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ROUTINE/COORDINATION				ORIGINATOR	PHONE NO.	DATE
TO	GRADE	SIGNATURE	DATE	Lt Col Newton DOCC	4114	27 Jul 68
VC				TYPED NAME/GRADE/SIGNATURE OF ACTION OFFICER <i>William H Stewart</i> WILLIAM H. STEWART, Colonel, USAF Chief, Command and Control Division TYPED NAME/GRADE/SIGNATURE OF DCS/DIRECTOR		

SAR Effort for Hellborn 20 (U)

1. (S) BACKGROUND: Hellborn 20/A-6A/CHU was hit by ground fire and the crew ejected at approximately 2150H, 25 July 68, 13 NM north of the DMZ. A weak continuous beeper was detected at intervals during the night, but there was no response to efforts to raise voice contact. A first light effort was planned for 26 July 68.

2. (S) During the early morning hours of 26 July, efforts to establish contact with the survivor were unsuccessful. At 0742H, Misty 11 reported he may have received a voice transmission. In a very short contact, the voice reported he was surrounded and was being shot at. No further contact was made until 0912H when Misty 11 reported he had a good beeper and poor voice contact with the survivor and had his position established. Prior to this time, intense 37 MM and ZPU fire were seen in the area.

3. (S) Ground fire suppression began at 0855H and continued throughout the day. A total of 71 sorties including 13 F105s, 50 F4's, and 8 A1's expended ordnance in the suppression effort. During this time it was learned that the survivor was in the Dai Grang (River) and there were enemy small arms positions on the river banks within 150 feet of his position. Two aircraft received battle damage; Ozark 2/F105/KRT and Sandy 1, with Ozark receiving very heavy damage. Suppression then continued, against the heavy AAA defenses in the immediate area, with an accumulated BDA of 19X37 MM guns destroyed, 4X37 MM guns damaged, 7X37 MM positions silenced, and numerous ZPU/AN/ and SA positions destroyed and silenced.

4. At 1725H, the survivor reported "there were numerous bodies in the area and ground fire had been suppressed". At 1728H, the SAR forces crossed the DMZ. At 1748H, Jolly Green 32 reported the rescue of a "wet, tired pilot", but otherwise in very good condition.

5. Questioning of the survivor, Maj Curtis Lawson, revealed he had seen a good chute on the other crew member. He indicated he had landed in a group of people and was assumed captured. Electronic search for the bombardier navigator is continuing.

* 10 MARINE SORTIES SUPPORTED THE SAR EFFORT

Cys to: DO
DOC
DSA
DOT
DAR

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
 DECLASSIFIED AT 14 JUL 2000
 BY 1011R 5400

