

Source = FOR VALOR OR VALUE AN EXAMINATION OF PERSONNEL RECOVERY OPERATIONS BY BILLY D. THOMPSON. File name = 2001 Thompson SAR Paper.pdf

The men who flew missions in support of the BAT 21B recovery and the Navy SEAL, Lt Tom Norris, who completed his recovery, were all supportive of the operation in spite of the fact that they lost squadron mates and friends. Following the loss of several aircraft early in the rescue attempt, an A-1 pilot, Captain Don Morse, and a Jolly Green pilot, Lt Cdr Jay Crowe, had similar sentiments about the rescue mission. Morse stated "The effort was going to be difficult, but there was no doubt that they would go back in to get him. That was what the rescue forces did; that was why they were there. Just as for any other downed airman, all efforts would be made to get him out as long as he was still alive and free."⁵² Crowe said, "The reason we did so much for those guys was because they were there to have it done for them. We all hoped that if the role were reversed that he would do for us what we were trying to do for him. I think that is about all there is to that."⁵³

⁵² Lt. Col. Donald Morse (Ret.), 16 May 1993, interview by Darrel Whitcomb, The Rescue of Bat 21, 38.

⁵³ Capt. Joseph "Jay" Crowe (USCG Ret.) interview by Darrel Whitcomb, The Rescue of Bat 21, 153.

The US experience in the Vietnam War stimulated the need for an effective personnel recovery system. By 1975, 2,780 lives had been saved in combat rescues by ARRS units. These units lost 71 American rescuemen in the process.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ California Air National Guard Major Michael J. Martini, "Air Rescue in the US Air Force: A Historical Perspective." Unpublished Research Paper, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: April 1987, 35-36.