

DECLASSIFIED

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66

(C) Of the six A-1 losses this quarter, only one resulted in the loss of the pilot. On 17 June, Hobo 42 crashed Northwest (WC7231) of Khong Sedone. On a firing pass, the aircraft was apparently hit by ground fire as the wingman saw a small explosion on the ^{left} ~~right~~ wing. Hobo 42 never pulled out of the pass and went straight in, exploding in a ball of fire. No radio transmissions or emergency beeper were heard. No parachute was observed. 1st SOS pilots stayed in the area till nightfall trying to raise Hobo 42 on radio, though they were almost certain that no objective existed. They returned to the area the next day with no results. Major Esequiel (Zeke) Encinas was declared KIA three days later. Major Encinas was to fly only two more missions before DEROSing. A friendly and jovial man, "Suppermex" (a moniker attached to him after a local tailor misspelled his desires on his name tag) was sorely missed in the Squadron.⁷¹

(S) All other A-1 losses occurred during SARs. Four were victims of the SA-7 "Strella" heatseeking missile. The bulk of 1st SOS activity for the quarter was SARs and these are covered in the Search and Rescue section of this chapter.

71. Msgs, Cmdrs 48 Hr Mishap Analysis Report, 19 Jun 72, (Doc 21), and Casualty Report, Initial MIA, 56CSGP to CSAF, 171220 Jun 72, (Doc 90).

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Classified by *William D. Broun*
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEME OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS
DEC 31 DECEMBER 1980

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 050/67/73 in a rugged area but bad weather prevented an immediate pick-up. After several hours and one refueling, the Sandys

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OTTSZYUW RUMOSRA3899 1691240-SSSS--RUCINAA.

ZNY SSSSS

O 171200Z JUN 72

FM OL-B 3ARRGP UDORN RTAFB THAILAND

TO RUEFHQA/CSAF/AFXOTZR

RUHHABA/URCC HAWAII

~~RUCINAA/HQ ARRS SCOTT AFB IL/COMMAND POST~~

INFO RUHHHQA/CINCPAC/CC

RUHHABA/CINCPACAF

ZEN/7/13AF UDORN RTAFB THAI/DOM

RUMHMA/41ARRWG HICKAM AFB HAWAII

RUEKAAA/FT RITCHIE MO/AFEOC

RUMTFJA/RANDOLPH AFB TX/USAFMPC/DFMCS

RUCMAA/HQ USAF ALTERNATE MAXWELL AFB AL

RUCINAA/MAC/DOCP

~~RUMHMA/HQV/COMMAND POST SAIGON RVN~~

RUMHMA/7AF TSN AB RVN/CC/DO/DOO/IN/DOCT

RUMHMA/3ARRGP TSN AB RVN/JRCC

RUMJAU/3636CCTWG FAIRCHILD AFB WA

RUHHKKA/13AF/INCO/CLARK AB PI

RUMOJNA/OL-A 3ARRGP SON TRA AB RVN

RUHHKKA/3614CCTS/JSS/CLARK AFB PI

RUMOREA/40ARRS NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB THAI

RUMOREA/3650N NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB THAILAND/DOO

PAGE 2 RUMOSRA3899 S E C R E T

RUMORKA/DET 4 3ARRGP KORAT RTAFB THAI

RUMOUVA/AIR VTN LAOS

BT

S E C R E T/JOPREP JIFFY/OL-B. 3ARRGP/RESCUE 116/170814Z JUN 72

1. RESCUE OPENING/PROGRESS REPORT-17 JUN 72

2. MISSION NUMBER-B-3-057 -17 JUN 72

3. SITUATION: DOWNED AIRCREW MEMBER

A. DESCRIPTION OF SAR OBJECTIVE:

(1) A-1E/857/CAMOUFLAGED/HOBO 42

(2) FLIGHT PLAN-TACTICAL

(3) PILOT-ENCINAS. ESEQUIEL M. MAJ 56 50

(4) POB-1

(5) WX IN AREA-TWO EIGHTS SCATTERED. 7 MILES VISIBILITY

(6) SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT-USAF STANDARD

(7) LAST KNOWN POSITION-1536N 10550E

B. ACTION TAKEN:

(1) CONTROLLING AGENCY-OL-B. 3ARRGP

(2) TIME NOTIFIED-170814Z BY KING-22

(3) FOLLOWING SAR FORCES ALTERED:

PAGE 3 RUMOSRA3899 S E C R E T

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By Authority of

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MESSAGE NOTIFICATION	
Individual	Contacted:
Local Time and Date:	

Classified by

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SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652

AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO

YEAR INTERVALS.

