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BAT 21B - NAIL 38B<sup>123</sup>

(C) Bat 21 (an EB-66) was downed by an SA-2 just South of the DMZ on 2 April; Easter Sunday of 1972. This was the beginning of one of the most unsuccessful and costly SARs of the Southeast Asian conflict. Though the tradeoff in lives and aircraft had a negative balance for this SAR, this fact is hindsight. The reason for the failure was simply overwhelming opposition. It was not learned until later that the SAR force was facing the full thrust of the 1972 NVA invasion of South Vietnam. Not only were there three enemy divisions in the immediate area of the SAR objective, but the enemy had brought with him a vast assortment of anti-aircraft weapons.

(C) The SAR started when a FAC, Bilk 34, heard an emergency beeper and contacted the survivor on the ground. It was Bat 21B, the lone survivor of a crew of six. Two airborne Sandys heard the transmissions and headed for the area. Ground fire was heavy and the Sandys sustained battle damage while expending ordnance around the survivor. Bilk 34 pulled off and returned with three Army Cobra helicopters for a quick pickup attempt. Two of these helicopters were immediately shot down. One helicopter exploded in the air but the crew of the other was immediately rescued. Though darkness was approaching, the

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123. 1st SOS and 23rd TASS Historical Data Reports. Also, see SARCO Reports for Bat 21B, 2 Apr 72, (Doc 23)

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Sandys continued to isolate the survivor. They finally winched and RTBed to Da Nang. Thus ended Day 1 of the Bat 21B SAR.

(C) While working above the survivor on the morning of the second day, Nail 38 was also downed by an SA-2. However, ground fire in the immediate vicinity of the survivors (Nail 38B was only 650 meters from Bat 21B) was very light. It was decided to attempt another pickup using Jolly Greens. The first Jolly Green received hits from ground fire so a different approach direction was planned. When the second helicopter also suffered battle damage it was decided to RTB to Da Nang for further planning. A well disciplined enemy, intent on shooting down a helicopter, was on the ground. The SAR force still did not know the enemy's true strength.

(C) During the night contact with Nail 38A was lost. Solid contact remained with Bat 21B and Nail 38B. Back at Da Nang, it was decided to thoroughly suppress the ground fire before committing the helicopters again. The next two days were spent sterilizing the area with B-52, fast mover, and Sandy strikes. On the first day of this sterilization process two Sandys receive serious battle damage. One made a gear up night landing at Da Nang, but the aircraft had to be salvaged.

(C) On Day 5, after two days of pounding the area, an-

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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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Bat 21B walked out from behind enemy lines and was rescued.  
Contact with Covey 282 was lost after eleven days.

VAMPIRE 46<sup>124</sup>

(C) Vampire 46 bailed out of his QU-22B East of Dong Hene, Laos, at about 1830L on 4 April. Nail 12 was vectored by ground radar to the approximate location. Radio contact was established and because the area was permissive, Nail 12 turned on his exterior lights so that Vampire 46 could vector the aircraft. After only one vector Nail 12 acquired the survivor's strobe light. Nail 12 then vectored the helicopter in for the pickup. This successful and unopposed SAR was terminated at 1915L.

BENGAL 505<sup>125</sup>

(C) Bengal 505, a Navy A-6, was downed at 1800L on 9 April, 6 miles Northeast of Tchepone, Laos. Nail 12 located the survivor at first light on 10 April. This was an extremely heavily defended area of Steel Tiger. For the next three days wave after wave of Navy aircraft struck the area so that a SAR could be considered feasible. The pickup was finally made by an NKP based Jolly Green on 13 April. The fate of the survivor was contested until the end. One Para-

124. 23rd TASS Historical Data Reports.

125. 1st SOS and 23rd TASS Historical Data Reports. Also, see SARCO Report for Bengal 505, 9 Apr 72, (Doc 25).

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V. NARRATIVE

The month of April was a very busy month for the 1st SOS. Most of the resources of the squadron were directed to the support of seven SARs, five of which lasted more than four days each. There were no accidents or incidents in April, but numerous A-1s took heavy battle damage and one aircraft was declared class 26 after a gear up landing at Da Nang. No pilots were injured or lost. Fourteen crewmen were rescued during the seven SARs that the Sandys worked.

On 2 April an EB-66 (BAT-21) was downed by a SAM just south of the DMZ. Of the 6 crewmembers only BAT 21B came up on the radio but he was surrounded by three enemy divisions which were invading South Vietnam across the DMZ. During the ensuing rescue operations 10 Sandys were sent to Da Nang, seven of which took battle damage on one day. Bad weather with ceilings of 1500 feet hampered rescue attempts which lasted 16 days. Several other aircrafts were shot down while working in the SAR area. On 3 April, NAIL 38A/B was shot down by a SAM while working with the Sandys. Both 38A/B came up on radios and three survivors were hiding among thousands of NVA troops. Heavy ground fire prevented a helicopter pickup after Jolly Green 67 was shot down on 6 April. All 6 crewmen were lost on the well planned rescue attempt. Jolly 67 was hit by small arms from the many enemy troops in the area of the survivor. Covey 282 was shot down on 7 April by a SAM. Contact with Nail 38A was lost but finally Nail 38B and BAT 21B were rescued by friendly

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DOC A4

ground forces. Contact was lost with Covey 282 on 18 April after he had evaded capture for 11 days. BAT21B spent 11 days on the ground and Nail 38B spent 8 days on the ground. After initial pickup attempts failed the Sandys made several madden kit drops to the survivors and passed coded movement instructions to the survivors.

While the SARs south of the DMZ continued, Bengal 505A (Navy A-6) was shot down east of Tchepone. Despite bad weather and a lack of air resources Bengal 505A was rescued after four days.

On 10 April Musket 01 (F-4) was downed northwest of the "Catcher's Mitt." Both survivors were quickly rescued when the SAR forces encountered no opposition in the area.

On 23 April contact was made with Cosmic 16B (RF-4) west of Dong Hoi. The aircraft had been downed by a SAM three days earlier and 16B had spent the time moving to a safe area. After four days delay because of bad weather and despite a lack of air resources, the Sandys led the Jolly Greens in for a successful pickup from deep in North Vietnam. At least two SAMs were fired at the rescue forces during the pickup but excellent planning thwarted all enemy defenses.

On 29 April Scorpion 115 (VNAF A-37) was shot down south of Quang Tri (300/31/69). During the search for the VNAF survivor two Army helicopters were shot down in the same area. After directing the rescue of eight Army crewmen from both helicopters the Sandys resumed the SAR for the VNAF pilot. Due to a lack of

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resources the area could not be made safe for the Jolly Greens but a pickup was attempted with VNAF helicopters. Contact with the survivor, who was wounded in the stomach, was lost several hours before the VNAF helicopters made their rescue attempt. They hovered over the chute for 20 seconds and departed the area when no survivor was seen. ARVN ground troops with tanks within 200 meters of the survivor refused to attempt a rescue. Rescue attempts were called off the next morning when contact could not be regained with the survivor.

For the first time since last dry season, survivors were not rescued after radio contact was established. The location of the unlucky survivors, in the middle of 3 enemy divisions, and the lack of air resources caused the rescue attempts to be unsuccessful.

The FOL at Ubon was closed and one at Bien Hoa with two Sandys was opened during April. During the latter part of April, A-1 strike missions were sent to strike around Quang Tri with turn arounds at Da Nang. Up to 10 aircrafts staged out of Da Nang on some days. Targets ranged from tanks and APC's to bridges.

