

Rescue saves F-105 pilot in Laos

TAN SON NHUT AB, RVN -- One of the most dramatic air rescues in recent months took place in Laos (Dec. 11) when an Air Force F-105 Thunderchief pilot was retrieved after his aircraft was downed by a surface to air missile (SAM) near the Mu Gia Pass.

A harrowing 20 hours for the pilot on the ground in Laos preceded his rescue.

The pilot, Maj. Robert E. Belli, was supporting an interdiction mission about eight miles northwest of the pass on Dec. 10 when his aircraft was downed by a SAM from the North Vietnamese side of the border.

The 39th and 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons were immediately notified of the crash and sped to the area.

The major had successfully ejected and the search and rescue (SAR) force of HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giants and HC-130 Hercules found him in hostile territory.

The SAR aircraft established both voice and beeper contact with the pilot of the downed aircraft, who reported he was in a secure position although enemy troops were in the area.

Due to deteriorating weather, the SAR aircraft were unable to extract the pilot before darkness, and he spent the night on the ground.

He reported he had a broken arm and a possible broken leg but there was little the rescue force could do for him until the weather broke.



CAPT. ALVIA W. MOORE II, r, returns to Bien Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam, after his successful rescue from hostile territory. Capt. Stephen Tyler, l, was the aircraft commander of the HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant that made the rescue.

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13 DEC

DATE: 11 December 1971

MISSION NUMBER: A-3-040

FLIGHT DESIGNATION: KING 22

MISSION OBJECTIVE: GHOST 033 (US ARMY COBRA GUNSHIP) AH-1G

LOCATION: 40NM SE CHU LAI

SAVES: TWO (NONCOMBAT)

DECLASSIFIED

At 2120L during RTB to Cam Ranh Bay from Udorn, a call for any aircraft was received on 243.0 from Ghost 033. King 22 responded to the call and asked for the nature of Ghost 033's difficulty and position. Ghost 033 replied that his navigation equipment had failed, he was in IFR conditions, low on fuel, and unsure of his position. King 22 directed Ghost 033 to squawk emergency for radar pick-up and also requested UHF hold down for a DF cut. GCI and Danang approach control both reported that they were not receiving an IFF emergency Squawk. King 22 continued with standard air rescue "lost aircraft" procedures and determined that Ghost 033 was approximately 40 SE of Chu Lai.

Ghost 033 was advised to head 300° and climb to 5000' minimum to avoid possible high terrain. King 22 then accomplished a DF intercept on Ghost 033. Ghost 033 was intercepted approximately 28NM southeast of Chu Lai. Queen provided updated data on facilities available at Chu Lai which were relayed to Ghost 033. Ghost 033 landed safely at 2240L.

LESSON LEARNED: During the course of this mission Ghost 033 was asked to make turns for radar identification. As a helicopter his turn radius was much smaller than that of a fixed wing aircraft. Because of this it was necessary to have Ghost 033 fly the new heading for several minutes in order to give GCI radar an opportunity to recognize the turn.

KING 22 CREWMEMBERS

AMC Capt Constant
CP Maj Johnson
CP Capt Hassell
NAV Capt Condie
RO TSgt Farr
RO TSgt Alford
FE TSgt Lamb
FE SSgt Stubbs
LM SSgt Alexander

ADDITIONAL CREW ABOARD KING 22 ASSISTING

AC Lt Col Klingenberg
AMC Capt Hager
CP Capt Williams
NAV Maj Siegel
RO TSgt Fierros
FE TSgt Tye
FE SSgt Underwood
LM SSgt Gartland

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FORCES UTILIZED

KING 22

QUEEN

PANAMA CCI CONTROLLER 20

DANANG APPROACH 10000 L

Dennis L. Constant

DENNIS L. CONSTANT, Capt.
Airborne Mission Specialist

DECLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~