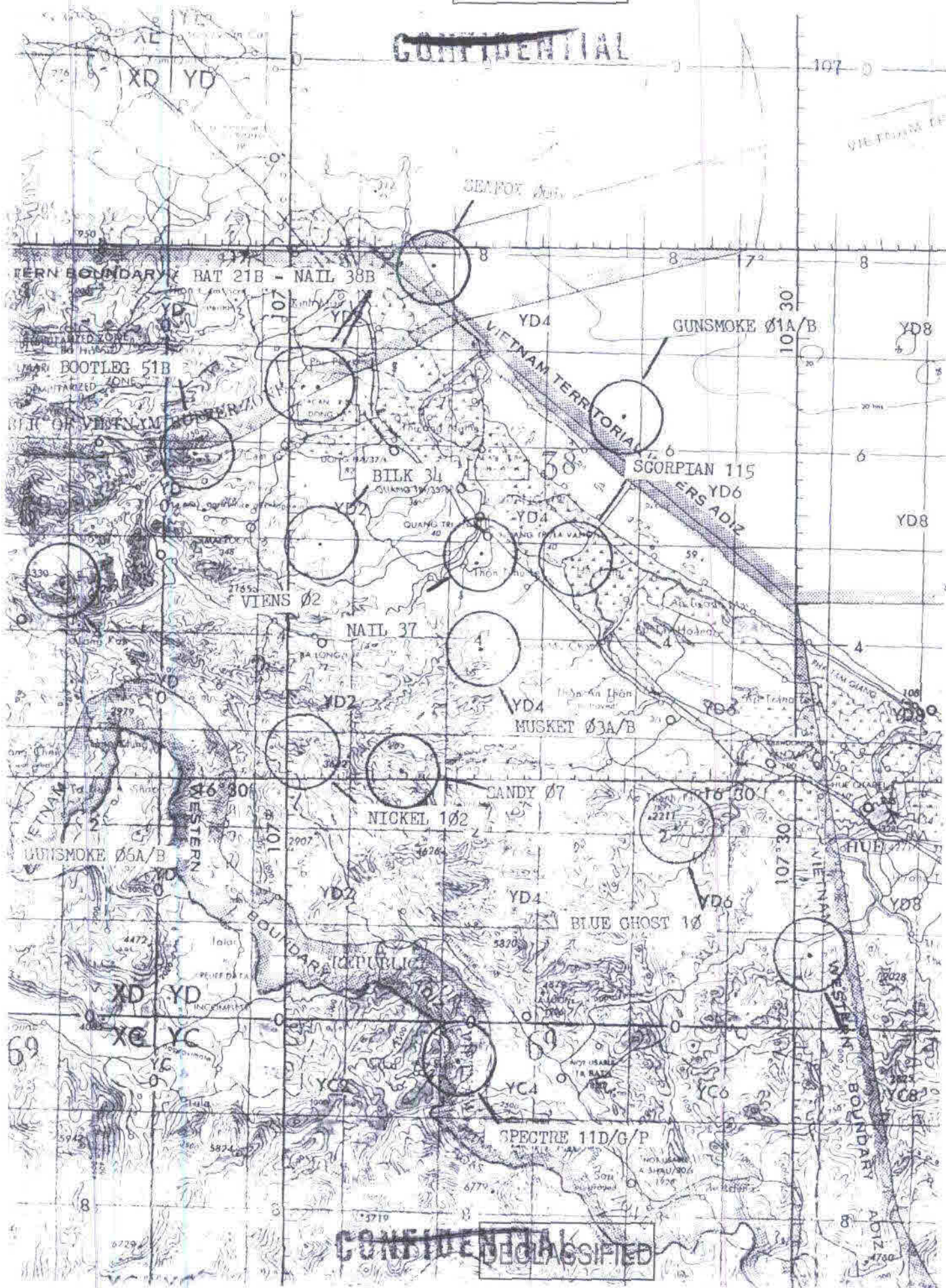


~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



DECLASSIFIED

DOC 2314

STATEMENT

6 Apr

April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21 B MAIL 38B)

1. 6 April 1972, day five of the BAT 21 B SAR four for Mail 38B. Capt Morse and Capt Morgan cocked on alert as Sandy 05/06. Communications with all outside activities is very poor. It had rained and all the phones were out. At 0400Z there were three addital possible SAR's, A Navy A-4 lost at CRAB, a VNAF A-1, and an unconfirmed F-4. Nothing materialized out of any of these. Joker, through Queen directed a Sandy launch at 0600Z. With difficulty they were convinced by Lt/Col Barbena to launch 2 Sandy's and then 2 more with the Jolly Greens, with an additional 2 Sandy's and Jolly's about one hour later. The request for Sandy recce was based on FAC reports of "absolutly no movement and no ground fire" in the SAR area.
2. Sandy 05/06 Morse/Morgan launch at 0720Z and rendezvous with Jolly Green 67 and 66 at 0740Z at 360/20/69. The weather was clear below 15,000' with outstanding visibility. The strikes being put in on the SAR area could be seen from the holding point.
3. At 0830Z Sandy 01 (Boli) was trolling the proposed ingress route for ground fire. Sandy 01 directed the Jolly's and Sandy's to move to the initial holding point YD 550 240 (see map# 1). We proceeded to that point dropping Jolly Green 66 off at a safe point just south of Quang Tri.
4. Once in the holding area, we had a very clear view of the SAR area. Sandy 01 was giving us the briefing on how he wanted the pick-up attempt to go. At 0845 Jolly 67 reported taking fire from somewhere near a bend in the river at the holding point. I directed him to hold a little further south and requested a more exact position on the source of the fire. Both Sandy 05 and 06 made several intimidation passes on the area in question. The ar area was occupied by friendly troops and the Jolly couldn't pinpoint the location, so no ordnance was expended. 5 or 6 Tanks or APC's were spotted coming down a road from the west to the east toward our position. I requested Sandy 01 and the Bilk FAC, Bilk 11 to see if they were friendly. All four Sandy's made an intimidation pass on the tanks and they threw out yellow smoke. Bilk 11 and Mail 59 confirmed that they were friendly.
5. At 0900Z Sandy 01 requested that we move further north, across the holding river to position ourselves overhead more friendly tanks and APC's. Jolly 67 started to cross the river at the same point that he had taken fire from only moments before. He again reported fire, so both Sandy's 05 and 06 rolled in and put some 20mm strafe on the river. Finally we got the jolly squared away and headed to the new hold point.
6. As briefed, a smoke screen was laid and execution was at 0930Z. Sandy 02 was leading the Jolly, with Sandy 05 and 06 laying ordnance in front, behind, and on either side of the Jolly. The Jolly crossed the river just east of Mail 38B's position, YD 165 608 (see map # 2). The Jolly reported taking ground fire just after crossing the route T 8 B. It then sounded as if he kept his transmitter keyed, for we could hear him breathing. We could not get a definite position on the fire, but we

