye out for enemy troops.*

*When the second helicopter arrived it lowered an excessive amount of cable. As Tom tried to prepare me to ride the lifting device, a loop of the cable ensnared his ankle and lifted him into the air feet first. Tom remained calm in this very awkward and dangerous position and was fortunate to be lowered fairly close to the ground before the loop slipped and he fell head first to the forest floor sustaining a sprain to one wrist. Tom took the entire incident in stride and acted as though nothing had happened. He calmly secured me to the penetrator and straddling my legs, wrapped his arms around me so that I could not fall off as we were pulled up through the tree-tops into the hovering helicopter.*

*From that point on the story is no longer exciting. I have taken this opportunity to write to you so that you would know of and appreciate your son's courageous and selfless actions. His kind of heroism in our rescue forces is what keeps our fighter pilots going. We have full confidence that the young men like Tom who serve in the air rescue units will spare no effort and will do everything possible to help us when we are downed by enemy action. Being a father of four children, three of them teenaged daughters, and one ten year old boy, I can only say I hope my boy will grow up to be as brave a young man as your son is. As his mother, you have every right to feel very proud of your son.<sup>1</sup>*

The above letter was written on 24 June 1968 by Col. Norman P. Phillips. When he was shot down, the Col. was using the callsign "Master 02." The HH-3E helicopter that lowered Tom to the ground was Jolly 36 and was assigned to Det. 1 40 ARRS based at NKP, Thailand. It was crewed by Capt. James Platt (pilot), Maj. Paul Regan (copilot), and A1C Narcisco Otero (FE). The HH-53 that recovered Sgt. Newman and Col. Phillips was Jolly 70. This "Super Jolly" was

*As I came up to him, the first thing I did was to take away his weapon. He had been firing tracer rounds from it to signal the helicopter when it was leaving. Then I cut him out of his G-suit and unnecessary survival gear. Throughout this time, there were occasional bursts of small and automatic weapons fire from the hill and ridge above us. After each burst the pilot would tell me, "that's only the fighters, that's only the fighters!" I knew that it was enemy forces, but let the pilot believe what he would. He told me later that he knew it was enemy fire too, but was afraid I might leave if I knew it. None of their shots came within several yards of us so it was obvious that they were only trying to flush us out, and shooting at the aircraft.*

*It was now getting darker and we could hear people moving through the brush searching for us. To flush us out, they fired their rifles sporadically through the brush. If I called the Jolly in now, they would be subject to close-range ground fire and would also give away our position. So, I radioed the helicopter and told them that I was closing communications so that the enemy could not find us by hearing my radio static. I told them I would be off the radio for 10-20 minutes. I then shut off my radio, got the pilot closer to the ground and a little more comfortable, and watched the shadows for movement. The end man in the enemy sweep came closer than 50 ft of where we were hiding behind a fallen tree.*

*After a while, the noises in the brush ceased as the enemy searched elsewhere. I radioed the chopper and told them we were ready for pick-up. As the HH-3E came in, they received very little small arms fire. I talked them in until they were directly over head, and told them to lower the cable. As they complied, I glanced away for a moment and when I looked back, the helicopter had drifted about ten yards downhill and to the left, and I could no longer see the penetrator. I figured that they had probably raised it into the aircraft to make the corrections I had given them. When I realized that the penetrator was on the ground, I decided that it would be easier to move the pilot than to have them move the aircraft.*

*I got my arm under Col. Philips shoulder and around him and helped him to where the cable came through the trees. In the darkness, I couldn't see the penetrator, so I tried to follow the cable to it. The area was covered with vines the same size as the cable and as the cable was lying in coils on the grounds I couldn't tell one from the other. I radioed the chopper and asked them to take up the slack. I must have been standing in a couple of coils of the cable. When the hoist retracted some cable, it tightened around my ankle and jerked me off my feet causing me to drop my radio and weapon. By this time, at least one enemy soldier had moved to within 75 yards of our position and I could hear him firing at the aircraft. I tried to grab my weapon but it was tangled in the vines and I couldn't reach it before I was pulled up through the trees by my right ankle.*

*As I was pulled through the first tree, the branches were catching me and it felt as if my right foot was being torn from my leg. Finally, I was pulled through by sheer force, and up into another tree which I went through more easily. Once I was through that, I pulled in my radio, which was dangling beneath me by the lanyard that attached it to me. Trying to sound calm and still be heard above the roar of the helicopter, I radioed them that I was tangled in the cable and wanted to be lowered to the ground. By now, I was about 70-80 feet in the air and within 20 feet of the helicopter. The hoist operator began to lower me, still hanging upside down by my right ankle. As I went through the first layer of trees, I narrowly missed being impaled on a dead tree*



Photo courtesy of Thomas Newman

Photo = NKP Newman Phillips2.bmp

Tom Newman (left) and Norman Phillips in the NKP hospital. Tom's left arm is splinted due to minor injuries when he was dropped off of the hoist cable

The pilot of Jolly Green 37, which recovered Tom and rescued the survivor, had this to say about the mission. *When Jolly 36 pulled off and departed the area, its pilot radioed that his hoist was inoperative. We immediately left our high orbit at 9500 feet and dropped down to a lower altitude. The sun was setting and we wanted to make the pickup before sunset. During our descent, we made several radio calls to the PJ on the ground but received no answer. We were also hit by small arms fire but continued in for a pickup. Just before total darkness we went into a hover over the survivors last known position. Sergeant Newman came up on radio and provided information that allowed us to set up a hover over him.*

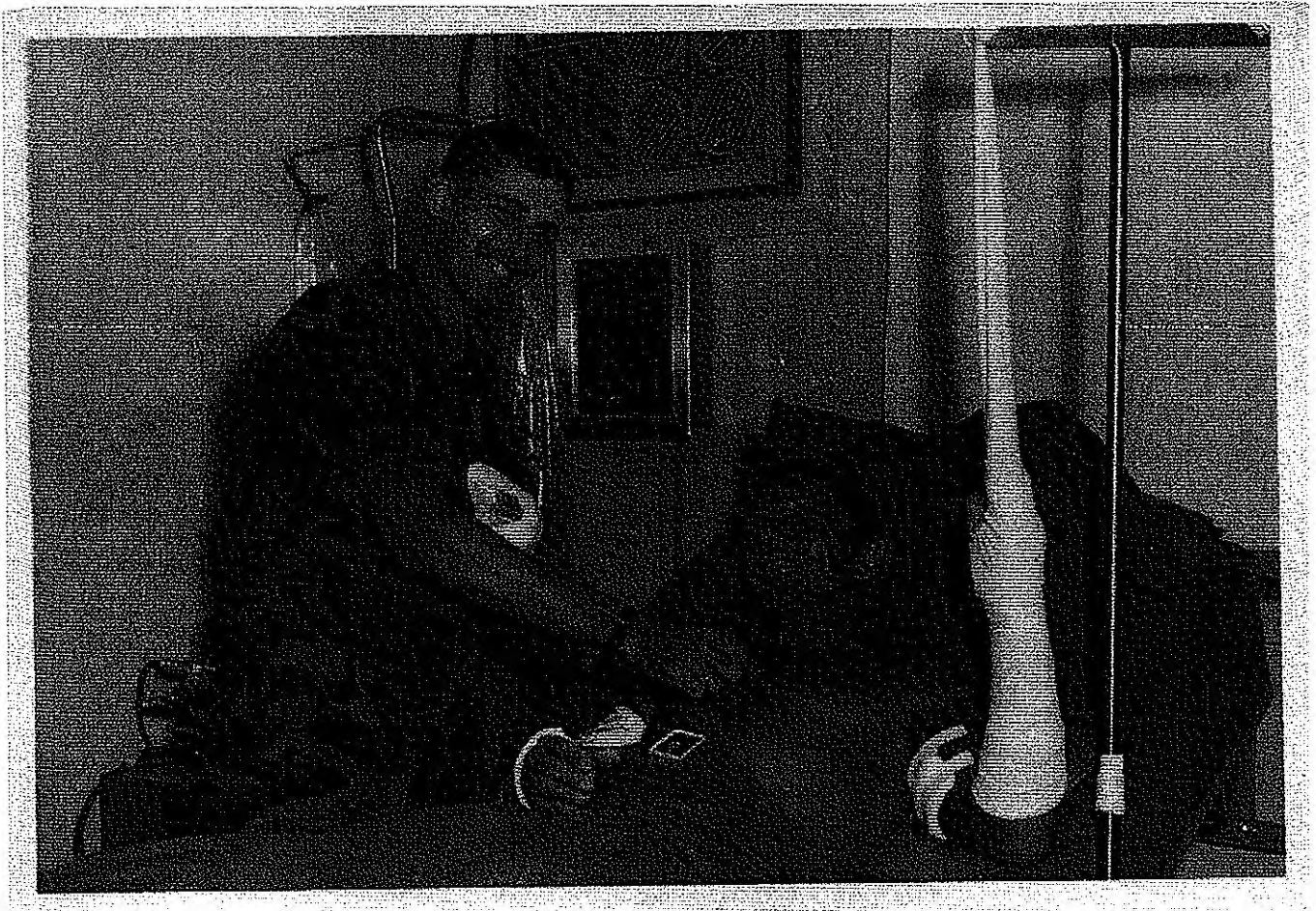
*The hover location was below the surrounding ridges, in a steep ravine with heavily wooded slopes. We took some minor small arms fire and returned fire with the minigun. The darkness and with no lights illuminated on the helicopter may have prevented the enemy the ability to see and shoot at us. All 240 feet of hoist cable was used to get the penetrator on the ground. The hoist operator could not see through the trees and waited for the cable to shake or a radio call from Newman to reel them in. The hoist operator waited several minutes until he felt a tug on the cable. He began to reel in and continued until we received a radio call from Newman telling us to lower cable. We were unaware that he was entangled in the cable but we complied with his instructions. The next radio call from the PJ was to "raise me slowly." At 7 p.m. and in now total darkness, the men on the penetrator emerged from the treetops and they were pulled into the helicopter.<sup>4</sup>*