DECLASSIFIED ON 31 Dec 1980

Local Time and Date:

Reproduced by DASS

17 Jun 72

ARRS CP-215

MESSAGE NOTIFICATION	
Individual	Contacted: PH
Local Time and Date:	

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7/2

- (A) DET-4, 3 ARRP AT 170814Z
(B) 40 ARRS AT 170815Z
(C) 5650W AT 170815Z
(4) TIME SAR FORCES LAUNCHED:
(A) 1 HC-130P, DET-4, 3 ARRP DIVERTED AT 170814Z
(B) 2 A-1E, 5650W LAUNCHED AT 170825Z
(C) 2 HH-53, 40ARRS LAUNCHED AT 170845Z
(C) PERSONNEL INFORMATION:
(1) ONE PERSON INVOLVED, ONE MISSING
(D) FLYING ACTIVITY:
(1) DET-4, 3 ARRP ONE SORTIE FOR 3.6
(2) 40 ARRS TWO SORTIES FOR 5.6
(3) 5650W FIVE SORTIES FOR 11.4
(4) 388TFW FOUR SORTIES FOR 7.0
(5) 8TFW FOUR SORTIES FOR 5.9
(E) SAVES DATA: NO SAVE
(F) FUTURE PLANS
(1) PLANNED SEARCH AREA - 15NM RADIUS OF 1536N 10550E
(2) SAR FORCES AVAILABLE FOR SEARCH:
(A) ONE HC-130P DET-4, 3 ARRP
PAGE 4 RUMOSRA3899 S E C R E T
(B) FOUR A-1E, 5650W
(C) TWO HH-53, 40ARRS

(D) SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS:
KING-22 NOTIFIED DL-B THAT A HOB0-42 WAS DOWN AT POSITION 360/40/82. 2 SANDYS AND 2 JOLLY GREENS WERE LAUNCHED TO AID IN THE SEARCH. 3 RAVEN FACS WERE DIVERTED TO DIRECT STRIKES AGAINST A AAA SITE IN THE AREA. TWO FLIGHTS OF FAST MOVERS WERE USED AGAINST THE BUN IMPLACEMENT. HOB0-43, WING MAN OF HOB0-42, REPORTED A FIREBALL AND NO PARACHUTE OR BEEPER OR VOICE CONTACT. THE RAVEN FACS RTB'D 171045Z. SANDY AIRCRAFT REMAINED IN THE AREA UNTIL 171130Z BUT SAW NO SIGNS OF A SURVIVOR AROUND THE CRASH SITE. ALL SAR FORCES WERE RTB'D AT 171130Z. DUE TO APPROACHING DARKNESS AND NEGATIVE SIGHTINGS AIRCRAFT TRANSITING THE CRASH AREA HAVE BEEN ADVISED TO MAINTAIN A LISTENING WATCH.

