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25+26 FEB 71

COBRA 23 ALPHA AND BRAVO SEARCH AND RECOVERY

(C) Search and Recovery forces encountered intense resistance and marginal weather during a two day effort which resulted in the successful rescue of Cobra 23 Alpha and Bravo. The two F-4 crewmembers ejected in hostile territory after sustaining battle damage. They landed at 260/43 from Tacan Channel 103 (Quang Tri Air Base, RVN) near Delta 12, a major interdiction point on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. The incident occurred in mid afternoon and the weather was marginal. By the time SAR forces started to arrive the weather had degenerated to the extent that the objective area was completely obscured by a rain squall. Bad weather, approaching darkness and intense enemy resistance prevented a pick up that day and caused a great deal of apprehension among the survivors who were well aware of their precarious position. When the downed crewmembers were informed that they would have to wait for a first light pick up, Cobra 23 Alpha replied "We won't be here in the morning".¹⁵⁴

(C) Hammer 62, a FAC (Forward Air Controller) was working a strike just south of the objective position and diverted at approximately 1530L to provide assistance. When he arrived there were already five other Hammer FAC's on scene as well as about 20 helicopters. Hammer 62 located both survivors' parachutes and pointed them out to Sandy 09 who assumed On-Scene Command when he

154. SARCO Report for Cobra 23 Alpha and Bravo, Document #8.

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arrived at 1600L. During low passes to determine the exact position of the survivors, both aircraft received intense ground fire from small arms, automatic weapons, anti-aircraft equipment and a tank parked on a hill about 300 meters to the west. During one pass Sandy 09 received battle damage and departed the area. After landing he determined that the aircraft had numerous holes shot in it and one hole in the right elevator was the size of a football.¹⁵⁵

(C) Sandy 06 took charge as On-Scene Commander and by this time the weather had deteriorated making it virtually impossible to continue the search. Successive passes met with intense resistance. Poor visibility and approaching darkness made it impossible to pin point Cobra 23 Alpha and Bravo's positions. The survivors were given bed down instructions and efforts for that day terminated. Meanwhile at TeePee (Command and Control Center at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB) plans were being formulated for the major effort that would commence at first light of the next morning.¹⁵⁶

(C) The next morning, 26 February 1971, Sandy 03/04 departed for the scene at 0440L. Upon arrival Sandy 03 took charge as On-Scene Commander and relieved Hammer 40, a night FAC who had been monitoring the survivors' positions. Sandy 03 was able to locate the exact position of Cobra 23 Bravo but Alpha's area was obscured by very low clouds. Several sources of enemy resistance

155. Ibid.

156. Ibid.

were located on ridge lines in the area. A FAC, Hammer 48, directed strikes by fast movers (jet aircraft) on these positions in an effort to sterilize the area. The weather remained marginal and Sandy 03/04 had to depart for low fuel prior to pin pointing both positions. ¹⁵⁷

(C) Sandy 05 took over as On-Scene Commander and soon the weather improved enough to permit positive identification of the downed crewmembers' positions. During each pass over the survivors the aircraft were subjected to enemy ground fire. Sandy 05/06 expended all of their ordnance on enemy positions prior to turning On-Scene Command over to Sandy 07 at approximately 0900L. ¹⁵⁸

(C) Sandy 07/08 continued the sterilization process by locating resistance, marking it and striking enemy positions. The A-1's struck at positions near the survivors and four F-4's were called in to strike a ridge line which supported many gun emplacements. The F-4's dropped napalm and the top of the entire ridge line went up in flames. No resistance was encountered from this area during the remainder of the effort. As the resistance diminished, Sandy 07 formulated a pick up plan which would take place within an hour. The Jolly Green helicopters would come in from the southwest over a friendly position about three miles from the survivors. Smoke would be used to mask off suspected enemy positions and obscure the survivors. The IP (Initial Point) and

157. Ibid.

158. Ibid.

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objective points would be marked and Sandy 09/10 would escort the low Jolly Green in for the pick up and back out the reverse route. 159

(C) The pick up was executed and the effort went as planned. Hammer 54 controlled smoke placement which was provided by F-4 aircraft. Three A-1's escorted the Jolly Green helicopter and sterilized his path. Cobra 23 Alpha and Bravo expended their signal flares on command and were easily located. The survivors were picked up very quickly and the Jolly Green exited over the planned route and departed for DaNang Air Base, RVN. The Search and Recovery for Cobra 23 Alpha and Bravo was successfully completed and the effort was terminated at 1437L. 160

Jolly Greens 64 and 73 were alerted on 19 February that Covey 275 had crashed west of Channel 77. Both helicopters proceeded to the scene where they were joined by the SAR force. No chutes were observed and no beeper could be heard. The cockpit seemed to be intact so it was decided that a pararescueman should be lowered to determine if there were survivors. This was accomplished and both Jolly Greens returned to Da Nang Afd, RVN.

On 25 February 71, Cobra 23 was shot down at 263 degrees for 43 miles off Channel 103. Jolly Greens 66 and 72 were scrambled from Da Nang and were placed in a holding point west of Channel 103. Jolly Greens 65 and 71 were later scrambled to the area. Weather and night fall prevented a pickup attempt so all SAR forces were returned to base. A first light effort was planned for the next morning. All SAR forces were reassembled in the area the next morning but the rescue was delayed until hostile forces could be eliminated. At 1230 Local the area was ready and the pickup of both crewmembers was successful. The low bird, Jolly Green 65 flown by Captain Bakke did take several hits from small arms fire during the rescue.

The last mission for February occurred on the 27th. The pilot of a Navy aircraft, call sign Chipple 414, bailed out feet wet off of Channel 69. Jolly Greens 72 and 71 scrambled to the scene and a successful water pickup was accomplished. Heavy fog in the area made this recovery very difficult.

SECRET

DATE: 25 Feb 71

27 Feb 71

MISSION NUMBER: A-3-009-25 Feb 71

AIRCRAFT DESIGNATION: King 26 (COBRA 23)

LOCATION: 260/43/CH 103

NOTES: None, Mission Suspended until 26 Feb 71

(S) KING 26, flying east orbit, received May Day call from Cobra 24 at 0722Z. He stated that Cobra 23 alpha and bravo had ejected at 260/43/CH 103 and that he saw two good chutes. At 0728Z, Hammer 04 was appointed On-Scene-Commander (OSC) and stated he had contact with both survivors who reported they were okay. They were down approximately 300-600 meters SE of firebase 31 which was then being overrun by the enemy and numerous TIC actions were in progress. During the following 30 minutes Hammer 04 attempted to organize the SAR for the crewmembers while he and other FAC's were directing air strikes in the immediate vicinity in support of the friendly ground troops. Jolly Greens (4), Sandys (6) were requested at 0733Z; smoke and CBU upload were directed plus MIG CAP, IRONHAND with border clearance. At 0810Z, Hammer 40 assumed OSC replacing Hammer 04 who was bingo fuel. Weather in the SAR area was rapidly deteriorating and low clouds hampered the rescue effort for the survivors who were reported to be approximately 1000' on the east side of a hill. Hammer 40 worked some fast movers with snake and nape in an attempt to suppress heavy ground fire from small arms, automatic weapons and several enemy tanks that were closing in on the firebase. Numerous air bursts were also observed from suspected AAA, both 23MM and 37MM. At 0900Z, Sandys 09 and 10 were on scene receiving a briefing from Hammer 40 when Sandy 10 took a hit and decided to RTB Channel 103 escorted by Hammer 62. King 27 was airborne at 0906Z enroute to the scene to act as backup A/C and standby for possible A/R. At 0910Z, Sandy 10 returned to the scene after determining that his damage was not too severe. At 0915Z a TPQ alert in the vicinity of the SAR scene was broadcast which was shut OFF through Queen. At 0930Z Sandy 10 again took ground fire, dropped his fuel tank and was forced to RTB Channel 77; Sandy 06 was then directed to the scene as a replacement. As of 0945Z the weather was looking grim and ground fire/air bursts were still heavy, however the survivors reported everything okay. At 0957Z, Hammer 62 was hit with no serious problems. At 1004Z Sandy 09 declared the area to be unworkable and the survivors were advised to stay well hidden. At 1026Z, Sandy 09 received multiple hits in his stub and centerline tanks and was streaming fuel; he

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GROUP-4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals,
Declassified after 12 years.

... 17. ... appointed ...
 ... in the ... were advised to ...
 ... heavy artillery warning that we were ...
 ... the heavy arty dropping ...
 ... and he was returning to the ...
 ... The weather began to improve slightly about this time, how-
 ... and the survivors ...
 ... decided to suspend the mission ...
 ... until the ... and all ... forces were released to R/B. The sur-
 ... advised to shut down and conserve their radios. Hammer ...
 ... to the area all night and attempt to ...
 ... including tank, while also har-
 ... ground troops. All On-scene-Commanders and Ham-
 ... involved did an outstanding job in the attempted rescue ...
 ... numerous T/F's, unfavorable ...
 ... extremely heavy ground fire. That no other aircraft ...
 ... the flying ability and ...

King 26 Crewmembers

AC/ACC Major Fleck
 CP L/C Spilseth
 CP L/C Foster
 1B Capt Seeger
 H Major McGill
 FO MGt Kochler
 FB MGt Tempa
 LM Sgt Carroll

King 27 Crewmembers

AC Capt Kennard
 CP Lt Johnson
 N Capt Smith
 RC MGt Jones, G.
 FB Tgt Turner
 LM Sgt Rivera

Resources Utilized

King 26
 King 27
 Jolly Green 65, 66, 67, 72
 Sandy 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10
 Hobo 32, 33
 F/Cs: Hammer 04, 40, 62, 23, 25, 54
 Fast Movers: Gunfighter 24, 31, 02
 Army Resources: Grips 25, 26 (flights of Snicks & Cobras)

Resources available but not used

Alcon 81, 83
 Cobra 01, 09
 Purgus Flight
 Stormy 02
 Wolf 07
 Kingneck 214

JOHN J. FLECK, Major, USAF
 Aircraft Commander/Airborne Mission Commander

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GROUP-4

Declassified in 3 years

17 Feb 71

2 Mar 71

179 1st BATTAL 1st AIRBORNE DIVISION 17 Feb 71

179 1st BATTAL 1st AIRBORNE DIVISION 17 Feb 71

179 1st BATTAL 1st AIRBORNE DIVISION 17 Feb 71

LOCATION: 16-42-15N 106-25-30E

REMARKS: 2 Combat

(S) On 25 Feb 71 at 1100G the Airborne Mission Commander (AMC) of King 23 was notified by 1st Co. Wells (Jack) that his crew was assigned a first light mission for the following day. The SAR briefing was to be held at 1100G at 25/0000G. Objective of the SAR were two survivors of a F4E, Call Sign Cobra 23, who had ejected from their aircraft at 25/0714Z after receiving enemy groundfire. The position of the survivors was given as 203/43/103, UTM-ED 519467, GEMREF 16-42-15N 106-25-30E. This position plotted out to a position 100 meters from a dirt road paralleling a small stream, 4 1/2 NM north of Route 9. The area was extremely hostile with heavy troops in contact (TIC). A friendly firebase 1000 meters north of the survivors had been overrun by the enemy during the initial SAR effort on the 25th. The enemy in the area were supported by tanks, large calibre machineguns and 20MM AAA. Darkness fell before a pickup could be made. At that time Cobra 23 Alpha and Bravo were instructed to dig in for the night and be prepared for a first light effort the following morning. The survivors were briefed that aircraft would be over their position during the entire night. They were not to use their survival radios, thus conserving the batteries, unless it was absolutely necessary.

At 25/2122Z King 21 was airborne from 30G enroute to the SAR area. King 21 arrived at its orbit position of 250/5-40/103 at 25/2155Z. Radio contact was established with Hammer 77 (FAC) and Candle 22 (Flareship) who were over the SAR scene. They reported that they had not had contact with Cobra 23 Alpha or Bravo. Hammer 77 reported that there were many enemy troops in a valley north of LZ 31 about 2 kilometers from the survivors. He reported visual sighting of an enemy tank with a 40mm Gun, 51 calibre machine guns and extensive small arms fire. Weather in the area was reported by Hammer 77 as 3,000 MSL broken 6 miles visibility with some patches of ground fog. Handy 03, 04 arrived in the area and after a thorough

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Declassified at 3 year interval
Declassified at 12 years

King 21 was advised by Queen that King 21 was On Stand-
by at 25/2200Z. Sandy 03 then attempted contact with
the survivors on 25/2200Z, with no success. At 25/2245Z Sandy 03
requested King 21 attempt contact with the survivors. After sev-
eral attempts King 21 established radio contact with Cobra 23 Bravo
at 25/2250Z and with Alpha at 25/2253Z. Both survivors reported
that they were in good condition, but there was extensive enemy
movement in their area. King 21 advised both survivors that Sandy
03 was over the area and that the entire SAR effort had commenced.
Shortly thereafter Sandy 03 established contact with the survivors.

About this time King 21 was advised by Queen that King 21 would be
the tanker aircraft. Also, JG 67 was enroute to CH 103 to drop off
a crew and would then RTB CH 77 and stand alert. King 21 requested
that JG 67 remain at CH 103 and JG 65 be launched from CH 77 to CH
103. This would put the helicopters only 43 miles from the SAR and
greatly expedite the recovery when the area was permissive. Queen
concurred and JG 65 was launched to CH 103 at 25/2235Z. At 25/2300Z
it was decided that JG 71 and 72 would go to CH 103 and stand alert
and JG 65 and 67 would orbit at the holding point, which was 265/25/
103. The helicopters were joined by Sandy 05 and 06 at the holding
point.

The weather in the area was good, but fog over the survivors pre-
vented Sandy 03 from pinpointing the survivors. During this period
airstrikes were put in by the Hammer PAC's to suppress enemy move-
ment in the area. The fog started lifting at 26/0200 and the OSC
began pinpointing the survivors. Ground fire was seen on each pass.
During the entire SAR effort Arc Light strikes were fraggged in as
close as 4NM from the survivors. Through close coordination with
all SAR Forces the SAR effort was able to continue. Enemy trucks
were seen coming down the road from the north by several area PAC.
These were attacked by air strikes.

After numerous airstrikes in the SAR area the OSC, Sandy 07 con-
sidered the area permissive for a SAR attempt. At 26/0403Z King 21
directed that JG 71 and 72 be launched as backup for JG 65 and 67.
At 26/0430Z Navy A-4 aircraft put in smoke to block the SAR objec-
tive from the enemy. Both survivors reported they were in fine
shape. Phase Alpha was begun at 26/0440Z. JG 65 picked up Cobra
23 Alpha at 26/0450Z and Cobra 23 Bravo at 26/0453Z. During the
pickup JG 65 received 13 hits from enemy ground fire. At 26/0455Z
JG 65 was clear of the area and all forces were directed to RTB by
King 21.