When Tom later wondered why the enemy did not shoot him as he was dangling defenselessly upside down on the hoist cable, he concluded that they were probably laughing too hard. This mission was a success because of the great team effort using HH-3's Jolly Greens 36 and 20, Sandy's 5, 6, 7 and 8, Nails 54 and 64, HH-53 Jolly Green 70, and HC-130 Crown 1.

Weeks later, Sergeant Newman became the third living enlisted man to be awarded the Air



FILE = NKP NEWMAN PILLIPS, ~~JE~~ BMP



FILE = NRP NEWMAN PHILLIPS 1, BMP

MISSION REPORT 31 MAY 68, Sgt. Thomas A. Newman, AF16817854

On 30 May 68, we were scrambled to aid an F-105 pilot who had ejected over hostile territory. We took off immediately, and during the flight to his position, were notified that he had sustained a broken arm and would require assistance in getting on the forest penetrator. In checking my equipment, I discovered that the helmet connection to one of my radios was inoperative, and decided that although there would be an element of danger, it would be to my advantage to leave my helmet behind and maintain two-way communications.

Upon arriving in the area, a brief search was made and the survivor was located. I relieved myself of my safety harness, parachute, and helmet and was lowered to the ground by the flight engineer. (I also left my medical kit, as I expected to just grab the survivor, get him on the hoist, and get out of there.) I immediately established radio contact with the aircraft and looked around for the survivor. When I couldn't see him, I began an expanding circle search pattern trying to locate him. After one circuit without success, I decided to have the aircraft depart the area, as they had been picking up ground fire from the ridge above me. I told them three times to raise the cable and depart the area before my message was intercepted. As the helicopter pulled out, it became entangled in the dense brush, but was pulled free before I could reach it to free it. (I didn't know it at the time, but when the penetrator tore free of the trees, it snapped up and half-hitched around the landing gear taking my aircraft out of commission.) As they flew over the ridge I was on, they were subjected to very heavy automatic weapons fire.

Suddenly there was a blast and I saw a muzzle flash in my right peripheral vision. I hit the ground and almost opened fire in the direction of the shot. But as I did not have a specific target, I decided that it would be better not to chance a miss and give away my position. I crawled a few feet toward the shot to get a better look, and the person fired again. This time I could make out a person, and was aiming to fire (had him in my sight picture and was squeezing the trigger) when it occurred to me that his shot hadn't been fired in my direction. I then thought it might be the survivor and held my fire. Not wanting to give away my position in case it was an enemy, I yelled, "Hey!" Keeping him in my sights. Had he made the slightest move in my direction I would have fired, as I could still not make out who it was. He sat perfectly still and yelled back, "Up here!" As I was still not sure whether or not he was friend or foe, I let him see a little movement from where I was (wiggled the bushes with my foot), and when he still didn't fire at me, I moved around to come at him from behind. (It turned out that he thought the helo was leaving him, and had tried to signal them with his .38cal tracer rounds.)

As I came up to him, the first thing I did was to take away his weapon (due to his previous shots it was imprinted in my mind that he was an enemy, even after I could see him, and I kept my weapon trained on him until I had disarmed him), and cut him out of his flight and survival gear. Throughout this time, there were occasional bursts of small and automatic weapons fire from the hill and ridge above us. After each burst the pilot would tell me, "that's only the fighters, that's only the fighters!" I knew that it was enemy forces, but let the pilot believe what he would (He told me later that he knew it was enemy fire too, but was afraid I would leave if I knew it). None of their shots came within several yards of us so it was obvious that they were only trying to flush us out, and shooting at the aircraft.

It was now getting darker and we could hear people moving through the brush searching for us and firing sporadically through the brush. Rather than call the aircraft in and subject them to close-range ground fire, as well as giving away our own position I called the helicopter and told them that I was closing communications so as not to be given away by my radio static. I told them I would be off the radio for 10-20 minutes. I then shut off my radio, got the pilot closer to the ground and a little more comfortable, and watched the shadows for movement. (The end man in the enemy sweep came closer than 50 ft of where we were hiding behind a fallen tree)

After a period of time, the noises in the brush had ceased, I called the chopper and told them we were ready for pick-up. As they came in, they received very little small arms fire. I

**Robert LaPointe**

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**From:** Tom Newman [tanewman@wans.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 21, 2002 12:58 PM  
**To:** Robert LaPointe  
**Subject:** AFC Mission

Bob --

Good to hear from you. I received your email with interest. I've always hated the dramatic license Airman Magazine took with their version of my mission. I can assure you I never crawled around the jungle floor on my knees muttering to myself (bar rooms are another matter entirely!). But I enjoyed how you put the letter and article together anyway. I also found myself trying to remember whether I had shared Col. Phillips' letter to my Mom with you after Pits' MOH ceremony (I'm probably having a senior moment) or if you got it somewhere else.