(3) KING-22 ASSUMED AMC DUTIES AT 170814Z.
TWO ARRS WERE ACCOMPLISHED. NO AUXILIARY SAR EQUIPMENT USED
BP-4.
BT
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07157YUW RUMOREA2793 1701828-SSSS-RUCIMAA.
ZNY SSSSS
O 191718Z JUN 72
FM 40ARRS/RCC/NAKMON PHANOM RTAFB THAI
TO RUEFHQA/CSAF/AFXOTZB
RUHHARA/CINCPACAF/JRCC HONOLULU HI
RUCIMAA/HQ ARRS SCOTT AFB ILL/COMMAND POST
INFO RUHHARA/CINCPACAF/CC
RUHHARA/CINCPACAF/DOH
RUHHARA/DIARRWG HICKAM AFB HI
RUHHKKA/13AF CLARK AB PI/TNEO
RUMOKRA/7/13AF UDORN RTAFB THAI/DOH
RUEKAAA/ET RITCHIE MO/AFEOC
RUMTEJA/RANDOLPH AFB TX/USAFMPC/DPMCS
RUCVAAA/HQ USAF ALTERNATE MAXWELL AFB AL
RUCIMAA/MAC/DCCP
RUHSHVA/NACV/COMMAND CENTER/SAIGON
RUMMRA/7AF TSN AB RVN/CC/DO/DOO/IN/DOCT
RUMMRA/3ARRBP TSN AB RVN/JRCC
RUMJAM/363500TWS FAIRCHILD AFB WA
RUHHKKA/361400TS/JSS/CLARK AB PI
RUMORWA/DET-4 3ARRBP KORAT RTAFB THAI
RUMOUVA/AIRA VIENTIANE LAOS

54
01
11A
ARRS
ARRSCP
203
800
1/2

PAGE TWO RUMOREA2793 S E C R E T

S E C R E T/JOPREP JIFFY/40ARRS-RCC/RESCUE 001/181600Z JUN 72

1. RESCUE PROGRESS REPORT NUMBER ONE - THIS REPORT IS A
CONTINUATION OF R-3-057 17 JUN REF NSG OL-B 171200Z JUN 72

2. MISSION NUMBER 40-001 18 JUN 72

3. SITUATION: DOWNED AIR CREW MEMBER

4. PERSONNEL INFORMATION

(1) 1 PERSON INVOLVED: ONE MISSING

5. FLYING ACTIVITY

(1) DT-4 3ARRBP 2 SORTIES FOR 16.9 HOURS

E. SAVES 0/1 NO SAVES

F. FUTURE PLANS

(1) PLANNED SEARCH AREA - 15 NM RADIUS OF 1536N 10550E

(2) SAR FORCES AVAILABLE

(A) ONE KC-130, DT-4, 3ARRBP

(B) FOUR A-1J, 5650W

(C) TWO HH-50'S 40ARRS

G. SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS

(1) K-21 AND K-22 KEPT A LISTENING WATCH AS DID ALL
AIRCRAFT TRAVELING THE AREA WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS.

(2) K-21 ASSIGNED AND AT 172200Z JUN 72

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SCHEDULE 1, EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
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YEAR INTERVALS.
DECLASSIFIED ON 31 DEC 1980

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(Date) 28/1/95

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Inventory 54
17 Jun 74
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REMT 00982 172 132045
OTTSZYUW RUMOREA3097 1721232-SSSS--RUCPAAA.
ZNY SSSSS
O 201220Z JUN 72
FM 40ARRS-RCC NAKHON PHANOM RTAFN THAILAND
TO RUEFHQA/CSAF/AFXTZB
RUHHABA/CINCPACAF/JRCC HONOLULU HI
RUCPAAA/HQ ARRS SCOTT AFB IL/COMMAND POST
INFO RUHHHQA/CINCPAC/CC
RUHHABA/CINCPACAF/DOH
RUHHABA/41ARRWG HICKAM AFB HI
RUHHKKA/13AF CLARK AB PI/INEO
RUMOSRA/7/13AF UDORN RTAFB THAILAND
RUEKAAA/FT RITCHIE MD/AFEOC
RUMTFJA/RANDOLPH AFB TX/USF.DC/OPMCS
RUCYAAA/HQ USAF ALTERNATE MAXWELL AFB AL
RUCPAAA/HQ MAC/DOCP
RHMSMVA/COMUSMACV
RUMMRSA/7AF TSN AB RVN/CC/DO/DOO /IN/DOCT
RUMMRSA3ARR GP TSN AB RVN/JRCC
RUWJUA/363SCCTWG FAIRCHILD AFB WA
RUHHKKA/3614CCTS/JSS/CLARK AB PI
RUMORKA/DET-4 3ARRGP KORAT RTAFB THAILAND
RUHHKKA/1600 SPT GP CLARK AB PI

