

DOC 23¹⁸

2 Apr

STATEMENT

April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B/Mail 38B)
Sandy 07 MORSE/08 MORGAN

1. On 1 April 1972, Sandy 07/08 Morse/Morgan accomplished a normal deployment to Da Nang.
2. On 2 April 1972, Easter Sunday, at 0400Z we briefed with the Jolly's for a possible evacuation of some personnel from Quang Tri (see Map #1). At 0800Z Queen launched us on a scramble for a downed aircraft, call sign unknown, position unknown. The Jolly's beat us off the ground and they were airborne when Queen canceled the launch, as the crew was recovered by the Navy. The Jolly's remained airborne at Queens direction while we taxied back.
3. At 0845Z Queen relaunched us for the evacuation mission. Sandy's were airborne at 0900Z. Rendezvous was in progress when the evacuation was canceled by higher Headquarters. We rejoined with the Jolly's and began to RTB to Da Nang. About 10 miles from base, I heard a radio call on Guard, "Beeper, Beeper come up voice". I queried Queen as to what was in progress. They did not know at the time, but were checking on it. Meanwhile Sandy 07/08 began to proceed back toward the north.
4. A Bilk FAC, Bilk 34, had pinpointed the survivor's location. He advised the Sandy's to proceed east from Cam Lo (see map). We worked our way north and west and started following the wrong river toward the rolling Hills southwest of Cam Lo. We received fire from a SAM, quite possibly an unguided rocket. I directed a break down and to the left toward the hills. The missile was launched at us from our 2:00 position. Sandy 08 observed the impact on the ground right under the spot I had been seconds earlier. This was our first indication that this was not going to be an easy SAR. We proceeded north and the FAC acquired us visually. He began to give us vectors into the area.
5. The weather was about 1500 MSL broken to overcast. As we approached the Cam Lo area from the southwest, we came under extremely heavy ground fire, mostly 12.7mm. The fire was of the barrage type as opposed to tracking. Every where we turned or looked there were tracers coming right at us. With a good deal of luck, extreme jinking and hiding in the clouds, we managed not to take any serious hits. The FAC kept saying come north of the river, there's no fire up here. (see map, Song Mieu Giang river, map #1) The ground fire did indeed, at first, seem less intense once we crossed the river, however they continued to fire at us. Some of the fire was coming from so far away that it was falling well short, yet this did not slow them down at all. It seemed as if they wanted to nail us pretty badly. The Bilk FAC showed me the survivor's parachute and I took on scene command at about 1015Z. The survivor was located in a clump of trees in the center of several fields (farming type community), at coordinates YD 155 615. He, the survivor, was in good spirits and uninjured. I pinpointed his position down to the nearest trees, and in the process began taking fire again. Most of the fire seemed to be coming from the north and

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from the east. The survivor himself was being extremely helpful in calling off ground fire for me. Communications with King and Queen were virtually non-existent, which is normal for Queen. I was begging for any kind of ordnance and for a FAC. The weather was a factor and it was rapidly becoming dark. I could not leave the survivor there without extending some effort to make sure that he wouldn't be scarfed up during the night. He was very close to the village complex along the river to his south, however, we were not taking fire from that location. To the north the terrain was fairly barren with very gentle rolling hills. There was fire from this area. To the east still more villages along the river (see map), but due east of his position was flat marshy land, and we were taking fire from there. Despite the low ceiling, I felt that I could safely place ordnance on positions north and east on the sources of ground fire. Yet I could raise no one on the radio. I directed my wing man to get some ordnance and some helicopters. Our original Bilk FAC was on the way back in to the area from the east near Dong Ha along the river. He had in tow 4 army Huey helicopters, 2 slicks and 2 cobras. Two of these helicopters were shot down. One completely demolished, the other crew was picked up by the Jolly's. This was unknown by Sandy 07 at the time, and for this reason, I was having difficulty communicating with other elements of the SAR force. They were engaged in their own SAR! Darkness was fast approaching and a pick-up attempt could not be made that night. I directed Sandy 08 to expend with me in the SAR area. Bat 21B saved his own life by maintaining his cool. Working with Bat 21B was an experience that none of the Sandy's who worked on this SAR will ever forget. The survivor called off positions of fire, watched our ordnance impact and gave us corrections from that. The ground fire threat was very bad, the survivor could see and hear people within 100 meters of his position. While expending ordnance, Sandy 07 came under heavy, accurate fire, receiving battle damage. After one particularly heavy exchange of fire I was concerned for the airworthiness of the aircraft. It seemed controllable and I had Sandy 08 check me over as best he could in the darkness. I could see several small holes in both wings and from thumps I had heard I knew that I had taken several hits on the armor plating. There was one rather jagged hole in the left wing over which I was apprehensive. However the survivor kept asking if I was alright, and that he could still see people. I knew where one gun position was so I returned with Sandy 08 and blew his sierra away. No further fire came that location. With the darkness around us, the exchange of fire was very impressive. The A-1 can throw a lot down when she needs to. We could see the returning fire, but due to our low altitude, it was not always possible to avoid it. Sandy 08 was winchester and headed out toward the coast to the east, acting as a radio relay. I expended what I had left as we waited for a FAC to come out and take over. Finally a FAC arrived, and I passed command at 1155Z. While returning to Da Nang I passed all information had on to King and Queen. I requested that ordnance be put in all night, specifically CBU 42 and BLU 52, "BABY". Landing at Da Nang was at 1235Z.

