

SSgt. Perry earns Silver Star Medal

EGLIN AFB, La. -- SSgt. Paul C. Perry, a pararescue specialist with the 44th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron's Detachment 1, was decorated for heroism at a special ceremony Oct. 1. He received the Air Force Silver Star Medal and congratulations from Lt. Gen. Jay T. Robbins, vice commander of the Military Airlift Command.

Sergeant Perry earned the decoration for distinguished heroic action last March while flying on a rescue mission as a member of a HH-53C "Super Jolly Green Giant" crew which rescued a downed American pilot in extremely hostile territory.

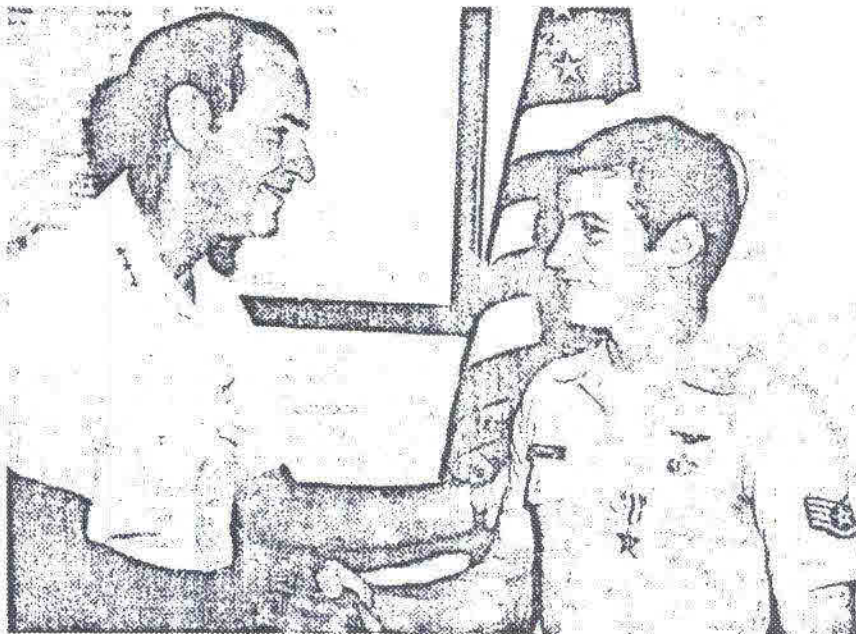
On this particular mission, the Aerospace Rescue and Recover team ran a gauntlet of intense antiaircraft fire. Sergeant Perry played a major role in suppressing enemy gunners by attacking their positions with a rapid-fire "mini-gun" while the downed pilot was hoisted aboard. After the pickup was accomplished, Sergeant Perry, from an exposed position, directed the helicopter's "evasive maneuvers" on the flight out through five minutes of heavy antiaircraft fire.

When asked how he felt about his rescue missions, Sergeant Perry said, "It is the most rewarding and unique job in all the military services -- to put your life on the line to save someone else's. It's a fantastic experience when you get the job done, do it right and everyone comes home in one piece."

The 22-year-old staff sergeant is a native of Erie, Mich. He plans to enter

college when his Air Force tour is completed in December. In addition to the Silver Star, Sergeant Perry's decorations include the Air Medal with two oak

leaf clusters. While serving in Southeast Asia he flew on four missions in which downed American flyers were rescued.



FOR HEROISM -- SSgt. Paul C. Perry, right, is congratulated by Lt. Gen. Jay T. Robbins, Military Airlift Command vice commander, after receiving the Silver Star Medal for a rescue mission in Southeast Asia. (USAF Photo)

Airborne ward run by rescue crew

LUKE AFB, Ariz. -- There are no pediatricians assigned to Det. 15, 42nd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, here but Lt. Col. Zack L. Stockett, Captains Larry B. Lindberg and Cole E. Walker, and 1st Lt. Ralph S. Winton seem to be running an aerial pediatric ward.

The men of Det. 15 were engaged in three missions involving newborn infants this month.

Oct. 23 Colonel Stockett and Lieutenant Winton responded to a request for a medevac of a premature child suffering from pneumonia. The HH-43, piloted by the colonel, flew to the San Carlos Indian Reservation, 112 miles east of Phoenix, where the pickup was made, and transferred the infant to the Good Samaritan Hospital in Phoenix.

Colonel Stockett was again involved in a mission involving a child Oct. 26. With Captain Lindberg as co-pilot, he flew to St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix

and picked up medical personnel and equipment, then departed for San Carlos and picked up the baby. They returned to St. Joseph's and unloaded the patient, medical personnel and equipment and returned to Luke. The detachment was credited with a "save" on the mission.

