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233

Date: 18 Jan 1969

21 Jan 1969

Mission Number: 2-3-007-9018

Flight Designation: Crown 2

Distressed Aircraft: Covey 264 and 285

Location: 010/42/72

Saves: One (1) Combat

1. We were escorting JG 70 to Channel 89 in the event he needed fuel. At approximately 0630Z, we heard Crown 1 talking to Covey 285 and 264. Covey stated that they went down about an hour earlier near the scene of the other crash. We assumed that he was talking about the crash site of Sandy 02 and JG 67. I immediately contacted JG 16/20 and Sandy 15/16, who were enroute from the previous SAR effort, and directed them to proceed to 010/42/72 and contact Crown 1. I coordinated with JG 16/20 and prepared to refuel them enroute to the Covey scene. Upon completion of the air refueling, we climbed out towards Channel 72 and were directed by King to assume control of the Covey mission. We contacted JG 16/20 and directed them to come as far southeast as possible. We then asked for Sandies out of Channel 89 to pick them up as they proceeded to the crash scene.

2. After arriving over the scene, we received a briefing from Crown 1 and had Sandy 15 assume duty as OSC. Sandy 15 was directed to use Sandy 16, Misty 41 and Nail 51 in an attempt to try and pinpoint the survivors. We had good voice contact with Covey 285 and weak voice contact with Covey 264. Both pilots reported their condition as OK. They stated that there was automatic weapons fire in the area. Ground fire could be heard each time Covey 285 transmitted on Guard.

3. At 0816Z, both survivors had been pinpointed by Sandy 15 and at 0819Z, JG 16/20 were told to hold east of the scene over the mountain ridge where a layer of clouds provided cover for them. Sandy provided escort for the JGs while they were holding over the mountains. At 0822Z, Sandy 19 was designated as OSC and was advised that Crown had several flights of fast-movers standing by if they were needed. Position of survivors referred was 360/42/72. Sandy 19 directed Speedo flight in for ordnance drop and Covey 285 reported on Guard that he hadn't heard any ground fire since the fighter strike, but he said in a whisper over his emergency radio, "I can see one guy about 20 yards from me, he is just waiting. Oh, me, what is going to happen now?" Sandy asked Covey 285 if he had a weapon and his reply was negative. Sandy informed Covey 285 to remain calm and we would put some more fighter strikes in and maybe the guy would go away. Covey 285 also reported that he thought the bad guy had a weapon because he had heard shooting in that area. Vampire and Gunfighter flights were directed in by Sandy 19.

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

234

4. At 0935Z, Sandy 19 made an evaluation of the area and decided to bring JG 16 in for the pick-up. JG 16 was escorted in with 4 Sandies in a Daisy. Chain expending ordnance as they went in. JG 16 had difficulty locating the Covey 285 and when he was directly over Covey 285 he began to take ground fire and had to pull out. JG 16 reported numerous holes in the aircraft and it was decided to have JG 20 escort JG 16 back to Channel 89.

5. Coordination with Sandy was made and we advised Sandy to inform Covey 264 and 285 to have smoke ready but not to pop it until Sandy asked for it. I also advised Sandy to inform the survivors when they had the JG in sight to talk to him and GCA him to their position.

6. Crown coordinated additional fastmovers and Spad 5/6 were turned over to Sandy 19 to expend. More JGs were requested and an ETA of 1025Z was received on JG 04/32 out of Channel 103. At 1006Z, Spad 05 reported that he had been hit and that the round had gone up thru a rocket pad and on up thru the wing. He was OK and would continue to expend. Sandies and Spads continued to soften up the area around the survivors and Sandy 19 directed a smoke screen between the survivors and the suspected area where the previous ground fire had come from.

7. At 1028Z, Sandy 19 started JG 32 in for the pick-up. Sandy 19 was having difficulty reading the survivors on Guard. Crown 2 was directly overhead reading them loud and clear. I broadcasted over Guard, "Covey 285 and 264 this is Crown 2, the JG is coming in for pick-up, do not pop your smoke until Sandy calls for it. Covey 285, you will be the first man for pick-up, when you have the JG in sight talk him in to you. Crown 2 out". At 1036Z, the Jolly was having trouble locating Covey 285 and 285 was finally able to talk the Jolly to him. At 1037Z, automatic weapons fire was reported west of the survivor and Sandy expended in that area. At 1038Z, Covey 285 was on the penetrator calling "up, up let's get out of here".