King 21 Crewmembers

AC/413 Major Delorenzo
 PW 1 Lt Kallender
 CP Major Regale
 N Capt Dugan
 RC Sgt Wisniewski
 FE MSgt Hartman
 FE TSgt Crozier
 LP SSgt Hoover

King 26 Crewmembers

AC Capt Frank
 PW Major Felmsley
 N Capt Thomas
 RC SSgt Swinson
 FE MSgt Wallace
 FE TSgt Lamb
 LM MSgt Patterson
 LM SSgt Barnett
 LM SSgt Gartland

On Scene Commanders

Sandy 03 (2926Z-0125Z)
 Sandy 05 (0135Z-0210Z)

Sandy 07 (0210Z-0455Z)

SAR Resources

King 21, 26
 Sandy 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, and 12 (A-1)

Smoke Aircraft

Ringneck 951 Flight (A-4)

Ringneck 953 Flight (A-4)

VAC Aircraft

Wolf 03 (F-4)

Hammer 40, 43, 54, 77, and 84 (OV-10)

Strike Aircraft (Expendable Ordnance)

Gunfighter Flights 01, 03, 34, 42 (F-4)

Cobra Flights 03, 25 (F-4)

Ringneck 207 Flight (A-4)

Did Not Expend Ordnance

Gunfighter Flights 40, 44, 93 (F-4)

Hockey Flight (F-4)

Chippy Flights 400, 412 (A-7)

Jerry 303 Flight (A-7)

Ringneck 201 Flight (A-4)

Jazz Flight (F-4)

Banyon Flight (F-4)

Other Forces

Candle 22 (Flareship)

Robert A. Delorenzo

ROBERT A. DELORENZO, Major, USAF
 Aircraft Commander/Airborne Mission Commander



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COBRA 23 - 25 Feb 71

HAMMER 54
Capt Peter J. Ruppert

At approximately 1530 I was working a strike just south of Delta 38 when I heard a mayday call on guard saying that Cobra 23 had been hit and was jumping out. The call also included a DME and Radial which was the 260/40 of CH 103. I at the time was on the 275/40 of 103.

I finished the airstrike and proceeded to the 260/40 to see if I could be of assistance. Upon arrival I saw many airplanes in the area so I climbed to 10,500 feet to stay out of the way. There were five additional OV 10's all Hammer Facs, at least I presumed, them to be, about 20 choppers or so and I do not know how many fast movers. Hammer 229 was working a TIC at the time as well as the SAR and I asked if I could be of help. He told me yes since he was out of rockets. I went down and took over for him. I saw both survivors chutes and plotted their position. Hammer 04 was made on-scene commander by King and I continued working the TIC. Hammer 04 RTB'd due to low fuel and H-40 relieved him. I was relieved by H-223. After landing, H-04 and myself went back out to the scene at 6:15 and H-62 along with Sandy 05 and 06 were talking to the survivor. H-62 did not know the exact location so H-04 and myself went into the area and showed Sandy's location. We were then informed by Hillsboro to clear the area to the east since they had heavy artillery going in and could not shut it off. The Sandys and we then held east for approximately 10-15 minutes. By the time we were cleared back in, it was 1900 hours. The Sandys and us made repeated passes over survivors position* but took heavy AAA which came from a tank that sat approximately 300 meters west of the survivors on top of the hill. Both survivors were talking and informed us of a lot of ground fire everytime a Sandy made a pass. The survivors called for CHOP and TIGGY but Sandy lead told them that it was getting too late and that they should hide themselves, not to worry, that there would be a Fac over them all night, to conserve their radios and use it only if absolutely necessary and that we (Sandys) would be back at first light to pick them up. Cobra 23A's reply was that "we would not be here in the morning". The Sandys RTB'd and H-04 and myself stayed on station until H-79 (the first night Fac) came out and we showed him both survivors' positions and also where the tank was that was shooting at us. H-79 then took over on scene and we (04 & 54) RTB'd. *To Show Sandy's Position Of Survivors.

26 Feb

The first Hammer Fac to launch was H-40 and he arrived on station at 0600. He informed us that the weather was bad and that he had not made contact with the survivors. At approximately 0800 H-40 informed us that they had reestablished contact with both A & B but the weather was still too bad to work the SAR. At 0900 H-40 called us and told us to launch the next Fac for the SAR. I, H-54, launched and arrived on station at approximately 1000am. H-40 RTB'd and Sandy 05 & 06 were on station.

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08 relieved 05 & 06 and 07 became on-scene commander. The weather began to clear up quite rapidly and we had about a 8-10,000' overcast. Sandys 07 & 08 proceeded to talk to the survivor and made repeated passes over their approximate position. I asked Sandy 07 if he knew where both survivors were and he said that he knew where Alpha was but not quite sure where Bravo was. I then pointed Bravo's chute out to 07 which he had not seen before. (Oh yes, Alpha had pulled his chute in about a half an hour after he ejected on the 25th and it could not be seen anymore) When the Sandys made the passes the survivors informed them that they were taking ground fire and the approximate position where it came from. The Sandys then began to sterilize the area by making repeated passes. Sandy 07 then showed me where he wanted some airstrikes put and for the next 2 1/2 hours I put airstrikes in around the survivors while the Sandys were working in close proximity of the survivors with their own ordnance. At approximately 1230 Sandy 09 & 10 checked in with the choppers and at approximately 1315 it was decided to go ahead with the pickup. Sandy 07 told me where to lay down the smoke and I then worked Ringneck 957 flight and laid the smoke down. The Sandys (4 of them) then really worked the immediate area over and the chopper (65) was then brought in from the IP. Two other Sandys were laying down CBU on both sides of the choppers route and Cobra 23A was picked up first. After Bravo was picked up the chopper exited the area by means of the same route that he entered. The whole pickup took about 15 minutes. It was a well planned and well executed mission.

PETER J. RUPPERT, Capt, USAF
HAMMER 54

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FLYING SCHEDULE

25 Feb 71

<u>PILOT</u>	<u>CALL SIGN</u>	<u>T/D</u>	<u>ATE</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
	SANDY			
CAPT MADDEN	01		GA	UBON
MAJ DE FELICE	02		GA	UBON
1LT WILSON	03		GA	NKP - Held By Jack
LT/COL BRUSHE	04		GA	NKP - Held By Jack
LT/COL ADAMS	05	1500	3.8	
1LT TATEISHI	06	1500	3.8	On-Scene-Commander
CAPT SMITH	07	1430	5.0	FROM BIEN HOA
1LT ROUSSEL	08	1430	5.1	FROM BIEN HOA
CAPT KEETER	09	1430	3.8	On-Scene-Commander
1LT CARMICHAEL	10	1450	2.7	
	ROBO			
CAPT LORENZEN	32	1405	5.5	
MAJ DONALDSON				
COL WALSH	33	1405	5.5	
	SMOKE			
LT/COL STONE	41		GA	
1LT LYON	42		GA	
MAJ WOLCOTT	43		GA	
MAJ ROBERTS, J.	44		GA	

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FLYING SCHEDULE

26 Feb 71

<u>PILOT</u>	<u>CALL SIGN</u>	<u>T/D</u>	<u>ATE</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
	SANDY			
CAPT MADDEN	01	1115	2.7	FROM UBON
MAJ DE FELICE	02	1115	2.7	FROM UBON
LT/COL STONE	03	0438	4.5	On-Scene-Commander
1LT MATHERS	04	0438	4.7	
CAPT ROBERTS, P.	05	0447	5.3	On-Scene-Commander
1LT LYON	06	0447	5.3	
CAPT RENTZ	07	0800	4.7	On-Scene-Commander
CAPT PHILIPS	08	0800	4.7	
1LT WILSON	09	0820	4.9	
COL ROUGH	10	0820	3.2	AIR ABORT
LT/COL DUNWOODY	11	0955	3.4	
CAPT TAYLOR	12			AIR GROUND
MAJ WOLCOTT	13		GA	
1LT KILAND	14		GA	
MAJ PLACE	15		GA	
CAPT STEWART	16		GA	
CAPT RENTZ	07	1445	1.0	RTN FROM QUANG TRI

	<u>SMOKE</u>	
MAJ BELT	41	GA
LT/COL MURRAY	42	GA
1LT TIPTON	43	GA
CAPT MAMIYA	44	GA

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FROM: 1 SOS (CC)

9 Mar 71

SUBJECT: SARCO Report for Cobra A & B

TO: DO

1. A successful rescue was conducted on 26 Feb 71 for two crewmembers of Cobra 23. The aircraft, an F4D out of Phu Cat AB, RVN, went down at approximately 1415L 25 Feb 71, on the 260° radial for 43NM of Channel 103. This report covers those activities relating to the Sandys during the rescue effort. All times are Thailand local.
2. At 1430L, 25 Feb 1971, A SAR was declared for Cobra 23. (Atch 1) The aircraft was downed by enemy gunfire in the vicinity of D-12, two parachutes had been observed and radio contact had been made with both survivors. The area was extremely hostile with active firefights and continuous airstrikes being put in. Hammer FACs were controlling all activity in the area. (Atch 2)
3. At the time the SAR was declared Jack scrambled Sandy's 09/10 from Da Nang, 05/06 from NKP and directed that Sandy's 03/04 were to remain on ground alert at NKP. 05/06 were to be escorts for Jolly Greens 66/72 which were scrambled from Da Nang. Sandy's 07/08 launched from Bien Hoa on their normal redeploy and were diverted to the SAR along with Hobo's 32/33 who were RTB with ordnance due to deteriorating weather in their target area. These were the forces participating in the first day effort. (Atch 3)
4. Sandy 09/10 arrived on scene at approximately 1600L and after being briefed by Hammer 40, 09 assumed on-scene command. (Atch 4) The weather in the objective area was marginal with heavy rain showers and intermittent low ceilings. Several attempts were made to penetrate the weather in an effort to pinpoint the survivors. Heavy ground fire was observed on all attempts and about the time the general area of the survivors was determined, Sandy 10 was hit by groundfire and exited the area to check damage. The inclement weather prevented full utilization of fast mover strikes however, Hammer 62 put in any he could. Sandy 10 had determined the damage was restricted to his external tanks, which he jettisoned, so he returned to the scene. At approximately 1620L, King ordered all SAR forces out of the area due to a TPQ alert called on guard. At 1635 Sandy 10 had to RTB due to low fuel so Sandy 06 was directed to the scene as low wing. (Atch 5) The effort to pinpoint the survivors continued and as they were located Sandy 09 took several hits in the underside of his aircraft and was streaming fuel from both external tanks. He jettisoned his load and RTB'd Channel 77 at approximately 1730. Later inspection revealed in excess of 10 entry holes in the aircraft with one the size of a football in the right elevator. Sandy 06 assumed on-scene command and 05 was called down to join him. Hobo's 32 and 33 had arrived after being released from their original mission and were assigned to escort the Jollies. (Atch 6) At this time there was approximately

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COBRA 23 ALPHA & BRAVO SAR

CALL SIGN: Sandy 5/6

Crew Members: Captain Roberts/Lieutenant Lyon

DATE: 26 Feb 71

FIRST LIGHT EFFORT: Launch Time — 0445 Local

Captain Rentz was originally scheduled as Sandy 05, however, he encountered AC generator problems in the arming area and Captain Roberts moved up to the Sandy 05 position. Mission was helicopter escort on the 265/25/103. Arrived on station at 0555 Local. Jolly Green 65 (Low) and 67 (High) arrived at the rendezvous at approximately 0630 Local. At approximately 0830 Local. Sandy 03 (On-Scene-Commander) reached bingo and was forced to RTB. We proceeded into the area and received a thorough briefing on the survivors' situation and best known locations. The weather was rapidly improving and so we decided to pinpoint the survivors and lay down some ordnance in their immediate area to silence the small arms and automatic weapons that they reported each time we flew over the area.

Starting with Alpha, he reported he was in excellent condition and the radio sounded very strong, so we made criss-cross low altitude passes over his area until we were positive about the position within about 15 meters. As it turns out later, the position I briefed to Captain Rentz was approximately 25 meters southeast of the actual position he was picked up at. Each time I passed over his position he called ground fire from a position over a small hill and directly west of his position.

Moving over to Bravo's position only two low altitude passes were required to pinpoint his position which turned out during the pick-up to be exact. He stated that light/sporadic gun fire was coming from somewhere north of his position, but I was not able to locate this reaction.

Sandy 07/08 (Captain Rentz) arrived in the area at this time and I began to brief him on the positions of the friendly and enemy forces and the survivors' positions as known at that time. I marked the known area of the gunfire west of Alpha's position and passed the On-Scene-Command to Captain Rentz at about 0905.

I suggested that he use our ordnance to try to quell the gunfire in the area around Alpha and he agreed. Lt Lyon and I delivered CBU-25, Rockets, and 20mm in that area before beginning to RTB.

RTB to NKP at 1005 Local — No further incident.

Philip A. Roberts, Captain, USAF
SANDY 05

Atch 8

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SAR FOR COBRA 23 A & B

STATEMENT OF SANDY 05/06/ADAMS/TATEISHI

25 Feb 71

At 1430 L on the 25 Feb 71, Sandy 5 & 6 were preparing to launch on their normal J-orbit when they received a call from King that an aircraft had gone down. They were instructed to rendezvous at 265/32/103. The Sandy's tookoff and were given further information to cross the route structure where the least possible chance of ground fire existed. Despite thunderstorms enroute they managed to rendezvous with the Jolly Green helicopters and provided escort for them. Sandy's 9 & 10 were on scene and on one pass Sandy 10 took ground fire and was going to return to base. King advised Sandy 6 to take over for Sandy 10 and continue the search.

Sandy 6 arrived on scene and replaced Sandy 10. The weather over the survivors made it virtually impossible for a search to start so Sandy 9 & 6 orbited south of the survivors approximate position. During this time, several probes of the survivors area were attempted when it seemed as though the weather was breaking. Air bursts were sighted periodically and ground fire was evident from the hits Sandy 10 took and the tracers coming up from the West of the survivors.

The weather broke with ceiling of 4000' msl and Sandy 9 was about to show Sandy 6 the approximate positions of the survivors when Sandy 9 reported taking ground fire. He withdrew to the South and Sandy 6 looked him over. Sandy 9 was streaming fuel from his stub tank from 2 places and from his centerline fuel tank from 3 spots. He also had holes in the wing and Sandy 6 advised Sandy 9 of his aircraft status. Sandy 9 reported to King and told King that he was going to return to base.

Sandy 6 was placed on scene commander and asked for Sandy 5 to join him. When Sandy 5 arrived on scene a FAC who knew where the survivors were attempted to show Sandy 5 & 6 where they were. On the initial pass intensive ground fire was seen and because the location of the survivors were unknown, no ordnance was expended. A scheduled arc lite was about to commence and King advised the Sandy and FAC pilots to head East.

After the strike was over Sandy's 5&6 returned to the area and took intensive ground fire from small arms, automatic weapons, AAA and a tank, West of the survivors. The Sandy's then determined that it was getting too dark for a pickup attempt and ground fire made it unfeasible. Sandy 6 then proceeded to 'bed down' the survivors and instructed them to hide well and conserve their batteries.

Sandy 6 instructed King to have the FAC'S who were on scene to be there at first light and also have some type of aircraft to be over head of the survivors if they wanted to talk.

Sandy 5&6 then returned to base through thunderstorms and landed at NKP. Upon aircraft post flight Sandy 6 had received a small arms hole in the right flap.