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STATEMENT

DOC 23¹⁶

6 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21/NAIL 38)
Sandy 01/Boli 02/Carlsen

1. 0715Z Sandy 01/02 launched for a Sandy recon of the SAR area to determine the feasibility of a pick-up attempt/Madden kit drop.
2. At 1545 we hear the first SAM launch call and hit the deck, no one observed the missile. We arrived just south of the survivors area at 0750Z. We informed King 21 and the FAC's Bilk 11 and Nail 40 that we were in the area. Bilk 11 continued to work strikes while Sandy 01/02 trolled the area south of the survivors, looking for the 5 infantry battalions that IDASC had briefed us was there. No enemy vehicle, personnel, or ground fire was seen.
3. At 0815 Sandy 01 takes on scene command and halts air strikes in order to talk to the survivors and troll the area near them. Bilk 11 and Nail 40 were instructed to hold over the area to watch for ground fire. BAT 21B and NAIL 38B were contacted and told to watch for movement and listen for fire. In the process of making the passes over the survivors, Sandy 01 showed Sandy 02 the locations of the survivors.
4. At 0830 Sandy 01 attempted to deliver a Madden kit to BAT 21B since no ground fire or movement had been detected. The run-in was made, but BAT 21B could not see the kit Sandy 01 made 2 more low passes but I could see the kit in the cleared fields either. So BAT 21 was told that the kit was probably somewhere in the grass/brush that was around him.
5. I widened the area of trolling to include planned run-in and any areas that looked suspicious. Strafe and CBU 25 was put in on these areas, but no reaction was evoked. The area was entirely quiet and heavily damaged. the following 4 areas looked a little suspicious and Sandy 01 directed Bilk 11 to strike them
 - a) 100m SE of target 21 Refugees (?) BLU - 52
 - b) 300m S of target 22 " "
 - c) area around " 29 Wooded area Snakes and Nape
 - d) 500m W of target 28 Farm Mk 82's
6. At 0900 I call to have Sandy 05/06 Morse/Morgan to bring Jolly Green 67 and 60 to the initial holding point. They arrived at that point 10 minutes later. They reported some ground fire near that holding point, so I selected an ARVN truck park about 4km southeast of the final runin. I mark the final IP with a WP rocket and Jolly Green 67 acknowledges having it in sight. The initial briefing was conducted on FM 38.9 since everyone had good contact on that frequency. At 0915 Sandy 03, a smoke bird, arrives so the briefing is altered to allow him to drop the snakes.
7. At 0920 I instruct Bilk 11 to call off any other airstrikes and enter the area for a final check. Still all was quiet. The requested targets had been accurately hit. The only movement I could see was the two refugee groups

GROUP 4

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Declassified at 3 year intervals;
Declassified after 12 years.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

STATEMENT

4 Apr

DOC 23¹³

8 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21/NAIL 38)
Sandy 05 Boli/06 Barbena

1. On 4 April 1972, the Sandy forces stood down until late in the afternoon. Sandy 05/06 were launched at 0830Z and we arrived on scene at 0905Z. We were holding 5 miles south east of the survivors while Sandy's 01/02 and 03/04 work the area. Sandy 07/08 were holding with us. There were numerous SAM calls, Sandy 08 saw one launched from north to south.
2. At 0830Z Sandy 01 is attempting to give on scene command to Sandy 03, but 03's radios were not functioning properly. So Sandy 05 was called to come up in the area; however, due to the numerous SAM calls and my own UHF breaking up, I did not hear this call. Sandy 07 did hear it and he went up to take over on scene.
3. Sandy 07/08 were not in the area long when both had taken battle damage due to ground fire. They rejoined with us (Sandy 05/06) and we checked them over at 1000Z. We could only find one hole in the right stub.
4. Sandy 05's radios seemed to be better, so I proceeded to the area at 1010Z and follow Sandy 01 as he shows me the locations of the survivors. I take over as on scene commander while Sandy's 01/07/08 expend prior to RTBing.
5. Bilk 11 is in the area, and I have him put in a flight of Snake and Nape on target #22 (see map # 2). The rest of the Sandy's are holding 908 just south of the SAR area. The survivors are told to dig in as we are putting ordnance in around them. There is good contact with both BAT 21 and NAIL 38. Sandy 05 is repeatedly taking ground fire from Cam Lo area and the area of the survivors. Bat 21B reports seeing troop movement south of his position. The fast movers with the Snake and Nape did outstanding work.
6. I was just initiating a pass over the survivors to check for ground fire, when Sandy 03 radios that he's been hit and is on fire, 1015Z. I come up guard and call for a Jolly Green rendezvous south of Quang Tri as Sandy 03 had already stated his egress heading and proposed route.
7. At 1050Z I turn over on scene command to Bilk 11 and inform King of Sandy 03's departure. Queen through King directs that all SAR forces RTB. Nail 32 checks in and provides a radio relay to Da Nang tower. The tower was informed of Sandy 03's problem and advised to foam a runway.
8. About 10 NM from DaNang, Sandy 06 reports a rough running engine and no cockpit lights. An IFE was declared followed by an uneventful landing.

Fred C. Boli

FRED C. BOLI, Captain, USAF
Sandy 05

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

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STATEMENT

4 Apr DOC 23"

April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B/NAIL 38A/B)
Sandy 03 Morse/O4 Morgan

