

28 APR 70

440 (Maj Berthold/2667)

Mission Narrative Report

3 ARRGp (JROC)

APO 96307

DATE: 22 April 1970

MISSION NUMBER: 2-3-027 21 Apr 70

FLIGHT DESIGNATION: Jolly Green 72

MISSION OBJECTIVE: Adlib 12

LOCATION: 070/23/72

SAVES: One combat (Adlib 12)

SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS:

1. (S) The crews of JG 72 and 70 briefed at 0630L on 22 Apr for a SAR mission on adlib, a C-130 which was reported down at 070/23/72 with 13 persons on board. JG 72 was low and JG 70 was high. JG 72 and 70 departed Ch 89 at 0455L with Sandy 3 and 4. Covey PAC 237 was in the area of the crash and at 0512L made contact with Adlib 12. The survivor reported he was burned on the hands and face but was in good condition. Covey 237 pinpointed Adlib 12's position at 0539L and reported that he was 100 yards off the route structure. Covey 237 made several passes over the area and reported negative ground fire. He also was getting low on fuel and would have to leave the area soon. At 0600L Covey 246 took over on scene commander from Covey 237. Sandy 1 was in the area and started trolling for ground fire and selected a holding area closer to the SAR area on the east side of the route structure. At 0617L, JG 72 and 70 and Sandy 3 and 4 arrived in the holding area. At 0705L Adlib 12 stated that he did not need the help of a PJ and he could get onto the penetrator alone. Sandy 1 briefed him to put the strap on first. Sandy 3 and 4 escorted JG 72 to the final holding point at 0720L. JG 70 remained in the high holding area. Sandy 1 briefed the SAR forces at 0725Z. Since JG 72's FM radio was inoperative VHF radio became the secondary freq. Guard freq would be used by only Sandy 1, JG 72 pilot and survivor. VHF freq would be used by Sandy, Smoke and JG 72 copilot. Sandy 3 gave an

40-70-C083

GROUP 1

Downgraded at 5 year
Intervals; declassified
after 12 years

excellent briefing of the area, IP location, slow down point and survivor's location. The run in was started at 0727L and smoke screen had been put down to mask off the route structure from the survivor's location. Smoke markers had been put at the IP and on a run in heading to the survivor. The smoke markers were placed perfectly from the IP to the survivor. As JG 72 turned at the IP, airspeed was decreased as briefed and Sandy 1 told the survivor to pop his smoke. Survivor's smoke was spotted and an approach started to the spot. There was some difficulty in pinpointing the survivor at first as the smoke had drifted off slightly. However, the survivor was sighted 20 feet to the rear by the PR. A hoist was established over the survivor and hoist lowered. The survivor was located in a bamboo area just below a small ridge. The aircraft was let down as low as possible to take advantage of the cover provided by the ridge line. Power requirements were good and very close to precomputed. Throughout the recovery phase the copilot kept the forces informed on VHF of the progress of the recovery. The Sandy and Smoke aircraft kept a steady "daisy chain" with continuous ordnance expended. Adlib 12 was hoisted aboard JG 72 at 0731L and the recovery forces egressed the area. The survivor was in shock and his face and hands were badly burned. The PRs advised that he should have immediate medical attention. JG 72 and 70 RTB'd to Ch 77 with Sandy 3 and 4 escort. Fuel was not required and King 5 was released. JG 72 and 70 landed at Ch 77 at 0830L.