On 3 April seven Sandys and two Jolly Greens took battle damage on rescue attempts for BAT 21B. One aircraft flown by Capt Morse had a wing fire causing a loss of hydraulic pressure. Capt Morse made a successful, night, gear-up landing but the aircraft was declared class 26.

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contact was lost with 38A within 12 hours. A tremendous SAR effort<sup>2.</sup> was mounted by all units involved. The enemy had moved into the area and was well fortified. Several attempts were made for rescue, each driven off by heavy ground fire. One CH-53 and crew was lost on one attempt. On 11 April, rescue of 38B was accomplished by a team composed of ARVN Rangers and US Marine advisors. Nail 38A is listed as missing in action.

2. (S) On 25 May, 1972, Rustic 124 (Lt James W. Twaddle, III, and Lt Jack W. Shaw) was downed by a SA-7 SAM southeast of Quang Tri in South Vietnam. Both crewmembers ejected successfully and were picked up immediately by ARVN helicopters operating in the area.

3. (S) On 30 June, 1972, Nail 37 (Lt Erwin Steincamp) was downed by a SA-7 SAM due south of Quang Tri in South Vietnam. Ejection was successful and crewmember was on the ground about 90 minutes. He evaded imminent capture and was picked up by a US Army helicopter. One helicopter crewmember suffered a serious wound and the helicopter sustained light damage.

F. (S) During the past quarter the 23rd TASS participated in many rescues and rescue attempts.

1. (S) On 2 April, 1972, Nail 31 (EB-66) was downed by a SA-2 SAM just south of the DMZ in South Vietnam. Contact was established with Nail 31 only. As the SAR progressed, BLUE GHOST 03 (UH-1) also went down with no survivors. The next day (3 April) NAIL 38 (Lt William Henderson and Lt Mark N. Clark) was downed by another SA-2 SAM in the immediate vicinity. Contact was established with both crewmembers, however after 12 hours contact with 38A was lost.

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As the SAR progressed into the 7th of April, COVEY 282 (CV-10) <sup>10.</sup> was also downed. Contact was maintained for 11 days and then lost. Crewmember presumed captured. The enemy had pushed its battle line farther southward by this time, and all survivors were located behind enemy lines. Several attempts for rescue were made, each driven off by intense ground fire. One Jolly Green was lost with the entire crew on one attempt. Madding Kits were employed, as well as area denial ordnance. Rescue of NAIL 34B was effected by an ARVN Bright Light team on 11 April. BAT 21B was picked up by the same team within the next few days. Losses included one CH-53 with crew, and several aircraft damaged by ground fire.

2. (S) On 4 April, 1972, VAMPIRE 46 (QU-22B) suffered an engine failure and the pilot was forced to bail out east of Dong Hene in southern Laos. Nail 12 (Capt Robert H. Willis) was vectored by ground radar to the survivor's immediate vicinity at 1845L. Nail 12 then turned on his aircraft exterior lights and was immediately spotted by the survivor. The strobe light was used for the pickup, but due to the low altitude of the rescue forces Nail 12 had to vector the helicopter towards the survivor. When the helicopter was close, the survivor popped a smoke flare for final acquisition. Pickup was completed by 1915L without opposition. No losses/damages sustained.

3. (S) At 1800L on 9 April, 1972, BENGAL 505 (A-6) was downed by ground fire 6NM northeast of Telephone in southern Laos. Nail 12 (Capt Robert H. Willis and Capt Lynn Steincamp) located the survivor's position at first light on the 10th. Nail 12 took a direct hit in the centerline fuel tank which caused the tank to burst into flames.

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sorties per day. The situation in Quang Tri Province was critical and the Americans used a large assortment of firepower. The Nails worked with Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine flyers, plus spotting for US Navy ships firing from the Gulf of Tonkin. Nail crews supported many SARs during this time and their roles will be discussed in the SAR section of this chapter.<sup>102</sup>

(S) Enemy missiles accounted for the three combat losses. Early in the quarter, a SA-2 shot down Nail 38 while the aircraft was participating in the BAT 21B SAR. BAT 21B and Nail 38B walked out from the midst of three enemy divisions after more than a week on the ground. The pilot of Nail 38, 1Lt William J. Henderson was listed as MIA as the quarter ended. This SAR received worldwide coverage in the news media and will be discussed in greater detail in the SAR section of this chapter.<sup>103</sup> The other two OV-10A losses were shootdowns by the SA-7 Strella. All crewmembers were recovered from these two losses.

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102. Ibid.

103. See SAR for Bat 21B and Nail 38B, this chapter, page 108.

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

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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

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Tail No.: Model: UH-1N Date of Loss: 04 Dec 71 Unit: 20<sup>th</sup> 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)

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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

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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. 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 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.

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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

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Tail No.: 70-1628    Model: CH-53C    Date of Loss: 24 Jan 75    Unit: 21st SOS, 56<sup>th</sup> 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:

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

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STATEMENT

DOC 23<sup>18</sup>

2 Apr

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 trees, and in the process began taking fire again. Most of the fire seemed to be coming from the north and

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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. 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

GROUP 4

Declassified at 3 year intervals;  
Reclassified after 12 years.



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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 FAC 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.

Thus ended Day 1 of the Bat 21 SAR.

*Donald E. Morse*

DONALD E. MORSE, Captain, USAF  
Sandy 07

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5 APR

|        |    |                                   |
|--------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 4/2230 | B  | Sgt Burrell To duty               |
| 5/0130 | LY | JG 30 + <del>60</del> 1 TO CH 69. |
| 0305   | LY | JG 30 + 60 ↓ FM CH 69             |
| 5/0754 | RH | JG 32 ↑ CH 77 FOR CH 69           |
| 5/1010 | gH | JG 32 ↓ CH 77                     |

6 APR

|           |    |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 05/2230 Z | B  | Sgt Burrell To duty                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1250Z     | B  | ITEM REPORT TO JOKER                                                                                                                                                |
| 06/0155Z  | B  | JG 60 ↑ to HUE                                                                                                                                                      |
| 06/0355Z  | gH | JG 65 ↓ fm CH 69                                                                                                                                                    |
| 06/0705Z  | gH | JG 67 & 66 ↑ SAR                                                                                                                                                    |
| 06/0705Z  | gH | SANDIES 1 & 2 ↑                                                                                                                                                     |
| 06/0720Z  | gH | SANDIES 5 & 6 ↑                                                                                                                                                     |
| 0800Z     | gH | JG 60 & 32 ↑ SAR                                                                                                                                                    |
| 0807Z     | gH | Sandies putting in strikes.                                                                                                                                         |
| 0809Z     | gH | Sandy 2 contacted 21B                                                                                                                                               |
| 0809Z     | gH | Sandy 1 moving in the area.                                                                                                                                         |
| 0810Z     | gH | JG 71 ↑ FCF                                                                                                                                                         |
| 0830Z     | gH | 38B reports no movement in his area.<br>21B reports some movement but<br>knows not what it is.<br>Sandy reports no ground fire but<br>sees people digging foxholes. |
| 0822Z     | gH | 21B reports noise may have<br>been can package dropped to<br>him.                                                                                                   |
| 0830Z     | gH | JG 67 & 66 moving to initial<br>holding point.                                                                                                                      |

A-3-030

|       |    |                                                                       |
|-------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0845Z | gt | IG 71 ↓ FCF                                                           |
| 0845Z | gt | Sandies briefing / both survivors checked in.                         |
| 0855Z | gt | Sandies finished briefing                                             |
| 0902Z | gt | Sandies asked for two passes of ordinance and then go in for pick-up. |
| 0911Z | gt | Sandies talking to ZIB trying to raise 38B, then going in.            |
| 0912Z | gt | Sandy 1 moving JGs up to friendly tank area.                          |
| 0923Z | gt | IG 67 going in for pick up.                                           |
| 0924Z | gt | IG 67 going in after 38B                                              |
| 0955Z | gt | IG 67 picking up ground fire.                                         |
| 0956Z | gt | IG 67 DOWN / exploded on impact.                                      |
| 0939Z | gt | ALL Sandies & JGs RTB.                                                |
| 0950Z | gt | JGs ETA CH 77 1000Z                                                   |
| 1015Z | gt | JGs 66, 60, 32 ↓ CH 77                                                |



~~SECRET~~  
STATEMENT

DOC 23'

2 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 UBON.
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 Sady'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 (Delta). The chopper was Blue Ghost Red 30. He

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DOC 23<sup>2</sup>

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 ~~one~~ 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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

## STATEMENT

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 that 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 another 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 taret 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.

