

Jolly Greens Defy Cong Traps in Futile Rescue Efforts

By JOHN T. WHEELER is, N.C., and his crew were next DA NANG, Vietnam (AP) — at the scene. He said: "After a doomed Marine pilot, crumpled the Skyraiders worked over the pined below his parachute deep area, we went in. When we enemy territory, became un-started to hover over the mawing part for a huge Viet rine, it seemed the whole right Cong ambush against helicop-side of the countryside erupted with groundfire. I could feel the

Enemy troops pointedly ig-hits on the aircraft." nored the flier, who lay with a Griggs' ship also caught fire broken leg and arm, trying to but the copilot, Capt. Harry H-call in Air Force rescue helicop-gen Jr., of Seattle, Wash., re-lets. The Viet Cong were dis-ported later: "Somehow we got-ging in all around the pilot, just away."

out of sight and earshot, wait- ing.

Away from the ridgeline trap, but far from home free.

Suspect Trap Severely Damaged

When the camouflaged chop- The severely damaged heli- pers arrived with their fighter- copter tried to land some dis- bombers escorts, they suspected- lance away "and the whole a trap at once. They had seen place blew up in our face. There many before. But traps are part- were so many streams of trac- of the business and pilots of the ers that it looked like 1,000 red Jolly Green Giant rescue ships pencils drawing lines in front of never questioned their next us," Hagen said.

move—try and get their man, out.

In the past year, the 37th Ae- With luck, a great deal of rospace Recovery and Rescue luck, this crew limped into the Squadron has rescued more Marine base at Khe Sanh. than 250 men from North and By now the Marine on the South Vietnam. The cost, three ground had stopped his radio helicopters and eight killed of transmission. With the odds against them, the rescue men might have assumed he was dead.

This time there was no mira- Maj. Harvie L. Stringer, Cookeville, Tenn., who escorted Griggs to Khe Sanh, returned and "figured most of the guns were allocated and that was worth another try."

Withering Gunfire Still Shooting

After fighter-bombers hit the Two skyraider proce- area, the first camouflaged heli- Stringer's craft, two were copter dipped its nose and sliced each side and two followed b- into the pickup zone. Despite the bombing and strafing run, no one was too surprised when Sgt. Robert Baldwin, 28, Bur- burnett, Tex., the flight engi- near, shouted: "Pull up! Pull up! They're shooting."

Baldwin and Sgt. Steve North- ern, 21, Riverside, Calif., began pouring machine-gun fire into the Viet Cong positions, killing some of the enemy and forcing the rest to keep their heads down.

The pilot pulled up and fight- Northern, the paramedic, was at the helicopter's er-bombers went back to work. A second chopper slowed above the downed man but heavy fire raked the twin-engine craft. One of the spotter plane pilots called in, "Your left side is on fire, Jolly Green. Get outta there."

The pilot tried, pulling his stricken craft up and away from the trap and limping to the east. The fire diminished, but the bird's rotors began turning more and more slowly and the chopper fell. When it hit the ground, a huge fireball consumed the fragile craft. The four men aboard presumably were killed instantly.

Rescue Volunteers

Back at the Da Nang base the radioed news of the disaster first brought shock and then a mass of volunteers to go after time. The results were about the same. Heavy fire, the rescue chopper hit several times before

being forced to abandon the effort. It was a bad day—but it was almost a glorious day. Other Jolly Greens from Da Nang had rescued five pilots. The sixth would have made a record for one day.

Next day aerial spotters found

the Marine pilot and his chute gone. He is listed as missing and presumed dead.

Lt. Col. Kenneth D. Caughlon, the Jolly Green squadron commander, said: "It's been appar- ent for some time that the ene- my is not capturing downed pi- lots immediately. He knows

will launch a rescue operati- on that will give him a chance

about down more of our plan- and get more of our people. I a thing we're up against—ever- one of us knows it. But we'll b- everytime. That's our job."