Captains Walker and Lindberg flew a third mission involving a child Oct. 29. They were alerted to transfer a premature baby from Mesa (Ariz.) Hospital to the Good Samaritan Hospital. After picking up a nurse and isolette enroute to Mesa, they finished the mission and made the transfer without incident. The crew was credited with a "save" by the Good Samaritan Hospital officials.

Capt. Lindberg, co-pilot on two of the missions, observed that "lack of facilities to treat premature infants necessitated the missions. The babies are usually very tiny and have to be moved immediately to a larger, better equipped hospital to ensure their survival."

Sgt. Ashdown decorated

OSAN AB, Korea -- Sgt. James K. Ashdown, Detachment 1, 33rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, was awarded the first oak leaf cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) and the fifth and sixth oak leaf cluster to the Air Medal here recently.

The 22-year-old flight mechanic was presented the two medals by Col. John H. Allison, 51st Air Base Wing commander, during the detachments Commander's Call.

Sergeant Ashdown's DFC was for a mission Dec. 31, 1971, when he aided in the rescue of seven Army airmen downed near Khe Sanh, Vietnam. Two previous rescue attempts had failed due to heavy enemy ground fire.

The Air Medal was for 163 missions. Sergeant Ashdown completed while in Vietnam.

20 MAY 72

Flyer Rescued After 23-Day Ordeal

By SSGT. TOM MERCHANT

UDORN RTAFB, Thailand — A U. S. Air Force search and rescue task force ventured north of Hanoi June 2 to recover an F-4 crew member who evaded the North Vietnamese for 23 days before he was rescued.

Capt. Roger C. Locher, a 28-year-old weapons system operator with the 432d Tactical Reconnaissance Wing here, was extremely weak — he lost 15 pounds during his ordeal — but was otherwise in good condition. Rescue men reclaimed his presence of mind throughout the evasion and rescue.

Captain Locher and the F-4 Phantom pilot, who is still missing, were shot down May 10 by a Mig-21 firing a heat-seeking missile. Shortly before, Captain Locher had bagged his third Mig; he had previously scored Mig hits on Feb. 21 and May 8. When he was shot down the captain was flying his 407th combat mission.

The rescue task force included HH-53 helicopters, A-1 fighters, HC-130 command aircraft and F-4 and F-105 fighters. F-4 and F-105 jet fighters to protect the slower-moving aircraft.

The task force encountered heavy ground fire on its way to and from the captain's mountain-side perch.

Describing his downing, Captain Locher said, "We immediately went out of control, flipping from side to side. Then fire started coming in the back of the cockpit. It seared my canopy with bubbles and I couldn't see out anymore. The airplane slowed down and we went into a flat spin."

He ejected into "a kind of deep-dished valley." During the next 23 days he subsisted on fruit, water, berries and water from his

lenced ground fire with mini-guns.

The flight engineer, Sgt. James F. Walsh, lowered the jungle penetrator to Captain Locher, who mounted it on his own power. The helicopter lifted to the top of the mountain as the captain was being hoisted in.

Sandys Scare Red Migs Away

NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB, Thailand — The A-1 Sandy may be a propeller driven plane, but

two of them chased Communist jets away as part of the effort to rescue Capt. Roger C. Locher north of Hanoi.

The day before the rescue, in fact, one almost shot down a Mig-21. First Lt. Robert L. Herklotz was part of a task force that went north after Locher contacted American bombers by radio.

Herklotz was escorting HH-53 helicopters through the mountains when a Mig "just popped over the hill and headed right for us."

"He went by about 500 feet in front of me and I saw clearly

that it was a Mig-21, so I slipped in behind him and started firing. He went down to treetop level and turned away." The jet was flying low and slow, apparently because of terrain and weather.

Although Herklotz fired 200 shots at the communist, he turned on the coal and went away. Meanwhile, awesome ground fire forced the task force to turn back and try for Locher later.

The next day, after Locher was successfully saved, Maj. James C. Harding had his run-in with a Communist jet, this one a Mig-17.

"I looked up and saw him coming right at me," he said, "I fired rockets at him and broke left firing my 20mm guns. He turned to his left and that was the last I saw of him."

Ground fire was obnoxious — with one "pretty good gunner" firing tracers from a train pulled by a stream locomotive.

Maj. Harding took care of the train, too. He flew the full length of the train, dropping bombs and firing cannons and rockets. "I finally put two rockets into the engine and the steam shot up about 300 feet. It was a beautiful sight."

Get a jump on the rest of the world

Military Preview

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...flying his 407th combat mission. The rescue task force included HH-53 helicopters, A-1 fighters, HC-130 command aircraft and F-4 and F-105 fighters. F-4 and F-105 jet fighters to protect the slower-moving aircraft.

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He ejected into "a kind of deep-dished valley." During the next 23 days he subsisted on fruit, nuts, berries, and water from banana trees.

