

40th ARPS (Major Smith)

13 Nov 1969

Mission Narrative Report (2-3-367, 12 Nov 1969)

40th ARPS
3rd ARPSp (JRCO)
IN TURN

1. (U) This report is submitted LAM ARPSM 55-2/3rd ARPSp Sup 1, dated 11 Jul 58.

a. Time of notification 2330, 11 Nov 69; b. No difficulty encountered enroute; c. Weather clear, no factors; d. All coordination and support excellent; e. Considerable radio chatter due to simultaneous effort in Barrel Roll; f. Arrival in area, 0545L, area Ma Gia Pass, Laos; g. Small arms, automatic weapons, ZPU and 37MM; GBU-19, and Sandy suppression used. Fairly effective. Jinking was employed by JG 70. At this time only JG 70 was under fire; h. Downed avian had broken right leg. He was very calm and his directions aided immeasurably in his rescue; i. Hoist pickup, ground fire hindered recovery; j. Departed pickup area, 0735L; k. Mission terminated at 0810L; l. Number of rescue vehicles damaged unknown at this time; m. N/A; n. N/A; o. Limiting factors, ground fire; p. None.

2. Jolly Green 70 and 72, standing alert at Nakhon Phanom RAAF were alerted at 2330 hours local on 11 Nov 1969 that a first light effort was to be executed for Owl 07, an F-4 aircraft working in the Ma Gia Pass area of South Central Laos. A pre-mission briefing was scheduled for 0315 hours on 12 Nov 1969. All forces, Jolly Green MM-53 and MM-23 and Sandy AL crews, reported to RMP T900 as scheduled. The best determined position of Owl 07 was given as 083/61/89. This placed him right in the pass area next to the main trail running through the pass. A holding position for the Jolly forces and Sandy 3 & 4 was selected to the north of the survivor's reported position. The forces were launched starting at 0445L to be in position by day break. Jolly Green 70 and 72 launched at 0510L along with Sandys 03 and 04, the escort aircraft. Jolly Green 70 and 72 arrived in the holding area with Sandys 03 and 04 at 0545L. The forces held while Sandys 01 and 02 attempted to locate the survivors. Good voice established with Owl 07A and his position was worked first. He was pinpointed at approximately 0637L by Mail 27. The Sandy forces then proceeded to troll for ground fire and strafe the area. They were receiving small arms and automatic weapons fire, ZPU and some 37MM fire. The area was worked by Sandys 01 and 02 for approximately 30 minutes. At that time, Sandy 03 and 04 joined 01 and 02 to get the survivor's location pinpointed and prepare to lead Jolly Green 70 into the area. Sandy 03 then returned to the orbit area and advised Jolly Green 70 to get ready. Sandys 40, 41 and 42 loaded with GBU-19 made several low passes to the east and south of the survivor and laid down their ordinance. Jolly Green 70 was

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DOWNGRADE AT 5 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFY AFTER 12 YEARS

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70770 11-11-69 12-4

called in by Sandy 03 and followed him to the survivor's position. At approximately 0500 hours from the survivor's position, Jolly Green 70 began trailing ground fire from the east. The ground fire continued throughout the approach. Jolly Green 70 located Owl 07A's chute hanging in a tree. Owl 07A was reported to be within 10 meters of his chute. A quick left turn was executed and an approach made to the chute. The survivor was located beneath the tree and a pickup attempt was started. The survivor had a broken right leg and assistance was required. A Pararescue Specialist from Jolly Green 70 was started down on the hoist to assist Owl 07 when heavy automatic weapons fire erupted. ZPU fire was reported and several small arms hits were called out. Jolly Green 70 aborted the rescue attempt at this time and called out the ground fire to Sandy 01. The RS who had been lowered approximately 10 feet on the hoist was retrieved and Jolly Green 70 exited the area to the northwest, back to the holding area. A battle damage assessment was made while back at the orbit point. No major damage was reported or noted, so Jolly Green 70 reported ready for a second attempt. Sandy 01 again was trolling the area for ground fire and had called in other Sandy aircraft to strike the observed gun positions. At approximately 0720, Sandy 01 called in additional CSU-19 aircraft who laid their ordnance again to the east and ~~west~~ of the survivor. This time a little closer. Jolly Green 70 was called in again at 0725 for another attempt. Sandy 03 again led JG into the area around the known gun positions. The survivor's location was quickly spotted and Jolly Green 70 again executed a left 180° approach, coming to a hover over Owl 07A. The RS was again deployed right next to the survivor's location. The RS grabbed the survivor and put him on the hoist and then climbed on for the retrieval. Both the survivor and the RS were on board JG 70 at 0735L and Jolly Green 70 exited the area. Small arms and automatic weapons fire was again experienced throughout the approach and while in a hover. Jolly Green 70 had received several hits in the right auxiliary and main fuel tanks and was returning to NKP. King 3 established contact with JG 70 and advised he was ready to provide fuel if necessary. However, sufficient fuel remaining in the left main fuel tank for the return trip to NKP. King 3 was released by JG 70 when 70 was clear of the immediate area and at altitude. Jolly Green 70 and 72 landed at NKP at 0810L. The survivor was transferred to an awaiting ambulance and taken to the base hospital. Jolly Green 09 recovered Owl 07B at 0919L.

