

3. The SOG team extraction mission on 5 October was much less fortunate. Major Wester and Sergeant Lawrence and Jolly Green 10 might not have been lost if the ground team had moved off the landing zone initially, as we later directed them to join the survivors of JG 10 at the crash site. The VNAF H-34 which landed the ground team was shot down while exiting the area. When JG 28 reached a hover over the LZ on the initial rescue attempt, the rotor downwash parted the elephant grass and disclosed two armed groups of men on each side of the LZ. The friendlies were mostly indigenous troops so it was impossible to tell friend from foe until the bad guys started shooting. JG 28 withdrew and made it back to DaNang with a main fuel line severed by the ground fire. The LZ was in a box canyon and low clouds and mist capped the ridges. This kept the fast movers from working and severely limited the effectiveness of the A-1's. Rockets and other ordnance from the gunships were used for suppression before JG 10 attempted to make the pickup and was shot down. The weather then lifted a bit and the ground team was directed to join up with the JG 10 survivors while the Spads and F-4's blasted the area around the LZ. The PJ survivor, 250 yds from the LZ at the JG 10 crash site, heard people by-passing his position through the jungle and radioed that the ground team was going too far. It turned out that the people he heard were the enemy driven downhill by the Spads suppressive fire ahead of the SOG team. The eventual recovery of all survivors by JG 32 was a classic. The crew returned ground fire with the M-60's and 8 Sandys and Spads expended ordnance continually from a circling "Daisy Chain" while Major Olsen held a hover for a long time with the main and tail rotor clipping tree branches to enable all of the survivors to board the penetrator. The following message of appreciation was sent from COMUSMACV/MAC SOG 5503 to 7th Air Force for the 37th ARRS crewmembers. "Please express my sincere thanks to the members of your unit who provided such professional and courageous assistance during the recovery of a reconnaissance team from an enemy stronghold on 5 Oct 68. Without their outstanding assistance, the entire team would very possibly have been lost. The flying skill, and bravery under fire of these crews is unsurpassed by any combat unit in the theater. Cavanaugh sends. "

4. Enemy forces on a certain island were responsible for the loss of our second two HH-3's last month. Fortunately no more lives were lost. The Navy made a futile attempt to salvage both aircraft. When JG 24 lost transmission oil pressure and landed four miles off the island on 16 Oct, the destroyer HMAS Perth moved in to return fire from the shore batteries and even the New Jersey was diverted toward

the scene. After the crew was evacuated under fire and the helicopter capsized, the Navy decided it was not worth the risk of exposing the USS Princeton to the enemy artillery in an attempt to recover the helicopter. Four days later, when Captain Moore and crew enroute to Echo orbit attempted to rescue two F-4 pilots in their rafts even closer offshore from the island, the first artillery round from shore blew the entire tail boom off the helicopter. The survivors in their rafts were drifting toward the island and Captain Moore decided that any delay while awaiting full complement of our RESCORT forces would result in their capture. A decision that I think was completely understandable under the circumstances. The enemy held their fire until the aircraft was in the water and the PJ overboard helping the F-4 pilot with a severe back injury. As the shell hit, the rotor blades contacted the water on the left side and sheared off. The PJ and pilot were under the rotor arc on the right side at the time. They were forced under the aircraft and through the tremendous efforts of the PJ, who maintained control of the injured pilot, came up on the other side unhurt. A piece of one blade came through the top of the cockpit narrowly missing Captain Moore's head. The helicopter suffered another direct hit moments after the crew abandoned it in their rafts. Artillery and even mortar shells were exploding all around when all six survivors were picked up. The shore batteries were eventually silenced by F-4's, F-105's, Navy A-4's and our Spads. After what remained of JG 29 drifted past the corner of the island and beyond range of shore, a Navy swiftboat took it in tow in hopes of beaching it further South. However, it sank below the water and caused minor damage to the swift boat so had to be abandoned. We sent you a copy of our message of appreciation to the Seventh Fleet for their support (7AF DSR 160832Z Oct 68). The Navy has subsequently bombarded the island with the 16 inch guns of the battleship New Jersey.

5. On the subject of formation flying, as I stated in my ARCCO ltr, 25 Sep 68 and 3ARRGp msg 1000332Z Aug 68, the need is urgent and we would appreciate your approval on this matter. With the many anticipated changes to our tactics resulting from the new bombing policy and the areas we will be concentrating our operations on, this training is a vital key to our continued successful recovery operations.