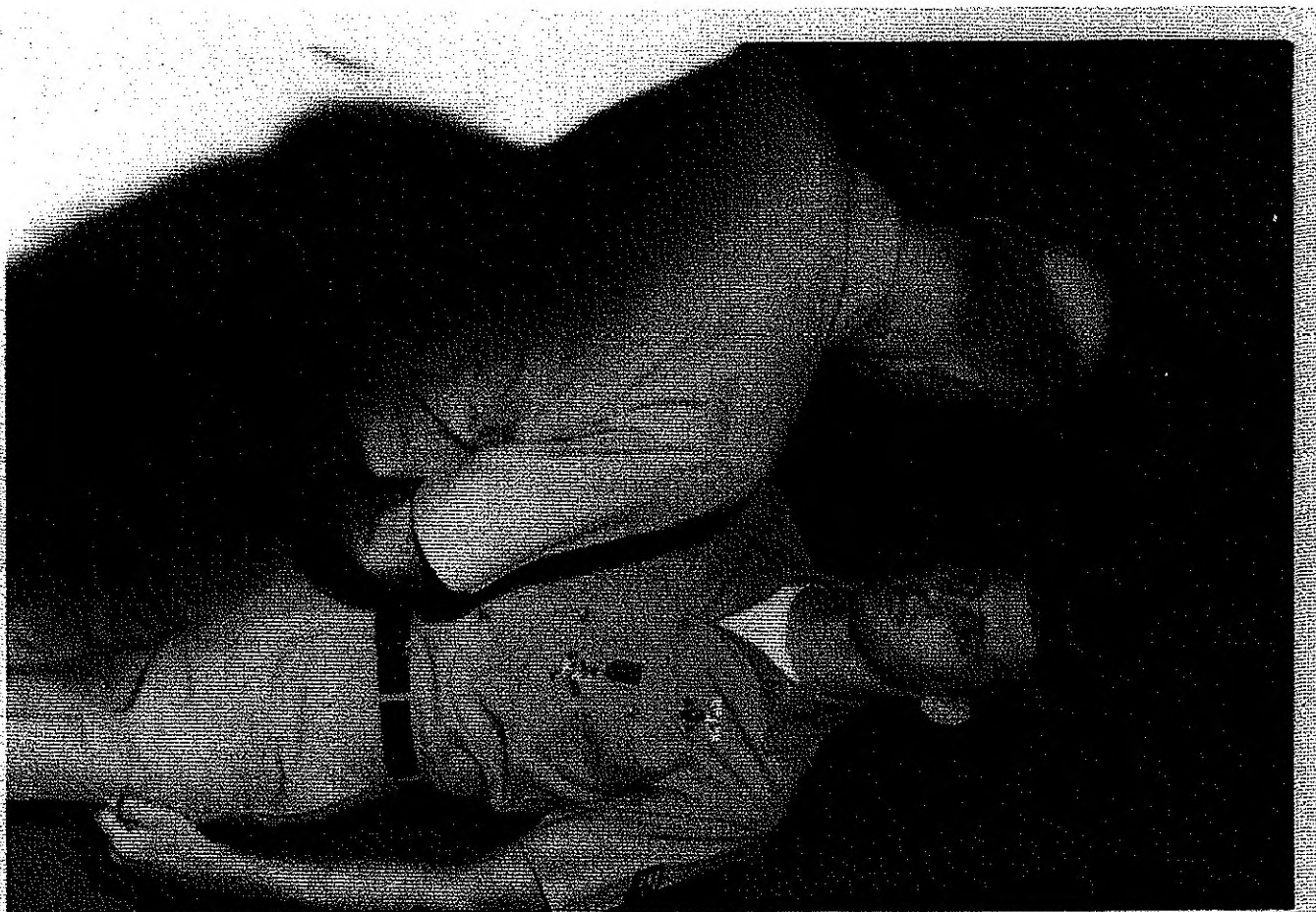
At risk of adding to your work or overloading you with more info than you want, I scanned my original mission report into a MSWord doc, and have attached it here as well. I added some after-thoughts and filled in a few facts where I thought it would be helpful (parentheses, blue, smaller font). It surprises me how little detail I wrote at the time, but it's still the most -- I should say only -- accurate account of what happened. I know you understand how media stories take on lives of their own, and I would very much appreciate you sharing the story as it really happened, without the dramatic crap Airman added to "spice it up". I always thought it was pretty exciting as is.

I also have a couple of pictures you may find useful, but I will send them separately to keep the file size manageable. Two are of Col. Norman P. Phillips and I in the NKP dispensary the following day, and the other one is me receiving the AFC from Gen. Howell M. Estes Jr. at NKP in about Aug 68.

Best of luck with your ongoing endeavor. Please let me know if I can be of any further help.

Warm regards,

Tom



FIVE = NEWMAN ESTES. BMP

Colonel Norman P. Phillips  
12 Thistle Lane  
Amherst, Massachusetts 01002

24 June 1968

Dear Mrs. Newman,

I had the good fortune of meeting your son, Thomas, recently in Southeast Asia. Our meeting was unexpected, but needless to say, very fortunate for me. I am the Vice Commander of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing based in Korat, Thailand. We fly the F-105, a single seated fighter used to bomb and strafe enemy forces and their positions in North Vietnam. On the 30th of May I was hit by enemy fire during a strafing attack. Shortly after being hit my aircraft burst into flames and went out of control. I was required to bail out of the aircraft over enemy held territory. I ejected at about 500 MPH and as a result the windblast broke my right arm and dislocated my left arm at the elbow. While descending in my parachute I crashed through tall trees, which injured my left leg and made it extremely difficult to stand. Upon reaching the ground I used my emergency radio and learned that the air rescue helicopter was enroute to my position. Since there were enemy troops in the near vicinity, I left the area where I had landed and hid myself in the dense jungle. Your son, Thomas, arrived overhead in a helicopter about an hour and a half later. Because I was unable to ride the lifting cable unassisted, I requested help. Your son Tom volunteered to be lowered on a cable through the dense tree coverage beneath him into unfriendly territory with no idea of what he could expect underneath. After he was on the ground, the helicopter which lowered him encountered mechanical difficulties with its cable lowering device and was forced to withdraw, leaving Tom and I alone on the ground with enemy troops drawing closer and closer. Tom calmly directed a second helicopter to our position and meanwhile made me comfortable and maintained an alert eye out for enemy troops. When the second helicopter arrived it lowered an excessive amount of cable and as Tom tried to prepare me to ride the lifting device, a loop of the cable ensnared his ankle and lifted him into the air feet first. Tom remained calm in this very awkward and dangerous position and was fortunate to be lowered fairly close to the ground before the loop slipped and he fell head first to the forest floor sustaining a sprain to one wrist. Tom took the entire incident in stride and acted as though nothing had happened. He calmly secured me to the lifting device and straddling my legs, wrapped his arms around me so that I could not fall off as we were pulled up through the tree-tops into the hovering helicopter.

From that point on the story is no longer exciting. I have taken this opportunity to write to you so that you would know of and appreciate your son's courageous and selfless actions. His kind of heroism in our rescue forces is what keeps our fighter pilots going. We have full confidence that the young men like Tom who serve in the air rescue units will spare no effort and will do everything possible to help us when we are downed by enemy action. I have recommended Tom for a fairly

high award for his gallantry and professional skill as a para-medic. Being a father of four children, three of them teenaged daughters, and one ten year old boy, I can only say I hope my boy will grow up to be as brave a young man as your son is. As his mother, you have every right to feel very proud of your son and the part he is playing in supporting our national policy in Southeast Asia.

I am enclosing a photo taken in the hospital the morning after Tom picked me up.

Sincerely,

Norman P. Phillips  
Colonel, USAF

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER  
HEADQUARTERS 388TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING (PACAF)  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96288

5 June 1968

Sgt Thomas A. Newman  
Det 1, 40th ARRS  
APO 96310

Dear Sgt Newman

Colonel Phillips requested that I send you the inclosed photos.

Due to the length of time it will take for his arms to completely heal, he was air evacuated to-Chelsea Naval Hospital today. He left in tremendously high spirits with a parade of vehicles accompanying his ambulance.

Please accept my sincere thanks on behalf of all the 388th "fighter jocks" for a difficult and hazardous job well done!

