

Mission Narrative, 1-3-71, Panda Lead, 14 July 1968

1. Crown 4 was called by Panda 2 at 0740Z. Panda Lead on mission 43, Route Package I, was down on the 080/85 of 89. Misty 41 and Panda 2 capping. Good radio contact was made between Panda Lead and Misty 41. Survivor in east end of valley, up in karst, broken leg. Misty 41 designated OSC. Request for hard ordnance and CBU relayed to Queen. Tankers requested from waterboy. Crown 4 directed to remain off-shore 30 miles. Crown 4 established orbit at FL250 off-shore in vicinity of incident. At 0756, Crown 4 requested Queen move Crown 2 into area to try to establish better contact with SAR Forces. At 0805 Dagger and Pistol flights were worked by Misty 41. Extensive 37mm, 57mm and ground fire in area. Misty 41 verified position XE67 446, 1 SOB. At 0814, Tide 11, Mayday, 270/29 of 69 heading 090° for feet wet. Crown 4 moved south to cap. Crown 2 moved off-shore and took the mission, Crown 4 returned to orbit. At 0830 Queen reported JG 15, 16 and Sandy's 1, 2, 5 and 6 inbound from Ch 89 SAR Forces advised to hold west of scene. At 0840 30F4 flights reported in. Harbormaster launched fighters with heavy ordnance. Scotch lead designated OSC. Misty refueling. Ozark flight working. Gunfighter 7 and 8 working. At 0853 Scotch lead reported 37mm sites 2 and 4 kilometers north of survivor. Panda lead told to stay low in karst while fast movers were working. At 0900, Bat 71 called Mayday for Bat 72. 260/30/Ch69. Chute sighted, no beeper, YD 375155, Rash 31, Bat 71 and 73 in area, Crown 2 taking mission. Ozark, Gunfighter, Scotch Phantom and Chippy fighters working Panda Lead area. At 0912, Crown 4 requested Crown 3 be brought on scene for helicopter refueling and relief of Crown 4 if fuel endurance exhausted. SAR Forces holding west at 0920. At 1030, Misty 41 resumed OSC. Queen relayed identification questions. Two tankers on orbit, available at 1035. Queen relayed King's instructions.

- a. Bring Sandy's in to check area.
- b. Put 105's in with Sandys in Jolly Green escort.
- c. Visual sighting of survivor mandatory.

2. At 1110, Sandy 1 became OSC. 37mm reported 3 to 4 kilometers southeast. At 1120, JG 15 going in for pick-up. Sandy 1 orbiting Panda Lead. Sandy 2 catching ground fire at 8000'. JG 300 meters out. Voice contact. Call for survivors smoke. JG 15 going in low to stay out of ground fire Sharkbait flight overhead. At 1132 JG 15 hit, pulling out. Sandy's in escort. Sharkbait suppressing ground fire. At 1143, Crown 4 relayed Blue Chip directions to RTB SAR Forces. Tell Panda Lead we will return at first light. Leave fast movers in area. Misty 51 became OSC. Crown 3 escorting JG 15 and 16 to Ch 89. Sandy's 1, 2, 5 and 6 in trail. The following comments are made IAW 3 ARRGp Sup 1, ARRSB 55-2, 15 Jun 67:

- a. Weather CAVU
- b. Outstanding performance by Misty 41, 51 and SAR Forces.
- c. Radio communications were most difficult. Three missions going simultaneously on Guard. Efforts to go discrete failed repeatedly. Only the experienced competence of the FACs, Sandys, Jollys and supporting forces kept the effort organized.

GROUP-4
Downgraded at 3 year intervals.
Declassified after 12 years.

