

DATE: 22 APR 70

25 April 1970

MISSION NUMBER: 1-3-031-22 APR 70

AIRCRAFT DESIGNATION: KING 5

LOCATION: YC 416972

DISTRESSED AIRCRAFT: CAP 53 (EC-47), GUNNER 6 (EC-47)

Classified by *DE 13-0000*
 SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
 SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
 AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
 YEAR INTERVALS.
 DECLASSIFIED ON *3) 01/71*

SAVES: 8 Combat, 2 KIA

1. (U) The mission had been briefed as an aerial refueling in support of the first light effort for Hostage Nan and Cowpoke. After we had completed refueling Jolly Green 35 & 42, we returned to an orbit track southwest of DaNang. At this time, Cap 53 called Mayday on Guard, and gave a position of 030/44/72. The aircraft was trying to make "feet wet." We directed Cap 53 to squawk emergency, and had Panama give him pigeons to the coast line. It was difficult to communicate with the distressed aircraft, as the SAR Task Force (SARTF) had just established initial contact with Cowpoke. Vanguard 912 had visual contact with Cap 53, and proceeded to join up with him. Eight minutes after the initial distress call, Cap 53 crash landed 27 miles west of Phu Bai.

2. (U) Vanguard 912 had visual contact with three survivors. We immediately established contact with one survivor. He stated that he was near the wreckage and three other personnel were with him. He appeared in shock, but stated they were not seriously injured. We directed him to search the area for other survivors, and to administer first aid to the injured. Shortly thereafter, he came back on the radio to say they had located another aircrew member. No enemy activity was observed in the immediate combat aircrew recovery (ACR) area. but the general location was hostile.

3. (U) Many Army helicopters had called on Guard to offer assistance, and several were directed to the ACR position. Catkiller 21 was appointed On-Scene Commander, and was told that an immediate pick-up would be most desirable. Since no ground fire had been observed, the FAC directed Gunner flight, two LOH's, in for the pick-up. The first aircraft successfully lifted off with two survivors, while the second helicopter, Gunner 6, crashed after lift-off due to being overgrossed.

4. (U) Catkiller 33 replaced 21 as On-Scene Commander. The Huey Gunships and Air Cavalry which we had requested, arrived at the crash site and descended to rescue the survivors, and secure the area. Cheyenne Phantom, the lead Huey, was directed to airlift the five survivors and to look for three aircrew members of Cap 53. As of yet, they had not been accounted for. A search produced the following results: one KIA located in front of the EC-47's nose; one KIA in the wreckage; and one injured survivor approximately 75

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meters from the burning wreckage. In addition, the ground team located an emergency radio which had been transmitting continuous tone on Guard channel. These transmissions were first heard when the LOH crashed, and continued up until the ground party located the radio. Needless to say, Guard was not usable for the last portion of the ACR. While on the ground, the rescue party was being mortared and receiving small arms fire. Spads 13 & 14, who were flying a daisy chain, began striking the area. This was in addition to the Army gunships who had been flying CAP during the effort.

5. (C) Resources:

Jolly Green 21 & 33 (available, but not utilized due to on-scene arrival time)

Spads 13 & 14

FAC's

Catkiller 21 & 33
Bilk 25

Fastmovers

Misty 11 & 12 (not utilized)
Stormy 04 (not utilized)
Yo-yo 24 (photo-recon)

Army Helicopters

Project Foxtrot
Gunner flight
Cheyenne Phantom
Sneaky flight
Project 31
Griffin 36
Thunder 07

Vanguard 912

6. (U) King 5 Crewmembers:

AC/AMC CPT EPSTEIN
CP LTC CRITES
N CPT MYERS
RO TSG GILMORE
FE MSG KILGORE
FE TSG EMBERY
LM SSG WAREHAM

Howard M. Epstein

HOWARD M. EPSTEIN, Captain, USAF
Aircraft Commander/Airborne Mission Commander

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Classified by *01/302 Rld*
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT 100
YEAR INTERVALS.
DECLASSIFIED ON *31 Dec 76*

GROUP-1
Declassify on 10 year intervals.
Declassify on 12 years.

DECLASSIFIED

22 APR 70

EC-47P 43-48402 362 TEWS, 460 TRW, USAF, Pleiku

1Lt George M Wall (KIA)

1Lt R M Nasipak (survived)

SSgt Michael R Conner (KIA)

6 crew, names unknown (survived)

Further south in Laos one of the RDF EC-47s was shot down during a mission to the south of the A Shau Valley. The aircraft was flying at 5,500 feet as the crew attempted to locate and fix enemy radio broadcasts when it was hit by automatic weapons fire or 37mm AAA. With the aircraft losing oil and power 1Lt Wall flew east in the hope of reaching an airfield but he was forced to crash-land the aircraft about 20 miles southwest of Hué. 1Lt Wall and SSgt Conner were killed in the crash-landing but the others were rescued by USAF SAR helicopters. This C-47 had been operated by the 5001st Operations Squadron from Fairbanks AFB, Alaska in the late 1950s.