3. Survivor, Major Carrol Killen, 497 TFW, Ubon AB, Thailand.

4. Crew of Jolly Green 70:

AC Major Robert L. Smith,
CP Capt Robert M. Horne,
FE SSgt Harold H. Bailey,
RE TSgt William E. Lester,
RE Sgt Grady T. Allen,
RE ALC David M. Davidson,
AP SSgt Charles J. Howard,

Crew of Jolly Green 72:

AC Capt Edward D. [REDACTED],

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CM Capt Donald V. Thompson,
PL Capt Thomas A. Blahodry,
RM Sgt James E. Haskins,
RC AIG Tommy L. Gaffney,
RC Sgt James E. Haskins,

ROBERT L. SMITH, Major, USAF
Aircraft Commander

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A/3 (Capt Garty/2587)

15 November 1967

Mission Narrative Report Number 2-3-068-11 Nov 69

3 APR 70 (JGAP2)

AFM 2587

1. (U) This report is submitted in accordance with AFM 55-2/3 AFM 55-2/3, dated 11 July 1966.

2. (U) The crews of Jolly Green 78 and Jolly Green 69 were alerted at approximately 0100Z, on 12 November 1966, to prepare for a first light effort to rescue Barro 65 who was down in the Karrel Hill section of Laos. In preparation a briefing at 0100Z at 0100Z. Jolly Green 78 and 69 launched at 0510Z and crossed the fence at 0530Z. Since firing range number two was close to our planned route, we obtained clearance for the mission and fired our own rounds. At approximately 0615Z we entered an orbit near Line Site 2 as indicated by Sandy 07 who had been designated as on-scene commander. At 0630Z, Sandy 07 established voice contact with the survivor and determined that the survivor was not injured and that he had lost flares and one watchable knife with a spare battery. The eyes of the survivor were completely obscured by a surface to 1,000 feet layer of ground fog and stratus cloud. At 0635Z, Sandy 07 briefed the survivor that we would pick him up as soon as weather permitted and said to check in on radio again at 0645Z. At 0630Z, Sandy 07 requested that Sandy 08 move the Jolly Green to a new orbit closer to the survivor. The Jolly Green climbed up from 5000 feet to 10,000 feet to obtain more protection against small arms fire (the local terrain was 3000 feet to 1,000 feet) and to observe the fog. Sandy 07 kept checking in with the survivor approximately every half hour while trying to pinpoint the position of the survivor. It was determined to be under the fog. Sandy 07 made several attempts to get under the clouds and the Jolly Green offered to attempt to dissipate the fog with rotor wash if an accurate fix could be obtained on the survivor. Jolly Green 78 advised King 1 that an A/R would be necessary at 0900Z if the weather hadn't broken before then. At 0830Z, the weather was still bad so Jolly Green 78 and 69 left the orbit and completed an A/R with King 1. Jolly Green 78 and 69 returned to orbit at 0900Z. At 0910Z, the survivor reported ground fire from his camp was currently aimed at the Gabyon. The A/R checks continued but due to the fog it was impossible to pinpoint the position of the survivor. At 1045Z, the fog had started to break up and the survivor was asked to fire a pin-gun flare; however, his pin-gun didn't work. Sandy 15 was on the scene at this time, orbiting and hoping to see the pin-gun flare. At 1045Z, the Sandy flight of 07, 08, 09 and 10 had to RTB because of low fuel. Sandy 07 had done a particularly outstanding job as on-scene commander and we were sorry to see him leave.

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intervals; declassified
after 12 years.

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3. (U) The survivor rescued by Jolly Green 79 was: Zorro 67
 Captain George H. Porter, [REDACTED], Pilot, 96th CGW.
4. (U) The rescue crews were:

Jolly Green 79 (Low)

AC: Carty, Donald L., Captain,
 CP: Schanberg, Leroy C., Captain,
 FR: DeMatteo, Carlos W., TSgt,
 RS: Olman, Rodney D., MGt,
 RS: McDonald, Gregory J., Sgt.
 AP: Banas, Raymond G., AIC,

Jolly Green 69 (High)

AC: Catlin, Frank E., Lt Colonel,
 CP: Baskett, Richard M., Captain,
 FR: Bringham, Leo R., TSgt,
 RS: Willis, Edward H., TSgt,
 RS: Crowder, Douglas W., Sgt.

SIGNED

DONALD L. CANEY, Captain, USAF
 Aircraft Commander

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DET 1, 40th ARRS CY 4/69

Jolly Green 17 (Low)

AC Capt John H. Fette*
 CP Capt Lawrence A. Marino*
 FE Sgt Robert J.P. Lafranboise*
 RS Sgt Leland H. Sorensen

Jolly Green 19 (High)

AC Capt Leonard D. Fialko
 CP Capt John J. Livengood +
 FE TSgt Leroy M. Wright
 RS Sgt Douglas L. Horka
 FE TSgt Claude C. Franks

(S) (Gp 3) A first light effort started the day on 12 Nov. Owl 07 had gone down during the night in a heavily defended area in eastern Laos. Two HH-53s from the 40th ARRS at Udorn were launched as the primary recovery aircraft with two of our HH-3Es launched as airborne back-up. An HH-53 made a successful pick up of the first pilot on Owl 07, but was driven off by hostile fire before he could locate the second pilot. Our back-up HH-3E's were then called on the scene and Jolly Green 36 started to go in for the pick up. On the way in Jolly Green 36 started receiving hostile ground fire and suffered hits. The number one engine failed and the utility hydraulic system failed rendering his hoist inoperative. Jolly Green 36 dumped fuel to reduce his weight and departed the area. Prior to this Jolly Green 09 and 37 were launched as airborne back-up. They immediately proceeded to the area and were holding in a secure area near by when Jolly Green 36 aborted his attempt. The Sandys put more ordnance in and Jolly Green 09 went in for the pick up. Although he received hostile ground fire, he was able to effect the rescue of Owl 07 second pilot, 1Lt James G. Hayler, [REDACTED], 497th TFS, and departed the area. One Sandy aircraft crashed, but it was apparent that there was no possibility of a survivor, so all SAR forces were returned to base.