SECRET

DOCC-8-49327

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58

Mission 1-3-079

26 July 1968

Mission was in progress at 0445 Z, when Crown 6 arrived on station to relieve Crown 4. Mission was being handled by Crown 4 and was for Helborn 20 (USMC A-6) that had been downed by hostile ground fire the previous evening. Coordinates for the SAR area were XD 904969 (319 degrees, 27 nmi., Tacan Channel 109). The SAR force had established radio contact with one survivor - the pilot of Helborn 20, who had reported that he was in excellent condition, but that he was surrounded by "unfriendlies" and ZPU and 37 mm. anti-aircraft positions. This fact was quite evident when two attempted rescue efforts were met with extremely heavy ground fire and were forced to withdraw. During the latter rescue attempt Sandy 1 (USAF A-1E) received a hit from automatic weapons fire and lost all hydraulic pressure. Sandy 1 and Sandy 2 (who was experiencing engine roughness) returned to Tacan channel 77. Prior to return to channel 77, Sandy 1 evaluated the SAR area and reported that although previous fighter strikes had destroyed approximately seven 37mm. and numerous ZPU positions, the area was still unsuitable for another rescue effort. SAR forces were returned to the vicinity of the "Rock Pile" to await sterilization of the SAR area by high performance aircraft. From this point in the mission until about 0930 Z, approximately 20 flights of fighter type aircraft expended ordinance on suspected gun positions in the SAR area under the control of Misty 21,31, and 41 (USAF F-100 FAC's). Bombing by the fighters was excellent and very precise (within 10 meters of the downed pilot). At 0835 Z Asiatic voices were heard on 243.0 mc and the survivor could not be contacted by radio. It was felt that the survivor had probably been captured at this time, but since this could not be confirmed the mission was continued. While controlling a flight of fighters, one of the Misty aircraft heard the survivor on Guard channel. The survivor advised that he was still ok at the present time but that if rescue was not effected before dark that it would be "Sayonara". Also, during the period that the SAR area was being sterilized, the Jolly Green's were cycled back to Cigar for refueling and then returned to the "Rock Pile" for orbit. At 0930 Z Spad 11 and 12 made a low level evaluation of the SAR area and recommended that another rescue attempt be made. At this time Jolly Green 28 and 31 were committed; being escorted by Sandy 5,6,7, and 8; while Spad 11,12, and 13 attempted to suppress any unfriendly activity in the immediate area of the downed pilot. Although moderate to heavy ground fire were encountered by the Jolly Green's, the Sandy and Spad aircraft were able to suppress the ground fire to a point that enabled Jolly Green to effect a rescue pick up. Pick up was made by Jolly Green 31 at 0945 Z. All rescue forces were returned south of the DMZ. The survivor was reported in good condition - just a little cold and wet. He (the survivor) also stated that the other occupant of Helborn 20 had a "good 'chute", but that he had landed in a large group of people and was presumed captured. At 0955 Z all forces, with the exception of Crown 6, had received RTB. Crown 6 resuming normal precautionary orbit position until release received from Queen.

GROUP-4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals.
Declassified after 12 years.

Crew List Attached

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John C. Wood Jr.
JOHN C. WOOD JR., CAPT.
RESCUE CREW COMMANDER

39-68-313

3HARKS/C

68-7-0021

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

Summary

Report 1-3-079-8207, 26 July 68

(C) Two pilots in a USMC F-4 were forced to eject north of the DMZ at approximately 1300Z hours 25 Jul 68. The pilot landed in a river where he remained concealed in the water and on the river bank for 21 hours. Since night had fallen no SAR effort could be attempted that night. Jolly Greens 25 and 31 were launched at approximately 2330Z 25 July and proceeded to an orbit point near the location of the survivor. Shortage of fuel necessitated departure from the orbit area. Jolly Greens 31 and 28 were launched from the refueling location at 0400Z 26 July. During the interim support aircraft were attempting to destroy known gun positions in the immediate vicinity of the survivor. A second withdrawal for fuel was accomplished with Jolly Green 31 and 28 being launched again at 0600Z. An evaluation by the Jolly Green resulted in a planned river landing to provide best protection from ground fire. Before a rescue attempt could be initiated the on-scene commander (OSC) drew ground fire and directed withdrawal of Jolly Greens 31 and 28 for refueling. Both helicopters returned to the rescue scene at 0800Z. Because of approaching darkness, it was decided that an immediate rescue would be attempted. Jolly Green 31 made a rapid decent from 8000 feet while being escorted by 4 Sandv aircraft. Ground fire was observed after decent below 3000 feet but was ineffective. Difficulty was encountered in locating the survivor due to dense jungle and enemy activity. Jolly Green 31 located the downed airman, made a rapid low level approach and flared just above the river. The survivor swam to the helicopter, was drawn aboard and a rapid departure effected. During the entire decent, approach, landing and departure, the co-pilot, Flight Engineer and Rescue Specialist provided almost continuous fire from the M-60 machine guns and the M-16 rifle. The survivor, Major Curtis L Lawson, MAG 12, CHW LAI, was taken to Da Nang AB RVN.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
37TH AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SQUADRON (MAC)
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96337



28 JUL 1968

REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

370

SUBJECT:

MISSION NARRATIVE REPORT (1-3-079-8207, 26 July 68) (U)

Classified by
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED ON 31 DEC 84

TO:

37C
3rd ARRGp (JSARC)
IN TURN

1. (U) This report is submitted IAW ARRSM 55-2/3 ARRGp SUP 1 dated 15 June 1967.

