

April 7, 2013

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☸ Thursday, 6 April 1972, Operation Freedom Train

In Military Region I, Quang Tri Province

HH-53C, s.n. 68-10365, call sign Jolly Green 67 was performing a search-and-rescue mission for BAT 21B and Nail 38B near Cam Lộ, northwest of Quảng Trị, when their Sikorsky HH-53C helicopter was hit by enemy fire and crashed.

KIA were:

Capt Peter Chapman

1st Lt John Call III

TSgt Roy Prater

TSgt Allen Avery

Sgt William Pearson

Sgt James Alley

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That Others May Live



Sgt James Alley





🔥🌪️🚁 **TODAY IN JOLLY GREEN WAR HISTORY** ➤ Thursday, 6 April 1972

≈ † † † † † † ≈ **Jolly 67**

Sandy 1: "Bat 21B, Bat 21B, pop your smoke, pop your smoke."

Jolly 67: "We're getting hammered ...got a fuel line."

Sandy 1: "You getting ground fire, Jolly?"

Jolly 67: (mike button is being held-down and it blocks the radio, except for the breathing of a Jolly 67 crewmember)

Sandy 1: "South, Jolly ...Turn south! Jolly, turn south! Don't go past that village, Jolly! Turn south! Turn south, Jolly!!!"

Sandy 2: "Turn south, Jolly!!!"

Sandy 1: "Turn south, Jolly! Turn south, Turn south!"

Sandy 3: "Right turn, Jolly, right turn!!"

Sandy 1: "Negative, Negative, left turn, Jolly, Left turn! Keep it going south!!!"

Nail 32B: (intercom communications) "Oh Shit!"

Sandy 2: "O.K., Jolly went down."

Sandy 1: "Jolly's down! Jolly's down!"

[1740 hrs-L, 6 April 1972]

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Godspeed Jolly 67

Serial 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)

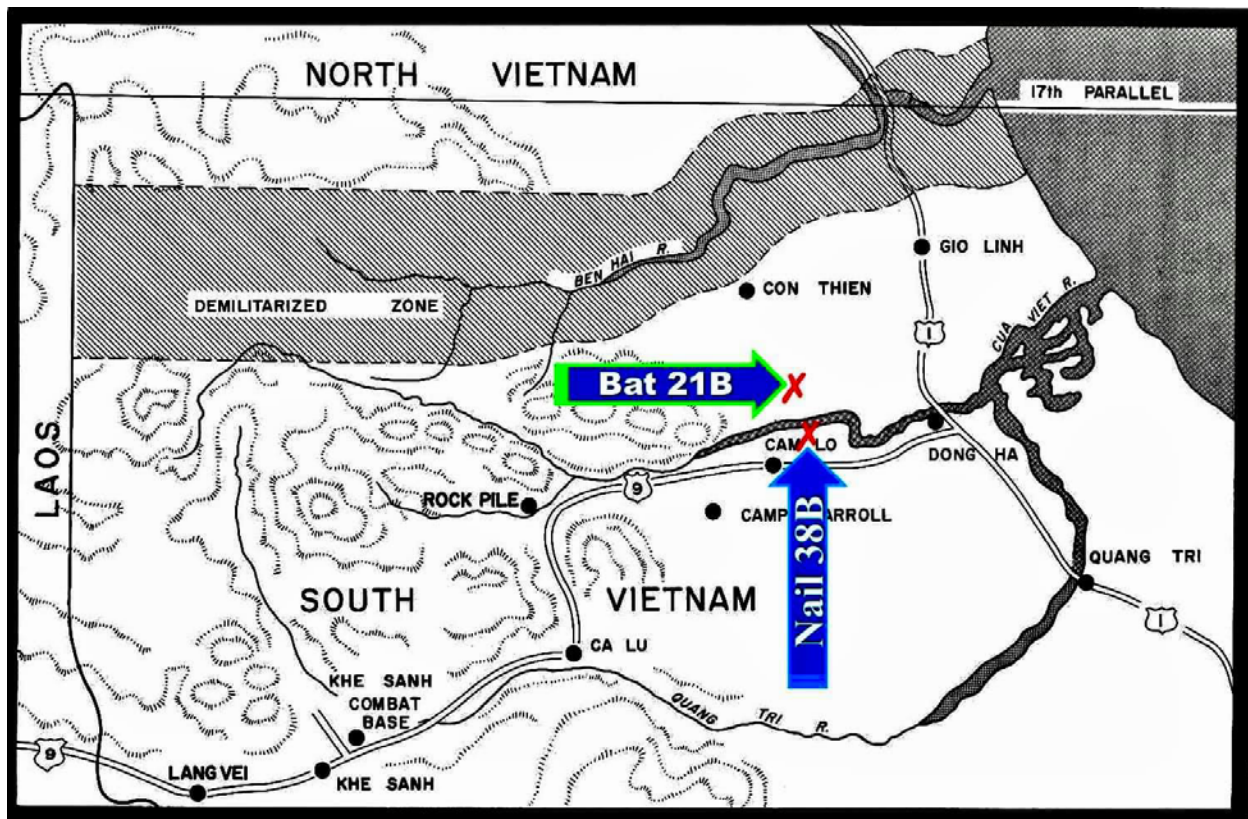
Flight Engineer: Roy D. Prater (02W-131)