2. (U) The survivor was Adlib 12, SSgt A. C. Fields, 8 EFWG

3. (U) The crew of Jolly Green 72 was:

AC: Maj Barthold
 CP: Capt Weeks
 FE: SSgt Bell
 PJ: Sgt Crowder
 PJ: Sgt Fisk

SIGNED

HUBERT M. BERTHOLD, Major, USAF
 Aircraft Commander, Jolly Green 72

SA
OF
MC

1 July 1970

SUBJECT: SAR for "Ad Lib 11"

TO: DCO

1. A successful SAR was conducted on 22 April 1970 for Ad Lib 11. The aircraft, an AC-119 went down at 0220L, 22 April 1970 at 070/23/72 (UTMXC982420). This report covers those activities relating to the rescue forces during the effort.
2. The aircraft took a direct AAA hit and immediately burst into flames. Ad Lib 11 was in the rear of the plane near the ramp and barely had time to don a parachute and bail out. He suffered several severe burns about his face and body. The other crew members were presumed to be lost with the aircraft. A first-light brief was organized immediately to enable the Sandy forces to arrive there at first light. Very little information was known at the time of the briefing other than the call sign, location, and that one survivor had come up on the radio.
3. The following aircraft and pilots participated:

PROJECT CATALOGED INVEST
DO NOT DESTROY
NO 0239165

Sandy 01/02 arrival on scene was 0600L.

4. The terrain was rolling hills creased by numerous creek and river beds. The defenses were unknown but the Covey PAC said that there were numerous ZPU, 23/37mm on a main route 5-8 miles to the North. As it turned out, there were no defenses ever discerned in the immediate area of the scene. The weather was clear of clouds but the visibility was restricted to about seven miles. The winds were calm.

5. Covey had established voice contact with the single survivor just prior to the arrival of Sandy 01/02 on scene. He had also located the parachute but had not been able to yet pin-point the survivor's location. Covey had also picked up some F-4 Phantom strike aircraft and a replacement FAC.

6. Sandy 01 received a briefing on the area and the location of the chute from Covey 237 upon arriving at the scene. He then took over as on scene commander and established voice contact with the survivor. Ad Lib 11 said he was generally all right, except for the burns, and that he had not detected any enemy movement in the area during the night. Sandy 01 made several passes over the area until he had definitely established the location of Ad Lib 11 a short distance up the slope from his parachute. Sandy directed the Covey FAC to put in the fast movers on several roads in the area and in general, around the survivor. He briefed the Smoke 21 flight on where he wanted their ordnance placed and Sandy 03/04 and the Jollys concerning the ingress, pickup, and egress procedures.

7. The pickup turned out to be a model pickup with the Smoke flight making a three-sided box into which the Jolly progressed from his IP. The survivor popped his smoke on command and it was immediately spotted by Jolly. The pickup was similarly uneventful, but most importantly, successful. There was no ground fire detected during the pickup operation, however Sandy 01 did take one small arms hit.

8. No problems. As Sandy 01 stated in his report, "when you have four Lieutenants running the show, how can you miss."


RICHARD E. MICHAUD, Lt Colonel, USAF
Commander

400 (Maj Berthold/2687)

Mission Narrative Report

3 ARRGp (JRCC)
APO 96307

DATE: 22 April 1970

MISSION NUMBER: 2-3-027-21 Apr 70

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MISSION OBJECTIVE: Adlib 12

LOCATION: 070/23/72

SAVES: One combat (Adlib 12)

SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS:

1. (S) The crews of JG 72 and 70 briefed at 0330L on 22 Apr for a SAR mission on adlib, a c-130 which was reported down at 070/23/72 with 13 persons on board. JG 72 was low and JG 70 was high. JG 72 and 70 departed Ch 89 at 0455L with Sandy 3 and 4. Covey FAC 237 was in the area of the crash and at 0512L made contact with Adlib 12. The survivor reported he was burned on the hands and face but was in good condition. Covey 237 pinpointed Adlib 12's position at 0539L and reported that he was 100 yards off the route structure. Covey 237 made several passes over the area and reported negative ground fire. He also was getting low on fuel and would have to leave the area soon. At 0600L Covey 246 took over on scene commander from Covey 237. Sandy 1 was in the area and started trolling for ground fire and selected a holding area closer to the SAR area on the east side of the route structure. At 0617L, JG 72 and 70 and Sandy 3 and 4 arrived in the holding area. At 0705L Adlib 12 stated that he did not need the help of a PJ and he could get onto the penetrator alone. Sandy 1 briefed him to put the strap on first. Sandy 3 and 4 escorted JG 72 to the final holding point at 0720L. JG 70 remained in the high holding area. Sandy 1 briefed the SAR forces at 0725Z. Since JG 72's FM radio was inoperative VHF radio became the secondary freq. Guard freq would be used by only Sandy 1, JG 72 pilot and survivor. VHF freq would be used by Sandy, Smoke and JG 72 copilot. Sandy 3 gave an

