

8Nov71 37th SAR

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 sandy's 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 Sandy's 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 pull, out the co-pilot spotted the survivors yellow smoke and red marker panel approximately 50 meters away. The helicopter was slowed and a landing made in a small clearing adjacent to the survivors 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 high speed low altitude egress from the area was made and the air craft recovered uneventfully at Bien Hoa AB.