

CHAPTER V

MISSION NARRATIVES

SAR activity for the quarter started on 8 Nov 71 when Captain Rodney S. Griffith and crew were scrambled at the Bien Hoa FOL. The objective for the mission was a downed VNAF H-34 helicopter located deep in Cambodia. Enroute to the crash site the crew was advised that the survivors were in contact with the enemy and being forced to leave the wreckage. At this time the on scene commander, a Mike FAC, began putting the TAC Air provided by both fast and slow movers. Upon arrival in the SAR area the Jollys rendezvoused with two Ubon base Sandys who began preparing the area for the pickup attempt. Ordnance was placed within close proximity to the survivors, and a smoke screen laid between the survivors and known enemy positions. At this time the Sandys briefed the Jollys on the pickup and an ingress was initiated. As the Jolly approached the pickup point the crew vision became obscured by the smoke screen which drifted over the survivors location. At this time Sandy lead advised the Jolly to make an immediate egress from the area. As Capt Griffith began the pullout the co-pilot spotted the survivors yellow smoke and red marker pannel approximately 50 meters away. The helicopter was slowed and a landing made in a small clearing adjacent to the survivors's markers. As the survivors scrambled on board through the aft ramp the Sandy's and Cobra gunships continued to expend around the pickup area. Ground fire was reported throughout the pickup phase, but was not observed by Capt Griffith and crew as a result of the smoke screen. Once the eight survivors were safely on board a

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high speed low altitude egress from the area was made and the aircraft recovered uneventfully at Bien Hoa AB.

Four days later Capt Griffith and crew were again scrambled from the Bien Hoa FOL. A VNAF UH-1F was reported down twenty miles northeast of Bien Hoa. A RASH FAC Briefed the Jollies on the situation while they proceeded to the area. An army hunter-killer team began preparing the area while the Jollies readied their aircraft for the rescue attempt. The survivors were located in the trees at the edge of a large clearing. Immediately upon arrival they were advised that the area had been thoroughly prepared and were cleared in for the pickup. An autorotative decent and power recovery to a landing was made in the immediate vicinity of the survivors who rapidly boarded through the crew entrance door. During the recovery, ground fire was reported north of the LZ but was never confirmed by the crew. Egress was made from the area and seven survivors brought safely back to Bien Hoa.

On 25 November 71 Jolly Green 70 and 73 were scrambled out of the Bien Hoa FOL for a Navy CH-46 shot down ninety miles south with twenty-one people on board. Major problems encountered enroute were navigation being hampered by low ceilings and poor visibility. As a result both aircraft, forced to fly at 100-300 feet AGL, were exposed to enemy ground fire as they approached the down helicopter. King advised the Jollies to withdraw to a safe holding point to await area preparation. Major Robert B. Swench the Alpha Low AC on Jolly Green 70 was advised that Dustoff and Sea Wolf helicopters had extracted seven injured survivors and that his assistance would be required to pickup the remaining personnel. Jolly Green 70

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Date: 8 November 1971

Mission Number: 03-016-8 November 1971

Aircraft Designation: King 24

Distressed Aircraft: King Bee w/Ground Team

Location: 115 DME on the 342 Radial CH 73

Saves: 8 Combat

(S) At 0725Z Joker diverted King 24 to proceed to the 155/170/93 advising that a King Bee had been shot down with 7 SOB. Jolly Green 65 and 70 were enroute from CH 73 and Sandys 5 and 6 were being scrambled from CH 93. Mike 64 was on scene and the survivors were reported to be under attack.

We proceeded to the crash scene and established contact with Ramrod and Pyramid. We requested information on the situation and the frequency of Mike 64 from Ramrod. Ramrod informed us that King Bee a CH 34 was down and we could talk to Mike 64 on 280.90. A discrete GCI frequency, 372.00, was obtained from Pyramid. Ramrod said that they could not come up that frequency.

At 0735Z initial contact was established with Granny 01, and Mike 65 who was Mike 64's replacement. At that time both Granny and Mike 65 were enroute to the scene. At 0738 we established contact with Mike 64 and designated him OSC. All SAR Forces on 280.9 were told to QSY King 24 on 364.2.

During this time Ramrod informed us that they were RTB and to effect further coordination with Sundog Alpha on 121.6V. At this time King 24's ETA to OS was 0750Z.

At 0740Z Jolly Green 65 and 70 were contacted on Hotel A and told to QSY King 24 121.7V with 364.2U as SAR primary.