CHRIS M. TATEISHI, 1st Lt, USAF
Sandy 06

Atch 5

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COBRA 23 Alpha & Bravo

STATEMENT OF SANDY 07/08 RENTZ/PHILLIPS

26 Feb 1971

Sandy 07 & 08 were scrambled to replace Sandy 03 & 04 as the low and high Sandy respectively. However, by the time we arrived over the survivors position, Sandy 03 & 04 had RTB'd to channel 89 because of low fuel and King had turned the on scene command over to Sandy 05 & 06 (Roberts P./Lyon). Sandy 05 gave me a detailed briefing on the positions of the many friendlies in the general area, the areas where he had received ground fire, and then the position of the two survivors. Sandy 05 turned over on scene command to me at about 0900 or 0915 NKP time. King informed me that Hammer 54, a Fac, was holding in the area and was available for use at anytime. Sandy 09 & 10 arrived to orbit with the Jollies. I had learned from my briefing that both the survivors were in good condition and had all the standard survival equipment. My first task was to expend Sandy 05 & 06 in the area of known ground fire around Alpha's position. My second task was to try and pinpoint both Alpha's & Bravo's position. Already knowing their approximate positions I started with Alpha. I made several low passes around and finally directly over his position. Even though I was having difficulty reading Alpha's transmission my wingman and I were able to communicate with him and mark his position by using prominent terrain features. When I made every low pass over Alpha I asked him to listen for any ground fire that may come up. On almost every pass especially when I passed over him and flew to the northwest of his position he told me he could hear what he thought to be small arms or automatic type fire. And on one of my pull-offs over the top of the ridge to the Northwest I saw flashes from what appeared to me to be a 12.7. I told Alpha to stand-by and keep his head down and that I was going to mark the ground fire with a WP rocket and if he could see the smoke to tell me if that was the area from which the ground fire was coming. Alpha's view was blocked by a small rise of ground and he could not see the smoke but he had heard the rocket hit and said it was in the right area. This area was about 75 to 150 meters Northwest of Alpha. The 12.7 was on top of the ridge that overlooked Alpha's position 300 meters away. I knew now that the whole top of the ridge above Alpha & Bravo's position would have to be sterilized. But first I wanted to pinpoint Bravo's position and check out the area in his immediate vicinity. I repeated the trolling process over Bravo who was located about 150-200 meters North Northeast of Alpha. Alpha was about $\frac{1}{4}$ way up the hill and Bravo about $\frac{1}{2}$ way up. Bravo reported negative ground fire near his location at least nothing within hearing distance. Let me say now that I saw Bravo's parachute hanging in a tree on one of my low passes and used that to help keep myself oriented to Bravo's position which was about 75 to 100 meters South of his chute down the hill.

I asked King what was available in the form of strike aircraft and King said there were two flights (Cobra?) of F-4 on station with wall to wall Napalm. I made contact with Hammer 54 who was orbiting overhead and had been watching me and asked him to direct the fast movers to expend their napalm along the top of the ridge. I put down three WP rockets to mark the area I wanted hit. Hammer 54 had a tally on Bravo's chute.

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17 Feb 9

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So we agreed to restrict the run-in heading from the Northwest to Southwest which paralleled the top of the ridge line. While Hammer 54 briefed the fast movers, and my wingman and I made two passes delivering rockets and CBU-25 in the area 75 to 100 meters Northwest of Alpha. Then we held to the South while the fast movers delivered their ordinance. All of their ordinance was directly on target and the whole top of the ridge line was in flame. After the smoke cleared I made many passes along the ridge but received no ground fire and couldn't find any sign of the enemy. I also made several more passes over Alpha and he reported no ground fire.

At this time I realized that we would be ready for a pickup possibly within an hour so I began formulating a plan. There were friendly forces in the area in the form of tanks, trucks and personnel massed in three areas about 2 to 3 miles West and Southwest of the survivors. When the time came for the pickup I decided I would hold the high Jolly (J667) over the friendlies and use this as an IP for the low Jolly. I planned to pickup Alpha first and then go directly to Bravo and pick him up and exit on a reverse of the entry route. I then flew back and forth along the route and had both survivors and my wingman listening and looking for ground fire. It was at this time that my wingman called that either B-40 rockets or some type of mortar fire was fired at me from along a road about 300 meters Southeast of Alpha's position.

I wanted to conserve the Sandies ordinance to protect the helicopter during the pickup so I again contacted Hammer 54 to have him work fast movers in the area. Since my wingman had seen the area I had him mark the position for the Fac. At this point a slight delay was experienced. My wingman thinking he had WP rockets in his LAU 9's tried to mark with them. After making two unsuccessful attempts to mark with rockets I had him drop a WP bomb. We found out later that the aircraft had been loaded incorrectly with heap rockets in his LAU 59's. (Now with the target marked the Fac went to work. This time snake and Napalm was used by A-4's (?) that did an outstanding job. The whole area was in flames).

+ + +

My wingman and I thought since some 23mm which had come up the day before may be waiting to get shot at the Jolly we would smoke off that area during the pickup. At this time I ordered four smoke birds. King, a few minutes later informed me that 4 fast movers smoke were on the way. I asked him what kind of smoke they carried and King replied that it was what I needed. I also planned to run a smoke screen Northeast and Northwest above Bravo's position to mark off the top of the ridge. The wind direction was such that neither of these screens would obscure the survivors.

I then brought Sandy 09, the escort Sandy, down to the area and left Sandy 10 with the helicopter. I pointed out the friendly position and told Sandy 09 I planned to hold the high Jolly at about 8500 MSL over them and also use a point just East of the friendlies as an IP for the low Jolly that I would mark just before the pickup started. I then showed him the position of both survivors and the areas that we had been receiving ground fire. Then with him in loose trail I flew along the proposed entry route of the helicopter to Alpha's position then to Bravo's position.

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I told him that the exit route would be the reverse of the entry. Then I sent Sandy 09 to the area of the friendlies and told him to troll for ground fire that may come up on the Jolly that was to hold there and then if no fire was received to go back to the Jollies holding point 265/25/103 and brief the Jollies on the proposed plan. At this time Sandy 10 RTB'd because of low fuel. His center-line wouldn't feed. I also realized that I may run out of fuel before a pickup could be made so I ordered two more Sandies. I told my wingman to figure out a pressure altitude and temperature and give that information to King and have them pass it on to the Jollies. And next I started to brief Hammer 54 where I wanted the smoke Southeast of Alpha. I planned to use my CBU-22 to mark off the ridge line to the North. (Sandy 11 arrived to take Sandy 10's place).

Then I told Sandy 09 & 11 to bring the Jolly to the forward holding point over the friendlies. I contacted the survivors and told them to get out a flare and get ready to ignite it when told to and to be sure and use the safety loop on the jungle penetrator. Both crewmen acknowledged. I then told Alpha that I was going to put a dud WP bomb near his position. I used this as a too far smoke for Alpha and also as the turning point to get to Bravo. I also put another dud WP bomb down as a too far point for Bravo. This bomb broke up and spread smoke making a perfect screen to protect the JG from any bad guys on the ridge that may have survived. So I did not use my CI -22 to mark off the ridge.

Everything was ready. All the briefings had been done on VHF. Everyone was brought over the 2828 channel D. Guard channel had been too cluttered with the other aircraft. I told Hammer 54 to send in the fast mover smoke (?) on the prebrief starting point and heading. The smoke was layed. I told my wingman to get in trail with me and we layed CBU-25 along the entry route of the Jolly. I put in two WP rockets in the last position of ground fire around Alpha and told Sandy 08 to hammer that area. I climbed up over the scene, the smoke to the Southeast was blocking any big gun fire from that direction. I told Sandy 09 & 11 to bring in the Jolly and lay down ordnance continuously around him. The Jolly started his run. I told Alpha to pop his smoke. The Jolly had no trouble seeing it and moved right into the hover. Sandy 08 joined 09 & 11 in a daisy change around the JG delivering ordnance at random making sure to stay away from Bravo's position. I held high directing traffic. With the Alpha man on board I directed JG to the direction of Bravo. The JG also had the smoke I had put down to aim for. I had Bravo man pop his smoke and directed JG to his position. The Jolly moved right into the hover and picked up Bravo. The Sandies continued delivering ordnance on the exit. I directed the JG out the exit route and instructed him to climb in a left climbing turn that positioned him over the friendlies. I was extremely low on fuel because of having to use high power setting most of the time. I turned command over to Sandy 08 and immediately headed for Cn 103 with Hammer 54 leading the way. (There are several suggestions I have in order to make the SAR force and procedures more efficient. First, since for the next 3 to 4 months we are going to have to use E-4 G models for SARs, I recommend that 2 more WP bombs be added to the present E model Sandy load.

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Secondly, all Sandys should be made familiar with all the different types of fast mover smoke. Thirdly, I recommend that the use of the mirror be emphasized in survival training. This is the only way to pinpoint the survivors position without exposing his position to the enemy. I was unable to see the crewmen on the ground and I did not know exactly where they were until they popped their smoke. Fourthly, I recommend that the Bingo time for an opposed SAR where the Sandy low is maneuvering at low altitude and at Max performance be changed to 3 or 3½ hours depending on his distance from channel 89.

Levy M. Rentz

LEVY M. RENTZ, Capt, USAF
SANDY 07

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SAR FOR COBRA 23A & B

STATEMENT OF SANDY 09/KEETER

25 FEB 1971

Sandy 09 & 10 were scrambled at 1455 local from Da Nang to proceed to the 268/33/ 103 where we would hold with Jolly's 66 and 72. We were told enroute that an F4 was down at 260/43 103 and there were two survivors on the ground in good shape. Hammer 40 was on-scene commander and was working fast movers around the survivors when we arrived at the orbit point at 1555. After holding with the Jolly's for 10 minutes we were instructed by King to proceed to the 260/43 for a briefing from Hammer 40 who was running low on fuel, and we arrived on scene at 1600.

The weather in the target area had become steadily worse and was totally obscured by a rain squall when we arrived. We made several attempts at penetrating the valley where they were located and finally spotted the general vicinity of the survivors. Sandy 10 was hit in the centerline drop tank on one of these passes and proceeded out of the area under the escort of Nail 62. Nail 40 and I continued to make passes over the area while taking with the survivors in an attempt at pinpointing their locations. We were drawing heavy AAA fire on all passes from ZPU, 12.5, 23mm, 37mm and AK 47 Hand-held weapons. Due to the heavy fire it was impossible to remain very long in the immediate area, and a definite pinpoint on their location was not made. We were unable, due to the weather, to work fast-mover aircraft around the survivors.

I was given on-scene command at 1615 and had Hammer 62 with me to act as PAC for any fast-mover support we were able to use and because he was familiar with the area of the survivors. The weather began to improve about 1715 and I again went back into the area to determine the location of the ground fire and to see if it would be possible to plan a pickup before darkness that evening. I had Sandy 06 as my wingman on this pass as Sandy 10 RTB'd for Bingo fuel at 1645 due to the loss of his centerline tank. As I was pointing out the survivors location to Sandy 06 I felt three sharp thumps under the airplane and observed an airburst directly in front of the aircraft. I then requested Sandy 06 to look me over as we exited the area toward the friendlies. He noticed fuel streaming from the centerline and stub tanks, and I was forced to punch them off, leaving me bingo fuel. I advised King of this and turned on-scene command to Sandy 06. I recovered at DaNang, arriving there around 1840.

JACK E. KEETER, Captain, USAF
Sandy 09

Atch 4-

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STATEMENT

SAR Report/Cobra 23 A/B
26 Feb 71/Sandy 09/Lt Wilson

On this date at 0820 local, Sandy 9 and 10 launched on a SAR effort for two downed crewmen of an F-4, Cobra 23 A/B.

Immediately after take off Sandy 9 and 10 contacted King, passed on ETA and bingo time and proceeded to the designated holding point to meet and escort Jolly Green 65 and 67. Upon arrival, at approx. 0915 local, Sandy 10 could not get his centerline fuel tank to feed. A revised bingo time was then passed to King. Jolly 65 and 67 arrived at the holding point at approx. 0930 having just refueled.

At approx. 1015 local, Sandy 07 requested Sandy 09 to come down into the area for a briefing on the survivor's location. Sandy 10 remained with Jolly 65 and 67. During the briefing Sandy 07 pinpointed the survivors, pointed out friendly positions, and discussed the pick-up tactics. Sandy 09 trolled for ground fire upon request from Sandy 07 and then returned to brief the Jollys.

At approx. 1030 local Sandy 10 was forced to RTB due to his fuel state. Sandy 09 remained with the Jollys and at approx. 1100 local was joined by Sandy 11. The escorts and Jollys continued to hold until Sandy 07 requested them to proceed to the SAR area and hold over the friendly positions.

About 1140 local Sandy 07 called for the pick-up execution. Jolly 67 remained high as Jolly 65 was led in by Sandy 09. With Sandy 11 covering his tail, Cobra 23A popped his smoke and Sandys 8,9, and 11 joined in a daisy chain around him covering the Jolly and laying down ordnance. With Alfa on board, Jolly 65 proceeded to Bravos position and picked him up in like fashion. The Jolly was then egressed from the area escorted by all the Sandys.

Sandy 09 and 11 escorted the Jollys to a point just west of Ch. 103 and were then released to RTB Ch 89.

ROBERT L. WILSON, 1Lt, USAF
Sandy 09

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FEBRUARY 1971				NAME RANK		
				SSN		
DATE	CREW	JG	SAV #	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	TYPE SAV
6	DREIBELBIS	65	601	NGOC, TRAN-VAN ^{V/LT}	14-185N	5 COMBAT
	BAKKE		602	BOI, HOANG ^{2/LT}	108.00E	
	ROGERS		603	NHIEP DANG ^{2/LT}	UH1H	
	BAILEY		604	BAT MAI VAN, ST	SOUTH V.N.	
	MUEELCHI		605	HÀO ĐỒ-HỮU, CPT.	MSN II A-3-004	
26	BAKKE	65	607	HEDDRICH, DAVID R.	106.26E	2 COMBAT
	WEIMER		608	CAPT	1642 N.	
	McKINNEY			~~XXXXXXXXXX~~	COBRA 23	
	NARDI			37 TFW	F-4	
	CURTIS			McLAUGHLIN, THOMAS M. ^{V/LT}		
				~~XXXXXXXXXX~~		
				37 TFW		
27	WAMMER	72	609	McCarthy, PAUL F. ~~LT~~	017/17/69	1 COMBAT
	FRIED			CMDR.	CHIPPY 44	
	ROGERS			"KITTY HAWK"	(A-7)	
	SCHWARTZ					
	KIRK					
09	BEATTIE	77	606	NAME UNKN	60N 50N	MED EVA
	KOMICH			V.N. WOMAN	ISLAND	
	BURCHFIELD			PREGNANT &		
	SMITH			HEMORRAGING	MSN #	
	HANCOCK				03-003 FEB	

MONTHLY TOTAL 9

25 FEB 71

2045	MAJ MURDO ON DUTY	JFM
2130	STATUS TO QUEEN	JFM
2330	3 rd GP SUPPLY CALLED. WANTS SUPPLY STATUS ON NORM AIRCRAFT (2400/4952) MAINTENANCE CONTROL NOTIFIED.	JFM
2335	RF - AR/WAEN PYRV	JFM
2400	STATUS TO JOKER	JFM
0238	GUNFIGHTER 44 F4 AC HAS BEEN SHOT NAV TRYING TO BRING AIRCRAFT IN. POSITION 150/34/103 FEET WEST.	J
0247	JG 66 : 72 AIRBORNE	J
0250	GUNFIGHTER 44 HEADED TOWARD CHANNEL 87	J
0257	QUEEN ADVISED THAT JOLLY GREEN 66 : 72 PROCEEDING TO PHU CAT TO BACK UP PEDROS ON PICKUP	JFM
0305	PILOT AND NAV PUNCHED OUT 065/13/87	JFM
0315	PILOT AND NAV PICKED UP BY LUCKY-15 - PROCEEDING TO PHU CAT	JFM
0320	REPORT LUCKY-15 HAS ALPHA MAN AND BULLDOG-21 HAS BRAVO MAN	JFM
0417	JG 65 FCF	J
0418	JG 73 TNG	J
0618	JG 65 Down LOGGED 21	J
0635	JG 72 Down LOGGED 40	J
0710	JG 66 Down LOGGED 4.3	J
0735	JOLLY'S ^{ALPHA} ALERTED	J
0725	~~Reported missing~~ ^{ALPHA} Down 2 GOOD CNOTES POSITION 260/43/103 CORBA 24 th REPORTED OF HOSTILE AREA	J
0745	JG 66 : 72 AIRBORNE	J
0813	JG 73 Down LOGGED	J
0835	BL: BH ALERTED JG 65 : 67	J
0843	JG 65 : 67 AIRBORNE	J

25 Feb (cont)

0848 TWO SURVIVORS IN A TRENCH SURROUNDED BY CHARLIE, FAST
MOVING WORKING AREA.

0905 SANDY 10 TOOK A HIT RTB CH 103

0910 SANDY 10 OK RETURNING TO SCENE

0928 SANDY'S 9:10 HOLDING WEST OF AREA WEATHER HAS DETERIORATED
SO THEY CANNOT LOCATE SURVIVORS

0932 HAMMER 62 HAS TALKED TO BOTH SURVIVORS BOTH STILL OK.

0941 SANDY 10 RTB CH 77 TOOK HIT IN FUEL TANK, LOST ALL FUEL

0942 SANDY 09-DSC - ONE HR TO BINGO

0942 SANDY'S 07-08 ON SCENE

0947 WX BAD AREA UNWORKABLE

0956 SANDY 09 TALKING TO SURVIVORS TRY TO PIN PT POSITION

1005 SANDY 09 SAYS CONSIDERABLE GROUND FIRE FROM ACROSS ROAD
ALSO AIR BURST (23 OR 37) CANNOT PINPOINT GROUND DUE TO
WX SUGGEST PUTTING SURVIVORS TO BED - EACH HAS TWO
RADIOS & BATTERIES.

