

7Apr72 Covey 282

OV-10A 68-3820

20 TASS, 366 TFW, USAF, Da Nang

1st Lt Bruce Charles Walker (KIA)

1st Lt Larry Fletcher Potts, USMC (K1A)

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An Air Force Bronco with a Marine Corps observer on board was tasked with spotting for artillery just south of the DMZ. While it was on station the aircraft was hit by a SAM and crashed three miles northwest of Dong Ha. The missile was one of a total of 83 SAMs spotted in the DMZ area on this day. The location of the crash was about four miles northeast of where Lt Col Hambleton and 1st Lt Clark were still hiding but the loss of this aircraft is not directly connected with the attempt to rescue the pair. Both the OV-10 crew ejected from their aircraft and 1st Lt Walker evaded capture for 11 days. During this time he used his survival radio to direct air strikes on camouflaged enemy positions. A survival kit was dropped to him and he was told to make his way northeast to the coast for an attempted rescue. On the morning of the 18th his last radio message to rescue aircraft was to warn them not to attempt a pick up as enemy soldiers were chasing him and closing in. When he was last seen, 1st Lt Walker was lying in a ditch surrounded by about 20 North Vietnamese soldiers who were clearly heard on the Lieutenant's survival radio. It has also been reported that 1st Lt Potts was captured and died of wounds in Quang Binh prison. Larry Potts was shot down on his 25th birthday.

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Above excerpted from Chris Hobson book "Vietnam Air Losses – USAF, USN, and USMC Fixed Wing Aircraft Losses in Southeast Asia 1961-1973" p.221

Below are excerpts from 3rd ARRGp Log #18 8Nov 71-9Apr72 Callsign "Joker" JAPAC logbook #45
 All times are Zulu +8 VN +7 THAI Original Logs kept at JAPAC, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii

7 April 72	
0322	From Queen: Covey 282 down at YD2167
0335	From King 21: Nail 41 has radio contact with both Covey 282 survivors
0351	Nail 41 hit and heading feet wet
0400	Nail 41 looked over by Coachman UH-1. Found minor battle damage. Nail 41 is heading back into SAR area
0450	Sandy 01 & 02 airborne and enroute to Covey 282 SAR. Nail 41 directs 2 strike flights to Covey 282
0630	Nail 41 reports that Nail 38 "Bravo" is OK
0850	Covey 282 "Alpha & Bravo" position is YD195655
1400	Authentication data for Covey 282 received. 1 st Lt Bruce Walker
1635	From Queen: Bilk 34 in contact with Bat 21 "Bravo" and Nail 38 "Bravo." No contact with Covey 282
1640	From Jack: Teepee requests 6 flights CBU-52, 4 flights Rockeye, 8 flights MK-82 / CBU-24. Plus any LORAN equipped ordnance they can get tonight
1830	JG 67 crew confirmed dead
8 April 72	
0330	From Queen: Bat 21 "Bravo" reports 30 small arms rounds went off near him and a 37mm is firing to his west
0450	From Queen: King 21 talked with Covey 282 "Alpha." He was very excited & talking fast. King was unable to understand him
0500	Covey 282 "Alpha" has calmed down some. He reports a large concentration of heavy artillery is about 200 meters north of him
0825	Sandy's & Jolly's scrambled from CH 77. Sandy will attempt Madden Kit drop
0830	Updated survivor positions: Nail 38 "Bravo" YD16516082 Bat 21 "Bravo" YD15516111 Covey 282 "Alpha" YD195656
0930	JG 21 has a chip light and is RTB CH 77 with Sandy's and JG 66
0957	JG 21 lands OK at CH 77