6. Once on the ground, Queen was immediately called with all information we possessed and our request for ordnance with the explanation that it was essential for protection of the survivor. Additionally SARCO at NKP was

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GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals;
Declassified after 12 years.

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called and the same information was passed to him, along with my request for more Sandy's and a replacement aircraft for myself. I had taken extensive minor battle damage. Sandy 07/08 debriefed with Covey FAC itel. With the aid of their maps we located the survivor's position and passed the 6 digit coordinates on to Queen. We set up for a first light effort with the Jolly Greens. As this was Easter and Lint was over I had a beer and tried to go to bed. Sleep did not come, as I lay awake shaking from fear most of the night. JCH

Thus ended Day 1 of the Bat 21 SAR.

Donald E. Morse

DONALD E. MORSE, Captain, USAF
Sandy 07

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

STATEMENT

2 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B)

1. At 2330L NKP time, Sandy's 01 Boli/02 LtCol Barbena/ 03 Clevenger depart NKP. At 0030, 3 April 1972, Sandy 03 develops prop regulator problems, and he has to divert into UBON.
2. At 0130 Sandy 01/02 rendezvous with Jolly Green 66/60 at 150/100/93 and escort them to channel 107 Pleiku. We were released by the Jolly's at 0300 and we proceeded direct to Da Nang, landing at 0335 (NKP Local).
3. At 1225L we launched for the Bat 21B SAR. Sandy 01/02 arrived on scene and held over Quang Tri at 1300. Sandy 03/04 Burke/Fossum were working the area over. They affected a rendezvous with us and showed us the survivor's location. Sandy 01 took on scene command at 1330. King passed a message to expend all ordnance and RTB to Da Nang due there being another Sar in progress. This confusion only lasted for awhile. The other SAR never did materialize.
4. We were trying to work the area over, having been briefed by the Sandy's on scene earlier, to suppress known areas of hostile fire. We contacted a MIKE FAC, Mike 92 to help in putting in strikes. However, an ARC LIGHT forced us out of the area, until 1415 when King again tells us to RTB.
5. On scene command is passed to Mike 92 and Sandy 01/02 start to exit. Mike 92 lost the survivors position, so Sandy 01/02 return to point it out to him. About this time, 1435, Nail 38 checks in. He has worked the area previously and he knows the survivor's location.
6. Sandy 01 awaits the Nail's arrival to be sure that the survivor is properly covered. The Nail arrived at 1445 and reconfirms the survivor's location. I passed to the nail that a blocking belt of area denial ordnance was to be constructed around the survivor. (CBU 42/49/52 and BLU 52) Mike 92 would mark for Nail 38.
7. At 1500 Nail 38 is downed by a SAM. There were 2 chute and good contact with both. SAM launches were coming fast and furious. Both Sady's and the Mike FAC had SAM's launched at them.
8. Covey 270 checks in and Sandy 01 passes instructions on helping to deny the area to the enemy. The bridge at Cam Lo was to be blown. I mark this location with a WP rocket. The Covey put in one flight of F-4's with Mk 82's and one A-37 with Mk 82's. The northern span was dropped.
9. We saw an Army Cobra and attempted contact thinking maybe we could get the Nail crew out. Finally we established contact on Guard. I request he come freq 282.8 (Delta). The chopper was Blue Ghost Red 30. He

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agreed to make a pick-up attempt. I briefed him thoroughly on the area and the threat, and also on how I wanted him to run in etc. He still agreed to give it a try. I never known the Army to turn u s down ! We executed with Sandy 01 leading the way in marking with WP rockets. At 1555 the chopper got shot off,,sustaining ~~one~~ damage. The fire was coming from a small gully/stream ~~bea~~ south of the villages and the river that the survivors were near.