1. 4 April 1972, day 3 of the SAR for BAT 21B. Capt Morse and Capt Morgan launched as Sandy 03 and O4, as directed by Queen at 0800Z. We proceeded northwest and effected a rendezvous with Sandy 01 and 02 at 0840Z. Sandy 03 began having radio problems on FM and VHF. We took a good look at the area, the weather was good, about 4000' broken. Sandy 01 was advising the FAC's on where ordnance was to go. The area had been very quiet and numerous strikes had gone in. A pick-up attempt looked feasible to both Sandy 01 and 03. The rest of the Sandy's were launched with the Jolly's. Sandy 01/02 were dropping ordnance prior to RTBing. By 0945Z Sandy's 05/06 and 07/08 were approaching the area. I was having intermittent contact with King on VHF and anticipating further problems, I contacted Sandy 05 (Burke) and asked him to come up and be prepared to take on scene command. Apparently Sandy 01 heard this call and delayed leaving the area until he could find a Sandy low to take command. By now I was missing several of the radio calls being made.
2. All the Sandy's arrived in the area of the survivors. Numerous SAM calls and the evasive dives resulting from same, made the area traffic so confused that leads and wings had a difficult time of keeping track of one another.
3. The ground fire intensity increases and my radios became worse. All the enemy had to do was launch a SAM (or go into the high PRF mode, thus giving a launch signal to RAW equipped aircraft) and the SAM calls caused us all to dive for the deck, forcing us into the small arms environment. I directed my wingman to take the lead of our element and I advised Sandy 05 of my problem with VHF and FM radios.
4. Ground fire was being taken from the survivor's area, the area around Cam Lo, from a stream/gulley at YD 156 586, and other non-fixed positions. At 1030Z while F-4 strikes were in progress in the SAR area, Sandy O4 (now the lead of our element) had an unguided rocket fired at him, somewhere in the vicinity of YD 150 560. There were numerous artillery rounds going off near the aircraft. That is to say on the ground underneath the aircraft.
5. At 1045 Sandy 03 took a hit from a 12.7 or 14.5 (I think) in the right wing, just inboard of the inboard gun. Fire broke out immediately. I dumped hydraulic pressure and jettisoned my load while turning toward the south. I headed south then east toward the initial holding point for the Jolly's, YD 550 240 (see maps). The Jolly's holding with Sandy 09 Carlsen/10 Scott, were directed to rendezvous with me. The fire continued, setting off the 20mm ammunition in the right wing, doing very little to settle my nerves or restore my confidence. The fire continued to burn for what seemed like a lifetime but in reality for about 5 - 10 minutes. Aircraft control was becoming marginal as pieces fell from the right wing. My lifting surface being destroyed on the right side, the left wing was producing more lift than the right; ergo the aircraft wanted to enter a right turn. My only thought was to get feet wet then play it by ear. Full left aileron and full left rudder was required. Upon reaching the coast a very ^{shallow} right turn was ^{units} ^{down} required.

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals;
Declassified after 12 years

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STATEMENT

DOC 2310

4 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy 1 and 2 (Bat 21/Nail 38)

1. On 4 April Sandy 01/02, scrambled from ground alert, were airborne at 0525Z. Arriving on scene at 0600 Sandys were briefed by Nail 41 and Bilk 29. While attempting to pinpoint exact survivor location Sandy 1 was hit and had fire coming from beneath his left wing. An immediate look over it was determined to be the left lau 3 rocket pod which was immediately jettisoned. Sandy 1 went back in and located both survivors.
2. For the remainder of the day Sandy 02 held over briefed safe area while Sandy 01 attempted to pinpoint ground fire. While doing this Sandy 01 received 2 more hits with no critical damage, with the assistance of Nail 41/Bilk 29 an area of concentrated ground fire was pinpointed and Sandys 01 and 02 expended some ordnance on this area taking no hits while striking.
3. During this time the weather 15 1500' - 2000' overcast. Around 0730Z the weather broke to the southwest of the survivor area but weather in the immediate vicinity was unworkable for fast movers.
4. A/C onscene and holding to expend were flying Eagle 313 and 304 and Hoboken 415. F-4s did one lorrain drop missing by about 5 clicks to northwest. An other flight with Blu 52 came in from feet wet down the river and did an outstanding job of dropping there ordnance. A flight of A-4s and flying Eagle 304 also came under the weather and dropped their "Rock eye" Hoboken flight RTB for fuel - the fusing on their bombs required them to drop from minimum of 4000 Agl. O'Hara flight (F-4) came in with more Blu-52 and during their strike took a hit in the ext. fuel tank.
5. Around 0800Z Nail 53 and Bilk 11 replaced Nail 41 and Bilk 29, also Sandys 03/08 with Jollys were launched by request from #1 and felt an attempt could be made. Jollys and Sandys 03-08 holding feet wet and Sandys 03 and 06 holding in briefed safe area. During the afternoon Sandy 02 counted 17 different Sam calls for DMZ and Quang Tri area, but observed only 2 due to 2000' over cast. Also observed 2 different rockets launched from southwest of the survivors area toward self and later Sandys 03-06. After 2nd rocket launch and during a Sam call # Sandy 2 was hit by small arms (12.7 or 14.5) while at low altitude to avoid Sams. *After briefing Sandy 05 to be on scene command, Sandy 01/02 expended their ordnance and RTB chan 77.

HINDSIGHT: Still had no one to brief us on what was going on so we had no idea how many people we were fighting. *Sandy 1 briefed #3 and take on scene and after briefing #3 encountered radio problems and #5 was called in.

G. PRLEBE, 1Lt, USAF

Sandy 01

G. BARDAL, Captk USAF
Sandy 02

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DOC 23⁶

3 Apr 72

STATEMENT

30 Apr
4 Apr

Sandy 03 (3 Apr 72)(Bat 21B SAR)
Sandy 07 (4 Apr 72)(Bat 21B/Nail 38B SAR)
Sandy 03 (6 Apr 72)(Bat 21B/Nail 38B SAR)

On 3 April 1972 I launched as Sandy 03 from NKP with Lieutenant Fossum on my wing as Sandy 04. Takeoff was at approximately 2130Z (2 Apr 72) and we proceeded to a "feet wet" rendezvous with Sandy 07 and 08 20nm east of Quang Tri, RVN. The weather over the water was poor with the cloud tops averaging 3500' MSL with bases ragged and blending into the fog on the deck. There was a FAC (call sign unknown) in the area directly over the survivor and he reported that the lowest cloud layer was 300' AGL with patchy ground fog beneath this covering the survivor's position. After we finally managed to get all four A-1's together, we headed inland with Sandy 07 as lead. We orbited the area at 5000' Msl with one of two Nail FAC'S who were on-scene at the time. After a short discussion, Sandy 07 directed Sandy 03 and 04 to RTB to Danang in order to refuel as the weather was still unworkable and did not appear to be ready to break. Sandy 03 and 04 complied and landed at Danang at 0140Z (3 Apr 72). We refueled and recocked and launched for a second time at 0240Z. Enroute to the area I was informed that Sandy 05 and 06 were holding "feet wet" with two Jolly Green helicopters after getting one other Jolly shot off in a previous rescue attempt. The run in on the aborted attempt was from the southwest and the fire had come from a village on the southern bank of the river. With Sandy 05 and 06 holding over the water I decided to move into the area and rendezvous with Nail 39 who was on-scene commander. The weather had improved to about 3500' AGL broken clouds and Nail 39 quickly showed me the location of the survivor. I took over on-scene command and proceeded to troll for ground fire with negative results in the immediate area. Nail 39 reported taking a hit but thought that it had come from the northwest of the area. I then directed Sandy 05 and 06 to start the helicopters in from their holding point over the water. Nail 22 was available to lead the group above the broken cloud layer and I assumed that he was going to come in from the southeast. However, this was a poor assumption and the Jolly's reported heavy ground fire from the time that they crossed the coast north of Dong Ha until they arrived in the area of the survivor. I had the Jolly's continue because I felt that the immediate area was relatively secure and that a quick pick up offered the best chance for the survivor. Sandy 05 and 06 arrived in the area slightly before the Jolly's and I was in the process of briefing them on where I wanted their smoke when the lead Jolly descended through a break in the clouds. He continued to descend until he was about 500' below us and at that time he again called that he was taking heavy ground fire. I could not get him to give me a direction and could not see any myself so I told him to exit the area to the southeast. He RTB'd to Danang without any further trouble and Sandy 05 and 06 stayed in the area to expend their ordnance on a tank that Sandy 04 had spotted. Unfortunately, Sandy 04 couldn't find the tank again although I am convinced that it was the source of the ground