At 0741Z Mike 64 informed us that there were 6 people on the ground (3 chopper crewmembers and 3 members of the ground team). Mike 64 also said that the survivors were moving to a clear area for use as a landing zone and that they were being pursued by the enemy. King Bee had been shot down while attempting to extract the ground team.

Weather OS was 4500' broken with good visibility, altimeter 2990. Terrain was flay 100' elevation with 100' trees. The hostile situation consisted of small arms fire.

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GROUP-4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals.
Declassified after 12 yrs.

At 0745Z we were informed as to the status of the survivors. All sign later turned out to be Law 56) was 10 and had visual and voice contact with the survivors. M65 said that 4 Huey Cobras would be available within 10 min. if required.

At 0745Z Sandy 5 and 6 were airborne CH 93 and Hawks were requested. At 0746Z we requested that King 27 be launched.

Further ordnance (soft preferable) was requested from Sundog Alpha. Ramrod then began to talk to Mike FACS and King on 364.2. We requested that he coordinate on discrete GCI freq. 372.0. Communication with Ramrod was poor and all requests were made through Sundog A. Our requests for TAC Air were denied by Sundog Alpha and Ramrod.

At 0751Z we requested that GBU 17, 30 and BLU 12 be unloaded. At 0752Z Granny 01 was put in hot with Nape and High Drags.

We attempted to contact Pawnee Target because of difficulty in obtaining TAC Air, however they could not be raised on listed frequencies. Law 56 reported that the enemy was close to the survivors and that the survivors were still under fire.

At 0806Z we requested that Joker coordinate with blue chip for TAC Air that was needed urgently. At 0808Z we were informed that Hawk 01 and Hawk 03 were being launched as TAC Air, we also requested gas be fragged on the hickory anchor for SAM support.

At 0810Z M64 RTB and M65 was appointed CGO. We asked for a kacked up position of the LZ but M64 said he would have to give it in the clear. We then asked for TACAN radial & DME only. He reported it as 342/115/102 (later he revised it to 342/115/73), at this time Granny Flt was winchester and RTB'd. M65 informed us that Raider 26 (4 Huey Cobras) was 5 min. out.

At 0812Z Gunfighter 01 checked in with 16 Snake and Nape, M65 started to work them as soon as they were available.

At 0813Z we were informed that King 27 was off CH 71 at 0811Z, ETA 0900Z. At 0815Z we were informed by Joker that Hickory 46 could AR Gunfighter 01 at anytime.

At 0820Z Gunfighter 01 was sent to the tank and Raider 26 was put to work, at 0830Z Hawk 01 was OS and was immediately put to work and the Raiders held close by. Hawk 01 had M82's, Nape and Nails.

At 0825Z JG 65 and 70 were established in holding 5 NM East of LZ. ETA for Sandy 5, 6 was 0900Z.

Three more flights of TAC Air were requested from Sundog Alpha. We were informed that we would have Clammy flt, Hawk 03 and Redbird 09.

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GROUP-4

Downgraded at 3 year interval
Declassified after 12 years

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At 0837Z CBU 19/0 was requested again. We were informed that neither CBU 19/0 or BLU 52 would be available. We then requested a fast mover smoke effect.

At 0835Z Clammy flt checked in with M82 and BLU 27. At 0837 Hawk 03 checked in with M82 clicks, AG, and pistol. At 0841Z Sandy 5 and 6 checked in on 127.7 with a 1230Z bingo. Bingo for JG 65 and 70 was 1100Z. A replacement FAC had been requested previously and we were informed by Sundog Alpha that Sundog 38 would be OS at 1000Z. Law 56 informed us that there were 8 survivors and that they were all in good condition waiting at the LZ with a panel out.

At 0855Z Hawk 01 RTB'd and raider 26 (then a flight of 2 Cobras) began to troll the area.

At 0900Z Sandy 5 & 6 began to work with M85. King 27 arrived OS. At 0900Z, BLU 52 was again requested with the approaching darkness in case we had to bed down the survivors.

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After coordination with Sandy 5 evaluating wind and time remaining we cancelled our request for fast mover smoke. Sandy 5 & 6 began trolling for ground fire. JG 65 and 70 checked in on 364.2 at this time and phase A was completed.

Phase B began at 0918Z. Sandy 5 saw ground fire west of LZ and expended on it. Raider 26 (now a flight of 4 Cobras) worked with Sandy 5 & 6 in phase B.

At 0920Z Clammy 1 & 2 were sent to the tank and at 0921Z Lowboy flt checked in with 12 MK82's ext and 12 MK82's rxn extended. LOWBOY flt had very little fuel so he was also sent to the tank. Hawk 03 and red bird 09 were in holding. Red Bird 09 had wall to wall high drag bombs.