40-70-C083

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3. (U) The crew of Jolly Green 72 was:

AC: Maj Barthold
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 FE: SSgt Bell
 PJ: Sgt Crowder
 PJ: Sgt Fisk

SIGNED

HUBERT M. BERTHOLD, Major, USAF
 Aircraft Commander, Jolly Green 72

~~SECRET~~

(S) ^{13/}On 22 April 1970, a successful SAR was conducted for Ad Lib 11. The aircraft, an AC-130 gunship, was shot down during a night interdiction mission and crashed at 0220L.

(S) The aircraft had taken a direct AA hit and immediately burst into flames. Ad Lib 11 was in the rear of the plane and barely had time to don a parachute and bail out. He suffered several severe burns about his face and body. The other crew members were presumed lost with the aircraft.

(S) A SAR briefing was organized immediately, to enable the Sandy force to arrive on-scene at first light. Aside from the call sign and location of the aircraft, very little information was available at the time of the briefing.

(S) The terrain consisted of rolling hills, creased by numerous creek and river beds. The defenses were unknown, but the Covey FAC in the area stated that there were many ZPU and 23/37mm gun positions around a main route, five to eight miles to the north. As it turned out, no defenses were ever discerned in the immediate area of the rescue attempt. The weather was clear of clouds, but the visibility was restricted to about seven miles. The winds were calm.

(S) Covey 237 established voice contact with the single survivor just prior to the on-scene arrival of Sandys 01 and 02. He had also located the parachute, but had been unable to pinpoint the survivor's location.

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(S) Upon arrival at the scene, Sandy 01 received a briefing on the area and the location of the chute from Covey 237. He then took over as On-Scene Commander and established voice contact with the survivor. Ad Lib 11 was generally all right, except for the burns, and he had not detected any enemy movement during the night. Sandy 01 made several passes over the area until he had definitely established the location of Ad Lib 11 a short distance up the slope from his parachute. Sandy directed the Covey FAC to put in fast movers on several roads in the area, and generally around the survivor. He briefed the Smoke 21 flight on where he wanted their ordnance placed. Sandys 03 and 04 and the Jollys were briefed concerning the ingress, pick-up, and egress procedures.

(S) The rescue turned out to be a model pick-up, with the Smoke flight creating a three-sided box into which the Jolly ingressed from his IP. The survivor popped his smoke on command and was immediately spotted by the helicopter. The pick-up was uneventful. No ground fire was observed during the operation, but Sandy 01 did take one small arms hit.

(S) 14/
On 23 April 1970 a successful SAR was conducted for Stormy 03 Alpha and Bravo. The aircraft, an F-4, went down on approximately the 010 degree radial at 45 DME from Channel

