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S.D. 19

106.

39th ARRSq History, Apr - Jun 69

Date: 14 Jun 69

Mission Number: 2-3-037-14 Jun 69

Flight Designation: King 2

Distressed Aircraft: Wolf 05

Location: 115/84/89

Saves: 1, combat

1. At 0757Z on 14 June 69, King 2 received a call from Warpaint 501 that Wolf 05 was going down on the 120 degree radial of Channel 82 with no DME. A location was called about 0759Z as 120/87/89. At this time, King 2 was working with Locust 1/2 on electronic search for Mantis 02 with orbit on 000/15/113. King 2 left the Channel 113 area and proceeded to the scene and Warpaint 501 had sighted the chutes and had voice contact with Wolf 05A and Wolf 05B. He elected to ask them to show their position by smoke or fire, Nail 19 was in the area and stopped this position giveaway of survivors. He asked that he be designated OSC since Warpaint 501 (A self appointed OSC) was not conducting things properly. Nail 19 was assigned as OSC at 0820Z relieving Warpaint 501. Nail 19 advised that he had contact with the survivors and had already asked hobo 24/25 and Pony 10/12 to proceed to the area. This was at approximately 0825Z that Nail 19 said Pony 10/12 and Hobo 24/25 were in the area. The Hobos went trolling and could find no gun positions in the area and then formed a Daisy Chain around the Ponys. At 0830Z, Pony 12 had smoke in sight on Wolf 05B and proceeded to pick up Wolf 05B. Pony 12's penetrator cable stuck at 100 feet down and he had to proceed 3 miles from the area with Wolf 05B clinging to the penetrator. A landing was made and Wolf 05B loaded aboard Pony 12. While Pony 12 was landing to load Wolf 05B, Pony 10 was vectoring in on Wolf 05A and proceeded to hover so as to pick up Wolf 05A. His equipment seemed to work fine and no malfunctions were called by Nail 19. In fact, Nail 19 was giving a narrative of the pick up of Wolf 05A by Pony 10 and said that Wolf 05A was on the penetrator and should be aboard in less than thirty seconds. I asked Nail 19 to see

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that they were extra careful and did not drop anyone. He said he understood but a couple minutes later he called and said Pony 10 dropped Wolf 05A from about 500 feet above the ground just as he was about to board the chopper thru the door. It was approximately 0857Z when Nail 19 called in this unfortunate incident to King 2. Pony 10 called shortly thereafter and said he thought he had a 1 to 1 vibration (Rotor Blades out of track) and may have to set down. JG 37/15 were airborne at 0810Z. Sandy 1/2 were airborne Channel 89 at 0815Z with ETA for area along with JG 37/15 at 0910Z. Sandy 1/2 and JG 37/15 were about 15 miles from the scene when what could have been a completely successful SAR turned sour when Wolf 05A fell off the penetrator of Pony 10. As to why Pony 10 dropped Wolf 05A, King 2 never found out. A search was made of the area where Wolf 05A was dropped. JG 37 and Sandy 1/2 and 6 conducted the search with negative results. Sandy 05 had to RTB due to mechanical malfunctions (Oil Sump Light). Ordnance was expended by Sandy 1/2 and 6 as JG 37 looked over the tree top level. Nail 138 was only in the area as a standby FAC. He was used to handle Banyon Flight on strike south of the SAR scene. Sandy 1 took over OSC at approximately 0905Z and conducted a search for Wolf 05A after the incident.

2. Crewmembers:

- a. AC Major Maddox
- b. CP Major Feiler
- c. NN Captain Stafford
- d. RO TSgt Weimer
- e. FE TSgt Mix
- f. FE TSgt Sweeney
- g. LM SSgt Gately

JOHN W. MADDOX, Major, USAF
AC, King 2

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56 Special Operations Wing

18 June 1969

SAR Report, Wolf 05A and B

3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Group

Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN

(S)1. A partially successful rescue was attempted on 14 June 1969 for Wolf 05A and B. The aircraft, an F4, went down at 14550 hours 14 June 1969 at 115°/84NM from channel 89 TACAN. This report covers Wing associated activities during the rescue attempt.

(C)2. The aircraft was hit by ground fire near Delta 11, and both pilots ejected safely.

(S)3. Sandy 01/02/03/04 were scrambled at 15050. Sandy 01/02 were airborne at 15200, and Sandy 03/04 at 15250. Sandy 01/02 arrived on the scene at 16000, and Sandy 03/04 arrived in orbit with Jolly 37 and 15 at 16000. Other aircraft participating in the effort were: Nail 19, Hobo 20/21, Pony Express 10/12, Wolf 06, Nail 138, and several jet flights.