6. We recently staffed a paper through 7th Air Force concerning RESCORT support within the DaNang SAR Sector. The paper cites the increase in enemy activity and firepower in the sector, our history of HH-3 losses, and recommends that six A1's be based at DaNang in support of our 37th Squadron. We have scheduled a SAR conference here at Tan Son Nhut for 7 November 1968 to discuss RESCORT tactics, training and

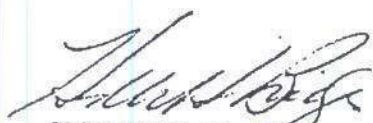
frequent basis. Plan to have my commanders in here for a quick 1-day conference just before General Estes' visit to insure continuity of action, etc.

24. The "MAC Family Concept" has resulted in a weekly flow of General officers touring our units, primary interest seems to be in the living facilities area. So far every one has had nothing but compliments.

25. Save Summary for September and October 1968:

|        | Combat   | Non/Combat | USAF<br>C/NC | USN<br>C/NC | USA<br>C/NC | USMC<br>C/NC | F/MIL<br>C/NC | CIV<br>C/NC |
|--------|----------|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| III-3  | 52       | 0          | 34/0         | 0/0         | 14/0        | 0/0          | 4/0           | 0/0         |
| III-43 | 9        | 75         | 2/11         | 1/5         | 3/11        | 1/4          | 2/33          | 0/11        |
| III-53 | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u>   | <u>1/0</u>   | <u>0/0</u>  | <u>0/0</u>  | <u>0/0</u>   | <u>0/0</u>    | <u>0/0</u>  |
| TOTAL  | 62       | 75         | 37/11        | 1/5         | 17/11       | 1/4          | 6/33          | 0/11        |

26. This letter, like some of my past speeches, may appear a bit lengthy, will attempt to be more brief in the future.



HOLLON H. BRIDGES, Colonel, USAF  
Commander

cc: Cmdr, PacARRC

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENT 23

56.

NEWS RELEASE  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

11-168-213

TOP USAF PARARESCUEMAN  
AFTER 51 COMBAT SAVES  
COMPLETES VIETNAM TOUR

DA NANG AIR BASE, RVN (7AF)—At age 21 Air Force Sergeant Steve M. Northern, Riverside California, has completed his Vietnam tour.

Barely of voting age, Sergeant Northern has recorded more "combat saves" than any other person in aviation history — 51. The all-time record was established by Northern during two consecutive Southeast Asia tours as a (PJ) Pararescueman with the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group of the Military Airlift Command (MAC).

Northern, who was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, where his father (deceased) was a championship race car driver, came to Southeast Asia in July 1966. He was first assigned to Bien Hoa Air Base, where he served as a PJ aboard HH-43 "Pedro" rescue helicopters.

He was wounded in action less than two months after his arrival, on September 10, 1966, and was awarded the Purple Heart.

Enemy bullets couldn't stop the then 19 year old youth, and he went on to become one of the most highly decorated pararescue men in the nation's history.

Northern received the first of two Silver Stars for "gallantry in action" for an heroic rescue action on July 15, 1967. His second Silver Star as a PJ came for an action on August 23, 1967, when he "volunteered to be lowered from his HH-3 helicopter to aid an immobilized survivor located in a position completely surrounded by hostile troops and gun locations."

The citation continues: "Airman Northern carried the survivor to the hoist and shielded him with his own body as they were brought into the helicopter..."

Both Silver Stars came for actions with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, home of the HH-3 "Jolly Green Giants." Like Northern, the 37th ARRSq is one of the most decorated units in history. He joined the unit in June 1967. Earlier, Northern served with Detachment 6, 38th ARRSq, at Bien Hoa.

While at Da Nang Northern has flown more than 240 missions with the long-range aeri ally-refuelable—"Jolly Green Giant." He flew an average of 45 combat missions a month, many deep into enemy territory as far north as the Haiphong area of North Vietnam.

During his off-duty days Northern volunteered to fly rescue missions with Detachment 7, 38th ARRSq, also based at Da Nang. He is one of the few pararescuemen who flew missions interchangeably on both the HH-3 "Jolly Green" and the HH-43 "Pedros."

At other times Northern participated in Medical Civic Action Patrol flights, offering medical aid to local Vietnamese villagers in the I Corps area.

57.

During a rocket attack on Da Nang, Sergeant Northern and the 1968 "Airman of the Year," Sergeant Duane Hackney, aided 25 persons trapped under a C-130 Hercules which had been set afire by exploding 750 pound bombs ignited by enemy rockets. Hackney, first living Airman to be awarded the "Air Force Cross" will return to the 37th ARCS; early next year.

Northern, who entered the Air Force at Oklahoma City (Midwest City), in early 1965, plans to attend El Camino Junior College, Torrance California, starting in February.

