

Cosmic 16B

On this day in ARS History, PJs Charles D. McGrath and Charles D. Morrow were awarded the Silver Star for a CSAR mission in North Vietnam. Their award narratives read:



Sergeant Charles D. McGrath distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia from 26 April 1972 to 27 April 1972. During this period, Sergeant McGrath, a Pararescue recovery specialist on an HH-53C Super Jolly Green Rescue Helicopter, penetrated deep into an extremely hostile and heavily defended area to effect the rescue of a downed American airman. His professional skill in providing the accurate and effective ground suppression fire required throughout the mission and his willingness, at great risk to his own life, to expose himself to hostile ground forces from his open mini gun position, was instrumental in the successful completion of this most hazardous mission. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Sergeant McGrath has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



Staff Sergeant Charles D. Morrow distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia from 26 April 1972 to 27 April 1972. During that period, Sergeant Morrow, a Pararescue recovery specialist on an HH-53C Super Jolly Green Rescue Helicopter, penetrated deep into an extremely hostile and heavily defended area to effect the rescue of a downed American airman. His professional skill in providing the effective ground suppression fire required throughout the mission and his willingness, at great risk to his own life, to expose himself to hostile ground forces from his open mini gun position, was instrumental in the successful completion of this most hazardous mission. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Sergeant Morrow has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

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May 12, 1972

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Recce navigator rescued after 7 days in North Vietnam



U.S. Air Force Photo

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ill smiles and safe

TAN SON NHUT AB - Two U.S. Air Force HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopters and four A-1 Sandys slipped across the mountains into the heart of North Vietnam on April 27 and snatched 1st Lt. Ernest S. Clark to safety.

Clark from Mount Airy, N.C., was the "back-seater" in an Air Force RF-4 Phantom reconnaissance aircraft that was shot down by a SAM missile on April 20 northwest of Dong Hoi. His pilot is listed as missing.

The navigator stated that the "plane was coming apart all around me," after the SAM struck. He bailed out and for the next seven days evaded enemy capture in rough mountain terrain. On one occasion he saw a North Vietnamese patrol party "within 12 feet of me."

Search and rescue aircraft of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron were unable to locate Clark or make radio contact for two days after his bail-out. On the third day, aircraft monitoring the area made radio contact and rescue planning began.

His most difficult day was April 23 when he ran out of water and began moving. He fell off a cliff, breaking his survival pistol, but finally made his way to "the highest hill in the area."

The first rescue attempt was made on April 26 but heavy rains prevented the pick-up. On the afternoon of April 27, with A-1 Sandys providing air cover, the rescue team brought off the epic recovery, moving into enemy territory, evading "at least three SAMs" and successfully recovering Clark.

Capt. Dennis M. Borocsk was pilot of the "low chopper," which went in to make the rescue. The downed RF-4 navigator was completely hidden by thick jungle in the rugged terrain below.

At first Borocsk flew his Jolly Green past Clark's position and then backed up his rescue aircraft, using radio directions from the downed navigator. Finally, with the help of his flight engineer, Sgt. Dennis C. Chriswell, the chopper pilot maneuvered the big Jolly Green Giant into position.

The jungle penetrator was lowered more than 150 feet into the thick foliage below. Clark strapped himself on the penetrator and was hoisted through the jungle canopy to the Jolly Green.

He suffered no serious injuries during the ordeal but was quite weak when the rescue forces finally recovered him.

The Super Jolly Green Giants received heavy ground fire as they raced home over the North Vietnamese countryside but none of the Jollys took hits.

The two pararescue specialists (PJs), Sgt. Charles D. McGrath and SSgt. Charles D. Morrow, fed the tired and hungry lieutenant tuna fish and other snacks as the rescue forces headed home.

A letter from the downed pilots parents to Sergeant Morrow

E. T. CLARK
1118 N MAIN STREET
MOUNT AIRY, N.C.
27036

18.

Pf Sarge
40th AG
APL &
Ca

Dear Sargent Morrow,
I have been trying to find words to express our appreciation for the job you do, and the willingness to take the risks you must take to do it. Thank you from all of us, and we'll never forget the wonderful wave of thankfulness that swept over us when we knew our son had been rescued. My first feeling was "Thank God" and the second was "Bless all those wonderful men who got him out." Thank you.

Sincerely,
Ed and Heath Clark