

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

I had several lengthy conversations with Jolly 72 about whether he was at he would be able to set the Jolly down and have all the survivors climb on board at once or whether he would have to use the penetrator that could take more time. The people on the ground seemed to think the area was flat enough for the jolly to sit down. So to sit down was our primary means of pick-up and the penetrator secondary. We were ready to use either method.

The survivors had no means of marking their position for the Jolly on the run in but I felt that I, being able to use the survivors, could call the Jolly right to their position. The survivors were also briefed to be ready to use their white T-shirts to help the Jolly find them.

About this time my UHF receiver went bad. All information between the survivor and myself had to be passed via my wingman who did an outstanding job relaying. I planned to run the pick-up on VHF and have everyone monitor guard so they could hear any ground fire that was called out by the survivors. My UHF transmitter worked fine.

Next I brought the smoke birds down (43 and 44) and with them in trail I briefed them on where I wanted the smoke, the position of the survivors. I planned to use the smoke birds 20m for the daisy chain because there were not any more A-1s available. Sandy 13 and 14 both had maintenance problems and weren't expected to launch. The plan was to lay the smoke and then have smoke 43 and 44 pull around quickly and join the helicopter at the IP. My wingman's cue to start Jolly 72 to the IP was the laying of the second smoke screen. Both Jollys were to hold over the ridge line to the south of the IP. The high Jolly would be able to watch the whole pick-up and be in position if anyone was hit during the pick-up attempt. Everyone was briefed to hold south if possible if they were hit or had an emergency and the high Jolly would be right there to pick them up.

As usual, timing was the most important factor so we ran through a dry run of the whole plan. About this time several Cobra gunships showed up and I had Master 55 expend half of the ordnance in close around the immediate area of the survivors and half along the entry and exit route. Everything was ready. We were waiting for the Cobras to expend. While the Cobras were expending in the area of the IP they reported taking ground fire. At this point it was obvious that that area needed more sterilizing. Master 55 said some C-24 was on the way and would be in the area in 15 minutes.

My wingman and I were right at Diego Fael and could not stay in the area long enough to wait for the C-24. So I made the decision to delay the pick-up attempt and brief Sandy 13 who had just arrived in the area on the plan. Smoke 43 and 44 were completely familiar with the plan and had plenty of fuel to stay in the area. My wingman and I RTR to channel 89 turning on-scene command to Sandy 13 with Smoke 43 to answer any questions Sandy 13 might have. I found out after I landed that the Army had taken command and was running the show.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The one overall frustrating factor about this whole SAM is that the enemy was reluctant to shoot at the A-1's but would open up at any helicopter that came in the area.

Atch IX

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MOKE 43 - WITCHDOCTOR 05/6 Mar 71

On 6 Mar 71, Smoke 43 & 44 were launched in support of a SAR already in progress for seven downed aircrew members. Airborne at 1150 local Smoke flight arrived in the area at approximately 1245 local. Jolly 72 and his wingman were holding along just south of the SAR area and I suggested to King that the Smokes hold with them and offer any assistance needed. This was approved and Smoke flight joined the Jollys. Sandy 11 was on scene commander, and he and Hammer 55 were working Fast mover strikes in the area. At approximately 1400 local Sandy 11 requested Smoke flight to join him in the area for a briefing on the survivors location and the required position of the Smoke screen. This was accomplished and Smoke flight made a dry run through the area to pinpoint the desired position and develop the required timing. Smoke 43 then returned to hold with the Jollys. At approximately 1500 local Sandy 11 was preparing for a pickup attempt. This attempt was aborted, however, just prior to the Jolly run in due to renewed ground fire. At approximately 1530 local Sandy 11 & 12 were forced to RTB for fuel and Smoke 43 & 44 remained with the Jollys awaiting Sandy 13. When Sandy 13 arrived in the area, Smoke 43 briefed him on the situation and subsequently took him into the area and pinpointed the survivors. Smoke flight then made two strafing passes on suspected ground fire positions and RTB'd channel 89 due to fuel. Landing was at 1650 local.

