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SUPPORTING DOCUMENT 20

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Mission Narrative Report (1-3-35-24 Mar 69)(U)

(C) Jolly Greens 31 (low) and 28 (high) were scrambled at 0605Z, 24 March 1969, from Da Nang AB in response to Queen directions. Bilk 23, an O-1 aircraft (FAC) of 20 TASS was reported down at 280 radial, 50 nm, Channel 77. Both alert aircraft were airborne at 0615Z and proceeded to climb to 3000'MSL over Da Nang AB, thence to 7500'MSL enroute to the reported position. Spads 11 and 12, on alert at Da Nang, scrambled concurrently with the Jolly Greens and escorted both 31 and 28 to approximately 40 nm on the 275 radial, Channel 77, where the rescue aircraft were placed on orbit pending an evaluation of the situation by the Spads. Army helicopters (1-LOH, 2 Hueys and 1 H47), in the immediate area of the crash, were drawing no ground fire and had supposedly located the distressed pilot who had incurred injuries in the crash. Voice contact had been established. Bilk 25 (sister O-1 to the downed aircraft) assumed On Scene Commander (OSC) until Spad 11 assumed OSC at 0637Z. Spad 11 cleared the Army aircraft from the area, established UHF SAR forces frequency, and proceeded to reconnoiter. After several passes, observation of the remains of a previous smoke signal, and observation of no ground fire, Spad 11 cleared Jolly Green 31 for an approach at 0650Z. Jolly Green 31 briefed the SAR forces on his tactics and requested screening smoke on the southwestern ridge line to cover his approach. The survivor's location was thought to be on the west slope of the eastern ridge at approximately 2500'MSL, of a "V" shaped box canyon with the open end facing north. The surrounding ridge line was approximately 3200'MSL, necessitating a steep approach from the south to the north. Spads 11 and 12 delivered the smoke precisely where requested and continued to fly a left orbit into the southwestern ridge, expending ordnance on each pass. Jolly Green 31 descended rapidly to the southern ridges, performed a 180 degree tactical turn and approached what was reported to be the survivor's location. (At this point and until some 40 minutes later the aerial observers continued to report Bilk 23's location in the immediate vicinity of the crash site). Dense vegetation prevented the Jolly Green 31 crew from establishing visual contact with Bilk 23. Since the aerial observers and Bilk 23 thought the rescue aircraft was in the survivor's immediate vicinity, Jolly Green 31 elected to lower the forest penetrator in an attempt to assist Bilk 23 to orient himself. (It should be noted that Bilk 23 was in moderate shock, incoherent at times, and discontinued contact with Jolly Green 31). While lowering the penetrator, Jolly Green 31 received ground fire from his left rear, which resulted in four holes in the aircraft and severing of the penetrator cable. Jolly Green departed the area at 0658Z, climbing to the north and northeast for damage assessment which was negligible except for the penetrator. Spad 11 re-evaluated the situation and cleared Jolly Green 28 for approach at

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0740Z after laying ordnance in the position of suspected ground fire, and after determining that suppressive fire was effective. (Note: Army helicopters continued to operate in the immediate area for support after the suppression fire and received no ground fire). Jolly Green 28 descended and approached in the same manner as Jolly Green 31 but was informed that the survivor's location had been passed. Jolly Green 28 performed a 360 degree turn, coming to a hover at the assumed location at 0710Z. This position proved to be erroneous and two more 360 degree patterns were accomplished. Jolly Green 28 could maintain contact with Bilk 23 except when in his immediate area where UHF radio reception was blocked due to UHF antenna location. During the third hover search the number 1 engine fire warning light illuminated and remained on. A check of performance instruments and a visual sighting of the engine indicated no malfunction, therefore Jolly Green 28 elected to continue the hover search. This proved rather difficult as the slope where the survivor was located inclined at approximately 35 degrees, consequently the search had to be conducted from the higher to the lower levels. At approximately 0725Z small arms fire was observed from the left rear. Jolly Green 28 departed the area until Spads 11 and 12 made ordnance deliveries into the suspected area. Driver, an Army LOH, who reportedly was cognizant of the exact location of the survivor, offered to hover over the area and mark such with a smoke grenade. Since the Spads had sanitized the area Jolly Green 28 elected to circle and approach the smoke. The LOH placed his smoke immediately north of the crash site and Jolly Green 28 hover searched this area to no avail. Jolly Green 31, who had been vectoring and providing close in observation, reported that Bilk 23 had placed white panels in his immediate vicinity but was unable to move because of painful leg injuries. Jolly Greens 31 and 28 decided that a GCA type of approach to the best and most probably location would be the most logical action, therefore Jolly Green 28 again departed, circled and commenced a slow, steep angled approach from just over the south ridge line toward the canyon floor. Through the expertise of Jolly Green 31, Jolly Green 28 was vectored over the survivor but approximately 25 feet behind the rescue aircraft. The Flight Engineer maintained the exact location where the panels had been sighted and directed backward flight into a position at approximately 0740Z. The Flight Engineer immediately lowered the penetrator, which could only be placed approximately 10 feet from the survivor due to the slope and vegetation. The survivor immediately moved to the penetrator with great difficulty and strapped himself on, then giving the up signal. The survivor became entangled in vines, bamboo and tree limbs several times during the hoisting, to the extent that almost 100 linear feet of vegetation was brought up with him. During the hoist operation small arms fire was observed by the RCCP, which appeared to be originating at the 9 o'clock position, ahead of the nose but dropping short. The hoist operation was continued and the survivor

