

~~SECRET~~

OYSTER Ø1B¹⁴¹

(S) At 1030L on 1 June, the NKP SARCO was notified that radio contact had been made with Oyster Ø1 near Yen Bai Airfield in North Vietnam. A quick check revealed that no Oyster flights were flying that day, but an Oyster Ø1 had been lost on 10 May, 21 days earlier. At 1055L two Sandys and a set of Jolly Greens were launched from NKP. The SARCO began loading other A-1s for possible use later.

(S) At the same time, while on SAR orbit North of the PDJ for a Linebacker mission, two Sandys heard King talking to the aircraft that had contact with Oyster Ø1. The Sandys got an initial heading from King and set a course, still not knowing the exact location of their objective nor his unique circumstances. Shortly, King passed the Sandys an authenticator question. Disco passed the best known position of the survivor which was "on a hill very close to Yen Bai Airfield." The survivor had stated that he could see the airfield. Disco took over vector duties for the Sandys.

(S) Just Southeast of Yen Bai the Sandys initiated radio contact with the survivor. The authenticator question was properly answered and the Sandys knew then that they had a valid

141. 1st SOS Historical Data Reports. Also, see SARCO Report for Oyster Ø1B, 1 Jun 72, (Doc 34). For Oyster Ø1B's own story of his adventure, see "The Evasion and Recovery of Oyster Ø1, Captain Roger Locher, 10 May-2 Jun 72," Air Intelligence Review (S/NF), PACAIR 11-72 Special Supplement, 11 Jul 72.

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EXEMPTION CATEGORY 3
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objective. Anti-aircraft fire started, SAMs were fired, and the Sandys lost radio contact with the survivor. The Mig Cap reported that they had contact and that the survivor was North of the Red River. The Sandys crossed the river and searched the hills but they never got near enough to the survivor for him to hear their engines. The Sandys' UHF/ADF were inoperative and the Jolly Greens were getting low on fuel so the effort had to be abandoned for the day. All forces RTBed.

(S) A thorough debriefing of the Sandys revealed the nature of the ordnance that would be needed for the rescue attempt. Yen Bai would have to be struck as would GCI sites and AAA emplacements. Mig Cap was a necessity since at least one Mig had flown to within one mile of the SAR force. A fast FAC would be needed to determine the exact location of the survivor. This FAC later aborted and on-scene resources were used to narrow down the survivor's position.

(S) The SAR force took off from NKP the next morning with a well developed plan but still no exact location to fly to. Sandys 3 and 4 held with the Jolly Greens 25 miles Southwest of Yen Bai while Sandys 1 and 2 went into the area to search for Oyster 01. The Sandys crossed the Red River Southeast of Yen Bai and contacted the survivor on radio but he could not hear their engines. A search was begun at altitudes ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 feet. After about 15 minutes the

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survivor stated that he was on a mountain to the North of the Sandys. The Sandys turned Northward but were forced to turn around because of the heavy AAA. They recrossed the river, joined up with Sandys 3 and 4 and the Jolly Greens, and went Northwest, using ridge lines South of the river as a mask. The force crossed the river 15 miles Northwest of Yen Bai and headed Southeast, again using ridge lines for masking. Two Sandys and the Jolly Greens held North of the objective while the other two Sandys flew over the mountain to get an exact position on the survivor. Just as the Sandys crested the top of the mountain the survivor called that they were right over him. The survivor's signal mirror showed the Sandys his exact position. A fast mover smoke screen was dropped and a Jolly Green brought around for the pickup.

(S) On egress, the SAR force spotted a Mig, blew up a train, fired on several gun positions, and received heavy small arms fire from villages. The force RTBed to Udorn for a jubilant welcome. This SAR received world wide coverage in the news media.

CHICO 64¹⁴²

(C) On 5 June, Chico 64 (an O-2) was reported down from unknown causes 72 miles North of Siagon. Bien Hoa Sandys took

142. 1st SOS Historical Data Reports. Also, see SARCO Report for Chico 64, 5 Jun 72, (Doc 35).

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DOWNED 10 MAY 72

2500 72 SAR

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other than peak daylight hours, and were careful to conceal themselves and their movements. They also were downed in areas where SAR was able to operate. Another excellent example of long term evasion was a crewmember who evaded for 22 days. Shot down in the hills northwest of Hanoi, he landed near a small village. Moving away from the landing and crash site, he found concealment among the vegetation on a hillside. Although a party of 80 to 100 villagers searched the area, he was not found. He attributed his success in hiding from the search party to knowledge gained through hunting, e.g., that a well concealed, motionless figure was extremely difficult to spot. By moving away from the crash area he succeeded in placing himself outside the area of the most intensive search. He moved at dusk and dawn, when there was sufficient light to see where he was going, but still dark enough to conceal his movements. Almost every night of the 22 day evasion, he made a leaf bed to sleep on and carefully dispersed the leaves the next morning. During rainy periods he obtained water by forming large leaves into funnels leading into a water bottle. At other times he tapped banana trees and obtained useable liquids. When tapping trees, he was careful to camouflage marks made so his presence in the area would remain unknown. Wrappings from anti-diarrhea tablets, peelings from fruit, etc., were also carefully disposed of. Water was a continuing problem, but the last few

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days of evasion were spent near a creek. Eventually the lack of protein in his diet became his biggest problem and he began making plans to approach a hamlet to steal a chicken or goose. This plan was not carried out, however, because air strikes began occurring near his position. (During the period of evasion, he had moved some distance southward in an attempt to reach an area where SAR would be feasible). He also had kept his survival radio and carefully protected the batteries for use when he was sure of friendly air activity in the area. After contacting friendly aircraft, the evadee was recovered without further incident.

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DOC 34'

1-2 June

FROM: 1st SOS (Maj Milner/2754)

SUBJECT: SARCO Report, Oyster 01B

TO: 56th SOW (DO)

1. At 1030 local the Sarco was notified of voice contact with Oyster 01B and of his approximate position near Yen Bia airfield, NVN. After evaluation of the threat near the reported position of the survivor Maj Milner, the SARCO, requested CBU-49, CBU-52, Air Defense and hard ordnance (MK-82s).
2. At 1048 Jack informed Maj Milner that a Disco (EC-121) was near the scene to vector the SAR forces to the area. Sandy 1 and 2 proceeded from a SAR orbit to the SAR area. Maj Milner requested fast FAC's and permission to launch Sandy 3 and 4. Sandy 3 and 4 launched at 1055 local.
3. At 1055 local Jack wanted to know if VJ 1324 was a safe place to hold Jollys. Maj Milner consulted with Maj Gary Gamble and suggested a more favorable holding point nearer the survivors location.
4. At 1105 local King confirmed that no Oyster 01 on the frag today. An oyster 01 was shot down on 10 May about the area of the Yen Bia airfield. This information was passed to Sandy 3.
5. At 1115 local Jack requested a refueling point for the Jollys and was passed UH 6384.
6. At 1120 Maj Milner instructed that a 1.3 armament load be put on Hs and Js and 1.5 load on Es. Jack informed Maj Milner that Sandy 1 and 2 in SAR area at 1127 local. Maj Milner requested Oyster 01B be asked the questions and if MIG CAP would be continuously available. At 1135 King reports the questions have been asked and that MIG CAP is in the area. Sandy 1 has contact with the survivor.
7. At 1138 the follow on crews are briefed and as A-1s come in commission, they are assigned to crews.
8. At 1150 SARCO notified that SAR forces taking heavy ground fire and that MIGs in the area. At 1155 Jack reported that Sandy 1 was hit by a MIG and was RTBing with Jollye. At 1210 Jack reported Sandy 1 and 2 on the treetops heading for home and Jollys are not with them.
9. At 1215 SARCO rechecked with Jack to make sure Disco is providing vectors for Sandy 1 and 2. At 1218 Maj Milner asked Jack to have Disco vector the Jollys and Sandy 3 and 4 to intercept Sandy 1 and 2 for a possible SAR. At 1225 Jack reports that Sandy 1 was not hit by a MIG, whew what a relief.
10. At 1238 King reports survivor on hill in vicinity of Yen Bia (survivor can see airfield). At 1245 Sandy 1 passed to King a SAM firing from site near Yen Bia airfield and recommends that airfield, nearby reservoir, and SAM sites need to be destroyed before further SAR forces are sent into area. Reports heavy accurate tripple A from vicinity of reservoir.

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11. At 1250 Jack RTBed all SAR forces. At 1255 Sandy 1 reported that he did not get a good position on the survivor. Calgon flight was in area and has a possible position.

12. 1355-Jack wants ingress, egress and holding for SAR. Good old Joker wants to try a 1st light effort and wants to know what our plan of action will be. Joker wants to know what ordnance we need. SARCO informs Joker that until he debriefs Sandy 1 no further plans will be formulated. SARCO advises against 1st light or further effort unless a fast FAC can get into the area and pinpoint survivor. Pending Sandy 1's recommendations no further plans.

13. At 1400 Jack called with the survivors possible position from Calgon flight at VJ 97859928. This plots out 5 miles East of Yen Bia airfield and North of the Red River.

14. Sandy 1 debrief- No definite position of survivor but good radio contact. Sandy 1 questioned survivor and received good answers. Sandy 1 reports the nearby areas to be heavily populated. The defenses encountered: SAMs at Yen Bia. MIGs within 1 klick of the Jollys. Sandy 2 took a shot at a MIG. AAA was fired at Sandy 1 near the reservoir. At 1430 Sandy 1 called Joker secure and debriefed him on all the information. Sandy 1 recommended destruction of Yen Bia airfield, reservoir dam and GCI sites nearby.

15. At 1500 a Top Secret telephone call from Joker with all the items requested by Maj Milner. At 1640 Jack said Fast FACs having no luck talking with survivor. Survivors transmissions are garbled.

16. Planning was accomplished by the Sandys and Jollys for the SAR effort on 2 June 72. Launch times were planned and crews selected. Maj Milner finally got the ordnance request squared away, because Ubon called and asked us what we really wanted on our Fast ordnance. The 7th frag shop didn't give us what we wanted, but Ubon knows enough to call us when they get a bad frag.

17. 2 June 1972. All crews briefed at 0500 local and launched on preplanned times. At 0925 local Jack reports Sandy 1 is departing holding point India for the survivors area. At 0930 local a Hi Test flight reported talking with the survivor and he is ok. They had a visual on the survivor 10 miles east of Yen Bia airfield.

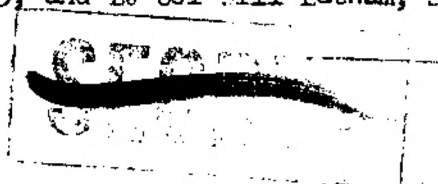
18. At 0951 the Sandys have contact with the survivor. At 1021 Jack reports Sandys have executed and are putting in the Fast strike air. SARCO requests that MIG CAP remain in area.

19. At 1055 Jack reports survivor on Jolly and SAR forces on way to Udorn.

20. At 1300 local Sandys request to RTB Udorn because of low fuel state and possible battle damage to a Jolly. Request granted.

21. Another successful SAR by Capt Ron Smith, Sandy 1, Capt Ross Buchanan, Sandy 2, Maj Jim Harding, Sandy 3, and Lt Col Bill Latham, Sandy 4.