Atch X

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

6 MARCH 71

0717 ARMY MOVING IN ON THE GROUND

1018 SICAL: AK47 SITE SPOTTED HOISING DOWN AREA, JOLLY'S STILL HOLDING.

1020 ARMY HAS REQUESTED FAST MOVES INTO THE AREA.

1030 ARMY HAS WILL-TO-WALL CHOPPERS DOUBTFUL IF THEY WILL MAKE SAVE A LOT OF CHOPPERS RTB BECAUSE OF HITS TAKEN.

1034 Hammer 20 OSC.

1040 SANDY 13 WILL LOOK OVER AREA WILL (MAYBE) ATTEMPT PICK UP.

1041 FRIENDLY GROUND TROOPS IN AREA (NO LOCATION OF THEM)

1056 STILL NO LOCATION ON GROUND TROOPS. STILL TAKING SICAL HITS. DOUBTFUL LAST NIGHTER.

1101 WITCH DOCTOR 05 DID GET PACKAGE (BATTERIES & WATER) THAT SANDY'S DROPPER

1105 GROUND TROOPS WITH IN SIGHT OF SURVIVORS. JOLLY'S RTB. ~~+~~

1150 JG 64 Down. LOGGED ~~+~~

1157 JG 71 Down LOGGED ~~+~~

1220 LINE CHECK 5X5 ~~+~~

1230 DCAE JALL TOTAL 32.8 ~~+~~

1245 SSGA ARRIVES OFF DUTY ~~+~~

7 MAR 71

0443		
2043	CAPT. BEATTIE ON DUTY	WAB
0145	BLACKCAT 203 (U-H) down off 103, standby	WAB
0200	Someone spotted downed heli 715/5/103. Helicopters	
	have landed nearby	WAB
0210	HEM 14 BH AYSP TQYJMO	WAB
0330	JG 64 Air Borne	WAB
0400	CAPT. BEATTIE off Duty Sgt Smith on	WAB
0455	JG 66 on	DS
0615	Alert BRAVO crews for RAVEN 41	
	FAC ENG Failure 100/60/82	DS
0710	RAVEN 41 pln by Army	DS
0715	20 more heli's down west of 103	DS
0720	JG 64 on the deck <u>3.8</u>	DS
0730	JG 66 on the deck <u>2.5</u>	DS
1000	DAAR to JRCC <u>10T 6.3</u> JP/DS	DS
1030	line check 5L5	DS
1045	MSGT Smith off duty	DS

0911	JG 72 270 ABN BINGO 0510	Cef
0923	CHARLIE CREWS FORMED	Cef
0928	HAMMER 24 HAS VISUAL ON SURVIVORS	Cef
0936	JG 71 LANDED & DEPARTED 103 ACFT OK ENROUTE 77	Cef
0200	SANDY 03 REMAINS OSC	Cef
0218	JG 71 BLOCKED JG 64	Cef
0219	SANDY 05 NEW OSC	Cef
0345	ONE MORE STRIKE AND DUSTOFF WILL ATTEMPT	Cef
0355	PHASE ALPHA BY DOLPHIN 06	Cef
0358	DOLPHIN 06 HIT PILOT INJURED	
	DUSTOFF 40 & SANDY 5. ESCORTING	Cef
0400	MAY POSEY OFF INSIDE SMOKE on	IS
0407	KING ARING JOLLYS 72/70	DS
0440	SANDY TALKING TO SURVIVORS about	
	PLW + STRIKES being put in for	
	Egress	DS
0717	JOLLYS + SANDYS ARE briefing for	IS
	Phase ALPHA	IS
0725	JG 64 ABN / JG 71	DS
0758	JG 72 IS BRIGADING JG 64	DS
0806	JG 72/70 RTB 1700H	DS
0800	ARMY WILL PUT IN AN 105 mm	
	Barrage - will try a ground trip	
	push to get SURVIVORS	IS
0805	JG 72 970 RTB CH 77 ETA 0855	
0828	BIG BANDIT OSC (SERPENT 20 IS NOT ABN (ARMY))	
0837	BIG BANDIT WILL NOT BE OSC UNTIL 0915Z OR UNTIL SERPENT	
	20 IS ABN. WE HAVE COMMAND UNTIL THEN! WE ARE	
	PUTTING IN AIR STRIKES AGAIN.	
0850	GUNFIGHTER 01 FLT WORKING AREA	
0858	JG 70 & 72 ON DECK.	
0906	ARMY WILL ATTEMPT PICKUP. SANDY 13, 15, 16, SMOKE 45, 46	
	WILL STAND BY. IF ARMY NO GO, WE WILL TRY LAST LIGHT.	
0914	ARMY HAS TAKEN OVER.	