(S)4. The survivors location was in heavily forested area, one kilometer south of RTE 23. The ground rose sharply into a high karst area, and was covered by jungle canopy. No ground fire or defenses of any type were noted in the immediate area. Weather was 5000' broken with rain showers in the vicinity, visibility 10 miles.

(S)5. While Sandy 01/02/03/04 were enroute to the scene Nail 19 was on-scene Commander, and directed Pony Express 12 and 10. Pony Express 12 made a successful pickup of Wolf 05B, but the hoist cable jammed necessitating flying the survivor to a level area and landing the helicopter to get him inside.

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(S)6. Pony Express 10 picked up Wolf 05A. A debrief of the pilot and hoist operation of Pony Express 10 revealed that the high karst near the survivor necessitated backing the helicopter into position. The hoist was lowered to Wolf 05A who extended the seats and waved to be hoisted. The hoist operator did so. About this time the aircraft main rotor contacted some vines and a vibration accompanied by smoke ensued. When Wolf 05A had cleared the trees, the hoist operator observed that the chest strap had not been secured. Ten feet below the helicopter door, Wolf 05A apparently lost his grip and was next observed dangling underneath the hoist with only his hands grasping the seat. He then lost his grip and fell between 350-500 feet to the ground. Inspection of the penetrator showed that the chest strap had not been opened or used. Pony Express 10 exited the area under escort of Hobo 20/21. Jolly Green 37 was moved to a holding area 2 miles south of the survivor over a high wooded karst area. Sandy 05 RTB'd with a sump lite and 06 joined Sandy 01/02. Nail 138 arrived and was directed to put in jet strikes along the route structure to the north and east of the survivor as a diversion. Sandy 01/02/06 put in ordnance along the road, one kilometer north of the survivor, laid a smoke screen and called in Jolly Green 37.

(S)7. Sandy 01 assumed on scene command from Nail 19 at 1620G and determined that the area was apparently permissive.

(U)8. Jolly Green 37 searched the area where the survivor had fallen, as directed by Wolf 06 and covered by Sandy 01/02/06. After 20-30 minutes of search, the effort was terminated.

(U)9. The survivor could not be located due to the thick jungle canopy and the fact that no contact could be made with him. Sandy 01/02 continued electronic search until 1815 hours with no results. The effort was terminated since no voice, beeper or any evidence of life was received from Wolf 05A subsequent to the fall from the penetrator.

(U)10. Wing forces participating in the effort were:

Sandy 01 - Capt J. L. Hudson
Sandy 02 - Maj J. Monk
Sandy 06 - 1/Lt W. B. Atkinson

Hobo 20 - Lt Col D. E. Downing
Hobo 21 - Maj L. E. Knox

SIGNED

DARYLE E. TRIPP, Lt Col, USAF
Asst Deputy Commander Operations
Sandy Coordinator

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621st Tactical Control Squadron, went to backup diesel power, but intensity of the rainstorm resulted in complete loss of control capability for 23 minutes. On 2 and 5 April, Detachment 5, 621st Tactical Control Squadron experienced difficulties in radar monitor and control of scheduled ARC LIGHT missions. The problem was caused by loss of radar/SIF data with B-52 aircraft when they ceased IFR output enroute to target.

Assistance was requested for possible changes to current procedures. ⁹

¹⁰

SAR Efforts:

(II) As reported in Chapter I, the search and rescue efforts became a 56th Special Operations Wing effort with the pilots and aircraft of three Special Operations Squadrons capable of taking part. Prior to this period, the 602nd Special Operations Squadron was the primary escort and fire suppression force in SAR efforts from Nakhon Phanom RTAFB. SAR efforts prior to the change are reported in the 602nd Special Operations Squadron section of this chapter. The following were the first two Wing SARs under the new program.

(U) In the discussion of SAR efforts in this chapter, three terms are used. These are successful, partially successful and unsuccessful. For definitions of these terms see Glossary.

(S) A successful rescue of Wolf 05B and a partially successful rescue of Wolf 05A were conducted on 11 June. The aircraft, an F-4, went down at 115 degrees/ 34NM from Channel 82 TACAN, after being hit by ground fire near Delta 11. Both pilots ejected safely.

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(3) After arriving on scene, Sandys 01, 02, 03 and 04 found the survivor's location was in a heavily forested area, one kilometer south of Route 23. The ground rose sharply into a high karst area, and was covered by a jungle canopy. Neither ground fire nor defenses of any type were noted in the immediate area.

(S) While the Sandys were in route to the scene Nail 19 was on-scene commander, and directed Pony Express 12 and 10. Pony Express 12 made a successful pickup of Wolf 05B, but the hoist cable jammed. This necessitated flying the survivor to a level area and landing the helicopter to get him inside.

