

2 Endless Hours on the Ground

Jolly Greens Snatch A37 Pilot From Reds

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TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam—The 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq. here told Tuesday how they snatched a downed pilot from under the noses of a Communist unit that was closing in on him.

The pilot was flying a U.S. Air Force A37 Dragonfly when his plane was brought down in flames by 12.5mm anti-aircraft fire.

The plane crashed and burned, but search and rescue (SAR) operations for the pilot, who had ejected, began almost as soon as the call for help was received by an HC-130 Hercules plane flying out of Cam Ranh Bay.

At the call for help, two broad-nosed 27th AF HH53 Super Jolly Green Giant

helicopters, armed with miniguns, were launched to rescue the downed pilot.

The two hours the pilot spent on the ground waiting to be rescued were probably the longest of his life.

The burns on his face, arms and legs were nearly forgotten during the agony of waiting.

While the Jolly Green Giants headed toward the crash site, two of the maneuverable A1s, heavily armed, single-engine fighters, sped to link up with the choppers and provide protection against Communist ground fire.

A Communist infantry unit was reported moving toward the downed pilot from one direction as allied ground forces raced in from another direction.

Seventh AF F4 Phantoms and Army helicopter gunships, diverted from other

operations as added protection, were only a radio call away if more firepower was needed.

Meanwhile, the pilot kept in touch with the SAR units via a radio built into his flight suit. An electronic device in the suit emitted impulses to aid in pinpointing his position.

As the A1s moved in and pounded the Red positions in an attempt to silence the ground fire, allied infantrymen reached the American pilot and moved him to a secure position.

One of the rescue helicopters awaited word to move in for the pickup, observing the colored smoke which marked a cleared landing area for the craft. The other copter remained in the distance.

The chopper spent seven minutes on the ground picking up the slightly in-

jured pilot. Communist fire could still be heard in the distance.

"The jollys always work in pairs," the AF spokesman said. "One works as a low bird and the other one is there in case the first bird gets hit or has mechanical trouble."

To the men aboard these bulky rescue helicopters, "there's no such thing as a standard mission. You play each one by ear," said Capt. Steve Tyler, 26, pilot of the chopper that eventually rescued the A37 flier.

Afterward, Flight Engineer Airman 1.C. John Drayer, 21, recalled, "You don't think about too much when you're out there. You do your job and shut out everything else."

For these men the job was done—until tomorrow.

Rescue crew saves Dragonfly pilot down in Cambodia

BIEN HOA AB, RVN — Rescue crews saved an Air Force A-37 Dragonfly pilot (Nov. 29) after his aircraft was shot down by enemy ground fire in Kampong Thom, Cambodia.

Capt. Alvin W. Moore II was picked up in hostile territory by members of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron on alert here from Da Nang Airfield.

The pilot was on a low pass when he felt the aircraft shudder. Moments later, the pilot of an accompanying A-37 radioed Captain Moore that his aircraft was on fire.

As flames reached the cockpit, the captain ejected and parachuted into the hostile area.

Meanwhile, the wing man contacted an HC-130 Hercules rescue command aircraft from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Cam Ranh Bay AB. The Hercules relayed the information to the Joint Rescue Coordination Center at Tan Son Nhut AB, and two HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giants and a pair of A-1 Skyraiders were launched from Bien Hoa to make the rescue.

Captain Moore, in good condition with burns on his face, arm and leg, reported to the Hercules that there were hostile forces in the vicinity.

The A-1s escorted the HH-53s in for the pickup but heavy ground fire forced the helicopters to pull out.

As the A-1s moved in to silence the enemy guns, friendly forces on the ground entered the area and helped Captain Moore to a safer location.

On the second attempt, the pickup was successful.

While Captains Stephen Tyler, aircraft commander, and Norm Coley, copilot, flew the helicopter back to Bien Hoa, the rescued pilot was attended by TSgt. John Young and A1C Charles D. Alden, pararescuemen. Sgt. John Drayer, flight engineer, assisted also in the rescue.