Sincerely

  
PAUL P. DOUGLAS, JR., Colonel, USAF  
Commander

 PACAF KRTAFB THAILAND

MISSION REPORT 31 MAY 68, Sgt. Thomas A. Newman, AF16817854

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Upon arriving in the area, a brief search was made and the survivor was located. I relieved myself of my safety harness, parachute, and helmet and was lowered to the ground by the flight engineer. (I also left my medical kit, as I expected to just grab the survivor, get him on the hoist, and get out of there.) I immediately established radio contact with the aircraft and looked around for the survivor. When I couldn't see him, I began an expanding circle search pattern trying to locate him. After one circuit without success, I decided to have the aircraft depart the area, as they had been picking up ground fire from the ridge above me. I told them three times to raise the cable and depart the area before my message was intercepted. As the helicopter pulled out, it became entangled in the dense brush, but was pulled free before I could reach it to free it. (I didn't know it at the time, but when the penetrator tore free of the trees, it snapped up and half-hitched around the landing gear taking my aircraft out of commission.) As they flew over the ridge I was on, they were subjected to very heavy automatic weapons fire.

Suddenly there was a blast and I saw a muzzle flash in my right peripheral vision. I hit the ground and almost opened fire in the direction of the shot. But as I did not have a specific target, I decided that it would be better not to chance a miss and give away my position. I crawled a few feet toward the shot to get a better look, and the person fired again. This time I could make out a person, and was aiming to fire (had him in my sight picture and was squeezing the trigger) when it occurred to me that his shot hadn't been fired in my direction. I then thought it might be the survivor and held my fire. Not wanting to give away my position in case it was an enemy, I yelled, "Hey!" Keeping him in my sights. Had he made the slightest move in my direction I would have fired, as I could still not make out who it was. He sat perfectly still and yelled back, "Up here!" As I was still not sure whether or not he was friend or foe, I let him see a little movement from where I was (wiggled the bushes with my foot), and when he still didn't fire at me, I moved around to come at him from behind. (It turned out that he thought the helo was leaving him, and had tried to signal them with his .38cal tracer rounds.)

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It was now getting darker and we could hear people moving through the brush searching for us and firing sporadically through the brush. Rather than call the aircraft in and subject them to close-range ground fire, as well as giving away our own position I called the helicopter and told them that I was closing communications so as not to be given away by my radio static. I told them I would be off the radio for 10-20 minutes. I then shut off my radio, got the pilot closer to the ground and a little more comfortable, and watched the shadows for movement. (The end man in the enemy sweep came closer than 50 ft of where we were hiding behind a fallen tree)

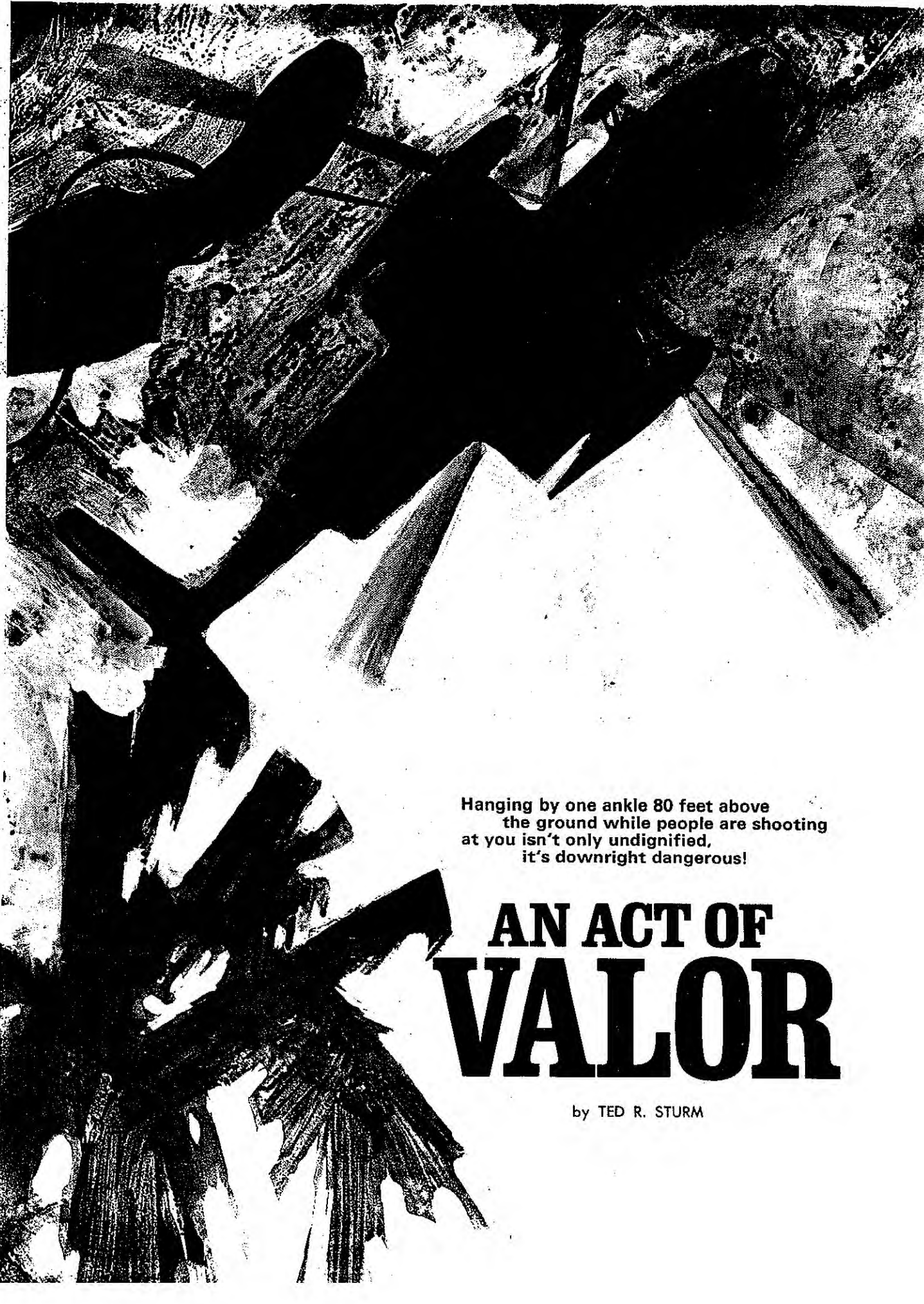
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talked them in until they were directly over head, and told them to lower the cable. As they complied, I glanced away for a minute and when I looked back, the helicopter had drifted about ten yards downhill and to the left, and I could no longer see the penetrator. I figured that they had probably raised it into the aircraft to make the corrections I had given them. When I realized that the penetrator was on the ground, I decided that it would be easier to move the pilot than to have them move the aircraft. I got my arm under his shoulder and around him and helped him to where the cable came through the trees. In the darkness, I couldn't see the penetrator, so I tried to follow the cable to it. The area was covered with vines the same size as the cable and as the cable was lying in coils on the grounds I couldn't tell one from the other. I called the chopper and asked them to take up the slack. I must have been standing in a couple of coils of the cable, as when the hoist was engaged, it tightened around my ankle and jerked me off my feet causing me to drop my radio and weapon. By this time, at least one enemy soldier had moved to within 75 yards of our position and I could hear him firing at the aircraft. I tried to grab my weapon but it was tangled in the vines and I couldn't get it free before I was pulled out of reach and up through the trees by my right ankle. As I was pulled through the first tree, the branches stopped me from going through, and it felt as if my right foot was being torn from my leg. Finally I was pulled through by sheer force, and up into another tree which I went through more easily. Once I was through that, I pulled in my radio, which was dangling beneath me and trying to sound calm and still be heard above the roar of the helicopter, notified them that I was tangled in the cable and asked to be put on the ground once more. When I was about 70-80 feet in the air and within 20 feet of the helicopter, they began to lower me, still hanging upside down by my right ankle. As I went through the first canopy, by jerking my body to one side I narrowly missed being impaled on a small dead tree trunk. As I went through the second canopy, the thick branches slowed my descent, the cable slacked around my ankle, and I fell about the last 20 feet to the ground. I broke my fall with my hands, and only scraped my face a little when I hit.