On another day, he reported, "I went through somebody's garden and stole some chives. They had some pretty good chives there." Although he had made attempts, the captain had been unable to make radio contact with U.S. aircraft until after a June 1 bombing mission.

"I could hear them bombing and hear the enemy shooting back, so I figured when they stopped shooting that meant they were heading home. It also meant they could listen for people and I could get on the radio."

"I did this yesterday (June 1) and two flights came up to answer me." The contact triggered the search and rescue mission. The rescue forces were driven off by MIGs on their first attempt.

A second task force headed north again through heavy ground fire. When they approached Captain Locher's position, the Sandys made two passes over him, then led in a Super Jolly Green Giant, commanded by Capt. Dale E. Stovall.

Sgt. Charles B. McQuid and A1C Kenneth W. Cakebread, pararescue specialists on the HH-53, si-

rest of the world

Military Preview
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SEA SCENE

Choppers Save Flier

TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam — Air Force search and rescue forces on May 20 penetrated North Vietnam to within 35 miles of Hanoi to rescue 1st Lt. John D. Markle an F-4 Phantom pilot credited with downing a MIG ten days earlier.

Braving surface-to-air missiles, anti-aircraft artillery and MIGs, an HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron picked up the lieutenant six hours after he was shot down.

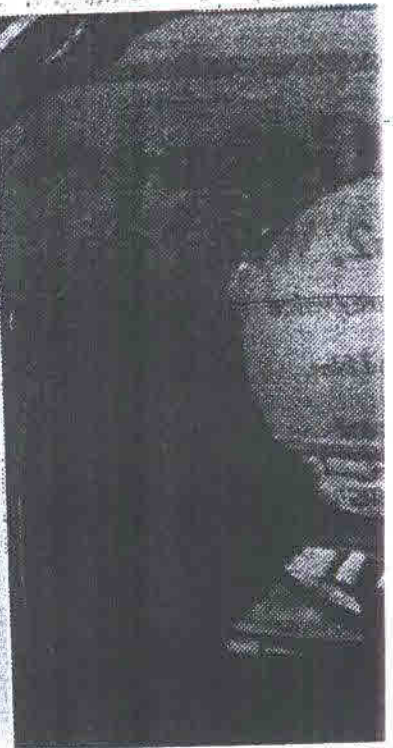
The search and rescue task force was led by A-1 Sandys flying rescue escort, and included the Super Jolly Green Giants, F-4 Phantoms, F-105 Thuds and HC-130 King aircraft. Lieutenant Markle's back-seater remains missing.

The lieutenant landed in some trees after ejecting from his aircraft and was left dangling 20 feet above the ground.

Because of rough terrain and a thick covering of trees, the Sandy pilots had difficulty in pinpointing Lieutenant Markle's position when they first reached the area. Rapidly deteriorating weather and communist ground fire compounded the situation.

Lieutenant Markle said, "The Jolly Green hovered right over my smoke marker and dropped the cable within 15 feet of me. It was beautiful."

As the forces withdrew from the area they were trailed by ground fire. Although Captain Schibler's Super Jolly Green Giant received several hits, no one was injured and the damage was later declared minor.



Close air support for An Lo Gordon Weed, commander target from his A-37.

F-4s In Rai

DA NANG AFLD, Vietnam — a recent night mission in mili region one, F-4 Phantoms of 4th Tactical Fighter Squadro Da Nang struck an enemy t convoy about five miles sout Quang Tri — leaving su trucks burning along almost miles of roadway.

First Lts. Sam C. White, 25, Barry W. Beard, 24, who participated in the night raids in May, described the action.

"We had a four-ship fligh for the first raid," White plained. "Barry and I were 4Ds and the other two wer 4Es."

White, who has been at Nang eight months, said tha four F-4s first arrived over target a little after midnight.

Beard, a 10-month Vietnan eran, explained that they jo two F-4 "OWL" FACs equi with flares for night missions

"One of the OWLs lit up road all the way between Qu Tri and Dong Ha," White rep The FAC spotted two tri