1000 SURVIVORS REPORT THEY ARE WELL HIDDEN NO CLOSE
MOVEMENT.

1030 SANDY 09 RTB CH 77 TOOK HIT IN FUEL TANK.

1040 ARTILLERY WARNING 268/49/103

1045 WEATHER LIFTING, GOING TO MAKE ATTEMPT.

1048 HAMMER 62 SPOTS ARTILLERY CLEAR OF SURVIVORS.

1050 JG 77 / 785 LOGGED 4.0-7 LANDINGS BING HOO

1058 JG 66 & 72 RTB CH 77. JG 66 HAS CONTROL PROBLEMS.

1100 SANDY 06 PUTTING SURVIVORS TO BED.

1103 JG 65 & 67 CLEARED TO RTB

1107 JG 66 ETA 1155

1200 JG 67 DOWN LOGGED -

1300 JG 66 LOCATED AT CH 103 HFCS OUT DS

1355 JG 65 DOWN DJ

1400 JG 67 DOWN DS

1500 MISSION # 15 A3 009 25 FB 15

26 FEB 71 (CONT'D)

2245 COBRA 24-CONT'D - KING 21, 4 SANDY'S & 2 CANDLESTICKS
IN AREA NO CONTACT WITH SURVIVORS. DRC

2246 JG 65 ABN FOR CH 103 DS

2255 BOTH SURVIVORS ARE UP DS

2257 BRAVO CREWS LAUNCHED DS

2300 SANDY'S - HAVE CONTACT WITH SURVIVORS DS

2308 JG 72 ABN DS

2308 JG 71 NO GO MGB CHIP LIFE DS

2309 JG 72 WILL BE HELD ON THE GROUND
AT CH 103 AS BACK UP FOR ALFA BIRDS DS

2309 SANDY 03 REPORTS SMALL ARMS FIRE IN THE AREA DRC

2343 SANDY 03 THINKS HE HAS A PRETTY GOOD FIX ON
BRAVO MAN'S POSITION DRC

0745 JG 65 & 67 IN THE AREA WITH SANDY 5 & 6

2346 JG 71 AIRBORNE DRC

2357 BRAVO MAN REPORTS ENEMY TROOPS CLOSING IN ON
HIS POSITION DRC

0002 JG 57 & 60 WILL BE ON "N" ORBIT AT 0025 DRC

0010 ACFT 788 READY FOR GROUND RUN AT 0845H DRC

0030 WEATHER MOSTLY CLEAR ALTHOUGH PATCHY GROUND FOG
IS OBSCURING SURVIVORS POSITION AT THIS TIME DRC

0055 JG 66 AIRBORNE 0050 FROM CH 103

0130 SANDY 3 & 4 BINGO - RTB 77 DRC

0140 SANDY 5 OSC - THINKS WEATHER IS OK TO START OPERATIONS DRC

0145 JG 64 ON THE DECK LOGGED 1.0 PS

0210 SANDY 7 OSC - HAS ALPHA & BRAVO LOCATED STARTING
TO WORK THE AREA DRC

0330 RINGNECK FLIGHT WITH SMOKE WILL BE IN THE AREA AT 0335 DRC

0400 KING 21 REQUESTS JG 72 & 71 BE LAUNCHED FROM CH-103
HOLD - 262/35/103 DRC

0410 KING 24 WILL REFUEL AT CH 77 - ETA 0445

COORDINATING MINIMUM GROUND TIME DRC

0440 PHASE ALPHA DRC

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4. Only 20 minutes of light remaining so the remaining time was used to positively pinpoint the survivors and identify areas of enemy gunfire in preparation for the first light effort that was to come. Sandy 06 gave the bed-down instructions to both survivors telling them Hammer PAC's would be overhead all night and they, the survivors, should stay off their radios unless they had something important to say. Regular 1/2 or one hour check-ins would only place a needless drain on the radio batteries as well as increase the possibility of enemy capture. Sandys 06/05 remained overhead until the first night PAC, Hammer 79, arrived at which time they RTB'd channel 09.

5. Upon debriefing the Sandys it was decided that the prime fast mover ordnance for sanitizing the area would be napalm. Enemy ground troops and armor were too close to the survivors for other types. A request was made to Blue Chip for "a wall-to-wall" napalm for the first light effort. Was later informed we probably wouldn't get it as it "hadn't been fragged." Also requested fast mover smoke on alert to augment our own, as Sandy 09 said it would take a lot. Also had to justify to Blue Chip our request for release from next days frag in order to support first light effort. We were directed to maintain the 4 Smokes and generate all other available A-1's as Sandys. The weather forecast for first light was 4000' broken 9000' overcast 5MI GFH. Patchy GF dissipating by 1000 local. All in all much more favorable than the first day. The briefing was coordinated through Jack for 0300 local. King 21 would land at NKP to attend. Four Jolly Greens were to be launched out of Da Nang and four Sandys from NKP. The smoke aircraft were to remain on Ground Alert.

6. The first light briefing was held at 0300 with the Ops team of King 21 present. The first 6 Sandys, 4 Smokes and NKP alert Jollys also attended. King was requested to keep all forces other than Sandy low on 127.7 VHF and 38.8 FM to eliminate the congestion encountered on the first day. In addition 38.9 FM had been very noisy with many Comers transmitting. Also requested King and Queen talk to each other on HF rather than VHF. Intelligence and weather was presented after which the Leads completed their individual briefings.

7. Sandy 03/04 launched at 0438 as the initial lows and Sandy 05/06 were off at 0447 to escort the Da Nang JG's. Sandy 03/04 arrived on scene at approximately 0545, 10 minutes prior to first light. (Atch 7) They received a briefing from Hammer 40 and assumed on-scene command at first light. The weather was marginal with Alpha's position completely obscured. Bravo's position had no sooner been located than it too was obscured by a low overcast. Repeated attempts were made to find a way under the clouds but were futile. During this period Hammer 40 requested ordnance to suppress some HMG fire that had been observed. Hammer 48 directed strikes against these positions. Around 0645 the weather improved enough for Sandy 03 to go down and locate the survivors. (600' overcast) Alpha was located and contacted. During several passes over his position Alpha reported artillery fire each time. Sandy 03/04 remained in the area until approximately 0830 when they RTB'd due fuel. Sandys 05/06 arrived from the JG orbit and 05 assumed on-scene command after being briefed by 03. (Atch 8) The

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weather continued to improve and after pinpointing the survivors positions 05/06 determined what areas gunfire was coming from. Sandys 07/08 arrived approximately 0900 and 07 assumed command after briefing by 05. 05/06 then expended their ordnance in the areas of known gunfire and RTB'd. (Atch 9)

8. Sandy 07/08 continued the process of trolling for gunfire and through coordination with the survivors was able to identify areas that needed sanitizing. Working with Hammer 54, 07 would locate and mark, and 54 would FAC in fast movers with napalm. All ordnance was directly on target and the area immediately around the survivors was clear. Sandy 07 began his planning for a pickup, estimating this would be possible within an hour. An ingress-egress route was picked and trolled. Rocket or mortar fire was sighted along this route and once again Hammer 54 was utilized to direct strikes of Snake and Nape in the area. The delivery was outstanding; and "the whole area was in flames." At this time 07 requested 4 Smoke aircraft to screen off a ridgeline that was thought to conceal a 23mm emplacement. Shortly thereafter King notified 07 that 4 fast mover Smokes were on the way. Sandy 09 was brought down from the JG orbit and briefed on the plan. Sandy 09 then trolled the route from the holding point and when he received no ground fire, returned to the JG's and briefed them. At this time Sandy 10 had to RTB due to a center-line fuel tank that would not feed. He was replaced by Sandy 11 from NKP. The survivors were then briefed on the plan by Sandy 07 and told to have their smoke flares ready to fire. Hammer 54 was briefed where to lay the smoke. Everything was ready. All forces were brought up on survival channel D and the Smoke birds executed. Sandy 07 and 08 marked the IP and too far points and 07 directed 09 and 11 to bring the Jolly down the chute. Alpha was directed to pop his smoke which the Jolly saw immediately. The JG moved into the hover while Sandys 08 and 09 and 11 ran a daisy chain around him suppressing any possible gunfire. Sandy 07 held high over the pickup point directing the operations. Alpha was picked up and the JG directed towards Bravo. Bravo was told to pop his smoke and again the Jolly saw it immediately. The Jolly moved right in and Bravo was picked up in minimum time. The entire force then exited the area with the Sandys laying down ordnance. The JG departed out over friendlies and RTB'd channel 77. Sandy 07 was very low on fuel at this time and had to divert to channel 103. All other Sandys RTB'd channel 89. (Atch 10)

9. Forces generated for the first light effort were Sandys 03 through 12 and Smoke 41 through 44. Sandys 01/02 were scrambled from Ubon but did not reach the scene in time to be utilized. (Atch 11).

10. Some problems experienced on other SAR's repeated themselves here. Sandy lows must be firm in insisting that King hold all assets on frequencies other than those Sandy Low is using. Also King is going to have to stop the practice of communicating with Queen/Jack on VHF. Radio clutter from these two causes were major problems for the Sandys on the first day. When King attends the first light briefing, there isn't any problem.

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In addition Sandy Low must get the survivor up on a different channel other than guard as soon as possible. The interference from area towers, fast-mover flights using it as common for joining-up, MIG warnings, ARC lights, etc. severely hamper communications.

11. On the second day of the SAR, Queen was asked by Jack on several occasions to update the Bingo times of the on-scene Sandys. Due to limited assets and reaction time this is vital. Queen/Jack/King must respond to this request because the fuel time for Sandys can vary from 3-5 hours depending on type of activity. This oversight caused Sandy 03 and 07 to be dangerously low on fuel when recovering at NKP and Quang Tri. In addition the practice of launching maximum assets for a first light effort is not realistic. The on-scene Sandys also recommend that the fast-mover variety of Smoke be used as a last resort only. It was described as looking like that used by skywriters and wholly inadequate for the type of screen needed.

12. The name of the game from here on out is MANAGEMENT of resources. We have gone from 70 odd A-1's on station to an average of 24. Downed American aircrews no longer have 1st priority on airframes as is evidenced in this S/R. The remaining aircraft must be judiciously scheduled until such time as the OSC decides an attempt is feasible. Then, and only then, should maximum forces be committed. The Sandy Low OSC is the only one that is qualified to make this decision, not TEEFEE/JACK/QUEEN/KING/JOKER. Premature utilization of our limited resources could be fatal for the survivors.

WILLIAM J. HAGAN, Lt Colonel, USAF
JRCO

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- 3 Flying Schedule
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- 5 Statement for Sandy 05/06
- 6 Statement for Hammer 32/33
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SARCO LOG

- 1012 Blue Chip pulled 2 - H models (my next Sandy lows) for the CD barrel roll.
- 1015 Maint has 4 acft but Sgt Moore cannot get them to concentrate on on acft that I have to get up for my #2 JG escort. (Sandy 09 replacement)
- 1030 Asked Jack to reconfirm Bingo for 07/08 as 1200L
- 1045 Bingo confirmed as 1130. Asked Jack to launch 01/02 from UBN as Sandy low.
- 1115 Sandy 01/02 launched
- 1151 Cobra 23 Alpha picked up by JG 65
- 1156 Cobra 23 Bravo picked up by JG 65
- 1205 Sandy 09 and 11 escorted JG to CH 103 where they were released - Survivors were recovered into CH 77.
- 1240 Sandy 07 landed at CH 103 because of shortage of fuel. RTB to NKP 1 hr later.
- 1437 SAR Terminated by Queen

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SARGO LOG

26 Feb 1971

0415 Sandy 03 - 1st launch for 1st effort. (Sandy on generator, so Sandy 07 acft and pilot substituted for Sandy 05) - be-

0450 07 (FAC) OSC with King

0525 Hammer 40 (OSC)

0530 King switched plan of checking in on 127.7 and receiving 123.1 for Sandy low and reversed it so we could monitor the Sandy low operation (Queen apparently only has 127.7)

0550 King established first radio contact day with 23/B

0553 King established first radio contact day with 23/A

0600 Jolly Green 65/67 at holding pt 10NM E of survivor.

0610 Sandy 03 OSC, (Stone) weather is D.S. Bingo Time 0200

0730 Req Bingo Time for 03 again (ans 0200)

0756 Launched 07/08 to replace 03/04 and become Sandy low

0815 Sandy 03/04 are calling Bingo now! There will be insufficient time to get 07/08 there so I suggested move JG escorts 05/06 (Roberts) to OSC temporarily.

0820 Launched 09/10 as JG escorts

0830 Sandy 05 OSC, WX improving, will attempt to pinpoint survivors.

0900 Sandy 05 has position of survivors w/I 10 Meters and briefing replacements 07/08.
Radio contact with Stone says trail WX is bad enough for cover so acft can go direct to scene.

0905 Sandy 07 (Rentz) OSC

0925 Sandy 10 (Col Rouch) can't get his C/L tank to feed - new Bingo for him is 1030. Wanted to launch 11/12 immed. to replace 09/10.

0955 Sandy 12 aborts (no radio)

1010 Sandy 10 got his fuel feeding again but then it quit again - asked Jack to get him released and leave 8-9 with Jolly's - need acft - neg from King.