0407 King AR, not Jollys 12/70 DS
 0640 Sandy talking to survivors about
 Plu + Strikes being put in for
 Egress DS
 0717 Jollys + Sandys are briefing for 15
 phase ALPHA 15
 0725 JG 64 ABN / JG 71 DS
 0758 JG 72 is briefing JG 64 DS
 0806 JG 72/70 RTB 1700H DS
 0800 Army will put in an 105 mm
 Barrage - will try a general trip
 push to get survivors 15
 0805 JG 72 & 70 RTB CH 77 ETA 0855
 0828 BIG BANDIT OSC (SERPENT 20 IS NOT ABN (ARMY))
 0837 BIT BANDIT WILL NOT BE OSC UNTIL 0915Z OR UNTIL SERPENT
 20 IS ABN. WE HAVE COMMAND UNTIL THEN! WE ARE
 PUTTING IN AIR STRIKES AGAIN.
 0850 GUNFIGHTER 01 FLT WORKING AREA
 0858 JG 70 & 72 ON DECK.
 0906 Army will attempt pickup. SANDY 13, 15, 16, SMOKE 45, 46
 WILL STAND BY. IF ARMY NO GO, WE WILL TRY LAST LIGHT.
 0914 ARMY HAS TAKEN OVER.
 0816
 0830

'Cont'

1030	SAN 04	survivors	05
	WMT		05
1038	phase A in progress		05
1043	JG 72 on the deck	<u>5.9</u>	05
1047	still in phase ALPHA		05
1055	phase BRAVO		05
1056	JG 71 on the deck	<u>6.4</u>	05
1238	JG 64 Down	3.1	05
1245	JG 70 Down	3.2	05
1343	DAAR JACC TOTAL	26.3	05
1350	LINE CHECK 575		05
1415	Set ARRO off duty		05

6 MAR 71

2040	MAJ POSEY ON DUTY	05
2120	STATUS TO QUEEN	05
2218	JG 71 ABN	05
2223	JG 64 ABN	05
2300	CONTACT WITH SURVIVORS	05
2310	JG 71 & 64 ON STATION	05
0015	HAMMER 21 OSC	05
0027	BAD GUYS MOVING TOWARD SURVIVORS	05
0045	STAND BY BRIEFING JOLLYS	05
0055	SNDY 04 FIRE IN WING GOING TO A12	05
0056	SNDY 05 PUNCHED OUT / JOLLY WILL PICK-UP	05
0100	PHASE BEARD COMPLETE ON SNDY 07 #611	05
0103	SCRAMBLE BRAVO MSN NBR A3-012	05
0104	JG 71 PICKED UP BAD FIRE / HANDING LOS	05
0107	SMOKE & CHOP REQUESTED	05

SARTF SANDYs in action

I was the Operations Officer for the 1st SOS at NKP in the autumn of 1970, before taking over command of the squadron in early 1970. I flew the A-1 Skyraider on 64 sorties, which isn't very impressive considering that many of the guys in my squadron had well over 100 'counters'.