10. By this time we have to RTB for fuel. I passed over on scene command to Bilk 33 at 1610. We RTB'd to Da Nang, landing at 1705 (NKP Local).

Fred C Boli
FRED C. BOLI, Captain, USAF
Sandy 01

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S T A T E M E N T

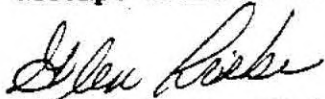
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3 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy 5 and 6 (SAR Bat 21)

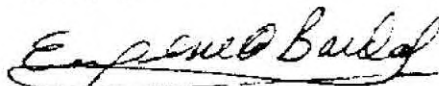
1. During morning briefing at Ubon on 3 April Sandys 05 and 06 received word to scramble at 0010Z. Wolf Pack gave us a holding point 050/30/103.
2. Sandys 5/6 arrived at the rendezvous at 0200Z and found Jolly 65/67 holding just off shore not at 050/30/103. Nail 38/39 were in the area of the survivor and they had not observed any ground fire. About 0330 Nail 39 came out to lead in the Jollys and Sandys above the clouds. Nail 39 then led Sandy 05, Jolly 65 and Sandy 6 down through a hole in the clouds. Jolly 67 remained above the clouds out about 4,000 ft. about 1 min after coming through the WX to VFR below Jolly 65 called that he was hit and was climbing back out. Sandy 05/06 searched for ground fire but found none, and Jollys landed at Chan 69.
3. Sandys 05/06 now returned to feet wet and joined in orbit with Jolly 66 and 60. At around 0430Z Sandys joined the orbit and took on-scene command with Nail 39/7/8 trolled the area and started briefing another attempt with ingress from the north of the survivors.
4. At around 0500Z this attempt was started the weather was now broken to overcast.
5. After 2-3 minutes in VFR weather Jolly 66 called he was hit and all forces withdrew to Chan 69. Sandys 05/06 RTB Chan 77 for fuel and Sandy 7/8 remained on-scene.

HINDSIGHT: Neither sandys nor Jollys had any knowledge of the intensity of the ground was in this area. Ground defenses of this position including 10,000 - 15,000 troops supported by large tanks with tñret removed and quadfifties mounted on them. Also numerous 12.7, 14.5 and 23mm AAA were plentiful. Also about 7-10 Sam calls were heard. Had Sandys or Jollys been made aware of this ground movement no Pick-up attempt would be made.



G. PRIERE, 1Lt, USAF

Sandy 5



G. Bardal, Capt, USAF

Sandy 6

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STATEMENT

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April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B/MAIL 38B)
Sandy 07 Morse/08 Morgan

1. 3 April 1972, day two of the BAT 21B Sar, the first light briefing was at 2000Z. The weather in the SAR area had deteriorated throughout the night and was now unworkable. Sandy 01 Fred Boli and 02 Lt/Col Barbena were enroute to Da Nang so I could have a replacement aircraft.
2. No ordnance had been put in all night, due to a conflicting report on the survivor's position. Despite my emphasis to Queen on the necessity of the ordnance and the telephone number where I could be reached, no attempt was made to contact me. The other position that had been passed was about 20 miles south of where the survivor really was (YD 18 42). This position was so totally ridiculous, that it was beyond my comprehension how it could even have been considered. Total incompetence on the part of members of the rescue team is unforgivable. I hope all who read this may never have to be a survivor on the ground and wonder if "they" really have it together.
3. The aircraft were not ready for us to launch as planned so the additional time was used to update intel and brief Boli and Lt/Col Barbena on the situation. Launch was at 2240Z and we proceeded northwest along the coastline.
4. We contacted the on scene Nail FAC, Nail 25 for an appraisal of the weather and the situation. The weather was unworkable for VFR strikes, however the FAC's were conducting LORAN drops. As there was nothing we could do in the area, we orbited off the coast with the Jolly's acting as radio relay and ordering up assets. There were numerous SAM calls from the DMZ. I kept requesting confirmation that Iron Hand was on scene. King assured me that it was; however, the SAM calls caused us numerous delays and loss of flight integrity as we had to dive through the low clouds to hit the deck. Inoperative UHF ADF's did not help us get rejoined.
5. Sandy 03/04 Burke/Fossum (see line up photos at end of report) arrived on scene and joined with Sandy 01/02 on the ground at 2330Z. The weather was starting to improve slightly. The Nail FAC's lead us overhead the survivor; however, the weather was still poor - tops 4000', bases ragged 250' to 300' AGL.
6. About 0100Z I heard Sandy 05/06 Priebe/Bardal coming up to the scene. Numerous SAM calls and the evasive action taken, made redeavour and briefing difficult. Additionally due to our altitudes, navigational assistance could not be obtained. (GCI/Tacan/ADF)
7. As radio contact allowed, I briefed Sandy 05 on the area, defenses,, ordnance now going in, etc. I also advised him of the best approach to the area as being from the south or southeast. I warned him of the intensive fire received from the southwest, and advised him to avoid coming in along the river from the east.
8. Sandy 05/06 found the Jolly's and I directed that they remain with them