*G. Priebbe*  
G. PRIEBBE, 1Lt, USAF  
Sandy 5

*G. Brundage*  
G. Brundage, Capt, USAF  
Sandy 6

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~  
~~SECRET~~  
STATEMENT

DOC 234

3ap

April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B/MAIL 38B)  
Sandy 07 Morsa/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 (XD 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.
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 redesvous 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

Declassified at 3 year intervals;  
Declassified after 12 years

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~~SECRET~~  
10



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DOC 235  
2/2

and await further words from the Nail 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~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~SECRET~~  
STATEMENT

4 Apr DOC 23"

April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B/NAIL 38A/B)  
Sandy 03 Morse/04 Morgan

1. 4 April 1972, day 3 of the SAR for BAT 21B. Capt Morse and Capt Morgan launched as Sandy 03 and 04, 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/gully at YD 156 586, and other non-fixed positions. At 1030Z while F-4 strikes were in progress in the SAR area, Sandy 04 (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

GROUP-4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals;  
Declassified after 12 years

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DOC 23<sup>12</sup>  
2/2

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 formed 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 controlable, 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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

STATEMENT

11 Apr

DOC 23<sup>13</sup>

4 April 1972

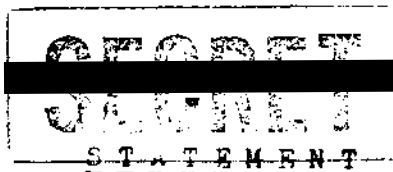
SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21/NAIL 38)  
Sandy 05 Boli/06 Barbana

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 Naps on target #22 (see map # 2). The rest of the Sandy's are holding 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 Naps 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~~





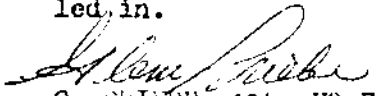
DOC 2310

4 April 1972

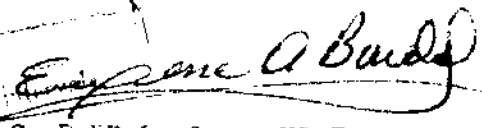
SUBJECT: Sandy 1 and 2 (Bat 21/Nail 38)

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 on scene 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 north-west. 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 03/06 with Jollys were launched by request from #1 and felt an attempt could be made. Jollys and Sandys 03-06 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. FRIESE, 1Lt, USAF

Sandy 01

  
G. BARDAL, Capt, USAF  
Sandy 02

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

STATEMENT 3 Apr  
4 Apr

DOC 23<sup>6</sup>  
3 Apr 72

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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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(2)

DOC 237

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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

was unable to get airborne. I was carrying CHU-22, CHU-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 hardsite on the south side of a ~~major~~ east-west 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 CHU-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 CHU-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 RTE'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.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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 aa 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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



## S T A T E M E N T

**SUBJECT:** Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21 B NAIL 38B)

1. 6 April 1972, day five of the BAT 21 B SAR four for Nail 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 flew over 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 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 Nail 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 Nail 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

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 Thirong ID 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.

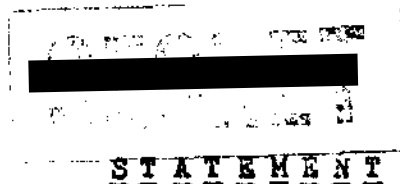
COMMENTS:

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



DOC 23<sup>16</sup>

6 April 1972

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

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 GBU 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 Snake 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 ruin. 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 smoke.
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  
Revised at 3 year intervals;  
Excluded after 12 years.

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 turn 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 overshot 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. JCB

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

*Fred C. Boli*

FRED C. BOLI, Captain, USAF  
Sandy 01

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

37th ARRS  
Memorial Service

South Hanger, DaNang Airfield  
Republic of Vietnam

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12 April 1972

1530 Hours

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ORDER OF SERVICE

- \* Presentation of Colors. Color Guard
- \* Hymn "How Great Thou Art"
- \* Invocation Chaplain Thomas F. Keane
- Responsive Reading "My Soul Is Thirsting"
- \* Hymn "The Strife Is O'er, The Battle Done"
- Scripture Reading TSgt Raymond Gore
- Tribute Lt Colonel William Harrie
- \* Hymn "The Air Force Hymn"
- \* Benediction Chaplain Thomas F. Keane

\* PLEASE STAND

+ + + + +

TRIBUTE

We, men of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron and friends, are here to pay honor to our fellow comrades:

TSgt Allen J. Avery  
1Lt John H. Call III  
Capt Peter H. Chapman II  
Sgt William R. Pearson  
TSgt Roy D. Prater  
Sgt James Alley (40th ARRS)

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### Capt Peter H. Chapman II

Capt Peter H. Chapman II - Aircraft Commander - Killed in action 6 April 1972, Vietnam. Capt Chapman was born on 26 August 1940 in Centerburg, Ohio, where he was raised and educated. He entered the Air Force in the early 1960's and completed navigator training. Soon after, Capt Chapman entered pilot training and received his wings in 1964. He flew the MAC line and C-141's until he transitioned into helicopters. This was Capt Chapman's first tour in SEA. He is survived by his parents, Mr and Mrs Peter H. Chapman, Route #2, Santeeburg, Ohio, 43011.

### Lt John H. Call

Lt John H. Call - Copilot - Killed in action 6 April 1972, Vietnam. Lt Call was born on 9 February 1947 in Washington, D. C. He was raised in Silver Springs, MD, and graduated from the University of Maryland in 1969. He entered the Air Force in 1970 and went through the Army helicopter training program at Ft. Walters and Ft. Rucker. This was Lt Call's first tour in SEA. He is survived by his parents, Mr and Mrs John H. Call, 5 Greenland Court, Potomac, Maryland, 20854.

### Sgt James Alley

Sgt James Alley - Combat Photographer - Killed in action 6 April 1972, Vietnam. Sgt Alley was born on 18 September 1949. His home is at Plantation, Florida and his last assignment was at Vandenburg AFB, California. Sgt Alley arrived in SEA during April 1971 and has been on flying status since he arrived. He has flown rescue missions with the Jolly Greens and was here to replace another sergeant who was slightly wounded by shrapnel. Sgt Alley had been stationed at Ubon Airfield, Thailand with the 40th ARRS and was at DaNang on TDY. He is survived by his parents and one sister.

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**TSgt Allen J. Avery**

TSgt Allen J. Avery - Pararescueman - Killed in action 6 April 1972, Vietnam. TSgt Avery was born on 22 February 1943 in New York City, New York. He has been a pararescueman for about ten years. Sgt Avery's decorations include the Silver Star, Airmans Medal, Air Medal with 14 Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm. He is survived by his daughter Deborah K. Avery and his grandmother, Mrs. Sonia T. Avery, 96 Boyce Street, Auburn, Maine, 01501.