Donald P. Milner
DONALD P. MILNER, Maj, USAF
SARCO



56 SOW

Apr - Jun 72 vol. 3

1 SOS 1-31 June 72

K-WG-56-HI

V. Narrative

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DOC A21

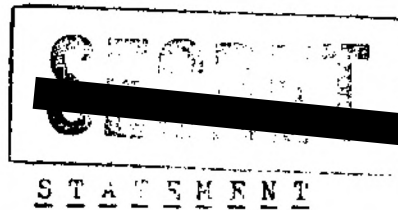
June was a very sad month for the 1st SOS. Two aircraft were shot down and one pilot was lost. The Sandys participated in sixteen SARs during which 14 airmen were rescued. There were no accidents or incidents in June.

On 17 Jun Hobo 42/43 was striking near Kong Sedone when Hobo 42 (Maj Encinas) was shot down by 23mm or 37mm fire. He was hit during a rocket pass and never pulled out. Maj Zeke Encinas was declared KIA three days later.

On 1 Jun Sandys 01/02 (Capt Smith/Lt Herklotz) were on north orbit in support of a linebacker mission when contact was established with Oyster 01B. Oyster 01B had been shot down on 10 May and was located on a mountain near Yen Bia airfield in North Vietnam. Sandys 01/02 immediately proceeded to the survivors area followed by two Jolly Greens. Upon reaching the red river and with Yen Bai in sight the Sandys began a search for Oyster 01B. The Sandys determined his position to be north of the red river near a dam. They were forced to leave the area due to heavy AAA, a Mig encounter, a SA-2 firing, and low fuel. Sandys 01/02/03/04 (Capt Smith/Capt Buchanan/Maj Harding/Lt Col Lathem) with two Jolly Greens returned the next morning and made a successful pick-up.

On 5 Jun Sandys 05/06 (Capt Throckmorton/Lt Scott) were scrambled from Bien Hoa for Chico 64 (O-2). Chico 64 was down at 0500/67/73 in a rugged area but bad weather prevented an immediate pick-up. After several hours and one refueling, the Sandys

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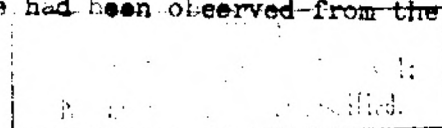
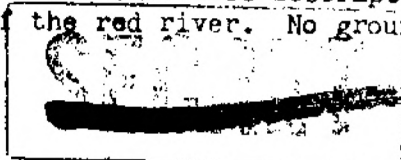


DOC 344

1 & 2 June 72

SUBJECT: Sandy 1 and 2 (SAR Oyster 01 B)

1. At 082010L on 1 June Sandy 1 and 2 were launched for an orbit north of the PDJ. A strike was planned in NVN with a time on target of 1000 to 103010L. At approximately 102010L Sandy 1 heard Disco calling an aircraft that had voice contact with Oyster 01. Because of the distances involved Sandy 1 and 2 and the Jollys obtained an approximate heading to the survivor and proceeded toward the area.
2. King informed Sandy 1 that Oyster flight was not fragged but Oyster 01 had been missing since 10 May 72. King passed me an authenticator question for Oyster 01 Bravo who was the only one talking on the survival radio.
3. Disco passed Sandy 1 an approximate position for the survivor. His position was said to be in the mountains very close to Yen Bai Airfield.
4. Sandy 1 & 2 proceeded directly to the area with the Jollys following. Sandy 1 contacted the survivor on guard just southeast of Yen Bai. He correctly answered the authenticator question, and was directed to "Delta" channel by Sandy 1. After establishing contact on "Delta" Sandy 1 ask him for any prominent ground references in his area. He said that he was North east of a lake on the side of a mountain. At this point Sandy 1 sent Sandy 2 to rendezvous with the Jollys and secure a holding point south of the river in the mountains.
5. The F-4 MIG Cap had a SAM launched at them from Yen Bai which hit one aircraft forcing them to RTB. Within 10 minutes 2 more F-4s were on scene.
6. At this point radio contact was lost with the survivor. No contact could be established on guard or 28228, Sandy 2 advised Sandy 1 that a MIG 21 had made a sweep thru the formation of Jollys and was headed toward Sandy 1. The MIG exited the area without firing at the SAR force.
7. Calgone lead (F-4 MIG Cap) stated that he heard Oyster 01 B and that he was north of the Red River.
8. Sandy 1 crossed the river to try and pinpoint the survivors location. After trolling for about 1 min. I re-established communications with the survivor but he still did not hear me and my UHF/ADF was inop. I located a lake that fit the survivors description of his area about 8 miles north of the red river. No ground fire had been observed from the



villages although many had been crossed at low altitude. As Sandy 1 headed further north toward the lake, AAA came up from the east corner of the dike. Sandy 1 evaded the AAA and began heading south toward the Jolly holding point.

9. The Jollys were now low on fuel and it was obvious that an ingress from the south was not possible in the near future. Sandy 1 directed the Sak forces to RTB and requested Calgone flight try to find the survivors exact location.

10. The position passed by Calgone, although north of the Red River, was south of the area Sandy 1 thought he was located.

11. The Sak forces RTB to ch89.

2 June 1972

- 1. Sandy 1 - Capt Ronald Smith
- Sandy 2 - Capt Ross Buchanan
- Sandy 3 - Maj James Harding
- Sandy 4 - Lt/Col William Latham

At 0745LCL Sandys 1-4 launched to arrive in the SAR area at 0930. Yen Bai Airfield was to be hit at 0920 and we were to have continuous MIG Cap, Iron Mund, and a Fast smoke and AAA suppression flight for Sandy 1 to use as needed.

2. Sandys 1-4 arrived at "India" point (about 25 miles southwest of survivor) at 0915LCL. Jolly 30 and 60 were 10 minutes out.

3. The Fast FAC requested to again confirm the survivors position aborted so Sandy 1 and 2 had to cross the Red River and locate his position while Sandy 3 and 4 escorted Jolly 30 flight to "Zulu" point (just south of the Red River)

4. As Sandy 1 and 2 approached the river we observed at least 2 direct hits on Yen Bai Airfield. Cousin flight (AAA suppression) and paste flight (Smoke) were briefed by Sandy 1 as we crossed the river. Contact was made with the survivor on guard at 0930LCL as we crossed the river southeast of Yen Bai.

5. Sandy 1 and 2 went directly to the position plotted by Calgone lead, but the survivor still could not hear or see us. Sandy 01 told the survivor that he was going to ask him a question and for him to think it over before answering. Sandy 01 asked him "what is kites?", the survivor said "a place to drink beer", Sandy 01 said "a place to drink what?", the survivor said "beer-beer", Sandy 01 said "it looks like you are the guy we are looking for", the survivor said "you're damn right I am". From then on there was no doubt in Sandy 01 and 02's minds that we had a valid, authentic survivor. Neither Sandy 1 or 2 had an operational UHF/ADF so a visual search at 2000 to 3000MSL was begun.

GROUP 3

Revised at 15 year interval;
Not subject to declassification

~~SECRET~~

DOC 346

6. After about 15 minutes of searching Sandy 1 and 2 were directly east of the reservoir where AAA had fired the day before. The survivor stated that he could hear us and was on the next mountain to our north. He also stated that the MIG Cap was directly over his head and was engaging the enemy. At least 2 AAA weapons from the eastern corner of the reservoir began firing at Sandy 1 and 2 forcing a turn southward. Sandy 1 described the target to Cousin flight and without marking the target cleared them in. Cousin flight did an outstanding job on the dike, but on their last pass 2 more guns were observed on a hill just east of the lake by Sandy 2. Sandy 1 asked Cousin to try to get more ordnance thru King for the remaining guns.
7. Sandy 1 now knew the survivors location and decided to ingress from the northwest using ridge lines for cover. I briefed the survivor prior to crossing the river to the southwest that we would be coming from a different direction and to be ready with his radio, mirror, and flares.
8. Sandy 1 and 2 rejoined with Jolly 30 flight and Sandy 3&4 and headed north west in the hills southwest of the Red River. Sandy 1 and 2 were leading and trolling for ground fire followed by Jolly 30 & 60 then Sandy 3 and 4 to roll in on any fire observed. About 15NM northwest of Yen Bai the SAR forces crossed the Red River. From this point to the survivor (about 20 minutes) ground fire was taken from almost every village. No F-4 flights could be raised by Sandy 1 on guard or 282.8 so the primary SAR force had to provide its own protection.
9. At approximately 1020LCL the SA⁺ forces reached the ridge line the survivor was on. Sandy 1 directed the Jollys and Sandy 3 and 4 to hold on the northwest side of the mountain while Sandy 1 and 2 got an exact position on the survivor. As Sandy 1 and 2 crested the ridge the survivor called on guard that we were flying over him and he hit Sandy 2 with a mirror flash. He was about half way down the south east slope. Sandy 2 began vectoring Jolly 30 over the ridge and Sandy 1 told Oyster 01 to "pop" his smoke.
10. Jolly 30 tried to use his Elf equipment but overshot the survivor. Sandy 1 told 30 to disregard his equipment and follow Sandy 1 vectors. The Sandys dropped CBU-22 between the survivor and the AAA positions to the southeast. At 1028LCL Oyster 01 "Bravo" was picked up.
11. The egress was via approximately the same route to the Red River. Tanks were sighted and a train destroyed during egress. A MIG was sighted by Sandy 3 but it did not attack the SAR forces. Small arms fire was again taken from the many villages and from the train.

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GROUP-3
Declassified 12 years after release
Ref: 100-100000-100000

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DOC 347

12. At 105510L contact was again made with King who informed Sandy 1 that Mig Cap was enroute and would be there in 10min. Disco again provided vectors for egress and King came into NVN to refuel the Jollys.

13. All SAR forces RTB to ch70 to check for damage and refuel.

Ronald E Smith

R. SMITH, Capt, USAF
Sandy 1

R. Herklotz

R. HERKLOTZ, 1st Lt, USAF
Sandy 2

~~SECRET~~

Page	
Ref	

S T A T E M E N T

1 Jun 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy 3 and 4 (Oyster 01B)

1. Sitting Sandy alert with Sandy 01 and 02 on north orbit we were scrambled at 1055 for an F-4 downed by migs near Yen Bai in NVN. We took off and enroute learned that the contact was with a call sign which went down on 10 May 1972, 21 days earlier.
2. Knowing that Sandy 01 and 02 would be hurting for fuel, we proceeded almost direct avoiding Sam ring in the "Fishes' mouth" by going directly over Ban Ban, no reaction had been reported from there lately and there was a broken cloud layer we were using for cover.
3. North of Ban Ban we began talking to Disco getting vectore (which agreed with our T and D figures) and also talking to the SAR force which reportedly was tangling with Mig's and getting shot up. Sandy 01 was in the survivor's area trying for a pinpoint and Sandy 02 was with the Jolly Green a short distance away just south of the Red River. It was Sandy 02's understanding that 01 had been hit by Mig's and was in a bad way. We've never heard so many people trying to talk on so many radios at the same time. Soon the Sar forces were reported coming out at treetop level and contact with Sandy 01 had been lost.
4. At this point we went to recue power and considered jettisoning the LAH-3 pods to increase A/S, but due to the possible mig encounters, kept them. We got another correction from Disco and kept pressing soon crossing the Black River. At this point Sandy 03 and 04 established radio contact with Sandy 02 who reported no Mig encounters but did report extremely heavy AAA.
5. We kept pressing into the area unable to get vectors or position from Disco due to radio traffic. Our plan was to link up with the Jolly Green's and Sandy 02 to help them clear the Mig threat before going on into the survivor's area.
6. About 8 minutes before my rough estimated time of arrival at the Red River we came upon a broad valley and large river. Radios were still too jammed to verify position or vectors to the Jolly Green's so we agreed they were behind us and turned 180 degrees over the river.
7. Shortly after turning we got word from King that we were recalled and we advised them of our plan to escort the Jolly's allowing Sandy 02 to get together and RTE, due to their low fuel state. King assisted in communications with the Jolly's and Sandy 02. Another 10 minutes and we got visual contact, rejoined and released Sandy 01 and 02 to RTE.
8. Our own RTE and JG escort home was normal.