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Declassify on 12/12/75

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and await further words from the Nail FAC's on scene. Sandy 07/08 returned to base at Da Nang landing at 0300Z.

9. We debriefed with intelligence and with the new crews for about 4 hours. We were still unaware at this time that we were facing a full scale North Vietnamese invasion force. At last we got some sleep, the first for many hours.

Donald E. Morse

DONALD E. MORSE, Captain, USAF
Sandy 07

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STATEMENT

3 Apr
4 Apr

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3 APR 72

Sandy 03 (3 Apr 72)(Bat 21B SAR)
Sandy 07 (4 Apr 72)(Bat 21B/Nail 38B SAR)
Sandy 03 (6 Apr 72)(Bat 21B/Nail 38B SAR)

On 3 April 1972 I launched as Sandy 03 from NKP with Lieutenant Fossum on my wing as Sandy 04. Takeoff was at approximately 2130Z (2 Apr 72) and we proceeded to a "feet wet" rendezvous with Sandy 07 and 08 20nm east of Quang Tri, RVN. The weather over the water was poor with the cloud tops averaging 3500' MSL with bases ragged and blending into the fog on the deck. There was a FAC (call sign unknown) in the area directly over the survivor and he reported that the lowest cloud layer was 300' AGL with patchy ground fog beneath this covering the survivor's position. After we finally managed to get all four A-1's together, we headed inland with Sandy 07 as lead. We orbited the area at 5000' Msl with one of two Nail FAC'S who were on-scene at the time. After a short discussion, Sandy 07 directed Sandy 03 and 04 to RTB to Danang in order to refuel as the weather was still unworkable and did not appear to be ready to break. Sandy 03 and 04 complied and landed at Danang at 0140Z (3 Apr 72). We refueled and recocked and launched for a second time at 0240Z. Enroute to the area I was informed that Sandy 05 and 06 were holding "feet wet" with two Jolly Green helicopters after getting one other Jolly shot off in a previous rescue attempt. The run in on the aborted attempt was from the southwest and the fire had come from a village on the southern bank of the river. With Sandy 05 and 06 holding over the water I decided to move into the area and rendezvous with Nail 39 who was on-scene commander. The weather had improved to about 3500' AGL broken clouds and Nail 39 quickly showed me the location of the survivor. I took over on-scene command and proceeded to troll for ground fire with negative results in the immediate area. Nail 39 reported taking a hit but thought that it had come from the northwest of the area. I then directed Sandy 05 and 06 to start the helicopters in from their holding point over the water. Nail 22 was available to lead the group above the broken cloud layer and I assumed that he was going to come in from the southeast. However, this was a poor assumption and the Jolly's reported heavy ground fire from the time that they crossed the coast north of Dong Ha until they arrived in the area of the survivor. I had the Jolly's continue because I felt that the immediate area was relatively secure and that a quick pick up offered the best chance for the survivor. Sandy 05 and 06 arrived in the area slightly before the Jolly's and I was in the process of briefing them on where I wanted their smoke when the lead Jolly descended through a break in the clouds. He continued to descend until he was about 500' below us and at that time he again called that he was taking heavy ground fire. I could not get him to give me a direction and could not see any myself so I told him to exit the area to the southeast. He RTB'd to Danang without any further trouble and Sandy 05 and 06 stayed in the area to expend their ordnance on a tank that Sandy 04 had spotted. Unfortunately, Sandy 04 couldn't find the tank again although I am convinced that it was the source of the ground

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fire reported by the Jolly Greens. Sandy 05 and 06 then RTB'd to Danang and with no FAC's in the area I asked King for ordnance and received a flight of F-4's (call sign unknown) carrying MK-82's. I expended the F-4's on the Cam LO bridge along with a flight of VNAF A-37's that were carrying MK-81's. I was trying to isolate the survivor and although one of the A-37's did hit the bridge damage to it was minor. A short time later, Mike 92 arrived on-scene and I showed the survivor's position to him and as I was getting ready to leave the area, Sandy 01 and 02 arrived on-scene. I proceeded to brief Sandy 01 on the situation, pointed out the survivor's position, and turned over on-scene command to Sandy 01. Sandy 03 and 04 RTB'd to Danang and landed at 0620Z.