**Sgt William R. Pearson**

Sgt William R. Pearson - Pararescueman - Killed in action 6 April 1972, Vietnam. Sgt Pearson was born on 18 April 1931 in Concord New Hampshire. He entered the Air Force in 1970 and graduated from pararescue school in January 1971. This was Sgt Pearson's first tour in SBA where he flew on 116 combat missions. He is survived by his parents Mr. and Mrs. Robert R. Pearson, Rt #1, Warner, New Hampshire.

**TSgt Roy D. Prater**

TSgt Roy D. Prater, Flight Engineer, Killed in action 6 April 1972, Vietnam. TSgt Prater was born on 1 July 1936 in Knoxville, Tennessee. He entered the Marine Corps in the 1950's and flew the H-34 helicopter. He then joined the Air Force and flew the Jolly Greens since they began production. TSgt Prater is survived by his wife Carol J. Prater and their three children, Dennis, Debra and Pamela, Route #4, Columbia City, Indiana, 46725. He is also survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Donald S. Strickland, 118 Camolet Sub Division, Warner Robins, GA, 31093.

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## CAPTAIN PETER HAYDEN CHAPMAN II

Captain Peter H. Chapman II was a native of Centerburg, Ohio. He entered the Air Force through the Aviation Cadet Program in 1961. After commissioning as a navigator (he was a distinguished graduate and received the Daughters of the American Revolution Award for Academic Excellence), he was assigned as a transport navigator in C-135s at Travis Air Force Base, California (MATS). He attended pilot training at Williams Air Force Base, Arizona in 1965, and returned to the 44th Air Transport Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, to fly the C-141. He attended Squadron Officer School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama in 1969, where he again graduated with honors. In 1971, he trained in the HH-53 "Super Jolly Green Giant" helicopter and became a member of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Da Nang Airfield, RVN.

On April 6, 1972, Captain Chapman and his crew on H-53 Jolly Green 67 were launched to recover the crewmembers of an OV-10 and an RB-66 who were downed in the northern portion of Quang Tri Province, very close to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in South Vietnam. Prior to the arrival of Jolly Green 67, the area around the survivors was repeatedly bombed and strafed to neutralize enemy fire. When the A-1 "Sandies" (close air support tactical aircraft) and other aircraft had determined that the enemy fire had been suppressed, Jolly Green 67 was cleared for the recovery attempt. As Captain Chapman and his crew approached, slightly south of the survivors, Jolly Green 67 began receiving intense enemy ground fire. During the attempt to get out of the area, the aircraft was disabled and Captain Chapman and the entire crew were lost.

The Military Airlift Command (MAC), the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS), and the 1550 Aircrew Training and Test Wing (ATTW) are very proud to dedicate this building to the memory of Captain Peter H. Chapman -- one who exemplifies the motto, "THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE".

Captain Chapman was selected by the members of the 1550 Technical Training Squadron as particularly deserving of this recognition as a Rescue pilot because of his dedication to academic excellence. Chapman Hall houses all academic classrooms, slide/tape learning center, aircraft simulators (HH-53 and HH-3), and the new ARRS Museum. All ARRS crewmembers and all Air Force helicopter pilots receive their training here; this includes training for TH-1F, UH-1N, H-3, H-53, and the HC-130.

## YOU GOT GATOR?



ARTICLE FROM VIETNAM

# Brave Jolly Green

**The entire North Vietnamese Army was on the move, but that didn't stop the Air Force's search and rescue helicopters.**

*By Colonel Darrell D. Whitcomb, U.S. Air Force Reserve (ret.)*

*Editor's note: The June 1997 issue of Vietnam features U.S. Air Force Colonel Darrell Whitcomb's story of the B-52 bomber strike against the North Vietnamese during the massive 1972 Easter Offensive, the shootdown of a Douglas EB-66 electronic warfare aircraft, and the downing of "Blueghost 39," an air cavalry helicopter (see "Heroic Huey Search-and-Rescue Mission" on TheHistoryNet). As in the classic Japanese movie Rashomon, where a tragic incident is told from many different perspectives, Colonel Whitcomb, a former forward air controller (FAC), tells the many-sided story of the attempts to rescue two downed American airmen in the spring of 1972. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Iceal Hambleton (call sign Bat-21 Bravo) was the navigator of the EB-66 that was shot down while leading the B-52 bomber strike. First Lieutenant Mark Clark was the navigator of a North American Rockwell OV-10 FAC aircraft shot down in an early attempt to extract Hambleton. The efforts to locate and rescue both men--later sensationalized in a 1988 movie, Bat-21, starring Gene Hackman, Dannie Glover and Jerry Reed (none of whom were "particularly believable" in their roles, according to one reviewer)--actually involved separate Army, Air Force and Navy operations. What follows is Whitcomb's account of the Air Force operations.*

At approximately 3:15 p.m. on April 6, U.S. Air Force Captain Fred Boli took off from the American air base at Da Nang in a prop-driven Douglas A-1 Skyraider fighter-bomber (known as a "Sandy"). With Boli, whose call sign was Sandy 01, were three other A-1s, Sandys 02, 05 and 06, and two Sikorsky HH-53 rescue helicopters (known as "Jolly Greens"), Jolly Greens 67 and 60. A few minutes later two more Jolly Greens, led by Captain Mark Schibler, took off as backups.

The task force had two possible objectives. Colonel Hambleton, the EB-66 survivor, had now been on the ground four days and needed to be resupplied. Therefore, one A-1 (Boli's) was rigged to drop him a Madden resupply kit with

food, water, ammunition and extra radios. A rescue attempt could also be made if Boli, the Sandy leader, felt the situation warranted it. It would be Boli's call.

Lt. Col. Bill Harris, commander of the Jolly Green squadron, was concerned about the mission. Harris knew that there was still likely to be a significant enemy presence around the two downed Americans. He discussed the situation with his commander, Colonel Cecil Muirhead, in Saigon. Muirhead and his staff were also worried and were monitoring the ongoing rescue effort very closely.

Harris had intended to fly as aircraft commander on the lead Jolly Green during the April 6 mission. But he had participated in one of the earlier pickup attempts, when the choppers had been badly shot up, and his squadron mates insisted that he had already done his share. When Harris reluctantly stood aside, Captain Peter Chapman stepped forward and insisted that he be allowed to fly as aircraft commander on the mission. Harris was deeply impressed with Chapman's volunteering, especially since

Chapman was not next in the duty rotation and, in fact, had orders to return to the United States to fly with the presidential air unit at Andrews Air Force Base, in Maryland. But Chapman's attitude was typical of all of the men in his squadron, who were ready to risk their lives to save others. With Chapman on Jolly Green 67 were 1st Lt. John H. Call, III, co-pilot; Tech. Sgt. Roy D. Prater, mechanic; Sergeant William R. Pearson and Tech. Sgt. Allen J. Avery, pararescuemen; and Sergeant James H. Alley, photographer.

The gaggle of airplanes proceeded to a holding point southeast of Quang Tri, where Jolly Greens 67 and 60 and Sandys 05 and 06 circled while Sandys 01 and 02 entered the battle area to assess how dangerous it might be to attempt a pickup. There, they took over from the two FACs on station, Captain Harold Icke (call sign Bilk 11) and Captain Gary Ferentchak (call sign Nail 59). Icke and Ferentchak had been working the area jointly and finishing up the preparatory airstrikes. The two backup Jolly Greens were on hold at a position east of Hue, just off the South Vietnamese coast.