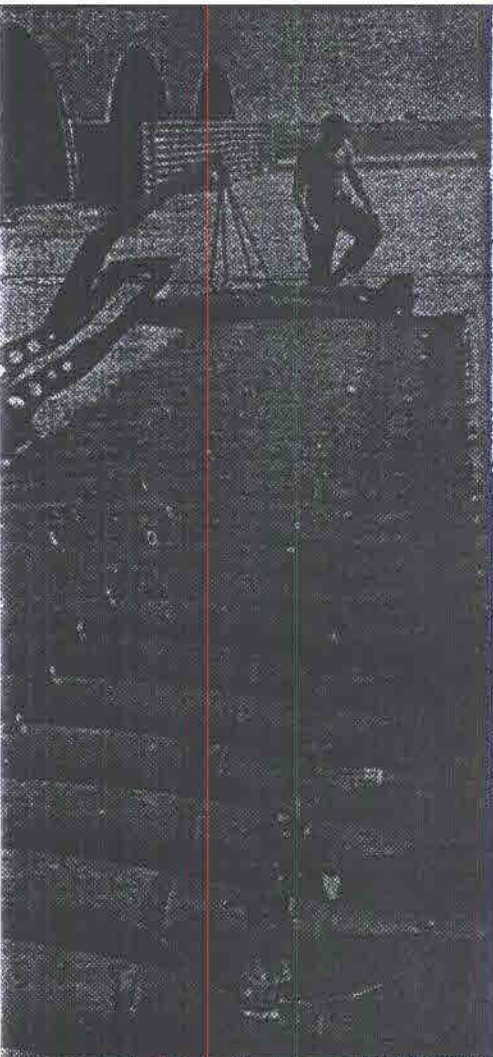


Photo by SSgt. J. Scott Crist

Bombs Away

s, left, and Sgt. Don Stock unload bombs at m. The two munitions specialists are part of response to the North Vietnamese invasion.

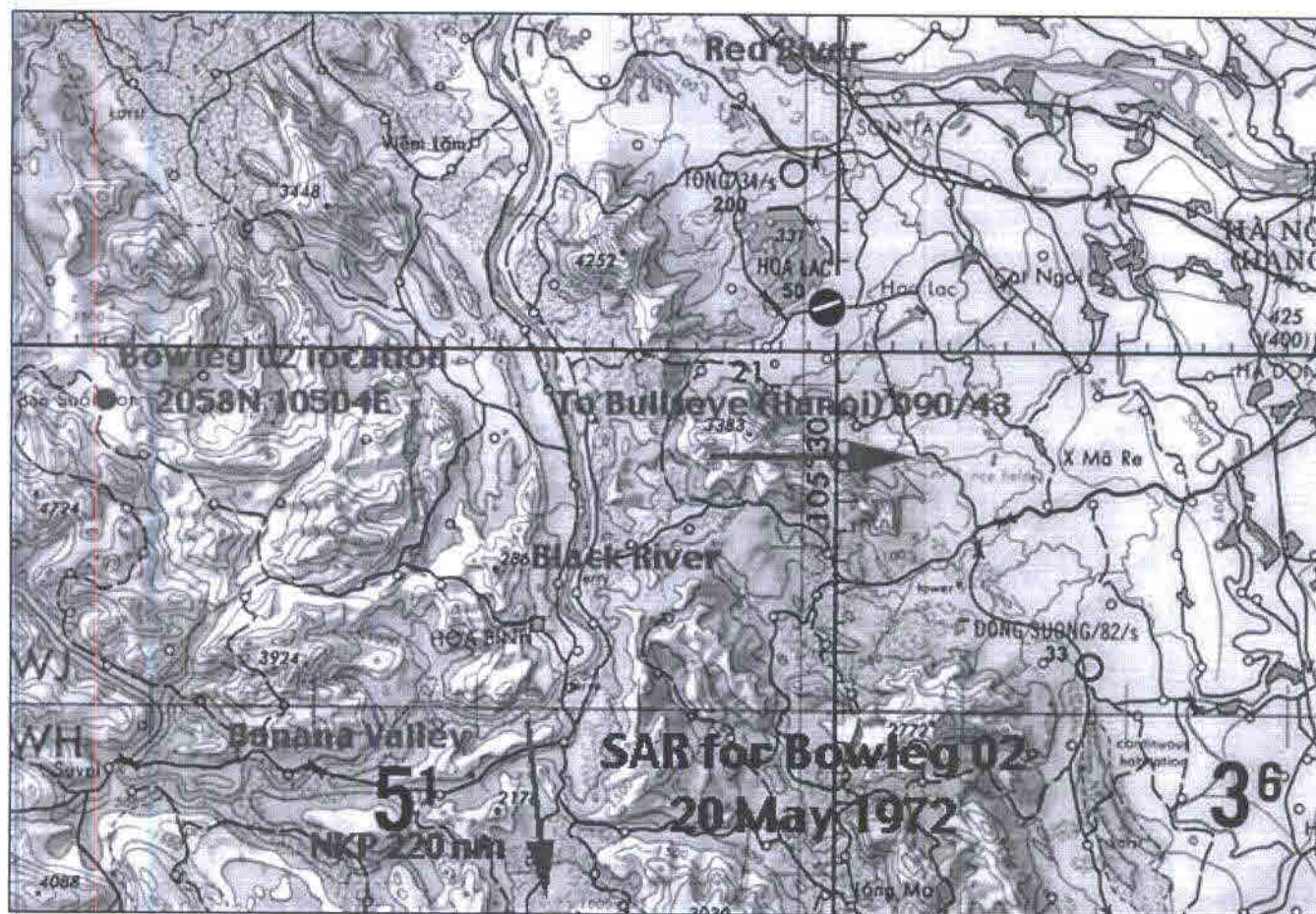
r at Da Nang y for Trouble

Vietnam — responsible for all taxiing air- craft. He gives out-going planes the runway in use, taxi route to the runway, altimeter setting and weather.