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SARCO LOG

25 Feb 1971

- 1430L - Jack called - SAR declared - A Navy F-4, Potato Masher 665 down at 260/43/103. Two good chutes were observed and radio contact has been established with both survivors. Generate 4 Smokes.
- 1440L - Sandys 05/06 to launch and proceed to area to escort Da Nang Jolly Greens. Sandys 09/10 scrambled from 77.
- 1445L - Hobo 32/33 RTB'd from BR due WX. Divert to SAR effort per JACK/BLUE CHIP.
- 1450L - Advised Jack to check ARC LIGHT Schedule with Blue Chip. Have a couple that could cause trouble.
- 1445L - 3 Huey Cobras in area.
- 1508L - Sandys 07/08 redeploying from Bien Hoa diverting to scene.
- 1512L - Hammer 04 On-Scene-Commander (OSC). Reports tanks in area and moving towards survivors position. Weather 5000' scattered visibility good. Mach mach ZPU, small arms plus tanks reported. Call sign of downed aircraft now reported as Cobra 23, F-4D out of Phu Cat.
- 1536L - King 26 directed launch of King 27.
- 1545L - Sandy 09/10 in area. Sandy 09 OSC.
- 1605L - Smoke 41/42 cocked. Sandy 10 RTB'd channel 103 with battle damage, holding hands with Hammer 62.
- 1610L - Sandy 10 looked over by other aircraft and is returning to scene. Jettisoned tanks.
- 1621L - SAR forces being pulled back due TPQ alert for 270/33/103. Centralized control prevents aborting missions endangering friendlies.
- 1625L - Smoke 43/44 cocked and Ground alert.
- 1635L - Sandy 10 RTB'd 77 due to low fuel. (No external tanks)
- 1730L - Sandy 09 hit in external tanks and streaming fuel. RTB'd 77. Jettisoned tanks.
- 1745L - Smokes and Sandys released from ground alert.
- 1755L - First light effort. Survivors being bedded down.
- 1805L - Hammer FACS will be overhead all night.

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- 1822L - Sandys 05/06 ETA 89 1845 local. King 21 will be airborne control for first light and will arrive 89 0215-30 local for briefing. Tail # 220, pilot Maj DiIorenzo. Will require 20,000# JP-4.
- 1910L - Sandy 09 down @ 77. At least nine entry holes in aircraft, one size of football. Sandy 10 will RTB 89 in AM. Fast mover Smokes on alert at 77. Sandy 09 says it will take a lot of Smoke for an attempt.
- 1920L - 2255 local established for first light time. WX forecast 4000' broken 9000' overcast 5 NM GFH. Patchy GF dissipating by 0300L.
- 1950L - Jack - 4 JG's will be launched from Da Nang.
- 2050L - Called Blue Chip with request for napalm. Maj Stinson at the Chip.
- 2200L - Lt Col Bryant, Blue Chip, called and wanted to know why we needed relief from all our normal fragged sorties for the SAR. Tried to explain how short of airframes we were. He said OK but would pursue in future. Also said he didn't think we'd get our request on wall to wall napalm as it wasn't in the frag. Might get us some mixed loads.
- 0040L - Called Jack - Hammer 04, 46, 62 will be the on-scene FACS tomorrow. Sandys 03/04 will launch at 2145 local and 05/06 at 2155 local. The smokes and NKP JG's will be CD.
- 0145L - Still can't get ordnance line-up out of Blue Chip. King 21 estimating block time on the hour. Candlestick 21 and Hammer 79 were heard calling, "Beeper Beeper come up voice."
- 0215L - Received call signs and TOT's for fast mover strikes. No ordnance loads given.
- 0300L - Briefed first wave.

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SARCO LOG

25 Feb 1971

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WILLIAM J. HAGAN, Lt Colonel, USAF
RCO

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weather continued to improve and after pinpointing the survivors positions 05/06 determined what areas gunfire was coming from. Sandys 07/08 arrived approximately 0900 and 07 assumed command after briefing by 05. 05/06 then expended their ordnance in the areas of known gunfire and RTB'd. (Atch 9)

8. Sandy 07/08 continued the process of trolling for gunfire and through coordination with the survivors was able to identify areas that needed sanitizing. Working with Hammer 54, 07 would locate and mark, and 54 would FAC in fast movers with napalm. All ordnance was directly on target and the area immediately around the survivors was clear. Sandy 07 began his planning for a pickup, estimating this would be possible within an hour. An ingress-egress route was picked and trolled. Rocket or mortar fire was sighted along this route and once again Hammer 54 was utilized to direct strikes of Snake and Nape in the area. The delivery was outstanding and "the whole area was in flames." At this time 07 requested 4 Smoke aircraft to screen off a ridgeline that was thought to conceal a 23mm emplacement. Shortly thereafter King notified 07 that 4 fast mover Smokes were on the way. Sandy 09 was brought down from the JG orbit and briefed on the plan. Sandy 09 then trolled the route from the holding point and when he received no ground fire, returned to the JG's and briefed them. At this time Sandy 10 had to RTB due to a center-line fuel tank that would not feed. He was replaced by Sandy 11 from NKP. The survivors were then briefed on the plan by Sandy 07 and told to have their smoke flares ready to fire. Hammer 54 was briefed where to lay the smoke. Everything was ready. All forces were brought up on survival channel D and the Smoke birds executed. Sandy 07 and 08 marked the IP and too far points and 07 directed 09 and 11 to bring the Jolly down the chute. Alpha was directed to pop his smoke which the Jolly saw immediately. The JG moved into the hover while Sandys 08 and 09 and 11 ran a daisy chain around him suppressing any possible gunfire. Sandy 07 held high over the pickup point directing the operations. Alpha was picked up and the JG directed towards Bravo. Bravo was told to pop his smoke and again the Jolly saw it immediately. The Jolly moved right in and Bravo was picked up in minimum time. The entire force then exited the area with the Sandys laying down ordnance. The JG departed out over friendlies and RTB'd channel 77. Sandy 07 was very low on fuel at this time and had to divert to channel 103. All other Sandys RTB'd channel 89. (Atch 10)

9. Forces generated for the first light effort were Sandys 03 through 12 and Smoke 41 through 44. Sandys 01/02 were scrambled from Ubon but did not reach the scene in time to be utilized. (Atch 11).

10. Some problems experienced on other SAR's repeated themselves here. Sandy lows must be firm in insisting that King hold all assets on frequencies other than those Sandy Low is using. Also King is going to have to stop the practice of communicating with Queen/Jack on VHF. Radio clutter from these two causes were major problems for the Sandys on the first day. When King attends the first light briefing, there isn't any problem.

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Only 20 minutes of light remaining so the remaining time was used to positively pinpoint the survivors and identify areas of enemy gunfire in preparation for the first light effort that was to come. Sandy 06 gave the bed-down instructions to both survivors telling them Hammer FAC's would be overhead all night and they, the survivors, should stay off their radios unless they had something important to say. Regular 1/2 or one hour check-ins would only place a needless drain on the radio batteries as well as increase the possibility of enemy capture. Sandys 06/05 remained overhead until the first night FAC, Hammer 79, arrived at which time they RTB'd channel 89.

5. Upon debriefing the Sandys it was decided that the prime fast mover ordnance for sanitizing the area would be napalm. Enemy ground troops and armor were too close to the survivors for other types. A request was made to Blue Chip for "a wall-to-wall" nape for the first light effort. Was later informed we probably wouldn't get it as it "hadn't been fragged." Also requested fast mover smoke on alert to augment our own, as Sandy 09 said it would take a lot. Also had to justify to Blue Chip our request for release from next days frag in order to support first light effort. We were directed to maintain the 4 Smokes and generate all other available A-1's as Sandys. The weather forecast for first light was 4000' broken 9000' overcast 5NM GFH. Patchy GF dissipating by 1000 local. All in all much more favorable than the first day. The briefing was coordinated through Jack for 0300 local. King 21 would land at NKP to attend. Four Jolly Greens were to be launched out of Da Nang and four Sandys from NKP. The smoke aircraft were to remain on Ground Alert.

6. The first light briefing was held at 0300 with the Ops team of King 21 present. The first 6 Sandys, 4 Smokes and NKP alert Jollys also attended. King was requested to keep all forces other than Sandy low on 127.7 VHF and 38.8 FM to eliminate the congestion encountered on the first day. In addition 38.9 FM had been very noisy with many Comers transmitting. Also requested King and Queen talk to each other on HF rather than VHF. Intelligence and weather was presented after which the leads completed their individual briefings.

7. Sandy 03/04 launched at 0438 as the initial lows and Sandy 05/06 were off at 0447 to escort the Da Nang JG's. Sandy 03/04 arrived on scene at approximately 0545, 10 minutes prior to first light. (Atch 7) They received a briefing from Hammer 40 and assumed on-scene command at first light. The weather was marginal with Alpha's position completely obscured. Bravo's position had no sooner been located than it too was obscured by a low overcast. Repeated attempts were made to find a way under the clouds but were futile. During this period Hammer 40 requested ordnance to suppress some HMG fire that had been observed. Hammer 48 directed strikes against these positions. Around 0645 the weather improved enough for Sandy 03 to go down and locate the survivors. (600' overcast) Alpha was located and contacted. During several passes over his position Alpha reported artillery fire each time. Sandy 03/04 remained in the area until approximately 0830 when they RTB'd due fuel. Sandys 05/06 arrived from the JG orbit and 05 assumed on-scene command after being briefed by 03. (Atch 8) The

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FROM: 1 SOS (CG)

9 Mar 71

SUBJECT: SARCO Report for Cobra A & B

TO: DO

1. A successful rescue was conducted on 26 Feb 71 for two crewmembers of Cobra 23. The aircraft, an F4D out of Phu Cat AB, RVN, went down at approximately 1415L 25 Feb 71, on the 260° radial for 43NM of Channel 103. This report covers those activities relating to the Sandys during the rescue effort. All times are Thailand local.

2. At 1430L, 25 Feb 1971, A SAR was declared for Cobra 23. (Atch 1) The aircraft was downed by enemy gunfire in the vicinity of D-12, two parachutes had been observed and radio contact had been made with both survivors. The area was extremely hostile with active firefights and continuous airstrikes being put in. Hammer FACs were controlling all activity in the area. (Atch 2)

3. At the time the SAR was declared Jack scrambled Sandy's 09/10 from Da Nang, 05/06 from NKP and directed that Sandy's 03/04 were to remain on ground alert at NKP. 05/06 were to be escorts for Jolly Greens 66/72 which were scrambled from Da Nang. Sandy's 07/08 launched from Bien Hoa on their normal redeploy and were diverted to the SAR along with Hobo's 32/33 who were RTB with ordnance due to deteriorating weather in their target area. These were the forces participating in the first day effort. (Atch 3)

4. Sandy 09/10 arrived on scene at approximately 1600L and after being briefed by Hammer 40, 09 assumed on-scene command. (Atch 4) The weather in the objective area was marginal with heavy rain showers and intermittent low ceilings. Several attempts were made to penetrate the weather in an effort to pinpoint the survivors. Heavy ground fire was observed on all attempts and about the time the general area of the survivors was determined, Sandy 10 was hit by groundfire and exited the area to check damage. The inclement weather prevented full utilization of fast mover strikes however, Hammer 62 put in any he could. Sandy 10 had determined the damage was restricted to his external tanks, which he jettisoned, so he returned to the scene. At approximately 1620L, King ordered all SAR forces out of the area due to a TPQ alert called on guard. At 1635 Sandy 10 had to RTB due to low fuel so Sandy 06 was directed to the scene as low wing. (Atch 5) The effort to pinpoint the survivors continued and as they were located Sandy 09 took several hits in the underside of his aircraft and was streaming fuel from both external tanks. He jettisoned his load and RTB'd Channel 77 at approximately 1730. Later inspection revealed in excess of 10 entry holes in the aircraft with one the size of a football in the right elevator. Sandy 06 assumed on-scene command and 05 was called down to join him. Hobo's 32 and 33 had arrived after being released from their original mission and were assigned to escort the Jollies. (Atch 6) At this time there was approximately

PROJECT CORONA HARVEST LOGGED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

RETIRED DESTROY

No 0251766 D-8

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

COBRA 23 - 25 Feb 71

HAMMER 54

Capt Peter J. Ruppert

064-32-532371

At approximately 1530 I was working a strike just south of Delta 38 when I heard a mayday call on guard saying that Cobra 23 had been hit and was jumping out. The call also included a DME and Radial which was the 260/40 of CH 103. I at the time was on the 275/40 of 103.

I finished the airstrike and proceeded to the 260/40 to see if I could be of assistance. Upon arrival I saw many airplanes in the area so I climbed to 10,500 feet to stay out of the way. There were five additional OV 10's all Hammer Facs, at least I presumed, them to be, about 20 choppers or so and I do not know how many fast movers. Hammer 229 was working a TIC at the time as well as the SAR and I asked if I could be of help. He told me yes since he was out of rockets. I went down and took over for him. I saw both survivors chutes and plotted their position. Hammer 04 was made on-scene commander by King and I continued working the TIC. Hammer 04 RTB due to low fuel and H-40 relieved him. I was relieved by H-223. After landing, H-04 and myself went back out to the scene at 6:15 and H-62 along with Sandy 05 and 06 were talking to the survivor. H-62 did not know the exact location so H-04 and myself went into the area and showed Sandy's location. We were then informed by Hillsboro to clear the area to the east since they had heavy artillery going in and could not shut it off. The Sandys and we then held east for approximately 10-15 minutes. By the time we were cleared back in, it was 1900 hours. The Sandys and us made repeated passes over survivors position* but took heavy AAA which came from a tank that sat approximately 300 meters west of the survivors on top of the hill. Both survivors were talking and informed us of a lot of ground fire everytime a Sandy made a pass. The survivors called for CHOP and TWIGGY but Sandy lead told them that it was getting too late and that they should hide themselves, not to worry, that there would be a Fac over them all night, to conserve their radios and use it only if absolutely necessary and that we (Sandys) would be back at first light to pick them up. Cobra 23A's reply was that "we would not be here in the morning". The Sandys RTB'd and H-04 and myself stayed on station until H-79 (the first night Fac) came out and we showed him both survivors' positions and also where the tank was that was shooting at us. H-79 then took over on scene and we (04 & 54) RTB'd. *To Show Sandy's Position Of Survivors.

26 Feb

The first Hammer Fac to launch was H-40 and he arrived on station at 0600. He informed us that the weather was bad and that he had not made contact with the survivors. At approximately 0800 H-40 informed us that they had reestablished contact with both A & B but the weather was still too bad to work the SAR. At 0900 H-40 called us and told us to launch the next Fac for the SAR. I, H-54, launched and arrived on station at approximately 1000am. H-40 RTB'd and Sandy 05 & 06 were on station.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

note: Times are Vietnam Time

afch 2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Sandy 08 relieved 05 & 06 and 07 became on-scene commander. The weather began to clear up quite rapidly and we had about a 8-10,000' overcast. Sandys 07 & 08 proceeded to talk to the survivor and made repeated passes over their approximate position. I asked Sandy 07 if he knew where both survivors were and he said that he knew where Alpha was but not quite sure where Bravo was. I then pointed Bravo's chute out to 07 which he had not seen before. (Oh yes, Alpha had pulled his chute in about a half an hour after he ejected on the 25th and it could not be seen anymore) When the Sandys made the passes the survivors informed them that they were taking ground fire and the approximate position where it came from. The Sandys then began to sterilize the area by making repeated passes. Sandy 07 then showed me where he wanted some airstrikes put and for the next 2½ hours I put airstrikes in around the survivors while the Sandys were working in close proximity of the survivors with their own ordnance. At approximately 1230 Sandy 09 & 10 checked in with the choppers and at approximately 1315 it was decided to go ahead with the pickup. Sandy 07 told me where to lay down the smoke and I then worked Ringneck 957 flight and laid the smoke down. The Sandys (4 of them) then really worked the immediate area over and the chopper (65) was then brought in from the IP. Two other Sandys were laying down CBU on both sides of the choppers route and Cobra 23A was picked up first. After Bravo was picked up the chopper exited the area by means of the same route that he entered. The whole pickup took about 15 minutes. It was a well planned and well executed mission.