At 0925Z smoke had been deployed by Sandys 5 & 6 and the survivors reported negative fire in their immediate vicinity. Survivors were asked to pop a smoke at 0932Z. Some one called that they were taking ground fire 50 meters to the NE and Sandy 5 went in hot. At 0935Z Raiders were bingo and had to RTB. At 0940Z phase bravo was complete.

At 0940Z Gunfighter 01 checked back in. He had landed at CH 73 and refueled. He was released at 0942Z. Hawk 03 was asked to escort JG 64 & 70 to CH 73, RTB 1125Z under the guidance of King 27. Redbird 09 was sent to Law 56 to destroy the CH34 and all participants were informed they the SAR was terminated and that they were released. Sandy 5 & 6 RTB'd to CH93.

Several problems were encountered in this mission basically due to a lack of knowledge of what to expect in a Cambodian operation. The Jollys were launched out of CH 73 without the SAR dedicated Hawks, when they were requested they were not available and only became available later as TAC Air. If the Jollys

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GROUP-4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals
Declassified after 12 years

could have made a quick pick up they would have been able to wait 30 min. for the Sandys or go on unassisted. I feel this situation should not have occurred. We also had problems getting the air, we felt that Alamo and Sundog Alpha were not familiar with Kings role and how they should assist us, I felt that CBU 19/30 should have been used and that BLU 52 also should have been available in case we had to bed down the survivors. If we will not be able to use this ordinance in Cambodia someone should have told us before hand. At least some type of smoke flight should be made available for all missions. We used to expect BLU 52 on Cobra PA's from Phu Cat. Phu Cat is closing now and Joker said that they were trying to locate BLU 52. Information on the location BLU 52 should be researched and made available to all using agencies. In requesting authentication from Joker there was an excessive time delay. Request that Joker radio operations have all encoding and decoding devices immediately available and are familiar with their use.

I feel that the mission was overall very successfully handled. Without the assistance of AhkS, the recovery of 8 personnel could not have been complete. The day after the survivors did have to spend the night I feel that it is very questionable whether or not they would have been alive the next day due to the intense enemy activity in the area.

King 24 Crewmembers

AC/AMC Capt Robert J. Hager
CP 1 Lt James V. Jordan
N Major Thomas E. Doherty
RO SSgt John E. Freeman
FE SSgt George T. Whitlow
FE SSgt Louie B. Payne
LM SSgt Jaime Rivera

SAR Resources

Jolly Green 65/70
Sandy 5/6

Other Resources available
not used

Clanny 01 Lowboy
Suhdog 08


ROBERT J. HAGER, Capt., USAF
Aircraft Commander/Airborne Mission Commander

King 27 Crewmembers

AC/AMC Capt Don H. Owen
CP 1 Lt Thomas J. Parks III
N Capt John C. Thomas
RO SSgt James Chrisan
FE TSgt Edward L. Pike
FE SSgt Bobby E. Stubbs
LM TSgt Claude R. Ferrand

Other Resources used

Mike 64/65	Gunfighter 01
Law 56	Red Bird 09
Raider 26	Hawk 01/03
Granny 01	

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GROUP-4
Downgraded at 3 year intervals
Declassified at 12

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH AIR FORCE PACAF
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96307

SPECIAL ORDER
G-1063

7 MAY 1972

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT, EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IS
AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS FOR HEROISM WHILE
PARTICIPATING IN AERIAL FLIGHT ON THE DATE INDICATED.

SSAN	NAME	ON	PAS
LIEUTENANT COLONEL			
	CLARKE JOHN A	711011	UBRSSK
CAPTAIN			
	BURKE ROBERT F 1ST OLC	711108	NARHSB
	FOLEY NORMAN R	711129	DAQKJR
	GRIFFITH RODNEY S	711108	DAQKJR
	HART LESLIE C	711231	DAQKJR
	SARTORI MICHAEL C	711108	DAQKJR
	SILVIA RONALD	711011	UBRSSK
	TYLER STEPHEN R 1ST OLC	711129	DAQKJR
	WITHERS JAMES R 6TH OLC	700610	NARMT6
TECHNICAL SERGEANT			
	NARDI EUGENE L 5TH OLC	711108	DAQKJR

G-1063

SO G-1063, HQ 7TH AIR FORCE, APO SAN FRANCISCO 96307, 7 MAY 1972

SALOME CHARLES F	711231	DAQKJR
1ST OLC		

YOUNG JON H	711129	DAQKJR
2ND OLC		

STAFF SERGEANT

GARCIA DAVID	711108	DAQKJR
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WINES JAMES W	711231	DAQKJR
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SERGEANT