~~SECRET~~

Vietnam War Aircraft Losses

1269	11 Mar 1970	O-2A	SVN	Klug P. F.	1Lt	KIA		Clement J. W.	Maj	KIA
1270	15 Mar 1970	OV-10A	LAOS	Erickson D. J.	Capt	Rescued	USAF Helo			
1271	16 Mar 1970	F-105D	THL	Wycoff W. J.	Maj	Rescued	USAF Helo			
1272	19 Mar 1970	A-1H	THL	Evenson L.	Maj	Rescued	USAF Helo			
1273	19 Mar 1970	F-100F	LAOS	Farnsworth E. L.	Capt	Rescued	USAF Helo	Davies J. D. II	1Lt	Rescued
1274	19 Mar 1970	F-4D	LAOS	Rash R. A.	Capt	Rescued	USAF Helo	Pugh D. G.	1Lt	MIA
1275	20 Mar 1970	A-1E	LAOS	Townsend D. H.	1Lt	Rescued	USAF Helo			
1276	21 Mar 1970	OV-10A	LAOS	Richmond J. A.	Capt	Rescued	AA Helo			
1277	21 Mar 1970	A-1J	LAOS	Hudgens E. M.	Maj	KIA				
1278	30 Mar 1970	F-4D	THL	Brown W. E.	LtCol	Rescued	USAF Helo	Melton L. L.	LtCol	Rescued
1279	2 Apr 1970	C-7A	SVN	Train S. W.	1Lt	KIA		Suppenant C. E.	1Lt	KIA
1280	4 Apr 1970	O-2A	SVN	Duffy J. E.	1Lt	MIA				
1281	4 Apr 1970	C-7A	SVN	Gray J. A.	Capt	KIA		Dauten F. W.	Maj	KIA
1282	5 Apr 1970	C-7A	SVN	Jaeger J. P.	Capt	KIA		Fehrenbach T. C.	1Lt	KIA
1283	6 Apr 1970	F-100D	LAOS	Klinger M. L.	Capt	KIA				
1284	6 Apr 1970	F-4D	LAOS	Vanbrunt R. S.	Maj	Rescued	USAF Helo	Loyd O. H.	1Lt	Rescued
1285	6 Apr 1970	A-1H	LAOS	Matthews J. R.	1Lt	Rescued	USAF Helo			
1286	10 Apr 1970	RF-4C	THL	Leaphart J. L.	Maj	Rescued		Bernholtz J. C.	Capt	Rescued
1287	16 Apr 1970	RF-4C	LAOS	Ayers R. L.	Maj	MIA		Rausch R. E.	Capt	KIA
1288	17 Apr 1970	F-4D	SVN	Rexroad L. F.	Maj	KIA		Smith R. W.	1Lt	KIA
1289	20 Apr 1970	F-105D	LAOS	Mahan D. F.	Capt	MIA				
1290	21 Apr 1970	A-1H	LAOS	Dyer J. M.	Capt	Rescued	USAF Helo			
1291	21 Apr 1970	A-1J	LAOS	Whinery C. E.	Maj	Rescued	USAF Helo			
1292	21 Apr 1970	C-130A	LAOS	Brooks W. L.	Maj	MIA		Towle J. C.	1Lt	MIA
1293	22 Apr 1970	F-4D	THL	Rush T. A.	Maj	Rescued	USAF Helo	Foster B. E.	Capt	Rescued
1294	22 Apr 1970	EC-47P	SVN	Wall G. M.	1Lt	KIA		Nasipak R. M.	1Lt	Rescued
1295	22 Apr 1970	A-1J	LAOS	Friestad D. E.	Capt	Rescued	USAF Helo			

22 April 1970

AC-130A 54-1625 16 SOS, 8 TFW, USAF, Ubon
Maj William Leslie Brooks (KIA)
1Lt John Cline Towle (KIA)
Lt Col Charlie Brown Davis (KIA)
Lt Col Charles Stoddard Rowley (KIA)
Maj Donald Garth Fisher (KIA)
MSgt Robert Newell Ireland (KIA)
SSgt Thomas Yuji Adachi (KIA)
SSgt Eugene Fields (survived)
SSgt Stephen Warren Harris (KIA)
SSgt Ronnie Lee Hensley (KIA)
A1C Donald Michael Lint (KIA)