1415	King 22 in radio contact with Bat 21 "Bravo" Nail 38 "Bravo" Covey 282 "Alpha" King instructed them all to bed down for the night. Bat 21 "Bravo" reports no enemy traffic on either the road or river
2230	Colonel Walker phoned from USA requesting information concerning his son (Covey 282 "Alpha.") No information was released
2250	From Blue Chip: Aqua 02 (B-52) with 6 POB has been hit and is diverting to CH 77 for emergency landing. Jolly's, Sandy's, and Pedro scrambled
2322	Aqua 02 lands safely at CH 77
9 April 72	
0400	Bat 21 "Bravo" reports 2 tanks south of him moving west
0652	Musket 01 down at 125/96/89
0701	From Jack: Gunsmoke 06 has spotted 2 chutes and has 2 beepers
0705	From Jack: Voice contact with 1 survivor. JG 52 & 53 airborne. "Alpha's" position is XD0522
0715	From Jack: Nail 18 has visual contact with Musket 01 "Bravo"
0719	JG holding point is 136/75/89
0721	Nail 18 has VID on both survivors. "Bravo" has a broken left arm and right leg
0750	Sandy 11 & 12 ETA 0815
0810	Sandy 01 & 02 laying smoke. Air America Hotel 15 is going to pickup "Alpha"
0830	From Queen: Bilk 17 talked with Bat 21 "Bravo," Nail 38 "Bravo," and Covey 282 "Alpha." Covey 282 "Alpha" reports enemy artillery is firing towards our ships. Bat 21 "Bravo" report AAA 500 to 1000 meters east
0846	JG 53 inbound for Musket 01 "Alpha"
0901	JG 53 lowering a PJ
0907	Musket 01 "Bravo" on board JG 53. Jolly is moving to "Alpha"
0910	"Alpha" rescued by JG 53. Jolly's egressing area
0951	JG 53 lands at CH 89
1330	From Blue Chip: Bengal 505 a USN A-6 is overdue
1415	Moonbeam has voice contact with Bengal 505 "Alpha" who says he thinks "Bravo" also got out

1420	From King 22: Bengal 505 "Alpha" position is XD550508
1515	Bengal 505 authentication data received. "Alpha" Smith "Bravo" Ketchie
2330	Radio contact made with Bat 21 "Bravo," Nail 38 "Bravo" and Covey 282 "Alpha"
New SAR log JTFFA local #19 Joker 10 April thru 20 August 1972	
10 April 72	
0301	Bengal 505 "Alpha" position XD565474
0900	From Jack: King 22 says FACs report no groundfire. Area looks good for a pickup
0920	JG 33 & 52 airborne
0925	JG 30 & 63 airborne
0940	Sandy 03 & 04 airborne
0945	Holding point for JGs 123/78/89
1030	Sandy 01 & 02 on scene. Nail 46 reports AAA from ridges on each side of the survivor
1035	Joker orders SAR forces RTB
1440	Ground team for Bat 21 "Bravo" and Nail 38 "Bravo" are at YD197594. Nail 38 "Bravo" is in the river moving downstream. Bat 21 "Bravo" is heading to the river but has not arrived yet.
1850	Both Bat 21 "Bravo" and Nail 38 "Bravo" are in river and moving towards rendezvous point
1935	Bat 21 "Bravo" reported stopping at club house for gin & tonic before playing the back nine. Bat 21 "Bravo" and Nail 38 "Bravo" are doing fine
2320	Nail 38 "Bravo" in friendly hands
11 April 72	
0230	From Queen: Bat 21 "Bravo" checked in on radio
0615	Nail 38 Bravo in hospital at DaNang
0705	Bengal 505 "Alpha" checked in with King
0712	Nail 25 took a hit working Bengal 505 SAR. Not serious and Nail is remaining in area