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DOC 238

was unable to get airborne. I was carrying CBU-22, CBU-25, and M-47's intending to be used as a smoke bird. When I arrived in the area, Sandy 01 briefed all the forces on the plan of attack. The plan was to have the Jolly Green start from a prominent hard site on the south side of a northwest-southwest road, proceed north past Nail 38B across the Cua Viet River, and then turn east to Bat 21B's position. Bat 21B was to be picked up first. Sandy 02 was to lead the helicopter along the route and Sandy 07 and 08 were to act as escorts on either side. Sandy 03 was to put smoke in the group of huts along the road just to the south of Bat 21B and this smoke was to be the signal of execution for Jolly Green 67 to start the run. With the briefing complete, Sandy 01 marked the position that he wanted the smoke to cover and Sandy 03 put CBU-22 between the two marking rockets. The smoke drifted over the survivor somewhat but Sandy 02 said that he could still see Bat 21B's position and the run in continued. On my second pass I put another can of CBU-22 in the huts to the west of Bat 21B. As I pulled off in a left turn to the east, Jolly Green 67 had just crossed the river and was heading west toward Bat 21B. He called that he was taking ground fire and broke to the north. I was above and behind Jolly Green 67 and rolled in with 20mm on his left side. The other four A-1's were also firing and calling for the helicopter to turn south as he was heading east toward a village that had previously produced a fair amount of ground fire. Jolly Green 67 finally responded to repeated calls and turned right and recrossed the river. I continued a descending turn firing 20mm into the villages to the east and in an area to within 50 meters of the helicopter on his left side. I finally stopped firing when I could not get my guns to bare on the area around the helicopter and pulled out of my dive approximately 300' above the ground. As I pulled up, I crossed behind Jolly Green 67 and called for a left turn as he had continued his right turn and was heading toward Cam Lo and away from the egress route. As he rolled out of his right turn, a flame shot out below the main rotor in the vicinity of the left engine. The helicopter nosed up and rolled left 90° and pieces started falling from the aircraft. The aircraft hit the ground on its left side and the fire continued to burn from the left engine, finally consuming the entire aircraft approximately ten seconds later. I did not see anyone get out and there were no chutes or beepers. I RTB'd to Danang with the rest of the Sandy's and landed at 1010Z.

COMMENTS:

1. There are times and circumstances when rescue by helicopter is impossible. However, this determination must be made by the people on-scene based on what the particular situation demands. I do not feel that a particular area should be declared unworkable without first hand and current knowledge of the enemy threat in the area. In this case we may have pushed too hard but the determination of the on-scene commander was that there was a good chance that the tremendous amount of ordnance that had been expended in the immediate area had effectively eliminated the major part of the enemy forces in the region. None of the other aircraft involved in the pickup attempt suffered any battle damage and looking back it appears obvious that the enemy was simply waiting for a shot at the helicopter. This is a possibility that is inherent in any mission of this type and unfortunately this time we lost. However, there have been cases in the past where we have encountered similar circumstances and pressed on and the mission was successful and there will be cases in the future where this will also hold true so in summation I would warn against giving up hope at too early a time.

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DOC 239

(4)

COMMENTS (CONT'D)

2. Although the choice of words in the preceding comment is admittedly pompous the though is not intended to be such. In addition to the mechanics of the SAR itself, I feel that mention should be made about running a major effort of this type at a forward operating location. The most important aspect and necessary element that was missing at Danang was a non-flying SARCO. As it was the crews had to set up the whole mission including intelligence, targeting, scheduling, and informing all the other agencies involved as to what was going on. This was in addition to flying and consumed the major portion of the time that was needed for adequate crew rest. Captain Boli assumed the responsibility and duties of a SARCO and did an outstanding job and should be commended for his efforts.

3. I also feel that when a SAR extends into several days that plans should be made to start rotating crews as early as the second day and that no one should be involved for more than four consecutive days.

4. In closing I would like to commend the 37th ARRS for its help in housing all of us on such short notice and for their general hospitality, they made the stay at Danang almost bearable.

Robert F. Burke

Robert F. Burke, Capt., USAF
1st SOS

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STATEMENT

DOC 234

3 Apr

April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B/MAIL 38B)
Sandy 07 Morse/08 Morgan

1. 3 April 1972, day two of the BAT 21B Sar, the first light briefing was at 2000Z. The weather in the SAR area had deteriorated throughout the night and was now unworkable. Sandy 01 Fred Boli and 02 Lt/Col Barbena were enroute to Da Nang so I could have a replacement aircraft.
2. No ordnance had been put in all night, due to a conflicting report on the survivor's position. Despite my emphasis to Queen on the necessity of the ordnance and the telephone number where I could be reached, no attempt was made to contact me. The other position that had been passed was about 20 miles south of where the survivor really was (YD 18 42). This position was so totally ridiculous, that it was beyond my comprehension how it could even have been considered. Total incompetence on the part of members of the rescue team is unforgivable. I hope all who read this may never have to be a survivor on the ground and wonder if "they" really have it together. *DM*
3. The aircraft were not ready for us to launch as planned so the additional time was used to update intel and brief Boli and Lt/Col Barbena on the situation. Launch was at 2240Z and we proceeded northwest along the coastline.
4. We contacted the on scene Nail FAC, Nail 25 for an appraisal of the weather and the situation. The weather was unworkable for VFR strikes, however the FAC's were conducting LORAN drops. As there was nothing we could do in the area, we orbited off the coast with the Jolly's acting as radio relay and ordering up assets. There were numerous SAM calls from the DMZ. I kept requesting confirmation that Iron Hand was on scene. King assured me that it was; however, the SAM calls caused us numerous delays and loss of flight integrity as we had to dive through the low clouds to hit the deck. Inoperative UHF ADF's did not help us get rejoined.
5. Sandy 03/04 Burke/Fossum (see line up photos at end of report) arrived on scene and joined with Sandy 01/02 on the ground at 2330Z. The weather was starting to improve slightly. The Nail FAC's lead us overhead the survivor; however, the weather was still poor - tops 4000', bases ragged 250' to 300' AGL.
6. About 0100Z I heard Sandy 05/06 Priebe/Bardal coming up to the scene. Numerous SAM calls and the evasive action taken, made redescend and briefing difficult. Additionally due to our altitudes, navigational assistance could not be obtained. (GCI/Tacm/ADF)
7. As radio contact allowed, I briefed Sandy 05 on the area, defenses,, ordnance now going in, etc. I also advised him of the best approach to the area as being from the south or southeast. I warned him of the intensive fire received from the southwest, and advised him to avoid coming in along the river from the east.
8. Sandy 05/06 found the Jolly's and I directed that they remain with them

GROUP 4

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DOC 235
2/2

and await further words from the Mail FAC's on scene. Sandy 07/08 returned to base at Da Nang landing at 0300Z.