The local controller controls all visual flight rules traffic. He clears aircraft for take-offs

The crew chief is responsible for the overall operations of the tower. That's the job of Sergeant Pomeranke.

controller Pomeranke, an interna- ually have



20 MAY 72

Rescues pilot near Hanoi

TAN SON NHUT AB, RVN -- Search and rescue forces penetrated North Vietnam to within 35 miles of Hanoi to rescue 1st Lt. John D. Markle, an F-4 Phantom pilot credited with downing a MIG in early May.

Braving surface-to-air missiles, antiaircraft artillery and MIGs, an HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron picked up the lieutenant six hours after he was shot down.

The search and rescue task force was led by A-1 Skyraiders flying rescue escort, and included the Super Jolly Green Giants, F-4 Phantoms, F-105 Thuds and HC-130 Hercules.

The lieutenant landed in some trees after ejecting from his aircraft and was left dangling 20 feet above the ground.

"I was pulling on the risers to straighten them," said Lieutenant Markle, "and suddenly I found myself sitting in a bush at ground level."

"I kept hearing people moving within 50 to 100 feet of me and felt sure they would find me. Their barking dogs kept hanging around after the people left. I heard beating drums and searching through the brush all around me."

The first rescue aircraft on scene was an A-1 flown by 1st Lt. Bob Carlson.

Because of rough terrain and a thick covering of trees, the Sandy pilots had difficulty in pinpointing Lieutenant Markle's position when they first reached the area. Rapidly deteriorating weather and communist ground fire compounded the situation.

The pilot of the HH-53 which made the pickup, Capt. Mark C. Schibler said, "We had to fly right through five or six big thunderstorms to reach the area."

Maj. Zeke Encinas, an A-1 pilot, said that they worked with low fuel, low weather and high terrain.

"The long distance and time involved caused fuel problems for everyone," explained Major Encinas. "The clouds got below 3,000 feet and we had to fly below the ridgelines to locate the survivor. We had so many MIG warnings that we lost count."

Lieutenant Markle continued, "I was lying on my back, well-hidden under the broad leaves of a tree. The Sandys were laying down ordnance all around to clear the area, and I told them over my radio how far away it was falling and in what direction. Finally, a Sandy put one smoke rocket on one side of me and another one on the other side. They really know their job and do it well."

Capt. Ronald E. Smith, an A-1 pilot, was the on-scene commander for the rescue. He and his wing man, 1st Lt. Byron Hukee, provided protection for the downed pilot and directed the movements of the Super Jolly Green Giants.

"The on-scene commander gave a detailed briefing on how the pickup would proceed and he gave me precise instructions on how to mark my position for the rescue chopper," related Lieutenant Markle.



1ST LT. JOHN D. MARKLE is greeted by A-1 Sandy pilots who escorted the HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant to his rescue 35 miles from Hanoi.

Major Encinas and his wing man, 1st Lt. Lance Smith, led the helicopters to Lieutenant Markle.

Lieutenant Markle said, "The Jolly Green hovered right over my smoke marker and dropped the cable within 15 feet of me. It was beautiful."

As the forces withdrew from the area they were trailed by ground fire. Although Captain Schibler's Super Jolly Green Giant received several hits, no one was injured and the damage was later declared minor.

"The roughest part was getting into and out of the pickup area," Major Encinas declared. "We had heavy antiaircraft fire both ways and we saw several SAMs launched." At least seven SAMs were fired at the Sandys and HH-53s.

Back at his home base, Lieutenant Markle commented, "I knew they wouldn't leave me up there. These guys are real pros."

Captain Schibler later remarked, "This mission was an outstanding example of the teamwork involved in a SAR and one of the most gratifying rescues I have made in my eight years of rescue work."

Members of the captain's crew were: 2nd Lt. Clifton L. Hutchinson, copilot; SSgt. Tommy Bryant Jr., flight engineer; and Sgt. Paul C. Perry and A1C Robert W. Mason, pararescuemen.

BOWLER #2 SAR
20 MAY 72

Rescue pickup made in Hanoi suburbs

TAN SON NHUT AB - U.S. Air Force search and rescue forces penetrated North Vietnam May 20 to within 35 miles of Hanoi to rescue Air Force 1st Lt. John D. Markle, an F-4 Phantom pilot credited with downing a MIG ten days earlier. Braving SAMs, AAA and MIGs, an HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron picked up the

lieutenant six hours after he was shot down.