Lemon C. Smith
L. SMITH, 1Lt, USAF
Sandy 3

Richard E. Brown
R. BROWN III, 1Lt, USAF
Sandy 4

DATE TIME GROUP: 031800Z Jun 72

FROM: CINCPACAF

TO: 13AF/CC
40 ARRSQ

UNCLAS E F T O/CC

REF: RESCUE MISSION B-3-047 1 Jun 72

THE MISSION DETAILS AND PARTICULARLY THE GRATIFYING RESULTS OF THE SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY OF CAPT ROGER C. LOOCHER ON 22 JUNE IS NOTED WITH EXTREME PRIDE, THIS MISSION IS INDICATIVE OF THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONALISM, COOPERATION AND DEDICATION TO DUTY DISPLAYED BY RECOVERY FORCES DURING EACH AND EVERY ACR MISSION ALL CONCERNED ARE COMENDED FOR THEIR EFFORTS DURING THIS EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS AND DIFFICULT MISSION, ESPECIALLY DESERVING OF HIGHEST PRAISE ARE THE AIRCRAFT MEMBERS WHOSE PERSISTENCE UNDER THE MOST HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY, CAPT LOOCHER IS TO BE PERSONALLY CONGRATULATED FOR HIS OUTSTANDING EFFORTS IN EVADING CAPTURE. PLEASE CONVEY MY PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL FOR ANOTHER JOB WELL DONE.

BT

#2582

DATE TIME GROUP: 048200Z

FROM: 7AF TAN SON HNUT

TO: 40 ARRSQ

UNCLAS/CC

FOR CAPTAIN STOVALL AND CREW

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM SECRETARY OF THE
AIR FORCE IS RETRANSMITTED: QUOTE

FOR GENERAL VOGT FROM SECRETARY SEAPANE

PLEASE CONVEY MY PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SEARCH AND RESCUE
FORCE, AND ESPECIALLY TO CAPTAIN DALE STOVALL AND HIS HELICOPTER
CREW, FOR THEIR SUCCESSFUL RESCUE OF CAPTAIN ROGER LOCKER NEAR YEN
SAY, NVN, SUCH ACTIONS EXEMPLIFY THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE USAF
UNQUOTE, ONCE AGAIN, ACCEPT MY PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU.

JOHN W. VOGT, GENERAL, USAF

BT

/#9822

DATE TIME GROUP: 040615Z.

FROM: 3ARRGP

TO: 40 ARRS/CC

UNCLAS/CC

SUBJECT: OYSTER 01 BRAVO

1. I WISH TO EXTEND MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE RECOVERY OF CAPTAIN ROGER C. LOCHER, HIS DETERMINATION, BRAVERY AND FAITH IN RESCUE WAS REWARDED WITH A RECOVERY THAT STIRRED THE IMAGINATION OF EVERYONE. THE OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM DISPLAYED IN THE PLANNING, COORDINATION, AND EXECUTION OF THIS MISSION WAS TRULY INSPIRING.
2. TO THE MEN OF THE KING BIRDS, YOUR COORDINATION, IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AND KNOW-HOW CONTRIBUTED MEASURABLE TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS MISSION. SUPERLATIVES CANNOT FULLY DESCRIBE HOW WELL YOU DID YOUR JOB. MY GRATEFUL THANKS.
3. TO THE MEN OF THE SANDYS, YOUR BRAVERY IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING ODDS BOARDERS ON HEROISM, YOUR DETERMINATION, DEVOTION AND INTERSPIDNESS HAS ONCE AGAIN PLACED YOUR HIGH STANDING IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE YOU PROTECT.
4. TO THE MEN OF THE FAST MOVERS, YOUR GALLANTRY, CONCERN AND WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE GAVE RESCUE THE TIME AND THE DIVERSION THEY NEED TO DO THEIR JOB, I WILL ALWAYS HOLD YOU IN THE HIGHEST ESTEEM.
5. TO THE MAINTENANCE MEN, WHO WORKED THE LONG HOURS WHICH GAVE RESCUE THE TOOLS IT NEEDED TO DO THE JOB. WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE THE RESPECT AND ADMIRATION I FEEL FOR ALL OF YOU.
6. TO THE SUPPORT PERSONNEL, WITHOUT WHOSE ASSISTANCE RESCUE COULD NOT HAVE PENETRATED SO DEEPLY INTO THE BACKYARD OF THE ENEMY AND SUCCESSFULLY RACED AGAINST TIME. YOUR EFFORTS WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN.
7. TO THE MEN OF THE JOLLY GREENS, YOUR EXTRAORDINARY EXPLOITS REFLECT THE VALOR, PROWESS AND SUPERLATIVE COURAGE IN FULFILLING YOUR HIGHEST PURPOSE. THE RESCUE OF A HUMAN LIFE, YOU NEVER CEASE TO ASTONISH ME BY YOUR CAPABILITY AND I STAND SECOND ONLY TO CAPTAIN LOCHER IN MY REGARD FOR YOU.
8. SO, AGAIN LET ME ADD MY PRAISES TO THE MANY YOU WILL RECEIVE, MY HAT IS OFF TO ALL OF YOU FOR A MAGNIFICENT JOB.

BT

#2139

(C) I believe that it is a definite morale factor that every person that flew over here felt that if he was to go down that there was some chance he would be rescued. However, I feel also that there was a tendency on the part of the aircrews to expect that they must be rescued above the requirements of the battle situation at any one time and as airmen or soldiers or sailors we should expect that there are times when as one person we must be sacrificed for the overall.

(C) Part of this controversy suggested that survivors must accept additional burdens during extended SAR missions. Maximum use of E&E procedures was a must. Downed crewmembers could not expect to be rescued in a short period of time if they were in a hostile environment. They would have to employ the techniques taught in survival school. 116

(U) Oyster 01. Flying an F-4 (call sign Oyster 01) on 10 May 1972, Major Robert A. Lodge and Captain Robert C. Locher shot down their third MIG. Shortly thereafter, they were shot down by another MIG approximately 40 miles west of Hanoi. Although the pilot, Major Lodge, was never recovered, Captain Locher, the weapons system operator, was rescued after 23 days of E&E in North Vietnam. During the E&E, Captain Locher subsisted on fruits, nuts, berries, and an ample supply of water. Captain Locher stated: 117

(U) One day I eyed a banana tree all day. It didn't have any bananas on it, but remembered I could get water out of it. Just before evening I stuck a hole in it and got myself three pints of good banana water.

He was also able to obtain various vegetables by raiding native gardens. Captain Locher continually changed his position in search of cover, food, and water. He moved a total of 15 miles, but he was unable to make contact with any U.S. aircraft. On 1 June, Captain Locher heard U.S. airplanes conducting bombing missions. He knew that when the bombing ended, the

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10-10-68
planes would egress the target area, and he might be able to contact them. He successfully made radio contact, and a search and rescue operation was initiated. However, the first SAR attempt was driven off by MIGs.

(U) The next day a SARTF consisting of Jolly Greens from the 40th ARRSq, HC-130 King aircraft, and A-1 Sandys from the 56th SOW, covered by F-4 Phantoms and F-105 Thunderchiefs, began the second SAR attempt. Heavy ground fire was encountered on the way to and from the rescue area which was located deep within the NVN heartland. With the Jolly Greens orbiting, the Sandys made several passes over the area. They then led a Jolly Green commanded by Captain Dale E. Stovall to a position over Captain Locher. Automatic weapon fire erupted from a nearby building, but was silenced by the miniguns on the Jolly Green. The flight engineer lowered the jungle penetrator and Captain Locher climbed on. Captain Locher stated, "It sure is a good feeling to get that penetrator, strap it on, give them a thumbs-up and hang on." Captain Locher was brought on board and the helicopter began the long trip home.

(U) During the return trip, the task force encountered enemy fire from villages, trucks, and a train. One A-1 Sandy from the 1st Special Operations Squadron (SOS) of the 56th SOW, attacked the train using bombs, 20mm cannons, and rockets. The pilot stated that:

(U) There was a pretty good gunner firing tracers up on either side of me as I went in. I finally put two rockets into the engine and the steam shot up about 300 feet. It was a beautiful sight.

Other Sandys made passes along the train and left all of the cars burning or destroyed.

Det 4, 3APRGp Historical Input Apr - 30 Jun 72

Appendix II

SARS in which Det 4 has participated

<u>MISSION</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SAVES</u>
SPECTRE 22	1 Apr	15 combat
BAT 21	2 Apr	1 combat
BLUE GHOST 39	2 Apr	-
BLUE GHOST 28	2 Apr	2 combat
PAVE MAIL 38	3 Apr	1 combat
VAMPIRE 46	4 Apr	1 non-combat
JOLLY GREEN 67	6 Apr	-
COVEY 282	7 Apr	-
BENGAL 502	9 Apr	1 combat
MUSKET 01	9 Apr	2 combat
COSMIC 16	20 Apr	1 combat
VAMPIRE 50	22 Apr	1 combat
SCORPIAN 115	29 Apr	-
COACHMAN 22	29 Apr	4 combat
RED HAWK 6	29 Apr	4 combat
ICERAG 04	11 May	-
OOPHER 01	11 May	-
BOWLEG 02	20 May	1 combat
OWL 14	23 May	-
OYSTER 01	1 Jun	1 combat
LOVER 03	1 Jun	2 combat
RITAOT	13 Jun	-
cathay airlines convair 880	15 Jun	-
SPECTRE 11	18 Jun	3 combat
HOB0 82	18 Jun	-
SANDY 7	20 Jun	1 combat
NICKEL 102	20 Jun	1 combat
WHOLER 03	21 Jun	-
SALTER 04	24 Jun	-
CHAPPAKAWA SKY	24 Jun	1 non-combat
CHAPPAKAWA MOON	24 Jun	1 non-combat
LOUGY 03	24 Jun	-
LAREDO 17	25 Jun	-
DOLBY 01	27 Jun	-
TROY 04	27 Jun	-
VALENT 03	27 Jun	1 combat
VALENT 04	27 Jun	1 combat
COVEY 27	30 Jun	1 combat