In the early hours of the 22nd an AC-130 Spectre gunship (call sign Adlib 1) took off from Ubon on a Commando Hunt mission over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos. The gunship was later joined by two fighters to form a truck hunter-killer team and the aircraft started work over Route 96A about 25 miles east of the town of Saravan. As the attack proceeded the AC-130 was hit by 37mm AAA and the port wing caught fire near the wing root. Some of the crew attempted to fight the blaze but the fire was too intense. Sgt Fields groped his way forward through darkness and smoke but found the gunner's position vacant and a hatch open. Fields strapped on a parachute and abandoned the

aircraft. Killer 2, one of the accompanying fighters, made voice contact with one of the crew who identified himself as Adlib 12, which was Maj Fisher's call sign. Sgt Fields had suffered burns on his face and hands and his parachute snagged on a tree. He eventually climbed down and hid until morning when he was rescued by a SAR task force. As has happened in several incidents, various rumours and claims relating to the missing crewmembers have persisted since the war. Returned POWs claimed to have seen Maj Fisher and Lt Col Rowley in prison camps but none of this information was ever substantiated. However, in November 1993 the remains of the missing crew were recovered from the wreck site near Ban Tang Lou and identified at the US Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii. The remains were buried in a group burial plot at Arlington National Cemetery on 8 November 1995. Even then some families did not accept proof of death as not all crew members were thought to be represented by the 1,400 small fragments of bone and teeth that were returned from Laos and that barely filled a single coffin. The name of SSgt Harris was omitted from the gravestone at Arlington at the request of his family. Like most of the AC-130s that served in Southeast Asia this aircraft was painted with distinctive nose art and carried the name 'War Lord'.



40th ARRSq Hist, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1970

58

Buff's 100th save crew. Standing from the left:
SSgt M. E. Bell (FE), Maj H. M. Berthold (AC),
Capt M. W. Weeks Jr. (CP). Kneeling from the
left: SSgt W. L. Fisk (PJ) and Sgt D. W. Crowder
(PJ).

100SAVE

22 APR 70

~~SECRET~~

10

40th ARRSq Hist, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1970

The two days of 21 and 22 April proved to be the most productive during the three month period as five combat saves were recorded. The mission began in search of Cowpoke 18 and Hostage Man (the front and back seater of a Marine OV-10). However, before the mission was completed, rescues were recorded on two Sandys (A-1E), one Spad (A-1E), as well as Cowpoke 18.¹³

In unrelated action the 40th chalked up its fifth save of the day and the unit's 100th save overall when Jolly Green 72 rescued the only surviving crewmember of Adlib 12 (AC-130) at 070/23/72.¹⁴ When hoisted aboard, the 100th save was in shock and suffering from burns about the face and hands. He received immediate medical attention from the pararescuemen on the Jolly Green, and was returned to the medical facilities at Danang AB, RVN.¹⁵

The back seater of an F-4 crew became the sixth non-combat save when his aircraft was forced down at 170/59/70 on 25 April.¹⁶ The Jolly Green crew landed in a large rice paddy near the survivor in order that medical attention could be given to the survivor's cuts, burns, and possible broken elbow. The crew and the injured pilot returned to Udorn without further incident.¹⁷

On 8 May a Nail (OV-10) pilot was plucked from the trees at 1616N 10626E. Sandy aircraft sterilized the area as a precautionary measure before the Buff crew moved in and lowered the penetrator to the dangling pilot. The pilot was recovered and found to have no injuries.¹⁸

~~SECRET~~

GROUP 4
Downgraded at 3 year
intervals; declassified
after 12 years

CHRONOLOGY

6 Apr 70 General George S. Brown, Commander 7th Air Force arrives to make award presentations.

6 Apr 70 An A-1E pilot and a T-28 pilot picked up, the second being a night recovery.

7 Apr 70 The F-4 crew (the mission objective of 6 Apr 70) are recovered by Lt Col Hegewald.

8-11 Apr 70 "Pigs and People Mission."

9 Apr 70 Buff crew bails out.

17 Apr 70 Operations are resumed at Channel 89.

18-25 Apr 70 Another "Pigs and People" Mission.

21 Apr 70 Two A-1E pilots are picked up in the SAR effort for a Marine OV-10.

22 Apr 70 One of the Marine pilots of the OV-10 as well as another A-1E pilot are picked up by Buff crews.

22 Apr 70 Major Berthold records the 40th ARRSq's 100th save with the recovery of the only surviving crewmember of an AC-130.