The search and rescue task force was led by A-1 Sandys flying rescue escort, and included the Super Jolly Green Giants, F-4 Phantoms, F-105 Thuds and HC-130 King aircraft.

Markle's back-seater remains missing.

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left dangling 20 feet above the ground.

"I was pulling on the risers to straighten them," Markle said, "and suddenly I found myself sitting in a bush at ground level.

"I kept hearing people moving within 50 to 100 feet of me and felt sure they would find me. Their barking dogs kept hanging around after the people left. I heard beating drums and (people) searching through

the brush all around me."

Because of rough terrain and a thick canopy of trees, the Sandy pilots had difficulty in pinpointing the lieutenant's position when they first reached the area. Rapidly deteriorating weather and communist ground fire compounded the situation.

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Maj. Zeke Encinas, an A-1 pilot said that they worked with low fuel, low weather and high terrain.

"The long distance and time involved caused fuel problems for everyone," explained the major. "The clouds got down below 3,000 feet and we had to fly below the ridgelines to locate the survivor. We had so many MIG warnings that we lost count."

"The roughest part was getting into and out of the pickup area," Encinas declared. "We had heavy anti-aircraft fire both ways and we saw several SAMs (surface-to-air missiles) launched." At least seven SAMs were fired at the Sandys and Jolly Greens.

Markle said, "The Jolly Green hovered right over my smoke marker and dropped the cable within 15 feet of me. It was beautiful."

Back at his home base, Markle commented, "I knew they wouldn't leave me up there. These guys are real pros."



First
to
give

Gen. John W. Vogt, 7th AF commander, presents his personal check to Col. F. P. Fitzgerald marking 7th AF's first contribution to the Fund Drive for Refugees. Colonel Fitzgerald is 7th AF chairman for the drive which will aid South Vietnamese citizens who have lost their homes and possessions as a result of the North Vietnamese invasion of the Republic of Vietnam. See page 8 for more details.

U.S. Air Force Photo by SSgt. J. Scott Crist

St. Francis Man Helps Rescue Downed Pilot

U.S. Air Force Search and Rescue forces penetrated to within 35 miles of Hanoi May 20 to rescue an F-4 Phantom pilot, 1st Lt. John Markie of Hutchinson, Kansas.

Playing an important part in the rescue operation was 1st Lt. Byron Hukee, of St. Francis. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Randall Hukee of St. Francis.

Braving surface to air missiles, anti-aircraft fire and Mig aircraft, A-1 "Sandy" aircraft of the 1st Special Operations Squadron took helicopters of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron to pick up the lieutenant only six hours after he was downed. The rescue task force was led by A-1 "Sandys" and included the HH-53 helicopters, F-4 Phantom jets, F-105 "Thuds" and HC-130 aircraft.

The lieutenant landed in trees after ejecting from his aircraft and was left

dangling 20 feet from the ground. He could hear the enemy moving within 50 to 100 feet away and their barking dogs kept hanging around after the people left.

The rescue team had difficulty locating the pilot because of the rough terrain, thick covering of trees, bad weather and Communist ground fire and they were working with low fuel.

Capt. Ronald Smith, an A-1 pilot was the on-scene commander for the rescue pickup. He and his wing man, 1st Lt. Hukee, provided protection for the downed pilot and directed the movements of the helicopters, providing a detailed briefing on the pickup procedure to the downed pilot and how to mark his position for the rescue chopper. There was heavy anti-aircraft fire during the rescue.

Lt. Hukee and others are scheduled to receive the Silver Star for their efforts.

This SAR even made the news back home in St. Francis, MN in the Anoka County Union.
(For the record, my father's name was Randolph, not Randall.)

This article appeared in the Anoka County Union June 16, 1997 in the "Looking Back" section where they look at past events 100, 50, and 25 years ago.

U.S. Air Force search and rescue forces penetrated within 35 miles of Hanoi May 20 to rescue an F-4 Phantom pilot. Playing an important part in the operation was 1st Lt. Byron Hukee of St. Francis.

The appearance of this article reminded me that this was in fact the 25th anniversary of my SEA tour. It only seemed logical that I do something on the web to share these experiences with others.

This is an email from Ron Smith on 19 May 1998

In response to my question of whether my recollection matched his:

I don't think it is very different from your version. If you read your paragraph on the Bowleg SAR, you will see one difference. Zeke was not already airborne with Tex. I think his wingman was Lance. We had been sending flights of 2 up to the SAR area all day. They would run out of gas before they could organize the pickup. Zeke and I went to LTC Barbena, and told him we would go as a 4 ship, and coordinate the mission before we left. He agreed. When we got to the area, Zeke and Lance went directly to the Jolly holding location, and relieved the flight covering them, and you and I went directly to the survivors location. I would have given a lot to have a recorder attached to the radio that day since Bravo said something just before he went off the air. He was almost yelling, and it was impossible to understand him. He was on top of a small mountain, and Alpha was about half way up the side of the same mountain.