PETER J. RUPPERT, Capt, USAF
HAMMER 54

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SAR FOR COBRA 23

STATEMENT OF SANDY--STONE

I departed NKP at 0440 with Sandy 04 to proceed to the position of Cobra 23A and 23B. When I arrived on scene Hammer 40 was working Candle 21 just North of the survivor's position. After first light, I assumed on scene command from Hammer 40. He took me into the area and gave a very comprehensive briefing of the area. The weather over Alpha was right on the ground. Bravo was in the clear. After Bravo's position was located the weather then moved over him and both survivors were under a low overcast. Several attempts were made to get under the weather, but they were all futile. A ridge line North and a ridge line East of the survivors was open and Hammer 40 stated that 51 Caliber fire had been coming from these areas. Nape and high drags were requested and Hammer 48 directed strikes along these ridge lines. Just South of the survivors were two camps of ARVN tanks. The other ARVN units were west of the survivors. About 6:45 the weather over Alpha started to lift so I went South and flew up the road and reached his position. At this time the weather was 600 feet above the road, but the hills on each side of it were obscured by clouds. Cobra 23A reported artillery fire as I would pass over his position. It was probably a mortar or a rocket that was fired at me. The general position of Alpha was determined and I made 5 or 6 passes under the clouds over him and each time reported ground fire. I stayed on scene as long as possible waiting for Sandy 07, but due to low fuel I had to RTB. Sandy 05 who was escorting the Jolly Greens came up and I let Hammer 40 brief him while I returned to base. Sandy 03 and 05 landed at NKP at 0910.

HERBERT H. STONE, Lt Colonel, USAF
SANDY

Atch 7

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SAR FOR COBRA 23

Callsigns - Hobo 32, Hobo 33

Crewmembers - Capt Lorenzen/Maj Donaldson, Col Walsh

Date - 25 Feb 71

On 25 Feb 71, I was scheduled for a mid-tour instrument refresher with Major Donaldson in my right seat and Col Walsh. Our mission was fragged and briefed for the Barrel Roll. About 25 minutes after takeoff, when we were checking in with ABCCC, we were advised that the weather was unworkable in the Barrel and to return to NKP with ordnance. As we approached NKP, we were advised to divert to support the SAR in progress. King 26 gave us a route to a holding point (265/32/103). We had a good view of the "beach" around Delta 45 as we flew King's briefed route to the holding point. As we approached the SAR area, we were assigned to escort Jolly Green 65 and 67 in the vicinity of Quang Tri. We escorted the Jolly Greens until our bingo time at 1800L. At about the same time, the SAR effort was postponed for the evening for darkness. We recovered at NKP, logging 5.5 apiece.

EDWARD V. LORENZEN JR, Capt USAF
HOB0 32

Atch 6

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE SILVER STAR

TO

MICHAEL A. CURTIS

Airman First Class Michael A. Curtis distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Kh. Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, on 26 February 1971. On that date, as a Pararescue Specialist on an HH-53 Rescue Helicopter, Airman Curtis' efforts culminated in the rescue of two United States Air Force aircrewmembers from certain death or capture by hostile armed forces. With full knowledge of the extent of hostile fire in the area and complete disregard for his own personal safety, and despite the helicopter's receiving numerous hits by ground fire, Airman Curtis exposed himself to the hostile fire throughout the rescue effort to provide suppressive fire, preventing much greater damage to the helicopter, and insuring the safe rescue of the downed airmen. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Airman Curtis has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

37 ARRSQ HISTORY, 1 JULY - 30 SEPTEMBER 1971

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT #6

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE SILVER STAR

TO

EUGENE L. NARDI

Technical Sergeant Eugene L. Nardi distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, on 26 February 1971. On that date, as a Pararescue Technician on an HH-53 Rescue Helicopter, Sergeant Nardi's efforts culminated in the rescue of two United States Air Force aircrewmembers from certain death or capture by hostile armed forces. With full knowledge of the extent of hostile fire in the area and complete disregard for his own personal safety, and despite the helicopter's receiving numerous hits by ground fire, Sergeant Nardi exposed himself to the hostile fire throughout the rescue effort to provide suppressive fire, preventing much greater damage to the helicopter, and insuring the safe rescue of the downed airmen. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Sergeant Nardi has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

37 ARPSO HISTOET, 1 JULY - 30 SEPTEMBER 1971

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT #5

25 February 1971

F-4D 65-0637 12 TFW, USAF, Phu Cat
Capt Hedditch (survived)
1Lt T McLaughlin (survived)

The second Phantom lost on this day was taking part in a night mission in the same area. Capt Hedditch was making his third pass on a target near Ban Tampanko when his aircraft was struck by ground fire. In this instance both the crew ejected successfully and were rescued by a USAF helicopter.

Gunfighter Gazette

Volume VI, No. 34

August 28, 1971

5 'Jollys' Earn Medals



Recipients of the Silver Star Medal, from left, A1C Steve Rhody, Capt. John R. Weimer, TSgt. Eugene Nardi, and TSgt. Carlos J. McKinney II, pose in front of an HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter. The medals were presented recently by Gen. Jack J. Catton, commander of Military Airlift Command. Missing from photo is A1C Michael Curtis, recipient of two medals, who has returned to the United States. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

Six Silver Star Medals were presented to five members of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron here recently, in recognition of their "gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force."

The five are: Capt. John R. Weimer Jr., an HH-53 "Super Jolly Green Giant" helicopter aircraft commander; TSgt. Carlos J. McKinney II, flight engineer; TSgt. Eugene L. Nardi, A1C Michael Curtis and A1C Steve Rhody, pararescuemen.

Presenting the medals at the ceremony was Gen. Jack J. Catton, commander of Military Airlift Command, of which the 37th ARRS is a subordinate unit.

Captain Weimer, Sergeant McKinney, Sergeant Nardi and Airman Curtis were crew members on the same "Super Jolly Green Giant" when, on February 26, near Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, their efforts culminated in the rescue of two U.S. Air Force aircrewmembers from "certain death or

(See Story Page 2)

General Catton presents six Silver Stars to Jolly Greens

Silver Stars Presented

(Continued from Page 1)

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The citations further stated, "all crew members exposed themselves to hostile fire throughout the rescue effort, "with

full knowledge of the extent of hostile fire in the area and complete disregard for (their) personal safety, and despite the helicopter's receiving numerous hits by ground fire."

Airman Curtis was doubly honored during the ceremony, receiving two Silver Stars. The second was in recognition of his performance on Mar. 13, near Tchepone, Laos, when he and Airman Rhody were again involved in a rescue attempt.

Airman Rhody exposed himself to ground fire on the rescue hoist twice outside a door of the helicopter while descending to help a wounded survivor on the ground until withering ground fire crippled the helicopter and wounded two crewmembers, (Airman Curtis was one of these) making continued rescue efforts impossible.

Airman Curtis manned his gun position continuing to expose himself to ground fire after being wounded, until the helicopter safely departed the scene.

Captain Weimer, 30, a native of San Bernardino, Calif., is a graduate of Springfield Senior High, Akron, Ohio. He has since attended Ohio University in Athens, and Central Michigan University at Wurtsmith AFB, Mich. He was commissioned in the Air Force in 1962 under the Aviation Cadet program.

He is married to the former Edith R. McClellan of West Blockton, Ala. The couple has three children: Donna, 8; Gloria, 6 and Gary, 5.

A native of Mirimar, Fla., Sergeant Nardi, 33, has attended Bethel Park High School, Bethel Park, Pa., and Broward County Junior College, Fla.

The 12-year Air Force veteran has served 32 months in the Republic of Vietnam as a pararescueman. He was formerly assigned to the 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing at Richards-Gebaur AFB, Mo.

Sergeant McKinney is from New Braunfels, Tex. He is married to the former Cynthia F. Jung, also from New Braunfels. They have one child, Michael, 11.

Airman Curtis has returned to the United States, having completed his tour in the Republic. He graduated from Boston English High School, Boston, in 1969.

Airman Rhody has attended Radford High School, Hawaii, and the University of Hawaii.

He was assigned at Eglin AFB, Fla., prior to coming to Da Nang.

PACIFIC STAR AND STRIPES

AN AUTHORIZED UNOFFICIAL PUBLICATION
FOR THE U.S. ARMED FORCES OF THE PACIFIC COMMAND

Vol. 27, No. 58

Sunday, Feb. 20, 1971

2 Rescued Pilots

Describe Ordeal in Laos

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The two crewmen ejected and used their emergency radios to direct air strikes on the attacking force while North Vietnamese soldiers searched for them in the bushes.

Talking with news men at an officers' club in Da Nang several hours after their rescue, Capt. David R. Hedditch, 28, Hamilton, Mont., and Lt. Thomas M. McLaughlin, 24, Melrose, Mass., both said "we thought we were dead men" when North Vietnamese searchers came within 10 feet of their separate hiding places.

"We were called out in a mission over Laos Thursday afternoon, refuel in the air over Thailand and returned to Laos when the forward air controller — FAC — told us to stand by for a strike on Hill 31," said Hedditch, the aircraft commander.

"I made my first napalm pass to mark the target, my wingman made corrections and I made a second napalm strike. As I was pulling out, the bird went out of control, pitched upward and then the whole cockpit turned red. I knew we had been

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Faces smeared with mud for camouflage, the men remained separated for the next 22½ hours until their rescue by a Jolly Green Giant helicopter Friday afternoon.

"All I could find was some knee high grass to hide in," said Hedditch. "I heard some noise, shut off my radio and just froze. Then I saw two North Viet-

namese soldiers walking around looking for me.

"After that I talked with an FAC and he assured us we would get as much air cover as they could lay on. Tom was also on the radio, so I knew he was all right, but we didn't dare move toward each other."

McLaughlin said he landed about 20 yards from an enemy mortar.

"I could hear the gun crew talking in between rounds as they fired at the fire base," he said. "Both of us heard tanks, continuous small-arms fire and a 37mm antiaircraft gun working on the choppers overhead. There was a hell of a lot of firing out there."

Rescue helicopters were repeatedly driven off by intense enemy fire, and as dusk fell Thursday night the forward air controller hovering overhead told them they would have to spend the night in Laos.

"Right then I figured we were dead," Hedditch said. "It started raining, freezing rain, and it continued through the night. I was stiff and sore from lying in the same position all the time."

At first light Friday, fighter-bombers joined the protective air pattern, flying 75 sorties continuously for eight hours to keep the North Vietnamese away from their downed buddies.

"The FAC decided to try another pickup at 1315 (1:15 p.m.)," said Hedditch. "He put a smoke flare right by me to mark the position. It scared the hell out of me. He told me to pop a smoke when the Jolly Green came in, and I threw it away from me down the hillside as the NVA wouldn't open up on my position. I knew they were watching."

"The chopper hovered about 25 feet away and I scampered toward it. I really expected to be shot, but we didn't take any fire. I just grabbed that sling and prayed as they hoisted me up. The guys were too busy to say a word to me as I came in."

"As soon as I climbed in, I went to the back of the chopper with my .43, hoping to lose some bad guys while we headed to pick up Tom."

When the helicopter dropped down again to pick up McLaughlin, it came under withering fire, taking 13 direct hits.

"Those 15 to 25 seconds were an eternity as they pulled me up on the sling," said McLaughlin. "It's an experience I never want to face again."

Hedditch continued: "When I saw Tom come in, I just crawled over and embraced him. I can't even remember what we said because of the rotor noise."

"We just held on to each other, we were so damn glad to see each other. Then we sat back and counted the bullet holes."

37th Rescues 2-Laos

After what was possibly the longest 22 hours of their lives, two USAF jet fighter pilots were pulled out of heavily enemy-infested territory recently, by crews from the 37th ARRS.

Capt. David R. Hedditch and 1st Lt. Thomas M. McLaughlin, both F-4 Phantom pilots from Phu Cat AB, punched out of their aircraft after it was shot down by enemy fire near the Laotian city of Tchepone.

That event started a chain-reaction which was to become one of the most heavily contested search and rescue (SAR) missions in the history of the war.

With the enemy sometimes within 20 meters of his position, Captain Hedditch managed to lay low and evade his would-be captors while A-1E Skyraiders and jet

fighters pounded the area to silence the enemy ground fire so that rescue choppers could get in.

Lieutenant McLaughlin, who was approximately a half-mile away from his fellow pilot, said that the enemy was so close to his position that at one time while hiding in a bush; "I was practically looking at two of them face-to-face. I reached for my weapon and then froze in my position. Amazingly they didn't spot me and about five minutes later they started moving down the hill. I didn't know whether I was going to have to shoot it out with them or what."

Aided by A-1 Skyraiders and jet fighters, the "Buffs" stood a steady vigilance over the area while attempts were made to silence the enemy guns.

Around noon of the second day, the area had been saturated enough for the rescue chopper to come in and pick up the downed men.

The crew of the rescue chopper were, Capt. Karlton I. Bakke, aircraft commander; Capt. John R. Weimer, Jr., the copilot; TSgt. Carlos J. McKinney, the flight engineer; and TSgt. Eugene L. Nardi and A1C Michael A. Curtis, the PJ's (pararescuemen).

Destroy Red Tank

Phantoms Aid Downed Pilots

DA NANG AFLD, Vietnam (Special) — The skill of two Air Force F4 Phantom fighter-bomber crews from the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing here made the jungle cover useless to an enemy tank that was attempting to foil a search and rescue operation.

A pilot of one of the Phantoms, 1st Lt. John O. Labouliere, commented on the unusual action: "We were flying to a combat support mission in an area in Laos where ARVN ground troops were engaged in Operation Lam Son 719. As we approached the area, we heard another F4 crewman already over the target saying, 'Lead, lead, you're on fire!'"

"There was a slight pause and then we heard the forward air controller (FAC) say, 'I see one chute. . . . I see the other one.'"

The Phantoms immediately diverted to the area. "When a search and rescue (SAR) is in progress, nearly everything else is dropped," explained the lieutenant. "The SAR is of the utmost importance."

"There was intense ground fire, and while we were working the area, the FAC was trying to get the location of the two downed pilots."

"The FAC saw two tanks coming up a road in the area. At first, we had a hard time spotting them because of the haze in the area. Also, there were numerous helicopters in the area and we had to watch out for them."

"The tanks started up the hill to where the two parachutes had been spotted, so we made a pass, and the lead aircraft opened up on them with 20mm cannons."

"The lead aircraft then came in again on a bomb pass. We fol-

lowed them in and dropped our ordnance. The FAC then told us to go up high while he checked on the position of the two pilots," recalled Labouliere.