Northern attended Riverside, California High School but earned his high school diploma while in the Air Force.

His brother, Army Specialist 4th Class Randy Northern, 20, is a helicopter "Gunship" crew chief, currently serving in West Germany. His sister, Glennanna, 21, lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

His father, a championship "sprint car" driver, was paralyzed following a race car crash at Jungle Park, Indiana, in April, 1949, shortly before he was due to take part in the Indianapolis Speed Classic on Memorial Day 1949. He died on July 22, 1967, seven days before Northern was due to complete his initial 12 month SEA tour.

Northern completed his final two "combat saves" (all combat saves involve an action in which the survivor would have met certain death or enemy capture had he not been rescued; most are under enemy fire) off Tiger Island, North Vietnam, on October 20, 1968.

Ironically, Northern's last save was of a fellow PJ, Airman First Class Robert Cassidy, 21, of Pittsburg, Pa. Cassidy and three other "Jolly Green Giant" crew members were rescued in a dramatic action when their aircraft was destroyed by enemy fire while attempting to rescue two Marine Corps F-4 crewmen from the Gulf of Tonkin.

Asked how he felt about leaving the Air Force and Southeast Asia, the soft-spoken, dark-haired, six-foot one-inch, 175-pound PJ Said: "I'll miss it!"

LAST MISSION WAS ON 20 OCT 68

# Rescuemen Match Efforts With Fate

DA NANG—The men involved in rescues at Da Nang had two hectic days recently in which they saved eight aircrew members, including four of their own.

On Oct. 20, all the guns of North Vietnam's Tigre Island couldn't stop one of the most dramatic rescue efforts in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Six Air Force personnel were pulled from the enemy's grasp near the island stronghold about four miles away. The quick re-

sponse of tactical airpower and the courage of Air Force crews made the daring escape possible.

Two days earlier, the rescue team saved two RF-4B Marine crewmembers after they had parachuted into the stormy, windlashed Gulf of Tonkin. The Marine pilots climbed aboard a Jolly Green rescue helicopter of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron exactly 23 minutes after they had been forced to bail out.

The Oct. 20 rescue began early in the morning when an F-4 Phantom from the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing was crippled by enemy fire over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam. The two crewmembers headed for the coastline and ejected near Tigre Island.

Jolly Green Giant helicopters from the rescue squadron immediately were vectored to the area to make the pick-up. A-1 Skyraider pilots from a detachment element of the 6th Special Operations Squadron were scrambled to direct about a dozen tactical fighters called to provide fire support for the rescue.

As the fighters headed for the rescue site, Communist gunners on Tigre Island opened fire. The first hit blew a chopper's tail off after it had landed to make the pickup.

"Our rescue attempt was over at that time and we became a part of the surviving party," recalled Jolly Green pilots Captains Gerald M. Moore and Laurence C. Davis Jr. Once in their rafts they rowed against the mounting seas away from the enemy fire.

Helping the F-4 pilot — who had suffered serious back injuries — were pararescueman Sgt. Steve T. White of Los Alton, Calif., and the copter's flight engineer, Sgt. Robert T. Anderson of St. Louis.

After facing 10-foot swells and continued enemy fire for almost an hour, two Jolly Greens attempted a multiple pickup. Fighter pilots temporarily suppressed some of the enemy fire and a smoke screen was laid for the descending, zig-zagging choppers.

"The seas were pretty rough and we couldn't land, so we had to use the hoist," commented

Maj. Charles Wicker, the rescue crew commander. "Each time we went into a hover, the people on the island started zeroing in on us. I've never made faster pickups in my life, because the enemy was just walking them up to the chopper."

It took only three to four minutes to pick up all six men — four on Major Wicker's aircraft and two on the chopper commanded by Capt. Jerry M. Griggs, Kannapolis, N.C.

Two days earlier, the two Marine pilots were rescued by a Jolly Green scrambled from Quang Tri Marine Corps base, 23 miles from the crash scene.

Making the pickup were Captains Richard D. Griffiths, Pembroke, Mass., and George Stokes, Houston, AIC Robert Cassidy, Mercer, Pa., and Sergeant Anderson who was to play another life-saving role today.

## Pararescueman's Valor Reaps 'Cheney' Award

WASHINGTON (AFNS) — Presentation of the Cheney Award to Sgt. Duane Hackney, Hamilton AFB, Calif., will be made by Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. John D. Ryan, today, at the Pentagon.

Sergeant Hackney, a pararescueman assigned to the 41st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, is only the fourth enlisted man to individually win the Air Force award for an "act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest performed in connection with aircraft."

