

STATEMENT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

NAIL 11 NAME: LT BURKE MISSION/NR: 1502

I was orbiting around coordinates UG033664 awaiting ordance, around 0615Z I began hearing "MAYDAY" calls from Raven 23, addressed to Raven 26. Raven 23 reported his position as the same as Raven 26's gun position. I asked Raven 26 where that was and proceeded immediately to 5NM West of the Roadrunner Lake.

Raven 23 then reported he was down East of Route 74 and could hear my OV-10. He instructed me to turn back to the Northeast, at which time Raven 20 began talking to Raven 23 trying to calm him down.

Raven 23 then said he was in his aircraft, wounded and the "bad guys are all around, shooting at me". I could hear gunfire during this transmission, either that of Raven 23 or of the enemy. Both Raven 20 and myself visually acquired the downed O-1 just after the last transmission. As we neared the scene, Raven 23 transmitted "O Christ, I've been hit five times and for all practical purposes am dead". There was a very distinct change in the voice this time as compared to his first few transmissions. A couple of seconds later his beeper came up for about 5 seconds and then stopped. No further voice or beeper was heard.

Raven 20 had asked 23 earlier where his back-seater was. Raven 23 replied he had not seen him since they took hits. No contact whatsoever was established with the back-seater. Raven 20 reported to me just after the radio went dead, that he saw a gomer run away from the plane into the woods West of the downed plane. This was the area Raven 23 had reported most of the hostile fire coming from.

Raven 20 then reported to King that he believed Raven 23 had either been snatched-up by the gomers as a prisoner or was dead. He did not speculate about Raven 23's back seater.

I believe the O-1 is located at UG128582. My back-seater Lt Felsenthal plotted this point as we circled overhead for roughly 3 minutes. Weather in the area was 4/8 coverage, bases at 6500 MSL and Tops 7500 MSL. The time period involved was roughly 0615-0645Z.

S T A T E M E N T

At 1400 on 29 December 1970, Sandy 03 - 06 were given the launch order for a downed crewmember (Raven 23). Sandy 03 and 04 were airborne at 1410 local and proceeded direct to the survivor's general area. Enroute King briefed Sandy 03 and 04 that the objective was on the 030/30/108 and that Raven 20 was on scene commander. They also briefed that the objective had not been up on the radio for approximately 40 minutes. Sandy 03 and 04 arrived on scene at 1500L and Raven 20 was putting in strikes. At 1510L, Raven 20 showed Sandy 03 and 04 the objective and objective aircraft. The aircraft had skidded to a halt heading about 160°, the right door was partially torn off, the left door was open, the undercarriage was partially torn away and the wings had bent forward and developed. The objective was lying face down about 15 meters to the rear of the aircraft and was partially hidden by a group of four small trees. Raven 20 then briefed that the last time he had voice contact with Raven 23A was about 1+30 minutes before and that Raven 23A's last transmission was "I have been wounded five times and I don't think I have much longer." Raven 20 then said that a group of hostile forces had been up to the aircraft and that he chased them off with his aircraft. This happened immediately after Raven 23A's last transmission. Raven 20 then stated that Raven 23A was next seen lying under the tree and had not come up on the radio since that time. Raven 20 then stated that Raven 23B was an 'X Ray' and was not seen nor heard. He did not wear a survival vest. At 1515 Sandy 03 then assumed on scene command and started to make passes on the area of the objective in an effort to get a better look at the objective and the objective aircraft. Two passes were made at 1500' and 500' respectively. Sandy 03 was not taking ground fire and needed to get closer to the objective to get a determination of his condition. On the next pass which varied from tree tops to 100', Sandy 03 began to pickup ground fire from two locations. One NE of the objectives position and one SE of the position. Both were about 150 - 200 meters from the objective and both were ZPU or 12.7. Sandy 03 continued his original objective and looked into the aircraft. It did not have any personnel inside. The objective was lying face down in the short grass. His lower torso was twisted, he had gray clothing on, was not wearing a vest, looked as if his back was wet (darker color than other clothing), his arms were twisted in an odd position and the left side of his head and face was dark as if it were bloody. As Sandy 03 continued his pass another gun came up about 100 meters to the North West of the objective. Sandy 03 then jinked to the left to expose the underside of the aircraft to the ground fire. He then felt five rounds hit the aircraft. Two in the right wing and three in the fuselage. Sandy 03 then asked 04 if he could see anything coming off the aircraft and he stated that fuel was streaming out. Sandy 03 then tried to electrically jettison the centerline, but was unable. He then jettisoned it manually. As Sandy 03 was climbing up to a higher altitude his engine backfired and began to run rough and all external stores were jettisoned. Sandy 03 started to RTB. While enroute he briefed all the SAR forces on what he saw and the location of the ground fire.

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RAVEN 23 NO SEARCH AND RECOVERY

(C) Raven 23's last transmission was "I am hit at least five times, for all practical purposes I am dead". Raven 23, an O-1, Captain Park G. Bunker 330-34-0537 probably received ground fire while attempting to take a closer look at a tank. He was accompanied by a Lao backseater (FAR Officer) whose fate was not determined. The aircraft crash landed about four kilometers northwest of Kwang Khai (coordinates UG 127 583) at approximately 1315L, 30 December 1970.¹⁶⁹

(C) Rescue efforts by Air America, Jolly Greens and members of the 1st Special Operations Squadron were unsuccessful. Raven 20 and Nail 11, who were flying in the area, heard Raven 23's May Day transmission and immediately responded to the call. They observed the scene of the crash and reported that the pilot was still in the aircraft and was surrounded by the enemy.¹⁷⁰