Jolly Green 09 (Low)

AC Lt Col Joe Lyle Jr.
 CP Capt John J. Livengood+
 FE TSgt Daryl I. Durant
 RS MSgt Paul L. Jenkins
 RS MSgt Lewis J. Roberts*

Jolly Green 37 (High)

AC Capt Phillip O. Pfanschmidt
 CP Capt Marshall B. Nash
 FE Sgt Brian W. Murray
 RS TSgt Lehman L. Booher

(C) On 22 Nov [REDACTED] control center was advised that Spunk 01 had received serious battle damage and would try to recover at our base. Spunk 01 had a fire on board just as he arrived over our base and both pilots ejected. The aircraft crashed one half mile south of the base and both parachutes were seen over head drifting south westward. Jolly Green 17 and 09 launched immediately. They jettisoned fuel while waiting for the parachutes to descend to the ground. The decision was made between Jolly Green 17 and 09 for Jolly Green 17 to pick up one pilot, Capt Lynn P. Wright, [REDACTED] and for Jolly Green 09 to pick up the other, 1Lt Frederick D. Paige, [REDACTED]. Both were from the 14TFW. They were picked up without further incident.

Jolly Green 17 (Low)

AC Capt Marshall B. Nash
 CP Maj Charles W. Bond*
 FE Sgt Joseph Vai*
 RS SSgt Roy D. Bloebaum
 RS Sgt Charles D. Morrow

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Jolly Green 09 (High)

AC Maj Emmet E. Hatch Jr.*
 CP Maj Edward B. Robbins
 FE SSgt Robert E. Hunt
 RS Sgt Richard G. Beasley

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(S) Sandy 17 vectored the helicopter to within 15 meters of the survivor at which time the survivor gave final corrections. Jolly Green 79 took over and made the pickup.⁹⁷

(U) More specific details of this SAR effort can be found in the Rescue Narrative Report, support document 50.

(S) The second SAR effort on 12 November was for Night Owl 07A and B, an F-4 aircraft which went down after taking a disabling hit. Nail 27 established the survivor's approximate position.⁹⁸

(C) The terrain was flat with karst to the north and east and a river just south of the survivors. The survivors were in a grove of trees approximately 500 meters south of Route 1281 and 1,500 meters west of Route 23. They were about 75 meters apart. The crews were briefed on ZPU positions to the north and northeast, 23mm positions to the northeast and east, and at least one active 37mm position to the southeast. The defenses encountered were exactly as briefed with possibly more hand-held AW and small arms than was anticipated.⁹⁹

(S) Upon arrival, Sandy 01 established voice contact with 07A, asked him an authentication question and received the proper reply. Sandy 01 attempted to have 07A vector him.

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in by engine sound, however, Nail 27 was able to establish the first approximate location by ADF cuts and by making low passes in the area. Sandy 01 located the area and by repeated low passes and talking to 07A he was able to pinpoint the exact location. Several calls were made to Owl 07B with no reply. Owl 07A advised Sandy 01 that he thought his fellow crewmember was just southeast of his position. ¹⁰⁰

(S) During the location process 07A reported that ZPU fire, small arms and AW were being fired at Sandy 01 from the northeast. This area was struck several times which silenced the weapons. ¹⁰¹

(S) Sandy 01 then called in to pickup 07A who requested a PJ because he had a broken right leg. The rescue was effected and the Jolly Green was escorted to Channel 89. ¹⁰²

(S) As soon as 07A was out, voice contact was almost immediately established with 07B who vectored Sandy 01 to his position. Sandy 05 and 06 led Jolly Green 36 into the area, but as Jolly 36 approached the survivor, he lost an engine due to ground fire and was forced to exit the area. During the interval until another helicopter could get into the area, the Sandys decided to strike the gun positions in the valley to the northeast. ¹⁰³

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(S) King 07 provided Cobra and Boxer flights (two F-4s each) to accomplish this. With Nail 27's assistance these two flights struck the target and ignited four secondary explosions and one fire.
104

(S) Jolly Green was then led into the area and effected the pickup.

(U) Further details of this rescue can be found in the Rescue Narrative Report, support document 51.

(S) A successful rescue was conducted for Boxer 24A and B on 16 November. The F-4 went down at 0228Z on 16 November after sustaining battle damage from enemy ground fire.
105

(S) The plane became uncontrollable and the pilots ejected successfully. Nail 46 was controlling the strike of Boxer 24 and after the plane went down he made radio contact with Boxer 24A and pinpointed the survivor's location. Nail 46 relayed the position, the condition of the survivors, and the general situation prior to the launching of the Sandys.
106

(S) The pilots had bailed out southwest of Delta 30 in the high karst approximately four kilometers south of Route 12 and one kilometer west of Route 911. The surrounding

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PROJECT CORONA HARVEST

DO NOT DESTROY

No. 0221964

CATALOGED

Sandy Coordinator

SAR Effort Report (Night Owl 07A and B) (U)