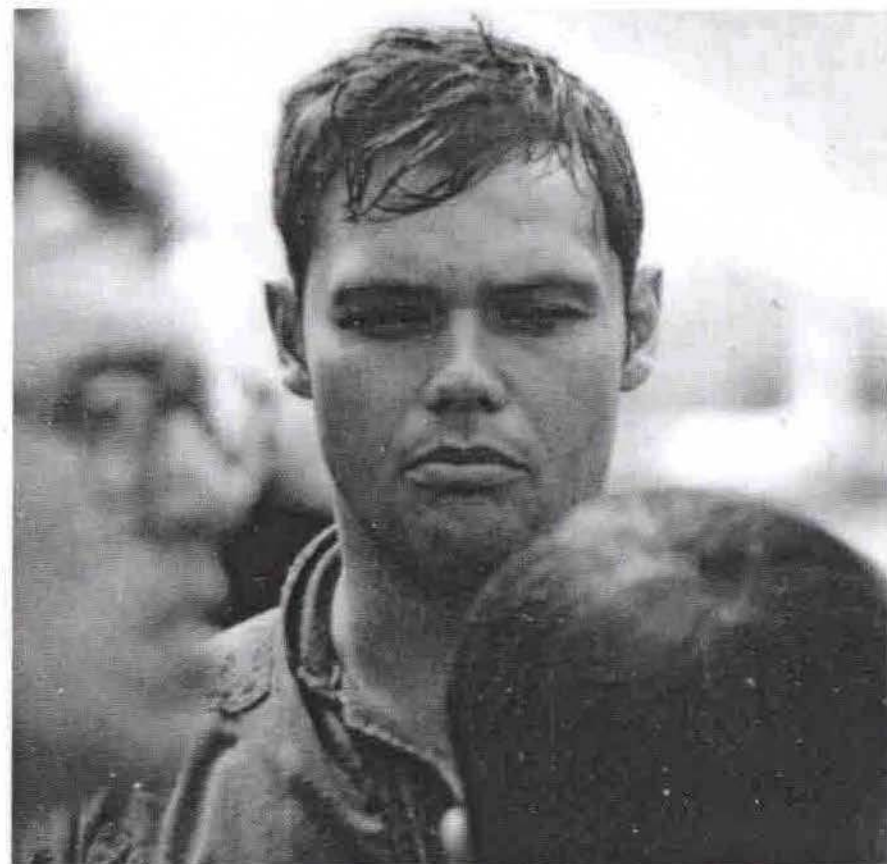
"By this time we were low on fuel and had to return to base," he added. The Phantoms left the area but other aircraft were soon on the scene.

When the crewmembers returned to Da Nang, they learned that they had been credited with destroying one of the tanks. The next day, after one of the most intense SAR missions in recent months, the two downed pilots were picked up by rescue crews from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron from Da Nang.

When he learned that the pilots had been rescued after 22 hours on the ground, Labouliere commented, "I was really glad when I heard that they finally got them out — it must have been hell down there."



SAVE 607 CAPT DAVID HAMMICK, USAF



SAVE 608 1/LT THOMAS A. LAVIGNE

Heddich&McLaughlin.jpg

26 FEB 71



WEIMER

SURVIVOR

UnknownSaves.jpg
AF Museum Photo

SURVIVOR

GENS
NARDI

SKINNY CURTIS

CARLOS
MCKINNEY

26 FEB 71 SAR

DANANG 1971

AF'S

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CURTIS

STEVE RHODY

FE

CARLOS MCKINNEY

PILOT
CAPT

BAHKE, CARLTON

CO-PILOT

CAPT

JOHN WEIMER

SURVIVOR

CAPT DAVID HEDORICH

1LT THOMAS MCLAUGHLIN



COBRA 23 SAR

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AEM #3

NARDI HAS ORIGINAL

CURTIS BAKKE WEINER MCKINNEY

HEDDORICH + McLAUGHLIN SURVIVORS F4

Cobra 23 SAR F-4D downed in Laos 25 February 1971. F-4 pilots rescued by 37th ARRS Jolly crew on 26 February.



Capt. John Weimer Copilot

Capt. David Heddich F-4 survivor

A1C Michael Curtis PJ

TSgt Carlos McKinney FE

Capt Karlton Bakke Pilot

1Lt Thomas McLaughlin F-4 survivor

TSgt Eugene Nardi PJ

Downed pilots spend 'longest 22 hours'

DA NANG AFLD — After what was possibly the longest 22 hours of their lives, two jet fighter pilots were pulled out of heavily infested enemy territory recently by rescue crews of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

Capt. David R. Hedditch and 1st Lt. Thomas M. McLaughlin, F-4 Phantom crew members at Phu Cat AB, bailed out of their aircraft after it was hit by enemy fire near the Laotian city of Tchepone. That event started a chain reaction which was to become one of the most heavily contested search and rescue efforts in SEA during recent months.

With the enemy sometimes within 20 meters of his position, Captain Hedditch managed to lay low and evade his would-be captors while A-1 Sky-raidiers and jet fighters pounded the area to silence the enemy ground fire so that rescue choppers could get in.

Lieutenant McLaughlin, who was approximately half a mile away from his fellow pilot, said that the enemy was so close to his position that at one



Captain Hedditch

time while hiding in a bush he was "practically looking at two of them face-to-face." I reached for my weapon and then froze in my position. Amazingly they didn't spot me and about five minutes later they started moving on down the hill.

Hindered by heavy enemy ground fire and poor weather conditions, the rescue efforts were unsuccessful the

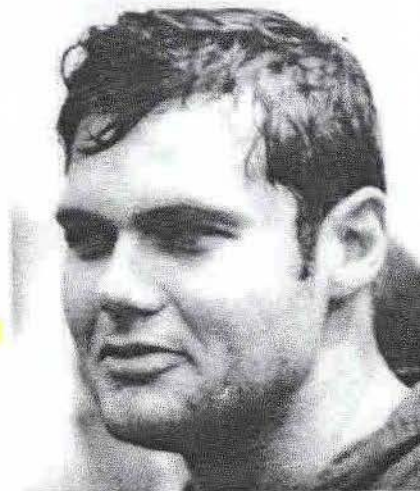
first day. But with the first light of the new day the rescue aircraft were once again airborne and headed for the area.

"Around noon the area had been saturated enough for us to come in," recalled **Capt. John R. Weimer Jr.**, HH-53 co-pilot. "We were still receiving ground fire, but once we found the survivors, the ground fire was not so intense that we could not stay there."

Said **Capt. Carlton I. Bakke**, rescue helicopter commander, "We came in at treetop level and picked up this aircraft commander (Captain Hedditch) first. We saw his smoke marker and spotted him right away and had him pulled up within two or three minutes.

"We then had to go over a little ridge to get the back seater. We aimed for his smoke and again we were about two or three minutes in a hover. Just as he was coming in the door we started receiving more ground fire and more hits. We got out low and fast and we received more ground fire."

Lieutenant McLaughlin recalled that when he saw the rescue chopper coming in, "I left everything I had sitting there and scrambled through the



U.S. Air Force Photos by
TSgt. Robert Minsky

Lieutenant McLaughlin

trees, falling down and tripping in the elephant grass, trying to get to that penetrator which hit the ground about the time I got to it.

"Once I got on the penetrator, it seemed like forever before I got in the aircraft, with all the firing going on around me. But I guess they were shooting at the chopper and not me."

2 Rescued Pilots Describe Ordeal in Laos

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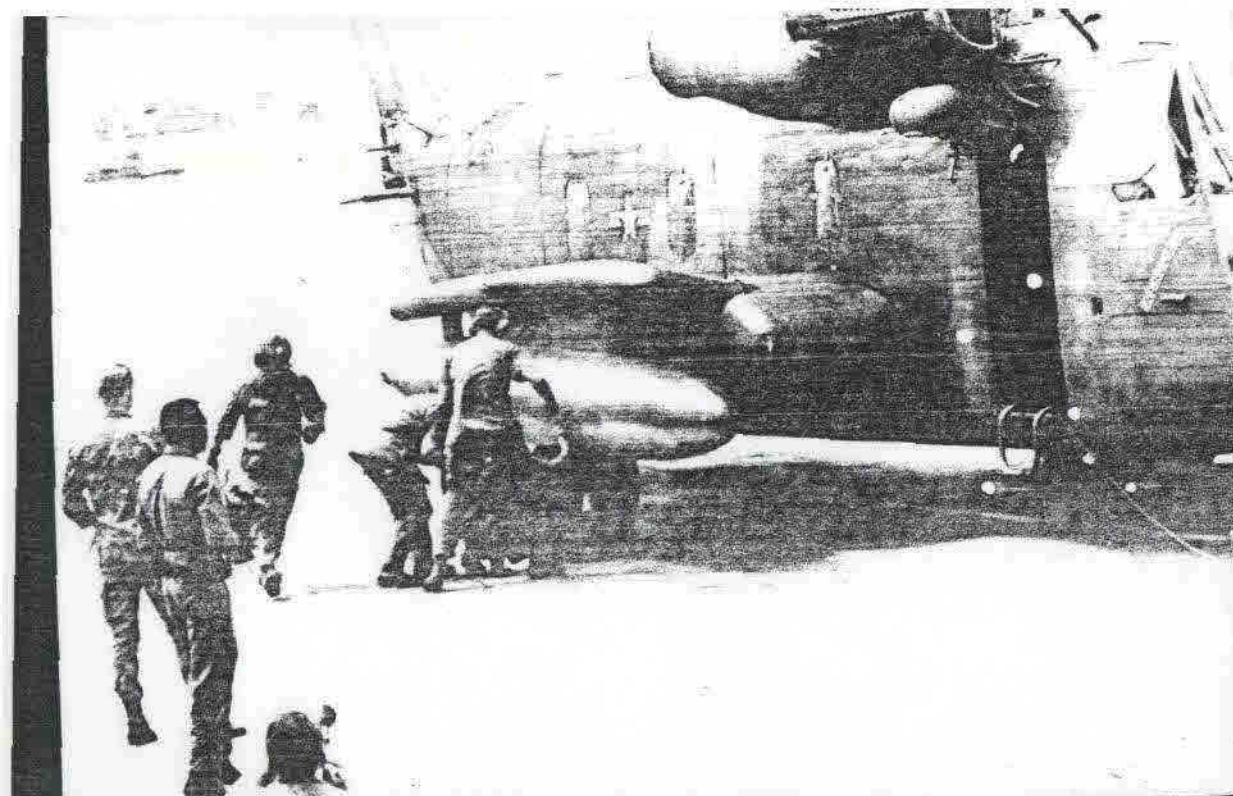
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26 FEB 71

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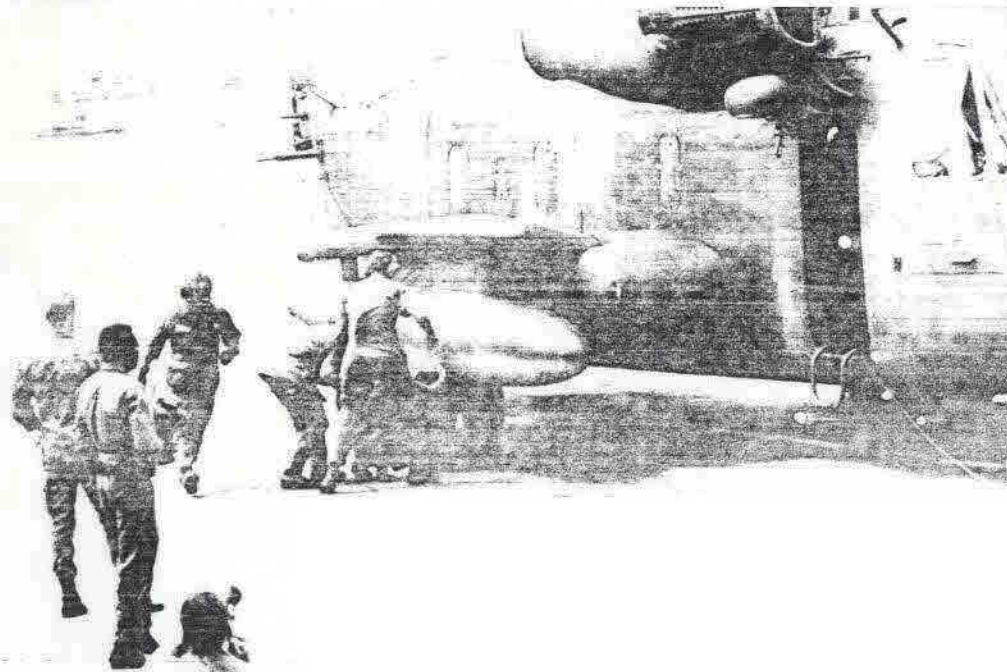
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CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE SILVER STAR

TO

MICHAEL A. CURTIS

Airman First Class Michael A. Curtis distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Kh. Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, on 26 February 1971. On that date, as a Pararescue Specialist on an HH-53 Rescue Helicopter, Airman Curtis' efforts culminated in the rescue of two United States Air Force aircrewmembers from certain death or capture by hostile armed forces. With full knowledge of the extent of hostile fire in the area and complete disregard for his own personal safety, and despite the helicopter's receiving numerous hits by ground fire, Airman Curtis exposed himself to the hostile fire throughout the rescue effort to provide suppressive fire, preventing much greater damage to the helicopter, and insuring the safe rescue of the downed airmen. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Airman Curtis has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

37 ARRSQ HISTORY, 1 JULY - 30 SEPTEMBER 1971

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT #6

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EUGENE L. NARDI

Technical Sergeant Eugene L. Nardi distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, on 26 February 1971. On that date, as a Pararescue Technician on an HH-53 Rescue Helicopter, Sergeant Nardi's efforts culminated in the rescue of two United States Air Force aircrewmembers from certain death or capture by hostile armed forces. With full knowledge of the extent of hostile fire in the area and complete disregard for his own personal safety, and despite the helicopter's receiving numerous hits by ground fire, Sergeant Nardi exposed himself to the hostile fire throughout the rescue effort to provide suppressive fire, preventing much greater damage to the helicopter, and insuring the safe rescue of the downed airmen. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Sergeant Nardi has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

37 ARRSO HISTOET, 1 JULY - 30 SEPTEMBER 1971

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT #5

25 February 1971

F-4D 65-0637 12 TFW, USAF, Phu Cat
Capt Hedditch (survived)
1Lt T McLaughlin (survived)

The second Phantom lost on this day was taking part in a night mission in the same area. Capt Hedditch was making his third pass on a target near Ban Tampanko when his aircraft was struck by ground fire. In this instance both the crew ejected successfully and were rescued by a USAF helicopter.

Gunfighter Gazette

Volume VI, No. 34

August 28, 1971

5 'Jollys' Earn Medals



Recipients of the Silver Star Medal, from left, A1C Steve Rhody, Capt. John R. Weimer, TSgt. Eugene Nardi, and TSgt. Carlos J. McKinney II, pose in front of an HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter. The medals were presented recently by Gen. Jack J. Catton, commander of Military Airlift Command. Missing from photo is A1C Michael Curtis, recipient of two medals, who has returned to the United States. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

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The five are: Capt. John R. Weimer Jr., an HH-53 "Super Jolly Green Giant" helicopter aircraft commander; TSgt. Carlos J. McKinney II, flight engineer; TSgt. Eugene L. Nardi, A1C Michael Curtis and A1C Steve Rhody, pararescuemen.

Presenting the medals at the ceremony was Gen. Jack J. Catton, commander of Military Airlift Command, of which the 37th ARRS is a subordinate unit.