9. We debriefed with intelligence and with the new crews for about 4 hours. We were still unaware at this time that we were facing a full scale North Vietnamese invasion force. At last we got some sleep, the first for many hours.

Donald E. Morse
DONALD E. MORSE, Captain, USAF
Sandy 07

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

DOC 23³

S T A T E M E N T

30 Apr

3 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy 5 and 6 (SAR Bat 21)

1. During morning briefing at Ubon on 3 April Sandys 05 and 06 received word to scramble at 0010Z. Wolf Pack gave us a holding point 050/30/103.
2. Sandys 5/6 arrived at the rendezvous at 0200Z and found Jolly 65/67 holding just off shore not at 050/30/103. Nail 38/39 were in the area of the survivor and they had not observed any ground fire. About 0330 Nail 39 came out to lead in the Jollys and Sandys above the clouds. Nail 39 then led Sandy 05, Jolly 65 and Sandy 6 down through a hole in the clouds. Jolly 67 remained above the clouds out about 4,000 ft. about 1 min after coming through the WX to VFR below Jolly 65 called thar he was hit and was climbing back out. Sandy 05/06 searched for ground fire but found none, and Jollys landed at Chan 69.
3. Sandys 05/06 now returned to feet wet and joined in orbit with Jolly 66 and 60. At around 0430Z Sandys joined the orbit and took on-scene command with Nail 39/7/8 trolled the area and started briefing and/or attempt with ingress from the north of the survivors.
4. At around 0500Z this attempt was started the weather was now broken to overcast.
5. After 2-3 minutes in VFR weather Jolly 66 called he was hit and all forces withdrew to Chan 69. Sandys 05/06 RTB Chan 77 for fuel and Sandy 7/8 remained on-scene.

HINDSIGHT: Neither sandys nor Jollys had any knowledge of the intensity of the ground war in this area. Ground defenses of this position including 10,000 - 15,000 troops supported by large tanks with turrets removed and quadfifties mounted on them. Also numerous 12.7, 14.5 and 23mm AAA were plentiful. Also about 7-10 Sam calls were heard. Had Sandys or Jollys been made aware of this ground movement no Pick-up attempt would be made.

Glen Priere
G. PRIERE, 1Lt, USAF
Sandy 5

G. Buxdal
G. Buxdal, Capt, USAF
Sandy 6

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DOC 23'

~~STATEMENT~~

3 Apr

2 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B)

1. At 2330L NKP time, Sandy's 01 Boli/02 LtCol Barbena/ 03 Clevenger depart NKP. At 0030, 3 April 1972, Sandy 03 develops prop regulator problems, and he has to divert into UBCN.
2. At 0130 Sandy 01/02 rendezvous with Jolly Green 66/60 at 150/100/93 and escort them to channel 107 Pleiku. We were released by the Jolly's at 0300 and we proceeded direct to Da Nang, landing at 0335 (NKP Local).
3. At 1225L we launched for the Bat 21B SAR. Sandy 01/02 arrived on scene and held over Quang Tri at 1300. Sandy 03/04 Burke/Fossum were working the area over. They affected a rendezvous with us and showed us the survivor's location. Sandy 01 took on scene command at 1330. King passed a message to expend all ordnance and RTB to Da Nang due there being another Sar in progress. This confusion only lasted for awhile. The other SAR never did materialize.
4. We were trying to work the area over, having been briefed by the Sandy's on scene earlier, to suppress known areas of hostile fire. We contacted a MIKE FAC, Mike 92 to help in putting in strikes. However, an ARC LIGHT forced us out of the area, until 1415 when King again tells us to RTB.
5. On scene command is passed to Mike 92 and Sandy 01/02 start to exit. Mike 92 lost the survivors position, so Sandy 01/02 return to point it out to him. About this time, 1435, Nail 38 checks in. He has worked the area previously and he knows the survivor's location.
6. Sandy 01 awaits the Nails arrival to be sure that the survivor is properly covered. The Nail arrived at 1445 and reconfirms the survivor's location. I passed to the nail that a blocking belt of area denial ordnance was to be constructed around the survivor. (CBU 42/49/52 and BLU 52) Mike 92 would mark for Nail 38.
7. At 1500 Nail 38 is downed by a SAM. There were 2 chute and good contact with both. SAM launches were coming fast and furious. Both Sandy's and the Mike FAC had SAM's launched at them.
8. Covey 270 checks in and Sandy 01 passes instructions on helping to deny the area to the enemy. The bridge at Cam Lo was to be blown. I mark this location with a WP rocket. The Covey put in one flight of F-4's with Mk 82's and one A-37 with Mk 82's. The northern span was dropped.
9. We saw an Army Cobra and attempted contact thinking maybe we could get the Nail crew out. Finally we established contact on Guard. I request he come freq 282.8 (Deltas). The chopper was Blue Ghost Red 30. He

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if not declassified after 12 years.