Boli noticed a friendly tank position approximately six kilometers south of the survivors and decided to make the final holding point for the helicopters right over them. But he was very concerned about the five enemy battalions that intelligence had told him were directly around the survivors. He spent the next 30 minutes trolling the planned ingress route for the helicopters, using his 7.62mm minigun to strafe anything that looked suspicious. Neither Boli, in Sandy 01, nor Sandy 02 observed any appreciable enemy reaction, but they did receive some enemy surface-to-air-missile (SAM) signals on the radio while they were checking out the area.

At 4:15 p.m., Boli directed the two FACs to terminate the airstrikes so that he could overfly the survivors' immediate area. He requested that Icke and Ferentchak as well as Sandy 02 and both Hambleton and Clark, on the ground, all listen on the same radio frequency and watch while he flew low around the survivors' positions. Boli also tried to drop the Madden supply kit to Hambleton,

but the arming wire on the device failed and the kit did not release from the aircraft. Boli did not know that, however, until he landed back at Da Nang.

Boli also strafed a few suspected NVA locations with his 20mm cannons and had Sandy 02 drop cluster bombs on other areas, widening his area of search as he did so. Boli directed the FACs to hit several areas with more airstrikes. While all of that was going on, Boli ordered Jolly Green 60 to hold southeast of Quang Tri and ordered Jolly Green 67 and Sandys 05 and 06 to proceed to the final holding point.

As the aircraft were repositioning, Captain Boli began his final briefing for all the participants in the rescue attempt. They would first try to pick up Hambleton, he said, then--depending on how the situation developed--they would try to extract Clark. The two would be picked up either by Jolly Green 67 or one of the other choppers. But the briefing was rudely interrupted by a SAM call, which forced all of the aircraft to dive for the deck to avoid the missiles. Boli noted that the SAM launches were not accompanied by any anti-aircraft artillery (AAA, or triple-A).

At 5:10 p.m., Sandy 03 joined the force with a full load of white phosphorus smoke, which could be used to lay a smoke screen. Boli finished the plan briefing--Sandy 02 would lead Jolly Green 67 in with a series of smoke rockets to pick up Hambleton and then Clark, in that order, if the area was quiet. Sandy 02 would then join with Sandys 05 and 06 in a "daisy chain" around the Jolly Green to provide suppressive fire. Sandy 03 would lay a series of well-placed smoke screens and then join the daisy chain. Sandy 01 would orbit above to direct the operation and call ground fire.

At 5:15 p.m., Boli determined that all requested targets had been struck to his satisfaction. He had the FACs and remaining strikes hold high and dry while he re-entered the survivors' immediate area to brief them and take one last look. He reviewed the plan and situation in his mind. He knew that it could be a trap, but the preparation had been thorough, the trolling and probing had been intense, and the enemy response so far had been slack. It was time to go!

Boli directed the task force to execute the pickup. Sandy 02 immediately laid down his marks for the helicopters to follow to Hambleton. Sandy 03 put down his smoke screen. Sandys 02, 05 and 06 began the daisy chain to protect the vulnerable helicopter and began dropping cluster bombs and strafing with their 20mm cannons anything that looked in any way threatening. A slight wind shift caused some of the smoke screen to partly obscure Hambleton's position. But the confusion was quickly resolved, and the force pressed on. Overhead, in the swirling mass of airplanes, Captain Ferentchak took out his camera and began to take pictures. He wanted to record what he thought was going to be a historic rescue.

As Jolly Green 67 crossed the river near Cam Lo, the helicopter began to take ground fire from all quarters. Seconds later, as it approached to within 100 meters of Hambleton, Boli called for the survivor to pop his red smoke so that



the Jolly Green crew could locate him. Almost simultaneously, someone on Jolly Green 67 called, "I'm hit." It was later determined that they also had added, "... they got a fuel line." Hambleton heard all of this on his survival radio and, realizing the gravity of the situation, did not pop his smoke and reveal his position.

The crew of Jolly Green 67 fought to control their damaged aircraft. Boli had briefed the helicopter crews that if they began taking ground fire, they were to immediately exit the area on a southeast heading. Realizing their desperate situation, the crew began to turn their craft to escape the cauldron of withering fire. The North Vietnamese gunners seemed to increase the intensity of their fire.

Boli ordered the other Sandys to cover the wounded Jolly Green, and he began strafing in front of the lumbering helicopter as it tried to gain speed. But instead of turning southeast as briefed, the crew began heading due east, toward the enemy concentrations north of the river nearby. Apparently one of the crew members on the Jolly Green was holding down his microphone transmit button, since numerous calls directing the chopper to "Turn south, Jolly, turn right!" were blocked. The crew finally turned south about one kilometer east of the planned route after Boli warned them not to cross over a village full of enemy troops. As the Jolly Green crew made their turn, Boli flew up behind them and strafed the enemy soldiers.

Jolly Green 67 overshot its turn and took up a heading to the southwest. Boli ordered the chopper to turn back to the left. Someone else came on the radio and told the chopper to turn right. Boli tells the story from there: "Jolly hesitated, and again I ordered, 'No! Turn left Jolly, turn south.' He initiated the turn, and I was about to order him to climb when, as I passed on a strafe pass, I observed a fire suddenly break out between the middle of the left engine and the main rotor. Immediately pieces flew off of the tail rotor and struck the main rotor, causing it to disintegrate. Jolly Green 67 continued to roll left and crashed on his left side about 1\_ kilometers south of Nail 38 Bravo's [Lieutenant Clark's] position. Fire immediately spread throughout the aircraft. No beepers were ever heard.... The time was 1740." On the tactical frequency, Boli began calling: "Jolly's down! Jolly's down!"

Jolly Green 67 lay on its side, a heap of burning, smoking wreckage. It would continue to burn and smoke for several days, with intermittent explosions of the ordnance on board. The fire would become so hot that some of the metal would melt into the ground. There were no survivors and there would be no search and rescue attempt. Instead, the names of six more Americans--Chapman, Call, Prater, Pearson, Avery and Alley--were added to the mounting bill for Hambleton.

Boli conducted a roll call of his task force. All others were present. Captain Schibler, leading the two backup helicopters, monitored all of this and immediately began to move his two aircraft to the holding point, where he encountered the rest of the force. The two groups of aircraft quickly joined into

an orbiting aircraft and tried to sort out the disaster. All the pilots agreed that there were apparently no survivors of Jolly Green 67 and that another attempt to rescue Hambleton and Clark did not appear justified at that time, since there was still a strong enemy presence in the area.

As the task force leader, it was Boli's call. He agreed that the area was just too hot; they would abort the mission. Boli then turned on-scene command over to Captain Icke, with another list of targets to be struck, told the survivors to remain hidden, and accompanied his shaken force back to base.

Back at Da Nang, the men of the rescue forces were stunned by the tragic loss of Jolly Green 67 and its crew. Colonel Harris was very upset. The loss of Jolly Green 67 confirmed his earlier fears that the search area was just too dangerous for helicopters. Once again, Harris called Colonel Muirhead in Saigon; this time Harris told him that they had to find another way.

Muirhead agreed with Boli's decision and Harris' recommendations to terminate the rescue attempts by helicopter. He then notified his superiors that "all reasonable actions had been accomplished," and that the area was just too dangerous for a helicopter pickup.