APPENDIX

Combat Saves

NUMBER	SURVIVOR	DATE	MISSION
155	Capt Martin J. Jacobs	9 Apr 72	Musket 01
156	Capt William M. Banks	9 Apr 72	Musket 01
157	Maj Clyde Smith	13 Apr 72	Bengal 505
158	1 Lt Ernest S. Clark	23 Apr 72	Cosmic 16
159	1 Lt John D. Markle	20 May 72	Bowleg 02
160	Capt Roger C. Locher	2 Jun 72	Oyster 01
161	Cmdr James Davis	21 Jun 72	Nickel 102
162	Maj Robert Miller	27 Jun 72	Valent 03
163	SSgt Charles D. McGrath	27 Jun 72	Jolly Green 73
164	Capt Lynn A. Aikman	27 Jun 72	Valent 04

Non Combat Saves

189	Unknown	13 Apr 72	B-3-032
190	Lt Namy	8 Jun 72	B-3-52

Medical Evacuations

25	Unknown	2 Apr 72	B-3-026
26	Unknown	23 May 72	B-3-042
27	Unknown	24 May 72	B-3-043
28	Unknown	4 Jun 72	B-3-050

Sender: dgoodlet@cyberhighway.net
Received: from pop1.cyberhighway.net (pop1.cyberhighway.net [209.161.0.35])
by hil-img-5.compuserve.com (8.8.6/8.8.6/2.18) with SMTP id XAA14077
for <rlapointe@compuserve.com>; Wed, 17 Feb 1999 23:20:22 -0500 (EST)
Received: (qmail 26033 invoked from network); 17 Feb 1999 21:17:14 -0700
Received: from ts19-42.boi.cyberhighway.net (HELO ngood) (209.161.10.181)
by pop1.cyberhighway.net with SMTP; 17 Feb 1999 21:17:14 -0700
Message-ID: <002701be5af4\$b20a6ba0\$b50aa1d1\$ngood>
From: "Don Goodlett" <dgoodlet@cyberhighway.net>
To: "Robert LaPointe" <rlapointe@compuserve.com>
Subject: Oyster 01B SAR
Date: Wed, 17 Feb 1999 21:09:44 -0700
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/mixed;
boundary="-----=_NextPart_000_0022_01BE5AB9.D9792F40"
X-Priority: 3
X-MSMail-Priority: Normal
X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 4.72.3110.1
X-MimeOLE: Produced By Microsoft MimeOLE V4.72.3110.3

Both crews got Silver Stars. This was first use of ELF location system. Dale Stovall w

Don

100

$$f^{\circ} = f \circ f : f^{\circ} \rightarrow f^{\circ} \quad f^{\circ} \in \text{Aut}(X)$$

09246116 250

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE SILVER STAR

TO

DONALD H. GOODLETT, JR.

Staff Sergeant Donald H. Goodlett, Jr. distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia on 2 June 1972. On that date, Sergeant Goodlett, a Pararescue Recovery Technician on an HH-53C rescue helicopter, voluntarily penetrated deep into an extremely hostile and heavily defended area of North Vietnam to assist in the recovery of a downed American airman. At great risk to his own life, he willingly exposed himself to hostile ground forces while manning his minigun position. Sergeant Goodlett's superior skill in suppressing the groundfire being directed at his vulnerable aircraft was instrumental in the successful completion of this hazardous rescue. By his gallantry and devotion to duty Sergeant Goodlett has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND NOMINEE

FOR

THE KITTY HAWK MEMORIAL AWARD

CAPTAIN DALE E. STOVALL

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Captain Dale E. Stovall is a 29-year old native of Toppenish, Washington. He graduated and received his commission from the United States Air Force Academy in 1967. While at the Academy, Captain Stovall served on the Cadet Group Staff and made the Superintendent's list for academic and military excellence. He was a 3-year Letterman in track, qualifying for the 1966 All-American Indoor Track Team.

Upon completion of pilot training in 1968, Captain Stovall flew the C-141 Starlifter for the Military Airlift Command. In 1970, he transitioned to the HH-53C "Super Jolly Green Giant" helicopter and was assigned to Patrick AFB, Florida, where he flew on the Launch Site Recovery Team for Apollo 14 and Apollo 15 space flights. In January of 1972, Captain Stovall was assigned to the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Nakhon Phanom AFB, Thailand, as a Rescue helicopter pilot.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Captain Dale Stovall compiled one of the finest combat records in Southeast Asia as an aircraft commander of an HH-53C "Super Jolly Green Giant" Rescue helicopter. His decorations include the Air Force Cross (the nation's second highest decoration), two Silver Stars, and two Distinguished Flying Crosses. He made 12 combat saves of downed airmen during his year tour, one of the highest individual saves totaled by one pilot. Captain Stovall flew on 18 actual combat rescue missions, including five into North Vietnam, and led two of the deepest penetrations into North Vietnam, north of Hanoi, ever attempted by a rescue crew. Two missions in particular, for which he was awarded the Air Force Cross and the Silver Star, highlight the bravery and determination of Captain Stovall in rescuing downed airmen from certain capture or death.

On the first of June 1972, Captain Stovall was flying the lead helicopter on a precautionary rescue orbit in northern Laos when he received word that an American airman, Captain Rodger Locher, had radioed from deep in North Vietnam that he had been on the ground since the tenth of May, 22 days before, when he was shot down by a MIG aircraft. Although the rescue force felt that it was a ploy to lure the slow moving helicopters into a trap, they elected to proceed into North Vietnam. After flying 110 miles into North Vietnam, the rescue force of two helicopters and two A-1H Sandy aircraft stopped at the edge of the famed

Red River, just eight miles from North Vietnam's Yen Bai Airfield that based over 70 MIGs. At that time, the enemy reacted with numerous surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), antiaircraft and small arms fire. Because of the enemy reaction and confusing directions given by Captain Locher, the rescue force was unable to locate Captain Locher. During 45 minutes of searching, the two "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters were twice attacked by a MIG-21 jet fighter, but the rescue force only terminated the search efforts when they had reached critically low fuel level.

The following day, Captain Stovall lead an all-volunteer mission back into North Vietnam on a second attempt. This time the rescue force of two "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters and four A-1H Sky Raiders was supported by dozens of other aircraft. After reaching the Red River Valley, the rescue force again was subjected to violent enemy reaction, but after locating the downed airman, they elected to continue and press deeper into North Vietnam across the Red River Valley. This placed the MIG airfield between themselves and safety. The rescue force had proceeded 130 miles into North Vietnam, just 30 miles north of Hanoi. Just prior to crossing the Red River Valley, the rescue force learned that their fighter protection against MIG aircraft had to leave because of low fuel. At this point, Captain Stovall, the aircraft commander in the helicopter that was to attempt the pick up, had the choice to continue or turn back. He immediately radioed that he would not turn back without the survivor.

Although the rescue force was still suspicious that they might be entering an enemy trap, Captain Stovall faced the task of hovering the big helicopter perfectly still while the downed airman was hoisted aboard. After spotting Captain Locher's signal smoke, Captain Stovall expertly flew his helicopter into a hover over the survivor, as he had previously done for nine other downed airmen in hostile areas. A stream of rifle fire erupted from a nearby village toward the motionless helicopter. Captain Stovall continued to hold his hover and give directions to the A-1H Sky Raiders to strike the enemy gun positions while his own helicopter crewmen returned the fire.

Following the successful pick up, a MIG-17 jet fighter attacked the rescue force as they were crossing the Red River Valley. They were able to evade it as well as the antiaircraft guns that were directed at the low flying rescue force. After 3 hours and 45 minutes in North Vietnam, Captain Stovall and his force reached the relative safety of northern Laos, completing one of the epic rescues of the Vietnam conflict. Captain Rodger Locher had evaded capture for 23 days, and his rescue was the second deepest penetration into North Vietnam by a rescue helicopter.

1972 (cont)

- 1 May 72 Evacuation of Quang Tri. The 3d ARR Group evacuated 132 persons from the citadel in the besieged city of Quang Tri to Da Nang, Vietnam. Five HH-53s of the 37th ARR Squadron were used for this mission. No one was injured, despite the nearby presence of enemy forces. Staff Sergeant Robert L. LaPointe, a pararescue-man in the first HH-53, silenced enemy snipers with a mini-gun. When the plane landed, Sergeant LaPointe organized the evacuees and maintained ground control until the second HH-53 departed.
- 11 May 72 General John D. Ryan, USAF Chief of Staff, directed that the mission of ARRS be primarily oriented toward combat rescue operations.
- 1 Jun-
2 Jun 72 The 3d ARR Group, augmented by A-1s and other forces, rescued Captain Roger C. Locher, who had lost his F-4 over North Vietnam on 10 May and had evaded capture for 23 days. Captain Dale E. Stovall, 40th ARR Squadron, and his HH-53 crew successfully evacuated Captain Locher on 2 June. New electronic locator finder (ELF) equipment aided in the success of this operation.
- 27 Jun 72 Captain Stovall, 40th ARR Squadron, again flew deep into North Vietnam to rescue two downed airmen. After another HH-53 was forced to withdraw from the rescue site due to enemy fire, Captain Stovall's crew descended and retrieved the two survivors. The second HH-53 received more than 16 hits during the engagement, and several personnel aboard both HH-53s were wounded. Later, Captain Dale E. Stovall and Staff Sergeant Charles D. McGrath (pararescueman) were awarded the Air Force Cross.
- 6 Oct 72 General John D. Ryan, USAF Chief of Staff, ordered a sizeable reduction in the number of ARRS local base rescue elements and detachments during Fiscal Year 1973.
- Oct-
Nov 72 The 71st ARR Squadron joined with elements of other agencies in the search for House Majority Leader Hale Boggs, Congressman Nick Begich, and two other men, who disappeared in Alaska during a flight between Anchorage and Juneau. Despite a 40-day search, no trace was found.
- 2 Dec-
3 Dec 72 Three HC-130s and two HH-3s from the 31st ARR Squadron hoisted 29 Philippine sailors and one pet orangutan from lifeboats after their logging ship, the *San Martin*, sank about 500 miles east northeast from the Island of Luzon. Twenty-nine plus saves.
- 21 Dec 72 The 40th ARR Squadron performed its first night combat recovery in Southeast Asia by an HH-53 using a new Night Recovery System.

DO NOT DESTROY

DATE: 1 June 1972

MISSION NUMBER: 2-02-047

Mission narrative

FLIGHT DESIGNATION: Jolly Green 30 (Low) and Jolly Green 60 (High)

No. 0581396

OBJECTIVE: Rescue and recovery of Oyster 01 Bravo, Capt Roger C. Locher, USAF, F-4E, shot down on 10 May 1972, 10 NM east of Yen Bai Airfield, North Vietnam. Recovered by Jolly Green 30 on 2 June 1972.

ADDITIONAL SAR FORCES: Kings 21, 22 and 27; Sandys 1 through 4 (both days); Jolly Green 73.

SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS: This is the mission narrative on the two day SAR for Oyster 01. As aircraft commander for Jolly Green 53 and Jolly Green 30, I was involved both days. We launched at 0805L for our orbit point in North Central Laos in support of Linebacker Mission. While at our orbit point we overheard radio traffic that a beeper and voice contact had been established with a downed aircraft member. I was low bird in Jolly Green 57 and Jolly Green 30 was high bird. We immediately proceeded toward the general area of the survivor as passed to us by King (HC-130P). We were following the Sandys (ALEs) but fell behind because of their higher air speed. The navigation from our orbit point until crossing the Black River in NVN was very difficult. The terrain was all very similar and all the mountains were the same height. As we approached the Black River we were able to locate our position. At this time we began to pass over many villages but did not see any ground fire. We climbed to 7000' MSL to get over a pass between two 9000'+ mountains and found our way blocked by clouds on the tops and in the saddle of the mountains. We detoured to the south and at this time JG 30, which had the ELF gear on board, picked up the survivor and Sandy 01 on guard. Using the ELF equipment we were able, with directions from JG 30, to navigate to a low ridge line about four miles from the Red River. At the bottom of this ridge was a village and every valley we crossed both days was populated as well as many of the hill sides. We were holding for about two minutes when Sandy 01, who had been in constant contact with us, sighted a SAM that was fired at and hit a F-4 MIG Cap flying overhead. Sandy 01 called out that the F-4 had taken a direct hit and was coming down but the F-4 pilot was able to stay with the aircraft and made a controlled bail out over Udorn. Sandy 01 was taking heavy AAA fire from the flat lands around the Red River. Because Sandy 01 was having trouble locating Oyster 01, JG 30 attempted to use the ELF equipment to locate the survivor. JG 30 did get a good lock on and I told JG 30 to take over the low position as he would have the only chance to find the survivor if we made an attempt as the Sandys were drawing heavy AAA. Just as we were changing lead a MIG-21 made a high speed pass on us. He made a quartering pass on JG 30 but for some reason did not fire. Sandy 02 called the MIG out and gave us some time to start a break. I broke down and rolled out at 100' AGL over the village and flew up a gully across the valley from the

REF: 40 ARSQ/DO

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

[REDACTED]

ridge line. As I was crossing the valley I saw the MIG flying away from me to the NW up the valley about 500' AGL. I called JG 30 to see if he was ok and said I would join him so that the Sandys could give us better cover. He had remained on the northern side of the valley. Sandy 01 had returned to our position and was calling for more MIG Cap. About two minutes after we had rejoined, the MIG or another MIG again made a pass on us. JG 30 which was holding about 300 yards to the NW of my position was again the target but although the MIG got into his 6 o'clock, the MIG did not fire. At this point we were all, the Sandys and Jollys, low on fuel, and had not been able to sight the survivor. We began to exit the area. Our holding point was about 7 NM SE of Yen Bai Airfield, NVN. Although, we did not see any ground fire, we were probably taking small arms fire from the villages but our preoccupation with the MIG probably caused us to miss it. Because of the survivor's apparent calmness, the Sandys and myself thought it might be a trap and that the survivor had been forced into calling the SAR forces. I did not quit believing it was a trap until Oyster 01 got on the penetrator the next day. King 27 met the Jollys in the northern part of Laos at 102 on the 034 radial of Ch 119, at this time both Jollys had reached a critical fuel state and both aircraft had low fuel caution lights. While air refueling with King 27, we flew to the west and ended up about 8 NM from the "Chinese Road" to the NW of Luang Prabang, Laos. I do not think the King birds have enough intelligence information on the gun position in the Barrel Roll area as he was going to take us over the gun position near Luang Prabang but was afraid to fly toward Lima 16 (Vang Vieng) which was our normal crossing point. Anyway, we had difficulty locating our position in the weather, there were many thunderstorms and buildups in the area. After we were able to tune in Ch 119 we had no further difficulty in returning to NKP. The first day we landed at 1535L at NKP after JG 30 had made an emergency landing 7 NM NW of NKP due to an engine problem. After considerable discussion of the threats involved, the Commander decided to continue with the SAR attempt on a voluntarily basis. That night we did extensive flight planning with the Sandy pilots. The crews and aircraft were changed for the second day. Only myself and the Flight Engineer remained from the first day's crew of JG 57. That night with a maximum effort from the 40th ARRSq Maintenance, JG 30 was repaired in the field in which it had landed, flown back to NKP and was ready for my crew the next morning at 0530L. The reason I changed to JG 30 was to make the ELF equipment available on the low bird. Due to the airborne abort of my wing man, JG 53, I had to wait for a replacement and was 35 minutes behind the scheduled flight plan to reach the final holding point at 0930L. I was able to make up 30 of the 35 minutes by flying very low with high power settings and some excellent navigation and short cuts computed by my copilot. Not only did he preplan our flight path to make up for lost time, he was able to pin point our position all day long using visual map readings from low altitude and dead reckoning as our doppler was inoperative. JG 57 who had launched with JG 60 followed us to the normal holding point for the Linebacker orbit and acted as backup. King 21 refueled all three Jollys north of the PDJ. The Sandys had taken off after the Jollys and had flown the more direct route to the east of the PDJ. Due to the low clouds in northern Laos,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

we crossed the Black River on the southern edge of the 9000+ mountain range. By this time I was fairly familiar with the route and my copilot's excellent navigation enabled me to stay at low altitude so that the NVA GCI radar would not pick up the Jollys. We were south of the holding point (India) in the mountains but I had an excellent ELF location both the survivor and Sandy 01, so I called Sandy 03 & 04 and told them I would join up with them at the final holding point (Zulu) at 0945L. The point I chose to hold at was the same one I had used the day before and was about 3 NM east of the planned holding point. I decided to use it because of the clouds that were laying on the ridge to give us cover if attacked by MIGs. With the clouds on the ridge line, I could slow up to 20 KTS A/S pop above the ridge to get an ELF position on the survivor. The survivor was on a hill 15 NM from my position and directly in line of sight facing me; therefore, I had a very strong ELF signal. From this I thought the survivor was only eight miles away just across the Red River on a small hill. I cannot say enough about Sandy 01, Capt Ron Smith, without him the SAR effort would have not been successful. Sandy 01 and 02 were taking very heavy and accurate AAA fire from a dam directly between my position and the survivor. Sandy 01 called a F-4 strike that knocked out most of the guns and left a large fire burning all the time we were in the area. I wanted to make a low level high speed run in across the flat land along the Red River but Sandy 01 located the survivor at 0955L and advised me that it was 15 NM to the survivor's position of 2152N 10506E and I would not be able to get past the gun positions. Sandy 01 then directed a move to point Oscar, a holding point to the northwest of Yen Bai, north of the Red River. With Sandy 01 and 02 in front and Sandy 03 and 04 behind, JG 30 and 60 proceeded very low level through the hills next to Yen Bai to the crossing point. At one point we were about four miles from Yen Bai airfield but Sandy 01 had seen a strike hit the field earlier in the day. It must have been good as we only saw one MIG that day. Just before we crossed the Red River 10 NM northwest of Yen Bai we took fire from the area of a parked military truck. Before we crossed the Red River, Sandy 01 called the MIG Cap on guard and the MIG Cap frequency but was unable to raise anyone. At this time King 21 informed us that we didn't have a MIG Cap as they were on the tankers. It was not until we had picked up the survivor and were back across the Red River that a MIG Cap arrived in the area. If there was a MIG Cap in the area, we were unable to raise them on any frequency. From the Red River to the survivor and back, both Jollys took ground fire from almost every village, because JG 60 was a little behind JG 30, JG 60 received most of the ground fire. Both PJs and the HJs as well as the AP on JG 30 directed suppressing mini gun fire on all villages that fired at either helicopter. We flew at 50' to 500' AGL to stay below the SAM radar of the two sites near Yen Bai and to prevent any MIGs from seeing the Jollys. The Sandys, meanwhile, were flying well above us, exposed to both the SAM and MIG threat. As we neared the ridge that the survivor was on, Sandy 01 went ahead and re-established contact with the survivor. Because the survivor was on the opposite side of a 1650' ridge and could not hear the helicopters or A/Hs, he was not up on his radio and we did not have any ELF indications until we popped over the ridge and the survivor came up on the radio. The high bird JG 60 held on the north side of the ridge as the Sandys could not have left him along the way with the MIG threat. Because I was still not sure we were not

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Being trapped, I kept my A/S around 150 KTS as I came over the ridge, I got an ELF indication, turned in the direction of the survivor and started to slow down but got ELF station passage at 100 KTS. My copilot spotted the survivor's signal mirror, which the survivor had also used to signal the Sandys with good success. I turned around and flew north back along the ridge until we again passed over the survivor. Because the slope was about 40-50°, the right side of the helicopter had to be facing the hill in order to use the hoist. I was unable to see the survivor, but the copilot had him in sight and hovered the helicopter down the slope with the hoist operator and #2 PJ advising him of his position in relation to the hillside and trees. Because the hover references were on my side, I took the helicopter after we arrived over the survivor and hovered while the pick up was being made. As soon as we went into the hover we began taking ground fire from several of the 40 or so houses at the base of the ridge line. During the pick up, the Sandys laid a smoke screen to our SE to shield us from nearby AAA positions that had been firing at them. They also strafed the village. The high bird was 1/3 of a mile away on the north side of the ridge also taking ground fire. When the survivor was out of the trees, I applied maximum power and did a vertical ascent to the top of the ridge line. At this time the survivor was in the door and we began accelerating and joined with JG 60. From our arrival at the ridge at 1025L until leaving the area of the survivor took three minutes. The weather in the SAR area was approximately 8000' scattered to broken. The gunners and the AP did an outstanding job of suppressing the ground fire as we did not take a single hit the entire day. The quick and accurate return of ground fire from both helicopters, especially JG 60, accounted for 15 KIA, three damaged trucks, approximately 40 to 50, 55 gallon drums were left burning and several cars on the train were damaged before Sandy 03 finished it off. During the egress from the pick up point to the mountain range about 15 NM south of the Red River, we took ground fire from the 10 or so villages that fired on us on the ingress. We were unable to avoid flying over the villages as the whole area was heavily populated and the ridge lines we followed in and out were the only ones we could use. The gunners spotted several trucks and two military compounds with which they traded fire. On the egress across the Red River, Sandy 01 spotted a train that had stopped exactly at our crossing point. The train had several guns mounted on the cars and these began to fire at the Sandies. Both Jollys were close behind the Sandies 01, 02 and 04 and crossed over the train at 500 AGL and all gunners returned the fire. Sandies 01, 02 and 04 each made one pass on the train. Sandy 03 made a rocket/CEU run the length of the train, blow up the engine and left several cars burning. He also made three strafing passes on the train. The rest of the SAR force continued to egress. As the SAR force crossed the Red River Valley, a MIG-17 approached and was spotted by JG 60. Sandy 03 attacked the MIG and then the MIG broke off the engagement. After crossing the Red River, SAR forces started into the mountains and received ground fire from three or four villages. The SAR force had some difficulty in navigating through the 9000+ mountains because of low clouds in the area. Both Jolly crews were nearing

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their minimum fuel when they were met by King 22 tanker inside of North Vietnam. After refueling, JG 60 noticed an oil leak from one of his engines and he suspected battle damage. The Sandys accompanied both Jolly crews to Ch 70, landing at 1326L. Upon inspection, JG 60 did not confirm the suspected battle damage.

The following areas were of importance in the mission.

1. The survivor used mirror to good advantage.
2. ELF equipment will be an extremely important asset in any SAR especially useful in Night Recovery System. The Sandy aircraft need ELF as much as the Jollys.
3. The Sandy pilots did the usual fantastic job.
4. The King aircraft came into NVN to refuel the Jollys.
5. We lost contact with MIG Cap at a very critical point in the SAR.
6. No radio contact can be expected with the SAR forces when they are north of the 9000+ mountain range in North Vietnam.
7. DISCO gave valuable aid in communications and navigation.
8. The strike on the Yen Bai Airfield prevented possible MIG reaction the second day.
9. All Jolly Green crewmembers performed in the finest tradition of Air Rescue.