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By 102 (Date) 28/6/15

PAGE 2 RUMOREA3097 S E C R E T
RUMOLBA/IDASC DANANG AB RVN
RUMVBA/8TFW UBON RTAFB THAILAND
RUMUDA/432TRW UDORN RTAFB THAILAND
RUMORKA/388TFW KORAT RTAFB THAILAND
RUMOLBA/366TFW DANANG AB RVN
RUMFRBA/CTF 77
RUHGOSA/CTG 77.0
RUHOPZA/CTG 77.2
RUHGOBA/CTG 77.3
RUHGQEA/CTG 77.4
RUMFRJA/CTG 77.5

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BT
S E C R E T/JOPREP JIFFY/40ARRS-RCC/RESCUE 006 201200Z JUNE 72
1. RESCUE SUSPENDING REPORT
2. MISSION NUMBER : 40-001 18 JUNE 72
3. SITUATION: DOWNED AIRCREW MEMBER
C. PERSONNEL INFORMATION:
(1) 1 PERSON INVOLVED 1 MISSING
D. FLYING ACTIVITY:
(1) DET -4 3 ARRG 2 SORTIES FOR 15.3 HOURS

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IMMEDIATE

PAGE 3 RUMOREA3097 S E C R E T

E. SAVES DATA: NO SAVES

G. SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS:

(1) KING 21 AND KING 22 MAINTAINED A LISTENING WATCH FROM ORBIT AND ALL AIRCRAFT TRANSITING THE AREA WERE BRIEFED TO ATTEMPT CONTACT AND HAD NEGATIVE RESULTS. THE MISSION WAS SUSPENDED AT 201200Z JUN 72 WITH CONCURRANCE OF PARENT UNIT AND 7AF DUE TO LACK OF LEADS AND OR SIGHTINGS OF PARENT UNIT AND 7AF DUE TO LACK OF LEADS AND OR SIGHTINGS OF HOB0 42.

(2) TOTAL FLYING TIME FOR MISSION:

(A) DET-4 + 3ARRGP 7 SORTIES FOR 51.5 HOURS

(B) 40 ARRS 2 SORTIES FOR 5.6 HOURS

(C) 56 SOW 5 SORTIES FOR 11.4 HOURS

(D) 388TFW 4 SORTIES FOR 7 HOURS

(E) 8TFW 4 SORTIES FOR 5.9 HOURS

(3) KING 21 ASSUMED AMC AT 192230Z KING 22 ASSUMED AMC AT 200500Z

(4) NO AERIAL REFUELLINGS WERE ACCOMPLISHED

(5) NO AUXILIARY SAR EQUIPMENT WAS USED IN SUPPORT OF THIS MISSION

GP-4

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0 043597 OCT 72

FM 40ARRS/RCC/NKP RTAFB THAI

FO AIG 7940

RUMOUVA/AIRA VIETIANE LAOS

BY

SECRET / JOPREP JIFFY/40ARRS-RCC/RESCUE 202/040340Z OCT 72.

1. (U) RESCUE CLOSING REPORT.

2. (U) MISSION NUMBER: 40-001 18 JUN 72 (THIS MISSION OPENED AS MISSION B-3-057 17 JUN 72).

3. (S) SITUATION: REMAINS RECOVERED FROM HOBO 42 (A-1).

C. PERSONNEL INFORMATION:

(1) 1 PERSON INVOLVED. 1 LOCATED. 1 RECOVERED.
1 DECEASED.

(2) LOCATING AGENCY:

(A) HOBO 42 LOCATED BY UNKNOWN GROUND PARTY ON
3 OCT 72. COORDINATES UNKNOWN.

(3) RECOVERY AGENCY:

(A) HOBO 42 REMAINS RECOVERED BY UNKNOWN GROUND PARTY.