4 April 1972

Sandy 07 - Captain Burke

Sandy 08 - Lieutenant Fossum

We launched at approximately 0700Z and proceeded to the SAR area. Nail 38 had been shot down the previous afternoon by an SA-2 and Nail 38B was located about 650 meters southeast of Bat 21B. I never had voice contact with Nail 38A although there were numerous intermittent beepers on guard in the area of the other two survivors. Sandy 01 and 02 had requested all available A-1's to launch for a possible pickup attempt and we held south of the survivors' position while Sandy 01 briefed Sandy 03 on the situation. Sandy 01 had taken only light ground fire and felt that the area was ready for a recovery attempt. Sandy 03 was experiencing major problems with his radios so Sandy 01 started to brief Sandy 05 to take over on-scene command. Sandy 05 was not able to read Sandy 01 and I decided to take the briefing and moved into the area directly over the survivors'. Sandy 01 pointed out the location of Nail 38B and also pointed out the areas that he thought were the source of the ground fire. Before going any further, I would like to mention that during the time we were holding south of the area with Sandy 05 and 06 several SAM calls were heard and we hit the deck on all of them. Sandy 05 reported seeing two or three of the missiles and all were thought to be SA-2's. There was also a North Vietnamese artillery barrage in progress and we moved our holding point farther to the west. Just as Sandy 01 was completing the briefing, another SAM call was heard and we dove for the deck right over the town on the south side of the river east of Cam Lo. I took a small arms hit in the right wing and Sandy 08 took several small arms hits one of which punctured the right fuel tank. Sandy 08 immediately headed southeast and rendezvoused with Sandy 05 who had now regained his radios. I was going to retain on-scene command but with Sandy 08 hit and Sandy 05 able to communicate I decided to pass on-scene command to Sandy 05. Before leaving the area, Sandy 07 and 08 expended rockets and CBU-25 on a group of huts to the east of Bat 21B as the FAC had reported ground fire from there when the SAM call was heard. We made one pass and then RTB'd to Danang landing at 1000Z.

6 April 1972

Sandy 03 - Captain Burke (single ship due to Sandy 04's abort for maintenance)

Sandy 01 and 02 were airborne with Sandy 07 and 08 and Sandy 01 had decided to attempt a pickup of both survivors. My wingman had a major hydraulic leak and

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was unable to get airborne. I was carrying CBU-22, CBU-25, and M-47's intending to be used as a smoke bird. When I arrived in the area, Sandy 01 briefed all the forces on the plan of attack. The plan was to have the Jolly Green start from a prominent hard site on the south side of a pangsueast-west road, proceed north past Nail 38B across the Qua Viet River, and then turn east to Bat 21B's position. Bat 21B was to be picked up first. Sandy 02 was to lead the helicopter along the route and Sandy 07 and 08 were to act as escorts on either side. Sandy 03 was to put smoke in the group of hmts along the road just to the south of Bat 21B and this smoke was to be the signal of execution for Jolly Green 67 to start the run. With the briefing complete, Sandy 01 marked the position that he wanted the smoke to cover and Sandy 03 put CBU-22 between the two marking rockets. The smoke drifted over the survivor somewhat but Sandy 02 said that he could still see Bat 21B's position and the run in continued. On my second pass I put another can of CBU-22 in the hmts to the west of Bat 21B. As I pulled off in a left turn to the east, Jolly Green 67 had just crossed the river and was heading west toward Bat 21B. He called that he was taking ground fire and broke to the north. I was above and behind Jolly Green 67 and rolled in with 20mm on his left side. The other four A-1's were also firing and calling for the helicopter to turn south as he was ~~HEADING~~ east toward a village that had previously produced a fair amount of ground fire. Jolly Green 67 finally responded to repeated calls and turned right and recrossed the river. I continued a descending turn firing 20mm into the villages to the east and in an area to within 50 meters of the helicopter on his left side. I finally stopped firing when I could not get my guns to bare on the area around the helicopter and pulled out of my dive approximately 300' above the ground. As I pulled up, I crossed behind Jolly Green 67 and called for a left turn as he had continued his right turn and was heading toward Cam Lo and away from the egress route. As he rolled out of his right turn, a flame shot out below the main rotor in the vicinity of the left engine. The helicopter nosed up and rolled left 90° and pieces started falling from the aircraft. The aircraft hit the ground on its left side and the fire continued to burn from the left engine, finally consuming the entire aircraft approximately ten seconds later. I did not see anyone get out and there were no chutes or beepers. I RTE'd to Danang with the rest of the Sandy's and landed at 1010Z.