I put the pain in my ankle out of mind, checked to see if the survivor was ok, and ran a quick search for my weapon as the V.C. that had moved in close was still firing in our direction. After a few minutes, I gave up, drew my pistol, and moved to the pilot who was now clutching the penetrator and shouting, "I've got it, I've got it!" He had one seat under his leg so I put down the other two and situated it under him. I got his worst arm in between him and the penetrator in his lap and explained to him that I would sit on top, straddling him and hold him on. When this was done, I called the aircraft and told them that we were ready to be pulled in. I repeated that three times before we were finally lifted off the ground. On the way up through the trees, I pulled the survivor in to the penetrator as close as possible, locking my arms around him, and trying to protect him from the branches. (Yes, I totally forgot about the safety straps; the only thing holding us on was me. There was a lot going on. I didn't notice – or care – that it was a HH53 from Udorn that was picking us up (Larry "Squatty Body" Palmer had taken over the hoist from the FM) and there were bursts of mini-gun fire as well as enemy small arms fire. I remember seeing muzzle flashes from the ground as we were hoisted up. As soon as we were clear of the trees, the chopper flew away with us still hanging below on the hoist cable.) In a few more minutes we were in the helicopter and out of the area.

Once aboard, I gave the survivor 1cc of codeine IM, and with the help of the crew on the helicopter, splints were applied to his left arm and leg, a wound on his head was cleaned, he was treated for shock and made as comfortable as possible.

Upon arrival at NKP he was turned over to a medical team from the NKP dispensary.



Hanging by one ankle 80 feet above  
the ground while people are shooting  
at you isn't only undignified,  
it's downright dangerous!

# AN ACT OF VALOR

by TED R. STURM

Newman wasted no time  
in getting to where  
the action is.

Through a growing darkness heightened by the dense forest, Sgt. Thomas A. Newman saw the outline of a man.

Flashes from a gun muzzle first attracted his attention, and as he inched his M-16 forward, it occurred to him to hold his fire. It was possible the shadowy figure was the injured F-105 pilot.

On the other hand, it could very well be an enemy soldier. They were all around, constantly announcing their presence by small arms fire. But even if it *were* the pilot, Newman wasn't sure how to reach him. More likely than not, the man was nervous, and would shoot at anything that moved.

The sergeant watched for another moment and then, even though he might give his position away to the enemy, he decided to shout. Immediately he heard a reply from the figure ahead.

"Over here!" the man answered.

"Sounds American," Newman muttered to himself. "Still, you can't tell. Almost everybody speaks a little English." There was only one way to find out.

Still on his stomach, Sergeant Newman inched forward. It was the pilot, all right, still in his life preserver, G-suit and survival gear. His arm was broken, as Newman had heard earlier. In a matter of minutes, the sergeant cut him free of his gear, and administered first aid.

Both he and the pilot, Col. Norman P. Phillips, could hear people moving through the brush, closing in on their position. Obviously, they had to get out of there in a hurry. But it was not to be an easy, routine rescue this time. Old Dame Fortune was feeling mischievous and had a few more surprises cooked up for this *Thunderchief* pilot and the pararescueman who had come to save him.

But some days are like that. Some days you *never* forget. And the fact that this was Memorial Day—May 30, 1968—only served as an additional reminder that sometimes the difference between a memory and a memorial can be a fraction of an inch, a single strand, or a split second.

Some men wonder, when they find themselves in a very tough spot, how they came to be there. Newman didn't wonder. He knew. When he joined the Air Force in 1965, he wasted no time in getting to where the action is. While he was still in basic, he volunteered for pararescue duty. About a year later, after seven tough, grueling schools that transformed the former high school student into a rescue expert, he was shipped to Guam. That was his first step toward the jungle he now shared with Colonel Phillips and an unknown number of enemy troops.

Newman was a busy man during the 19 months he spent on Guam. Before he left, he managed to help save a civilian seaman suffering from acute insulin shock; assisted a Navy corpsman in saving a chief petty officer who suffered a heart attack aboard a submarine; was credited with saving the lives of two Japanese fishermen who suffered severe burns in an engine room fire on board the fishing vessel *Shoichi Maru*, and aided in the treatment and evacuation of four more. In each of these cases, the indomitable sergeant had to parachute into the open sea.

Sergeant Newman was accepted for duty in Southeast Asia and departed for Eglin AFB, Fla., in December 1967. There he took pararescue specialist training in the HH-3E helicopter. After PACAF Jungle Survival School at Clark AB in the Philippines, he arrived at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand, in March 1968.

That's the kind of a man in whose hands Colonel Phillips' life now lay. And although all pararescue men are the kind of people you trust in any

situation, Newman had a deep inner strength that he would be forced to draw on before the day ended.

In fact, even before he got on the ground to find the downed pilot, the situation got a little sticky. Newman and his "Jolly Green" crew had been scrambled to recover Phillips after his F-105 had been clobbered by 37mm antiaircraft fire west of Khe Sanh. He had bailed out and, because of the broken arm and a dislocated shoulder, was unable to get himself on the forest penetrator hoist that was to be lowered to him.

So Newman volunteered to ride the hoist down through two layers of jungle treetops and help strap the pilot on. Phillips was down in an area dotted with antiaircraft weapons and numerous enemy units armed with small arms and handheld automatic weapons. Not only that, but the poor visibility brought on by approaching darkness made it impossible for Newman to evaluate the area. He was unable to predetermine his escape routes should he and the pilot be forced to get to an alternate pickup area on foot.

As fighter escort aircraft strafed and bombed the area, Newman's chopper moved in. It was then the radio crackled with another bit of bad news. Because of his broken arm, the pilot was not able to ignite a smoke flare. Finding him would be tough.

Nevertheless, Newman secured himself to the penetrator, and as the helicopter hovered over the downed airman's suspected position, the pararescue man was lowered to the ground. He immediately established radio contact with the hovering Jolly Green, but could not contact Colonel Phillips.

There was only one way to find the pilot in the darkness and the dense foliage—hunt for him! Newman began to work his way in a constantly expanding circle. He had just completed the first circuit when he noticed that his hovering Jolly Green was catching a lot of automatic weapons fire from a ridge above him.

This situation brought three immediate problems into focus: First, the noise from the helicopter prevented Newman from hearing the enemy or the downed pilot. Second, he feared for the safety of the helicopter crew, and third, the hovering bird would soon draw the enemy forces to his position. Sergeant Newman asked the helicopter to leave. As it moved out, it was subject again to a barrage of heavy automatic weapons fire.

It was only a matter of seconds after the helicopter left that Newman saw the muzzle flash and the shadowy figure that turned out to be Colonel Phillips.

Now, as the colonel and the sergeant huddled in the foliage, they decided the enemy was too close to risk a pickup.

Getting his helicopter crew on the radio, Newman advised them to stand off. He also told them he would be shutting off his radio for a few minutes to evaluate the situation before he called them back in. There was still the danger of their being shot down by ground fire.

For nearly 20 minutes he and the pilot remained motionless, listening and watching for sounds of the enemy. Neither man moved nor made a sound, preventing the enemy from pinpointing their position. Soon the noise of movement in the undergrowth died away.

Now the sergeant called the helicopter in for the pickup. Again, as the chopper moved over their position, it received ground fire. Still they lowered the jungle penetrator. As Newman turned to help Colonel Phillips get on the hoist, he lost sight of the penetrator in the darkness. The numerous vines hanging from the trees all looked like the cable, and Newman had to search more by feel than sight. Finally, he found it, but realized the heli-

... He was hanging upside down 70 to 80 feet above the ground.

copter crew had dropped too much cable. Because of the excess on the ground, Newman could not follow it to the penetrator seat itself.

He asked the helicopter to take up the slack.

