

DATE: 9 Apr 71

15 Apr 71

MISSION NUMBER: A-3-016-9 Apr 71

AIRCRAFT DESIGNATION: King 26

DESTRESSED PERSONNEL: Vietnamese Ground Team

LOCATION: 215/57/CH 77

SAVES: 4 Saves

(S) On 9 Apr 71 at 0644Z (1454H) I advised a Vietnamese who had been transmitting on Guard for some time to stay off that frequency when Nail 47 came up and explained that his indigenous backseater had been conversing with a four-man Vietnamese ground team (Call sign AP) which was surrounded at landing zone "Eelgrass" located at 215/57/CH 77 (YB 8089). He said that the extraction forces could not come from NKP due to a large weather front on the ridgeline and that if the team was not recovered that day they would be captured by the next morning. I asked if he had tried Army resources and he replied that they did not have the endurance for an extraction in that high terrain (4300'). Queen was advised and at 0731Z (1531H) JG 70/67 and Sandy 9/10 were launched from Danang for the SAR effort. The weather in the area was 7/8-8/8 at 10,000 feet and 3/8 on the surface with scud and low clouds moving across the landing zone.

Nail 47 was appointed OSC at 0700Z (1500H) and had sufficient fuel to remain until dark. Nail 28 was on scene also but departed soon after. Nail 49 arrived at 0810Z (1610H) to supplement Nail 47. Sandy 9 was made OSC at 0823 Z (1623H) after locating the survivors. Other aircraft arriving on scene were several Blade aircraft which were not used due to deteriorating weather and Jupiter, a flight of 2 VNAF A-1's which Nail 47 used from 0835Z (1635H) to 0850Z (1650H) to sanitize the area. Since Hobo 20/21 and Sandy 1/2 were due on scene at 1000Z (1800H), I cleared Sandy 9/10 to expend about half their ordnance on scene in support of the SAR before the first pickup attempt. At 0900Z (1700H) Sandy 9 was briefing the pickup to the Nail FACs, Sandy 10, and JG 70/67. At 0914Z (1714H) the forces moved in for a first attempt with JG 70 prebriefed to set down on the landing zone in order to onload, an injured survivor. Nail 49's backseater briefed the survivors on Guard but the SAR forces used discreet frequencies for the attempt as only Vietnamese was spoken on Guard. The first attempt was abandoned

after Smoke drifted across the landing zone and JG 70 took some small arms fire. Confusion resulted when it was thought that the survivors were firing at the aircraft but the Nail FACs checked with the survivors and relayed that the firing came from the treeline across the landing zone from the SAR forces. At 0936Z (1736H) Sandy 9 briefed for a second attempt with modified tactics. With Sandy 9/10 strafing and JG 67 flying above a thin cloud deck as high bird, JG 70 moved in for the pickup with his M60's firing at the treeline. From 0946Z to 0954Z the run-in and pickup was accomplished and I heard the radio calls, "We're hit" or "I'm hit" and then Sandy 9 calling to JG 70 to, "Get it up Jolly...Climb out Jolly" and then, "Where's Sandy 10?". I asked twice, "Who is hit?" but received only broken transmissions. Then I said on Guard, "All SAR forces check in on 123.1". Immediately everyone checked in except Sandy 10. JG 70 assessed his damage and reported the survivors were all on board and that two PJ's had been injured. I then sent JG 70 and 67 home to CH 77 and kept Sandy 9 and the Nail FACs on scene. Sandy 1/2, JG 65/71 and Hobe 20/21 had all arrived in the area as the pickup was accomplished and they were also kept on scene.

Sandy 9 reported that the last time he had seen Sandy 10 was on the strafing passes while JG 70 was inbound on the second pickup attempt. He also said that a 5600 ft peak to the south was largely obscured by clouds. Sandy 9 initiated a communications search and Panama was asked by King if they had an emergency squawk on radar. Queen also advised several ground stations to be on the lookout for Sandy 10 who may have had radio failure.

Sandy 1 rejoined with Sandy 9 over the scene and Sandy 2 stayed with JG 65/71 in the holding pattern. Nail 49 was bingo and departed for CH 77 at 1015Z (1815H).

All efforts to locate Sandy 10 both visually and electronically proved negative and the SAR forces were cleared off scene in the following order: Sandy 9 (1039Z) CH 77; Hobe 20/21 (1050Z), Moonbeam; Sandy 1/2 (1110Z) CH 93; JG 65/71 (1110Z) CH 77; Nail 47 (1110Z) CH 77; King 26 (1120Z) CH 71.

SAR Forces

Sandy 1/2, 9/10
JG 70/67, 65/71
King 26

FACs

Nail 47, 49, 28

Strike Aircraft

Jupiter C
Hobe 20/21