COMMENTS:

1. There are times and circumstances when rescue by helicopter is impossible. However, this determination must be made by the people on-scene based on what the particular situation demands. I do not feel that a particular area should be declared unsorkable without first hand and current knowledge of the enemy threat in the area. In this case we may have pushed too hard but the determination of the on-scene commander was that there was a good chance that the tremendous amount of ordnance that had been expended in the immediate area had effectively eliminated the major part of the enemy forces in the region. None of the other aircraft involved in the pickup attempt suffered any battle damage and looking back it appears obvious that the enemy was simply waiting for a shot at the helicopter. This is a possibility that is inherent in any mission of this type and unfortunately this time we lost. However, there have been cases in the past where we have encountered similar circumstances and pressed on and the mission was successful and there will be cases in the future where this will also hold true so in summation I would warn against giving up hope at too early a time.

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COMMENTS (CONT'D)

2. Although the choice of words in the preceding comment is admittedly pompous the though is not intended to be such. In addition to the mechanics of the SAR itself, I feel that mention should be made about running a major effort of this type at a forward operating location. The most important aspect and necessary element that was missing at Danang was a non-flying SARCO. As it was the crews had to set up the whole mission including intelligence, targeting, scheduling, and informing all the other agencies involved as to what was going on. This was in addition to flying and consumed the major portion of the time that was needed for adequate crew rest. Captain Boli assumed the responsibility and duties of as SARCO and did an outstanding job and should be commended for his efforts.

3. I also feel that when a SAR extends into several days that plans should be made to start rotating crews as early as the second day and that no one should be involved for more than four consecutive days.

4. In closing I would like to commend the 37th ARRS for its help in housing all of us on such short notice and for their general hospitality, they made the stay at Danang almost bearable.

Robert F. Burke

Robert F. Burke, Capt., USAF
1st SOS

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STATEMENT

DGC 2310

4 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy 1 and 2 (Bat 21/Nail 38)

1. On 4 April Sandy 01/02, scrambled from ground alert, were airborne at 0525Z. Arriving on scene at 0600 Sandys were briefed by Nail 41 and Bilk 29. While attempting to pinpoint exact survivor location Sandy 1 was hit and had fire coming from beneath his left wing. An immediate look over it was determined to be the left lau 3 rocket pod which was immediately jettisoned. Sandy 1 went back in and located both survivors.
2. For the remainder of the day Sandy 02 held over briefed safe area while Sandy 01 attempted to pinpoint ground fire. While doing this Sandy 01 received 2 more hits with no critical damage, with the assistance of Nail 41/Bilk 29 an area of concentrated ground fire was pinpointed and Sandys 01 and 02 expended some ordnance on this area taking no hits while striking.
3. During this time the weather 15 1500' - 2000' overcast. Around 0730Z the weather broke to the southwest of the survivor area but weather in the immediate vicinity was unworkable for fast movers.
4. A/C onscene and holding to expend were flying Eagle 313 and 304 and Hoboken 415. F-4s did one lorran drop missing by about 5 clicks to north-west. An other flight with Blu 52 came in from feet wet down the river and did an outstanding job of dropping there ordnance. A flight of A-4s and flying Eagle 304 also came under the weather and dropped their "Rock eye" Hoboken flight RTB for fuel - the fusing on their bombs required them to drop from minimum of 4000 Agl. O'Hara flight (F-4) came in with more Blu-52 and during their strike took a hit in the ext. fuel tank.
5. Around 0800Z Nail 53 and Bilk 11 replaced Nail 41 and Bilk 29, also Sandys 03/08 with Jollys were launched by request from #1 and felt an attempt could be made. Jollys and Sandys 03-08 holding feet wet and Sandys 03 and 06 holding in briefed safe area. During the afternoon Sandy 02 counted 17 different Sam calls for DMZ and Quang Tri area, but observed only 2 due to 2000' over cast. Also observed 2 different rockets launched from southwest of the survivors area toward self and later Sandys 03-06. After 2nd rocket launch and during a Sam call # Sandy 2 was hit by small arms (12.7 or 14.5) while at low altitude to avoid Sams. *After briefing Sandy 05 to be on scene command, Sandy 01/02 expended their ordnance and RTB chan 77.