(C) Eight A-1's were generated for the effort. Six were launched as Sandies and two as smoke aircraft. Sandy 03/04 launched at 1410 and proceeded to the scene while Sandy 05/06 launched at 1415 and escorted Jolly Green 53/55 to Lima Site 98. Sandy 07/08 launched at 1515 and held high since there was no sign of life at the crash site.¹⁷¹

(C) Sandy 03, piloted by Major Hugh Place, arrived on the scene at 1500L and reported to the On-Scene Commander (Raven 20) who was continuing to strike enemy positions in the area. Major Place reported the aircraft had skidded to a halt heading about 160 degrees, the

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169. Msg, Embassy Vientiane to Sec of State Wash D. C. 210917Z
Dec 70, (S) "Casualty Report" (U). Document #21. 076103Z
170. Ibid. 1H-95-DM-X
171. SARCO Report for Raven 23, 2 Jan 71, Document #18.

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right door was partially torn off, the left door was open, the undercarriage was partially torn away and the wings had bent forward. The objective was lying face down about 15 meters to the rear of the aircraft and was partially hidden by a group of four small trees. There had been no radio voice contact with Raven 23 for about one hour and 30 minutes. According to Major Place, Raven 20 reported that the backseater was an "X-Ray" who did not wear survival vest and he had not been seen or heard.¹⁷²

(C) At 1515L Sandy 03 took charge as On-Scene Commander and made low passes to observe the objective and the aircraft. Major Place reported Raven 23 was lying face down in short grass without his survival vest. His lower torso was twisted and his arms were twisted in an odd position. His upper body and face appeared to be covered with blood. Sandy 03 made several low passes and during one which varied from tree tops to 100 feet he jindled left to expose the underside of the aircraft to ground fire. Five rounds hit the aircraft and Major Place started a climb to depart the area. He jettisoned everything and with a rough running engine, he returned to Nakhon Phanom without further incident. Enroute he briefed the remaining SAR forces on what he had seen and encountered.¹⁷³

(C) The Raven FAC's continued to put strikes in throughout the hours of day light. The heavy ground fire which included 12.7 and 14.5 AA fire was never silenced and all SAR forces returned to base at night fall. Captain Bunker was presumed dead and the fate of the Lao backseater was unknown.¹⁷⁴

172. Ibid.
173. Ibid.
174. Ibid.

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K-WG-56-HI
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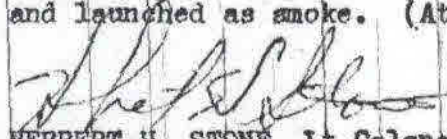
FROM: 1SOS(Lt Col Stone/2116)

2 January 1971

SUBJECT: SARCO Report for Raven 23

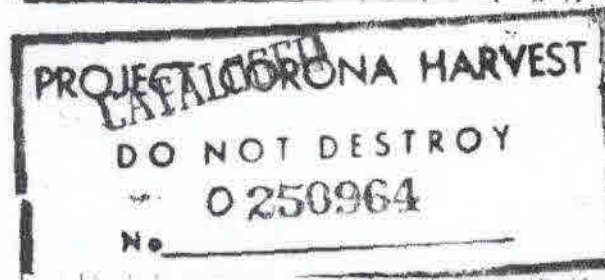
TO: DO

1. An unsuccessful rescue was attempted on 30 December 1970 for Raven 23. The aircraft, an Ol, went down at approximately 1315 at UG128582. This report covers those activities relative to the rescue attempt. All times are Thailand Local.
2. Raven 23 called Mayday at approximately 1315, stating that he had been hit by ground fire. Nail 11 and Raven 20 were in the area and proceeded to the crash scene. Raven 23 reported that he was still in the aircraft and that the bad guys were all around him. He also stated that he had been hit five times and for all practical purposes he was dead. Beeper came on a few seconds later and that was the last transmission that was made from the crash site. (Atch 1)
3. Raven 23 had an indigenous person in his back seat. It is not known whether he was wearing a survival vest or not. No radio transmission was made by him, but Raven 20 reported an indigenous person running from the aircraft with a green hat on. Raven 23's back seater is reported to have been wearing a green hat.
4. Sandy 03 - 04 launched at 1410 and proceeded to the crash scene. Sandy 05 - 06 launched at 1415 and escorted Jolly Green 55 and 53 to Lima site 98.
5. Sandy 03 and 04 arrived on scene at 1500 and were briefed by Raven 20. At 1510 Sandy 03 assumed command. Sandy 03 made low passes over the objectives position and saw him under a tree face down. Sandy 03 was hit by ground fire and returned to base. (Atch 2) Sandy 07 and 08 were launched at 1545 and proceeded to the scene. Since there was no beeper or indication of life at the crash site, the Sandys were held high in a safe area. The Raven FAC's in the area continued to put in strikes until dark. The heavy ground fire was never silenced and all SAR forces returned to base at dark.
6. Six A-1's were generated and launched as Sandy. Two were generated and launched as smoke. (Atch 3)


HERBERT H. STONE, Lt Colonel, USAF
SARCO

3 Atch

1. Statement - Lt Burke
2. Statement - Maj Place
3. Flying Schedule



FLYING SCHEDULE

<u>PILOT</u>		<u>SANDY</u>		<u>ATD</u>	<u>ATA</u>
PLACE		03		0710	2.04
ANDERSON		04		0710	2.04
REEVES		05		0715	4.30
TAYLOR		06		0715	4.30
DONALDSON		07		0845	3.10
WARREN		08		0845	3.10
ROCK	LOTTO	41		0830	3.10
ROUGH	LOTTO	42		0830	3.10

atcl 3'