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other pickup attempt was planned. No one had received ground fire for quite some time and the FACs reported the area to be very quiet. The first Jolly Green was brought in from the South and headed toward Bat 21B's position. The helicopter began taking ground fire and so began a wide turn to the right, heading Eastward toward a village that had been the source of previous ground fire. The Jolly Green was told repeatedly to turn away from the village. It was thought that these transmissions were not received because Sandys could hear the Jolly Green pilot breathing over the radios. He was inadvertently holding down his microphone button. This proved to be fatal, because by the time he received the frantic calls from the Sandys he was over the village. An engine was hit and parts began falling from the helicopter. The aircraft struck the ground on its left side and burst into flames. No survivors were observed. Ground fire was well diciplined and the enemy fired only when he was quite sure of getting the Jolly Green. With this catastrophe, all attempts to rescue Bat 21B and Nail 38B from the air stopped.

(S) The next day, Covey 282 was shot down behind enemy lines. Coded messages were passed to the survivors telling them that they must walk out and how they were to do it. On 11 April, Nail 38B reached a team of ARVN Rangers and US Marines on the South bank of the Cau Viet River. Two days later,

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from the east. The survivor himself was being extremely helpful in calling off ground fire for me. Communications with King and Queen were virtually non-existent, which is normal for Queen. I was begging for any kind of ordnance and for a FAC. The weather was a factor and it was rapidly becoming dark. I could not leave the survivor there without extending some effort to make sure that he wouldn't be scarfed up during the night. He was very close to the village complex along the river to his south, however, we were not taking fire from that location. To the north the terrain was fairly barren with very gentle rolling hills. There was fire from this area. To the east still more villages along the river (see map), but due east of his position was flat marshy land, and we were taking fire from there.⁸² Despite the low ceiling, I felt that I could safely place ordnance on positions north and east on the sources of ground fire. Yet I could raise no one on the radio. I directed my wing man to get some ordnance and some helicopters. Our original Bilk FAC was on the way back in to the area from the east near Dong Ha along the river. He had in tow 4 army Huey helicopters, 2 slicks and 2 cobras. Two of these helicopters were shot down. One completely demolished, the other crew was picked up by the Jolly's. This was unknown by Sandy 07 at the time, and for this reason, I was having difficulty communicating with other elements of the SAR force. They were engaged in their own SAR. Darkness was fast approaching and a pick-up attempt could not be made that night. I directed Sandy 08 to expend with me in the SAR area. Bat 21B saved his own life by maintaining his cool. Working with Bat 21B was an experience that none of the Sandy's who worked on this SAR will ever forget. The survivor called off positions of fire, watched our ordnance impact and gave us corrections from that. The ground fire threat was very bad, the survivor could see and hear people within 100 meters of his position. While expending ordnance, Sandy 07 came under heavy, accurate fire, receiving battle damage. After one particularly heavy exchange of fire I was concerned for the airworthiness of the aircraft. It seemed controllable and I had Sandy 08 check me over as best he could in the darkness. I could see several small holes in both wings and from thumps I had heard I knew that I had taken several hits on the armor plating. There was one rather jagged hole in the left wing over which I was apprehensive. However the survivor kept asking if I was alright, and that he could still see people. I knew where one gun position was so I returned with Sandy 08 and blew his sierra away. No further fire came that location. With the darkness around us, the exchange of fire was very impressive. The A-1 can throw a lot down when she needs to. We could see the returning fire, but due to our low altitude, it was not always possible to avoid it. Sandy 08 was winchester and headed out toward the coast to the east, acting as a radio relay. I expended what I had left as we waited for a FAC to come out and take over. Finally a FAC arrived, and I passed command at 1155Z. While returning to Da Nang I passed all information had on to King and Queen. I requested that ordnance be put in all night, specifically CBU 42 and BLU 52, "BABY". Landing at Da Nang was at 1235Z.