HINDSIGHT: Still had no one to brief us on what was going on so we had no idea how many people we were fighting. *Sandy 1 briefed #3 and take on scene and after briefing #3 encountered radio problems and #5 was called in.

G. PHILBE, 1Lt, USAF

Sandy 01

G. BARDAI, Captk USAF
Sandy 02

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STATEMENT

4 Apr
DOC 23"

April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21B/NAIL 38A/B)
Sandy 03 Morse/04 Morgan

1. 4 April 1972, day 3 of the SAR for BAT 21B. Capt Morse and Capt Morgan launched as Sandy 03 and 04, as directed by Queen at 0800Z. We proceeded northwest and effected a rendezvous with Sandy 01 and 02 at 0814Z. Sandy 03 began having radio problems on FM and VHF. We took a good look at the area, the weather was good, about 4000' broken. Sandy 01 was advising the FAC's on where ordnance was to go. The area had been very quiet and numerous strikes had gone in. A pick-up attempt looked feasible to both Sandy 01 and 03. The rest of the Sandy's were launched with the Jolly's. Sandy 01/02 were dropping ordnance prior to RTBing. By 0915Z Sandy's 05/06 and 07/08 were approaching the area. I was having intermittent contact with King on VHF and anticipating further problems, I contacted Sandy 05 (Burke) and asked him to come up and be prepared to take on scene command. Apparently Sandy 01 heard this call and delayed leaving the area until he could find a Sandy low to take command. By now I was missing several of the radio calls being made.
2. All the Sandy's arrived in the area of the survivors. Numerous SAM calls and the evasive dives resulting from same, made the area traffic so confused that leads and wings had a difficult time of keeping track of one another.
3. The ground fire intensity increases and my radios became worse. All the enemy had to do was launch a SAM (or go into the high PRF mode, thus giving a launch signal to RAM equipped aircraft) and the Sam calls caused us all to dive for the deck, forcing us into the small arms environment. I directed my wingman to take the lead of our element and I advised Sandy 05 of my problem with VHF and FM radios.
4. Ground fire was being taken from the survivor's area, the area around Cam Lo, from a stream/gulley at YD 156 586, and other non-fixed positions. At 1030Z while F-4 strikes were in progress in the SAR area, Sandy 04 (now the lead of our element) had an unguided rocket fired at him, somewhere in the vicinity of YD 150 560. There were numerous artillery rounds going off near the aircraft. That is to say on the ground underneath the aircraft.
5. At 1045 Sandy 03 took a hit from a 12.7 or 14.5 (I think) in the right wing, just inboard of the inboard gun. Fire broke out immediately. I dumped hydraulic pressure and jettisoned my load while turning toward the south. I headed south then east toward the initial holding point for the Jolly's, YD 550 240 (see maps). The Jolly's holding with Sandy 09 Carlsen/10 Scott, were directed to rendezvous with me. The fire continued, setting off the 20mm ammunition in the right wing, doing very little to settle my nerves or restore my confidence. The fire continued to burn for what seemed like a lifetime but in reality for about 5 - 10 minutes. Aircraft control was becoming marginal as pieces fell from the right wing. My lifting surface being destroyed on the right side, the left wing was producing more lift than the right; ergo the aircraft wanted to enter a right turn. My only thought was to get feet wet then play it by ear. Full left aileron and full left rudder was required. Upon reaching the coast a very shallow right turn was ^{units} ~~den~~ required.

GROUP-4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals;
Declassified after 12 years

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DOC 23¹²
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entered. I rolled out on heading parallel to the coast.

6. Assistance was offered from the Nail FAC's, Jolly's, the Navy, and my fellow Sandy's. It was very comforting to be surrounded and escorted by all my fellow aviators. A request for a foamed runway was passed to Da Nang tower by both the Jolly's and the Sandy's. I arrived and orbited just north of Da Nang at 1115Z. Foam was laid in a 21 x 4000' strip. My request was for a minimum of 75 x 2000'. The landing gear would not extend; ergo a normal night, gear up, black-out, marginally controllable, zero instruments landing was made uneventfully. My knees were a little shaky, but it was good to be able to "walk away from it".