56 SpOpWg (DCO)

1. (S) A successful rescue was conducted on 12 November 1969 for Night Owl 07A and 07B. The aircraft (F-4) went down at 2135L, UTM coordinates WE 735 338. This report covers those activities relating to the Sandys during the rescue effort.
2. (C) Night Owl 07A and 07B ejected from their aircraft after taking a disabling hit. Nail 27 established the survivors approximate location.
3. (C) At approximately 2200 on 11 November, the Sandy force was alerted for a first light effort. Sandy 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06 and Jolly Green 70, 72, 36, and 19 were all airborne between 0457 and 0519L. Sandy 01 and 02 proceeded to the search area with Nail 27. The other Sandys and Jollys went to predetermined holding points. King 07 was contacted prior to arriving in the rescue area and King 07 passed "On-Scene Command" to Sandy 01.
4. (C) The terrain was predominantly flat with karst to the north and east and a river just south of the survivors. The survivors were in a grove of trees approximately 500 meters south of route 1281 and 1500 meters west of route 23. The survivors were approximately 75 meters apart. There were prebriefed ZPU positions to the north and northeast, 23mm positions to the northeast and east, also at least one active 37mm position to the southeast. The defenses encountered were exactly as briefed with possibly more hand-held AW and small arms than was anticipated.
5. (S) Upon arrival, Sandy One established voice contact with 07A and asked him an authentication question and received the proper reply. Sandy 01 attempted to have 07A vector him in by engine sound, however Nail 27 was able to establish the first approximate location by ADF cuts and then making low passes in the area. Sandy 01 located the area and by repeated low passes and talking to 07A was able to pinpoint his exact position. Also, several calls were made to Owl 07B with no reply. Owl 07A advised Sandy 01 that he thought 07B was just southeast of his position. Sandy 01 then instructed all aircraft not to strike in that area.
6. (S) During the location process 07A reported that ZPU fire, small arms and AW were being fired at Sandy 01 from the northeast. This area was struck and this particular ZPU was silenced, however subsequent dry passes revealed that small arms and AW were still being received. This

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procedure was repeated several times until dry passes by Sandy 01 elicited no reaction. Then the areas north-northwest, west and east were probed with rockets and strafed in an attempt to troll up any other gun positions. None were noted and 07A reported he had heard no other ground fire. During this portion of the SAR a 37mm had fired two clips of seven rounds each at the Sandys, also approximately three 23mm positions had fired at aircraft that were 4500 to 7500 AGL and east of the survivors position. The 23mm was coming from a valley to the northeast and was not considered a threat to the SAR aircraft because below 4000 feet they would be shielded by Karst formations. The 23mm positions fired numerous rounds anytime an aircraft ventured too far east and above 4000 feet. Sandy 3 and 4 were asked to bring Jolly Green 70 and 72 into the area northwest of the survivors. Jolly Green 70 and 72 and 07A were briefed and Sandy 3 and 4 proceeded to lead JG 70 into the area from the west. Owl 07A reported he had a broken right leg and would require a pararescueman for assistance.

7. (S) Just prior to the JG 70's approach to the survivors, Sandy 40 and 41 (DIP aircraft) were directed to lay CBU-19 along the road to the north and on a line south to northeast of the survivors. JG 70 arrived over the survivor and the Sandys formed a "daisy chain" around the area. JG 70 reported he was receiving ground fire all around and when a ZPU opened up just north he was forced to withdraw after taking numerous hits. The Sandys then proceeded to strike all around the area in an attempt to sterilize the area. Later repeated dry passes and contact with 07A revealed no current enemy fire. Again DIP was employed; this time north and west of the area by Sandy 42 and 43. JG 70 was recommitted and after entering a hover again reported some small arms and AW ground fire. However, apparently the ZPU positions had been silenced. The Sandys were again in a "daisy chain" while the PJ assisted 07A. The PJ and 07A were hoisted up and JG 70 departed the area with the Sandys dispensing CBU-14 along the exit route. JG 70 was all right but had again received numerous hits. After JG 70 was safely out of the area and was being escorted to channel 89 by Sandy 03 and 04, Sandy 01 and 02 returned to the area to search for 07B. Voice contact was established almost immediately and 07B proceeded to vector Sandy 01 to his position. Sandy 01 was able to establish 07B's position approximately 75 meters south of 07A's position. He was in high trees and had very limited visibility up through the trees. Sandy 05 and 06 were asked to bring Jolly Green 36 and 19 to the northwest of the area and hold. The area was again probed with no response by enemy gun positions. Sandy 05 and 06 led JG 36 into the area, but as JG 36 approached the survivor he lost an engine due to ground fire and was forced to exit the area to the south and west escorted by Sandy 05 and 06. Meanwhile, King 07 had assembled Jolly Green 09 and 37, Sandy 11 and 12, 13 and 14 and Spad 01 and 02 to the west of the area. Also Sandy 48, 49, 50, 51 (DIP aircraft) were available. During the interval that occurred while these forces were marshalled, it was decided to strike the gun positions in the valley to the northeast. King 07 provided Cobra and Boxer flights

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(2 F-4s each) to accomplish this. With Nail 27's assistance these two flights struck and received BDA of four secondary explosions and one fire. The 23mm gun positions did not come up after this strike. Sandy 01 directed Sandy 48, 49, 50, 51 to lay CBU-30 on all four sides of the survivor and Jolly Green 09 was to be led to the survivor by Sand 13 and 14 immediately after the CBU-30 was dispensed. Three sides of the box were created but one aircraft had a release problem. Sandy 01 had previously marshalled Spad 01 and 02 overhead, also Sandy 11 and 12 were on scene. Sandy 01 directed Spad 01 and 02 to lay CBU-22 to the east of the area (the open end of the box). Spad 01 accomplished this, however Spad 02 impacted the ground southeast of the area due to unknown causes. JG 09 approached 07B and 07B popped a smoke. Sandy 01 and 02, 11 and 12 and 13 and 14 were flying in a "daisy chain" around the area but in spite of this array JG 09 did receive ground fire. JG 09 accomplished the pickup and all aircraft dispensed CBU-14 on their exit heading south and west. JG 09 with Sandy 13 and 14 as escort, proceeded to channel 89. Sandy 01 and 02 also RTB'd while Sandy 11 and 12 stayed on scene to conduct an electronic search for Spad 02 with the help of Nail 52 who had arrived in the area.