Flying Activity:

Det 4, 3 ARRGp, 8 Sorties, 51.5 Hours
40 ARRSq, 9 Sorties, 42.1 Hours
56 SCW, 8 Sorties, 44.4 Hours
432 TFW, 25 Sorties, 43.5 Hours
283 TFW, 2 Sorties, 4.0 Hours
366 TFW, 4 Sorties, 8.0 Hours
8 TFW, 8 Sorties, 12.0 Hours
10 Air Refuelings were accomplished.

Dale E. Stovall

DALE E. STOVALL, CAPT, USAF
Aircraft Commander

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The Crews Were:

Jolly Green 30

AC - Captain Dale E. Stovall,
CP - Captain John M. Gillespie II,
RF - ALC James T. Walsh,
RS - Sgt Charles E. McQuoid II,
RS - ALC Kenneth W. Cokerbroad,
AP - TSgt Debbie L. Walborn,

Jolly Green 60

AC - Captain Jerry W. Shipman,
CP - Captain Stanley J. Ziolkowski Jr.,
RF - Sgt William T. Liles,
RS - SSgt Donald H. Goodlett,
RS - Sgt Dennis C. Williamson,
AP - SSgt Hal Smith,

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...New commander

During his tour as MAC commander since August 1969, General Catton introduced the C-5 Galaxy into the Air Force strategic airlift inventory.

General Catton's command is charged with the operation of the global military airlift system plus aerospace rescue, air weather, photo audio-visual and aeromedical evacuation systems throughout the world.

General Simler assumed command of ATC in September 1970 and was charged with the mission of selecting and training American men and women for the Air Force in military, technical, and flying skills.

General Simler is a native of Johnstown, Pa., and a graduate of the University of Maryland. He was commissioned in August 1942 and served two combat tours in the European Theater of Operations during World War II. He was shot down in July 1944 and evaded capture and was successful in making his way back to the Allied lines in September 1944.

He is a command pilot and had served as vice commander, USAFE, prior to his ATC assignment.

General McBride served as MAC Chief of Staff under General Catton and was appointed to the USAFE position last September.

Missing man formation tribute to crew

TAN SON NHUT AB, RVN—When Maj. Gary L. Gamble recently returned from what was to be his last mission in Southeast Asia, he led his crew in a tribute to members of his squadron who would not be returning home.

Traditionally, a 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron pilot's last flight in SEA ends with a ceremony consisting of an extra pass over the field and a splashing with a bucket of cold water when he steps from his aircraft.

But Major Gamble wanted to express the feeling of his squadron for those who will never return home. He requested permission for three HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giants on his mission to fly a brief "missing man" formation as a tribute to a crew that perished in March.

The crew, flying an HH-53 of the 40th ARRSq, was downed by hostile action during a rescue operation in enemy territory.

The 40th ARRSq is well known for flying Super Jolly Green Giants. Their record of saving lives of downed flyers has earned them great respect in the Air Force.

The pride within the unit and the feeling among its members made the brief and simple ceremony very meaningful. In fact, it was so meaningful that Major Gamble voluntarily extended his assignment for three months.

Flyer rescued after 23 days in North Vietnam

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

Capt. Roger C. Locher, a weapons system operator with the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, was extremely weak—he lost 15 pounds during his ordeal—but otherwise in good condition. Captain Locher and the F-4 Phantom pilot, who is still missing, were shot down 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 Super Jolly Green Giants, A-1 Sandys, HC-130 King command aircraft which also refueled the helicopters on the long journey, and F-4 Phantom and F-105 Thunderchief jet fighters to protect the slower-moving aircraft.

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

During the next 23 days he subsisted on fruit, nuts and berries. He was very successful in locating water.

"One day I eyed a banana tree all day. It didn't have any bananas on it, but I remembered I could get water out of it. Just before evening I stuck a hole in it and got myself three pints of good banana water."

On another day, he reported, "I went through somebody's garden and stole some chives. They had some pretty good chives there."

Captain Locher changed his position in search of good cover, food and water. He shifted approximately 15 miles during his 23-day ordeal.

"In this one clearing there was a hooter and behind it was a pretty steep little mountain, so I just climbed up their garden and halfway up their mountain, quite near the top. That's where I stayed the last two days."

Although he had made attempts, the captain had been unable to make radio contact with U.S. aircraft.

"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 and two flights came up to answer me. That was the first time I made radio contact."

The contact triggered the search and rescue penetration deep into North Vietnam. The rescue forces were driven off by MIGs on their first attempt.

The next day, the task force headed north again, led in by the Sandys of the 56th Special Operations Wing. Heavy ground fire failed to dissuade the rescue aircraft as they continued north.

When they approached Captain Locher's position, the Sandys made a pass over him, circled the mountain, made another pass and then led in a Super Jolly Green Giant, commanded by Capt. Dale E. Stovall.

As the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron helicopter moved in,

automatic weapon fire erupted from a nearby hooter. Sgt. Charles B. McQuid and A1C Kenneth W. Cakebread, parascramen on the HH-53, silenced the ground fire with their miniguns.

The flight engineer, Sgt. James F. Walsh, lowered the jungle penetrator to Captain Locher, who mounted it on his own power.

"It sure is a good feeling to get that penetrator, strap it on, give a thumbs-up, and hang on."

To evade further ground fire, the helicopter lifted to the top of the mountain as the captain was being hoisted in. Captain Locher was swung onboard and the rescue force headed home.

The trip home was no downhill glide. Every village was a source of ground fire. Trucks, even a train, opened fire on the task force, but the A-1 Sandys returned the fire, not only protecting the helicopters but destroying one locomotive, several railroad cars and trucks.

Other crewmembers on the HH-53 making the pickup were Capt. John H. Gillespie, copilot, and TSgt. Bobbie L. Welborne, combat photographer.

Upon return here, Captain Locher was greeted by Gen. John W. Vogt, commander of Seventh Air Force, who was here on a staff visit.

Captain Locher said, "Those Jolly Greens and Sandys are just great. They did a wonderful job in getting me out of there. I can't thank them enough."

...Team places second

changing ideas and techniques for search and rescue operations, the competition has evolved into a test of team skills in navigation, scramble and precision winning events.

The Alpha crew from Det. 4, 40th ARRWg, Ramstein AB, Germany, included: Captains Leonard and John C. Smith, TSgt. Leroy W. King and SSgt. William G. Wilson.

The Bravo crew from Det. 5, 40th ARRWg, Hahn AB, Germany, included: Maj. William D. McColl, Capt. John W. Christianson, and Staff Sergeants Robert T. Anderson and Carl M. Miller.

Ground crew members included Staff Sergeants Carlos L. Joiner and Donald C. Blair, and Sgt. Gary W. Wasmer.

The teams participating were: Royal Belgian Air Force; Royal Danish Navy and Air Force; French Navy; Federal German Navy and Air Force; Royal Netherlands Navy and Air Force; Italian Air Force; and Britain's Royal Air Force.

By John L. Frisbee, Contributing Editor

A Good Thought to Sleep On

The rescue of Roger Locker did more than set a couple of Vietnam War records.

ON May 8, 1972, President Nixon authorized the mining of Haiphong and other North Vietnam ports, together with regular and frequent air strikes north of the twentieth parallel. Operation Linebacker was on.

Two days later, the US Air Force launched 120 aircraft against targets in and around Hanoi. Oyster Flight, four F-4s from the 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron flying MiG-CAP, was led by Maj. Bob Lodge, an outstanding young combat leader. He and his backseater, Capt. Roger Locker, were veterans of the air war, both with previous tours in southeast Asia. Also in Oyster Flight were Capt. Richard S. "Steve" Ritchie and Chuck DeBellevue, who were to become the Air Force's only F-4 "ace" team with five victories.

As Oyster Flight neared the Red River at a point about seventy-five miles northwest of Hanoi, they were alerted to the approach of MiGs. In the ensuing battle, Lodge and Locker shot down a MiG-21 and were positioning themselves to fire on another when they were hammered by 30-mm shells from two MiG-19s. The F-4's hydraulic system was knocked out, making the aircraft uncontrollable. A fire in the rear of the fuselage forced Captain Locker to punch out while the plane was inverted. Major Lodge did not eject. Since no one in the vicinity saw parachutes, it was assumed that both men had perished.

Captain Locker had, in fact, landed in trees near a MiG base at Yen Bai, north of the Red River, shaken but uninjured. He could not retrieve his parachute, which was caught in the trees, or his survival pack. After a brief radio call, he sought to put distance between himself and the parachute, which inevitably would attract a search party. (His radio signal was received by friendly aircraft, but, since there was no voice transmission, the signal probably was thought to be

sent by a North Vietnamese using a captured radio.)

Within minutes, Captain Locker heard sounds of a search party. Taking cover in a brush pile, he took stock of his situation. It wasn't encouraging. He had the contents of his survival vest, including two pints of water and a couple of snacks. Rescue so deep in enemy territory—some 350 miles north of the DMZ—was unlikely.

His best chance of rescue was to cross the heavily cultivated Red River Valley, swim the river, and work his way to the sparsely inhabited mountains about ninety miles to the west. The river lay several miles away through forested, hilly terrain. He would travel only at first light and at dusk, living off the land.

The enemy's search resumed the next morning. At one point, searchers came within thirty feet of Captain Locker's hiding place. On the third day, there were no sounds of a search party, and Locker could move some-

what more freely, but living off land proved to be a greater problem than he had anticipated. It was early in the season for ripened fruits, or berries. He ate what he could find, gradually weakening as the days passed. Water was no problem. There were plenty of small streams. There were also plenty of mosquitoes and drenching rains as he inched along less than a mile a day.

Captain Locker frequently tried radio contact, with no success. Then on June 1, three weeks after he was shot down, as he was contemplating leaving the forest for a dicey venture into the valley, a flight of F-4s passed directly over him on their way home from a strike and, he hoped, with radio frequencies open.

Locker's call was picked up. Within hours, a small search-and-rescue (SAR) force was on its way from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. After A-1 Sandys were satisfied that they were talking to Locker, an HH-53 Super Jolly helicopter, flown by Capt. Dale Stovall, started in for the pickup, but the SAR force was driven off by missiles and MiGs. Maybe rescue was not possible so far north of the DMZ after all.

Seventh Air Force thought otherwise. On June 2, another SAR force, supported by fighters, bombers, Wild Weasels, tankers, and ECM aircraft, numbering more than 100 in all, fought its way in. Captain Stovall's HH-53 picked up Roger Locker and returned him to Ubon RTAFB.

It had been a record-setting show. Captain Locker had eluded capture in enemy territory for twenty-three days, setting a record for successful evasion in the Vietnam War. Capt. Stovall had twice flown his rescue helicopter further into North Vietnam than had been done before, earning him the Air Force Cross. All the principals emerged as heroes, but there's more to the story. Combat crews would be flying Linebacker strikes north of the Red River now knew that eluding capture in that inhospitable land and rescue from Hanoi's backyard were indeed possible. That was a good thought to sleep on.



Over his "Triple Nickel" cap, a haggard but happy Captain Locker dons that of the SAR unit that rescued him after twenty-three days in Hanoi's backyard.



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HQ SEVENTH AIR FORCE

June 23, 1972

CONTRIBUTIONS

U.S. \$4,378
\$VN 213,400 = 508
\$4,886

The fund drive continues through July 2. There is still time to join with thousands of your buddies in this worthy cause.

Locher rescued after 23 days north of Hanoi

A U.S. Air Force search and rescue task force ventured north of Hanoi early this month to recover an Air Force 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 was extremely weak—he lost 15 pounds during his ordeal—but otherwise in good condition. Rescue men acclaimed the captain's presence of mind throughout the evasion and rescue.

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, Locher had bagged his third MIG. He 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 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopters to make the actual pickup, A-1 Sandy propeller-driven fighters to locate the downed airman, suppress ground fire and lead in the helicopters, HC-130 King command aircraft which also refueled the helicopters on the long journey, and F-4 Phantom and F-105 Thunderchief jet fighters to protect the slower-moving aircraft.

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

Describing his downing, Locher said, "We immediately went out of control, flopping 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.

"I told the pilot, 'I think I'm going to have to get out. It's starting to burn pretty bad back here.'

"I yanked for what seemed like an eternity

on my primary ejection. The next thing I heard was a big blast. When I opened my eyes, I was in my parachute and just about then I could see the airplane hit the ground right below.

"I looked around and was going into a kind of deep-dished valley. I aimed for a steep mountainside and came down through the trees. My heels were on the ground so all I had to do was unbuckle and get out. I just sat down for a minute and listened."

During the next 23 days he subsisted on fruit, nuts and berries. He was very successful in locating water.

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"I did this yesterday and two flights came up to answer me. That was the first time I made radio contact." (Continued on page 8)

By SSgt. Tom Merchant



U.S. Air Force Photo by Sgt. Charlie R. Stutts

Captain Locher is greeted by Gen. John W. Vogt, commander of Seventh Air Force, after the weapons systems officer was rescued from North Vietnam. He was shot down May 10 and survived 23 days in North Vietnam before being rescued on June 2.

Spells Doom for Red

HQ. 7TH AF, TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam — The Air Force, Navy and Marines teamed up Aug. 12, and that combination was a little too much for a Mig-21.

Flying an Air Force F-4 from Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, Capt. Larry Richard of the Marines and Lt. Cdr. Michael Ettel of the Navy shot down a Communist jet 50 miles northwest of Hanoi.

The two are assigned with the

Air War Deadlier

WASHINGTON — The "Triple Nickle" squadron didn't celebrate much the day Steve Ritchie shot down his first Mig-21.

It was May 10 and fliers from Udorn shot down three of the Communist jets that day — but their best pilot and backseater had gone down in the jungle near Hanoi moments after shooting down their third Mig of the war.

For the next 23 days, one of those crewmembers, Capt. Roger Locher, hid in the jungle and heard the sounds of war, of bombing raids of missions by his fellow 555th TFS members.

He may have heard the sounds of battle on May 31, when Ritchie got his second Mig and when a navigator named Capt. Jeff Feinstein of the 13th TFS was in on his second kill.

That was the day Locher made contact and set up a huge rescue mission that finally plucked him from the jungle and returned him in triumph to Udorn. He had spent more time in North Vietnam without being captured than any Air Force man yet.

Not all have been as lucky as Locher. While AF Phantoms have been downing 28 Migs, the Mig-21s have taken their toll and shot down 18 F-4s. "We're spending a lot of time in pretty hotly defended country," an AF spokesman said.

There have been 22 more AF Phantoms lost over North Vietnam to anti-aircraft fire and other causes. Three crew members who were involved in shooting down Migs are listed as missing.

Mig Killers of the 432d Tactical Fighter Reconnaissance Wing under an Air Force-Navy-Marine exchange program.

When they got their Mig, the rest of the crews in their flight all were Air Force men. Joining in effort back at Udorn was the crew chief for the plane, AF Sgt. Alvin Stephens.

Richard said he and Ettel engaged two Migs and chased off the flight leader. "The Mig's wingman broke away and we broke after him. We fired a missile which guided and impacted just in front of his vertical fin," Richard said.

It was the 430th combat mis-

sion for the second SEA tour first Mig. Ette SEA tour and combat mission

"What impressive close flight it maintained the tire engagemer

"Everyone w should have b where my Air should be and there — and th

This was tl killing of the Marine pilot fl Force backsea Mig-17.

MIG KILL

THE AIR WAR in Vietnam has occurred in dis crews shot down 111 Migs. Then President John north and AF planes did not see Migs again. Th Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam. Since Febr war, 161 Migs have been downed, 109 by the Air F shot down by Air Force crews. Confusing the stat Marine-Air Force F-4 crew and the downing last Force plane, on a mission with an Air Force flight.

Following are details on the 28 Air Force-downer

DATE	CREW	NO. OF MIGS	TYPE SHOT DOWN
Feb. 21	(Pilot is MIA) Capt. Roger Locher	1	Mig-21
Mar. 1	(Pilot and WSO are MIA)	1	Mig-21
Mar. 30	Capt. Fred Olmsted Capt. Roger R. Volloy	1	Mig-21
Apr. 18	Maj. Dan Cherry Capt. Jeff Feinstein	1	Mig-21
	Capt. Fred Olmsted Capt. Stu Maz	2	Mig-21
	Capt. James Null Capt. Mike Vahue	1	Mig-21
May 8	(Pilot is MIA) Capt. Roger Locher	2	Mig-21
	Maj. Barton D. Crews Capt. Keith W. Jones	1	Mig-19
May 10	(Pilot is MIA) Capt. Roger Locher	3	Mig-21
	Capt. Richard S. Ritchie Capt. Charles D. DeBellevue	1	Mig-21
	Capt. John D. Markle Capt. Stephen D. Eaves	1	Mig-21
May 12	Lt. Col. Wayne T. Frye Lt. James P. Cooney	1	Mig-19
May 23	Capt. James M. Beatty 1st Lt. James M. Sumner	1	Mig-21
	Lt. Col. Lyle L. Beckers Capt. John F. Hume	1	Mig-19

SEPT 13 1970 P 17 VOL 33 # 6

By Edgar Ulsamer

SENIOR EDITOR, AIR FORCE MAGAZINE

THE AIR FORCE's bold and superbly efficient teams that rescue downed airmen have been working overtime since the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam in March of this year.

During the past four months, almost 200 "saves," many involving deep penetration into North Vietnam, have been made or directed by men of the 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (ARRGp), headquartered at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon. The total of all USAF combat rescues completed in Southeast Asia during the past seven years stands at about 2,600 at this writing.

The 3d ARRGp is responsible for overseeing all USAF rescue and recovery operations in Southeast Asia. Involved is a huge area

totaling some 1,100,000 square miles in four countries and the Gulf of Siam. (The US Navy handles rescue operations in the Gulf of Tonkin and along the shoreline of North Vietnam up to five miles inland.)

The 3d covers its vast territory with a staff of fewer than 700 people and a hardware inventory of about thirty aircraft. The unit operates fixed-wing HC-130P King mission coordinators, which also serve as aerial tankers, plus HH-53 and HH-3 air-refuelable, long-range helicopters. They are known as "Super Jolly Green Giants" and "Jolly Green Giants," respectively.

The 3d Group also operates a large number of short-range HH-43 "Pedro" local rescue helicopters from eight bases in Southeast Asia. The HC-130Ps are based at Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base in Thailand, and the long-

AIR RESCUE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



From a human as well as a political point of view, airpower in Southeast Asia has shown one vulnerability—the downed aviators who fall into the hands of a ruthless enemy who exploits them to serve his own objectives. But an ingenious, elaborate mechanism has been created which, operated by a special breed of dedicated, fearless airmen, keeps bringing survivors back to safety . . .

Right from Hanoi's Own Backyard

range choppers at Da Nang and Tan Son Nhut in South Vietnam, as well as at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai AFB.

The 3d Group also runs the Joint Rescue Coordination Center at Tan Son Nhut, code-named "Joker," and two subregional coordination centers located at Son Tra AB in South Vietnam and at Udorn Royal Thai AFB, Thailand. These centers plan and execute rescue operations in the areas under their jurisdiction and maintain command and control for each.

Air rescue operations also draw freely on personnel and planes of other USAF units, and the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. Some of these "outside" forces participate in almost all search and rescue operations (SAR), under USAF direction.

At the outset of a "routine" SAR, an HC-130P King has already been prepositioned and is "orbiting" in the vicinity of combat missions being flown at that time. The SAR starts with report of a bailout, an aircraft down, or a May Day distress call. When any of these events occurs, the mission coordinator aboard the HC-130P King tries for a bearing on the downed flyer or aircraft in distress, or, failing that, to establish the location through aircrews on the scene. Once the approximate location of a downed flyer is established, the coordinator directs the rescue force to the site.

During periods of heavy air combat activity, the rescue force is likely to be airborne, but if not, is quickly launched by the mission coordinator via the "Blue Chip" Tactical Air Control Center at Tan Son Nhut. In addition to the HC-130P mission coordinator, a SAR force usually consists of at least two A-1 Sandy aircraft, aided occasionally by a forward air controller (FAC) and two HH-53s. The Sandys go in first and attempt to establish positive identification. Actual voice contact with the survivor over his survival radio is "considered almost mandatory because there are simply too many beepers [personnel locator beacons] loose around the countryside," an Air Force rescue expert told *AIR FORCE Magazine*. In several instances, the enemy has used captured beepers to bait traps for the rescue force. While no USAF rescue aircraft have been lost to ground fire due to such tricks, present procedures "more or less dictate" that a survivor be unmistakably identified before the rescue copters go in.

To minimize the danger of detection by the enemy, downed flyers are instructed to use survival radios only intermittently and as sparingly as possible. Current long-term Air Force efforts to improve rescue operations through the application of advanced technology center on more efficient means of locating and identi-

fying survivors and providing them with some degree of mobility.

One innovative way of finding downed flyers quickly is being explored through ASAP (Advanced Survival Avionics Program), which uses a space satellite to establish the survivor's "gross," or approximate location on an essentially instantaneous basis. ASAP is premised on DME (distance measuring) techniques that evaluate the differences in the time it takes a signal from the survivor's radio to reach two points whose locations are known, *i.e.*, the satellite and the mission coordinator aircraft. From this information the system then calculates with reasonable accuracy the survivor's location. Once the SAR force has reached that general area, another system pinpoints the exact location.

Another promising approach to the rescue problem is through a program called Air Escape and Recovery Capability. Several schemes are under investigation and have proved feasible in tests. Common to all is the survivor's ability to be propelled for many miles, perhaps as many as a hundred, from the bailout area to either friendly or less-hostile sites. The bailing-out airman attains this mobility through either a parawing (a cross between a parachute and an aircraft wing) or a rotary wing, either of which works in concert with a rocket booster to furnish power (*for details on development of such a device, see "Jane's Supplement," p. 43*). The systems under investigation are folded when not used and fit into the ejection seat of an F-4 aircraft. They require no modification of the aircraft's cockpit. Yet a third approach, by which the survivor is provided with mobility once he is on the ground, is under preliminary investigation but can be expected to require many more years of research and test before it can become operational.

Major Outside Support

One of the two A-1 Sandys normally assumes command control over a rescue operation once a downed flyer is located and identified. If the Sandys draw enemy ground fire, they attempt to suppress it; when the enemy is too tough for the Sandys to overcome, they call in outside support supplied by Blue Chip—usually F-4s, Navy fighters, A-7s, A-37s, and Army gunships. It is not unusual for forty to fifty combat aircraft to participate in a difficult rescue operation. (In several instances, that number has swelled to more than a hundred to deal with especially intensive ground fire.) And, at times, the supporting force can include MIG CAP (combat air patrol) air-superiority fighters and F-105 "Iron

Hand" (electronic-countermeasure) aircraft to combat enemy fighter aircraft.

Rescue operations in South Vietnam also involve friendly ground forces from time to time. In certain instances, when enemy forces were

so close to the downed flyer that conventional munitions couldn't be used without endangering him, the rescue force has dropped conventional riot-control agents.

After enemy fire has been suppressed to a

THE SAGA OF ROGER LOCHER



Capt. Roger C. Locher was rescued from deep within North Vietnam after avoiding capture for twenty-three days.

By
SSgt.
Tom
Merchant,
USAF

A US Air Force search and rescue task force ventured north of Hanoi early this summer to recover an Air Force F-4 crew member who evaded the North Vietnamese for twenty-three days before he was rescued.

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The flight engineer, Sgt. James F. Walsh, lowered the jungle penetrator to Locher.

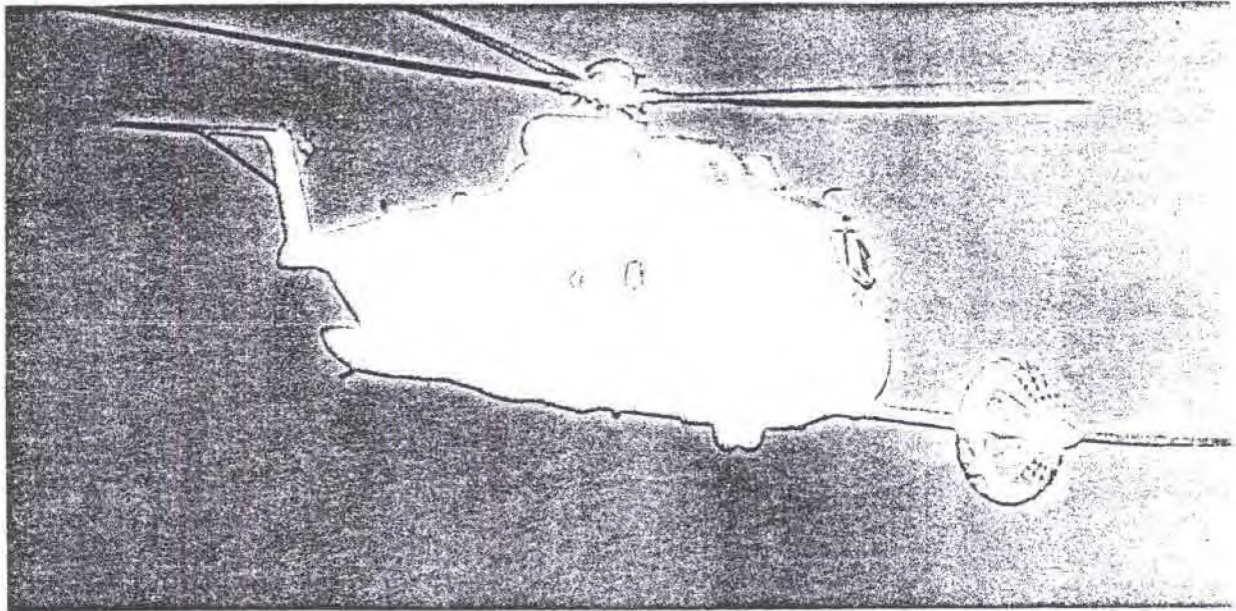
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To evade further ground fire, the helicopter lifted to the top of the mountain as the captain was being hoisted in. Locher was swung onboard, and the rescue force headed home.

The trip home was no downhill glide. Every village was a source of ground fire. Trucks and even a train opened fire on the task force, but the A-1 Sandys returned the fire to protect the helicopters, and in the process destroyed one locomotive, several railroad cars, and trucks.

The rescued weapon systems officer said, "Those Jolly Greens and Sandys are just great. They did a wonderful job in getting me out of there. I can't thank them enough."

AIR RESCUE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



High above the jungles of Vietnam, an HC-130 mission controller/tanker provides fuel to an HH-3 Jolly Green Giant of the 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group.

reasonable extent, or in cases where the Sandys detect no enemy threat, the HH-53 rescue copters are called in. These are relatively lightly armed, with three 7.62-mm Miniguns, so the A-1s stay handy to provide whatever further support may be needed. (Both the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong have grown familiar with SAR procedures and often stay hidden until the copters descend. Hovering copters, they have found, make easy, highly vulnerable targets.)

The two HH-53s of a standard SAR force work in tandem, with one acting as "low-bird" and the other "high-bird." This arrangement provides backup should the low-flying copter get shot down or otherwise be unable to perform the rescue.

Many rescue operations in SEA take place in dense jungle, with the downed flyer hidden from view by thick foliage of several layers. In this situation, a downed airman will "pop" a smoke marker carried in his survival kit to reveal his precise position.

The low-bird HH-53 then lowers its jungle penetrator, a heavy metallic device shaped like a big arrowhead with three paddle seats

folded into its sides. It is extended on a 250-foot steel cable by a hoist positioned much like an outrigger on the right side of the rescue chopper. Except when a pararescueman rides it down, the penetrator is closed, its weight forcing it through the dense jungle roof. A pararescueman, known as a PJ, descends whenever a downed flyer is injured or otherwise unable to strap himself onto the penetrator.

Nighttime Operations

At present, combat rescue operations are confined to daytime missions involving visual contact. But the 3d ARRGp has pioneered and field-tested techniques for limited night recovery, which are now operational on a limited basis. Known as the PAVE IMP Limited Night Recovery system, it uses a low-light-level TV, infrared sensors, and related equipment installed aboard the Super Jollys. The system, in effect, can see in the dark by augmenting and magnifying the traces of light present at night.

One unit of the 3d Group, the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, located

AIR RESCUE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

at Udorn Royal Thai AFB, currently is the only organization in the world believed to have a night rescue and recovery capability. The 40th Squadron evaluated the system during a ninety-day period while also conducting its normal work load of daytime rescues. The unit developed battle tactics and operational concepts and provided its own systems support for the specially equipped HH-53 copters used in the program. The USAF Chief of Staff had requested that the Military Airlift Command, in charge of all aerospace rescue and recovery units, develop such a system.

Senior officers of the 3d ARRGp point with pride at the extent to which advanced technology has been incorporated into air rescue operations. A problem fundamental to all combat rescue operations is "both obvious and very difficult to solve: We must know where the survivor is with absolute certainty and complete precision; until you know that you just don't dare put any ordnance in," a senior rescue expert told AIR FORCE Magazine.

One obvious way to ascertain the exact whereabouts of a survivor is to have an observer on the scene during bailout, and every effort is made to assign an escort to all aircraft in distress. The rescue coordination centers do this, of course, in cases where no wingman is present to shepherd an aircraft in trouble.

A New Rescue Aircraft?

Staff officers of the 3d ARRGp highly praise the performance of the A-1, the propeller-driven vintage aircraft used in close support. The A-1 Sandy is considered "the best airplane in the inventory for this job," because of its slow speed, high maneuverability, and ability to remain on station for long periods. In addition, it carries a large ordnance payload and can sustain extensive battle damage without impairment of performance.

Despite this high opinion of the A-1, air rescue experts in Southeast Asia believe that, once available, the Air Force's upcoming A-X, designed specifically for close air support, will bring important new muscle to future USAF rescue and recovery operations. The experts also say that the most pressing equipment need, in the light of recent Southeast Asian experience, is for "a small V/STOL [vertical/short takeoff] recovery vehicle capable of going in with a strike force." It should have enough self-protection to be able to function against heavy ground defenses, have a self-contained ECM capability, and be able to pinpoint the location of survivors.

Such a vehicle, rescue people in Vietnam believe, should be able to hover, as well as cruise at between 300 and 350 knots, and be capable of refueling during flight. The latter feature is meant to reduce vulnerability because such an aircraft would not be required to carry substantial quantities of fuel during combat operations.

A high-ranking planner at Headquarters USAF told AIR FORCE Magazine that plans for an advanced V/STOL rescue vehicle, a replacement for the canceled CARA project of the late 1960s, are currently in a preliminary stage and might be incorporated in the FY '74 budget. There is widespread recognition that the HH-53s are both too big and too slow for optimum rescue operations. Similar drawbacks afflict Army, Navy, and Marine Corps copters that participate from time to time in Southeast Asia rescue operations. (SARs operate flexibly, drawing on whatever sources happen to be available at the time.)

In addition to the some 2,600 combat rescues that the Air Force has performed or coordinated in Southeast Asia during the past seven years, about 1,200 noncombat saves were performed by the 3d Group, each of them representing a human life saved. (One frequent "customer" of the 3d Group is Air America, the air logistics operation supplying non-Communist forces in Cambodia from Saigon and other points by small transports under CIA contract. A spokesman of the 3d ARRGp said, "We arrange pickups for them on a routine basis whenever one of their aircraft is reported down.")

In testimony to the rescue effort throughout SEA, a recent award of another Presidential Unit Citation to the 3d ARRGp, already the most highly decorated unit in the Air Force, contained this statement by Gen. John W. Vogt, Commander of PACAF's Seventh Air Force:

"The personnel of the 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group performed their duties under extremely hazardous conditions and in a manner epitomizing the virtues of duty, honor, and allegiance to country. . . . The extraordinary dedication and heroic determination of the rescue crews, often hovering directly over enemy positions to snatch a pilot from the enemy, has become a legend in Southeast Asia."

Even a casual visit with the officers and men of the 3d ARRGp leads to one definite conclusion: They have made an unstinting commitment to their motto, "That Others May Live."

ASIA (SEA)

A Dramatic Rescue

On May 10, 1972 the F-4 carrying Capt. Roger C. Locher of the 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Udorn Royal Air Force Base, Thailand, was shot down by a heat-seeking missile launched from a MiG-21; Capt. Locher was on his 407th combat mission. He parachuted to safety near Yen Bai Airfield (northwest of Hanoi) but could not contact friendly aircraft with his survival radio. For the next 22 days he hid, living on fruits, nuts, and berries, until he was finally able to make radio contact with friendly aircraft.

A rescue attempt was launched on June 1 by HH-53 helicopters, A-1 attack airplanes, and an HC-130 command airplane, with F-4 and F-105 fighters providing air protection, but they were driven off by enemy MiGs. They were back the next day, deep inside North Vietnam, and an HH-53, using a newly-developed electronic location finder (ELF), pinpointed the downed airman through a canopy of jungle growth, lowered a jungle penetrator and lifted Capt. Locher to safety.

Related Museum Aircraft

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- [F-4C](#)
- [A-1E Skyraider](#)
- [F-105D](#)
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