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(See Story Page 2)

General Catton presents six Silver Stars to Jolly Greens

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(Continued from Page 1)

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Airman Rhody exposed himself to ground fire on the rescue hoist twice outside a door of the helicopter while descending to help a wounded survivor on the ground until withering ground fire crippled the helicopter and wounded two crewmembers, (Airman Curtis was one of these) making continued rescue efforts impossible.

Airman Curtis manned his gun position continuing to expose himself to ground fire after being wounded, until the helicopter safely departed the scene.

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He is married to the former Edith R. McClellan of West Blockton, Ala. The couple has three children: Donna, 8; Gloria, 6 and Gary, 5.

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"The chopper hovered about 25 feet away and I scampered toward it. I really expected to be shot, but we didn't take any fire. I just grabbed that sling and prayed as they hoisted me up. The guys were too busy to say a word to me as I came in."

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When the helicopter dropped down again to pick up McLaughlin, it came under withering fire, taking 13 direct hits.

"Those 15 to 25 seconds were an eternity as they pulled me up on the sling," said McLaughlin. "It's an experience I never want to face again."

Hedditch continued: "When I saw Tom come in, I just crawled over and embraced him. I can't even remember what we said because of the rotor noise."

"We just held on to each other, we were so damn glad to see each other. Then we sat back and counted the bullet holes."

37th Rescues 2-Laos

After what was possibly the longest 22 hours of their lives, two USAF jet fighter pilots were pulled out of heavily enemy-infested territory recently, by crews from the 37th ARRS.

Capt. David R. Hedditch and 1st Lt. Thomas M. McLaughlin, both F-4 Phantom pilots from Phu Cat AB, punched out of their aircraft after it was shot down by enemy fire near the Laotian city of Tchepone.

That event started a chain-reaction which was to become one of the most heavily contested search and rescue (SAR) missions in the history of the war.

With the enemy sometimes within 20 meters of his position, Captain Hedditch managed to lay low and evade his would-be captors while A-1E Skyraiders and jet

fighters pounded the area to silence the enemy ground fire so that rescue choppers could get in.

Lieutenant McLaughlin, who was approximately a half-mile away from his fellow pilot, said that the enemy was so close to his position that at one time while hiding in a bush; "I was practically looking at two of them face-to-face. I reached for my weapon and then froze in my position. Amazingly they didn't spot me and about five minutes later they started moving down the hill. I didn't know whether I was going to have to shoot it out with them or what."

Aided by A-1 Skyraiders and jet fighters, the "Buffs" stood a steady vigilance over the area while attempts were made to silence the enemy guns.

Around noon of the second day, the area had been saturated enough for the rescue chopper to come in and pick up the downed men.

The crew of the rescue chopper were, Capt. Karlton I. Bakke, aircraft commander; Capt. John R. Weimer, Jr., the copilot; TSgt. Carlos J. McKinney, the flight engineer; and TSgt. Eugene L. Nardi and A1C Michael A. Curtis, the PJ's (pararescuemen).

Destroy Red Tank

Phantoms Aid Downed Pilots

DA NANG AFLD, Vietnam (Special) — The skill of two Air Force F4 Phantom fighter-bomber crews from the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing here made the jungle cover useless to an enemy tank that was attempting to foil a search and rescue operation.

A pilot of one of the Phantoms, 1st Lt. John O. Labouliere, commented on the unusual action: "We were flying to a combat support mission in an area in Laos where ARVN ground troops were engaged in Operation Lam Son 719. As we approached the area, we heard another F4 crewman already over the target saying, 'Lead, lead, you're on fire!'"

"There was a slight pause and then we heard the forward air controller (FAC) say, 'I see one chute. . . . I see the other one.'"

The Phantoms immediately diverted to the area. "When a search and rescue (SAR) is in progress, nearly everything else is dropped," explained the lieutenant. "The SAR is of the utmost importance."

"There was intense ground fire, and while we were working the area, the FAC was trying to get the location of the two downed pilots."

"The FAC saw two tanks coming up a road in the area. At first, we had a hard time spotting them because of the haze in the area. Also, there were numerous helicopters in the area and we had to watch out for them."

"The tanks started up the hill to where the two parachutes had been spotted, so we made a pass, and the lead aircraft opened up on them with 20mm cannons."

"The lead aircraft then came in again on a bomb pass. We fol-

lowed them in and dropped our ordnance. The FAC then told us to go up high while he checked on the position of the two pilots," recalled Labouliere.

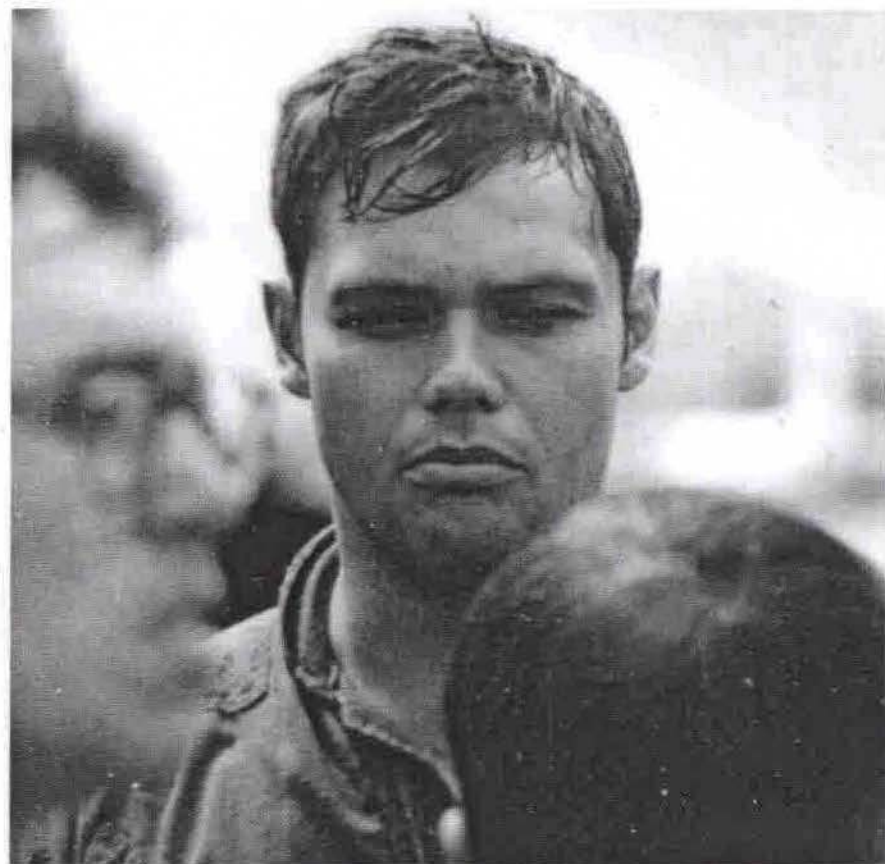
"At this time we were low on fuel and had to return to base," he added. The Phantoms left the area but other aircraft were soon on the scene.

When the crewmembers returned to Da Nang, they learned that they had been credited with destroying one of the tanks. The next day, after one of the most intense SAR missions in recent months, the two downed pilots were picked up by rescue crews from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron from Da Nang.

When he learned that the pilots had been rescued after 22 hours on the ground, Labouliere commented, "I was really glad when I heard that they finally got them out — it must have been hell down there."



SAVE 607 CAPT DAVID HAMMICK, USAF



SAVE 608 1/LT THOMAS A. LAVIGNE

Heddich&McLaughlin.jpg

26 FEB 71



WEIMER

SURVIVOR

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AF Museum Photo

SURVIVOR

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NARDI

SKINNY CURTIS

CARLOS
MCKINNEY

26 FEB 71 SAR

DANANG 1971

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CURTIS

STEVE RHODY

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CARLOS MCKINNEY

PILOT
CAPT

BAHKE, CARLTON

CO-PILOT

CAPT

JOHN WEIMER

SURVIVOR

CAPT DAVID HEDORICH

1LT THOMAS MCLAUGHLIN



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NARDI HAS ORIGINAL

CURTIS BAKKE WEINER MCKINNEY

HEDDORICH + McLAUGHLIN SURVIVORS F4

Downed pilots spend 'longest 22 hours'

DA NANG AFLD — After what was possibly the longest 22 hours of their lives, two jet fighter pilots were pulled out of heavily infested enemy territory recently by rescue crews of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

Capt. David R. Hedditch and 1st Lt. Thomas M. McLaughlin, F-4 Phantom crew members at Phu Cat AB, bailed out of their aircraft after it was hit by enemy fire near the Laotian city of Tchepone. That event started a chain reaction which was to become one of the most heavily contested search and rescue efforts in SEA during recent months.

With the enemy sometimes within 20 meters of his position, Captain Hedditch managed to lay low and evade his would-be captors while A-1 Sky-raidiers and jet fighters pounded the area to silence the enemy ground fire so that rescue choppers could get in.

Lieutenant McLaughlin, who was approximately half a mile away from his fellow pilot, said that the enemy was so close to his position that at one



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time while hiding in a bush he was "practically looking at two of them face-to-face." I reached for my weapon and then froze in my position. Amazingly they didn't spot me and about five minutes later they started moving on down the hill.

Hindered by heavy enemy ground fire and poor weather conditions, the rescue efforts were unsuccessful the

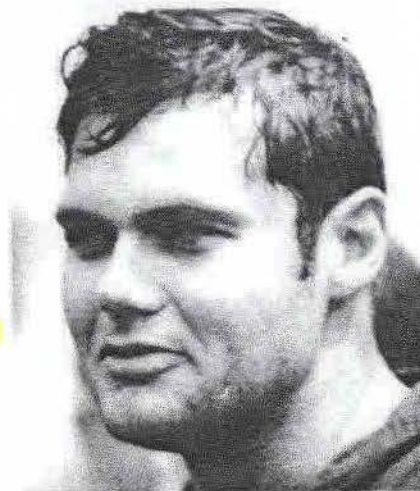
first day. But with the first light of the new day the rescue aircraft were once again airborne and headed for the area.

"Around noon the area had been saturated enough for us to come in," recalled **Capt. John R. Weimer Jr.**, HH-53 co-pilot. "We were still receiving ground fire, but once we found the survivors, the ground fire was not so intense that we could not stay there."

Said **Capt. Carlton I. Bakke**, rescue helicopter commander, "We came in at treetop level and picked up this aircraft commander (Captain Hedditch) first. We saw his smoke marker and spotted him right away and had him pulled up within two or three minutes.

"We then had to go over a little ridge to get the back seater. We aimed for his smoke and again we were about two or three minutes in a hover. Just as he was coming in the door we started receiving more ground fire and more hits. We got out low and fast and we received more ground fire."

Lieutenant McLaughlin recalled that when he saw the rescue chopper coming in, "I left everything I had sitting there and scrambled through the



U.S. Air Force Photos by
TSgt. Robert Minsky

Lieutenant McLaughlin

trees, falling down and tripping in the elephant grass, trying to get to that penetrator which hit the ground about the time I got to it.

"Once I got on the penetrator, it seemed like forever before I got in the aircraft, with all the firing going on around me. But I guess they were shooting at the chopper and not me."

2 Rescued Pilots Describe Ordeal in Laos

DA NANG Vietnam (AP) — Two U.S. fighter pilots described Friday night how they huddled on a Laotian hillside for nearly 23 hours while North Vietnamese troops who shot them down overran a South Vietnamese fire base a half mile away.

Their F4 Phantom fighter-bomber exploded in flames Thursday while dropping napalm on enemy tanks and gun emplacements attacking Hill 31, a South Vietnamese airborne battalion fire base eight miles inside Laos.

The two crewmen ejected and used their emergency radios to direct air strikes on the attacking force while North Vietnamese soldiers searched for them in the bushes.

Talking with news men at an officers' club in Da Nang several hours after their rescue, Capt. David R. Hedditch, 28, Hamilton, Mont., and Lt. Thomas M. McLaughlin, 24, Melrose, Mass., both said "we thought we were dead men" when North Vietnamese searchers came within 10 feet of their separate hiding places.

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"After that I talked with an FAC and he assured us we would get as much air cover as they could lay on. Tom was also on the radio, so I knew he was all right, but we didn't dare move toward each other."

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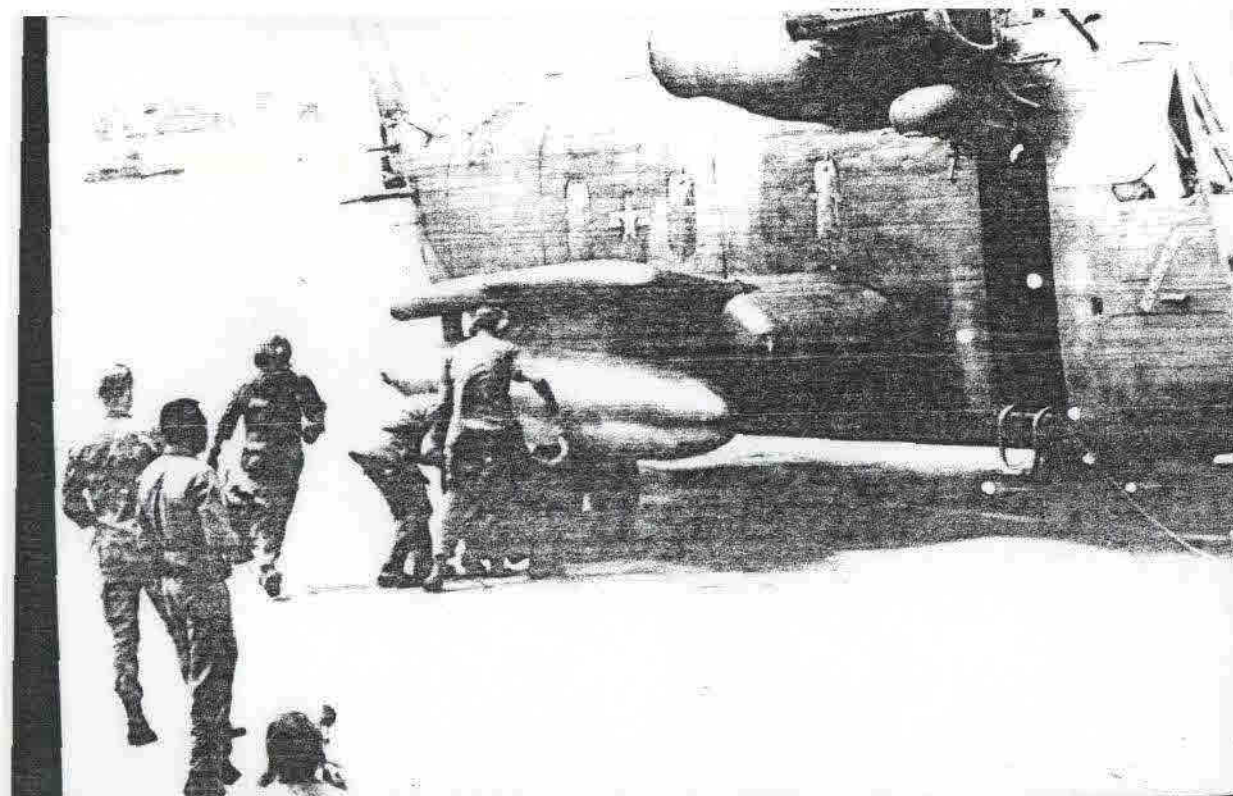
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26 FEB 71

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