The award was first presented in 1928 in memory of 1st Lt. William H. Cheney, killed in an air collision in Italy during World War I. A \$500 honorarium, bronze medal and certificate accompany the award. Six other enlisted men have shared the Cheney Award.

Sergeant Hackney, one of the

Air Force's most decorated first-term airmen, was selected for his extraordinary act of valor in the rescue of a downed American pilot from a dense jungle area in North Vietnam in February 1967.

He twice volunteered to be lowered from his HH-3 Jolly Green Giant helicopter before finding the pilot. After both men had been hoisted into the helicopter, enemy gunners found their mark, causing heavy damage and igniting a fire in the aircraft.

Sergeant Hackney placed a parachute on the stunned pilot and as he slipped his arms into another parachute, an explosion blew Sergeant Hackney out the open door. He managed to deploy the unbuckled parachute and survived the 250-foot fall when trees caught his partially opened chute. A second rescue helicopter later picked him up.

# thumous awards for hero



TS AWARDS earned by the late CMSgt. Charles D. King, a pararescuer. Mr. Charles L. King presented the decorations by Maj. Gen. Ralph S. Saunders, ARRS commander. (U.S. Air

SCOTT AFB, IL—The nation's second highest medal—along with four other prestigious decorations—was awarded recently to an Air Force hero killed during the Vietnam conflict.

The Air Force Cross, second only to the Medal of Honor, was presented to the family of the late CMSgt. Charles D. King, a pararescuer. Other decorations awarded include the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, and the Purple Heart.

The medals were presented Sept. 23 to the late hero's father, Charles L. King, by Maj. Gen. Ralph S. Saunders, commander of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, with headquarters here. The ceremony was held in the Air National Guard Armory in the family's hometown, Muscatine, IA.

According to the citation accompanying the Air Force Cross, Sergeant King "in an extraordinary display of courage and valor placed his comrades' lives above his own." The citation refers to the 1968 Christmas Day incident which took his life while he was rescuing a downed pilot in a hostile fire area.

Descending from the rescue helicopter to the ground, Sergeant King freed the pilot from his parachute harness and was attempting to recover the pilot when enemy gunfire opened up. Sergeant King was hit. Aware that the helicopter crew also was endangered, Sergeant King radioed that he had been wounded and asked the aircraft crew to "pull away." They did so. From that point Sergeant King was listed as missing in action.

The Department of the Air Force recently declared Sergeant King killed in action. At the time he was listed as "missing in action," he was a member of Detachment 1, 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand.

Sergeant King had a history of heroic deeds. He earned the Silver Star Medal on Sept. 19, 1968. Under circumstances almost identical to those which earned him the Air Force Cross, Sergeant King descended under enemy gunfire to the ground on a rescue hoist to help a downed flyer. This time he cut the pilot loose from his parachute harness and immobilized several fractures the man had suffered. He then dragged the injured man to the forest penetrator (a device used to penetrate from above through heavy tree limbs) and the pilot and Sergeant King were hoisted to safety.

Just 19 days before the fatal mission, Sergeant King was aboard a helicopter which flew into heavy anti-aircraft fire to rescue another downed pilot. During the time the aircraft was in the area, it was hit repeatedly by enemy fire. Chief King remained in a fully exposed crew position firing his weapon at the enemy. His action permitted the helicopter crew to make the rescue.

Chief Master Sergeant Charles D. King was a hero. While a member of the Air Force, he like the other men of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, lived—and he died—under the motto of his command: "That others may live."



**HERO AGAIN**—Sgt. Steven Northern, rifle ready, looks out of rescue helicopter in photo taken during action two years ago.

## Riverside airman takes part in wild rescue

It was one of the wildest rescues of the Vietnam war, and Sgt. Steven Northern of Riverside had a part in it yesterday.

One Jolly Green Giant was lost and four men almost didn't make it, but the helicopter crewmen, of which Northern was one, once more got their men out from under the enemy guns.

**FOR NORTHERN** it was the 50th and 51st men he had pulled aboard during 225 rescue missions. So far he has earned the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart and 15 Air Medals.

Northern stands out among the Jolly Green crewmen whose heroism has made them the most decorated airmen in the war, according to an Associated Press report from Saigon.

(He entered the Air Force after graduating from Rubidoux High School in 1965 and went to Vietnam in August 1966. His parents were listed then as Mr. and Mrs. Glenn F. Northern of 5952 Mission.)

**THE RESCUE** Northern participated in yesterday started during a bombing raid on North Vietnam's Tiger Island just north of the 17th Parallel.