DECLASSIFIED

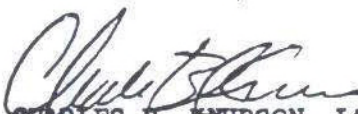
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d. Both Jolly Greens reported ground fire while withdrawing through the DMZ.

e. Panda Lead, being immobile with a broken leg, could only stay under cover. Crown 4 couldn't hear him. His communications with the OSCs seemed normal.

f. JG 15 sustained undetermined damage.

g. Limiting factor was the hostility of the area and impending nightfall. The single problem was communications. Equipment may be partially responsible, though Crown 2 had similar problems.


CHARLES B. KNUDSON, Lt Col, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

1 Atch
Crew List

AC Knudson
CP Tollefson
CP Nelson
NN Connell
NN Coffland
RO Morton
FE Riney
FE Coe
IM Hillsman

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43

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Mission #1-3-7

Crown #1 15 July 1968

On 14 July 1968, Panda 01 (USAF F-105) was hit by ground fire, and the pilot bailed out at position 1734 N 10616E (313/74/109). Due to ensuing darkness, SAR efforts were discontinued, and a first light attempt was organized the next morning. Crown 1 was on station at 2005Z, with Misty 11 checking in as the FAC a few minutes later. Misty 11 contacted the survivor, and pinpointed four 37mm gun positions around his area. The downed pilot reported that he had broken his ankle, but otherwise was in good shape. Ten flights of fighter-bombers were controlled by Crown 1. They were turned over to the FAC as fast as he could use them for strikes against the gun positions. Sandy 1 and 2 were holding at the border awaiting a border clearance, while Sandy 5 and 6 were escorting Jolly Green 37L and 19 toward the scene. Misty 11 requested close air support around the survivor and Sandy 1 and 2 were given clearance to the site. After multiple strikes, Sandy 1 (On scene commander) determined that an attempted pickup could be made. Border clearance was received from King, which Crown 1 relayed to the Jolly Greens. The pickup was made by Jolly Green 37 at 0120Z, and was uneventful except for isolated ground fire. All forces were released, and the survivor was flown to NKP in good shape.

Declassify at 10 year intervals.
Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification.

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FROM: 1-40/0

21 July 1968

SUBJ: Mission Narrative Report (1-3-70, 15 Jul 68)(U)

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

TO: 1-40C *from*
3 ARRGp (JSARC) *leg*
IN TURN

1. (U) This report is submitted IAW ARRS 55-2/3ARRGp Sup 1, dtd 15 Jun 67.
2. (S) At 0841Z Jolly Greens 15 (Low) and 16 (high) were put on cockpit alert for a possible SAR effort on Panda Lead down at IE 373 442. COMPRESS ordered launch of the SAR forces at 0845Z. At 0932Z, the Sandys and Jollys arrived in the holding area (090°/89/Ch 89). Weather in the area was high overcast with isolated patches of ground fog and haze. Sandys 1 and 2 proceeded into the survivor's area at 1104Z to evaluate the environment for hostility. Receiving none, Sandy 1 cleared Jolly Green 15 in for pickup at 1117Z. Jolly Green 15 entered the pickup area low along riddgelines and as he was vectored into the survivor, a barrage of AAA and automatic weapons fire was directed at him. Jolly Green 16 also was fired upon while holding in the "safer" area. Both Jolly Green 15 and 16 drew fire until out of range. Departure from the hostile area was at 1130Z and all SAR forces were shortly RTB'd by COMPRESS. Jolly Green 15 and 16 recovered to Ch 89 at 1230Z and subsequent maintenance inspection revealed no battle damage. Coordination and radio discipline was good.
3. (S) A first light effort was initiated with Jolly Green 37 (Low) and 19 (High) departing Ch 89 at 2210Z accompanied by Sandys 1 thru 4. SAR forces arrived in the holding area 080°/70/Ch 89 at 2300Z. Takeoff weather was VFR and enroute was 3/8 to 5/8 cloud cover layered between 3000 and 12000 feet with isolated thunder-showers. Weather in the pickup area was VFR with high overcast and patches of light haze in the lower valleys. During the night, fighter-bomber aircraft had bombarded the AAA sites and concentrations of automatic weapons. Between 2200Z and 0130Z numerous flights of fast movers continued to suppress the opposition. At 0100Z Sandys 1 and 2 were called into the area by Misty (FAC) to evaluate the area around the survivor and lay down covering fire. At 0110Z Jolly Green 37 and Sandys 3 and 4 were cleared into the area. The Sandys vectored Jolly Green 37 through the valleys and karst and at 0120Z Jolly Green 37 was in a hover over the survivor. The survivor was on board at 0123Z and exit was over the route of entry with Sandys providing cover. The pickup was made from a hover using the jungle penetrator. The survivor's actions were SAR briefed and he greatly aided his own rescue. He was handicapped by a painful compound fracture of the right ankle and was dehydrated. All SAR forces were RTB'd to Ch 89 at 0125Z and terminated landing at 0225Z. Radio discipline and coordination of SAR forces were excellent. The success of this pickup was greatly enhanced by 2 factors: The Sandys provided immediate suppression close in to the Jolly Green and the presence of the fast movers continuing their support during the pickup. Having the Sandys vector the Jolly in very low and pressing the attack it is doubtful if the enemy even was aware of the pickup.