D. FLYING ACTIVITY THIS DATE: NONE

PAGE 2 RUMOREAD622 S E C R E T

E. SAVES DATA: NO SAVES.

G. SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS:

(1) ON 3 OCT 72 A GROUND PARTY SEARCHED THE WRECKAGE SITE OF HOBO 42 (A-1), RECOVERING REMAINS OF THE PILOT. ON 4 OCT 72 THE REMAINS WERE TAKEN TO UDORN RTAFB THAILAND BY AIR AMERICA WHERE THE REMAINS WERE POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS MAJ. ESEQUIEL M. ENCINAS 1S0S BY DOG TAG AND OTHER IDENTIFYING MATERIAL.

(2) TOTAL FLYING TIME FOR THIS MISSION FROM OPENING TO CLOSING:

(A) SEE RESCUE SUSPENDING REPORT 201220Z JUN 72.

(3) AREA SEARCHED: UNKNOWN.

(4) NO AMC ASSUMED AMC DUTIES.

(5) (A) NO AERIAL REFUELINGS WERE ACCOMPLISHED THIS DATE
IN SUPPORT OF MISSION.

(8) 2 AERIAL REFUELINGS WERE ACCOMPLISHED ON THIS MISSION FROM OPENING TO CLOSING.

(6)(A) NO AUXILIARY SAR EQUIPMENT WAS USED THIS DATE
IN SUPPORT OF MISSION.

(6) (B) NO AUXILIARY SAR EQUIPMENT WAS USED IN SUPPORT
PAGE 3 RUMOREAD622 S E C R E T
OF THIS MISSION FROM OPENING TO CLOSING.

2000

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MESSAGE NOTIFICATION

Individual
Continued:

IMMEDIATE

PT 00211

171-131123

OTTSZYUW RUMOREA2924 1711250-SSSS--RUCIMAA.

ZNY SSSSS

0 191200Z JUN 72

FM 40ARRS/RCC/NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB THAI
TO RUEFHQA/CSAF/AFXTZ
RUHHQA/CINCPACAF/JRCC/HONOLULU HI
RUCPAAA/HQ ARRS SCOTT AFB IL/COMAND POST
INFO RUHHQA/CINCPAC/CC
RUHHQA/CINCPACAF/DOH
RUHHQA/41ARRWG HICKAM AFB HI
RUHHKKA/13AF CLARK AFB PI/INEO
RUMOSRA/7/13AF UDRON RTAFB THAI/DOH
RUEKAAA/FT RITCHIE MO/AFEOC
RUWTFJA/RANDOLPH AFB TX/USAFMP/OPMCS
RUCMAAA/HQ USAF ALTERNATE MAXWELL AFB AL
RUCIMAA/MAC/DOCP
RUHSMVA/MACV/COMAND CENTER/SAIGON
RUHMRA/7AF TSN AB RVN/CC/DO/DOO/IN/DOCT
RUHMRA/3ARRGP TSN AB RVN/JRCC
RUWTAUA/3636CCTWG FATRCHILD AFB WA
RUHHKKA/3614CCTS/JSS/CLARK AFB PI
RUMORKA/DET 4 3ARRGP KORAT RTAFB THAI
RUMOUVA/AIRA VIENTIANE LAOS

PAGE 2 RUMOREA2924 SE C R E T
BT

S E C R E T / JOPREP JIFFY/40ARRS-RCC/RESCUE 004/191200Z JUNE 72

1. RESCUE PROGRESS REPORT NUMBER TWO - CONTINUATION OF R-3-057

17 JUN 72 REF MSG DL-B 171200Z JUN 72

2. MISSION NUMBER 40-001 18 JUNE 72

3. SITUATION: DOWNED AIRCREW MEMBER

C. PERSONNEL INFORMATION:

1) 1 PERSON INVOLVED, 1 MISSING

D. FLYING ACTIVITY:

1) DET-4 3ARRGP 2 SORTIES FOR 15.3 HOURS

E. SAVES DATA: NO SAVES

F. FUTURE PLANS:

1) PLANNED SEARCH AREA 15 NM RADIUS OF 1536N 10550E

2) SAR FORCES AVAILABLE

A) ONE HC-130P, DET-4, 3ARRGP

B. SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS

1) KING 21 HAD KING 22 MAINTAINED A LISTENING WATCH FROM THEIR NORMAL ORBIT AND ALL AIRCRAFT TRANSITING THE AREA MAINTAINED A LISTENING WATCH FOR ANY POSSIBLE CONTACT WITH SURVIVOR AND HAD NEGATIVE RESULTS.