6. Once on the ground, Queen was immediately called with all information we possessed and our request for ordnance with the explanation that it was essential for protection of the survivor. Additionally SARCO at NKP was

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agreed to make a pick-up attempt. I briefed him thoroughly on the area and the threat, and also on how I wanted him to run in etc. He still agreed to give it a try. I never known the Army to turn u s down ! We executed with Sandy 01 leading the way in marking with WP rockets. At 1555 the chopper got shot off,,sustaining sme damage. The fire was coming from a small gully/stream bea south of the villages and the river that the survivors were near.

10. By this time we have to RTB for fuel. I passed over on scene command to Bilk 33 at 1610. We RTB'd to Da Nang, landing at 1705 (NKP Local).

Fred C. Boli
FRED C. BOLI, Captain, USAF
Sandy 01

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entered. I rolled out on heading parallel to the coast.

6. Assistance was offered from the Nail FAC's, Jolly's, the Navy, and my fellow Sandy's. It was very comforting to be surrounded and escorted by all my fellow aviators. A request for a foamed runway was passed to Da Nang tower by both the Jolly's and the Sandy's. I arrived and orbited just north of Da Nang at 1115Z. Foam was laid in a 21 x 4000' strip. My request was for a minimum of 75 x 2000'. The landing gear would not extend; ergo a normal night, gear up, black-out, marginally controllable, zero instruments landing was made uneventfully. My knees were a little shaky, but it was good to be able to "walk away from it".

Donald E. Morse

DONALD E. MORSE, Captain, USAF
Sandy 03

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fire reported by the Jolly Greens. Sandy 05 and 06 then RTB'd to Danang and with no FAC's in the area I asked King for ordnance and received a flight of F-4's (call sign unknown) carrying MK-82's. I expended the F-4's on the Cam Lo bridge along with a flight of VNAF A-37's that were carrying MK-81's. I was trying to isolate the survivor and although one of the A-37's did hit the bridge damage to it was minor. A short time later, Mike 92 arrived on-scene and I showed the survivor's position to him and as I was getting ready to leave the area, Sandy 01 and 02 arrived on-scene. I proceeded to brief Sandy 01 on the situation, pointed out the survivor's position, and turned over on-scene command to Sandy 01. Sandy 03 and 04 RTB'd to Danang and landed at 0620Z.

4 April 1972

Sandy 07 - Captain Burke

Sandy 08 - Lieutenant Fossum

We launched at approximately 0700Z and proceeded to the SAR area. Nail 38 had been shot down the previous afternoon by an SA-2 and Nail 38B was located about 650 meters southeast of Bat 21B. I never had voice contact with Nail 38A although there were numerous intermittent beepers on guard in the area of the other two survivors. Sandy 01 and 02 had requested all available A-1's to launch for a possible pickup attempt and we held south of the survivors' position while Sandy 01 briefed Sandy 03 on the situation. Sandy 01 had taken only light ground fire and felt that the area was ready for a recovery attempt. Sandy 03 was experiencing major problems with his radios so Sandy 01 started to brief Sandy 05 to take over on-scene command. Sandy 05 was not able to read Sandy 01 and I decided to take the briefing and moved into the area directly over the survivors'. Sandy 01 pointed out the location of Nail 38B and also pointed out the areas that he thought were the source of the ground fire. Before going any further, I would like to mention that during the time we were holding south of the area with Sandy 05 and 06 several SAM calls were heard and we hit the deck on all of them. Sandy 05 reported seeing two or three of the missiles and all were thought to be SA-2's. There was also a North Vietnamese artillery barrage in progress and we moved our holding point farther to the west. Just as Sandy 01 was completing the briefing, another SAM call was heard and we dove for the deck right over the town on the south side of the river east of Cam Lo. I took a small arms hit in the right wing and Sandy 08 took several small arms hits one of which punctured the right fuel tank. Sandy 08 immediately headed southeast and rendezvoused with Sandy 05 who had now regained his radios. I was going to retain on-scene command but with Sandy 08 hit and Sandy 05 able to communicate I decided to pass on-scene command to Sandy 05. Before leaving the area, Sandy 07 and 08 expended rockets and CBU-25 on a group of huts to the east of Bat 21B as the FAC had reported ground fire from there when the SAM call was heard. We made one pass and then RTB'd to Danang landing at 1000Z.