An Air Force F4 Phantom jet was hit and its two-man crew bailed out. They landed in typhoon-whipped waters just off the island which bristled with enemy artillery and antiaircraft guns.

**MINUTES LATER**, the downed pilots, both of whom were injured, heard the roar and pop, pop of an H3 rescue helicopter.

But the North Vietnamese gunners were watching the vulnerable chopper just as closely. The shore batteries fired off several rounds and one hit the tail of the chopper piloted by Capt. Gerald W. Moore, 31, Washington, D.C., and Laurens C. Davis Jr., 29, of Fort Worth, Tex.

The chopper crashed into the sea, leaving six instead of two Americans in the water. All were being blown steadily toward death or capture on Tiger Island. The way the shells were exploding, death seemed more likely.

As Sgts. Steve White, 24, of Los Altos, and Robert T. Anderson of St. Louis, Mo., crewmen from the chopper, fought the elements to aid the injured pilots, one enemy shell hit the downed but floating helicopter.

**AS USUAL** a vast air armada quickly appeared over the scene. Air Force and Navy strike planes disregarded normal caution and the enemy antiaircraft guns. They dived time after time in an attempt to silence the shore batteries shooting at the men.

Navy Lt. (jg.) Richard K. Miller,

25 of New Haven, Conn., made repeated passes. "There were about 10 anti-aircraft sites opening up on us, but they weren't what we were after," he said.

Miller, together with other jet pilots, dumped their bombs onto the shore batteries.

By this time, the wind had whipped the waves into 10-foot sledgehammers rolling the freezing and struggling crewmen toward Tiger Island.

White, the son of a retired Navy commodore, was on his first rescue mission in Vietnam. After helping Sgt. Anderson move life rafts to aid the downed pilots, one of whom had a serious back injury, White dived into the water, tied a line to the two rafts and for almost an hour tried to match his powerful swimming stroke against the South China Sea.

More bombing, more strafing runs by the Navy and Air Force jets. Two more Jolly Green helicopters arrived

on the scene to rescue the six Americans. Enemy shellfire, despite the heavy air attacks, still was murderous.

**ONE OF THE CHOPPER** pilots, Maj. Charles E. Wicker, 34, Baltimore, Md., said, "We tried to go in a couple of times, but every time they started using artillery pieces on us and we couldn't get in there."

Finally a smoke screen was laid between Tiger Island and the swimming, paddling men. Wicker brought in his helicopter and picked up four of the men, using a winch and cable because of the high seas. Also aboard Wicker's chopper was Maj. Robert D. Schular, 37, Laguna Hills.

The jets kept up their work during the rescue. Navy Lt. Thomas E. Harding, 26, of Pawtucket, R.I., said, "The shore battery was lobbing shells out at the people in the water. We kept making passes using our rockets and 20 millimeter cannon fire until we were out of ammunition and low on fuel.

Northern was on the rescue helicopter that picked up the other two men.

An hour and a half after the ordeal started, all the Americans were safe and heading back to Da Nang. Capt. Davis, who had been paddling one of the life rafts, was asked later, "How far did you row?"

"How far can you row in an hour?" he asked. "My arms are so sore I can't lift them."

(In an interview published a month after he got to Vietnam, Northern said, "I hope I'm more successful here than I was on the race track." He drove in jalopy races at the National Orange Show stadium in San Bernardino.)



# RESCUE *Review*

AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE

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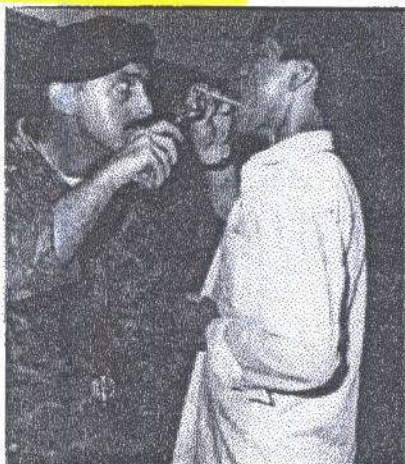
## Posthumous awards



FATHER ACCEPTS AWARDS earned by the late CMSgt. Charles D. King, a pararescueman. Mr. Charles L. King, father, is presented the decorations by Maj. Gen. Ralph S. Saunders, ARRS commander. (U.S. Air Force photo)

19 SEPT 68 KING, JPC

IN MSC #2



DA NANG -- Mouth and throat exam -- SSgt James L. Miller, 30, Bancroft, W. Va., closely scrutinizes the situation while examining the mouth and throat of a Vietnamese youth during a recent visit to one of the surrounding hamlets with the Medical Civic Action Program team. Miller is a pararescuer with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq.

