

On June 2, 1972, **General John Vogt**, commander of the 7th Air Force, consulted with Army MACV commander General Frederick C. Weyand. Vogt canceled the entire strike mission set for Hanoi that day. He dedicated all the available resources, over 150 aircraft, to rescuing Locher. The direct task force of 119 aircraft included two HH-53 rescue helicopters, bombers, and an array of F-4 escorts, EB-66s, A-1Es, F105G Weasels, and KC135 tankers.[19] Vogt said.

I had to decide whether we should risk the loss of maybe a dozen airplanes and crews just to get one man out. Finally I said to myself, Goddamn it, **the one thing that keeps our boys motivated** is the certain belief that if they go down, we will do absolutely everything we can to get them out. If that is ever in doubt, morale would tumble. That was my major consideration. So I took it on myself. I didn't ask anybody for permission. I just said, "Go do it!"

SAR priority

The Air Force remained fully committed to finding and bringing back every downed air man, regardless of the cost. Air crew's morale depended on it. Search and rescue was based on the premise that it was necessary "to secure the safety of pilots as valuable military assets and to enhance their effectiveness by boosting morale."^{[2]:29} On June 2, 1972, General John Vogt, commander of the 7th Air Force, sent in a huge task force of 119 aircraft to rescue Capt. Roger Locher, a F-4 weapons officer who during Operation Linebacker had been shot down only 40 miles from Hanoi.^[35] When he was picked up by a HH-53 from the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, he was within 5 miles of the heavily defended MiG Yên Bái Airfield and had eluded capture while covering 12 miles in North Vietnamese territory for 23 days.^[36]

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Busboom, Lt. Col. Stanley (April 2, 1990). [*Bat 21: A Case Study*](#). Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: U.S. Army War College. Retrieved April 3, 2011.