

K-WG-56-HI
Oct-Dec 1970
Vol. 1

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FIREBIRD 05 SEARCH AND RECOVERY

(C) A successful rescue was accomplished for Firebird 05 Alpha and Bravo when they bailed out following battle damage sustained from ground fire in North Viet Nam. At approximately 0300L, 21 November 1970, a F-105 (Firebird 05) reported eminent flameout and indicated he would steer toward Lima Site 98, set up max glide and bailout over Lima Site 98 or passing through 12,000 feet altitude if he were unable to reach the site. At 0330L the crew ejected and the aircraft crashed east of Lima Site 98.¹³⁰

(C) Alleycat (ABCCC) contacted Candlestick 31 (a C-123) performing a routine flare mission in support of FAG Wildcat located 13 NM north of Lima Site 98) and designated him On-Scene Commander for the SAR. Candlestick 31 established radio contact with the downed crew and located their exact position by flashing the aircraft lights and directing Alpha and Bravo to indicate when the aircraft was directly overhead. It was determined that Alpha was secured in a tree with no injuries while Bravo, with possible neck injuries, was on the ground and searching for a hiding place.¹³¹

(C) A Mig Cap flight, Falcon 03, 04, and 05 arrived immediately and were directed to hold high. Alleycat reported two SAR helicopters, Apple 04 and 05 were inbound. When Apple flight arrived Candlestick directed them to the exact position of the downed crew and Apple 04, with concurrence of the downed crew, decided to attempt a night rescue. Apple flight aborted their attempt due to the hazardous terrain conditions, insufficient light from the flares and possible

130. SARCO Report for Firebird 05 Alpha and Bravo, 6 Dec 70, Document #10.
131. Statement, Aircraft Commander, Candlestick 31, Document #11.

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ground fire reported by Candlestick.¹³²

(C) In the meantime Sandy 01, 02, 03, 04 and Nail 26 arrived on scene and set up an orbit. Candlestick 31 reported, (Return to Base), for fuel and Sandy 01 took charge as On-Scene Commander. It was established through Alleycat that a friendly ground team had sighted the downed crew but had not attempted contact for fear of startling them or provoking gunfire. It was then decided to hold off for a first light pick up because: (1) Both crewmembers were well and being watched by friendlies; (2) Terrain conditions, rugged mountains with tops over 9,000 feet, were in no way conducive to night operations; (3) The flares did not provide an abundance of light while the failure of a flare could provide an extreme hazard to the entire operation and (4) The immediate area appeared to be completely permissive to SAR operations while the weather was clear and forecast to remain so. In addition, none of the On-Scene Commanders had been briefed for a night pick up and Candlestick 31 had no previous experience in SAR operations.¹³³

(C) Sandy 01 established contact with Firebird 05 Alpha and Bravo, informed them of the decision and directed them to come up on radio at daybreak when they observed Sandy Low Lead descending to a lower altitude. The operation proceeded as planned, Bravo was picked up by Apple 04 and shortly thereafter Alpha was rescued by Apple 05. The operation was completed at 0630L and egress was accomplished without incident.¹³⁴

132. Ibid.

133. SARCO Report for Firebird 05 Alpha and Bravo, 6 Dec 70, Document #10.

134. Ibid.

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23 NOV 1970

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Classified by 2133A/67
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS.
DECLASSIFIED ON 31 Dec 78

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DOWNGRADED TO
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IAW EX. ORDER 11 52

SECRET JOPREP JIFFY/OL-B, 3ARRGP/RESCUE 061/202018Z NOV 1970.

1. RESCUE OPENING/CLOSING REPORT - 20 NOVEMBER 1970
2. MISSION NUMBER - B-3-043-20 NOVEMBER 70
3. SITUATION: DOWNED AIRCREW MEMBERS

A. DESCRIPTION OF SAR OBJECTIVE:

- (1) F-105/624436/CAMOUFLAGED/FIREBIRD 05
 (2) FLIGHT PLAN - TACTICAL
 (3) PILOT - MAJOR DONALD W. KILGUS
 ADDRESS - 388TFW KORAT RTAFB, THAILAND
 (4) POB - 2
 (5) WEATHER IN AREA - NOT A FACTOR
 (6) SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT - USAF STANDARD
 (7) LAST KNOWN POSITIONS - 1909N 103-08E AND 1909N 103-06E

B. ACTIONS TAKEN:

- (1) CONTROLLING AGENCY - OL-B, 3ARRGP
(2) OL-B, 3ARRGP NOTIFIED OF SAR INCIDENT AT 20/2018Z
NOVEMBER 1970 BY BRIGHAM CONTROL.
(3) FOLLOWING SAR FORCES ALERTED:

MESSAGE NOTIFICATION

Individual
Contacted: *Sgt. Chapman*

Local Time
and Date: *0040Z*

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- (A) 40 ARRS AT 20/2025Z
(B) 39 ARRS AT 20/2025Z
(C) 56 SOW AT 20/2025Z
(4) TIME SAR FORCES LAUNCHED:

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- (A) 1 HC 130P, 39ARRS DIVERTED AT 20/2020Z
(B) 1 HC 130P, 39 ARRS LAUNCHED AT 20/2210Z
(C) 2 HH-53'S, 40ARRS DIVERTED AT 20/2025Z
(D) 2 HH-53'S, 40ARRS LAUNCHED AT 20/2050Z
(E) 4 A-1E'S, 56 SOW LAUNCHED AT 20/2050Z

2 1/2

C. PERSONNEL INFO:

- (1) 2 PERSONS INVOLVED, 2 SAVED
(2) SAR OBJECTIVES LOCATED BY CANDLESTICK 31: ALPHA AT 20/2039Z COORDINATES 1909N 103-06E. BRAVO AT 20/2051Z COORDINATES 1909N 103-08E.
(3) 40 ARRS (2) HH-53 MADE RECOVERIES BY FOREST PENETRATOR.
(4) SURVIVORS TAKEN TO UDORN RTAFB, THAILAND.