That's when it happened! One of those incidents occurred that can never be anticipated. Apparently Newman's statement was misinterpreted, and before he realized he was standing in the midst of the snarled hoist line, the cable was reeled in. It looped his ankle, jerking him skyward, upside down.

The violence of the jolt tore his radio and weapon from his hands. As he rose higher and higher he became entangled in the trees and his leg and ankle were wrenched brutally as he was pulled through the branches by sheer force. Then he went through the second tree canopy, buffeted and banged by the branches, lashed by the vines. Below, he could see the enemy's muzzle flashes, not more than 75 yards from him and the helicopter.

Fortunately, his radio was tied to his vest and he pulled it to him. Incredibly calm, he informed the helicopter crew of his predicament and asked them to lower him. At this point he was hanging upside down 70 to 80 feet above the ground and within 20 feet of the helicopter. Dimly, he could see the penetrator dangling some 30 feet below.

Most of the return trip was far less violent and much more comforting! Using his hands, he was able to avoid entanglement with vines and branches. But as he dropped through the trees the cable loosened around his ankle and he fell the last 20 feet to the ground.

Breaking the impact with his hands, Newman sprained his left wrist. By then, however, the colonel had reached the penetrator. Newman secured him to the seat, strapped himself on and told the chopper to reel away. Again on the trip up, increasingly accurate ground fire gave them a wild ride, but, amazingly, neither man was hit.

As they flew home, Sergeant Newman took care of the pilot's wounds, splinted his broken arm and checked his dislocated shoulder. He then treated him for shock, making him as comfortable as possible.

It had been a day to remember all right. Sergeant Newman and Colonel Phillips would never forget it. Neither would the United States Air Force.

Weeks later, Sergeant Newman became the third living enlisted man to be awarded the Air Force Cross. As Gen. Howell M. Estes, Jr., former commander of the Military Airlift Command, pinned the nation's second highest award on Sergeant Newman's chest, the words of the citation captured a little of the spirit of Newman's Memorial Day.

"Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness, Sergeant Newman reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force," the citation read.

But the Air Force was not finished rewarding this intrepid airman. Some 20 months after he rescued Colonel Phillips, Thomas A. Newman stood in the office of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and became the 12th enlisted man in history to receive or share in the receipt of the Cheney Award.

The award, established in 1928 in memory of 1st Lt. William H. Cheney, who was killed in an air collision during World War I, consists of a certificate, a bronze medal and a \$500 honorarium. Annually it recognizes an "act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest performed in connection with aircraft."

Today Tom Newman is a technical assistant at Doctor's Hospital in Milwaukee, Wis. He left the Air Force early in 1969. But this former airman has carved a niche in Air Force history. And it will stand through the ages as a testimonial to the courage, fortitude and valor of America's airmen. ✪



Thomas A. Newman, now a civilian, receives the Cheney Award from Chief of Staff John D. Ryan in honor of his act of valor.

Sergeant Thomas A. Newman

Incident date: 30 May 1968

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Place of incident: Near Savannakhet, Laos

Unit: Detachment 1, 40 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Nakhon Phanom, Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand

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Synopsis: Sergeant Newman's "Jolly Green" crew was launched to rescue a downed F-105 "Thunderchief" pilot near Savannakhet, Laos. While enroute, the helicopter's copilot stated that the downed pilot was incapacitated and that Sergeant Newman may need to descend by hoist. Sergeant Newman volunteered, and upon arrival at the scene descended into the hostile jungle. Knowing that enemy was nearby, Sergeant Newman set up a circular search to locate the survivor in the extremely dark jungle. After making one circle, Sergeant Newman saw automatic weapons fire being directed at the helicopter hovering overhead. Sergeant Newman requested that the helicopter leave the immediate area to protect themselves, and to make it quiet, so he could hear in the jungle. After the helicopter departed, Sergeant Newman saw a muzzle flash to his side. Not knowing if it was the downed crewman, Sergeant Newman dropped to the ground. He saw another muzzle flash that illuminated the pilot. Sergeant Newman inched closer knowing that the downed crewman could mistake him for the enemy. Risking detection by the enemy, Sergeant Newman called out to the crewman. When he was certain that the person barely detectible in the dim light was the survivor he moved to him and prepared him for extraction. (2:--)(1:18)

It was extremely dark. Sergeant Newman and Col Norman Phillips, the downed crewman, could both hear weapons fire and movement around them. Sergeant Newman radioed that he was going to shut on his radio for a few minutes so they could be extremely quiet. Within 20 minutes the noise had subsided and Sergeant Newman called the helicopter back overhead. When the forest

AF EHT

penetrator (rescue device) was lowered, Sergeant Newman lost the cable in the vines. He radioed for the aircrew to take up some of the excess cable on the ground. When the helicopter did so, Sergeant Newman's foot became entangled in the cable and jerked him upward through the trees. He was upside down, some 80 feet up. He lost his rifle and radio, although the radio was still attached to him. Sergeant Newman radioed the helicopter that he was entangled and to lower him back to the ground. At this point, he could also see automatic weapons fire 50-75 yards away being directed at the "Jolly." His body caught the branches as he was descending through the trees. This loosened his foot from the cable, causing him to fall to the ground.

Miraculously, he only sprained his wrist. Sergeant Newman put Col Phillips on the forest penetrator and joined him there, protecting him with his own body during the ascent to the helicopter. As they were being hoisted automatic weapons fire was being directed at the helicopter. (2:--)(1:18)

I was able to accomplish an oral interview with Capt Thomas A. Newman. Captain Newman works for the USAF Occupational Measurement Center, Randolph AFB, Texas. He told me that when Colonel Phillips fired his revolver, he'd noticed that the shot hadn't been directed at him. Captain Newman also said that when he yelled to the survivor, that Colonel Phillips answered with "up here." But, he was still just as cautious as ever when he approached Colonel Phillips from the rear. Captain Newman said he felt pretty bad as he was hanging upside down entangled in the cable. He'd come to rescue the downed crewman and had botched things up. But, he said he remained calm and collected, and was able to correct the situation. Captain Newman said that he'd almost received an Article 15 because he hadn't worn his aircrew helmet to the ground. (10:--)

Captain Newman was awarded the Air Force Cross for heroism. He was later awarded the "Cheney" award by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. He was the 12th enlisted person in history to win the prestigious award. The annual award recognizes acts of valor, self sacrifice, or extreme fortitude in connection with a military aircraft. (19:36)

See TABs E, K, and L for reference material

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

SPECIAL ORDER  
GB- 111

5 March 1969

The Cheney Award for 1968 is awarded to SERGEANT THOMAS A NEWMAN, AF16817854, who distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism and valor in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E Pararescue Specialist in Southeast Asia on 30 May 1968. On that date, SERGEANT NEWMAN voluntarily descended into a hostile jungle environment to rescue a downed Air Force pilot. With complete disregard for his own life, and hampered by darkness and concentrated automatic weapons fire, he requested the rescue helicopter above him to enter a nearby orbit, both for the safety of the crewmembers and to prevent the hovering aircraft from revealing the survivor's position to the unfriendly ground forces. When the rescue helicopter returned for the pickup, SERGEANT NEWMAN was severely injured in the first hoist attempt. Nevertheless, he succeeded in securing the injured pilot to the forest penetrator and protected him with his own body from hostile fire as they ascended to the helicopter. SERGEANT NEWMAN'S courageous act reflects the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE



JOHN F RASH, Colonel, USAF  
Director of Administration

J. P. McCONNELL, General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

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GB-111

15 Jan 68

## RECOMMENDATION FOR DECORATION

DATE

15 JAN 1968

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| TO: (Organization and address)                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | FROM: (Organization and address)                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group<br>APO 96307                                                                                                                                                             |  | Det 1, 40th ARRS (MAC) PAS HKQPTO<br>APO 96310                                                                                                                                                            |  |
| RECOMMENDATION                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| RECOMMEND INDIVIDUAL INDICATED BE AWARDED                                                                                                                                                                        |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| 1. NAME OF DECORATION (Indicate number of clusters, if appropriate)                                                                                                                                              |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| AIR FORCE CROSS                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| 2. RECOMMENDATION IS BASED ON:                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | 3. INCLUSIVE DATE(S) OF ACT, ACHIEVEMENT OR SERVICE                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HEROISM<br><input type="checkbox"/> MERITORIOUS SERVICE<br>(Based on completed period of service)<br><input type="checkbox"/> OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT                        |  | X802 ON TO<br>30 May 1968                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| PERSONAL DATA ON INDIVIDUAL BEING RECOMMENDED                                                                                                                                                                    |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| 4. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL                                                                                                                                                                       |  | 5. AFSSN                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| NEWMAN, THOMAS A.                                                                                                                                                                                                |  | AF16817854                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
| 7. PRESENT ORGANIZATION AND STATION                                                                                                                                                                              |  | 8. PRESENT DUTY ASSIGNMENT                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
| Det 1, 40th ARRS (MAC) PAS HKQPTO<br>APO S.F. 96310                                                                                                                                                              |  | Pararescue Specialist                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
| 9. PERMANENT HOME ADDRESS                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | 10. ORGANIZATION OF NEXT DUTY ASSIGNMENT (If applicable)                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| 2709 N. 36th St<br>Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53210                                                                                                                                                                    |  | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| 11. ORGANIZATION, DUTY ASSIGNMENT AND GRADE AT TIME OF ACT OR SERVICE                                                                                                                                            |  | 12. DATE OF PROMOTION TO GRADE IN WHICH SERVING                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| Det 1, 40th ARRS, APO 96310, PAS HKQPTO<br>Pararescue Specialist, III-34, A92350<br>Sergeant E-4                                                                                                                 |  | 1 October 1967                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |
| 13. INDIVIDUAL'S SERVICE IN AIR FORCE SINCE ACT OR SERVICE HAS BEEN HONORABLE                                                                                                                                    |  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                       |  |
| 14. DATE OF PROMOTION, RETIREMENT OR SEPARATION, AS APPLICABLE                                                                                                                                                   |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| RETIREMENT OR SEPARATION IS <input type="checkbox"/> VOLUNTARY <input type="checkbox"/> INVOLUNTARY, AND THE FOLLOWING SERVICE DATES APPLY:                                                                      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| CDOS: TAFCSN: TAFMSD: TFCSD: TMSD:                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| 15. PREVIOUS UNITED STATES DECORATIONS, COMPLETE AUTHORITY THEREFOR, AND INCLUSIVE DATES OF SERVICE RECOGNIZED                                                                                                   |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| (Do not include service medals, hostile credits, unit citations or foreign decorations)                                                                                                                          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| NONE.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| 16. ARE OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARDS TO THIS INDIVIDUAL PENDING? (If yes, state award)                                                                                                                       |  | 17. ARE OTHER INDIVIDUALS BEING RECOMMENDED FOR THE SAME ACT OR SERVICE?                                                                                                                                  |  |
| AIRMAN'S MEDAL<br>AIRMAN'S MEDAL (1st OLC) N/A                                                                                                                                                                   |  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO<br><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                |  |
| 18a. IF ANSWER TO ITEM 17 IS YES, ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OTHER INDIVIDUALS FORWARDED AS A PART OF THIS RECOMMENDATION?                                                                                  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                         |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| 18b. IF ANSWER TO ITEM 18a IS NO, EXPLAIN REASON FOR DELAY, INCLUDING DATE RECOMMENDATION(S) WILL BE FORWARDED, AND IDENTIFY THE INDIVIDUAL(S) BY GRADE, NAME, SERVICE NUMBER, PRESENT ORGANIZATION AND STATION. |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| 19. HAS PREVIOUS AWARD BEEN MADE TO THIS INDIVIDUAL FOR THIS ACT OR SERVICE?                                                                                                                                     |  | 20. HAVE ALL AVAILABLE RECORDS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION THAT WOULD HAVE A BEARING ON THIS RECOMMENDATION BEEN CONSIDERED AND NO CONDITION EXISTS WHICH WOULD MAKE APPROVAL OF THIS AWARD INAPPROPRIATE? |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                              |  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO<br>14 AUG 1968                                                                                                                        |  |
| IF AWARD IN FORTHCOMING OR INDIVIDUAL RECOMMENDED IS MISSING IN ACTION OR A PRISONER OF WAR, LIST NAME, ADDRESS AND RELATIONSHIP OF NEXT OF KIN.                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| 22. DATE WHICH PRESENTATION OF AWARD IS DESIRED, IF APPROVED.                                                                                                                                                    |  | 23. IF APPROVED, FORWARD FOR PRESENTATION TO (Organization and address)                                                                                                                                   |  |
| As Soon As Possible                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | VARRGP, APO 96307                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

SPECIAL ORDER  
GB- 521

3 October 1968

1. By direction of the President, OOW THOMAS A. NEWMAN, AF16817254, is awarded the Air Force Cross for extraordinary heroism while participating in military operations against an opposing armed force on 30 May 68.
2. By direction of the President, MAJ J LYNN McBRIDE, PR65427, is awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service from 1 Sep 64 to 1 Aug 68.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE



JOHN F. EAST, Colonel, USAF  
Director of Administrative Services

J. P. McCONNELL, General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

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GB-521

# Pararescue Sergeant Wins Air Force Cross

SAIGON—The third Air Force Cross awarded to a living enlisted man was presented recently to Sgt. Thomas A. Newman, a pararescue specialist assigned to Det. 1, 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq., Nakhon Phanom RTAFB. The medal was presented by Gen. Howell M. Estes Jr., commander of Military Airlift Command.

The other living enlisted men to be awarded the Air Force Cross, the nation's second highest military honor for gallantry in action, are Sgts. Duane Hackney and Russell M. Hunt, also pararescue specialists.

On May 30, Newman was told that a downed pilot had broken his arm when he bailed out, and needed assistance. The area was known to contain concentrated unfriendly ground forces, but Newman volun-

teered to descend from an HH-3E on the jungle penetrator even though he knew that the pilot was within range of several anti-aircraft weapons.

After being lowered on the penetrator, Newman was forced to search for the pilot in expanding circles since it was too dark to see more than a few feet.

To keep the helicopter crew from being subjected to ground fire, he told them to move out until he could find the downed pilot.

Suddenly he saw a muzzle flash. He began to crawl toward the source, believing it to be the downed pilot. His gamble paid off as he called to the pilot and began to inch his way toward him, hoping he would not be mistaken for one of the hostile forces.

Reaching the pilot, he cut him free of his flight and survival gear.

As he worked, Newman could see flashes and hear weapons firing, both at him and at the helicopter. He could also hear people moving through the brush, searching for them.

After 20 minutes, when the noise had settled down, Newman called in the rescue helicopter. Again ground fire was received as the copter hovered and lowered the penetrator.

As he turned to assist the pilot, Newman lost sight of the penetrator in the darkness. Searching for the device, he found the cable, but realized that there was an excess of cable on the ground.

He radioed for the slack to be taken up. The cable went rapidly, but his foot was tangled in the cable and he was snatched off his feet, caught by the ankle.