2. (C) The SAR effort for Helborn 20, A Marine F-4, began at approximately 1300Z, 25 July 68. He was on an armed reconnaissance mission in Route Pac 1, when he was hit by 37MM and forced to eject. Both pilots ejected and the survivor noted a good chute on his observer, however, he was seen to land in a populated area and was assumed captured as no voice contact was ever established. The survivor came down in the Dai River located approximately 3 miles east of the intersection of Routes 101 and 103 (318/27½ CH 109) and swam about 20 meters to the east, after sinking his chute, and concealed himself against the north bank of the river where he spent the next 20½ hours. His approximate location was established that evening by a Misty FAC and a first light effort was scheduled for the next morning. The area was very heavily defended by 37MM, automatic weapons and small arms and it was assumed that a rescue attempt by a JG would not be feasible until after 3 to 4 hours of "softening up" the area. JG 25 (Low) and JG 31 (High) departed CH 77 at 2330Z 25 July, for strip alert at CH 103. After being airborne for approximately 20 minutes they were advised by Queen to proceed to the Rockpile (265/12-CH 109) and orbit for a possible rescue attempt. After arriving at the orbit point at 0030Z 26 July, and holding, they were instructed to RTB CH 103 for refueling and to standby for immediate launch. Landing at CH 103 was completed at 0100Z. JG 25 and 31 launched again at 0200Z for a rescue attempt but it was cancelled because Sandy lead considered the area still too hot. Both JG's landed at CH 103 at 0230Z with JG 25 experiencing a generator malfunction on his final approach. JG 28, who had RTB'd to CH 103 upon completion of his ECHO orbit requirement then became High bird and JG 31 assumed Low bird in place of JG 25. JG 31 (Low) and JG 28 (High) launched again at 0400Z and orbited at the Rockpile to be in position for another rescue attempt. Sandy 1 made another low pass over the survivor at approximately 0500Z to determine if the JG's should be called in, but took hits from ground fire and RTB'd to CH 77. JG's were RTB'd to CH 103 for refueling while additional airstrikes were called in. Landing was accomplished at 0530Z. JG 31 and 28 launched again at 0600Z, went to the Rockpile and then proceeded Northwest along the mountain ridges at 8000' to hold at a point about 10 miles west of the survivor. Observation of the rescue site from this area was quite good and at this time definite plans for the type of rescue attempt were formulated by the crew. A check was made with Mistys and Sandies to determine if the river was wide enough to attempt a landing in the river bed adjacent to the survivor's position. It was determined that river was approximately 120 to 150 feet wide at the survivor's location.

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year
intervals; declassified
after 12 years