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Declassified after 12 years

DOC 23¹⁸

2 Apr

S T A T E M E N T

April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B/Nail 38B)
Sandy 07 MORSE/08 MORGAN

1. On 1 April 1972, Sandy 07/08 Morse/Morgan accomplished a normal deployment to Da Nang.
2. On 2 April 1972, Easter Sunday, at 0400Z we briefed with the Jolly's for a possible evacuation of some personnel from Quang Tri (see Map #1). At 0800Z Queen launched us on a scramble for a downed aircraft, call sign unknown, position unknown. The Jolly's beat us off the ground and they were airborne when Queen canceled the launch, as the crew was recovered by the Navy. The Jolly's remained airborne at Queen's direction while we taxied back.
3. At 0845Z Queen relaunched us for the evacuation mission. Sandy's were airborne at 0900Z. Rendezvous was in progress when the evacuation was canceled by higher Headquarters. We rejoined with the Jolly's and began to RTB to Da Nang. About 10 miles from base, I heard a radio call on Guard, "Beeper, Beeper come up voice". I queried Queen as to what was in progress. They did not know at the time, but were checking on it. Meanwhile Sandy 07/08 began to proceed back toward the north.
4. A Bilk FAC, Bilk 34, had pinpointed the survivor's location. He advised the Sandy's to proceed east from Cam Lo (see map). We worked our way north and west and started following the wrong river toward the rolling hills southwest of Cam Lo. We received fire from a SAM, quite possibly an unguided rocket. I directed a break down and to the left toward the hills. The missile was launched at us from our 2:00 position. Sandy 08 observed the impact on the ground right under the spot I had been seconds earlier. This was our first indication that this was not going to be an easy SAR. We proceeded north and the FAC acquired us visually. He began to give us vectors into the area.
5. The weather was about 1500 MSL broken to overcast. As we approached the Cam Lo area from the southwest, we came under extremely heavy ground fire, mostly 12.7mm. The fire was of the barrage type as opposed to tracking. Every where we turned or looked there were tracers coming right at us. With a good deal of luck, extreme jinking and hiding in the clouds, we managed not to take any serious hits. The FAC kept saying come north of the river, there's no fire up here. (see map, Song Mieu Giang river, map #1) The ground fire did indeed, at first, seem less intense once we crossed the river, however they continued to fire at us. Some of the fire was coming from so far away that it was falling well short, yet this did not slow them down at all. It seemed as if they wanted to nail us pretty badly. The Bilk FAC showed me the survivor's parachute and I took on scene command at about 1015Z. The survivor was located in a clump of trees in the center of several fields (farming type community), at coordinates YD 155 615. He, the survivor, was in good spirits and uninjured. I pinpointed his position down to the nearest tress, and in the process began taking fire again. Most of the fire seemed to be coming from the north and

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3/3

called and the same information was passed to him, along with my request for more Sandy's and a replacement aircraft for myself. I had taken extensive minor battle damage. Sandy 07/08 debriefed with Covey PAC itel. With the aid of their maps we located the survivor's position and passed the 6 digit coordinates on to Queen. We set up for a first light effort with the Jolly Greens. As this was Easter and Lint was over I had a beer and tried to go to bed. Sleep did not come, as I lay awake shaking from fear most of the night. 281

Thus ended Day 1 of the Bat 21 SAR.

Donald E. Morse

DONALD E. MORSE, Captain, USAF
Sandy 07

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DECLASSIFIED

Notes: at Lima Site 20, crashed on landing, hit ground, spun right, rolled down hill, flipped, burst into flames.
Two flight engineers survived.

Tail No.: 68-10366 Model: HH-53C Date of Loss: 25 Nov 71 Unit: 37th ARRS
Country of Loss: Gia Dinh, SVN Call Sign: Jolly Green 70

Pilot: Robert B. Swenck (02W-72)
Co-Pilot: John W. George (02W-72)
P.J.: Thomas D. Prose (02W-72)
P.J.: James R. Thomas (02W-72)

Notes: SAR mission, crashed Song Na River

Tail No.: Model: UH-1N Date of Loss: 04 Dec 71 Unit: 20th SOS, Ban Me Thuot
Country of Loss: Gia Dinh, SVN Call Sign: Green Hornet

Gunner: Thomas E. Fike (02W-84)

Notes: Tim Fike was the last Hornet lost. If I remember right it was in Dec 71. It was his last mission before rotating home (it was to be a milk run out of Saigon and back). His crew was shot down as they were returning to Saigon. The pilot thought that they had seen a rocket launcher set up in a rice paddy. The went in low level to check it out (flying a slick), and a bad guy popped up and raked the bottom of the chopper. Tim Fike was killed, the other gunner (King) was seriously wounded and at least one of the pilots was wounded in the leg. From "Jim" (Official Squadron History does not have this information in files - History ends Sept 1971)

Tail No.: 68-10359 Model: HH-53C Date of Loss: 27 Mar 72 Unit: 40th ARRS
Country of Loss: Cambodia Call Sign: Jolly Green 61

Pilot: David E. Pannabecker (02W-120)
Co-Pilot: Richard E. Dreher (02W-119)
Flight Engineer: James Manor (02W-120)
P.J.: Raymond J. Crow, Jr. (02W-119)
P.J.: Raymond A. Wagner (02W-120)

Notes: crashed from unknown causes

Tail No.: 68-10365 Model: HH-53C Date of Loss: 6 Apr 72 Unit: 37th ARRS
Country of Loss: Quang Tri, SVN Call Sign: Jolly Green 67

Pilot: Peter H. Chapman, II (02W-130)
Co-Pilot: John H. Call, III (02W-130)
Flight Engineer: Roy D. Prater (02W-131)
P.J.: Allen J. Avery (02W-130)
P.J.: William R. Pearson (02W-132)

Other: James Alley (Photographer) (02W-130)

Notes: SAR mission for BAT 21 (EB-66C), crash site excavated May 94, remains of crew buried in Nov. 1997.

Additional Information: The Flight of Jolly Green 67

Jolly Green 67 was an HH-53 long range rescue helicopter assigned to the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS) at Da Nang Airbase, South Vietnam. It was downed by enemy ground fire on 6 April, 1972, while attempting to rescue two American airmen who had been shot down and were hiding behind enemy lines.

This was one of the key events in what would become the largest rescue operation of that war, the rescue of Bat 21. Bat 21 was an EB-66 electronic jamming and reconnaissance aircraft. On 2 April, it was hit and destroyed by a North Vietnamese surface to air missile as it and another EB-66, Bat 22, escorted three B-52s as they bombed advancing North Vietnamese units invading South Vietnam at the beginning of what has come to be known as the Easter Offensive.

Only one crewmember, Lt. Col. Icaal Gene Hambleton was able to eject from his stricken aircraft. His personal call sign for the rescue operation was Bat 21 Bravo. Immediately, US Army helicopters tried to rescue Lt. Col. Hambleton. But the North Vietnamese guns drove them off and downed one - a UH1 Huey, call sign Blueghost 39. Three of its crewmembers were killed and one was captured. The captured soldier was released by the North Vietnamese a year later. The bodies of the other three were eventually recovered and buried in Arlington National cemetery in April, 1994.

The next day, Jolly Greens from the 37th ARRS made two attempts to pick up Bat 21 Bravo. Both times, they were driven off with heavy damage to their aircraft. Additionally, an OV-10, call sign Nail 38, was hit and downed by an enemy missile. Its pilot Capt. Bill Henderson, was captured. Its navigator, 1Lt Mark Clark, call sign Nail 38 Bravo, was able to hide and await rescue like Lt. Col. Hambleton.