DRAYER JOHN W	711129	DAQKJR
---------------	--------	--------

AIRMAN FIRST CLASS

ALDEAN CHARLES B	711108	DAQKJR
2ND OLC		

ASHDOWN JAMES K	711231	DAQKJR
1ST OLC		

WAGNER MICHAEL L	711231	DAQKJR
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FOR THE COMMANDER

M. K. Pfautsch
M/K PFAUTSCH, SMSGT, USAF
ASST DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

DISTRIBUTION
G



NARDI
ALDEAN.JPG

8 NOV 71 SIAC

ALDEAN NARDI

GRIFFITH
SARTORI

PHOTO PROPERTY OF NARDI

Robert LaPointe

From: "Lori" <cbaldea@mn.mediaone.net>
To: "LaPointe" <rlapointe@gci.net>
Sent: Saturday, May 06, 2000 12:25 PM
Attach: chuck & me.jpg
Subject: Fw: Hi

Bob, Heres some stuff on missions you asked for. Picture is after 12nov71 mission; Pilots- Griffith& Sartori; PJ's- Nardi& Aldean ; not pictured FE-Garcia.

8Nov71 mission in Cambodia Nardi & I both remember we were expecting Americans. When they broke tree line, were Viet's wearing combo good guy-bad guy uniforms & were all carrying AK's. Came in ramp by Nardi. He kept close watch on em because we still weren't sure who they were, & I layed down covering fire with mini on way out. They were off loaded pretty hush hush at Bien Hoa. We were told later they were a 'road watch' team of repatriated bad guys.

24May71 Your mission report covers it pretty well.

29Nov71 Cambodia If you remember being at Bien Hoa shortly after Jim Thomas's bird went down, the unidentified picture of pilot on your web site could have been this guy. Was burned, & I dressed his arm & cleaned up his face a little.

25Nov71 Nardi & I hi bird. Thomas , Prose , Steeds lo bird made succesful pickup. Both took hits on way in. Stopped at small army base to check for damage & had quick Thanksgiving Turkey.[Was Thanksgiving Day] On way back to Bien Hoa weather real bad. They went down. We returned & couldnt see anyone in water. I went in river but very strong current & poor visibility & couldnt locate for sure where wreckage was. Also put me down on shore but again unable to locate survivors. Short time later we did pick up Steed who apparently had been taken to different location on shore by Viet fisherman. Keep up good work. See you in Sept thanks Charlie Aldean

----- Original Message -----

From: <Genonardi@aol.com>
To: <cbaldea@mn.mediaone.net>
Sent: Monday, April 24, 2000 3:40 PM
Subject: Hi

> Here is the picture you asked about
 >

Seven saved in one mission

BIEN HOA -- Rescue crews from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron on alert here recently rescued seven crewmen and passengers of a downed Republic of Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) helicopter from possible capture or death by nearby enemy forces.

The VNAF helicopter was hit at 8:57 a.m., the seven airmen aboard it were on their way to safety via an HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter. During those 31-minutes however, a lot happened.

As soon as the VNAF chopper went down, an emergency call went to 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group headquarters Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) at Tan Son Nhut. Maj. Jimmy Lewis, the duty controller, immediately located the site and his map while MSgt. Darryl D. Tincher plotted the position on the center's search and rescue map.

Major Lewis then punched the hot-line button for Bien Hoa, ordering the two HH-53s on alert there to launch. The next order of the day was

to get air cover over the downed crewmen. To do this, Major Lewis contacted the U.S. Army liaison officer with the JRCC, Lt. Col. Gus Greyhosky, and asked that Army

gunships be diverted to the rescue site.

Near Major Lewis, intelligence officers plotted the area again and evaluated it as "hot"... known enemy troop concentrations, within range of possible enemy mortars, good chance of ground fire.

Minutes after the crash, an Air Force OV-10 Bronco forward air control aircraft was on the scene, and notified the JRCC that there was enemy small-arms fire in the area, some as close as 50 yards north of the downed men.

JRCC had by then diverted a specially modified HC-130 Hercules aircraft to act as airborne command and control center for the rescue.

More minutes passed until finally voice contact was made with the Vietnamese crewmen. There was no injuries but they could hear enemy fire very close to them. They had not as yet made contact.

While the Jolly Greens were churning their way to the area, U.S. Army Cobra gunships had reached the scene and began working with their cohort, a tiny OH-6 low observation helicopter to suppress the enemy's fire and keep them away from the downed chopper.