25 Apr 70 Buff crew makes a non combat recovery of an F-4 back seater after bailout south of Channel 70.

8 May 70 General Jack J Catton, Commander MAC, visited 40th ARRSq and made award presentations.

8 May 70 An OV-10 pilot is rescued from the trees.

15 May 70 100th Pickup Party was held at the Officer's Club.

16 May 70 100th Pickup Party was held at the NCO Club.

8 Jun 70 Col William M. McDonald, Vice Commander 41ARRWg, arrived for the Change of Command Ceremony.



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The Story



HENSLEY, RONNIE LEE Remains returned and identified September 1995. Name: Ronnie Lee Hensley Rank/Branch: E5/US Air Force Unit: 16th Special Operations Squadron, Ubon Airbase, Thailand Date of Birth: 08 June 1948 Home City of Record: Richwood WV Date of Loss: 22 April 1970 Country of Loss: Laos Loss Coordinates: 154400N 1065100E (XC990410) Status (in 1973): Missing In Action Category: 2 Acft/Vehicle/Ground: AC130A Source: Compiled from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews. Updated by the P.O.W. NETWORK in 1998. Other Personnel in Incident: Thomas Adachi; Robert Ireland; Stephen Harris; Donald Lint; William Brooks; Charles B. Davis; Donald G. Fisher; John C. Towle; Charles Rowley (all missing); Eugene L. Fields (rescued). REMARKS: SYNOPSIS: In the early hours of April 22, 1970, an AC130 gunship flown by veteran pilot Major William Brooks departed Ubon Airbase with a crew of ten for a Commando Hunt mission over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos. The aircraft, code named "Ad Lib", was joined near its destination by two jet escort fighter bombers, code named "Killer 1" and "Killer 2", and immediately began air strikes against enemy traffic below. The crew of the aircraft included Brooks, the pilot; SSgt. Thomas Y. Adachi, the aerial gunner; LtCol. Charlie B. Davis, a navigator; Maj. Donald G. Fisher, a navigator; SSgt. Stephen W. Harris; SSgt. Ronnie L. Hensley; Master Sgt. Robert N. Ireland; Airman Donald M. Lint; LtCol. Charles S. Rowley; and 1Lt. John C. Towle. During its fourth strike, the gunship was hit by anti-aircraft fire and began burning. Brooks radioed, "I've been hit, babe". Fisher, the navigator, reported that his position was OK. Fields and Hensley, battling the blaze in the rear of the aircraft, lost contact with each other in the smoke. Fields inched his way to Adachi's position, and found Adachi gone and the left scanner window open. Fields used an auxiliary parachute to abandon the aircraft. Killer 1 reported seeing no parachutes, although Killer 2 reported the crew was bailing out. Just before Killer 1 departed the area for refueling, it received one emergency beeper signal from the ground. Killer 2 established voice contact with a member of the crew identifying himself as Ad-Lib 12 (Fisher), who reported that he had burns on his face and hands. Killer 2 also left for refueling, while other aircraft monitored the downed craft and waited for morning to attempt rescue of the survivors. The following morning, Ad-Lib 11 (Fields) was rescued, but due to hostile ground forces, no ground search or photographs were made at the time. The Air Force assumed at the time that Fields had incorrectly identified himself, and announced that 6 of the crew had been killed and four were missing. The rest of the story is confusing. The family of one of the crew was told that a ground crew had been inserted and that partial remains of one crew member had been recovered. Another family was advised that photographs of the crashsite existed. A photograph of a captive airman having burn bandages on his hands was identified as being Fisher by his family. Rowley's family was informed of a secret intelligence report indicating that 8 of the crew had been captured, and

that a controlled American source had witnessed them being tortured to death for their "crimes". A returned POW reported seeing Rowley in a propaganda film. Another returned POW stated that Fisher had been a POW. Although the Air Force would not allow family members to contact the only survivor, Fields, Fisher's son located him after 18 years. Fisher denied ever being in contact with any of the Killer jet escorts. It was not he who identified himself by radio to rescue forces. Apparently, at least some of the crew of Ad Lib survived to be captured in Laos, often called the "Black Hole" of the POW issue because of nearly 600 lost there, not a SINGLE man was released that had been held in Laos. The Pathet Lao stated on several occasions that they held prisoners, yet we never negotiated their freedom, and reports continue to be received that some of these men are still alive. The surviving crew members lost that day were abandoned by the country for which they bravely fought.