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The RCC briefed the crew that the pickup would be accomplished by landing rather than hover to utilize maximum protection of river banks and minimize exposure time in the pickup area. He also briefed that the penetrator would be put in the water with slack already set in the hoist cable to assist in pulling in the survivor. Additionally, he directed M-60 and M-16 firing from 1000 feet in and throughout the pickup. Upon completion of crew briefing, Sandies and Spads again reported heavy ground fire still in the survivor's immediate area and recommended additional airstrikes. JG 31 and 28 were RTB'd to CH 103 for refueling. Landing was completed at 0718Z, refueling accomplished, additional ammunition on loaded and aircraft launched again at 0740Z for orbit at Rockpile. It is worthy of note that JG 31 had experienced landing gear malfunctions on the last two sorties. Main gear circuit breaker had to be held in to cycle main gear and nose gear was stuck in an intermediate position. The major problem caused by this malfunction was that due to the minimum extension of the nose gear, the aft tank could be fueled to only 1200 lbs and no tip tanks were installed. JG 31 and 28 arrived over the Rockpile again at 0800Z and Bingo Time (based on Rockpile departure to pickup point and return to CH 103) was passed as 0915Z. At 0910Z Sandy 7 questioned the JG fuel state. A new Bingo Time of 0930Z was computed based on recovery at LZ Stud. Due to darkness approaching, it was felt that an additional refueling would not permit sufficient time for a rescue attempt. Sandies advised that there was still ground fire in the area, but with due consideration to all factors, an attempt was feasible. JG 31 and 28, departed Rockpile at 0920Z and proceeded NW on a heading of 340 at 8000' to a point over the mountains at 301/22-CH 109. JG 28 held at the approximate point to provide rescue capability for JG 31. RCC and RCCP removed chest packs and put on Iron Maidens at this point while the RCC completed the pickup briefing and the RCCP completed the Descent and Hostile Descent Checklists. The RCC reiterated the requirement for heavy fire suppression by Rescort aircraft and JG 31's own guns. At 0932Z JG 31, accompanied by Sandies 5, 6, 7, and 8 began a fast descent on a Northeasterly heading to 3000' arriving at that altitude some 3 to 4 miles south of the survivor's location. A left turn to a Northerly heading was completed and further descent at 130 KIAS was begun so as to arrive over the survivor's approximate location at minimum altitude to execute the landing. After rolling out on the Northerly heading the RCCP observed heavy automatic weapons fire coming from the area of the village in the "horseshoe" formed by the river approximately 200 meters south of the survivor's location. He called the ground fire on UHF and it was immediately suppressed by the Rescort aircraft. This area was covered fairly well with smoke and it is felt that the enemy was firing more at the sound than visually. The RCC called passing 1000' and the PJ and FE started suppressing ground fire with both M-60's the remainder of the way in, as pre-briefed. The RCC called for the survivor's smoke approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles out. The PJ observed a large number of enemy troops in ditches as the chopper passed over the village area just south of the survivor's position. The survivor either delayed or had some difficulty popping smoke as it was not visible upon reaching the south bank of the river. The RCCP observed smoke on the North bank of the river at the next horseshoe to the left. The RCC executed a left turn and proceeded toward that smoke. Sandy 7 noted that JG 31 was headed for the wrong spot and almost immediately called, "you're going the wrong way, he is in the river behind you!" A steep 180 degree turn to the right was executed and the RCC and FE then spotted the smoke. The RCC maneuvered the aircraft at minimum altitude and approximately 70 KIAS along the river to the survivor's location while the RCCP monitored the engine instruments and the emergency fuel controls and the

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Downgraded at 3 year
intervals; declassified
after 12 years

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PJ and FE fired the M-60's just above the river banks to keep the enemy's heads down. Abeam the survivor, a steep 180 degree left turn with a flare was executed 35 feet south of the survivor in the river. The survivor started swimming toward the aircraft as it approached touchdown and caught hold of the penetrator thrown to him by the FE. The PJ came off the left M-60 when the survivor reached the door (the left M-60 finally siezed at this time from excessive heat) and pulled him in. The FE continued firing the right M-60 at enemy positions with his left hand as he took up the hoist cable slack by operating the hoist with his right hand. As the PJ left the left gun position the RCCP provided the necessary fire to keep their heads down on the south river bank by firing the M-16 out of his window while the aircraft was in the water. Five or six 20 round clips were fired at that time. As soon as the survivor was on board, (approximately 0942Z), a take off was executed, staying just off the water until approximately 100 KIAS and then a shallow climbout to the southwest was started. The RCCP continued to fire his M-16 while in the immediate take-off-area, as did the PJ and FE. Both M-60's were inoperative at this point with only 70 rounds of M-60 ammo left. Approximately 2400 rounds were fired. Maximum altitude on the flight back to CH 103 was 4500' and JG 31 was accompanied by Sandies 5, 6, 7 and 8, and also joined by JG 28. 37MM fire was observed by the Sandies aft of JG 31 on the departure leg. The aircraft was visually inspected after landing at CH 103 at 1003Z and no battle damage was noted. The Survivor was in good condition. Refueling was accomplished and departure for CH 77 was 1045Z with mission completed at CH 77 at 1145Z, 26 July 68. The crew coordination was outstanding on the mission. The Rescort aircraft had been completely briefed by the RCC on exactly how the pickup would be made and what would be required of them in the way of support. It is felt that the three most significant factors contributing to the success of this mission were: (1) The outstanding job of close air support by the FAC's and all strike aircraft. (2) The keen professionalism displayed by the survivor throughout his entire ordeal, and (3) The impressive amount of suppressive fire from JG 31 before, during, and after the pickup, which allowed the pickup to be accomplished in an unsterile area without suffering any battle damage.