I recall one search and rescue mission that had all the ingredients of a Hollywood script. It took place in March 1971, as part of Operation Lam Son 713, an incursion into Laos by South Vietnamese Army troops (ARVN), across the DMZ toward Tchepone. In the course of this action, a US Army Huey, callsign WITCH DOCTOR 05, was monitoring the action of a group of ARVN senior officers. They were touring the front lines well beyond the advancing ground troops.

Closing on Tchepone, the Huey was hit by North Vietnamese (NVA) anti-aircraft fire, and was forced down in an area immediately adjacent to a group of NVA troops. The Huey crew and the passengers extracted themselves from the wreck of the chopper, and got into an old bomb crater that was near the main trail (the Chi Minh Trail) out of Tchepone. We launched the SARTF force on 5 March and headed toward the downed Huey.

While we were en route, a couple of forward air controllers were bringing in some Navy and Marine

fighters to soften up the area prior to our attempted rescue. One of the Marine A-4 Skyhawks was shot down, which created another SAR effort. One of our 'Jolly Greens' was diverted to the downed Marine pilot, and we got him out without too much trouble.

However, while the rest of the SARTF force was working on the WITCH DOCTOR mission, one of the SANDY A-1s was hit by ground fire and started to burn. The pilot, First Lieutenant Chuck Tipton, used his 'Yankee Extractor device' and got out of the aircraft at a very low altitude. The 'Jolly Green' that he'd been escorting swooped in and picked him up in less than a minute. The 'Jolly Green' pilot then made an immediate turn and went straight back to NKP with Tipton aboard.

In the meantime, another US Army Huey, callsign DOLPHIN, decided that he could probably sneak in and pick up the WITCH DOCTOR crew and passengers. He made a rather vertical approach to the area, which made him an easy target for the NVA anti-aircraft, and was hit several times. He did make it out of the area, but his co-pilot was very badly wounded.

The call went out for another SAR force to launch out of NKP. That was me - SANDY 02. SANDY 01 and myself, along with a third 'Jolly Green' helicopter, left NKP and headed directly for the area of WITCH

DOCTOR. When we arrived, we found we weren't alone, as several other A-1s had launched from Da Nang to support our effort. These guys were armed with smoke and CS gas dispensers.

The on-scene SAR commander ordered the smoke and gas to be put down, and our team started the approach to the WITCH DOCTOR crew, but the area was still too hot. Lots of heavy anti-aircraft (AAA) fire started to blossom around both my flight and the 'Jolly Green'. As soon as the AAA opened up, the 'Jolly Green' beat a hasty retreat, and stood by, out of range of the big guns. My flight started working over the NVA gun positions that had shot us off our mission. SANDY 01 killed a ZSU (23-mm twin-mount on a tank chassis) that was near WITCH DOCTOR's position. got a 37-mm gun that had set up about a mile away.

Since the area was still very hot, and darkness was approaching, the decision was made to abandon the effort for the day. Before we left, one of our younger pilots, who had been working on a scheme to air deliver supplies to downed personnel, decided to give his idea a try. He'd been working on a high-speed delivery capsule that was made from the shell of an air-dropped flare. He'd rigged up a drogue 'chute for the thing. Inside the capsule was a URC-10 rescue radio and spare batteries, some water, hand flares, and a few meagre rations. After two passes over WITCH DOCTOR, he made a successful drop.

The next morning NKP was alive with activity as the ground crews armed the aircraft and helicopters for another try at WITCH DOCTOR. Before we got to the point of "Start engines!", we were informed that WITCH DOCTOR, his crew and passengers, were safe and sound. They'd been rescued by an ARVN M48 tank that had been part of the original Lam Son 713 effort - which is what should have been used for the rescue effort in the first place.

Major Frank Murray
1st Special Operations Squadron
Nakhon Phanom, March 1971

5 MAR 71
WITCH DOCTOR 05
DOWNED ON WITCH DOCTOR 6AR:
5 MAR 71 DOWNED SANDY
5 MAR 71 DOWNED USMC A-4

RESUED 5 MAR 71