8. (S) There were two major problems associated with this SAR: (1) Heavy intense ground fire of all types and (2) the apparent ineffectiveness of CBU-19 and CBU-30. Small arms, AW and ZPU ground fire was observed numerous times coming out of areas saturated with CBU-19 or 30. These personnel apparently were wearing gas masks (unlikely) or the CBU is not strong enough to incapacitate them for the needed pickup time. The Sandy forces were directed to use high number call signs for the CBU-19 aircraft. This resulted in considerable confusion and increased radio chatter.

9. (S) The use of a Nail FAC aircraft is extremely valuable and this procedure should be continued. It is recommended that on future SARs approximately six SAR support aircraft be configured with NAPE and these aircraft be used to subdue ground fire in close proximity to the survivor. It is also recommended that CBU-19/30 aircraft use the appropriate codeword as the call sign.

10. (C) The willingness, aggressiveness and heroism demonstrated by Jolly Green 70, 36 and 09 is worthy of special note. The expertise and many helpful tasks performed by Nail 27 were extremely valuable. The expertise and professional competence of King 07 was a major factor in the successful completion of this SAR.

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11. (U) The Sandy forces which participated in the effort were:

Sandy 01	Major Walter R. Davis
02	Major Joseph (EMI) Leonhardt
03	Major James P. Pretlow
04	Major Robert L. Hoffman
05	Major Peter D. Williams
06	Lt Anthony N. Wylie
11	Lt Rex V. Huntsman
12	Lt James R. Matthews
13	Capt Charles (NMI) Holder
14	Lt Alan O. Williams

The Sandy forces equipped with DIP were:

Sandy 40	Col Jerald J. Ransom
41	Major Clarence E. Whinery
42	Capt Joseph J. Tarnowski Jr.
43	Capt Thomas M. Power
48	Lt George C. Harvey
49	Major Wademar D. Krueger
50	Capt Ernest P. Anderson
51	Lt Donald N. Travis

Fredrick A. Beebe
FREDRICK A. BEEBE, Lt Colonel, USAF
Sandy Coordinator

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TSgtSutton&SAR.jpg

RS TSgt William Sutton, back from a successful night
feet wet rescue.

12 NOV 69



Left to Right: FE-Sgt Robert Laframboise, AC-LT(JG)
Robert Ritchie, CP-Capt Jimmie Blackwood, RS-TSgt
William Sutton, RS-SSgt Luther Davis.



FILE 12 NOV 69

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40TH ARRSQ HIST, OCT-DEC 1969

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Crew of 12 Nov mission that picked up F-4 pilot. Kneeling from left A1C David M. Davison, TSgt William E. Lester, and Sgt Grady F. Allen. Standing from Left SSgt Charles J. Howard, Maj Robert L. Smith, SSgt Harold H. Bailey and Capt Robert M. Horne.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT # 27

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS
(FIRST OAK LEAF CLUSTER)

TO

LEWIS J. ROBERTS JR.

Master Sergeant Lewis J. Roberts Jr. distinguished himself by heroism while participating in aerial flight as a Pararescue Technician of an HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant" rescue helicopter in Southeast Asia on 12 November 1969. On that date, Sergeant Roberts aided in the rescue of a United States Air Force pilot downed in hostile territory. Three times before, rescue helicopters had attempted to recover the downed airman, but intense and accurately directed ground fire had forced them to withdraw. With complete disregard for his personal safety, undeterred by the gunfire and ordnance exploding around him, Sergeant Roberts persisted courageously and aggressively, and against almost insurmountable odds, rescued the pilot from the midst of the hostile troops which surrounded him. By his unselfish dedication in the face of almost certain danger, Sergeant Roberts has enhanced the image of America's fighting man. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Sergeant Roberts reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

From: "Rouhier, Chuck", INTERNET:Chuck.Rouhier@Deskbook.wpafb.af.mil
Date: 5/24/99, 9:57 AM
Re: FW: Request For Assistance

Received this a few minutes ago from the JTF-FA. If anyone can help Bill, please contact him directly.

Chuck
Jolly FE '71-'74

-----Original Message-----

From: Forsyth, William L. GS-12 [mailto:WLFORSYT@hq.pacom.mil]
Sent: Monday, May 24, 1999 1:19 PM
To: Rouhier, Chuck
Subject: Request For Assistance

Chuck

Could you post the following request on the Jolly Green Web Site?

Joint Task Force-Full Accounting needs your assistance to locate witnesses to the loss of SPAD 02, a 6th SOS, Pleiku AB RVN, A-1H, that was shot down while supporting the SAR effort for the crew of OWL 07 at 0910G on 12 November 1969 Southwest of the Mugia Pass in Laos. SPAD 02 was to lay CBU-22 smoke east of Jolly Green 09, while his wingman placed smoke on the west side of the Jolly Green as it went in on a Northerly heading to pick up the crew of OWL 07. SPAD 02 was apparently hit by ground fire, went into a right hand bank, and impacted in a 135 degree bank in a 45 degree dive.

Thus far, we have not been able to locate the crash site of SPAD 02 and the witnesses I have talked to do not have a good recollection of just where the aircraft crashed. I would like to talk to other witnesses to the incident, our records contain statements from MSgt Bobby R. Mink, a flight engineer on King 07, and SSgt George H. Freburger, the King 07 radio operator, neither of whom I have located. The information I need is where SPAD 02 crashed in relation to the river that runs east-west through the area and the road, which is north-south, and what the terrain was like where the aircraft impacted, i.e. open rice paddies, forest, karst, ect. If either of these individuals or anyone else who witnessed the crash of SPAD 02 could contact me, it would be very much appreciated. Mr. Bill Forsyth, Laos and Cambodia POW/MIA analyst, JTF-FA, email wlforsyt@hq.pacom.mil (Change from earlier email address) or telephone 808-477-2101 (DSN 315-477-2101)