1 of 9 Copies

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GROUP 4

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4. (C) The name of the survivor was: Major Robert K. Hanna, FR49592, 33rd TFS, Takhli RTAFB, Thailand.

5. (U) The Jolly Green crews were:

14 July 1968

JOLLY GREEN 15 (LOW)

RCC Lt Col Royal A. Brown, Jr.
RCCP Maj Dale N. Weeden.
FE SSgt Raymond J. Price
RS Sgt Clifton L. Caffall

JOLLY GREEN 16 (HIGH)

RCC Capt James H. Platt
RCCP Capt Ronald McKinley
FE Sgt Mickey D. Berry
RS Sgt Thomas A. Newman

15 July 1968

JOLLY GREEN 37 (LOW)

RCC Capt Edward L. Heft
RCCP Capt Roger C. Gibson
FE TSgt Jarvis E. Peele
RS Sgt J. T. Lombard

JOLLY GREEN 19 (HIGH)

RCC James E. Oliver, Capt
RCCP Capt Samuel P. Wheate
FE SSgt William J. Jordan
RS ALC Ember A. Curry

Edward L. Heft
EDWARD L. HEFT, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

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S E C R E T

31 July 1968

I would like to place myself in the rather unusual position of the player thanking the coach for playing a good game. On 11 and 15 July 1968, as Misty 11 and Misty 11, I had the opportunity to work in the successful rescue of PANDA 01 who had been downed by hostile fire over a heavily defended area of North Vietnam. On both days, the numerous active, hostile defensive positions dictated that we silence them before attempting to pick up the injured pilot. Crown 1, on both days, did an exceptional job of coordinating the SAR effort. Through a great deal of perseverance, skill, and level headed work, he made order out of the initial confusion and persisted in keeping the forces well under control, even though there were several other simultaneous emergencies in being. After narrowly missing success on the 11th, I returned the next day to participate in what I consider a classic rescue effort. Crown had everything so well assembled, controlled, and coordinated, that it was an almost effortlessly successful rescue in one of the heaviest defended areas of the southern panhandle. The continuous rain of ordnance, timely ingress of the rescue helicopter, and subsequent rescue can all be attributed to the exemplary effort and skill of the Crown crews. It was my distinct pleasure to work with these professionals and hope they receive appropriate praise and reward for their performance. Following is a partial list of the deserving crews:

11 July 68 - Lt Col Knudson (A/C Cmdr)

Maj Tollefson (CP)

Capt Nelson (3rd Plt)

15 July 68 - Capt Richardson (Plt)

Capt Eldridge (CP)

Capt Shore (NAV)

I realize that there were other personnel involved and trust they will receive proper recognition for this team effort.

Paul K. Robinson Jr.