3. (C) The survivor was: Major Curtis L. Lawson, MAG 12 CHU LAI.

4. (C) Crew of Jolly Green 31 were:

RCC Major Charles E. Wicker
RCCP Major Robert E. Booth
FE SSgt John Enriquez
RS Sgt Steve M. Northern

Charles E. Wicker
CHARLES E. WICKER, Major, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

James H. Grady
JAMES H. GRADY, LtCol, USAF
Operations Officer
Charles R. Klinkert
CHARLES R. KLINKERT, LtCol, USAF
Commander

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year
intervals; declassified
after 12 years

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During the SCOTCH 3 SAR effort, 42 F-4s were allocated to the mission, and 32 were used. Twelve F-105s were also used. Additionally, there were five Misty (F-100) FACs and one Covey (O-2) FAC used; two FACs were on-scene almost continuously. When the primary SAR aircraft, consisting of eight A-1s, four helicopters and two Crown aircraft are added, the total number of aircraft involved totals 74. During the nine-hour mission, 121 tons of ordnance were expended. ^{10/}

An examination of the STREETCAR 304 mission revealed that 44 F-4s and 42 F-105s were involved for a total of 86 support aircraft. Additionally, six Nail (O-2) FACs were used, and approximately eight A-1s, six helicopters, and three Crown primary SAR aircraft were used during the 28-hour mission. The total number of aircraft involved was approximately 109. The figure becomes "approximate" because the total number of primary aircraft was estimated from incomplete records. Eighty-six tons of ordnance were expended. ^{11/}

^{26 JUL 62}
During the HELLBORNE 20 mission, 38 F-4s, 11 F-105s, five A-6s, two A-4s, and seven A-7s were involved, for a total 63 support aircraft. Additionally, four Misty FACs were used with an estimated 14 primary SAR aircraft to make a grand total of approximately 81. The mission lasted 10 hours and a total of 118 tons of ordnance were expended. ^{12/}

The totals of all aircraft and tons of ordnance used in just three missions are depicted here:

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25 Jul 68

Hellborn 20 SAR. USMC A-6 Intruder pilot shot down on the evening of 25 July 68, about 32 miles north of the DMZ. Hellborn 20 Alpha (Major Curtis Lawson) is on the bank of a river, and talking to overhead aircraft on his survival radio. No radio contact was ever made with Bravo. Due to darkness, Alpha is bedded down for the night. A FAC remains in the area to keep in touch with him. Sandy's from NKP launch at first light and start working the area. Next, Sandy's and Jolly's were scrambled out of DaNang at 1000L. The Jolly's and their Sandy's were put on a high orbit about 10 miles west of Hellborn 20. After the NKP A-1's started taking significant amounts of ground fire, they ordered the DaNang Jolly's out of the area and had the DaNang A-1's accompany them back to DaNang. They were told to refuel, have lunch and be ready to return when needed. In the meantime, the on scene command was passed to a FAC who was putting in airstrikes every 5 minutes or so. This FAC had coordinated over 120 strike sorties into the area around Hellborn 20 Alpha. At about 1500L, the aircraft from DaNang launched again. Despite all this close air support, the FAC and Sandies were still taking a lot of 12.7mm fire. When the area was as quiet as the Sandy's thought it could get, the Jolly started in and picked up Major Lawson. It turned out that Bravo (Captain Paul G Brown had been captured. He was repatriated on 14 March 1973, as part of "Operation Homecoming." See *Hellborn folder*.

Hellborn 20 SAR

25 Jul 1968

(Tape contributed by George Marrett, with assistance from Don Condra)



(If you can provide additional info, please do so)

MSN NARRATIVE E-MAILED
email to webmaster

Setting

Hellborn 20 is down near the bank of a river. He has gun positions surrounding him and has been working with Misty 41 who is putting air strikes on them.

