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6 AUG 69 SAR

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His situation could be likened to that of Lt. Roger Busico, 31st TFW, who ejected at treetop level from an uncontrollable, flaming F-100 in midsummer, 1969. In his words: ^{71/}

...After releasing the ordnance I started to pull out and the aircraft started to come up. Then the stick froze and I couldn't move it back any further. The plane struck a tree on the top of the hill and caught fire. I became disoriented after striking the tree and didn't know if I was upside down or right side up. I did know that I was going to crash and that I had to eject.

...When the canopy separated, the floor of the cockpit turned bright orange. My wingman later told me that the aircraft looked like a large comet out of which I came shooting.

The Lieutenant saw that he was going to land in the trees, and tried to assume the tree-landing position but did not have time before he went through the trees with his parachute still not completely deployed. After striking the base of one of the trees, he sat up to take stock. His survival vest pockets were melted and all his gear except the radios was gone; the radios had been retained only by the zippers. His G-suit legs were gone from the knees down, and his flying suit sleeves were in tatters. One arm was badly burned, and he felt that his face had also been burned in the ejection. In his words: ^{72/}

...I was in shock, but it wasn't so bad that I couldn't handle myself or didn't know what was going on...I drank a can of water and left the rest of the equipment in the kit.

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Despite faulty radio communications, Lt. Busico made contact with a rescue helicopter by using his day smoke flares and was successfully recovered and flown to the Phan Thiet hospital for treatment of his burns. ^{73/}

In two events, similar in effect but contrasting in details, an RF-4C navigator and an F-105 pilot went through the ejection-downed-recovered experience within a two week period in March-April, 1969. On 20 March, 1st Lt. Ronald D. Stafford, of the 388th TFW, was hit by ground fire on his second attempt at a Bullpup missile launch. Suddenly his aircraft was upside down, and then in a spin. ^{74/}

Lt. Stafford described the situation as follows: ^{75/}

...I continued around one spin in the revolution and made one transmission: "I'm hit; I'm in a spin." I could see the ground coming up at me. I knew I had no control over the aircraft. I proceeded to punch out.

...I ejected with the mask on, the visor down and my head all the way back. There was very little turbulence or windblast. Almost immediately I felt the "butt-snapper" separate, and I was in my chute. All systems worked automatically.

...I could see huts below me and to my left. I counted ten in all. At this time, I think I picked up some automatic weapons fire from the ground. There weren't any tracers but something was whizzing past. I cut the four lines and started experimenting in what direction I could direct the chute.

...I continued working with my parachute risers and slipped toward a ridge above the huts. As I got closer to the trees I put on my mask, lowered my visor, and prepared for a tree landing. I raised my arms and put my face into the crook of my right arm.

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60. (U) Author's observation, JSS, 30 Dec 71-3 Jan 72.
61. (S) 2nd Air Division Evasion and Escape Newsletter, 9 Jun 1965.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. (S/NF) Project CHECO Report, "Search and Rescue in SEA, 1961-66," published 24 Oct 66. (Hereafter cited as "SAR in SEA, 61-66.")
67. (S) Project CHECO Report, "USAF Search and Rescue, Jul 66-Nov 67," published 19 Jan 68. (Hereafter cited as "USAF SAR, 66-67.")
68. Ibid.
69. (S/NF) SAR in SEA, 61-66.
70. (S) PACAF Evasion and Recovery Report No. 305. (Undtd) Recovery effected 12 Jan 70. Recoveree: Capt Lawrence C. Johnson, 374 TAW.
71. (C) PACAF Evasion and Recovery Report No. 290. (Undtd) Recovery effected 6 Aug 69. Recoveree: Lt Roger P. Busico, 31st TFW.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. (S) PACAF Evasion and Recovery Report No. 275. (Undtd) Recovery effected 29 Mar 69. Recoveree: Lt Ronald D. Stafford, 388th TFW.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. (C) PACAF Evasion and Recovery Report No. 278. (Undtd) Recovery effected 12 Apr 69. Recoveree: Captain Charles Mattern, 460 TRW.
79. Ibid.

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