PAUL K. ROBINSON JR., Capt, USAF
Pilot, Commando Sabre Operation

COMMAND CORRESPONDENCE STAFF SUMMARY SHEET

ROUTINE COORDINATION				ORIGINATOR	PHONE NO.	DATE
	GRADE	SIGNATURE	DATE	1st Colonel Newton		
				DOCC	4114	15 Jul 68
				TYPED NAME/GRADE/SIGNATURE OF ACTION OFFICER		
				 WILLIAM H. STEWART, Colonel, USAF Chief, Command and Control Division		
				TYPED NAME/GRADE/SIGNATURE OF DCS/DIRECTOR		
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Aircrew Recovery, 15 July 68 (U) JUL 16 1968

1. (S) BACKGROUND: At 1634H, 14 July, Panda 01/FLODD/TKL, was hit by probable 37mm fire and the pilot ejected in Route Package I, 22 NM WNW of Dong Hoi. The pilot reported he was in a karst area and had a broken leg. The SAR effort on 14 July was unsuccessful due to enemy defenses and approaching darkness. A first light effort was planned for 15 July 68.

2. (C) At 0605H 15 July, F4C Misty 11 established voice contact with the survivor and had his position established. Misty 11 reported two gun sites near the F105 pilot, one located 100 meters to the east and another 150 meters to the south. Other sites were in the area. Ground fire suppression began at 0611H and continued until 0900H. A total of 21 F105s and 2 F4Ds expended ordnance before the ground fire was suppressed enough to allow SAR forces to enter the area. Misty 11 reported that during this period two sites containing eight gun positions were destroyed and two other sites containing ten gun positions were heavily damaged.

2. (S) At 0905H, the SAR forces crossed the border. At 0925H, Jolly Green 37 reported the survivor was on board. Debriefing of the crew at Nakhon Phanom indicated some small arms fire was received during the recovery and a Sandy took one hit. The F105 pilot was able to help himself onto the penetrator in spite of an open compound fracture of the ankle. He will be evacuated to Korat for further medical treatment.

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DSA

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DATE _____

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DATE 01-13-2010

DOCC-8. 46978

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ET

ROUTINE/FOURTH/SEVEN		ORIGINATOR		PHONE NO.	DATE
C	WILLIAM W. MOMMYER, General, USAF	DATE	DCCC	4114	15 Jul 68
	Commander		1st Col Newton		
			TYPED NAME/GRADE/SIGNATURE OF ACTION OFFICER		
			William H Stewart		
			WILLIAM H. STEWART, Colonel, USAF		
			Chief, Command and Control Division		
			TYPED NAME/GRADE/SIGNATURE OF DCS/DIRECTOR		
88	BBG				
NE	BBG				
FI	BBG				

Aircraft Loss, 14 Jul 68 (U)

1. (S) BACKGROUND:

a. Panda 01/F105D/TKL was reported down by probable 37mm fire 22 NM WNW of Dong Hoi near the village of Phuong Chay. The aircraft was hit while strafing a truck. The flight had previously struck a cave and ford in RP I with AGM-12C missiles. After being hit, the pilot was able to climb to approximately 12,000 feet before the aircraft caught on fire and he was forced to eject. Some 37mm tracer fire had been seen although no bursts were observed.

b. Ground contact with the pilot was quickly established by Panda 02 and FAC Misty 41. He reported he was on top of a karst ridge and had a broken leg. SAR forces were launched and held at the border until ground fire had been suppressed. SAR forces then made an attempt to approach the survivor, but as Jolly Green 15 was entering a hover, heavy 37mm and ZPU was received. The SAR forces then withdrew to a safe area and no further rescue attempts were made due to approaching darkness. A "first light" effort is planned for the morning. First light is at 0603H, and sunrise at 0627H. The weather forecast is 3,000 scattered, 10 miles visibility and ground fog in the valleys.