IMMEDIATE

Classified by 4447
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED ON 23 DEC 1980
CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
Or Changed to CONFIDENTIAL
By Authority of AAS
By (Date) 23/2/78

CONFIDENTIAL

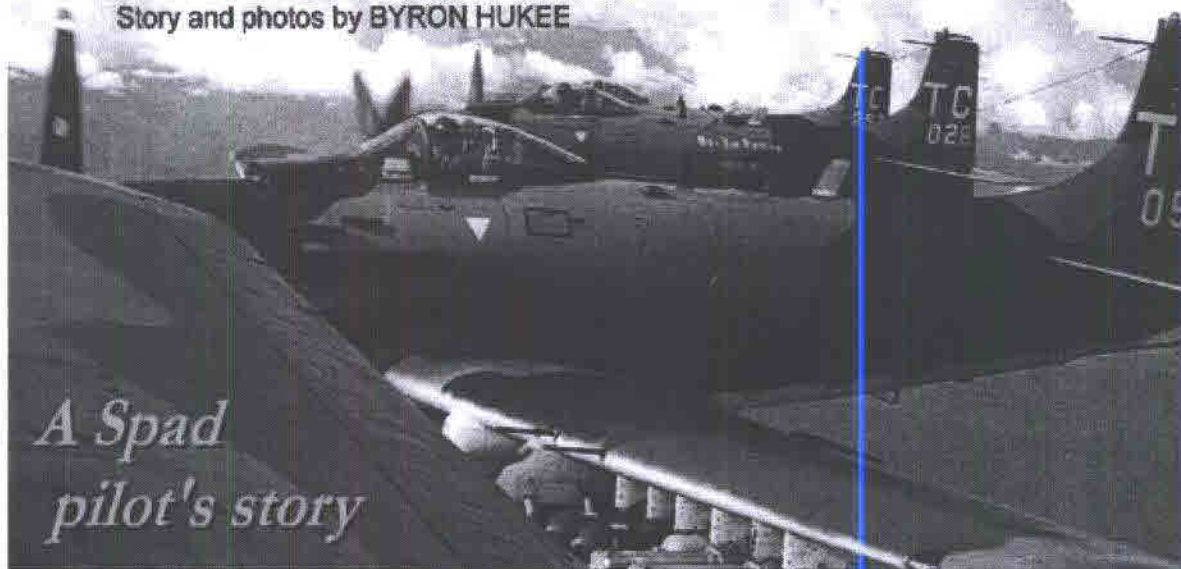
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FLIGHT JOURNAL

Rare aircraft, extraordinary
people
and remarkable stories

"Down There Amongst Them"

Story and photos by BYRON HUKKEE



The above photo was taken on 1 October 1972, on my 140th and final combat mission in the Skyraider. Front front to back: Capt. Buck Buchanan in A-1J 142-058; 1st Lt. Tex Brown in A-1J 142-028 and Capt. Willy P. Kramer in A-1H 135-257. It was also the final Spad flight for Buchanan and Brown.