0840	Bat 21 SAR: Queen advised that ground team was under mortar attack and needed CAS
0915	Bat 21 SAR: Briefed General Marshall on situation. He ordered the ground team to pull back
1015	Bat 21 checked in
2115	From Queen: Bat 21 says he is hiding and waiting for the ballgame
2225	Covey 282 checked in and said he was in good shape but needs water
2240	Bat 21 SAR: From Queen – getting close. Golf cart ready to move
2245	Golfcart going in for pickup
2320	Bengal 505 radio contact and in good shape
12 April 72	
0035	Bengal 505 SAR: FACs report no groundfire and request Sandy's
0300	Bat 21 SAR: Survivor throwing up. Ground team does not have him
0440	Bat 21 "Bravo" not sick anymore. He has a broken arm and is too exhausted to make any further travel. Requests care package
0820	Bengal 505 SAR: RTB SAR forces. Sandy fired on by AAA that had not been spotted before.
0946	Bat 21 "Bravo" too weak to get care package. May try for it later but doubts it
1020	Bat 21 "Bravo" has injured his back and broken his arm. Radio weak. Madden Kit 50 yards away but too weak to get it. Told to hold his position
0835	JG at CH 77 will be late for take off. Possible rocket attack damage
2215	From Queen: Bat 21 "Bravo" standing on a river bank waiting for 2 men in a sampan. He will challenge them with his daughters middle name. They will pick him up and then exfiltrate the area.
2337	Launching Sandy 05 & 06. Bat 21 ground team taking machinegun fire
13 April 72	
0200	Bat 21 has linked up with sampan. Ground team attempting to get an APC or helo to get Bat 21 "Bravo" out. He is in poor shape with cuts and an infection
0215	JG 60 & 71 sustained minor battle damage from incoming last night at CH

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0300	Bat 21 "Bravo" is in an APC moving east on Rt 9
0450	Bat 21 is on an Army helo enroute to hospital at DaNang
0458	Covey 282 "Alpha" check in. He is OK
0555	Bat 21 "Bravo" dropped off at DaNang Hospital
0850	Covey 282 instructed to bed down for the night
0859	JGs inbound for attempted pickup on Bengal 505
0904	JG 32 picked up Bengal 505 "Alpha"
1121	JG 32 took battle damage during pickup. PJ WIA but not serious
14 Apr 72	
0220	Covey 282 "Alpha" SAR: Madden Kit dropped. Survivor is making his way to kit that landed 60-70 yards away in elephant grass
0232	Covey 282 "Alpha" cannot find the kit
0245	Covey 282 "Alpha" has the kit and is receiving E&E instructions from FAC
0412	Covey 282 "Alpha" begins E&E movement
1035	Covey 282 "Alpha" to bed down for the night. Reports enemy forces south of his position
15 Apr 72	
0005	From Queen: Covey 299 with 2 POB going down on the beach 10 miles north of Hue
0025	From Queen: JG 71 picked up 2 survivors from Covey 299. JG 71 & 66 will proceed to "India" orbit. JG 71 will become "high bird"
0045	JG 71 will remain in "India" orbit until replaced by JG 60 & 21
2308	Covey 282 "Alpha" checked in. NVA are all around him. He is OK and will hide at present position
16 Apr 72	
0540	Covey 282 "Alpha" is moving east to put some distance between him and the NVA
0625	Det 6 38 th ARRS Pedro advises 2 parachutes in sight just north of Bien Hoa
0630	Ruddy 02 down. "Alpha & Bravo" picked up by Pedro. "Bravo" has a back

	injury
0940	Covey 282 "Alpha" reports troops 250 meters south of his position
17 Apr 72	
0227	Covey 282 "Alpha" checked in
0732	Sandy 07 & 08 attempted to drop a Madden Kit to Covey 282 "Alpha" Sandy 08 was hit by groundfire. Weather bad in C282 area. Sandy 07 & 08 will hold feet wet until the weather clears up
0830	From Queen: Madden Kit cannot be dropped today due to gomers near survivor. Covey 282 "Alpha" advised to move northeast. Will try again tomorrow.
18 April 72	
0700	Bilk 35 reports he saw gomers chasing Covey 282 "Alpha". He put 20mm and hard bombs within 10 minutes of "Alpha's" call for CAS. Bilk 35 later observed 2 bodies in same location of strike.
1030	Bilk 35 FAC lost communications with Covey 282 "Alpha" at 0718. He could hear small arms fire over Covey 282 "Alpha's" radio. Bilk 35 saw about 20 people chasing Covey 282 "Alpha." "Alpha" jumped into a ditch and never came up radio again. FACs will maintain comm CAP tonight.
19 Apr 72	Negative radio contact with Covey 282 "Alpha" for 24 hours