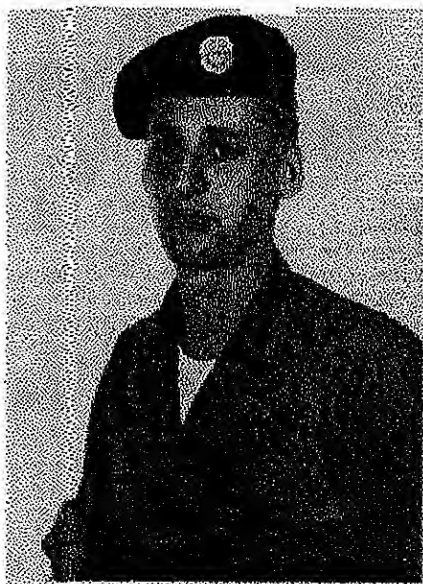
As he was jerked, Newman dropped his weapon and his radio, which was secured to his vest by a strap. He rose through the trees feet first. He could see weapons fire within 50 to 75 yards of him and the helicopter.

Entangled in the trees, his leg and ankle were violently wrenched as he was pulled through the branches. He managed to retrieve his radio by the restraining strap and notified the helicopter crew that he was caught in the cable. He was already 80 feet in the air.

As he was lowered through the trees, Newman was slowed by branches which loosened the cable around his ankle. He fell the last 20 feet to the ground, spraining his left wrist.

But he quickly recovered and secured the injured pilot and himself to the penetrator. Newman protected the survivor with his body from the ground fire which was becoming increasingly accurate.

1962



### **Sgt. Thomas A. Newman**

*During a rescue mission in Laos on May 30, 1968, 40th ARRS para-rescueman Sgt. Thomas A. Newman descended from a Jolly Green helicopter while under heavy hostile fire to rescue a downed Air Force pilot. Hindered by darkness and concentrated automatic weapons fire, he asked the helicopter pilot to hover out of enemy range to avoid being hit or disclosing his location. He kept searching for the downed pilot, risking detection by the enemy by calling the pilot's name. Newman finally found him and radioed for the Jolly Green. When the chopper returned, Newman secured the pilot to the hoist and shielded him with his own body as they were lifted into the aircraft.*

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Description of the act, achievement or service, including specific dates, places and facts. If additional space is needed, use plain paper, the last sheet of which must be signed by the recommending individual.)

On 30 May 1968 Sergeant Newman was scrambled to recover an F-105 pilot shot down by 37mm anti-aircraft fire west of Khe Shan. While enroute to the survivor's position, he was advised the pilot had broken an arm following bail out and would require assistance getting on the forest penetrator. Sergeant Newman immediately volunteered to descend on the hoist to assist the injured airman. Major Reagan, the pilot, then briefed Sergeant Newman that the area into which he would be placed was within range of several anti-aircraft weapons, and contained concentrated unfriendly ground forces with hand-held automatic weapons. Sergeant Newman checked and prepared his gear for hoist descent. The poor visibility caused by approaching darkness hampered the pararescue specialist's chances of evaluating the area, and orienting himself towards the best escape route should he be required to evade ground forces until the following day. When the rescue helicopter was called in following the sterilization of the area by the fighter escort aircraft, Sergeant Newman heard the downed pilot state that his injuries prevented him from igniting a smoke flare to pinpoint his position beneath the jungle canopy. Once the rescue helicopter came to hover over the downed airman's suspected position, it was evident he could not be seen beneath the dark jungle unless the pararescue specialist was put down to direct the rescue helicopter over the survivor. Sergeant Newman then secured himself to the forest penetrator and was lowered to the ground. He established radio contact immediately with the hovering helicopter; however, he was unable to talk to the downed airman. Beneath the dense foliage the pararescue specialist found it too dark to see more than a few feet. He immediately began an expanding circle search for the survivor and completed one circuit without success when he saw the hovering helicopter subjected to automatic weapons fire from the ridge above him. Because of the noise from the helicopter he was unable to hear the unfriendly forces surrounding him and, fearing for the safety of the crewmembers above him and realizing the aircraft above him would draw the enemy to his position, he requested the rescue helicopter depart until he could locate the downed pilot. As the helicopter departed the area, he observed it was subjected to heavy automatic weapons fire. After the departure of the helicopter the pararescue specialist heard a shot and caught a glimpse of a muzzle flash in his peripheral vision. Unable to pinpoint the source, and unwilling to give away his position or risk a shot that could hit the survivor, Sergeant Newman dropped to the ground and began crawling towards the shot. Within seconds another shot allowed him to pinpoint the source, and for a fraction of a second illuminated the person firing; believing this to be the downed pilot, Sergeant Newman, with complete disregard for his own life should the survivor mistake him for hostiles and fire at him, and risking that his voice might give away his position to the hostile forces surrounding him, called to the survivor and began inching his way to the barely visible injured man. Once assured he had found the survivor, he quickly cut him free of his life preserver, G-suit, and survival gear. As he worked he could see muzzle flashes and hear weapons firing, both towards his position and at the aircraft orbiting above. The pararescue specialist and the pilot could hear people moving

25. TYPED NAME, GRADE AND TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL INITIATING RECOMMENDATION.

JOSEPH L. WELLS, Lt Col, USAF  
Commander

26. SIGNATURE

*Joseph L. Wells*

27. ATTACHMENTS

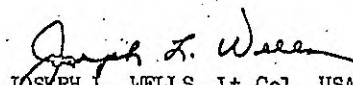
NUMBER

DESCRIPTION (Citation and supporting statements or other official documents)

Citation

Item 24, AF Form 642, Air Force Cross recommendation for Sergeant Thomas A. Newman, AF16817854)

through the brush as they closed in on their position. Sergeant Newman advised the crew of the orbiting rescue helicopter that he would be shutting off his radio for a few minutes to evaluate the situation before calling them in and subjecting them to close and accurate fire. For the next 10-20 minutes he and the pilot remained motionless as they kept watch around them for signs of unfriendly forces. This apparently prevented the hostile troops from pinpointing their position, and when the noise of movement in the undergrowth appeared to be dying away, Sergeant Newman called in the rescue helicopter for a pickup. Once again ground fire was received as the helicopter came into a hover and lowered the penetrator. As Sergeant Newman turned to assist the injured crewman in getting on the hoist, he lost sight of the penetrator in the darkness; after confusing the cable for one of the many vines in the area he finally located the hoist line and realized there was considerable excess cable on the ground; unable to follow it to the forest penetrator, he requested the hovering helicopter take up the slack. Apparently this statement was misinterpreted, and before he became aware that he was standing in the midst of tangled hoist line, the cable was reeled in catching him around the ankle and jerking him inverted. With the violence of the jolt, he lost his weapon; his radio, though secured to his vest, fell from his grasp. Before he could react the cable had become taut and locked to his ankle pulling him feet first up through the jungle. From his inverted position he could see muzzle flashes within 50-75 yards of himself and the rescue helicopter. His body became entangled in a tree, and his leg and ankle were violently wrenched as he was pulled through the branches by sheer force. He went through the second tree canopy; dangling inverted above the trees, he retrieved his radio with the strap securing it to his vest, and notified the helicopter crew he was tangled in the cable and requested to be put back on the ground. At this point he was 70-80 feet above the ground, and within 20 feet of the helicopter; he could dimly see the penetrator hanging some 30 feet below him. As he was lowered head-first to the ground through the foliage he was able to use his hands to avoid becoming entangled in the trees. Dropping through the second canopy, his downward motion was momentarily arrested loosening the cable around his ankle, and he fell the last 20 feet to the jungle floor, breaking the impact with his hands and spraining his left wrist. By then the survivor had reached the penetrator, and Sergeant Newman quickly secured the injured pilot, strapped himself on, and then advised the rescue helicopter they were ready. The unfriendly forces were firing with increasing accuracy as the survivor, protected by the para-rescue specialist's body, was lifted out of the jungle and safely secured on the helicopter. During the return flight to home base Sergeant Newman made a thorough inspection of the survivor's wounds, applied splints to his broken left arm, checked his dislocated right shoulder, cleaned a wound on his head, and treated him for shock. He then made the pilot as comfortable as possible until he was turned over to the flight surgeon upon landing at home station.

  
JOSEPH L. WELLS, Lt Col, USAF  
Commander

14 AUG 1968