[Return to articles home page](#)

The red-orange tracers arced lazily up from the right to a point not too far in front of me. I wasn't sure whether their apparent lack of speed was the survival fright reaction that makes time stand still, or the angle from which I viewed them. I could tell that they would not find me, and the gunner who fired them was not the first to be fooled by the slow speed of the Skyraider. But I also knew that those rounds were meant for me, as I was the only Skyraider in this piece of South Vietnamese sky, west of Da Nang. I glanced down to the right in time to see more rounds leaving the

THE DAY WE LOST "ZEKE"

DATE: 17 June 1972

SORTIE #: 41

SORTIE LENGTH: 5.6

COMBAT TIME: 270.6

AIRCRAFT: A-1E-3 135-215

My journal entry for 17 June 1972: *Hobo 43 wingie. Doz for a downed CH-53 north of Khong Sedone with Zeke as lead [This was not a SAR situation, as the crew had previously been recovered.] We replaced other Hobos*

the final part of the turn, I turned on the master arm switch and armed up the SUU-11 minigun that I would use as an aid to aim the rockets. I briefly tracked the pipper up to the target then eased forward on the stick. The 7.62mm rounds buzzed out of the minigun at the rate of 4,000 rounds per minute, or nearly seven rounds per second. After a short, two- to three-second burst, I moved my right thumb from the upper button to the lower button and held it down. In less than two seconds, all 38 rockets were on their way to the AAA site. I wondered if "time was standing still" for the AAA gun crew.

The date was 20 June 1972 and, as Sandy 04, I had launched from Nahkon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base (RTAFB) about an hour and a half earlier. My flight lead, Joe Seitz, was also a first lieutenant in the 1st Special Operations Squadron, the last operational A-1 Skyraider squadron in Southeast Asia. We were flying under his call sign of Sandy 03. Earlier in the day, a Navy F-8 pilot off the carrier USS Hancock, call sign Nickel 102, was downed in the north end of Ashau Valley. Other Sandys were working the Nickel 102 search and rescue (SAR), and there was no telling whether or not Joe and I would be needed. We were also escorting to the scene a pair of HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopters from the 40th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

Throughout the war in Southeast Asia, the A-1 Skyraider had performed admirably in various roles related to close air support. The aircraft was a perfect match for that mission in that threatening environment. It carried tons of ordnance and external fuel on 15 external stations and was equipped with four internal 20mm cannons. It could take hits and keep on fighting, or at least get the pilot away from the target area to where he could be rescued. The A-1 was equipped with enough radios to

make it home. I met the Sandys on my way home and told them there was no survivor. I was met in the de-arm area and was taken to the TUOC. I concluded that Zeke must have been hit in the cockpit and incapacitated. Airbursts would have been hidden above the clouds.

Obviously, this mission stands out in my mind today as much as any of those I flew 26 years ago. Sometimes I can't remember where I put my glasses five minutes ago, but this mission is as clear as if it happened yesterday. The first part of the mission was simply orbiting over the downed CH-53 and waiting, waiting, waiting. After what seemed like hours (because it was!), we were released to contact a Raven FAC as the next Hobos checked in on freq. We were about three and a half hours into the mission at this time. The FAC said he had a target near Khong Sedone. I had worked this area the day before. Zeke contacted the FAC, and he gave us the standard target brief to include the possibility of up to

March 1964, and the last was U.S. Air Force Maj. Esequiel "Zeke" M. Encinas on 17 June 1972. I was Zeke's wingman for the mission on which he died (see sidebar, "The Day we lost 'Zeke'").

The A-1 Skyraider was very much a throwback to former times. Its conventional gear, radial-engine configuration reminded many of the way aviation used to be—hence the moniker "Spad." But the Skyraider was not old technology. Even in 1971 when I began flying the Skyraider, the airframes were not yet 20 years old, and the newest A-1Js, sent to the Air Force via the Navy, were but 15 years old.

As we neared the SAR area, we were monitoring the SAR communications on UHF and heard that the SAR force for Nickel 102 was withdrawing to Da Nang due to deteriorating weather. Suddenly, we heard excited voices saying that someone had been hit and was on fire. I quickly recognized the guys in trouble as Larry Highfill and Tim Brady, the Sandys who were working the Nickel 102 SAR. Sandy 07 had been hit by ground fire and was desperately trying to keep the aircraft under control and get out of the area. I heard Larry report that the fire was getting hotter and that he was leaving the aircraft.

