

STATEMENT

The crash occurred on 25 November, approximately 1515 hours. The aircraft was Jolly Green 70.

On board we had a six man crew which consisted of Major Swenck, Captain George, AIC Prose, SSgt Thomas, AIC Steed and myself Sgt Theriot.

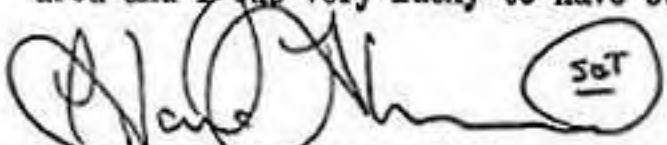
We were traveling down a river low and fast. About 15 miles off Channel 102 we lost sight of Jolly Green 73 who was high bird. We were flying a loose formation about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile back at his 5 O'clock position when we hit the storm. At this time Captain George was flying the aircraft. When we lost sight of Jolly Green 73 Major Swenck took control of the aircraft and shortly after no. 1 scanner, AIC Steed called Jolly 73 out at 11 O'clock $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. I glanced at the Jolly and the next thing I knew I was submerged under the water with no immediate exit. After I calmed down and realized what might have happened I started to look for a way out.

I came to the surface and looked around. Then AIC Steed called to me and asked how I was, and we exchanged a few words and I started to swim to him. He was about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile up the river and I couldn't make that distance with the current. At this time I started to swim down the river to a tip tank and main fuel bladder which was floating. When I reached the tank I took off my boots and swam approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to shore. When I reached shore I camouflaged myself and hid in a small group of trees. There were many boats in the area picking up parts of the aircraft, but I didn't notice any ground activity. About ten minutes later I saw AIC Steed in a Vietnamese fishing boat. I recognized him by the glare of his radio antenna. I called to him but he didn't hear me. He went to a little village about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile down the river.

I stayed hidden about 1 hour, then I heard a Huey helicopter. I went down to the beach and was rescued.

We stayed in the area for 1 hour or so looking for other survivors. We were searching about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius in which the crash covered.

The pilot of the Huey (Sea Wolf) told me that there were hostiles in the area and I was very lucky to have survived.

 Sgt
HANK L. THERIOT, Sgt, USAF
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