## U. S. JAYCEES CALL RESCUER 'OUTSTANDING'

PLEIKU- Captain Derry A. Adamson, Eau Claire, Wis., a rescue crew commander assigned to Detachment 9, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Pleiku, was recently named by the National Junior Chamber of Commerce as one of the "Outstanding Young Men of America."

He earned the honor while assigned to Detachment 5, Western Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center McChord AFB Washington.

Recipients of the award are chosen by the Junior Chamber of Commerce to be placed in the annual edition of "Outstanding Young Men of America."

The book is distributed to libraries and universities throughout the country. The criteria utilized for the award is 'those men, who by their accomplishments, stand out in their chosen profession as outstanding young men.'

A 1960 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy (USAF), Captain Adamson was the captain of the varsity swimming team for four consecutive years setting several Rocky Mountain and USAFA records in the process. Upon graduation, he was given the 'Tate Award' as the most outstanding leader-athlete of his class.

# FROM THE COMBAT ZONE

## JOLLY GREEN CREWS RISK MORTARS TO SAVE PILOTS

DA NANG, RVN- An ARRS pararescuer swimming through storm-tossed seas while pulling two life rafts behind him helped execute, late last month, one of the most dramatic rescues in the Vietnam War.

Sergeant Steve T. White, 24, of Los Altos, Calif., the son of a retired Navy commodore, joined the lengthening list of heroes who have served with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, located at Da Nang Air Base.

Hit by enemy fire while on a mission over North Vietnam, an F-4 phantom was downed about 4½ miles southeast of Tiger Island, off the North Vietnam shore. At 7:20 a.m., a "Jolly Green" rescue helicopter piloted by Captain Gerald W. Moore, 31, Washington, D.C., landed at the scene. Almost immediately enemy shore batteries opened fire. The first hit blew the chopper's tail off. All four crew members immediately joined the F-4 pilots in the Gulf of Tonkin, hurriedly paddling from the scene in their life rafts. The sole exceptions were White, the injured aircraft commander, and the "Jolly Green's" flight engineer, Staff Sergeant Robert T. Anderson, 26, of St. Louis, Mo.

Anderson joined the downed pilot, bringing his own life raft astride. While he helped the Air Force pilot, who suffered serious back injuries, remove his gear, White dove into the sea and tied a line to the two rafts.

Just as they cleared the floating helicopter a direct hit from an enemy shore battery bowled the aircraft over onto its side.

For almost an hour White continued to pull the two rafts, while Anderson, who had been with the 37th ARRS only ten days, aided the pilot. The fourth "Jolly Green" crew member, Captain Laurens C. Davis Jr., 29, Fort Worth Texas, (the co-pilot) and the others rowed against the mounting seas.

By 8:14, when the first of two more "Jolly Green" rescue choppers arrived on the scene, the seas had mounted to ten foot swells.

In the meantime Air Force A-1 "Spads" and a HH-130P "Crown" aircraft of the 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (Tuy Hoa AB), joined the action.

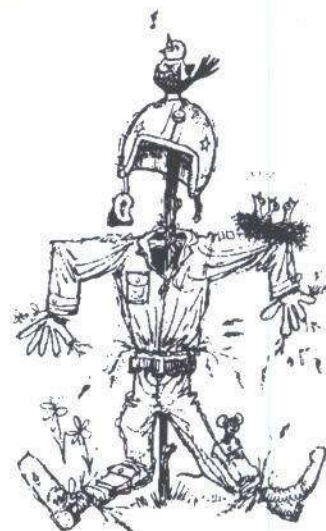
With seas too heavy to land on, the first "Jolly Green" lowered its hoist to rescue two survivors. Making the pickup was Sergeant Steven N. Northern, 21, Riverside, Calif., who has now saved 51 people while serving in Vietnam for more than two years.

Meanwhile, despite continuing small arms and artillery fire from Tiger Island, White continued to swim with the two rafts behind him. With the enemy fire suppressed by the fighter cover, a smoke screen was laid so that the island gunners would be obscured from the rescue helicopters. Zigging and zagging to the scene, as had the earlier "Jolly Green", the "Jolly Green" pilot, Major Charles E. Wicker, 34, Baltimore, brought the aircraft to a hover over the remaining four survivors.

"Each time we went into a hover the people on the island started zeroing in on us. We were only about one and a half miles from the island when we finally made the pickup," Wicker said.

Despite their efforts to pull away the heavy tides continued to bring them closer to the waiting enemy.

"I've never made a faster pickup in my life..." sighed Wicker. "The enemy was just walking them [shells] up to the chopper. Some were really hitting close."