The Jolly Greens arrived soon after. One of the big helicopters stood off to provide cover while the other went in for the rescue.

Aboard the rescue chopper making the pickup were Captains Rodney S. Griffith, aircraft commander, and Michael C. Sartori, co-pilot. Crewmen included Sgt. David Garcia, flight engineer, and pararescuemen TSgt. Eugene L. Nardi and A1C Charles B. Aldean.

Captain Griffith brought the HH-53 in for a landing near the downed VNAF chopper, and the Vietnamese airmen quickly scrambled aboard. This was the second rescue mission of the week for the men at Bien Hoa earlier this week they pulled another eight men to safety, continuing to live up to their Service's motto - "That others may live."

REF ID: A667

(C) The first of three SAR missions in November occurred on the 8th of the month. The crew and passengers of an Army helicopter, with the call sign of King Bee, were downed in central Cambodia about 60 miles northwest of Phnom Penh. The helicopter had a crew of three and five passengers.²⁷

(C) Sandys C5 and C6 were launched from Udon where they had been on alert. Upon arriving in the vicinity of the downed helicopter they were aided in locating the correct position by a local PAC, Mike C5. The Sandys proceeded to saturate the area with gunfire until the Jolly Greens, also launched from Udon, arrived on the scene.²⁸

(C) No hostile fire was encountered in the area of the downed helicopter and the Jolly Greens made the pickup of all who had been on board King Bee. The Sandys continued to make fire suppression passes while the pickup was being made, however, no opposition was encountered at any time.²⁹

27. Details provided by Maj. G.V. Miller, 56th Wing SARCC, 22 Feb 72.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

NOVEMBER 1971				SURVIVORS		
				NAME	RANK	
				SSN		
DATE	CREW	JG #	SAVE #	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	TYPE SAVE
8 NOV	GRIFFITH SARTORI GARCIA ALDEAN NARDI	65	661 THRU 668	DNB-BAN-HUE LT. 219 SQ + 7	345/120/73 ASN # 030/6, 8 NOV 71	8 COMBAT SAVES
12 NOV 71	GRIFFITH SARTORI GARCIA ALDEAN NARDI	65	669 THRU 675	2LT TRUNG MINH DUC 2LT PHAU VAN HOA SGT HOANG TRUNG DUNG SGT TROU HUE PHUOC SGT LOUAI H.V. AIC MONGI N.V. THANH L.V.	120/73	7 COMBAT SAVES
25 NOV 71	SURICK GEORGE THORIC THOMAS PELSS STEED	346 TC	676 THRU 689		C955N 10559E	14 COMBAT SAVES
25 NOV	WALL DAKE GARCIA NARDI ALDEAN	788 73	690	AIC STEED SGT THOMAS 37 ARRS		15 COMBAT SAVES

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS
(SECOND OAK LEAF CLUSTER)

TO

CHARLES B. ALDEAN

Airman First Class Charles B. Aldean distinguished himself by heroism while participating in aerial flight as a Pararescue Specialist on an HH-53 Rescue Helicopter near Kracheh, Cambodia, on 8 November 1971. On that date, Airman Aldean's outstanding airmanship and extensive technical skill, displayed under the extremely hazardous conditions of making a pick up in a known hostile area, culminated in the rescue of eight Vietnamese crewmembers whose H-34 Helicopter had been shot down. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, and despite the threat of hostile ground fire, Airman Aldean exposed himself in the open door of the helicopter to man his defensive gun position and provide suppressive fire throughout the landing and recovery of all survivors. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Airman Aldean reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

PHOTO BURKE - GRIFFITH.
SARTRON
FE GARLEY
DJO NARDI - ALDEAN

Bob -

THIS WAS

MISSION WE HAD BEEN
TOLD GOING IN THAT
SURVIVORS WERE AMERICAN.
ABLE TO LAND IN A
CLEARING. NARDI WAS
ON RAMP GUN, I WAS
ON L-SIDE GUN. I
SAW EM BREAK
TREELINE FIRST AND
HAD TO YELL AT GEND
THAT THEY WERE
NEAR & CARRYIN AK'S.
IF HE'D HAVE SEEN
EM FIRST, HE'D HAVE
HOSSED EM! WAS A
REPARATED EX NVA
'ROAD WALKER' TEAM. AT
LEAST I HAD BEEN KILLED
IN FIREFIGHT AFTER THEY
WENT DOWN. WE LANDED
IN REMOTE AREA AT
BEN HON & THEY GOT OFF
QUIETLY. NO KNOWLEDGE OF
FLYBY. (TALKED TO GEND ON
PHONE TODAY & HE REMEMBERS.)
CA