

On 31 December 1971, Jolly Green 73 and 65 were launched from Da Nang AFB to recover two army helicopter crews downed in the vicinity of Khe Sahn. The crews had been briefed on the severity of hostile action in the area prior to takeoff. The Jollies held above a high overcast waiting for the Sandies to confirm that the pickup zone was ready. The Jollies were then advised to descend and establish themselves in a holding area several miles south of the survivors position. It had been determined that even though several survivors were wounded it would be possible to use the Forest penetrator for the pickup. Sandy lead advised Capt Peter H. Chapman and crew that it looked good for the pickup attempt since no ground fire had been detected during the last thirty minutes and that varied ordnance had been expended around the survivors. Following Sandy 8 Jolly Green 73 made a high speed low altitude run in toward the pickup point. Shortly they were established in the hover and the penetrator only a few feet from the ground, heavy ground fire was received from all sides of the helicopter. As the ground fire intensified a moderate vibration and shuffle was felt in the aircraft. At this time JG 73 pulled off from the hover and made a high speed egress from the area. JG 73 and JG 65 both returned to Da Nang safely after assessing the damage at Quang Trl.

As Jolly Green 73 and Jolly Green 65 were departing the SAR area the Bravo Alert Aircraft were launched from Da Nang. Enroute JG 21 and JG 66 were briefed on the SAR situation by Sandy 7. They were directed to a holding position in the vicinity of the Khe Sanh to await area sanitization, which was in part being directed by the survivors. An approach to the crash site was made detouring around concentrations of heavy enemy fire. Capt Rodney Griffith placed his aircraft directly over the downed aircrew and the Stokes litter immediately deployed. Despite a heavy smoke screen laid down for cover JG 21 began receiving small arms fire from all sectors. The ground fire was returned by JG 21, the survivors and escort aircraft in the area. All seven survivors plus one KIA were hoisted aboard during a fifteen minute hover. After the survivor was aboard an immediate egress was made and course set for the 95th Medevac Hospital. Enroute the wounded survivor was treated for a serious head injury by the pararescue personnel. This mission marked over seven hundred saves by the men of the 37th ARRS.