"OK, so the Giant *does* need a scarecrow, but what's Capt. Whirly gonna' fly in?"

# Two Phantom 'Punch Outs' <sup>1 me wo Jim Wilburn Rescue</sup> Fail to Keep Jet Pilot Down

DA NANG — "It's hard to describe the feeling you have when they pull you into that helicopter . . . you've almost given up all hope . . . then suddenly you are alive . . . breathing . . . and happy as heck," commented 1st Lt. Sammy F. Wilburn as he related his experiences of ejecting twice from an F-4D Phantom jet fighter.

The 24-year-old officer from Carthage, Tenn., is one of the few pilots to have ejected out of the Phantom twice against the heavy odds of enemy fire and the rugged conditions of Asia. The fact that he was able to survive against those odds is a tribute to the Air Force's life support and rescue systems.

As a pilot with the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing 'Gunfighters,' Lieutenant Wilburn has recorded 119 combat missions . . . 53 over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam before the Nov. 1 bombing halt.

"The first mission I'll always remember was a scheduled north mission strike in North Vietnam," declared the lieutenant. "Right after takeoff from Da Nang, we got hit by small arms fire and our flaps locked in the half way up position.

"We tried to get the flaps to work, and our wingman joined up to give us a visual check. When we couldn't get the flaps to unlock we headed out over the sea to burn off fuel and jettison our ordnance.

"When we tried to use the emergency system, we felt a small explosion and our wingman radioed that we had a small fire in our left wing. I looked out and could see a bright glow from my seat. This soon turned into a large fire and when I reported this to my aircraft commander he told me to eject. I punched out and landed 'feet wet' (in the water) about 10 miles east of Da Nang in the South China Sea.

"Some 30 minutes later, a U.S. Marine H-34 rescue chopper picked me up," continued Lieutenant Wilburn.

"The second mission I won't forget was one near Dong Hoi," added the plucky lieutenant who is a pilot with the 480th Tactical Fighter Squadron. "We were on a strafing run when we got hit by some 23mm fire."

"Our wingman told us we were trailing a stream of fire. Two of the firelights came on and we knew we had fires raging in our engines. We climbed out, cleaning the aircraft of ordnance and wing tanks, then cut the power on our left engine where the largest fire seemed to be concentrated."

The flier's wingmen radioed the radar control at Dong Ha and informed them of the situation and asked the radar control station to alert their 'Jolly Green Giants.'

"About 20 miles out, the Phantom pitched over and rolled to the right. Both men ejected then. Seconds later the F-4D literally blew apart.

"We splashed down near Tiger Island and within 30 minutes a Jolly Green Giant helicopter was there to pick us up."

"But before he could get us out, the enemy ground batteries knocked the chopper out of commission."

At this point Spads, along with fighter jets from both the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing and the Navy started pouring fire on the enemy positions. After an hour of bombing and strafing by the tactical aircraft, the Jolly Greens made the pickup.

"How does it feel to punch out twice during one tour?" "Well it happens so fast . . . there's no pain . . . and for a minute you lose your orientation . . . but then you know what is happening and you start your own survival preparations," he answered his own questions.

Lieutenant Wilburn is still flying with the 480th Tactical Fighter Squadron and is scheduled to attend upgrade training as an aircraft commander when he rotates in early 1969.

20 OCT 69

## Eight Rescued on Two Days

*Jim Reeves was all involved in the one.*

# Rescuemen Match Efforts With Fate

DA NANG—The men involved in rescues at Da Nang had two hectic days recently in which they saved eight aircrew members, including four of their own.

On Oct. 20, all the guns of North Vietnam's Tigre Island couldn't stop one of the most dramatic rescue efforts in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Six Air Force personnel were pulled from the enemy's grasp near the island stronghold about four miles away. The quick re-

sponse of tactical airpower and the courage of Air Force crews made the daring escape possible.

Two days earlier, the rescue team saved two RF4B Marine crewmembers after they had parachuted into the stormy, windlashed Gulf of Tonkin. The Marine pilots climbed aboard a Jolly Green rescue helicopter of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron exactly 23 minutes after they had been forced to bail out.

The Oct. 20 rescue began early in the morning when an F-4 Phantom from the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing was crippled by enemy fire over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam. The two crewmembers headed for the coastline and ejected near Tigre Island.

Jolly Green Giant helicopters from the rescue squadron immediately were vectored to the area to make the pickup. A-1 Skyraider pilots from a detachment element of the 6th Special Operations Squadron were scrambled to direct about a dozen tactical fighters called to provide fire support for the rescue.

