

18 DEC 71

FALCON 66-71-75

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(5) K 66 was declared at 1400 hours and on 18 December 1971 when Falcon 66 was shot down by a MIG while flying MIG CAP for a D32 mission in the vicinity of San Nera, Laos. Falcon 67, wingman of Falcon 66, reported that he saw two chutes open as Falcon 66 went down but that no beepers were heard and no radio communications established. Falcon 67 returned to his base without refining the location of the chutes he had seen.⁵²

(6) Sandys 03 and 04 had launched at 1230 on a routine mission to the Barrel Roll. Fifteen minutes after takeoff they were notified by KING of the SAR for Falcon 66 and were directed to a location 102 miles at 045 degrees from BANG on panel 138. This was in the area southeast of San Nera. Upon their arrival at the designated location contact was made with an ARVN American aircraft with the call sign "Arthur" who was searching for the survivors. The Sandys and Arthur split up the area and continued the search. They were soon joined by Nail 04 who was assigned to remain near San Nera and listen for some communication from the survivors.⁵³

(6) Shortly after the arrival of Nail 04 a beeper was heard by both the Nail and the Sandys. It was traced to an area southeast of San Nera and voice contact was established shortly

52. SARNO Report for Falcon 66/71/75, 19-Dec 71, (Dec 17).
53. Ibid.

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7th Group. He explained that Falcons 74 and 75 had been down
search for Falcon 66, but that 74 had run out of fuel and had
forced to eject. Since no word had been received from Falcon
66, the search then moved on to locate the last survivor, Falcon
76. With the Ranger, the Mail, and Arthur coordinating, the
location of Falcon 76's crash was, at 1625, determined as a forest
nine miles southeast of Sam Nhon. Visual conditions were poor with
broken to overcast conditions prevailing. Sandy 63, however, de-
cided to go under the low clouds to try to locate the chutes by
visual search rather than by radio calls. While at low altitude
under the clouds his aircraft developed difficulty, indicated by
an oil warning light, and he was required to jettison low altitude
and return to base with Sandy 64. On-scene command was then
passed to Mail 54.

(C) Mail 54 continued to talk with Bravo so as to confirm
his location. During these conversations Alpha also identified
himself as being down in the same general area and able to com-
municate. The search by Mail 54 and Arthur was joined by Mail
09, however, due to the location close to the border of North
Vietnam, operations were hampered by numerous SAM and MIG warn-
ings. At 1648 Mail 54 refined the survivors' position to be
UE 6202. The weather at that time was poor but workable, and no

54. T144.
55. T144.

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ground fire was normal in the area. A decision was made for a pickup before dark was made.⁵⁵

(C) Jolly Greens 52 and 56 were called into the area from where they had been holding near Lima Site 32. They departed from the site at 1730 with a new team of Sandy 01 and 02 inbound also. The weather closed in and darkness arrived and by 1800 conditions made it impossible to continue with the pickup. It was decided to wait until first light in the morning. The Jolly Greens and Sandy's returned to RHP for the night and Lima 07 remained on-scene secured.⁵⁶

(D) During the search of the afternoon no word had been received from Falcon 66, and hope of rescue of that crew began to fade. By mid afternoon a third Falcon aircraft was also identified as missing. Falcon 75, the wingman of 74 had not only run low on fuel, but had lost navigational aids as well, and at last contact had departed the San Nam area heading over North Vietnam for the sea in hope of a "West Net" rescue. When he departed the area he was known to be almost out of fuel. By evening no contact had been established with the crews of either Falcon 66 or 75.⁵⁷

(E) As darkness came the two survivors reported they could hear people moving around them. The inhabitants of the area were known to be hostile, and it became essential to isolate the two crewmen until rescue could be made in daylight. The use of RHP-52 and CDF-11 was approved, and a protective ring was applied around

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

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and on the area of the survivors, directed by the Jolly Green commander. While it served its purpose, it was to cause problems the next day.⁵⁸

(C) MIGs entering the area on several occasions forced the Nails to jettison their ordnance and take evasive action. In spite of those difficulties the Nails directed the application of the area denial munitions around Falcon 74 Alpha and Bravo and heard ordnance on hostile positions and known enemy gun locations.⁵⁹

(C) The first night SAR effort was carefully planned during the night to utilize two Jolly Greens and four Sandys. The Jolly Greens were to hold in a safe area over Lima Site 32 so as to be near the pickup site when needed. Other Sandys and Nails were programmed to assist in refinement of the search.⁶⁰