For two more days, rescue forces fought the weather and the enemy forces to try to rescue the two airmen. They could not get in. Instead, hundreds of air strikes were put in to beat down the enemy gunners.

But the 6th of April, dawned bright and clear. So, after 42 more air strikes were put in, a rescue force of four HH-53s and six escorting A-1 Sandy aircraft launched to make another attempt to recover the two evading Americans. They were assisted by several forward air controllers in O-2s and OV-10s and numerous other support aircraft.

Jolly Green 67 was designated to make the rescue attempt. But as it came to a hover over Bat 21 Bravo, it was raked by heavy enemy fire. The escorting Sandy A-1s tried to engage the enemy guns. But they could not get them all.

And they could see what the ground fire was doing to the helicopter. So several shouted for the crew to fly out of the area. The crew of Jolly Green 67 aborted the rescue attempt and tried to maneuver their stricken aircraft to safety. But the enemy fire continued and so damaged the craft that it crashed in a huge fireball a few kilometers south of the survivors. The fire was intense and lasted several days. There were never any indications of survivors.

The Sandy pilots were shocked by the turn of events. The other helicopters were ready to move into the area and make another attempt. But Sandy 01, the leader of the taskforce was not willing to risk another aircraft. He aborted the mission. It was just too dangerous.

The next day, another OV-10 supporting the rescue, call sign Covey 282, was shot down in the same area. The pilot, 1Lt Bruce Walker, call sign Covey 282 Alpha, was on the ground and evading like the two earlier airmen. His crewman, US Marine 1Lt Larry Potts, was never heard from. With this news, General Abrams, the overall US commander in Saigon directed that there would be no more helicopter rescue efforts for the now three downed flyers. Instead, a ground team was formed to attempt to infiltrate through enemy lines and pick them up. It was planned and directed by US Marine Lt. Col. Andy Anderson, and lead by US Navy SEAL LT Tom Norris. From 10 through 12 April, the team operated through enemy lines and rescued 1Lt Clark and Lt. Col. Hambleton. They also intended to rescue 1Lt Walker. But on the 18th, he was discovered by Viet Cong troops and killed. The rescues were over. Later, Lt. Tom Norris would get the Medal of Honor for the mission.

This was the largest sustained rescue operation of the war. Over 800 air strikes, to include B-52s, were put in in direct support. Numerous helicopters, A-1s and forward air controller aircraft were shot down or damaged. A total of eleven men were killed. But it was all done in the best traditions of the rescue forces. Their motto was: That Others May Live. During the war, they rescued 3,883 downed American or allied airmen, sailors, marines and soldiers and made it possible for them to return home.

And finally, we welcome you home, Jolly Green, and salute you proudly for a job well done.

Darrel Whitcomb

Author - The Rescue of Bat 21

To be published, Spring, 1998 by the Naval Institute Press.

Tail No.: 68-10362 Model: HH-53C Date of Loss: 14 Jun 73 Unit: 40th ARRS
Country of Loss: Cambodia Call Sign: Jolly Green 64

Pilot: Gilbert A. Rovito (01W-119)
Co-Pilot: Francis E. Meador (01W-118)
Flight Engineer: David V. McLeod, Jr. (01W-118)

Notes: Tail rotor lost, crashed into Tonle Sap

Tail No.: 70-1628 Model: CH-53C Date of Loss: 24 Jan 75 Unit: 21st SOS, 56th SOW
Country of Loss: Thailand Call Sign: Knife ??

Pilot: Gary C. Hall (01W-121)
Co-Pilot: Bryan A. Rye (01W-121)
Flight Engineer: James K. Hurley (01W-122)
Flight Engineer: Garry W. Hermanson (01W-121)

Notes:

Tail No.: 68-10933 Model: CH-53 Date of Loss: 14 May 75 Unit: 21st SOS, 56th SOW
Country of Loss: Thailand Call Sign: Knife 13

Dramatic U.S. Rescue Frees 2 Crewmen

(Continued From Page 1)

age, Hambleton replied: "because I did not want to be a war prisoner."

Hambleton was a navigator aboard an EB66, a modified bomber being used to jam North Vietnamese radar sites. The plane was hit by Communist fire April 2 just above the DMZ and Hambleton bailed out just on the South Vietnamese side of the border. The other five crewmen are listed as missing.

The other man rescued, Lt. Mark N. Clark of Los Angeles, was shot down April 3 in an OV10 spotter plane while participating in the search for Hambleton. Clark's copilot is missing and presumed dead.

A Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter was shot down April 6 during the search for the missing men, and all six of its crewmen were killed. Clark was rescued April 11 and Hambleton two days later, but meanwhile two other planes not connected with the search were shot down in the same area and their four crewmen were missing. The U.S. Command would not allow disclosure of the rescue of Hambleton and Clark until Friday, after the search for those four men was abandoned.

Both Clark and Hambleton were snatched from behind enemy lines in the Dong Ha area just below the DMZ by a volunteer team of South Vietnamese commandos led by U.S. Navy Lt. Tom Norris.

Informed sources said the

team used secret techniques which they were not at liberty to disclose. But they reported that Hambleton was taken out by sampan and floated downriver until the South Vietnamese lines were reached.

Norris said Hambleton used a pocket radio and continued to call in air strikes against enemy forces despite his injuries and weakened condition.

When the commando team reached him at midnight, he could not walk and was barely able to crawl to a nearby stream to wash his face.

Norris said the team was spotted by three North Vietnamese but managed to evade them. The Vietnamese members of the patrol said they made an all night sampan ride through enemy lines within sight of North Vietnamese tanks and troops to reach Hambleton.

The commando team and Hambleton made it back to a South Vietnamese tank unit just after dawn. He was flown to a hospital in Da Nang and then to Clark Air Base, the Philippines.

"Hambleton was surrounded by enemy forces during most of his ordeal," said one officer. "The search and rescue forces made repeated efforts to extract the men with no success. One problem was that they were caught in the North Vietnamese invasion across the DMZ. The enemy was passing through the area and it couldn't

have been worse. Many times the enemy search teams were within five feet."

The B52s made several raids in efforts to divert North Vietnamese troops away from the two downed airmen. It was the first time the eight-engine Stratofortresses were reported used in a rescue effort.

Officers said that in addition to the B52s, fighter-bombers and the biggest gunship the U.S. Air Force has, the four-engine, computerized AC130, flew constant cover for the operation.

Speaking of the rescue, Hambleton said, "It was a hell of a price to pay for one life. I'm very sorry."

Hambleton spoke to a newsman by telephone from his hospital ward at Clark AB, where he is recovering from his 11-day ordeal during which he lost 45 pounds.

Hambleton's plane was hit by a Russian built surface-to-air missile while flying just below the DMZ. He recalled that after the missile hit the middle of the plane "I was the first in rotation to bail out." He never saw the plane or the other five crew members again.