After a short silence, I heard Sandy 08, Larry's wingman, calling "Mayday, mayday; Sandy 07 is down!" Now Sandy 07 was also down in Ashau Valley. Since we were but 20 minutes from the scene, we proceeded directly to the SAR location, which meant a more risky Ho Chi Minh trail crossing point. But the weather was on our side and would provide some cover for our crossing. We "towed" the Jolly Greens to the other side of the trail then handed them off to another pair of Sandys.

was definitely no extraction. I immediately thought a hundred things at once—none of them particularly logical. I wanted the FAC to tell me where the gun was so I could roll in on it and kill it. The FAC saw no gun; only the result of its work. After about two minutes, I realized fully what had just occurred and began to act more rationally. I called the other Hobos and waited until they arrived on the scene. I briefed them on the situation and turned for Ubon. I passed on my black assessment of the possibility of Zeke's surviving the crash; I was that sure. We didn't need any more A-1s downed while making low passes over a crash site that was not survivable. I had never in my life felt such a sheer and utter sense of despair. Mostly, I felt a great deal of helplessness. It was not easy to concentrate on flying the plane during these moments. I realized there was no need to land at Ubon, as I had enough fuel to make it back to NKP. The 45 minutes it took to get back seemed an eternity. I met the Sandys en route to the

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Robert LaPointe

From: "Vincent Matthew R 2dLt 21 LSS/LGT" <Matthew.Vincent@PETERSON.af.mil>
To: <rlapointe@gci.net>
Sent: Friday, August 10, 2001 11:01 AM
Subject: SEA KIA/MIA additions

To add to your list of those KIA and MIA during SAR ops in SEA, you can add my father, Capt Halton R. "Ramsey" Vincent (if you list him, list him as H. Ramsey, as people only really knew him by his middle name), and the man with whom he went down, 1Lt George W. Kamenicky. They were in the 1st SOS at Nakhon Phanom (NKP). They died flying over the Plain des Jarres in Laos on 30 September, 1970 in an A-1E Skyraider. I don't know their call sign (I'd thought it was Hobo 42, but you have Maj Encinas listed as that, and I'm not sure enough to argue). I don't know the number of their panel on the wall, nor do I know the line numbers (they are close together), but they are both on the second panel to the left of center about 80" from the ground. I assume that you can find the right panel and line numbers with just their names, but this gives a rough idea of the location. Kamenicky was the PIC that day, as it was my father's first mission and he was just going as a ride-along to qualify for combat pay for September. I suppose you could list him then as copilot. There was also a man named James Herrick that I know of who went down I believe in an A-1, but I don't know his info off hand (perhaps you could research that). Zeke Encinas would also have been 1st SOS, and as a footnote was the very last American to die in a Skyraider in SEA. Thank you for your efforts.

Matthew R. Vincent, 2nd Lt, USAF
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JUNE 17 72

Hobo 43 wingie [with Maj Zeke Encinas leading as Hobo 42]. Doz for a downed CH-53 north of Knong Sedone with Zeke as lead... [this was not a SAR situation as the crew had previously been recovered] We replaced other Hobos who were working the area prior to our arrival... We orbited over the [CH-53] crash site while a team landed to check the feasibility of lifting it out... We worked the Doz about 2 hours. Our plan was to get a quick strike, recover at Ubon to refuel and RTB. Weather in the target area was about 6500 broken. We worked a target east of the river near Khong Sedone. We did not observe any ground fire and were working from about a 6,000 ft. roll in altitude. On Zeke's second rocket pass, he got hit as he was firing his rockets. I saw the heavy smoke trailing from his aircraft. He said nothing. The FAC said, "Are you all right?" The only thing I could say was, "Are you all right, pull out." He went in with the plane. There was a large fireball. I went back to the Doz frequency and told the other Hobos what had happened. Jim Harding was leading that flight and he came down about 15 klicks to the south to run any possible SAR. I had to RTB because of fuel and started heading for Ubon, but saw that I had enough [gas] to make it home [to NKP]. I met the Sandys on my way home and told them there was no survivor. I was met in the dearm area and was taken to the TUOC. I concluded that Zeke must have been hit in the cockpit and incapacitated. Airbursts would have been hidden above the clouds.