Home	Ronnie
Crew Members	Warlord Bio Download

Warlord Bio:

The Lockheed AC130A Spectre gunship first made its appearance in Vietnam in late 1967. Because it was highly maneuverable at low speeds and could spend hours in an operational area while delivering a precisely placed stream of withering fire on a target, it immediately proved its worth in combat. Within one year, all but three AC130A gunships were deployed to SEA. Those three aircraft remained in the US to train additional aircrews. The C130 was armed with 2 M61 Vulcan cannons mounted in the first half of the fuselage and could deliver a stream of accurate fire from each gun at a rate of 100 shells per second. It was usually used at half that rate to conserve ammunition. A pair of 40mm Bofors cannons were mounted at the aft section that could deliver a steady stream of 300 rounds of ammunition per minute.

Some C130's were armed with 105mm Howitzers mounted in place of the rear Bofors cannons.

On 22 April 1970, a AC130A spectre gunship, call sign "Ad lib 11," with its name "WARLORD" boldly scrawled across its side below and slightly behind the cockpit windows (tail number FT54-1625), departed Ubon Airbase on a "Commando Hunt" mission over the Ho Chi min Trail, Saravane Province, Laos.

The aircrew was comprised of veteran pilot manager William Brooks, aircraft commander: 1st Lt. John C. Towle, pilot: Lt. Col. Charles S. Rowley, navigator; Lt.

Col. Charlie B. Davis, Navigator; major Donald Fisher, navigator; Master Sgt.

Robert Ireland, flight engineer, then SSgt. Thomas Adachi, aerial gunner; SSgt. Stephen Harris; aerial gunner A1c Donald Lint, aerial gunner; SSgt Eugene Fields and SSgt. Ronnie Hensley, illuminator operator. They were conducting an armed reconnaissance mission over the extremely rugged jungle covered mountains near Ban Tang Lou, Laos. Adlib was joined near its destination by two escort fighters, call signs "Killer 1" and "Killer 2" The weather was nearly perfect with visibility of two to five miles with some haze and a full moon.

At approximately 0150 hours, a number of enemy 37mm anti-aircraft artillery shells burst around the aircraft. The gunship immediately initiated an attack against the AAA position. At 0159 hours, while in its fourth pass over the target of nearly 7,500 feet, the gunship was struck in the left lower rear section of the fuselage near the tail. Major Brooks radioed, "I've been hit, babe." No further transmissions were heard from the crew while the aircraft was still airborne.

During pull off from its own attack pass against the AAA emplacement, one of the fighter crew's observed the C130A on fire, but under control. moments later, Sgt. Fisher reported the fact over the intercom and heard Lt. Col. Fisher report that he and his position were ok. Sgt. Fields and Sgt. Hensley attempted to extinguish the fire that was being fed by flammable flare markers. However, both men forced to retreat because of the intense heat and thick smoke. They collided in the thick black smoke before Eugene Fields continued to feel his way forward to the right scanner window, Thomas Adachi's position. Finding the position empty, Fields snapped on an auxiliary parachute and exited through the open scanner window.

Unfortunately while fighting the fire, Sgt fields became disconnected from the aircraft's intercom and does not know if Major Brooks issued a bail out command to the crew.

As the aircraft descended in a shallow straight line, the intensity of the fire increased and burning pieces of the C130 were seen falling away from the gunship by their fighter escort. About five to ten seconds prior to aircraft contacting the ground, a large unidentified object, suspected to be the left wing, was seen to separate from it.