(S) Pony Express 10 picked up Wolf 05A. After the hoist was lowered to Wolf 05A, who extended the seats and waved to be hoisted, the aircraft main rotor contacted some vines and a vibration accompanied by smoke ensued. When Wolf 05A had cleared the trees, the hoist operator observed that the chest strap had not been secured. Ten feet below the helicopter door, Wolf 05A apparently lost his grip and fell 350-500 feet to the ground. Inspection of the penetrator showed that the chest strap had not been opened or used.

(S) A successful SAR effort was conducted for Kingfish 01, an F-105, on 16 June. The survivor was located in heavy elephant grass in a valley completely surrounded by a high, steep karst. There was a river about 500 meters north and east and a deserted village on the other side of the river.

(S) A Kingfish wingman was first on scene and had observed

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Firefly 42/43 were vectored to the area while Raven 46 was designated On Scene Commander. The area was trolled by the Fireflys (A-1s) to locate ground fire; fortunately there was none. Sandy 03/04 arrived on scene and Sandy 03 took over as OSC. Firefly 42 managed to establish voice contact with the survivor who stated he was badly hurt. Jolly Green 71 was vectored in and pararescuemen were lowered with a stokes litter. The survivor was administered first aid and then picked up by JG 71.¹⁴

(U) King 7, the alert crew at Tuy Hoa AB, was launched to rendezvous with Jolly Green 28/21 and escort them to a surface vessel with a crewman suffering from an acute appendicitis. The rendezvous with the ship was made and the patient was picked up with a stokes litter and taken to the U.S. Air Force hospital at Cam Ranh Bay. Both Jolly Greens were air refueled by King 7 enroute.¹⁵

King 2 was on precautionary inland orbit when a Mayday call was picked up from a Warpaint 501 who stated that Wolf 05, an F-4, had been shot down and both crewmen had

14. S.D. 17 Narrative, Mission 2-3-038-16 Jun 69, p. 102

15. S.D. 18 Narrative, Mission 1-3-064-23 Jun 69, p. 105

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successfully ejected. Nail 19 was designated on-scene-commander. Pony Express 10/12 and Hobos 24/25 were in the area and had not received any ground fire. After trolling for ground fire and finding they were free of enemy activity, Hobos 24/25 recommended that a pick up be made without delay. At 0830Z Pony Express 12 reported that he had sighted a survivor and that he was making the pick up. Pony Express 12 experienced hoist difficulties during the pick up and had to carry Wolf 05 Bravo on the penetrator 3 miles to a suitable landing area, where the survivor was put down and brought aboard after a landing was made. At 0830Z Pony Express 10 said Wolf 05 Alpha was in sight and that they were dropping him a penetrator. During the pick up the rotor blades of Pony Express 10 contacted some high tree branches and heavy vibrations resulted. The survivor was nearly up to the cabin when he fell off the penetrator. He fell some 500 feet to the ground. A search for the body was made to no avail. Wolf 05 Alpha was declared dead and SAR efforts were closed.¹⁶

16. S.D. 19 Narrative, Mission 2-3-037-14 Jun 69, P. 106

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In contrast to the three-day mission, on 28 January 1969, the orbit concept was proven without question when Wolf 2, an F-4, was shot down at 1745 hours in the same general area and environment. Wolf 3, his wingman, had radio contact with 2A, while he was still descending in his chute. He drifted over a small karst into some trees. Nail 54 (O-2 FAC) was in the area and saw both chutes descend. Sandys 1 and 2, on orbit with Jolly Greens 36 and 20, diverted to the scene and arrived at 1802 hours. Voice contact had been established with both survivors. Crown 2 advised of heavy gun positions flanking the area just beyond the karst from the survivors. Sandys 3 and 4 were scrambled from NKP, while Jolly Greens 09 and 19 were deployed from orbit. Several fast movers arrived at 1815 hours. The Sandys checked the area and noted no hostile activity on the survivor's side of the karst; however, hostile forces were observed en route from the road. Jolly Green 36 was brought in by Sandys 1 and 2 and picked up Wolf 2B at 1836 hours and 2A at 1841 hours. A total of 56 minutes had elapsed. The mission was brilliantly executed from orbit positions. With hostile forces so close to the survivors, a longer reaction time could easily have resulted in failure.^{6/}

All rescue efforts, however, were not successful. Many aircrewmembers were captured before SAR forces could arrive; others died while awaiting rescue; some died after being rescued. Probably the most poignant effort of the war was made on 14 June 1969. Wolf 5, an F-4, was working in Central Laos when Nail 19, an O-2 FAC, heard a call that Wolf was experiencing hydraulic difficulty. Shortly thereafter, Wolfs 5A and B ejected. Warpaint, a Navy A-4, was the first to arrive on scene. Nail 19 arrived shortly thereafter and