6 April 1972

Sandy 03 - Captain Burke (single ship due to Sandy 04's abort for maintenance)

Sandy 01 and 02 were airborne with Sandy 07 and 08 and Sandy 01 had decided to attempt a pickup of both survivors. My wingman had a major hydraulic leak and

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were throwing ordnance all around the area he had been when he called ground fire. Sandy 01 directed the Jolly to turn south. He was in a right hand turn, but it was far too shallow. The Jolly was coming far too close to the village area of Xam Thiong YD 171 609 (map # 2). His shallow turn continued while we were all trying to get him to steepen it up and head south. He came very near the village of Thon Bich Giang as well. He crossed the river now on a heading of southwest, which was the worst to take. We told him to turn left which he finally did. We had no indication that he was hit until fire broke out on the left side of the Jolly. He entered a steep left descending turn with parts of the aircraft (possibly parts of the rotor) falling off. He impacted, burning, but still fairly intact and still in a left bank. The aircraft burst into flames the instant that he hit the ground. No survivors were seen, no one was observed jumping from the aircraft before impact. No contact could be established. Sandy 01 turned over onscene command to the Nail FAC and briefed the Nail and the Bilk FAC's on where to place their ordnance and what remaining areas he wanted obliterated. The Sandy forces regrouped and RTB'd to Da Nang. Sandy 05/06 landing at 1020Z.

COMMENTS:

It was three days after the SAR kicked off that we were first to learn about the threat and the invasion forces we were up against. The first day and night of the SAR, 2 April 1972, the ground fire was heavy but undisciplined. On the following days, the first line troops were in the field. They had excellent communications. Sam calls were driving us into the small arms threat. Ground fire was accurate and well disciplined. (ie they waited for the best opportunity. It would be quiet for hours and then the whole world would erupt.) The NVA were very definitely monitoring and jamming our communications.

In addition to having to fly on the missions, it was necessary that we do all the planning and coordinating between all the elements involved in the SAR. Debriefing was one place, then one had to go debrief the same thing to the Bिल्ks and Covey FAC's. There was no rest only constant pressure. Da Nang it not set up to handle anything even slightly out of the ordinary. There are no clear cut guidelines of responsibility set out for any of the many organizations who do become involved in a SAR effort. This should be a lesson, but the very same problem exists this very moment.

Donald E. Morse

DONALD E. MORSE, Captain, USAF
Sandy 05, Fighter Pilot

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who were rapidly exiting the area.

8. At 0930 I mark the area for smoke and Sandy 03 puts in a beautiful smoke screen. Sandy 02 begins to lead the Jolly in from the South. Once the final IP is crossed, the Jolly hit the deck and Sandy 05/06 are shooting up everything all around the Jolly. The Jolly crossed the river and started to turn left behind the smoke screen. Just then he began taking hits, just as I called for BAT 21 B to POP his smoke. Sandy 01 saw no orange smoke and by this time the Jolly had made a 180° turn and began backtracking the planned egress route. All the SANDY's were were placing ordnance all around the Jolly and the area where he first called ground fire. The Jolly had his mike keyed thus blocking all transmissions to him. I repeatedly called Jolly turn south then right. Finally the Jolly responded and crossed the river.. Sandy 01 began straffing target 28 and crossed behind the Jolly from right to left, and pulled up on his left side. The Jolly had overshoot his turn to the right and was now headed southwest. Sandy 01 directed "Jolly TURN SOUTH !!!" as he began to turn, a fire broke out above the left engine, beneath the main rotor. Parts began coming off the Jolly. The tail rotor seemed to separate and the Jolly crashed and burned. No survivors were seen and no contact was established.

9. The SARTF exited the area RTB'd to Ch 77, landing at 1015. 3CB

Fred C. Boli
FRED C. BOLI, Captain, USAF
Sandy 01

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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 airstrikes, 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

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