The aircraft exploded upon impact just east of a primary road and 2 miles northwest of a "Y" shaped road junction in densely forested mountains under total enemy control approximately 31 miles northwest of Chavane, 25 miles due west of the Laos/South Vietnamese border and 59 miles west-northwest of Kham Duc, South Vietnam. From the time of initial emergency call to impact, the aircraft remained airborne for roughly 90 seconds and covered almost 31/2 miles.

After the gunship was hit, killer 1 reported seeing no crewmen exiting the crippled aircraft and no parachutes deploying, while Killer 2 reports the crew was bailing out. Just before killer 1 departed the area to refuel from an airborne tanker, its crew heard one emergency beeper signal from the ground. Killer 2 established voice contact with a crewman who identified himself as Adlib 12, Donald Fisher's identifier. He reported that he had burns on his face and hands but was otherwise ok. Killer 2 left to refuel shortly thereafter and turned command control over to Covey 246, the Forward Air controller (FAC), who continued to monitor the situation.

The following morning search and rescue (SAR) operations commenced shortly after daybreak. Adlib 11, Eugene Fields, was rescued shortly thereafter and treated for minor injuries. SAR efforts continued throughout the day for the rest of the crew. Because of the heavy enemy activity in the area, no ground search was possible. At the time formal search efforts were terminated, William Brooks, Ronnie Hensley, Robert Ireland, Stephen Harris, Donald Lint, Thomas Adachi, Charlie Davis, Donald Fisher, John Towle and Charles Rowley were declared Missing in Action.

From here the story becomes more confused based on information provided to different families by the US government during the years before the war ended.

1. One family was told that a ground team had been inserted into the crash site (date unknown) and had recovered the partial remains of one of the crew, but no identity was ever provided to any of them. Likewise, those reported remains were not identified nor returned to any of the families of men of this aircraft.
2. Another family was advised that photographs of the crash site existed, but none were provided to them or to any of the other families.
3. The Fisher family was shown a photograph of a captive airman with burns on his hands. Each family member identified that photo as Donald Fisher. The Air Force assumed at the time of the incident that Eugene Fields had incorrectly identified himself to Killer 2 and dismissed the report of Adlib 12 being the one in contact. Major Fisher's son located Fields 18 years later and questioned him about that communication. Fields told him that he, Fields, had not been in radio contact with anyone before being rescued, therefore it was not him, proving that at least one other man safely reached the ground.

4. Charles Rowley's family was informed of a classified intelligence report indicating that 8 of the 10 crew members had been captured, and tortured to death for their "crimes" yet no such report has been provided to them, or to any other families of the crew.

In 1987 life Magazine published a recently taken photograph of an american POW that had been smuggled out of Laos with the caption: "The mysterious Mr. Roly" Col. Rowley 's family had that photograph analyzed and compared to precapture family photos by noted forensic experts. The results prove the man in the 1987 photo is Charles Rowley.

In 1993 the USG conducted a joint US-LAOS crash site excavation of the C130. To no one's surprise they found a few teeth and bone chips, and heralded this achievement as the successful recovery of all 10 crewmen.

They also claim to have found a dogtag belonging to Col. Rowley. Since his dogtags were returned to his family with the rest of his personal possessions shortly after being shot down, the USG's discovery of his dogtags at the the crash site is both miraculous and suspicious. The families of all the men aboard this aircraft requested that an independent examination be made, including DNA testing. The Pentagon's reply is very revealing, specific and sinister: "They cannot release remains to family members unless the remains can be positively identified." Each family requested the remains that were attributed to their man be turned over to them. Each request was denied.

The crew of the Adlib 11 flight are among nearly 600 Americans who disappeared in Laos. many of these men were know to be alive on the ground. The Laotians admitted holding "tens of tens" of American POWS, 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.

On Nov. 8, 1995, a group burial of the unidentifiable co-mingled remains of the C130A spectre gunship crew was held at Arlington National Cemetery. While the USG considers these men to be "remains returned" the families do not. They ask that Americans continue to wear their men's POW/MIA bracelets and help them fight for an honorable accounting of them.