

Captain Lifted From Jungle

TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam — Capt. Mahlon H. Long III, was rescued just before dusk recently after he was forced to bail out of his OV-10 aircraft in the lower panhandle of Laos.

He was flying a reconnaissance mission for the 28th Tactical Air Support Squadron out of Da Nang AB, when his aircraft was hit by ground fire. Unable to nurse the OV-10 back to Da Nang he bailed out around 5 p.m.

He landed in a tree about two miles from a road. His helmet and glasses were torn off as he descended through the branches, stopping just 10 feet above ground. He lowered himself and ran for cover. "There was no place to hide," he recalled.

Thirty minutes after bailing out, he reached a cluster of trees and took time to make radio contact with a FAC pilot in the area.

Meanwhile, an HC-130 King of the 35th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, which had been in pursuit of Captain Long's aircraft as it struggled towards Da Nang, called in a rescue force of A-1s and HH-53 from the 40th ARCS. The Sandies formed a "daisy chain" around the captor, which lowered a jungle penetrator and pulled the captain to safety.