8. At 1039Z, Covey 264 was instructed to pop his smoke and JG 32 started to move over to the smoke. At 1040Z, Jolly Green 32 reported that he was taking ground fire. Sandy repeatedly asked from what direction but could not get JG 32 to answer. JG 32 was instructed by Sandy to turn left and the Sandies escorted JG 32 out of the hot area.

9. At this time, Crown discussed with Sandy 19 the possibility of having the Spads escort JG 32 to Channel 103 and to use JG 04 for another attempt after the area was softened up again. It was decided that unless JG 04 could attempt a pick-up within the next 5 minutes, it would be too dark. JG 04 said that he was willing even without a high bird for back-up. Since it was impossible to soften up the area prior to darkness and without a high bird, Sandy and Crown 2 agreed that we would RTB the SAR forces and have a first light effort. Covey 264 was advised to dig in and lay low and that the rescue forces would be back at first light to get him.

~~SECRET~~

UNCLASSIFIED

235

Crown advised Covey 264 to stay off the radio during the night and to come up on radio when he heard an aircraft at daylight.

10. At 1055Z, I coordinated with Sandy 19 and asked him if he thought it would be a good idea to let the Sandies and Spads expend the rest of their ordnance around the survivor. Sandy 19 agreed that they should do it so the area could be softened up some more. Sandy 19 had to RTB for fuel at 1057Z and Sandy 17 was designated OSC. Sandies and Spads were expending and it got dark. Sandy 17 and Crown agreed that it was too dark to continue and that the SAR forces should RTB. SAR forces RTB at 1105Z. ETAs were passed and Crown 2 received RTB at 1108Z.

11. Observations:

a. When fastmovers are being used by the OSC, UHF Primary should be used by the OSC and the fastmovers. Other SAR forces should listen up SAR UHF Primary and use SAR VHF Primary for interphone communications. For example: JG holding, Spads and Sandies holding with JGs or outside the immediate scene or enroute to scene. Crown will be monitoring both frequencies. Several times during this mission, Crown advised SAR forces and fastmovers to go to SAR UHF Primary from Guard. Also for the SAR forces holding to use SAR VHF Primary for interphone and to leave SAR UHF open for OSC and strike aircraft.

b. Survivors, after being located, should be briefed to stay off the air until a specified time or to listen on Guard. Several times the survivors called and just wanted to know how things were going causing the OSC to have to switch to Guard and leave the strike aircraft. This causes delay in the utilization of the fastmovers.

c. Survivors should be briefed by the OSC not to pop their smoke until the OSC asks for it and to have all signaling devices ready for use when the JG is coming in.

d. When two or more survivors are in the same general area, the OSC should make sure that the survivors know the intended order of pick-up.

e. The survivors should be briefed by the OSC to talk the JGs in. Left, right, aft, forward, stop etc. Just like a GCA once the survivor has the JG in sight.

f. JGs should give position of ground fire immediately if encountered. For example: "We are taking ground fire from the left". This will enable the Sandies to get into position and silence the guns.

g. Route in and route out for the JGs should be coordinated prior to going in. This should include descent and climb points.

h. Fastmovers should be scheduled approximately 15 minutes apart. On this mission, we had several flights that had bingo fuel at the same time and we were not able to utilize all of the resources. Several fastmovers returned from the tanker only 15 to 20 minutes of play time left.

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

Tankers should be brought in closer.

11. Major Boyd did an outstanding job coordinating with Invert for fighter resources. Captain Smith, the navigator, was a tremendous aid in providing positions and ETAs. Several times he was able to give Sandies and Spads vector and distance to the nearest airfield when fuel reserve became critical. Sgt Jones, the radio operator, provided valuable assistance in transmitting and receiving information concerning the mission and mission resources.

12. Several times we received conflicting reports from Compress concerning aircraft resources, they were reported off but never arrived on scene.

13. Invert was outstanding; using a discreet frequency of 303.7 to control the fastmovers and to cycle them on and off the tanker.

14. Resources utilized:

a. Fastmovers expending:

Speedo 2
Vampire 2
Hayfire 2
Gunfighter 3
Oakland 2
Rustic 2
Dallas 2
Misty 1

b. Fastmovers available:

Olds 2
Marlin 2
Killer 2
Gator 2
Sample 2
Lotto 2
Misty 2

15. Others participating in the SAR effort:

Hobo 64, 24 and 27
Sandy 15, 16, 19, 20, 17, 18, 21 and 23
Spad 05, 06, 11 and 12
Jolly Green 16, 20, 04, and 32
Nail 51
Misty 41, 51 and 61

16. Rustic flight destroyed Jolly Green 67 that had been shot down in the Sandy 02 recovery.

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