----- Internet Header -----

Sender: Chuck.Rouhier@Deskbook.wpafb.af.mil
Received: from rsclmail3.wpafb.af.mil (rsclmail3.wpafb.af.mil [129.48.198.8])
by spamgaad.compuserve.com (8.9.3/8.9.3/SUN-1.0) with ESMTP id NAA06900;
Mon, 24 May 1999 13:57:09 -0400 (EDT)
Received: by rsclmail3.wpafb.af.mil with Internet Mail Service (5.5.2448.0)
id <K60KPVLG>; Mon, 24 May 1999 13:57:14 -0400
Message-ID: <1EC7CEB74D00D111BA7100A0C91E18D301D7A673@rsclmail3.wpafb.af.mil>
From: "Rouhier, Chuck" <Chuck.Rouhier@Deskbook.wpafb.af.mil>
To:
Subject: FW: Request For Assistance
Date: Mon, 24 May 1999 13:57:02 -0400
X-Mailer: Internet Mail Service (5.5.2448.0)

Spad Two, down in Laos

Gerald Helmich must have been a quiet guy, because when I sent an email to a dozen members of the UNH Class of 1954, nobody remembered him. Jerry came from Manchester, majored in mechanical engineering, joined Air Force ROTC, belonged to Sigma Beta fraternity, and played two years of football, intramural baseball . . . and bridge! He was a good-looking guy. (You'd be surprised how few of us fell into that category.) He wore a crew cut, jug ears, and a warm, wide smile.

Commissioned as a second lieutenant in June 1954, he became a pilot and flight instructor. In June 1956, he was married in the Pease Air Force Base chapel in Newington, New Hampshire, to Gertrude Hamel. They had three children, euphonically named James, Jill, and Jerilyn.

Then came the Vietnam War and an urgent need for men to fly the venerable Douglas Skyraider. This magnificent plane was a relic of World War II, meant to fly off carriers as a replacement for the dive bombers that, from 1942 to 1944, had torn great holes in the Japanese fleet. It didn't see service in that war, but the Skyraider did serve in Korea, and it was introduced early into Vietnam because--being propeller-driven--it didn't violate the Geneva Accords that had divided the country between a communist north and a pro-western south. Pilots called it the Spad or Able Dog. It could carry a huge amount of ordnance for an incredible distance, and it could stay aloft all day. This made it the perfect plane for search-and-rescue missions, while the jets ran the gauntlet of MiGs and SAMs over North Vietnam.

So it was that in early 1969, as a 37-year-old major, Jerry Helmich entered A-1 training at Hurlbert Field in Florida as a member of Training Class 69-08. A photo of him on the Skyraider Association website shows him as a heavyset man, years older than the captains and first lieutenants who made up most of the class.

"Finished A-1 training in May '69," recalled one of them, Captain Charles Holder, "and headed, as a group, to Clark AB in the Philippines for jungle survival training. Following an 'enjoyable interlude' at Clark, the class split up and proceeded to our final base assignments in SE Asia. Jerry went to South Vietnam ... and I headed for Nakhon Phanom (NKP), Thailand."

Jerry was stationed outside Pleiku, in the Vietnamese Central Highlands, as a member of the 6th Special Operations Squadron, 633rd Special Operations Wing, whose Skyraiders were often deployed for search-and-rescue missions. Charlie Holder explained that generally took a couple of months for the "new guy" to become comfortable with the airplane and familiar with the terrain; then, toward the end of his tour, a pilot tended to get cautious. "Throwing in travel time and ... Jungle Survival School," Holder said, "that leaves about eight-nine months out of the year when you ... were probably THE BEST DAMN PILOT IN THE WHOLE DAMN AIR FORCE.... Jerry and I were both in that mid-timeframe; we were damn good, and knew it. That's why we were both selected for and checked out as Sandy (or Rescue Mission) pilots."

Jerry was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on September 16, the Air Medal on October 2, and another DFC on October 10. While the Air Medal is generally awarded for a specific number of missions flown, the DFC is for "extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight."

Owl Seven goes down

On November 11, 1969, a U.S. Army helicopter with the call sign Owl Seven was reported down in Laos. The crew of two managed to get out safely, and they spent the night in a densely forested area about fifteen miles from the North Vietnamese border. The nearest town was Ban Senphan, which the Defense Mapping Agency chart shows at about 17°30' north latitude, 105°42' west longitude. According to the search-and-rescue reports, there were several villages in the area, but the forest was thick enough to provide good cover. Ban Senphan is on a river, with level ground to the south and high mountains to the north. (Some of the pilots recall that the villages were abandoned, as a result of heavy American bombing along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.)

Early next morning--Wednesday, November 12--a Jolly Green Giant search-and-rescue helicopter was dispatched to the site, and by 0455 hours it had plucked one of Owl Seven's crew out of the rain forest. The helo, which had the call sign Jolly Green Nine, had to break off the rescue effort when it was attacked by "an enemy helicopter"--presumably North Vietnamese. Two U.S. Air Force Phantom jets, Packard One and Packard Two, attacked the North Vietnamese aircraft through a hail of ack-ack from 37-mm anti-aircraft guns. Packard One was shot down.

Now there were three Americans on the ground. In addition to Jolly Green Nine and Packard Two, there was at least one other American aircraft in the area. This was the FAC or Forward Air Controller, an unarmed liaison plane with the call sign King Seven. Apparently four Skyraiders arrived on the scene about this time--a "Sandy" flight from Nakhon Phanom in Thailand. The FAC put them to work suppressing the ack-ack. As they'd trained to do at Hurlbert Field, the Skyraiders formed a "daisy wheel" of four aircraft, flying a racetrack pattern 500-800 feet above the ground, so that one pilot was always in position to roll in against any North Vietnamese gunner who showed his position by firing at them or the Jolly Green.