As the fighters headed for the rescue site, Communist gunners on Tigre Island opened fire. The first hit blew a chopper's tail off after it had tumbled to make the pickup.

"Our rescue attempt was over at that time and we became a part of the surviving party," recalled Jolly Green pilots Captains Gerald M. Moore and Laurence C. Davis Jr. Once in their rafts they rowed against the mounting seas away from the enemy fire.

Helping the F-4 pilot — who had suffered serious back injuries — were pararescueman Sgt. Steve T. White of Los Altos, Calif., and the rescue flight engineer, Sgt. Robert J. Anderson of St. Louis.

After facing 10-foot swells and

Maj. Charles Wicker, the rescue crew commander. "Each time we went into a hover, the people on the island started zeroing in on us. I've never made faster pickups in my life, because the enemy was just walking them up to the chopper."

It took only three to four minutes to pick up all six men — four on Major Wicker's aircraft and two on the chopper commanded by Capt. Jerry M. Griggs, Kannapolis, N.C.

Two days earlier, the two Marine pilots were rescued by a Jolly Green scrambled from Quang Tri Marine Corps base, 23 miles from the crash scene.

Making the pickup were Captains Richard D. Griffiths, Pembroke, Mass., and George Stokes, Houston, Ala.; Robert Cassidy, Mercer, Pa., and Sergeant Anderson who was to play another life-saving role two days later.

*Check  
Major James Reeves was  
the spot leader on  
this mission.*



# SEARCHER



NEWSLETTER OF THE 41st AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY WING

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## COMBAT RESCUE RECORDS SET DURING '68



THIS IS the ride to safety offered by the men and machines of the 3d ARRGp. A record number of persons took this ride in Southeast Asia during 1968. Whether the combat rescuers are flying the HH-43 "Pedro", HH-3 "Jolly Green Giant", HH-53 "Super Jolly Green Giant" or directing rescues in an HC-130 Hercules "Crown" aircraft, the object is the same -- "THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE".

TAN SON NHUT (7AF) -- Every existing record established by the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) in a combat environment was eclipsed during 1968.

During the past year rescue crews of the 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (ARRG), whose sole mission is the saving of human lives, were responsible for over 900 persons being able to usher in the new year.

In 1968 a total of 915 lives were saved by the rescue unit's "Jolly Green Giant" and "Pedro" helicopter crews, which are located at more than 20 sites throughout Southeast Asia.

A total of 571 combat saves were included in the overall total.

A save is credited when an individual would have met certain death or enemy capture if he had not been rescued. The "combat" classification results from the individual being exposed to enemy action or having been recovered from a hostile area.

Since air rescue operations began in Southeast Asia, a total of 2203 persons have been rescued. Of these, 1508 are classified as combat saves.

(NOTE: Non-combat saves should not be confused with "medical evacuation" flights. The latter involve the transfer of patients by air. 3ARRGp units have made thousands of medevac flights, but statistics are not maintained because of the high volume involved.)

Not all air search and rescues involved downed aircrew members or downed aircraft.

In fact, of the 1508 combat saves made to date, the largest number have been of U.S. Army personnel (472). A total of 449 U. S. Air Force personnel have been rescued. U. S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel account for 274 combat saves. The remainder have been of other friendly forces, including Vietnamese, Thai, Korean and Australian personnel.

Involved in virtually all air rescue behind enemy lines, many as far North as the Hanoi-Haiphong area (prior to the current bombing halt over North Vietnam), have been three different helicopters of the 3ARRGp. These are the HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant", the HH-43 "Pedro", and the HH-53 "Jolly Green

*Continued on page 3*

## GUNFIGHTER PILOT 'HAPPY AS HECK' ABOUT SECOND RESCUE OF TOUR

DA NANG (7AF) -- "It's hard to describe the feeling you have when they pull you into that helicopter ... you've almost given up all hope ... then suddenly you are alive ... and breathing ... and happy as heck," commented Air Force 1st Lt. Sammy F. Wilburn as he related his experience of ejecting twice from an F-4D Phantom jet fighter.

The 24-year-old officer from Carthage, Tenn., is one of the few pilots to have ejected out of the Phantom twice against the heavy odds of enemy fire and the rugged conditions of Asia. The fact he was able to survive against

those odds is a tribute to the Air Force's life support and rescue systems.

As a pilot with the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing 'Gunfighters', Wilburn has recorded 119 combat missions ... over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam before the Nov. 1 bombing halt.

"How does it feel to punch out twice in one tour?"

"Well it happens so fast ... there's no pain ... and for a minute you lose your orientation ... but then you know what is happening and you start your own survival preparations," he answered his own question.