2. (S) SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:

- 1645H - Panda 01 reported down. SAR forces launched.
- 1655H - Panda 02 and Misty 41 have voice contact with Panda 01.
- 1710H - 1900H - Jet strikes providing ground suppression. At 1850H, automatic border clearance was granted provided all ground defenses have been silenced and continuous voice contact with the survivor has been maintained.
- 1911H - Sandy 1 and 2 reported over the survivor and not receiving any ground fire. Jolly Greens 15 and 16 cleared in with Sandy 5 and 6 as escort.
- 1919H - Sandy 1 directing Jolly Green 15 to the survivor.
- 1927H - SAR force receives heavy ground fire. All forces withdrawn.

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DCCC-68-4693

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3. (C) AIRCRAFT AND CREW DATA:

a. Aircraft

(1) Call Sign: Panda 01

(2) Type: F105D

(3) Tail Number: 62-4367

b. Aircrew Data

(1) Pilot

(a) Name - Major Robert K. Hanna, FR49592

(b) Total Flying Time - 3504

(c) Total Fighter Time - 2,822

(d) Total Time In Aircraft - 590

(e) Total Missions - 100

(f) Total Counters - 84

(g) Unit Position - Wing Weapons Officer

4. (C) Line up for First Light Effort:

a. In target area: 0605H - Misty 11/F100

b. Holding 080⁰/70 (CH 89/NKP)

0605H - Cookie/4 F4D/UDN

0615H - Vampire 4/F4D/UBN

0620H - Dallas/4 F105/TKL

c. Holding on tanker:

0640H - Wildcat/4 F105/TKL

0700H - Bison/4 F105/TKL

d. SAR forces - poised at border

0615H - Sandy 01, 02/2 A1/NKP

0620H - Sandy 5, 6/2 A1/NKP

0620H - Jolly Green 27, 19/2 HH-5/NKP

Jolly Green Foils Charlie

Chopper Pulls Off Daring Rescue

By MSGT. O. J. STREETER

SOUTHEAST ASIA — Maj. Robert K. Hanna, Bend, Ore., 355th Tactical Fighter Wing F-105 Thunderchief pilot, recently released his ordnance on enemy supply storage areas and a nearby bridge in the southern Panhandle of North Vietnam.

Heading his F-105 in for a second pass strafing gun emplacements, his aircraft was badly damaged by ground fire. Unable to maintain altitude, he ejected. Thus began a great team effort to save one of its airmen.

Major Hanna's wingman gave him cover until he ran out of ammunition and almost out of fuel. It was his wingman's radio call that started a rescue operation that eventually involved some 65 aircraft ranging from piston-driven A-1 Skyraiders to

F-4 Phantoms, several flights of F-105s and F-100 Supersabres, and HH-3E Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopters.

The major, a veteran of more than 100 combat missions over the panhandle, was lying below a cliff on a rocky hillside thick with green foliage. Less than 150 yards away were 37 and 57mm enemy gun emplacements, probably the very ones that shot him down.

Within 2½ hours, about 30 F-105s and F-4s had peppered the area with rockets, bombs and machine gun fire. The Jolly Green rescue team would try and get him out before the fast-approaching night.

The big rescue chopper finally came over the hill and headed toward the pilot; however, intense enemy ground fire damaged the chopper and it was

forced to pull out. Major Hanna said, "That was the beginning of the longest night in my life."

All during the long night he could hear the enemy rustling through the brush looking for him. Just before daylight more rocks were rolled down the cliff, one missing him by only 10 feet. As day broke he was on the radio talking to the rescue support aircraft, "You have to get in close to get those guns, real close." "Roger, we know," they replied.

Flight after flight came in, pounding the hill with heavy ordnance. Shell and bomb fragments were hitting all around Hanna.

Remembering vividly, Hanna recalled, "I saw the chopper, heard some bomb blasts, saw the sling coming down, and then I was in the chopper. It was all over just that quick."

PANDA

F-105

7/15/68

40 ARRS

HH-3

PJ

JAY T. LOMBARD

AC

CAPT HEFT

CP

CAPT GIBSON

FE

TSgt PEAL