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was brought aboard at 0749Z. Because of the extra weight of the vegetation, plus the downwash on this "garbage," it required both the Flight Engineer and the Pararescue Specialist to swing the survivor inside the helicopter. Jolly Green 28 departed down the slope to increase airspeed, thence turned easterly in a right climbing turn at the north end of the ridge. Note: Shortly after departure the Flight Engineer reported that vegetation was trailing well beyond the tail rotor and suggested a slow right turn away from the trailing vines.) Spads 11 and 12 escorted the Jolly Greens, 28, 31 and 21 (which had been launched and was in the area and holding as back-up east of the pick-up point) to within 3 miles of Da Nang. Jolly Green 28 proceeded to NSA Hospital heli-pad at Marble Mountain, discharging the survivor at that point at 0820Z and returned to Da Nang at 0830Z, 24 March 1969. Jolly Greens 31 and 21 landed at Da Nang at approximately 0820Z.

(U) Survivor: Captain Kerry G. Herron, 20 TASS, Da Nang AB, on duty at LZ Sally.

(U) Jolly Green Crewmembers:

JOLLY GREEN 31

RCC Major Charles E. Wicker
RCCP Capt Edwin L. Shobert Jr.
FE SSgt James E. Smith
RS ALC Sammie Thompson

JOLLY GREEN 28

RCC LtCol Henry E. Simpson Jr.
RCCP Capt Robert E. Nash
FE ALC James A. Thibodeau
RS SSgt Eugene L. Nardi

JOLLY GREEN 21

RCC Capt Bill M. Campbell
RCCP Capt Laurens C. Davis
FE SSgt Billy R. Bloomer
RS SSgt James L. Miller

Comments:

a. (U) Enroute briefing by Queen was superior even though reported data was not exact.

b. (C) Vectoring by PANAMA was highly effective and accurate to the orbit point (this was necessary due to non-reliability of the TACAN at the altitudes and distances involved; also relates to position reporting of survivor).

c. (U) Enroute radio traffic was held to a minimum, which is usual.

d. (U) Spad 11 and 12 performed in an absolutely superior manner. OSC (Spad 11) placed the Jolly Greens in a safe orbit; contacted the acting OSC, informed Bilk 25 (OSC) that he was inbound, and assumed OSC upon his arrival. He completely assumed

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charge of the effort, cleared excess aircraft from the area yet placed them on stand-by, and proceeded to prepare the environment for a rescue attempt. During the entire period Jolly Greens 31 and 28 were in extremely vulnerable positions. Both Spads provided absolute protection in a highly professional manner.

e. (U) The Army SAR forces cooperated to the fullest in this endeavor. Although Driver (LOH) mis-located the individual, the sincere attitude and personal disregard for his own safety was commendable. The remaining Army aircraft and the "sister" O-1 cooperated in keeping clear, yet remained available to offer assistance.

f. (U) Jolly Green 31 provided technical, tactical, and moral support throughout the effort. His advisories and relays of information proved the difference between consummating the mission with available resources or proceeding into an extended effort. Although struck by small arms fire, he elected to support the effort, providing "high bird" coverage and assistance.

g. (U) Of extreme significance is the fact that the controlling agencies, Crown, Queen, and King, kept the communications channels open, even though this was an unusual effort involving 38 minutes of hovering time.

h. (U) Jolly Green 21 (back-up support) performed exactly as a "back-up" aircraft should. He remained "off-the-air" and simply monitored communications channels.

i. (U) SAR coordination was extremely effective. Jolly Green 31 briefed the Spads prior to descent as to his exact intentions and requirements. He followed his briefing explicitly thereby preventing confusion in the later phases of the operation.

j. (U) Internal crew coordination on Jolly Green 28 was commendable. Particular mention must be made of the fact that it required both the Flight Engineer and the Pararescue Specialist to pull the "dangling garbage" into the aircraft during the return trip to the Da Nang area. This was done while the RS monitored the survivor. A conservative estimate is that 70 linear feet of bamboo trailed from the personnel door of the helicopter. Although the aircraft was slowed to 40 knots (after reaching altitude) it required tremendous effort to retrieve the bamboo vines.

k. (U) The RCCP maintained constant communication with the supporting forces. He was the key element in the successful accomplishment of this mission in that he served as the relay point between the supporting forces and the rescue aircraft thereby allowing the RCC to direct his full attention to the immediate

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mission. (This was the RCCP's first rescue in SEA.) Without the superior support rendered the mission could have easily developed into a farce.

1. (U) Reaction and services offered by the NSA Hospital at Marble Mountain were outstanding. In less than two minutes after landing the survivor was inside the hospital.

m. (C) The UHF antenna on the HH-3E is located on the upper most surface. It must be relocated so that contact with the survivor can be maintained. Relocation or adding additional antennas cannot await Class V modification approval under AFR 57-4. This operational capability is needed now. Submission of a RCC is not considered acceptable to resolve that problem due to the delay involved. The commanding echelons should demand an immediate service test of what can be done, and direct whatever modification is necessary to provide this required capability.

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