Spad One and Two to Ban Senphan

At 0726 hours, at least two Skyraiders were scrambled from Pleiku Air Base to Ban Senphan. Major Jerry Helmich was in command of the second aircraft with the call sign Spad Two, meaning that he was flying as wingman to the flight leader, Major Willard Dillon. They would add their firepower to the search-and-rescue effort, which by now consisted of at least six other Skyraiders. Four were from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand--including Captain Charlie Holder, who evidently was flying that day with the call sign Sandy Three. As he recalled, his flight had just replaced the Skyraiders that had been dispatched from NKP earlier in the morning. The other two Skyraiders, he thought, had come from Pleiku, in which case they would have carried the call signs Spad Three and Spad Four.

Packard Two must have already flown back to base--a turbojet, the Phantom fighter could spend only a brief time over the target. Jolly Green Nine had likewise departed, so as to take the rescued (and possibly injured) Owl Seven crewman to an American base in South Vietnam. It returned to Ban Senphan at about the same time as Spads from Pleiku arrived on the scene.

As the Jolly Green Giant swept in to rescue the second Owl Seven crewman, it came under heavy fire from North Vietnamese 37 mm guns. The pilot asked the Skyraiders to drop CBU-22 cluster bombs onto the ack-ack site, and also to lay a white phosphorous smoke screen between the Jolly Green and the North Vietnamese gunners. "With the addition of the [Pleiku] A-1s," Charlie Holder recalled, "we were trying to set up an eight-ship Daisy Wheel over the survivors, in a valley, under 'contested' conditions. Confusion reigned for a few moments ... but the following is truly burned into my memory: as we tried to mesh these two formations, I had a single-seat A-1 cut into 'my' pattern very close in front of me." This was Spad Two--Major Jerry Helmich. "I had to pull up and to the right to avoid hitting him," Holder went on, "and basically surrendered my place in the Daisy Wheel for a few moments. I pulled back down and fell into trail with that bird, perhaps 400-500 feet back."

According to the rescue report, Jerry's Skyraider was the second to roll in on the ack-ack guns--always more dangerous than the initial attack, since the gunners have had a chance to adjust their aim. Sandy Three from Nakhon Phanom--almost certainly Charlie Holder--later reported that he had watched Jerry begin his dive, the nose of his Skyraider dropping and the plane rolling to the right, evidently already hit. (In his memoir written 30 years later, Holder recalled that Spad Two was hit while still in the Daisy Wheel, but the reports from the scene are probably more accurate.) Another Skyraider pilot glimpsed Spad Two in a 45-degree dive with a bank angle of 135 degrees--that is to say, almost on its back. He noted the time as 1010 hours.

At almost the same moment, the Jolly Green succeeded in its rescue attempt, pulling the second Owl Seven crewman from the rain forest.

Jerry's Skyraider exploded when it hit the ground. One of the Sandy pilots--also taking part in ack-ack suppression--fired a pod of rockets into a clump of trees near the spot where Spad Two had crashed; its pilot reported that he flew through "the same smoke layer" when he pulled off from the attack. Spad One also flew over the crash site, seeing no sign of life.

The following Monday, Jerry Helmich would have been thirty-eight years old.

"No further information at this time"

Spad One and two of the Nakhon Phanom pilots stayed on the site for several hours, and King Seven--the FAC--remained there for the rest of the day, hoping to spot either Jerry Helmich or the crew of the downed Phantom jet, Captains Jon Bodahi and Harry Smith. The search was continued by electronic means until 1430 hours next day, when it was

HELMICH, GERALD ROBERT

Name: Gerald Robert Helmich
Rank/Branch: Colonel/ US Air Force
Unit: 6th Special Operations Squadron

Pleiku Airbase, South Vietnam
Date of Birth: 17 November 1931
Home of Record: Manchester, NH
Date of Loss: 12 November 1969
Country of Loss: Laos
Loss Coordinates: 172800N 1054000E (WE747328)

[Click coordinates to view maps](#)

Status in 1973: Missing in Action
Category: 2
Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: A1H "Skyraider"
Other Personnel in Incident: (none missing)



REMARKS:

SYNOPSIS: With its fantastic capability to carry a wide range of ordnance (8,000 pounds of external armament), great flight range (out to 3,000 miles), and the ability to absorb punishment, the single-seat Douglas A1 Skyraider became one of the premier performers in the close air support and attack mission role (nickname: Spad) and RESCAP mission role (nickname: Sandy). The Skyraider served the Air Force, Navy and Marines faithfully throughout the war in Southeast Asia.

On 12 November 1969, then Major Gerald R. Helmich was the pilot of an A1H, call sign "Spad 02," that was scrambled to assist in the overall search and recovery (SAR) mission for the crew of "Owl 07," a 2-man Army helicopter downed the day before; then later the same morning, for the crew of an F4E aircraft shot down during the first rescue effort. Spad flight departed Pleiku Airbase at 0726 hours as the # 2 aircraft in a flight of two. Their planned flight path was from Pleiku to rendezvous with other aircraft participating in the SAR operation, then return to Pleiku. Those aircraft included the Forward Air Controller (FAC), the rescue helicopter, and at least 6 other A1Hs.

The location of loss was approximately 60 miles due west of the major communist port city of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam; 1 mile south of Ban Senphan and 15 miles southwest of the Lao/North Vietnamese border, Khammouan Province, Laos. Another description of the loss location placed it 6 kilometers south-southwest of Ban Phanop, 600 meters southeast of Ban Senphan and 300 meters east of Route 23. The Nam Mo River ran parallel to and approximately 1 mile south of Route 23. To the west of the loss location, a tributary of the Nam Mo River branched off and meandered to the south-southeast through the jungle covered valley.