In their hiding places near Cam Lo, the two survivors had been witnesses to Jolly Green's downing. Lieutenant Clark later recalled that there had been so much firing going on that he could not distinguish who was firing at whom. But as the Jolly Green passed over him heading south, he could tell that it was not gaining altitude. When he heard it crash, Clark was devastated. His immediate thought was: "I really cocked this up. Six more guys dying because I f---d up." And then the realization set in that he was not going to be picked up that day. Clark felt desperately lonely.

Colonel Hambleton--Bat 21 Bravo--cried for the six brave men who had lost their lives lost trying to save his own. Although he was tired, hungry and demoralized, the 53-year-old navigator resolved then and there, "Hell, I'm going to get out of this, regardless."

Hambleton and Clark did get out. But not by helicopter. No more of the vulnerable choppers would be sent in. Instead, a small ground team was dispatched commanded by U.S. Marine Lt. Col. Andy Anderson and led by Navy SEAL Lieutenant Tom Norris. Within a week, the team would infiltrate behind enemy lines to rescue the two downed flyers. It was a risky and dangerous mission, but it got done. The two lucky fliers returned home as heroes.

Nothing could be done, however, for the brave crew of Jolly Green 67. They were lost forever, part of the larger cost of the war. It would be 22 years before their remains would be found and returned to the United States.

*Now a captain for Delta Airlines, Air Force Colonel Darrell D. Whitcomb logged 1,875 combat hours as a cargo pilot and FAC during the Vietnam War. Suggestions for further reading: 'The Rescue of Bat 21, by Darrell D.*

*Whitcomb (forthcoming); BAT-21, by William C. Anderson; and "SEALS Shadowy Rescue," by Dale Andrade, Vietnam Magazine, December 1990.*

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## **Jolly Green 67 Memorial Page**

**Shot down on  
6 April 1972**

**near Cam Lo, South Vietnam**

**Attempting the Rescue of Bat-21 Bravo and Nail 38 Bravo**

**Capt. Peter H. Chapman, Pilot; Buried on 1 Nov 1997 near Lock, Ohio**

**1st Lt. John H. Call, III, Co-Pilot; Buried 19 Nov 1997, Arlington National Cemetery**

**Tech. Sgt. Roy D. Prater, Flight Engineer; Buried 19 Nov 1997, Arlington National Cemetery**

**Sergeant William R. Pearson, Pararescueman; Buried 1 Nov 1997 in New Hampshire**

**Tech. Sgt. Allen J. Avery, Pararescueman; Buried 19 Nov 1997, Arlington National Cemetery**



Don Call's Tribute to his brother John.

PJ John Ratliff's Tribute to Al Avery and Jolly Green 67

### **The Homecoming**

The USAF announced on October 2, 1997 their remains had been returned to American soil.

Read a brief narrative of the Bat 21 mission by Darrel Whitcomb, Nail 25

The crew of Jolly Green 67 was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery

on Nov 19, 1997. Here is the AF News Service article on the ceremony.

More pictures from the services.

Also read Don Morse's, Sandy 5, article on the Services.



http://www.jollygreen.org

*A Tribute to Al Avery*



I was walking the halls of the College Inn  
When above the normal din  
I heard the announcer say  
That a helicopter had been shot down today.  
I learned shortly thereafter that Al Avery was one of the crews.  
But no one would attend to the news.  
For the students it didn't matter  
That we had lost an aircrew, and on they'd chatter.  
But I had smelt  
The air after a rocket attack and felt  
The anguish of flesh torn asunder  
In answer to the rocket's thunder.  
Those students didn't comprehend  
That we had lost friends:  
True patriots who give  
"That Others May Live."  
I had seen Al at another ethos



After a rescue from Laos,  
The tension in Al's face  
Shows the intensity he bore in that place.  
Al and the crew of Jolly 67  
Went on April 6, 1972 into heaven!  
They found that day their destiny,  
And went to their place in history.  
The heroes they became,  
Were not recognized, and the blame  
Is an American public  
Which had grown apathetic.  
And now, at last, they are buried  
At Arlington National Cemetery, and are carried  
In the highest esteem by the nation,  
For the effects of their dedication.  
For Al and the crew  
Have again shown us what to do.  
How the dedication to duty  
Can lead into unity.  
I was going to send flowers  
But they wilt away in hours.  
A poem, however, with words will last  
For future generations to learn from the past.

Al, I bid you adieu.

This nation sometimes hasn't a clue  
Of the sacrifice it takes for us to live  
So that others may learn how to give.

It is raining as I pen these lines.  
New storms are hrewing in our times.

Let us hope future generations  
Learn what it takes to live in peace among nations--

**AND WE MAKE WAR NO MORE.**

John C. Ratliff

November 19, 1997



Al Avery and the crew of Jolly 67 were buried on November 19, 1997 after having been lost on the rescue mission for BAT 21. They remained missing until recently, when several teams went into Vietnam to recover their remains. It took some time to identify them, and the crew was buried with over 100 watching. Unfortunately, on the very day of their burial, another "event" overshadowed their interment--a political controversy about who should be buried in Arlington. It seemed that there would be no real remembrance of their service. This is posted to honor this crew, who continued the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service's tradition of sacrifice.

**"THESE THINGS WE DO, THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE."**

The crews from the 37th ARRSq won the Presidential Unit Citation, Outstanding Unit Citation, and had over 613 "saves," or lives saved from its crews efforts. Al Avery had several of those saves credited to him.

**Webmaster, John C. Ratliff**

**[www.sorcom.com/~searat/Tribute.html](http://www.sorcom.com/~searat/Tribute.html)**

**contact: [searat@ sorcom.com](mailto:searat@sorcom.com)**

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**Created, December 29, 1997**

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# **The Homecoming**

By  
Ruth Spitler

A man of honor, fine and brave  
Left home and loves behind  
To rescue those across the world  
Beyond the battle line.

The duels of men are deadly.  
He that saves was lost.  
No win could come from bloodied soil  
At such a mighty cost.

So many years have gone awry.  
Cruel walls and angry men  
Have left him on the other side.  
At last, he's here again.

Solemn cadence, march and drum  
Guide him on his way  
To his final resting place  
Of honor on this day.

Beneath the lawns of Arlington  
Our hero's come to rest.  
To lay in God's own slumber  
Among the very best.

Soft breezes whisper o'er him.  
Cool rains mist on his tomb.  
He sleeps in peaceful silence.  
The rescuer is home.



## Servicemen's remains return home

Released: Oct 3, 1997

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- The remains of seven American servicemen previously unaccounted for from Southeast Asia have been identified and were returned to their families for burial in the United States.

They are identified as Capt. Peter H. Chapman, Centerburg, Ohio; 1st Lt. John H. Call III, Potomac, Md.; Tech. Sgt. Allen J. Avery, Auburn, Mass.; Tech. Sgt. Roy D. Prater, Tiffin, Ohio; and Sgt. William R. Pearson, Webster, N.H., all Air Force personnel. The names of one airman and one Army aviator will not be released at the request of their families.

On April 6, 1972, Chapman, Call, Avery, Prater, and Pearson were flying an H-53C Super Jolly helicopter on a search-and-rescue mission over Quang Tri, South Vietnam. While trying to evade enemy ground fire, Chapman, the pilot, flew the helicopter to an altitude of 200 feet. The helicopter then crashed into the ground and burst into flames. Other aircraft in the area did not see anyone exit the aircraft before impact.

In 1989, 1992 and 1994, joint U.S.-Vietnamese teams investigated and excavated a crash site in Quang Tri Province. During the 1992 investigation of this incident, a local villager reported finding remains and burying them in his garden. U.S. investigators excavated the garden and recovered possible human remains.

In 1994, a joint team found many bone fragments, personal effects and aircraft wreckage. The remains were repatriated to the United States. Mitochondrial DNA testing was used to confirm the identifications.