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-53C long range rescue helicopter assigned to the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS) at Da Nang Air Base, 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-Bravo. Call sign Bat 21 was an EB-66C electronic jamming and reconnaissance aircraft. On 2 April 1972, it was hit and destroyed by a North Vietnamese SA-2 surface-to-air missile as it and another EB-66E, Bat 22, escorted three B-52Ds as they bombed advancing North Vietnamese units invading South Vietnam at the beginning of what has come to be known as the 1972 Easter Offensive.

Only one crewmember, Lt. Col. Iceal '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 UH-1H & AH-1G helicopters tried to rescue Lt. Col. Hambleton. But the North Vietnamese guns drove them off and downed one - a UH-1H 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-10A, call sign Nail 38, was hit and downed by an enemy SA-2 missile. Its pilot Capt. Bill Henderson, was captured. Its navigator, 1Lt Mark Clark, call sign Nail 38-Bravo was able to hide for eight days 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.

[Jim Henthorn Page 25 12/20/2007]

USAF Helicopter Crew Losses - Vietnam War

But the 6th of April, dawned bright and clear. So, after 42 more air strikes were put in, a rescue force of four HH-53Cs and six escorting A-1H Sandy aircraft launched from Da Nẵng to make another attempt to recover the two evading Americans. They were assisted by several forward air controllers in O-2As and OV-10As 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 Sandies shouted for the Jolly 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 task-force 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 to the NE. 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 Creighton 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 (along w/ Nguyễn Văn Kiệt, PO2 RVN Navy Seal a.k.a. LDNN & Sea Commando). From 10 through 12 April 1972, the team operated through enemy lines and rescued 1Lt Clark and then 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 was awarded the Medal of Honor for the B21B/N38B SAR mission.

This was the largest sustained rescue operation of the war. Over 800 air strikes, to include B-52s, were flown in direct support. Numerous helicopters, A-1s and forward air controller aircraft were shot down or damaged. A total of eleven US 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 67, and salute you proudly for a job well done.

Darrel Whitcomb

Author - The Rescue of Bat 21

Published, Spring, 1998 by the Naval Institute Press.

8 Comments

161 Shares

8 Comments

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[Byron Hukee](#)

Brave Jolly Greens. GBYA

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Reply

• • [8y](#)

• [Randy Jayne](#)

Bravest of the brave.....

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Reply

• • [8y](#)

• [Tex Brown](#)

Loved being a Sandy with those brave and bold Jolly Green pilots and their PJ's.....

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Reply

• • [8y](#)

- [Dan Manion](#)

Recruited and trained by Al as well as being a teammate. Billy was a teammate and best friend. Their loss has been very personal for me. They insisted on going on that mission despite the obvious dangers that existed. True heroes.

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Reply

• • [2y](#)

- [Bob Carlsen](#)

Their loss was very disturbing for me as well, and still is. As Sandy 02, I was leading them in to pick up Gene Hambleton when they began taking ground fire, and were shot down as they attempted to egress to the south.

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Reply

• • [2y](#)

- [Walter Shull](#)

I wasn't flying this day but worked both Bat 21B and Nail 38 several times during there 10 day recovery effort.

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Reply

• • [4d](#)

- [Bob Clifford](#)

Rest in peace brothers.....

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Reply

- · [3d](#)

- [David Snyder](#)

Saddened by the events of downed aircraft and lost troops. Valiantly many attempts made and some were successfully made others failed at great cost. Those men each one a HERO. Honor, bravery and dedication were the very things that distinguished each...

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