Since I did not know what had caused Bravo to go off the air, and he was above the location of Alpha, I was not sure which direction the bad guys might be coming from. You might remember we put smoke down in a V shape that lead the Jolly directly to Alpha. I remember that the smoke was much closer to Alpha than I had planned because he was not exactly where I thought -- too many trees. It looked like we had planned it that way, but once again we had a Good Buddha watching over us. I also remember you and I

stayed behind for several minutes trying desperately to get Bravo to come up on the radio or give us some other signal. We got nothing. I would like to know if he got captured and later released or was killed. Have you ever heard? I also remember how low on fuel you were. You did a great job of getting everything out of that old plane. We gave you the lead about half way home to try to help. I think you still owe the taxpayers for the mini-gun! \$18000 in 1972 is worth much more today.

That was the first mission I flew that qualified for the River Rats, and the last mission I flew with Zeke. Zeke was going to sign us all up. After he was killed, it somehow lost meaning, and I never joined.

Ron

This is an email from John Markle on 20 May 1998

I will be glad to share what I remember of the events of 20 May 72. Since I would not have remembered my call sign, you may want to check this out pretty closely!

It seems the SAR took place 80-100 miles WNW of Bullseye. Terrain was hilly and heavily foliated. Time starts about 1200 hrs. Is this even close? As trained, I had moved a very short distance after getting on the ground. I was not injured and, as the events unfold, I learn that Jim Williams (02B) was also in good shape. We probably were actually no more than 400 yds apart, although I never saw Jim other than briefly in the parachute descent.

After hiding under some thick foliage, I camouflaged my face and hands, then came up on the radio. At some point I remembered to use the radio earpiece...this I believe becomes VERY important as time goes on! Jim was communicating with our flight members loud and clear. I listened as they cycled to/from the tanker and believe it was about 2 hours before the first two Sandys arrive in the area. Jim did a nice job of helping Sandys define our "exact" position.

Probably an hour EARLIER I heard people and a dog near me. I later learned from the Sandys that there was a village nearby. I never saw anyone because of the foliage, but people moved around sporadically throughout the afternoon. It was a little confusing that Jim didn't seem to notice anybody yet, in my mind, we were reasonably close together.

What I didn't know, but later learned, was the Jollys had mechanical problems and it took a while for the spares to arrive. Glad we weren't told...that would have been disappointing. The Sandys continued to define our position and eventually flew over for a "mark position". Jim called the mark right over me...again confirming that we were not far apart.

Approximately 4-5 hours into the event the Sandys delivered some ordnance and smoke in an attempt reduce the visibility and give the locals something else to concentrate on. This was shortly before the Jollys were to enter the area for pick-up. Evening and clouds in the valley are becoming factors.

Shortly thereafter, Jim acknowledged that people are near him. I heard one shot fired then no further contact with Jim. (I speculate they may have been attracted by the radio speaker). With contact lost Sandy called for me(02A). After I responded, the SAR continued as Sandy guided me through the appropriate actions. I prepared and used the survival flares as instructed and soon a Jolly hovered nearby and lowered the tree-penetrator/pick-up device. I climbed aboard and the winch lifted me into the Jolly. The PJ and I traded "thumbs up" and away we went.

As we egressed the area I realized how young the Jolly crew was. Seven TOTAL stripes among the three PJs and a 2Lt and Capt up front!! We were escorted out by Sandys and eventually rendezvoused with C-130 tanker for refueling enroute to NKP. Great job by everyone involved!

We eventually learn Jim is residing in Hanoi Hilton. I complete my tour and PCS to Clark AB in Dec 72. I am able to greet and visited with Jim when he arrived Clark AB in Apr 73. He later graduateed UPT and flew the F-15!

Apparently he'd had enough of other guys getting him into trouble!!

You're probably saying "this isn't even close". Time takes it's toll but that's it as I remember the events. Please use as you see fit.

Thanks again to everyone involved!