With the identification of these seven servicemen, 2,109 Americans remain unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War.

"The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam which resulted in the accounting of these servicemen," said a Defense Department spokesman. "We hope that such cooperation will bring increased results in the future. Achieving the fullest possible accounting for these Americans is of the highest national priority."



## 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 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 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 airstrikes were put in to beat down the enemy gunners.

But the 6th of April, dawned bright and clear. So, after 42 more airstrikes 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 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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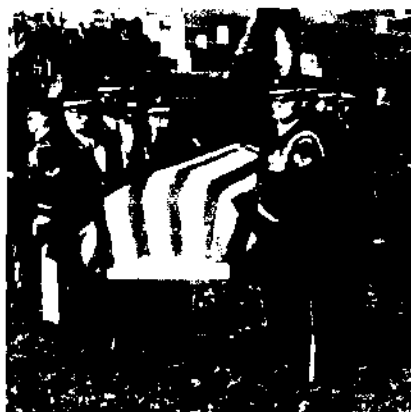


# Air Force News

## News Service

### Arlington funeral honors crew of Jolly Green 67

Released: Nov 20, 1997



Members of the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard carry the remains of one of six U.S. Air Force servicemen to his final resting place at Arlington National Cemetery. The six airmen, part of the famed Bat-21 rescue attempt in South Vietnam, were buried in the cemetery Nov. 19. Twenty-five years ago, the airmen were performing a search-and-rescue mission over Quang Tri, when their Sikorsky HH-53 Helicopter -- call sign Jolly Green 67 -- was hit by enemy fire and crashed. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela Stafford)



The repatriated remains of six airmen who were part of the famed Bat-21 rescue attempt in South Vietnam, were buried Nov. 19 in Arlington National Cemetery. Capts. John H. Call III and Peter H. Chapman II, Tech. Sgts. James H. Alley, Allen J. Avery and Roy D. Prater, and Sgt. William R. Pearson were performing a search-and-rescue mission April 6, 1972, over Quang Tri, South Vietnam, when their Sikorsky HH-53 Helicopter -- call sign Jolly Green 67 -- was hit by enemy fire and crashed. The crew of Jolly Green 67 was part of an ultimately successful effort to rescue downed airmen Lt. Col. Iceal Hambleton and 1st Lt. Mark Clark. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela Stafford)



Assistant Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen David L. Vesely, presents a flag to Greta Call, the mother of Capt. John H. Call III. Captain Call and five other airman lost their lives while flying in support of the famed Bat-21 rescue attempt in South Vietnam. The airman were buried Nov. 19 in Arlington National Cemetery. The six airmen were performing a search-and-rescue mission April 6, 1972, over Quang Tri, when their Sikorsky HH-53 Helicopter -- call sign -- Jolly Green 67 -- was hit by enemy fire and crashed. The crew of Jolly Green 67 was part of an ultimately successful effort to rescue downed airmen Lt. Col. Iceal Hambleton and 1st Lt. Mark Clark. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela Stafford)



A pararescueman placed this Jolly Green sticker on the casket of one of the repatriated remains of the Jolly Green 67 crew that went down in the famed Bat-21 rescue attempt. The airmen were buried Nov. 19 in Arlington National Cemetery. Cpts. John H. Call III and Peter H. Chapman II, Tech. Sgts. James H. Alley, Allen J. Avery and Roy D. Prater, and Sgt. William R. Pearson were performing a search-and-rescue mission April 6, 1972, over Quang Tri, when their Sikorsky HH-53 Helicopter -- call sign Jolly Green 67 -- was hit by enemy fire and crashed. The crew of Jolly Green 67 was part of an ultimately successful effort to rescue downed airmen Lt. Col. Iceal Hambleton and 1st Lt. Mark Clark. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela Stafford)

*by Staff Sgt. Michael Dorsey  
Air Force News Service*

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Twenty-five years after the longest search-and-rescue mission in Air Force history, two pararescuemen, a mechanic, photographer, pilot and co-pilot, were remembered Nov. 19 for giving their lives trying to save others.

Six crewmen from Jolly Green 67, Cpts. John Call III and Peter Chapman II, Tech. Sgts. Allen J.

Avery, James Alley and Roy D. Prater, and Sgt. William R. Pearson, were honored at Arlington National Cemetery. Their remains were recently returned home from their fatal attempt to rescue a downed navigator in Vietnam; their helicopter crashed after being hit by enemy fire.

The object of their rescue attempt was Lt. Col. Iceal Hambleton, whose call sign was Bat-21. He was flying aboard an EB-66 leading a B-52 bomber strike when his aircraft was struck by a surface-to-air missile. The only one to eject safely, Hambleton landed near a highway junction on a Communist supply route.

Intelligence sources reported 30,000 enemy troops in the area. On the fourth day of search-and-rescue operations, Jolly Green 67 went down. All aboard were lost.

Air Force, Army and Navy teams continued fighting for the next seven days to retrieve Hambleton before he was saved.

A quarter century later, the funeral service for the Jolly Green 67 crew began with a fly-over by two MH-53J Pave Low III helicopters from Hurlburt Field, Fla. The Air Force Honor Guard and Air Force Band from Bolling Air Force Base, D.C., also helped commemorate the event.

Among the mass of people at Arlington paying respects to the helicopter crew were red beret-wearing pararescuemen who honored their fallen comrades. The veterans also represented pararescuers who served in Southeast Asia and rescued more than 3,800 servicemembers during the war.

Among those who could not attend the funeral was Bat-21 himself; however, the 78-year-old Hambleton wrote about how much he appreciated the sacrifice of the Jolly Green 67 crew. Dan Manion, one of many pararescuemen who helped search for Hambleton, read the letter.

"This is a crew of real heroes," Manion said. "They were doing what they had been trained to do. They deserve all the accolades that we, the living, can bestow upon them. Again, I thank them, I honor them, and I will always hold great faith in my heart with them."

Col. Mark Clark was a first lieutenant at the time of the Bat-21 search, and was the first to go in trying to extract Hambleton. But Clark's OV-10 was shot down, and he became part of the Bat-21 rescue. He, too, was saved. He attended the Arlington ceremony and addressed the Jolly Green 67 family members.

"Each of you played a distinct role and forming the character of these men who so willingly paid a very dear price to help me get out of the jungles of Vietnam," he said. "You have my deepest sympathy -- you and these six brave men."



I had an opportunity to visit with the families of the crew of Jolly Green 67 on Tuesday 18 November. There must have been 50 family members and relatives of Captain Peter Chapman, Aircraft Commander; First Lieutenant John Call III, Copilot; Technical Sergeant Roy Prater, Flight Mechanic; Technical Sergeant Allen Avery, Pararescueman; Sergeant William Pearson, Pararescueman; Sergeant James Alley, Photographer. Darrel Whitcom (Nail 25) is the "historian" who is telling the Bat 21 story the way it should be (book due out this spring). Mark Clark Nail 38 was there as was the Niece of Iccal Hambelton (Bat 21). For over 2 hours the family listened to those of us who had been there tell the whole Bat21 story from Blue Ghost 39 to Covey 225. Charts graphs, even photographs were used. I don't think there has ever been such a gathering nor is there likely to be one again. There were a few misty eyes from those narrating. Jay Crowe, Jolly pilot (USCG exchange) of an earlier attempt at picking up Bat 21 told the harrowing story of that attempt and his crash landing.