D. FLYING ACTIVITY

- (1) 39 ARRS - 2 SORTIES FOR 9.9 HRS
(2) 40 ARRS - 4 SORTIES FOR 14.6 HRS
(3) 56 SOW - 4 SORTIES FOR 14.0 HRS

9.9
14.6
24.5

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E. SAVES DATA:

- (1) RCC'S MAKING SAVE - LTCOL ROYAL BROWN, 37ARRS
MAJOR MURPHY
(2) PERSONS SAVED - MAJOR DONALD W. KILGUS
CAPTAIN CLARENCE T. LOWRY

- (A) SERVICE - USAF
NATIONALITY - USA
(B) 2 COMBAT SAVES
(C) 2 AIRCREW MEMBERS

G. SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS:

FIREBIRD 05 WAS DOWNED IN A HOSTILE AREA AT 20/2018Z. CANDLESTICK 31 MADE CONTACT WITH BOTH SURVIVORS. SAR FORCES WERE DIVERTED/LAUNCHED FOR A 20/2253Z FIRST LIGHT EFFORT. AT 20/2308Z SANDY 01, THE ON SCENE COMMANDER, DETERMINED THAT THAT AREA WAS SAFE FOR A PICK UP. JG 54 PICKED UP THE BRAVO MAN AT 20/2320Z. JG 61 PICKED UP THE ALPHA MAN AT 20/2328Z. BOTH SURVIVORS WERE REPORTED IN GOOD CONDITION AND WERE TAKEN TO UDORN RTAFB THAILAND.

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IMMEDIATE

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1350	13 Nov 1970	RF-4C	NVN	Wright D. I.	Maj	KIA		Bancroft W. W. Jr	1Lt	KIA
1351	20 Nov 1970	F-105G	LAOS	Kilgus D. W.	Maj	Rescued	USAF HH53	Lowry C. T.	Capt	Rescued
1352	23 Nov 1970	OV-10A	CMB	Brooks D. L.	Maj	Rescued	u Helo	Bellefeuille G. B.	SSgt	Rescued
1353	1 Dec 1970	F-4E	LAOS	Robinson J. R.	Capt	Rescued		Boulet D. A. II	1Lt	Rescued
1354	12 Dec 1970	O-2A	LAOS	Duckett T. A.	1Lt	MIA		Skinner O. G.	Maj	MIA
1355	12 Dec 1970	B-57	LAOS	u	u	Rescued		u	u	Rescued
1356	12 Dec 1970	F-100D	CMB	u	u	Rescued				
1357	19 Dec 1970	F-4D	LAOS	Rotz D. H.	Capt	Rescued		Louis W. K.	1Lt	Rescued
1358	21 Dec 1970	RF-4C	LAOS	Nullis M. M.	1Lt	Rescued	USAF Helo	Rush A. F.	Maj	Rescued
1359	24 Dec 1970	A-1E	LAOS	Lundy A. L.	Maj	KIA				
1360	28 Dec 1970	OV-10A	LAOS	Smith J. L.	Capt	KIA		u	Sgt	KIA
1361	2 Jan 1971	F-4E	LAOS	Wier H. D.	Capt	Rescued	USAF Helo	Brown R. K.	1Lt	Rescued
1362	3 Jan 1971	F-4E	LAOS	Ayres J. H.	Maj	KIA		Stratton C. W.	Capt	MIA
1363	17 Jan 1971	F-4E	Sea	Mirrer R. H.	Maj	KIA		Siderius J. D.	Maj	Rescued
1364	20 Jan 1971	F-4E	SVN	Warner D. A.	Capt	Rescued	USAF	Kiefer H. E.	Maj	Rescued
1365	27 Jan 1971	F-100D	CMB	Neil J. M.	Capt	KIA				
1366	28 Jan 1971	OV-10A	CMB	Lineberger H. B.	Maj	MIA				
1367	31 Jan 1971	O-2A	SVN	Hoenninger	1Lt	Rescued	Army Helo	Platt P. R.	1Lt	Rescued
1368	1 Feb 1971	A-37	CMB	Harris J. C.	1Lt	KIA				
1369	3 Feb 1971	F-4D	LAOS	Standerwick R. L.	LtCol	MIA		Gotner N. A.	Maj	POW (retur
1370	11 Feb 1971	F-4D	SVN	Ford M. W. Jr	Capt	Rescued	Army	Eisenbeisz R. A.	1Lt	KIA
1371	16 Feb 1971	F-4D	LAOS	Cox W. R.	LtCol	Rescued	USAF	Allen W. C.	Maj	Rescued
1372	16 Feb 1971	F-4D	LAOS	Pattillo R. N.	Maj	MIA		Hoskins C. L.	Capt	KIA
1373	19 Feb 1971	O-2A	LAOS	Hull J. L.	1Lt	KIA		Fernandez W. M.	Sgt	KIA
1374	20 Feb 1971	O-1F	SVN	Peacock P.	1Lt	Rescued	USAF Helo			
1375	25 Feb 1971	F-4D	SVN	Somers R. K.	Maj	KIA		Talley J. S.	Capt	Rescued
1376	25 Feb 1971	F-4D	LAOS	Hedditch	Capt	Rescued	USAF Helo	McLaughlin	1Lt	Rescued