(C) Before dawn on the 19th, a four plane formation of Sandys and Nails launched from HAF in time to arrive over the crash site at the end of darkness. Weather in the area was worse than the day before, with a solid low cloud deck. At first light Sandy 01 went under the clouds and after many very low passes located 74 Alpha in a position barely visible under the clouds. Bravo reported that he was close by, but that the clouds were right on the treetops in his location. The Jolly Greens were called in and Jolly Green 62 went under the clouds to make the rescue. He was guided to 74 Alpha and went into hover over him.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

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...to keep the jungle peace. The ELU-52 had been
from which started up a cloud over the ground which enveloped
the helicopter and objective. It was the ELU-52 which had been
dropped during the night to protect the survivors from hostile
intruders. The Jolly Green was forced to withdraw, with the
crew suffering from the effects of the ELU-52. Alpha also suf-
fered from the same ill effects to the degree that he could
hardly talk on his radio.⁶¹

(C) The crew of Jolly Green 62 required some time to re-
cover from the ELU-52. They then put on gas masks and again
started towards the objective area. The weather on the morning
had deteriorated even more, to the extent that low clouds made
protective passes by the Sandy impossible. Jolly Green 62
reached Alpha again and went into a hover at which point a burst
of small arms fire took out one of his engines and forced him out
of the area. He was escorted to Lima Site 32 by the Sandy 03/04
flight and as he drew near that site additional ground fire was
encountered from the surrounding area. Sandy 03 returned fire
with his 20mm cannon and mini-guns and Jolly Green 62 was able
to make an emergency landing for repairs to the engine.⁶²

(D) Clouds closed in over the survivors after the second
pickup attempt, and little could be done for the time being.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

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the wilderness. He led Snake 31, and the Green and followed him down, leaving Snake 31 on top to direct the others. Conditions under the clouds were poor, with mountain peaks obscured and broken clouds in the valleys, but there were indications that visibility was improving. The Jolly Greens were called in from their holding point at Alpha Site 32, about thirty minutes away. While the Jolly Greens were on the way, Snake 31 tried to locate the objectives under the clouds with the aid of Para Mail 39 over the clouds to guide him to the correct position. Snake 31 was unable to locate Alpha or Bravo, and at 1400 he was required to return to base for fuel.⁶⁵

(C) Sentries 03 and 04 now arrived on the scene, followed shortly by Jolly Greens 55 and 60 who were escorted by Sentries 17 and 18. Mail 09, 32, and 39 were also in the area to assist. Due to previous holding time, the Jolly Greens now had limited time remaining on station and it seemed to be a "now or never" time to make another rescue attempt that day. It was now Sentry 03's turn to go under the clouds to conduct the search. He found conditions much as Snake 31 had described them, with low visibility and clouds in the higher areas. After many unfruitful attempts, often finding himself in dead end canyons but always guided back towards the survivors by Para Mail 09 and his radio contact, Sentry 03 was required to be extracted by Alpha. The parachutes were located, and Sentry 04 was directed to guide Jolly Green 55 into the area. Also Sentry 03 made passes to now

65. Ibid.

including any ground fire. Bravo was no nearer to the tower by Sandy 03, and Jolly Green 35 was led to the chutes. While Sandy 03 and 04 circled Bravo, Alpha was in the air. Alpha saw smoke but no smoke appeared, and Alpha could not raise the helicopter. The search again started with the survivor continuing to give directions to 03 that would lead him to where the clouds were on the treetops. The chutes were nowhere in sight now. The Jolly Green was instructed to hover as close as he could to the edge of the clouds in the direction of Alpha and look for the chute from a stable position close to the ground. As he moved in the clouds lifted from 50 to 100 feet, but not enough to see the chute or survivor. The sound of the helicopter engines proved to be the key factor, and Alpha was able to talk the Jolly Green in to his location. The rescue was made with the Sandy ready to provide fire power if required.⁶⁶

(c) Bravo came up on radio while the Jolly Green was in a hover over Alpha. He gave a vector to bring the Jolly Green over his position, and soon he had been picked up. By the completion of Bravo's rescue, Alpha's previous position was again obscured in the clouds and the overcast was again thickening. All forces returned to base after a difficult but successful run.⁶⁷

(d) Throughout the two day task effort no contact was made

66. TML.

67. TML.