The players

Hellborn 20A - Maj Curtis Lawson, USMC A-6 Intruder pilot,

Hellborne 20B - Capt Paul G. Brown (Captured and held as POW. Released on March 14, 1973)

Sandy 07-08 Lead Sandy pair **Need names**

Sandy 05-06 Escort Sandys with Jolly Greens **Need names**

Jolly Green 31 - Pickup Jolly

Crown - Command and Control HC-130

Not on Tape

Spad 11, flight of three - Skinny McGinnis, John Hayes, Don Dineen

Need all possible information relating to this SAR.

Hook, Ask and you shall receive. Attached is a copy of the 7th AF News about the

Hellborn 20A (Maj Curtis Lawson, USMC) mission. Sometime later I heard that Hellborn 20B (the backseater) was kila or died after capture.

HB20 was shot down the evening of 25 July 1968 about 32 miles north of the DMZ. Don Dineen, Gene "Skinny" McGinnis and John Hayes were in the Spad alert detachment at Da Nang. Normally we only had two birds on alert but early the next morning (26 July) we were told to put up all three and told about the rescue effort. We were scrambled about 1000 hrs. We crossed the DMZ at the western end and met with the JG's. We were put on hold with the JG about 5-10 miles west of HB20. Two Sandys from NKP were working over the rescue site and when it was cool we would escort the JG in for the pickup. About that time Sandy took several hits and "we were told to go home and have lunch".

We RTBd to DaNang with only 1:20 total fly time. The Sandys also recovered at DaNang. Sandy 2 was Charlie Flynn (Now Deceased) I had been stationed with Charlie from 1956-59 at Stewart AFB and hadn't seen him since. Sandy lead (Maj Hale) had quite a bit of damage. I think that his plane was left at DaNang and they both returned to NKP in Charlie's.

After lunch (what a war!) we were again sent north about 1500 hrs. From early morning F-100 Misty Fast Facs had been putting two strike sorties every 5 minutes. I heard at the club that night that one FAC had gone out over the water and refueled three or more times before he would leave the scene. We went back north by the same route and met with the JG. Again there were two Sandies working over the site.

When they had expended it was our turn. I don't remember too much about it except the river ran generally east-west. All the groundfire seemed to be coming from the north side and there was a village on the south side. In spite of over 120 strike sorties that day they were still shooting. I don't remember any heavy stuff but there was still lots of 50Cal. I only got north of the DMZ 5 or 6 times and I didn't like it one bit. On this day I remember being at 1,500 feet going straight up with almost no airspeed and saying "WHAT IN THE HELL AM I DOING HERE?" For about 6 or seven passes it was just one continuous roll-in after another for all three of us. I never let John Hayes forget about his "great accuracy". On one pass I saw him fire one rocket and it went right smack into a MG hole. We expended all our munitions and were relieved by two more Sandys. Within ten minutes after we left Wicker in the JG had had enough and decided to make the pickup, went down, landed in the river and brought the marine on board. We flew 3:40 on this sortie. We met him when he got off the JG in DaNang--talk about wrinkled like a prune--but after almost 24 hours in the water he was a happy prune.

I have Maj Wicker's name in some other articles. He was tough. I played him a handball match one day and made the mistake of beating him in the first game. I don't think that I scored more than 2 or 3 points in each of the next two games.

Don Dineen

From: Robert LaPointe <rlapointe@gci.net>
To: spadguy@mindless.com <spadguy@mindless.com>
Date: Sunday, May 23, 1999 11:21 PM
Subject: Hellborn 20 SAR

My name is Bob LaPointe and I was a PJ with the 37th ARRS 70-72. While doing research at Maxwell for a book I am writing about SEA CSAR I obtained a copy of the mission narative for the Hellborn 20 SAR written by the Jolly Aircraft Commander. If you are still looking for info on this SAR I would be glad to mail you a copy. Send me a postal address and I will forward to you.

Great web site. I always remember the best CAS the AF ever had. The PJ's today think that getting ordnance within a couple hundred meters is great. They don't believe me when I tell them you guys put rounds within 50 meters of us. Fast movers will never replicate the A-1's.