The highest terrain feature within 5 miles of the loss location was 2,300 feet with 6,000-foot mountains to the north, then the mountain range wrapped around to both the east and west. The area in which the downed helicopter crew was hiding was relatively level and densely forested surrounded by villages. In the early morning hours during the first rescue attempt, low stratus clouds collected around the mountaintops. In the valley it was clear with only a slight haze existing in the immediate target area. Visibility was 8 to 10 miles.

At 0455 hours, as the SAR helicopter, call sign "Jolly Green 09," was recovering the first crewman of Owl 07, a flight of 2 F4Es, call signs "Packard 01 and 02," were attacking an enemy helicopter that was attempting to

interfere with the recovery operation. Capt. Jon K. Bodahl, pilot, and Capt. Harry W. Smith, weapons systems officer, comprised the aircrew of Packard 01. As they maneuvered to obtain an acceptable angle of attack while dodging intense enemy 37mm anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) fire, Packard 01 was struck by AAA fire and seen to crash 2 meters south of a ford along the Nam Mo River.

SAR efforts for the second helicopter crewman were temporarily suspended while an initial search was conducted for Capt. Bodahl and Capt. Smith. At the same time other aircraft under the control of the FAC, call sign "King 07," assaulted communist AAA sites, automatic and heavy weapons positions, and troop concentrations hidden in the dense jungle. US aircraft used bombs, rockets, CBU-22s (cluster bomb units) and strafing runs in an effort to contain the communists' ability to further interfere with overall US operations. These efforts were successful enough that another rescue attempt to recover the second crewman from Owl 07 was attempted. During this time weather conditions improved to a clear sky with 10 plus miles visibility.

After transporting the helicopter crewman rescued during the early morning operation to a US base in South Vietnam, Jolly Green 09 returned to the ongoing SAR operation. As the Jolly Green's crew prepared to enter the recovery area for the second helicopter crewman, its pilot directed Major Helmich and his flight leader to place CBU-22 and WP smoke, between them and the intense enemy small arms and heavy weapons fire. Jolly Green 09 moved in and successfully recovered the downed crewman at the same time Major Helmich made his attack pass.

Witnesses observed Spad 02 in various phases of flight from a bomb run to impact, but no one witness observed the entire sequence of events. According to these statements, Spad 02 was observed by another A1H pilot, call sign "Sandy 13," as he began his run. As Gerald Helmich continued to press forward, his aircraft started a right roll with its nose dropping. At 1010 hours, other Americans caught sight of Major Helmich's aircraft in a 45-degree dive and 135 degree angle of bank nearly inverted when it impacted the ground and exploded. The crash took place in an area that had been subjected to intense ground fire from small arms, automatic weapons fire and from AAA. One of the Sandy pilots's reported in his witness statement that he "put a pod of rockets into a clump of trees (near the wreckage of Gerald Helmich's aircraft) to suppress enemy ground fire, then pulled off into the same smoke layer." Spad 01 made a low pass over the wreckage of his wingman, but the flight leader detected no sign of life.

In the confusion of battle, no parachute was seen departing the damaged Skyraider and no emergency beeper was heard. In spite of the witness statements, the Air Force believed there was a possibility that he could have survived only to be captured immediately. Spad 01 and two other A1H aircraft, Sandy 11 and 12, stayed in the area for 1 to 3 hours attempting to locate the pilot. Major Helmich's A1H was downed approximately 1 mile southeast of Capt. Bodahl and Capt. Smith's F4E Phantom.

King 07, the on site FAC, continuing to search for Gerald Helmich, Jon Bodahl and Harry Smith for the rest of the day. An electronic search also continued until 1430 hours the next day and was suspended due to a lack of an objective. At that time formal search operations were terminated, Gerald Helmich was listed Missing in Action.

Gerald Helmich is among nearly 600 Americans who disappeared in Laos. Many of these men were known to be alive on the ground. The Laotians admitted holding "tens of tens" of American Prisoners of War, but these men were never negotiated for either by direct negotiation between our countries or through the Paris Peace Accords which ended the War in Vietnam since Laos was not a party to that agreement.

Since the end of the Vietnam War well over 21,000 reports of American prisoners, missing and otherwise unaccounted for have been received by our government. Many of these reports document LIVE American Prisoners of War remaining captive throughout Southeast Asia TODAY.

Pilots in Vietnam and Laos were call upon to fly in many dangerous circumstances, and they were prepared to be wounded, killed or captured. It probably never occurred to them that they could be abandoned by the country they so proudly served.

suspended and the three airmen were formally listed as Missing in Action.

According to Operation Smoking Gun, from whose report this description was put together: "Gerald Helmich is among nearly 600 Americans who disappeared in Laos. Many of these men were known to be alive on the ground. The Laotians admitted holding 'tens of tens' of American Prisoners of War, but these men were never negotiated for either by direct negotiation between our countries or through the Paris Peace Accords which ended the War in Vietnam since Laos was not a party to that agreement."

True enough, and tragic enough, but I find it impossible to believe that Jerry Helmich survived the crash of his Skyraider, auguring in at perhaps 250 knots, 45 degrees off the vertical, almost upside down, and exploding when it hit.

Because he was missing, not officially dead, Jerry Helmich was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1973 and full colonel in 1978. However, in December 1978, a posthumous awards ceremony was held at Dobbins Air Force Base in Georgia, at which time Jerry finally got a grave marker, a 21-gun salute, and the medals he had earned on what was almost certainly the last day of his life: another Air Medal, the Purple Heart for his presumed injuries, and the Silver Star for heroism.

On Memorial Day 1999, the city of Manchester erected a memorial plaque to Jerry Helmich near the Queen City Bridge, and his name will be added the city's Vietnam Memorial. And if you visit the beautiful "Wall" in Washington, or see the scale model that tours the country, you'll find his name on Panel 16W, Row 064.