After hitting the ground, "the first thing I did was look for a place to hide," Hambleton said.

Hambleton, who knew he was below the DMZ but also behind the lines of the invading North Vietnamese, landed with a radio transmitter, a broken wrist and

finger, and confident that someone would save him.

"I never ever lost hope," he said. "I knew I would come out of there."

It was almost dark and after finding a hiding place "in a little brush patch," the first thing he did was try out his radio. It worked.

For four days, as the U.S. command tried to figure a way to get to him, Hambleton stayed in his hiding place venturing out only at night to scrounge meals of banana stalks, green corn, berries and roots.

"Then it became apparent I would have to move so I began moving," he said. "We had to change tactics while they decided where I should go. They knew just where I was all the time."

For the next seven days, guided by instructions from his radio, Hambleton moved slowly and cautiously to a river rendezvous point.

North Vietnamese troops were constantly around him. At one point, Hambleton recalled, "They were within five feet of me. I just kept thinking how long it would take our guys to get me out of there. But I never lost hope."

To keep Communist troops from finding Hambleton, Abrams ordered B52 bombers, tactical fighter bombers and gunships into the area on a round-the-clock basis to batter Communist positions and keep the enemy off balance.

Dramatic Rescue Of 2 Crewmen Cost 7 Lives



Lt. Col. Iccal E. Hambleton is given a glass of water after being found near Dong Ha, South Vietnam, by a rescue team. He had hidden for 11 days behind enemy lines. (AP)

Compiled From AP and UPI

SAIGON — The biggest U.S. air rescue effort of the war, including the use of B52 bombers, paved the way for an American-led commando team to snatch two downed crewmen from the middle of a North Vietnamese invasion force after nearly two weeks.

In disclosing the rescue Friday, U.S. sources said it cost the lives of seven other airmen shot down and took a personal order from Gen. Creighton Abrams, the American commander, to use the giant B52 bombers as a diversionary ploy.

Despite a broken arm, a sprained back, lack of food and water, and his 52 years, one of the crewmen, Lt. Col. Iccal Hambleton, managed to evade North Vietnamese troops swarming across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) for 11 days. Sometimes they came within a few feet of his position.

Asked how he found the stamina to survive at his
(Continued on Back Page, Col. 2)

Pilot's Last Words: 'I'm Just a Decoy'

By STEWART KELLERMAN

QUANG TRI, Vietnam (UPI) — A downed U.S. Air Force pilot made his way through Communist-held jungle for 10 days, and on the 11th day, one helicopter after another sent to pick him up was shot down or damaged.

When last heard from, he radioed his would-be rescuers, "I'm just a decoy down here. Don't send any more planes. It's too dangerous."

Then he turned off his pocket-size radio transmitter or had it turned off for him. Military sources said Friday he was probably captured.

The sources declined to identify the pilot or say what plane he had been flying when he was shot down April 7 in the Communist-held portion of Quang Tri, South Vietnam's northernmost province.

North Vietnamese troops occupy the northern half of the province from the Demilitarized Zone down to the Cua Viet River. The Communists have moved heavy antiaircraft defenses into the region, including Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles and radar-guided 37mm guns.

The sources said the pilot hid out in the rough, jungled hills of northern Quang Tri Province for 11 days, working his way south to flatlands where he could be picked up by rescue choppers.

He lived on food from his green survival flight vest and

used the vest's tiny radio to notify U.S. officials early Tuesday when he had reached what he considered a good place for a pick-up.

U.S. and South Vietnamese choppers went in again and again to pick up the pilot, but were turned back by heavy ground fire. A big American AC130 Spectre gunship and Allied fighter-bombers covered the rescue aircraft from above.

One South Vietnamese sky-raider fighter-bomber, two government Huey utility choppers, one U.S. Jolly Green Giant helicopter and one or two American Pedro choppers were damaged or downed by the Communists, the military sources said.

A U.S. Army air cavalry helicopter team was on the way to the scene, however, when radio contact with the downed pilot was lost.

"It's possible that he's still free," the sources said. "But it's highly unlikely. It's almost certain he was captured when he lost contact."

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BAT-21



In one of the most bizarre rescues of the Vietnam War, Lt. Col. Iceal Hambleton was recovered from enemy territory in northern South Vietnam after 11 1/2 days on the ground. This was the largest rescue operation in USAF History. On Easter Sunday, April 2, 1972, Col. Hambleton was flying as navigator in an EB-66 electronic counter-measures aircraft (callsign Bat-21). When the aircraft was struck by a surface-to-air missile (SAM), he was the only man to eject safely, landing near a busy highway junction on a Communist supply route. Intelligence sources reported the area contained 30,000 enemy troops. (While initially awaiting rescue, Hambleton directed USAF aircraft which destroyed many enemy vehicles on the highways.) Intense ground fire prevented the first attempts to rescue him. A plan was devised to direct him by radio contact with a forward air controller (FAC) aircraft to a safer pick-up point. USAF reconnaissance aircraft photographed the area and photo analysts laid out a course for him to follow to a river two miles away. Hambleton, an avid golfer, remembered in great detail various golf

courses where he had played. To guide him safely past enemy camps, gun emplacements, and unfriendly villages and then downstream to a rescue point, specific holes at certain courses were used to establish distance and direction of travel for each segment of his journey.

Traveling only at night, he reached the tenth day, exhausted and with nothing to eat or drink since bailout except several ears of corn and rainwater. Floating downstream, at the last "hole" he was met by a Navy SEAL (Sea-Air Landing) Lt. Thomas R. Norris and a Vietnamese Ranger who had stolen a boat. Despite several enemy ambushes, they delivered Hambleton to a waiting USAF helicopter which took off under enemy fire. Hambleton's experience was the basis for a book and a movie, but neither portrayed the complexity of the operation, the exotic technology or number of people involved in the rescue. 234 medals were awarded to individuals for this rescue and Lt. Norris received the Medal of Honor for his role in this and a related rescue.

Displayed on the mannequin (in the Museum's actual rescue gallery) are the baseball cap, monocular, and glasses which Col. Hambleton had with him when rescued. His original flight suit was taken from him in the hospital for laundering, but he was transferred before it was returned. The URC-64 survival radio was his most important survival item. He was enthusiastic about how well it worked despite submersion in water and other hardships. The framed photomontage was composed of reconnaissance photos and was used to plan the escape route, since there were no usable maps of the area. The plaque was given to him by the commander, 42nd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron in memory of the EB-66 crew members who died.

(Donated by Lt. Col. Iceal Hambleton, USAF (Ret), Tucson, Arizona)

See also, the RB-66B Destroyer in the Modern Flight Hangar

The Pararescue Jumper