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assumed On Scene Command after being briefed by Warpaint. Pony Expresses 10 and 12 of the 20th SOS, Udorn (CH-3E helicopters), heard the Mayday call on guard channel and volunteered assistance through Invert (a radar unit) and Cricket (the ABCCC aircraft). A check was made by these command and control agencies as to the availability of Jolly Green aircraft, but none was in the area at the time. Hearing this, Pony Expresses 10 and 12 advised their Hobo escort (A-1) that they were proceeding to the scene. They checked in first with Nail 19 and then with Sandy 1 when this aircraft arrived and assumed On Scene Command. The position of Wolf 5B was quickly pinpointed and Pony Express (PE) 12 picked him up. The penetrator hoist malfunctioned, whereupon PE 12 airlifted the survivor on the hoist to a flat knoll four km west, where a landing was made and the survivor was brought aboard. He had minor cuts and bruises and a possible back injury. ^{7/}

Meanwhile Wolf 5A was pinpointed and contacted by PE 10. Wolf 5A vectored PE 10 to his position by voice and smoke. The survivor appeared to be in good condition and his transmissions were coherent. His position was at the edge of a jungle canopy, which rose steeply into a karst nearby. The pilot of PE 10 noted that the beginning of the vertical karst was so close to the survivor that his only approach was a backward movement of the helicopter into a position directly overhead. PE 10 (with standard three-leaf-seat-jungle penetrator) hovered over Wolf 5A, lowered the penetrator to its full extension, but had to descend farther to get it on the ground. The hoist operator noted that all three seat positions were lowered by the survivor, but the chest restraining strap was not used. During the descent, the

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helicopter rotor blade contacted some jungle vines and received severe blade damage. There was also a smell of smoke as the survivor was being hoisted. The helicopter pilot, concerned for the safety of his aircraft and crew, initiated a 10-kt forward speed course to the next ridgeline, where he planned to land and bring the survivor on board. The survivor was clear of the trees when the forward speed was started. The hoist operator saw Wolf 5A grab the top of the penetrator and wave, whereupon the hoist was raised. The hoist operator was of the opinion the the pilot came through the top of the forest canopy with a branch across his legs. Shortly thereafter, the hoist operator observed the pilot had slipped from the seat and was holding on to the penetrator seat by his hands with arms extended over his head. The survivor was unable to retain his grip and tumbled to the ground from a height of about 500 feet. Subsequent transmissions from Sandy 1 to Wolf 5A were unsuccessful. The SAR effort was terminated approximately 45 minutes after the pilot fell from the penetrator. A visual and electronic search was continued until dark on 14 June, and by O-2 aircraft the following morning, without results. Heavy foliage in the area precluded any chance of making a successful visual search. Friendly ground forces were alerted to search for the body. The accident, and it was that, could be attributed only to the unfortunate position of the survivor, and because he probably forgot to lock the chest restraining strap.^{8/}

All important missions were not necessarily of a combat nature. Many humanitarian efforts were made. On 3 December 1968, Crown 7 joined with two Jolly Greens to fly 100 miles out to sea, off the coast of Vietnam, to a German tanker where two crewmen were suffering from food poisoning. The dramatic

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- 11 (S) Search and rescue effort for Manual 42A was successful.
- 15 (U) Munition's loading crews were consolidated under 456th Munitions Maintenance Squadron..
- 15 (S) Maj. James B. East Jr., 602nd Special Operations Squadron, declared MIA.
- 17 (S) Search and rescue effort for Cobalt 01 Bravo was successful.
- 22 (U) The 56th Special Operations Wing assumed main support base supply responsibility for OV-10 aircraft.
- June
2 (C) Thai Guard accidentally killed when a bunker collapsed.
- 7 (U) Civic Action Center quick reaction mobile medical team deployed to Ubon, Thailand in response to reported cholera epidemic.
- 9 (S) A-1H #52-135356 crashed on takeoff, killing the pilot.
- 13 (S/NF) Aircraft of Detachment 1, 56th Special Operations Wing, received hits during hostile action. The RLAF pilot died during attempted crash landing.
- 13 (U) Col. Thomas B. Carter assumed command of 56th Combat Support Group.
- 13 (S) 1st Lt. Neal C. Ward, 602nd Special Operations Squadron, declared MIA.
- 14 (S) Search and rescue effort for Wolf 05B was successful and search and rescue effort for Wolf 05A was partially successful.
- 16 (S) Search and rescue effort for Kingfish 01 was successful.
- 20 (U) The rapid area supply support (RASS) team number 118 was terminated at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB.

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