Regards,

John

283.5

216.7 A-1J 142-058

My first journal entry for 12 May 1972

+ SAR for Icebag 01B 50 nm [actually 25 nm!] west of Hanoi... Sandy 02 with [Captain Don] Tango Mike [Morse] leading... Icebag 01B was hidden and had lots of bad guys around him... TM was having difficulty locating him, so he gave me the lead and I found him... He [Icebag 01B] called ground fire on several passes and I did end up with some AK-47 holes in my airplane... I had an intermittent sump light [while working the survivor]... Marked his position with an M-47... Had to RTB for low fuel... Maybe could have gotten him out if we had a chopper ready... Scotty and someone else saw two MiG-19s in the area in the afternoon... We had a Nail FAC with us on the first go. DFC

The Icebag 01B SAR is among those presented on the Skyraider Association website. There, you will be able to hear a 26 minute portion of the actual SAR as it happened 26 years ago. In addition there is a writeup of the SAR and a map showing the survivor's location. In addition there was email communication between Don Morse, Bill Talley (Icebag 01A) and me.

Operation Linebacker was on its second day (11 May 72) when Icebag 01 was downed by a MiG while providing SAM suppression (Iron Hand) for the strike [top] [bottom]

force going to targets in the Hanoi area. There was no SAR effort on that first day.

Tango Mike and I were on the morning Sandy schedule the next day, 12 May 1972. I do not recall that we were scrambled for this mission, but we may have been. Flying time to the SAR location was about an hour and 15 minutes as it was more than 200 nm to the SAR location.

The long distance from home made coordination between the Jolly Greens and Sandys very important. We would have only about two hours in the survivor's area and everything would have to go without a hitch.

That, of course, only happens in Hollywood and in fictionalized accounts. What really happened is that we were continually harassed by ground fire from enemy troops on the ground who were as intent on capturing the survivor as we were in trying to rescue him. We were close to making an attempt when we were ordered to withdraw to the west because of MiG activity. In addition, just prior to our withdrawal, we found out that the Jolly Greens were refueling with King and were not in a position to come in to the area anyway. Don had radio and UHF/ADF problems which also added to the general confusion.

I also had an annoying "oil sump warning light" that kept illuminating while I was working the survivor with Sandy 01. Illumination of the oil sump warning light is a "land as soon as possible" emergency, but of course that was out of the question. So I watched my instruments for a while, and when the light went back out, I was good to go. Except it came back on again, and again. Oh well, I can say now that it was a false indication, but back then, I had no such knowledge.

As we were departing the area due to the MiG calls, I put down a safe "willy pete" (white phosphorus) bomb (M-47A4) to mark the survivor's general location. It would wisp out smoke for a couple hours and could serve as a reference for other Sandys trying to relocate the survivor.

[top] [bottom]

During the battle damage check back on the way home, TM spotted what he thought were holes in my aircraft, and sure enough, there were a few AK-47 sized holes in the right wing.

The flight home seemed to take forever, but I knew it would be tougher yet for the survivor. He had reported enemy activity near his area, and in that location, I knew he was in trouble.

Date	Mission #	Sortie Length	Total A-1 Time	Total Com
12 May	74	4.7		

288.2

221.4 A-1H 135-257

My second journal entry for 12 May 1972

Went back up [to Icebag 01B's location] with TM, but to no avail... The weather had closed in by the time we got there... We still talked with the survivor [Icebag 01B] and put in some BLU-52 with LORAN F-4s... Icebag 01B said he could not hear them hit, so they must not have been too close... RTB at night... Kind of spooky 'till we got out of North Vietnam... No strike

Don Morse (Tango Mike) and I got a quick turn around and headed back up to the SAR location later in the day. I changed aircraft due to the battle damage I had suffered on the first sortie. The weather had closed in around the location which did not allow us to work the area.

A flight of LORAN equipped F-4 Phantom IIs loaded with BLU-52 were used in an attempt to reduce enemy movement in the area. BLU-52 was a 'riot control', CS based powder that would temporarily incapacitate anyone that came into contact with it, including the survivor. Typically, the victim would experience burning eyes, draining sinuses, and nausea. Since its effects were only temporary, this was a risk we were all willing to take, the survivor included. The CS powder was delivered in a 500 lb napalm tank. [top] [bottom]

After Icebag 01B reported that he did not hear the BLU-52 canisters impact, one could only assume they were not too close to the survivor, and therefore, of little benefit. But at least we tried.

The flight home was again one which took far too long. Night fell as we began our long flight back to NKP, and we were both a bit apprehensive. Since we were in enemy territory, neither of us turned on our position lights or rotating beacons, so we got altitude separation and flew the same airspeed and heading in order to stay together, and to arrive back in friendly territory in more or less the same piece of sky.

Once back on the other side of "the fence," we both turned on our lights and effected a rejoin. In all, we spent 8.7 hours in the air during the Icebag 01B SAR.

I feel that this mission was a turning point for me as a Sandy. Despite our best efforts, we had come home empty handed, and the survivor was still in enemy territory. I knew that there were circumstances outside our control that prevented us from effecting the pickup, but I also knew that we could have been more aggressive. The longer a survivor remained on the ground, the harder it became to pick him up. We had experienced that axiom first