I spoke to the first night, Easter Sunday 2 April 72, "ground fire like the fourth of July", my flaming egress after being hit by a 57mm AAA, and subsequent gear up landing. I also spoke to the attempt to get Bat 21 and Nail 38 on the 6th of April. I was the Sandy escorting and trying to protect Jolly Green 67. The room was quiet, the attention intense as I described the ingress, the ground fire hitting Jolly 67 and the subsequent fireball and crash. Being the one to escort and protect the Jolly Green, I thought there may be some who would seek to take out their pain on me. On the contrary, a very sweet elderly lady, hugged me, thanking me, and saying she knew we had all done our duty the best way possible. Over the next day each of the families personally thanked me and stated how brave they thought all who had been involved were. On Wed, 19 November 97, God decided to make it a clear crisp day with beautiful blue skies. About 300 people begin to gather at Arlington's administrative building. The ceremony of honor for the crewmembers of Jolly Green 67 at Arlington National Cemetery began at 11:00. These six brave men were members of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron during the spring of 1972. Six men finally coming home 25 years after their deaths in Vietnam. They died living their unit motto, "*That Others May Live*". In attendance were many of us gray haired veterans and about 250 young PJ's and young officers paying their respects to 6 very brave men.

The ceremony was flawless. We were driven by bus to the waiting caisson and Honor guard for the procession to Pershing Drive and the gravesite. The casket was transferred to the caisson drawn by 6 horses (3 of which were riderless). The honor guard colors and band marched off smartly to the strains of the Air Force song "Off we go..." I cried! A lone airman followed the honor guard carrying the POW/MIA flag. Behind him the family and the rest of us fall-in walking to the gravesite, stepping carefully around the horse droppings.

While the pallbearers lift the Colors from the casket, holding the flag taught, you could feel, then hear, and finally see two dark HH- 53J PAVE LOW helicopters charge over the hillside at tree-top level. All too soon they passed overhead, that sound and sight so many of us knew would be there if we needed them. The lead aircraft trailed a wisp of green smoke out the aft hatch.

The speakers at the graveside were brief and eloquent, quoting in part from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Apropos, yet causing me to well in anger at news reports of Clinton selling plots in Arlington. I don't normally get political, yet I am deeply pained that heroes I knew and flew with would be sharing hallowed ground with political contributors.

*"This is Sandy 5 on guard... All SAR forces egress and return to base.*

*Jolly Green 67 is home safe... "*



H.R. (Randy) Pickelsimer  
126 Jim Torrence Lane  
Gastonia, NC 28052  
704-866-7735  
Email rpick\_pj@juno.com



Dear Bob,

YOU WANTED INFO ON CREW MEMBERS IN SEA. THIS ONE IS ABOUT ROY PRATER (FE KIA APRIL 72 ON JOLLY 67). IT IS A COPY OF A SHORT LETTER I SENT TO BOB BALDWIN AND CAN BE DOCUMENTED THROUGH USAFSO RECORDS OR FROM JIM SPEARS PJ. WE WERE BOTH ON THE MISSION AND CREDITED WITH THE SAVES. MAYBE YOU CAN USE THIS IN SOME WAY TO HIGH LIGHT ROY PRATER.

TAKE CARE, RANDY

TO BOB BALDWIN:

ROY PRATER AND I WERE GOOD FRIENDS IN THE CANAL ZONE (69-70) AND ON SEVERAL GOOD MISSIONS TOGETHER. WE WERE ALSO TOGETHER AT DANANG WHEN JOLLY 67 WENT DOWN. THAT WAS A VERY SAD DAY.

THE ENCLOSED PICTURE IS ROY PRATER AT HIS BEST. HE WAS CREDITED WITH MORE THAN 200 SAVES ON THIS MISSION ALONE. HE PICKED PEOPLE UP FROM THE WATER, OUT OF TREES, FROM ROOF TOPS AND WHERE EVER. WE WERE THERE FOR SEVEN DAYS AND HAD TO REFUEL THOSE CH-3s WITH A HAND PUMP FROM 55 GAL. DRUMS. WHEN THE MISSION WAS OVER WE ALL WERE READY TO GO HOME.

ROY PRATER WAS A FINE MAN AND A DAMN GOOD FE. HE WAS THAT TYPE WE CAN ALL BE PROUD TO HAVE KNOWN AND WORKED WITH.

PS. MY COMPUTER IS DOWN. I WILL SEND THE PICTURE LATER



# Southern Command News

PUBLICATION OF UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND

Vol. V, No. 19

QUARRY HEIGHTS, CANAL ZONE

Jan. 16, 1970

## USAFSO Helicopter Helps Flood-Stricken Costa Ricans

**Albrook AFB** — Close cooperation between the Civil Guard of Costa Rica and personnel of the U.S. Air Forces Southern Command was instrumental in the movement of 216 Costa Rican civilians from flooded areas of Limon Province, Costa Rica, over last weekend.

After heavy rains started flooding the Caribbean coastal area of Costa Rica Friday morning, a request was made to the United States Embassy in San Jose by the Costa Rican Government for help in moving approximately 40 marooned people.

Bad weather greeted the CH-3 "Big Charlie" helicopter that was dispatched to Puerto Limon by the USAFSO Rescue Coordination Center at Albrook. The helicopter, piloted by Capt. John R. Squire and Capt. David E. Lyall, 24th Special Operations Squadron, encountered strong headwinds in the two and one-half hour flight from Albrook to Puerto Limon. Upon arrival at the Costa Rica coastal town, the runway was under water and there was a

100-foot visibility ceiling.

Landing on higher ground off the runway, the helicopter crew was greeted by Alfonso Sole, governor of Limon Province, and Capt. Thomas Flemings, commander of the Puerto Limon Civil Guard detachment.

Other USAFSO personnel who arrived on the helicopter were TSgt. Harvey R. Pickelsomer and TSgt. James A. Spears, pararescue personnel of the 605th Special Operations Squadron, and TSgt. Roy Prater and Sgt. Luis Garcia, helicopter mechanics with the 24th Organizational Maintenance Squadron.

At 6:30 Saturday morning the personnel from the Canal Zone started their operations and had picked up 41 marooned persons by 10 a.m. After dropping them off on higher ground, reports started arriving at the airport about other people who were in possible danger from flood waters.

The helicopter took off again and flew up the Sixaola River separating Costa Rica and Panama. Flying under a 100-foot ceiling, the helicopter followed the river and spotted people in the water, or on ground that appeared in imminent danger of flooding. Capt. Lyall said the water extended some three miles from the banks of the river.

The helicopter pilot described the area they were flying in as river valleys surrounded by mountains. All the lowlands were flooded and they had to follow the rivers inland from the coast.

The water was so high it covered a railroad that ran parallel to the river. According to Capt. Lyall, the water was high enough that there



**EMERGENCY AIRLIFT** — TSgt. Harvey R. Pickelsimer, (l) pararescue man from the 605th Special Operations Squadron, and TSgt. Roy Prater, helicopter mechanic with the 24th Organizational Maintenance Squadron, carry a 12-year-old Costa Rican girl suffering from an appendicitis attack from a U.S. Air Forces Southern Command CH-3 "Big Charlie" helicopter at Puerto Limon, Costa Rica. The helicopter was in Costa Rica to help move villagers from their homes because of flood waters.

Continued on Page 2



# JOLLY GREEN 67

CAPT PETER H. CHAPMAN

1LT JOHN H. CALL III

TSGT ROY D. PRATER

SGT WILLIAM R. PEARSON

TSGT ALLEN J. AVERY

SGT JAMES ALLEY



NO GREATER GIFT THAT A MAN GIVE  
HIS LIFE

"THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE"