

On 18 June the 37th ARRSd was notified that Spectre 11 an AC 130 was down in the vicinity of the Ashau Valley. Plans were made throughout the night for an early morning pickup of the three known survivors. At 0745 local time the Jollies scrambled for a pickup attempt. The first Survivor was difficult to locate due to the dense jungle. Once the penetrator was deployed into the survivor's estimated position he climbed on the penetrator and was on the penetrator for approximately one minute before he was hoisted up. He apparently did not shake the penetrator to let the flight engineer know he was on it. The other two survivors were picked up without any difficulty and Jolly Green 72 egressed the area.

CREW ROSTERS

Jolly Green 72

AC Capt. Don Sutton
 CP Capt. Todd Hohberger
 HM Sgt. Ronald Blackwell
 RS SSgt. Cole Panning
 RS A1C. Kenneth Cakebread

Jolly Green 64

AC Capt. Doug Bruner
 CP Capt. David Mullenix
 HM Sgt. Gregory Sealander
 RS Sgt. David Mueller
 RS A1C. Michael Aillet

On 20 June Sandy 7 was hit while participating in a SAR for a Navy F-8 pilot who was later recovered by Jolly Greens from the 40th ARRSd, NKP, Thailand. Sandy 7 was bedded down for the night and an attempt to pick him up the next morning was planned during the night. The morning of the 21st the ordinance was used by the SAR forces that they felt would secure the area for a pick up. Jolly Green 72 came into the pickup area for Sandy 7. The only problem encountered was in getting the penetrator through the

dense foliage. The survivor was hoisted up and Jolly Green 72 returned to Da Nang without further incidence.

CREW ROSTERS

Jolly Green 72

AC Major Christopher C. Korber
CP Capt. Gerald M. Tonn
HM Sgt. Jimmie R. Cherry
RS SSgt. Douglas E. Wilson
RS A1C. Michael A. Friedrich

Jolly Green 64

AC Capt. Gary A. Dake
CP 2Lt. Jerry D. Stout
HM A1C. Charles J. Rouhier
RS Sgt. David W. Young
RS Sgt. Charles B. McQuoid

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DOC 38'

S T A T E M E N T

20 June 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy 03 and 04 (Nickel 102 SAR/Sandy 07)

On 20 June 72, Sandy 03/04 were launched out of Ch 89 at 0620Z to escort Jolly Green 73/30 and Nail 27 and to proceed to the 280 degree for 40 NM of Ch 89. The objective was Nickel 102 a Navy F-8 pilot. Sandys on scene at the time we launched were Sandy 07/08 from Da Nang, and Sandy 01/02 from NKP. Jolly Green 73/30 and Nail 27 were about 30 minutes ahead of us when we launched, and we were to rendezvous with them and proceed to the SAR area. We were just crossing the trail north of Saravane when we heard Sandy 08 say that 07 had been hit and had extracted. The position passed was close enough to Nickel 102 that we proceeded direct to the area which at the time was 027 degrees/25 miles from our position. At about 0745Z we arrived on scene and rendezvoused with Jolly 73/30 and Nail 27. Sandy 08 and Sandy 01/02 had RTB'd to Ch 77 prior to our arriving on the scene. We recieved no positive position and were working with Nail 12 and conducted a search of the suspected area. Due to the adverse weather none of the previous Sandys had been able to determine a firm position of Sandy 07. Frequency 282.8 at this time was really loaded as was 243.0 because the Navy aircraft in the area were using those channels and were not aware that the primary objective had shifted to Sandy 07, and Nickel 102 had become the second priority. The radio chatter from the Navy on the main SAR freqs made communications with Sandy 07 next to impossable. It was later learned that Nickel 102 had only those two frequencies available. Sandy 03 and 04 were now trying to locate the position of Sandy 07, Sandy 04 was able to talk to 07 at certain times but it was later learned that S-03/04 were searching too far north. Nail 12 was also helping in the search. Sandy 04 had a good ADF so cuts were taken to locate his position. At about 0805Z Sandy 03 was experiencing engine problems and thought he might have to RTB to Ch 77. About 10 minutes later Sandy 04 sighted 07's chute and established good radio communications with him. Sandy 03 now took up a heading for Ch 77 due to engine problems. Sandy 04 stayed in the area of the survivor. Nail 59 was now the FAC on scene and he put in strikes in the valley and route structure nearby. Several small arms positions were located as close as 100 meters to the survivor and Sandy 04 concerned himself with silencing these to make the area secure for an attempted pick-up. Sandy 04 also fac'd in a flight of F-4s to strafe the gun pits. It was now becoming apparent to Sandy 04 that his fuel state was deteriorating and that he would soon have to RTB to Ch 77. At 0915Z Sandy 04 RTBed turning over on scene command to Nail 59 who was still working the area. About 20 minutes later, Sandy 09/10 from NKP arrived on scene, and Sandy 08 had returned with Sandy 03 from Da Nang to the SAR area. The Nail was working more fast mover strikes in the area and was drawing heavy 23/37 AAA fire from the Valley. The 4 Sandys held out of the area. The weather was getting worse and darkness was approaching, so it

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was decided that we would bed the survivors down for the night, and return first light. Sandy 09/10 RTBed to Ch 89 and Sandy 03/08 RTBed to Ch 77 as did Sandy 01/02 with the Helicopters.

William J Seitz

W. SEITZ, 1Lt, USAF
Sandy 03

Byron E Hukee

B. HUKKEE, 1Lt, USAF
Sandy 04

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STATEMENT

DOC 383

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20 June 1972

Sandy Statement SAR NICKEL 102/SANDY 07

On 20 June 1972, at 1000L (MCP time), Sandys 01/02 were notified of the downing of Nickel 102, a Navy F-8 pilot (own-30B). Nickel 102 was down North of Ashau valley, and Sandys 07/08 out of Da Nang were going to need escort help from the MCP Sandys. Sandy 01/02 launched at 1100L (MCP) with Mail 10 as navigational escort, and they headed direct to the area. Upon reaching the SAR area, Sandy 07 directed Sandy 01/02 to go to Hms and pick up the Jolly Greens. Sandy 07/08 were talking to the survivor at this time and were preparing for a pick up. Sandy 01/02 found the Jollys and herded them toward the holding point. Bad weather was a factor and a large thunderstorm was building just South of the survivor. Upon reaching the holding point, the Jollys and escort Sandys descended down to 1000 feet AGL and awaited the execution words. Meanwhile, Sandy 07/08 were briefing the survivor and at approximately 1300L the execution was given. Upon the first attempt at pick up, the Jolly Green began receiving ground fire just as it was going into the hover. The Jolly began to pull out immediately, as the flight engineer had been seriously wounded. Then Sandys 01/02 and 07/08 all put down ordnance on the spot the ground fire had come from. The first Jolly began climbing and going home. At this time the second Jolly stated that he was preparing to make an attempt. We executed just as before and again the Jolly took small arms fire, forcing him to pull out. It was thought that he had taken battle damage, but he actually hadn't. At this time Sandy 07/08 were bingo fuel, so they elected to follow the Jollys back to Da Nang. Sandy 01/02 stayed on scene and attempted to find the ground fire and silence it. Then as Sandy 07/08 were following the Jollys back to Da Nang, they had to divert around the thunderstorm. Suddenly Sandy 07 called out AAA fire and directed a break. Almost immediately after this he called that he had been hit and gave his position as 280/35/69. Very soon after this he said he had to get out, and he extracted immediately after the call. Sandy 01/02 headed out for the area as quickly as possible and soon found Sandy 08 who was searching for his lead. Sandy 08 witnessed the extraction and reported a good chute, however he hadn't been able to establish radio contact yet. The three Sandys continued to work with the two Jollys that were in the area. Soon Sandy 08 was forced to leave due to lack of fuel. At this time Sandy 03/04 could be heard on the radio. They were only 15 minutes from the area. They had two more Jolly Greens in tow with them. Next radio contact was established with Sandy 07, the survivor, but a pinpoint position could not be made. When the Jollys arrived with Sandy 03/04, Jolly 30 reported having an ELF (electronic location finder) lock-on on Sandy 07's radio, however we didn't commit the Jolly to a run in due to the high threat area. Sandy 01/02 were below bingo fuel by this time, so they had to RTB to Da Nang. On scene command was passed to Mail 18 and then on to Sandy 03. Sandy 01/02 RTB'd uneventfully, landing at 1500L for 4.0 hours of flying time (each). PAB

Sandy 01/02/08 launched for a second time at 1645L (MCP). Sandy 08 was directed by King to join up with Sandy 04 in the SAR area. Sandy 04 had lost his leader

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who had to RTB due to a rough running engine. Sandy 04 and 08 were to make up a flight. Sandy 01/02 were directed to find the NKP Jollys and hold at HUE with them. Sandy 01/02 did so and awaited further instructions. It was soon apparent that the afternoon's efforts were wasted as there seemed to be no control or organization to the rescue attempt.

Sandy 04 had RTB'd for fuel, while Sandy 08 was still searching in vain for him. Finally Sandy 09/10 arrived and took on scene command. Immediately Sandy's 01/02 were moved to a closer holding point. As the Sandy's and Jollys moved in, a 23 mm came up on them, but the air bursts were well short. Nightfall was rapidly becoming a factor. Sandys 01/02 attempted to follow a ridge-line and move into the SAR area in hope of a pick-up; however, they began taking ground fire. For the next 15 minutes, the Sandy's and Jolly's took continuous ground fire from at least 10 different positions, estimating 200 - 250 rounds of AAA. The fire varied from 23 mm up to radar controlled 57 mm. With darkness upon them, the Sandy's took the Jolly Greys back to the coast line and RTB'd them to Da Nang. Sandy 01/02 also RTB'd to Da Nang, landing at 1915 (NKP time) for a 2.5 flight. Sandy 1 had minor battle damage. A coordinated effort was planned for the next day.

James D. Cleverger

JAMES D. CLEVERGER, Captain, USAF
Sandy 01

Richard E. Brown
RICHARD E. BROWN III, 1/Lieutenant, USAF
Sandy 02

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20 JUN 72 (CONT'D)

0650Z	JB	JG 71 DECLARED EMERGENCY TO RECOVER HUE PHU BAI - LOST 1/2 T/R SERVO - IN CONTACT WITH DUST OFF 508 JG 64 & 21 ON WAY INTO AREA	085 090 090 090
0700Z	JB	SANDY 3 & 4 ETA AREA + 45	090
0710Z	JB	SANDY 7 & 8 GOING BACK IN AGAIN - BINGO FUEL - STILL GROUND FIRE IN AREA	0915 092
0725Z	JB	JG 21 PHASE "B" - TOOK HIT IN FUEL TANK - RTB	
0730Z	JB	SANDY 7 HIT AT 0722Z - BAILED OUT 265/30/69 JG 21 TO RECOVER AT CH. 69 JG 64 WILL RECOVER CH. 69 & STAND-BY JG 30 & 73 ARRIVE ON SCENE	092 093 094 094
0740Z	JB	VOICE WITH SANDY 7	100
0745Z	JB	KING 26 TO A/R JG 64 THEN REFUEL ??? (SHOULD BE JG 30 & 73 - NEED FUEL ASAP)	100 100
0747Z	JB	JG 62 FLITE A/R - GOING BACK TO SAR AREA WITH SANDY 11 & 12	
0748Z	JB	SANDY 3 & 4 ON SCENE - NAIL 12 WORKING POSITION - BINGO 1030Z	101
0800Z	JB	JG 64 & 21 ON GROUND CH. 69 / REFUEL - GOING TO HOLD GROUND ALERT CH. 69.	102
0825Z	JB	KING 27 ↑ ETA AREA 0830Z JG 56 & 62 HOLDING WEST OF FENCE	103 1035
0826Z	JB	SANDY 1 & 2 ↓ CH. 77	104
0829Z	JB	SANDY 11 & 12 ETD + 11 OF CH. 89	104
0835Z	JB	SANDY 11 & 12 OFF CH. 89	1045
0840Z	JB	SANDY 7 POSITION 275/35/69	105
0845Z	JB	KING 22 USE AS TANKER	
0858Z	JB	SANDY 3 - ENGINE DYING - RTB CH. 77	

20 JUN 72 (CONT'D)

0857Z JB KING 28 REFUELING JG 30
0905Z JB PAVENAIL S9 TO GET ACCURATE POSITION ON SURVIVORS
0906Z JB SANDY 3 STILL GOING TO CH. 77 - FOUND TROUBLE - ETC + 15
0908Z JB SANDY 9 & 10 ↑ CH. 69
0915Z JB SANDY 7 LOCATED - SANDY 4 O.S.C.
0920Z JB JG 62 FLITE ESCORTED BY SANDY 11 & 12 - 9 & 10 TO FOLLOW
0925Z JB 23MM REPORTED IN AREA OF SANDY 7 (2 ROUNDS)
0937Z JB KING 22 COMPLETE A/R ON JG 30
0940Z JB PHASE "B" ON SANDY 7
0945Z JB SANDY 1, 2 & 8 AIRBORNE (0955)
1000Z JB JG 21 ↑ CH. 69 FOR CH. 77
1005Z JB JG 21 ETA 1015 WITH PARTS FROM JG 71
1006Z JB TELL NICKLE 102 TO BED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT (POSSIBLE - NOT YET) +15 SANDY 1, 2 & 8 - +15 SANDY 9, 10, 11 & 12 +25 JG 62 & 57
1010Z JB KING 26 RTB - KING 27 NEW TANKER
NAIL 23 IN NICKLE 102 AREA
NAIL S9 & SANDY 4 IN SANDY 7 AREA
1025Z JB SANDY 4 RTB - SANDY 9 & 10 IN AREA
1030Z JB SANDY 8 IN AREA OF SAND 7 - BEAR FLITE OVERHEAD
1035Z JB KING 27 NOW IN CHARGE 102 - NAIL 23 O.S.C.
1040Z JB JG 62 & 57 ↘ CH. 77 REFUEL
1041Z JB JG 30 HOLDING FEET WET
1045Z JB JG 30 FLITE & SANDY 1 & 2 STILL HOLDING FEET WET
1050Z JB JG 30 FLITE MOVED FEET DRY
JG 57 & 62 ↓ CH. 77 - WILL REMAIN OVERNIGHT
JG 30 FLITE WILL RTB CH. 77 - REMAIN OVERNIGHT
SANDY 3, 9 & 10 RTB CH. 89

21 JUN 72

2320Z	GH	ITEM REPORT TO JACK
2325Z	GH	ALPHA'S SCRAMBLED - JACK
2340Z	GH	ALPHA'S TO SHUTDOWN - JACK - AREA NOT READY REQUESTING CBU 49
0015Z	GH	LAUNCH ALPHA'S AT 0030Z - JACK
0040Z 0045Z	GH	4 JOLLIES - JG 72, 64, 57 & 62 ↑ 40-003 (CONT'D) 4 SANDIES - SANDY 11, 12, 3 & 4 ↑
0105Z	GH	JG 57 & 62 PULL GROUND ALERT AT HUE PHU BAI - SANDY'S REQUEST
0106Z	GH	JACK SAYS <u>NO</u> - REMAIN AIRBORNE
0110Z	GH	KING 25 TANKER - A/R AT 0210Z
0115Z	GH	NAIL 68 & 18 ON SCENE. NAIL 68 RELIEVE 43 (RTB)
0117Z	GH	GARFISH 51 O.S.C.
0124Z	GH	SANDIES AT HP
0133Z	GH	JACK REQUEST RECCE BIRD MAKE PASS BEFORE RESCUE ATTEMPT
0146Z	GH	JOLLIES HOLDING FEET WET
0147Z	GH	SANDY 11 & 12 TRYING TO PINPOINT SURVIVOR - 10 TO 15 MIN BEFORE RESCUE ATTEMPT
0209Z	GH	SANDIES & JOLLIES THINK GOOD CHANCE OF GETTING SANDY 7.
0215Z	GH	JOLLIES GOING IN
0217Z	GH	SURVIVOR POPS SMOKE
0220Z	GH	PENETRATOR ON GROUND
0222Z	GH	SANDY 7 IN AIRCRAFT
0230Z	GH	JG 72 RTB - NO A/R
0237Z	GH	JG 57 & 62 HOLDING FEET WET
0240Z	GH	SANDIES HOLDING FEET WET
0249Z	GH	JOKER SAYS 72 & 64 HOLD FEET WET UNTIL OTHER SURVIVOR IS OUT

1451 RT JACK called Sandy 7 shot Down
 1520 RT called JACK TO HOLD 62+57 This side
 of the Fence - JACK approved
 1525 RT JACK called Question can we make "Y"
 Crew out of JG 30+73 - Answer Yes
 1530 RT JACK called Question can ~~we~~ ~~not~~ it's
 JG 62 "Y" Qualified - NO Except copilot
 also answered on JG 57 - NO
 1530 TN SGT NEALIS ON DUTY
 1745 TN PASSED DAAR+FORSTAT to JOKER / TRIED to GET DOWN
 TIMES AND PRYING TIME FOR THE JOLLIES BUT NO CAN
 DO
 2000 TN TALKED to TWO ABOUT SCH - HE SAID HOLD OFF till WE HAVE
 A GOOD SCH to PASS to HIM.
 2330 RT SGT POSITIVE ON DUTY
 2400 RT LOG CLOSED

21 JUNE 72

0001 RT LOG OPENED
 1005 RT ADV. TO OL LINE DOES NOT RING AT OUR END /
 0600 RT REC 2 SECREF MSG DIS 2002588+ 12007508+
 REC 2 CONF. MSG RTG 2003008+2003008 PLANCH
 IN 13C //
 0600 RT PASSED DIA TO TOKER.
 0730 RT Jensen ON DUTY
 0955 RT JACK - JG 72+64 RTB ch 77
 0957 RT JACK - JG 21+73 AOUT OF ch 77
 1010 RT JG 62+57 Proceed to Holding Point
 1017 RT JACK - JG 62 phase ALPHA
 1029 RT JACK - JG 62 phase Bravo
 1030 RT JACK JG 62 phase Charlie
 JACK. 0800Z ETD FOR JULY 30,
 62, 73, 57 TO RETURN FROM ch 77
 1220 JS JG 52+JG 531 ch 89 0520Z / TP // Jack

~~SECRET~~
STATEMENT

DOC 385

21 Jun 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy 11 and 12 (SAR Sandy 07/Nickel 102)

Sandy 11/12, Hukee and Brady with Sandy 03/04, Clavenger and Brown, launched out of Ch 77 at 0040Z. Jolly Green's 72/64/57/62 also launched at this time with Nail 59. Nail 43 was in the SAR area putting in ordnance around Sandy 07's position 272/32/69, since daybreak and on his request the SAR forces were launched from Ch 77 as planned. Sandy 11 contacted Nail 43 at about 0100Z and was informed that he had good radio contact with the survivor and had him on "C" frequency, 248.2. Sandy 11/12, 3/4 and Jolly Green 72/64 proceeded to the holding point at 280/40/69. Sandy 11/12 proceeded directly from the holding point to the survivor's position leaving Sandy 3/4 behind with Jolly Green 72 and 64. At 0130Z Sandy 11 and 12 were in the survivor's area and on scene command was passed to Sandy 11. He first showed Sandy 12 the survivor's position then the location of the ground fire which had been taken the previous day. Sandy 11/12 made several low passes in the survivor's area in an attempt to draw ground fire but could see none. The survivor also reported no ground fire observed or heard. One flight of Behar was put in on the positions from which ground fire had been taken the previous day. Sandy 11 marked these positions with WP rockets and Nail 43 put them in. Sandy 11 also put in some of his own CBU 25 /and 20mm in this area. Sandy 11 now brought Sandy 03/04 in to show them the survivor's exact position leaving Sandy 12 with the Jolly's. Shortly after Sandy 03/04 acknowledged that they had Sandy 07's position they returned to the holding point with the Jolly's, and Sandy 12 again returned to the survivor's position. as this was taking place Sandy 11 observed tracere, coming from the valley to the south west which were directed at his aircraft. Sandy 11 marked the approximate position and Nail 43 put in a flight of fast movers with Behar on it. While this air strike was going in, Sandy 11 briefed the survivor that a pickup attempt was imminent and that he should have his smokes ready. The SAR forces were now brought up on 248.2 and the pickup plan was briefed by Sandy 11. Just prior to execution of phase B it was determined that the low Jolly Green 72 was having UHF trouble so Sandy 11 decided to execute phase B on VHF, 133.3. Execute words were given and Jolly 72 began his run in across the ridge lines. Sandy 11 and 12 put down a smoke screen to screen the Jolly from the position from which the ground fire had come on the previous day. No ground fire was taken while the Jolly was in the hover, which was about 5 minutes. All 4 Sandys were laying down ordnance during the pickup. After Jolly 72 had Sandy 07 on board he was told to egress the area via the same route used for ingress. When the holding point was reached, Jolly 72 climbed to 11,000' and exited the area to the east. Time of the pickup was approximately 0240Z. On scene command was now turned over to Sandy 03. The decision to attempt a pickup on Nickel 102 was made by Sandy 03 and was based on several factors. The most important of which was the fact that Sandys 03/04/11/12 all had enough ordnance and fuel remaining to prepare the area for a pickup attempt. Sandys 11/

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12 escorted JG 72 with Sandy 07 on board and JG 64 to a safe feet wet drop off point east of Ch 69. Sandy 03 and 04 proceeded from the holding point used for Sandy 07 to Nickel 102's position and immediately began preparing the area around the survivor. Sandy 11 and 12 now initiated a rendezvous east of Ch 69 with JG 57/62. Nail 59 again provided navigational assistance in effecting the rendezvous and lead Sandy 11/12 and Jolly Green 57 and 62 back to the holding point of 280/40/69. Upon arrival at the holding point all forces were brought up 2828. Sandy 04 now briefed the Jollys and Sandys to proceed to a final holding point. About 3 kilometers west of Nickel 102 on a high ridge line. Nickel 102 was located in a small gully which was an off shoot of a large eastwest valley. The plan as briefed by Sandy 03 was to bring Jolly Green 57 in low down the valley on an easterly heading and then up the gully to the south. Just prior to execution, Sandy 03 brought Sandy 11 into the survivors position and instructed the survivor to flash his mirror on the second A-1 that he saw, Sandy 11 immediately saw the flash. Sandy 11 returned to the holding point and the forces were ready to execute. Five minutes prior to execution, Sandy 03 put in siggy, a flight of F-4's with smoke. An east west smoke screen was laid down masking Jolly Green 57 from gun positions which were active the previous day. The SAR forces were briefed on 282.8 and phase B began. Since the survivor used both his signal smokes the previous day, he was briefed to use a penguin flare when he saw the helicopter, on the run-in, Sandy 03 and 04 filled in gaps in the smoke screen and then joined Sandy 11/12 in the daisy chain around the hovering helicopter. The smoke screen proved to be very effective as no ground fire was observed from the positions of the previous day. With the survivor on board, Jolly Green 57 was instructed to egress the area on the reciprocal of his ingress heading which was a westerly heading. As Jolly Green 57 exited the area, all 4 Sandys put down ordnance in front of and beside him to discourage any one who may have wanted to shoot at a helicopter. Jolly Green 57 proceeded on the deck to 280/40/69 and then climbed to a safe exit altitude of 11,000 feet msc. The SAR forces then exited the area to the east. Enroute to Channel 77 Sandy 12 discovered hydraulic fluid leaking from his left wing and the loss of all hydraulic pressure followed shortly thereafter. An approach and arrestment was made by Sandy 12 with Sandy 11 and 3 and 4 making normal landings. Sandy 12 was the only member of the SAR force to sustain battle damage on this day. All 4 Sandys logged 3.7 on the mission.

Byron E. Hukee
B. HUKER, 1Lt, USAF
Sandy 12

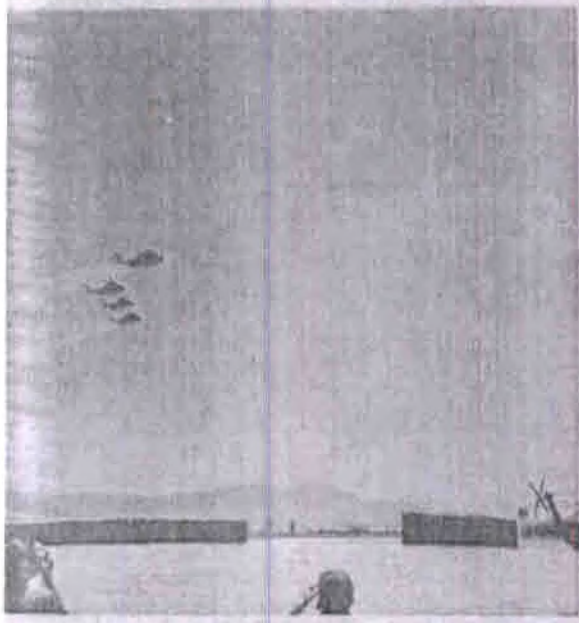
Timothy S. Brady
T. BRADY, 1Lt, USAF
Sandy 12

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				SURVIVOR NAME, RANK ORGAN. SSN.		
DATE	CREW	SG	SAVE #		SAVE LOCATION	TYPE SAVE
19 JUN 72	SUTTON	72	845	ROBERT V. REID, 2/LT	A. SHAU VALLEY	3 COMBAT
	HUNBERGER		THR	XXXXXXXXXX		SAVES
	BLACKWELL		847	16 SOS WIA		
	CHKEBREAD			CAPT. BOCHIER		
	PAINING			SERGEON WILLIAM L.		
				XXXXXXXXXX		
				16 SOS		
				PATTERSON,		
				WILLIAM R.		
				SSGT XXXXXXXXXX		
				16 SOS		
21 JUN	KORPER	72	848	HIGHILL, (CAPT)	East side of	1 COMBAT
	TUNN			XXXXXXXXXX LARRY G	A SHAU Valley	SAVE
	CHERRY			XXXXXXXXXX		
	WILSON			15 SOS		
	FRIEDRICH					

JUNE 1972

SANDY 07, WHILE FLYING LEAD SANDY ON A SAR INVOLVING A DOWNED F-8 PILOT, FOUND HIMSELF HANGING FROM THE END OF HIS CHUTE AFTER HIS AEROSPACE MACHINE WAS SHOT OUT FROM UNDER HIM. AFTER AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT THAT EVENING TO RECOVER HIM, THE SUPER JOLLIES OF THE 37th RETURNED THE NEXT MORNING TO SUCCESSFULLY RESCUE OUR CO TRADE IN ARMS. IT IS GOOD TO HAVE HIM BACK!!!



S
A
N
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Y
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7



Back home
and SAFE

LARRY HIGHFILL



SANDY 7. JPG

2021 JUN 22

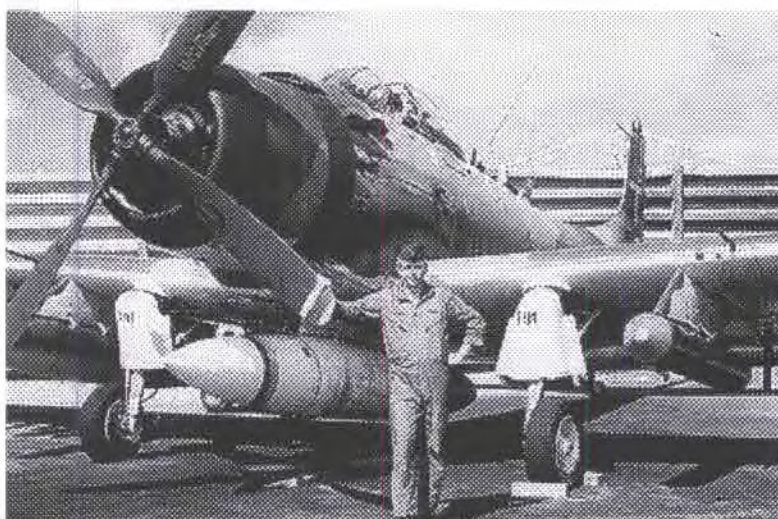
FLIGHT JOURNAL

Select a Page

EXPLORING
THE AVIATION
ADVENTURENICKEL 102
SANDY 7

21 JUN 22

...continued from previous page



The author poses with A-1H 139-791. This photo gives one an appreciation of the size of the Skyraider. The oil dripping on the 300-gallon centerline tank shows the pilot that this Spad is "alive" and ready to go.

We immediately called for Sandy 07 on the radio, but there was a great deal of confusion, since Nickel 102 was still up on the radio. Several flights of Navy aircraft were calling for Nickel 102 on "guard," blocking all attempts to communicate with either survivor. The standard rule for SAR was that you normally went after the guys who had been on the ground the shortest length of time. Nickel 102 would have to wait while attention shifted to Sandy 07.

Weather in the area was a bit of a problem because of towering cumulus clouds with tops above our maximum altitude capability of around 10,000 feet. It was a bit like flying through canyons of clouds as we weaved through them as if on an obstacle course from hell. Joe and I were not having much success raising Larry on the radio. At times, his voice was clear, and then it would just disappear. I suspected we weren't too close to his position, as he reported that he did not hear us at all.

BAIL OUT FROM A BLAZING SKYRAIDER

For Larry Highbill leaving the burning Skyraider was as easy as reaching for and grasping the extraction handle mounted on the seat between his legs and pulling it sharply. Barring malfunction, the Yankee Extraction System, designed by Stanley Aviation expressly for the Skyraider, was quite a simple affair. The extraction system was mounted on the seat between the pilot's legs and was operated by pulling a handle. But leaving a crippled Skyraider was not always so "automatic." The Yankee Extraction System was not installed in the Skyraider until 1968. By that time only the USAF was equipped with the Skyraider in Southeast Asia.

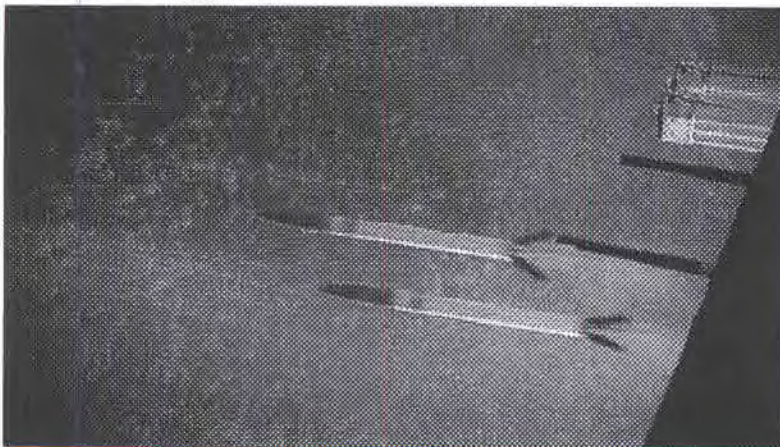
On October 19, 1965, Capt. Melvin C. Elliott of the 1st Air Commando Squadron was flying an A-1E at night while supporting the besieged Plei-Me Special Forces camp in South Vietnam. During one of his weapons delivery passes, Elliott was hit by enemy ground fire. Elliott writes:

As I pulled off the target, I noticed that things were quite bright. I looked at the left wing and it was

Then Sandy 03 started having problems with a rough-running engine. Joe decided to take it back to Da Nang, which was only about 35 n.m. to the southeast. He joined the Da Nang Sandys who were orbiting "feet wet" (over the water) east of the SAR area, and they escorted him to Da Nang without incident. We talked over the situation and decided that I would continue the search, even though darkness was approaching. I thought Sandy 07 might be on the east side of the valley, as we had been searching on the west side up until this point. It was when I had turned east through a hole in the weather across the north end of Ashau Valley that I encountered the AAA gun.

Capt. O'Dean "Stretch" Ballmes, an A-1 combat veteran and my A-1 instructor at Hurlburt Field, Florida, told me two things as I was preparing to leave the States for Southeast Asia: "There is nothing over there worth dying for; and never duel with a gun." The wisdom of the former was debatable at best, but the truth contained within the latter was without challenge. The success rate of pilots who tried to battle it out with AAA weapons was not good. But I felt that I had to acknowledge their presence with a greeting of my own—if only on one short pass.

As I broke off the rocket pass without waiting to see the impacts, I flicked the "bombs/rockets" switch to the bombs position and hit the bomb button again to dump the empty launchers into the jungle below. Once the frangible nose fairing was burst by the first rockets out of the pods, the flat "barn door" profile of the launchers served to slow the Skyraider even more, and that was not good.



ablaze. At this time I called my wingman and notified him that I was on fire. The wingman requested that I turn on my lights so he could see me. My thoughts at that point were, if he couldn't see me with the fire that was burning, he for sure wouldn't see the lights of the aircraft. At that point I planned to maneuver over the compound and bail out. Before getting into position over the compound, the flares went out and it was impossible to see the ground. I continued in the orbit at approximately 200 feet altitude awaiting the illumination of flares so I could see the ground. Before this happened, the controls of the aircraft failed and I notified all concerned that I was bailing out at that point.

As I was attempting to bail out of the aircraft, I became stuck against the rear part of the left canopy. My helmet was blown off immediately when I stuck my head out of the cockpit. At this point the aircraft was out of control and was rolling due to the fire burning through the left wing. After freeing myself from the aircraft, I reached for the D-Ring, which was not in the retainer pocket on the parachute harness. However, I found the cable and followed it to the ring and pulled it. The chute opened and, shortly after flares lit, I could see that I was going to land in the trees in the area.

If bailout could not occur by a certain altitude in a descending Skyraider the only options were a forced landing or ditching if over water. U.S. Navy Lt (j.g.) Tom Nelson had just such an experience. Following an engine failure



A pair of 2.75-inch folding fin aerial rockets (FFARs) leave the LAU-3 rocket pod that held 19 rockets. The red streaks are the burning exhaust particles of previous rockets.

On the other side of the valley, I turned south to resume the com search for Sandy 07. Once more, the traffic on the UHF guard channel (243.0) was so busy that it seemed I could not get a word in edgewise. I moved Larry over to "SAR Delta" 282.8 and immediately had much better success. As I headed south along the eastern shoulder of Ashau Valley, Sandy 07 reported that he could hear an aircraft approaching; then he reported that he had me in sight. I looked around to take note of the land features and held my southerly heading. The call of "You are over my position now" was music to my ears. He appeared to be just off the ridge that formed the eastern side of Ashau Valley, perhaps 200 feet below the ridge elevation. I reported to the other SAR forces that I had located Sandy 07's position and checked on the status of the Jolly Greens. We had about an hour of daylight left, and I wanted to know whether a pick-up attempt was even possible. The response was that the Jolly Greens wouldn't be available for a pickup attempt before dark. But first things first: I had to determine how close the bad guys were to Larry.

at night while flying an AD-5 Skyraider, he ordered his two crew members to bail out: one did so in a short time, but the other balked when faced with a bail out over water at night. Nelson relates:

I experienced one night-ditching at sea, after engine failure. I survived, though I landed in the water without seatbelt or shoulder harness, which I had removed in preparation to jump—only to give that up and hold a panicky crewman in the plane after we were too low to jump. I did this on the gauges while flying with my left hand. I hopped out, amazed to still be alive, only to observe my crewman struggling to get free of the sinking plane. I abandoned my life raft, swam to him and helped him get untangled. A destroyer found us and picked us up.

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EXPLORING
THE AVIATION
ADVENTURE...continued from previous page

I immediately tried to pinpoint Sandy 07's position. Unless I knew exactly where he was, I wouldn't be able to return fire if fired upon for fear of endangering the survivor. Since Larry had only intermittent visual contact with me because of the tall, dense, jungle canopy, I used a combination of visual and electronic search methods to refine his position. To complicate matters, Larry reported that I was taking ground fire on most low passes. The fire, he reported, seemed to be coming from above his position, to the east.

As I was pulling off this area following a low pass, I looked down behind me and saw a guy standing up in one of the craters and shooting at me with a rifle.

Larry pressed and held his mike button, which allowed me to home in on his radio signal. I maneuvered to put this bearing on the nose and flew straight until he reported that I was overhead. I was close to being absolutely sure of his position but wanted to remove any doubt. Just north of his position was a slide area that was devoid of any vegetation. I asked him if he could see this area; he replied that he could not. I told him to keep his head down while I put a few rounds of 20mm into the clear area. He heard the impact of the high-explosive 20mm rounds and reported that he was about 20 meters south of that spot.

I turned my attention to the ground fire. On one of my "trolling passes," I saw an area with several bomb craters that was just about 100 meters east of, i.e., above, Larry's position. As I was pulling off this area following a low pass, I looked down behind me and saw a guy standing up in one of the craters and shooting at me with a rifle. The bomb crater he was in

SKYRAIDER PRODUCTION

Designed by Ed Heinemann of the Douglas Aircraft Company in the mid-1940s, the Skyraider was produced in multiple variants in time to see action during the Korean conflict. There, it was the mainstay of the close air support as flown by both U.S. Marine Corps shore-based squadrons and carrier-based naval attack squadrons.

By the end of the Korean War in mid-1953, a large percentage of the production run of 3,140 Skyraiders had been completed. What remained to be delivered, however, were the F-13A-1H and F-13A-1J Skyraiders which were to form the backbone of the Navy attack capability through the latter part of the 1960s, when the last Skyraiders were retired from Naval service. The ten Navy attack squadrons

had a fallen tree across it that he was using for cover. I set up the switches and came around to attack with the SUU-11 minigun. As I neared firing position, the soldier again stood up and began firing. My 7.62mm minigun rounds completely covered the bomb crater, and I was not shot at again from that area. It rather reminded me of the cartoon that showed a mouse making an obscene gesture at a hawk, talons spread and descending for the kill, with the caption, "The last great act of defiance."

This was the one and only time during my entire tour of duty in Southeast Asia that I actually saw the human form of an enemy on the ground as he was shooting at me. It was a very sobering experience—an image that has stayed with me to this day.

An important part of the Sandy's role as SAR on-scene commander was to predict the need for additional munitions and fighter support and request the same from King—the HC-130 command-and-control aircraft that not only provided aerial refueling for the HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopters, but was also the link with command headquarters in Saigon. The Sandy's requests would be passed through this channel and eventually to the command posts of fighter bases throughout the theater.

Prior to leaving the area due to darkness, I briefed Larry on the plan to return the next morning and bring him home. There would be constant airborne forward air controller (FAC) coverage in the area all night, and Larry was told to report any and all signs of enemy activity to them.

As darkness fell, I left the area for the 20-minute flight to Da Nang, where I met with the other Sandy pilots and FACs familiar with the enemy's defenses in the area. We considered all options and decided on a plan that would enable us to attempt rescues of both Nickel 102 and Sandy 07 on the same mission. We scheduled a "first light" effort for the following morning.

Since I was the only Sandy pilot who had knowledge of Sandy 07's position and the threat surrounding him, I would lead the first portion of the mission. On completion of that phase of the SAR, the

equipped with these versions of the Skyraider during the Vietnam War years flew no fewer than 29 Yankee Station cruises in the Tonkin Gulf beginning in October of 1963 and ending in April of 1968, when VA-25 completed the last carrier deployment for a naval attack squadron equipped with A-1 Skyraiders.

The U.S. Air Force experience with the Skyraider began in mid-1962, when the Navy loaned two A-1E Skyraiders for evaluation purposes. As a result of this evaluation, an initial batch of 75 A-1E Skyraiders was sent to Vietnam as replacements for the B-26 and T-28 aircraft used by the 1st Air Commando Wing. Ultimately the USAF would equip themselves with more than 450 A-1 Skyraiders.



A-1J 142-028 on Sandy alert at Bien Hoa AB, SVN. That's not oil on the

lead of the mission would be handed over to Capt. James "Red" Clevenger, one of the Sandy pilots who had worked with Nickel 102 prior to the shooting down of Sandy 07.

Four A-1 skyraiders and two HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopters took off from Da Nang AB, South Vietnam, just as dawn was breaking over the South China Sea on 21 June 1972. Fifteen minutes later, we were turning inland just south of Hue, en route to Ashau Valley. We selected a location in high terrain that was relatively free of roads and left the Jolly Greens and Sandy 03 and 04 to provide protective escort. I proceeded into Sandy 07's area with my wingman, 1st Lt. Tim Brady, and made initial contact with the survivor, Sandy 07. He reported that all was quiet at the time, but that he was ready to get out of there. Tim and I made a few low passes to assess the threat and determined that it would be wise to sprinkle some cluster bomb units (CBUs) in the area where I had taken fire the previous day. With no enemy reaction detected, we decided the time was right to bring the other Sandys in so they could get a feel for the location of the survivor and the potential threat. Tim went out to get the other Sandys and lead them back to the survivor's position.

With still no perceptible enemy reaction in the immediate area of the survivor, I determined that the time was right to go for the pick-up. I orchestrated a "fast mover" air strike on the valley floor to divert the enemy's attention and led the Jolly Green toward the first survivor, Sandy 07, who was told to "pop his smoke." Tim scanned the area behind the Jolly Green for ground fire while the other two Sandys laid a smoke screen on either side of the helicopter to conceal the Jolly Green from the view of any remaining enemy gunners. Once the Jolly Green had Larry's smoke in sight, the four Sandys pulled up into a circular orbit called a "daisy chain" around the chopper. After what seemed like an eternity—but was actually less than five minutes—the Jolly Green reported that he had Larry on board and was ready to exit. I directed him to egress along the ingress route that had proven safe just minutes earlier. Once safely out of the immediate area, I gave the other Sandy

*ramp; a rain shower
had just passed over.*

The Air Force experience with the A-1 Skyraider was at first limited to the two-seat, side-by-side configuration of the A-1E. Beginning in 1967 as the A-1H and A-1J single-seat models were leaving the naval inventory, these newer Skyraiders found their way into four Air Force squadrons throughout Southeast Asia. During the peak years of 1969 and 1970, there were more than 100 Skyraiders equipping the 1st, 6th, 22nd and 602nd Special Operations Squadrons in Southeast Asia.

By the time I arrived at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB in October of 1971, there were but 28 Skyraiders left in the USAF arsenal in SEA. Through combat attrition, this number had been reduced to 19 by the time I left the squadron one year later.

Skyraider Website

element leader "on-scene command" while my wingman and I assumed the role of helicopter escort for the second pickup.

Nickel 102 had been monitoring the first portion of the SAR, so he was ready to assist in his own rescue. Red and his wingman, 1st Lt. Tex Brown, determined that the threat was minimal so they called for the chopper, just as I had only minutes earlier. Once the chopper was hovering, some light ground fire erupted to the east of the survivor's position. All four Sandys took turns hammering that area with 20mm and CBU-25, and I made my last two passes dry, since I had run out of all ordnance. This was a rather helpless feeling, but we were nearly finished with this double rescue. Nickel 102 was picked up and we exited the area toward the coastline of the South China Sea. Once feet wet, we allowed ourselves to relax, and I had the biggest ear-to-ear grin on my face. We had done it!

With both survivors safely on board the Jolly Greens, we escorted them back to Da Nang. There, we had a mini celebration on the ramp and were reunited with squadron mate and fellow Sandy Larry Highfill. We also met briefly with Lt. Cmdr. Jim Davis, the F-8 pilot who was Nickel 102, before both survivors were whisked away for medical examinations.

This mission occurred in June of 1972, about nine months into my one-year combat tour in A-1 Skyraiders. These were my 92nd and 93rd combat sorties in the Skyraider. I now had accumulated nearly 350 hours and was feeling very comfortable in the aircraft. By the time my one-year tour of duty was over, I had flown 140 combat missions in Southeast Asia and amassed 400 combat hours in the A-1.

I completed my tour with a mission on 1 October 1972 as flight lead of four Skyraiders on a Sandy SAR orbit in northern Laos. I took several photos on that mission, some of which appear with this article. At the time, I was obviously ready to head home to my family and have a taste of some peacetime flying. It did not take long to realize, however, that my one-year tour in Thailand while flying the A-1 Skyraider was an experience that I would look back on as the most bittersweet of my life.

Byron Hukee, aka SpadGuy, has used the electronic media to capture the spirit and convey the atmosphere of the A-1 Skyraider at war.

SpadGuy recounts all 140 of his combat missions on his "A-1 Skyraider Combat Journal" website.

He operates two websites that deal exclusively with the Spad. Both Skyraider websites can be found at www.skyraider.org.

orbited the area with flares during the night in case the Navy decided to make an earlier try.

The fliers were aboard their rafts for 28 hours and when time came to pluck them from the sea, visability was bad and winds were kicking up 15-20 foot waves. Typhoon Rita, packing 100 mph winds, roared by within 20 miles of the rescue area.

Both the Navy and Air Force planes were in the area and directed the submarines USS Barb and USS Gurnard to the scene. Crews of one of the subs spotted the men in the water and picked them up at about 6:30 a.m.

Copters Save Pair of Fliers

DA NANG AFLD, Vietnam — Air Force rescue forces thrust into heavily defended North Vietnamese territory June 21 to rescue two pilots one day after they had been downed by enemy ground fire.

Navy Commander Jimmy W. Davies, an F-8 pilot from the aircraft carrier USS Hancock, was shot down while on a strike mission 40 miles west of Hue.

During rescue attempts, AF Capt. Larry Highfill, an A-1 pilot, was downed by enemy ground fire.

On the first day three HH-53s were forced to return to base because of serious battle damage received during pickup attempts.

The next day Highfill was rescued by an HH-53 commanded by Maj. Christopher C. Korper of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

One hour later, Commander Davies was hoisted to safety by a 40th ARRS Supper Jolly Green Giant crew, commanded by Capt. Bennie O. Orrell.

17th for 432d TFRV

Udorn F.

HQ. 7th AF, TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam — Capt. Richard S. Ritchie of the 555th "Triple Nickle" TFS is one Mig away from being Air Force's first combat ace of the Vietnam war.

With weapons system operator Capt. Charles D. DeBelleue, the Udorn AB, Thailand, pilot downed two Mig-21s during a furious day of combat over North Vietnam July 8.

The same day, Capt. Richard F. Hardy and Capt. Paul T. Lewinski, whose 366th TFW just moved from Da Nang to Thailand, downed a Mig to bring AF's total for the day to three, for the year to 21 and for the war to 102.

It was the third day this year that AF pilots scored a "hat trick" on the Communists. Ritchie became the first pilot to shoot down four Mig-21s, the most advanced of the Russian-built fighters flying in Vietnam.

For DeBelleue, it was the third time he was in on a Mig kill all while flying with Ritchie. Ritchie was flying with Capt. Lawrence H. Pettit when he got his second Mig on May 31.

In the July 8 action, Ritchie and DeBelleue were flying cover for a strike mission into North Vietnam when DeBelleue saw Communist planes closing fast.

"There they are at 10 o'clock," he shouted. "Tally ho!" Ritchie responded, as he passed his F-4 head on by the two Communists planes "close enough to see red stars all over it."

The wing man passed and the crew turned hard left and gave chase to the second Mig. Two missiles were fired. The first of the heat-seeking weapons

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Combined efforts save pilots

A Navy F-4 aircraft piloted by Commander Jim Davis from the carrier Hancock was downed by ground fire northwest of Hue Tuesday. A rescue party arrived in the area and encountered intense ground fire causing an A-1 Sandy aircraft piloted by Capt. Larry Highfill to be downed.

The rescue was resumed Wednesday morning with a joint effort by HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopters from the 37th and 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons picking up both survivors. Both survivors were reported in good condition. Hostile fire in the area was silenced by A-1 Sanfys piloted by Capt. "Red" Clevenger, Lt. Byron Hukec, Lt. Tim Brady, and Lt. Richard Brown.

The crew of the 37th rescue helicopter was Maj. Kip Korper, aircraft commander; Capt. Gerald Tonn, co-pilot; Sgt. Jimmy Cherry, flight engineer; and Sgt. Doug Wilson and Alo Michael Fredrich, pararescuemen.

The crew on the 40th rescue chopper was Capt. Ben Orrell, aircraft commander; Capt. Andy Courtice, co-pilot; SSgt. Bill Lices, flight engineer; and TSgt. Charles Salome and Sgt. George Weber, pararescuemen.