

(Editor's Note: While the events in this story took place in November 1976, the efforts of the crew involved makes it a noteworthy item.)

By SSgt. W. Ray Huesman

With no possible escape route, no margin for error and hovering 10 feet from a ice cliff to the left and front, a rescue crew from Detachment 14, 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing, Keflavik, NI, Iceland, rescued three severely injured Icelanders from a glacial ice ravine.

The helicopter crew of Capt. Steven B. Black, pilot; Maj. Douglas A. Johnson, copilot; Lieutenant Commander (Dr.) Charles F. Tate, U.S. Navy flight surgeon; Sgt. William R. Graves, flight mechanic; SrA Edward J. King, pararescueman; ALC Andrew K. Moser, pararescueman; and ALC Mark W. Zitzow, pararescueman completed the mountain glacier rescue.

After preparation and a rapid planning, Jolly 38 took off. An HC-130 Hercules, King 88, commanded by Capt. Ted Schindler, took off to find the location, vector the helicopter, provide long range communications, and, if necessary aerial refueling.

When King 88 arrived at the scene to begin the search they determined that the first coordinates were incorrect. King 88 spotted the survivors and ground rescue part in the middle of a rugged ice flow. After establishing contact with the party, King 88 found out that one person was unconscious and the other two were immobile. Jolly 38 was then vectored to the area and spotted

the party.

At first, the crew of Jolly 38 ~~dout~~^Xed the possibility of a hoist pickup because of the terrain, altitude, approach avenues and wind conditions. After making several passes over the area and consulting with his crew, Captain Black determined it was possible but only if sufficient power could be obtained, hover clearance maintained and cabin procedures completely understood. However, even ~~it~~^X with ~~the~~^X these preparations the risks could only be ~~much~~^X lessened.

When Sergeant Graves computed the ~~px~~^X weight he found that all nonessential people and equipment would have to be off loaded in order for the helicopter to maintain the hover. ~~board~~^X The Jolly 38 landed at a lower site to allow Doctor Tate to leave along with 700 pounds of gear including parachutes, life rafts, survival kits and ~~x~~^X equipment boxes.

Jolly 38 then took off and dumped 1,200 pounds of fuel, meaning that aerial refueling would be a necessity to complete the rescue. After reconnoitering the area again the crew found that the approach would have to be quite abnormal.

Jolly 38 would have to fly into a dead-end ravine with possible turbulent winds to reach the survivors. With close crew coordination Captain ^BBlack eased ~~the~~^X Jolly 38 into hover position. With Sergeant Graves' instructions, Captain Black established a safe and precise hover just clearing the ice walls by ~~x~~^X 10 feet of the left and front of Jolly 38.

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The flight crew had done their job and now it was up to the pararescuemen. Airman Moser was lowered to a small five by five-foot perch. Once there he evaluated the injuries of the three Icelanders and determined the hoisting priority before asking for the first litter.

Sergeant Graves lowered the litter and, with the help of the ground party, Airman Moser placed the most seriously injured man in the litter. Once the man was aboard the helicopter, Airmen King and Zitzow went to work to stop bleeding and begin intravenous medication.

Still giving hover instructions, Sergeant Graves lowered the second litter and the second man was hoisted aboard. The forest penetrator was used to hoist the last man and Airman Moser back to Jolly 38. In all, the hoist procedure took only 15 minutes, though, to the crew, it seemed much longer.

With all the injured and crew men aboard, Captain Black moved the helicopter backward 50 feet, turned the nose to the right and took off downslope. At dusk, Jolly 38 landed at the lower site to pickup the equipment and Doctor Tate.

Once aboard, and with the aid of the three pararescuemen, Doctor Tate went to work to stabilize the condition of the most severely injured man who had a blood clot on the brain, a deep gash across his entire face, a cracked cervical vertebra and a broken leg. The second man had a broken arm, concussion and a possible crushed pelvis. The third man suffered a broken arm and

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not hover, therefore all non-essential cargo, personnel, and fuel had to be
unated. (Jolly 38 then landed at a lower site and off-loaded 700 ^{and} lbs of gear
including parachutes, life rafts, survival kits, ^{and} equipment boxes ~~and Commander Tate.~~
Jolly 38 took off and dumped 1200 lbs of fuel, meaning that an aerial refuel-
ing would be needed to complete the mission,. The area was again reconnoitered. It
was determined the approach would have to be quite abnormal in that the ice cliffs
would be 20 to 30 feet to the left, airspeed would have to be dissipated quickly,
and there would be no possible escape route, no margin for error. In order to
hoist the survivors, the helicopter would have to fly into a dead end ravine with
possible turbulent winds. The landing gear was placed up to avoid inadvertant
ON contact with the ice on approach or take off. With ^{please crew} ~~coordination between~~
~~Major Johnson and Captain Black~~, Captain Black Maneuvered the aircraft into a
stable hover near the ground party. Under Sergeant Graves' concise instructions
a safe, precise hover was established clear of the ice by ^{ten} feet on the left
and front and ALC Moser was lowered to a small five by five ^{foot} perch. ALC
Moser quickly evaluated the injuries of the three, determined hoisting priority
and asked for the first stokes litter. Sergeant Graves lowered the litter and
with the help of three Icelanders, ALC Moser placed the most seriously injured
man in the litter. After being hoisted aboard, SRA King and ALC Zitzow worked
feverously to stop bleeding and start intravenous medication. While continually
giving exact hover instructions, Sergeant Graves lowered the second litter to ALC
Moser and the second man was hoisted aboard. The forest penetrator was then
used to hoist the last man and ALC Moser ⁱⁿ to the helicopter. Although the hoist
procedure only took 15 minutes due to the excellent planning and execution, it seem-
much longer to the crew. With all injured and crewmen safe on board, Captain Black
slowly hovered fifty feet backward, turned the nose to the right and took off
downwind and downslope. Jolly 38 landed back at the lower site (at dusk) and retrieved
the equipment, ^{TATE} ~~and~~ Commander reboarded. With aid of the three pararescuemen, Doctor

stabilized the condition of the most severely injured man who had a blood
spot on the brain, a deep ^{gash} across his entire face, a cracked cervical and a
broken leg. The second man had a broken arm, concussion and possible crushed
pelvis, and the third had a broken arm and a slight concussion. With only 600 lbs
total fuel left, the HH-3E required an inflight refueling from King 88. Due to
fading light, haze and inoperative navigation equipment, King 88's task of
rendezvousing with Jolly 38 was gravely complicated. The superb skill of both crews
enabled the two aircraft to rendezvous as the HH-3E's low level fuel lights flickered
on and off. A successful air refueling was accomplished in the bumpy air and
Jolly 38 landed at Reykjavik airport at 1747Z. The survivors were, ^{transferred} into two
awaiting ambulances and Jolly 38 returned to Keflavik at 1810Z. The rapid
response, ^{superbly} coordinated crew effort and great ^{display} of courage saved the
lives of these three Icelanders. ~~The outstanding aerial skills and professional~~
~~individual efforts of each crew member showed a devotion to duty and human life~~
~~that far exceeds that required or expected. The singularly heroic rescue~~
~~achievements of Captain Black and his crew during this most difficult, dangerous~~
~~mission reflect great credit upon themselves and the United States Air Force.~~