Donald E. Morse

DONALD E. MORSE, Captain, USAF
Sandy 03

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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STATEMENT

4 Apr

DOC 23¹³

8 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21/NAIL 38)
Sandy 05 Boli/06 Barbena

1. On 4 April 1972, the Sandy forces stood down until late in the afternoon. Sandy 05/06 were launched at 0830Z and we arrived on scene at 0905Z. We were holding 5 miles south east of the survivors while Sandy's 01/02 and 03/04 work the area. Sandy 07/08 were holding with us. There were numerous SAM calls, Sandy 08 saw one launched from north to south.
2. At 0830Z Sandy 01 is attempting to give on scene command to Sandy 03, but 03's radios were not functioning properly. So Sandy 05 was called to come up in the area; however, due to the numerous SAM calls and my own UHF breaking up, I did not hear this call. Sandy 07 did hear it and he went up to take over on scene.
3. Sandy 07/08 were not in the area long when both had taken battle damage due to ground fire. They rejoined with us (Sandy 05/06) and we checked them over at 1000Z. We could only find one hole in the right stub.
4. Sandy 05's radios seemed to be better, so I proceeded to the area at 1010Z and follow Sandy 01 as he shows me the locations of the survivors. I take over as on scene commander while Sandy's 01/07/08 expend prior to RTBing.
5. Bilk 11 is in the area, and I have him put in a flight of Snake and Nape on target #22 (see map # 2). The rest of the Sandy's are holding just south of the SAR area. The survivors are told to dig in as we are putting ordnance in around them. There is good contact with both BAT 21 and NAIL 38. Sandy 05 is repeatedly taking ground fire from Cam Lo area and the area of the survivors. Bat 21B reports seeing troop movement south of his position. The fast movers with the Snake and Nape did outstanding work.
6. I was just initiating a pass over the survivors to check for ground fire, when Sandy 03 radios that he's been hit and is on fire, 1015Z. I come up guard and call for a Jolly Green rendezvous south of Quang Tri as Sandy 03 had already stated his egress heading and proposed route.
7. At 1050Z I turn over on scene command to Bilk 11 and inform King of Sandy 03's departure. Queen through King directs that all SAR forces RTB. Nail 32 checks in and provides a radio relay to Da Nang tower. The tower was informed of Sandy 03's problem and advised to foam a runway.
8. About 10 NM from DaNang, Sandy 06 reports a rough running engine and no cockpit lights. An IFE was declared followed by an uneventful landing.

Fred C. Boli
FRED C. BOLI, Captain, USAF
Sandy 05

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



DOC 23¹⁶

6 April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21/NAIL 38)
Sandy 01/Bolli 02/Carlson

1. 0715Z Sandy 01/02 launched for a Sandy recon of the SAR area to determine the feasibility of a pick-up attempt/Madden kit drop.
2. At 1545 we hear the first SAM launch call and hit the deck, no one observed the missile. We arrived just south of the survivors area at 0750Z. We informed King 21 and the FAC's Bilk 11 and Nail 40 that we were in the area. Bilk 11 continued to work strikes while Sandy 01/02 trolled the area south of the survivors, looking for the 5 infantry battalions that IDASC had briefed us was there. No enemy vehicle, personnel, or ground fire was seen.
3. At 0815 Sandy 01 takes on scene command and halts air strikes in order to talk to the survivors and troll the area near them. Bilk 11 and Nail 40 were instructed to hold over the area to watch for ground fire. BAT 21B and NAIL 38B were contacted and told to watch for movement and listen for fire. In the process of making the passes over the survivors, Sandy 01 showed Sandy 02 the locations of the survivors.
4. At 0830 Sandy 01 attempted to deliver a Madden kit to BAT 21B since no ground fire or movement had been detected. The run-in was made, but BAT 21B could not see the kit Sandy 01 made 2 more low passes but I could see the kit in the cleared fields either. So BAT 21 was told that the kit was probably somewhere in the grass/brush that was around him.
5. I widened the area of trolling to include planned run-in and any areas that looked suspicious. Strafe and CBU 25 was put in on these areas, but no reaction was evoked. The area was entirely quiet and heavily damaged. the following 4 areas looked a little suspicious and Sandy 01 directed Bilk 11 to strike these:
 - a) 100m SE of target 21 Refugees (?) HLJ - 52
 - b) 300m S of target 22 " "
 - c) area around " 29 Wooded area Snake and Nape
 - d) 500m W of target 28 Farm Mk 82's
6. At 0900 I call to have Sandy 05/06 Morse/Morgan to bring Jolly Green 67 and 60 to the initial holding point. They arrived at that point 10 minutes later. They reported some ground fire near that holding point, so I selected an ARVN truck park about 4km southeast of the final ruin. I mark the final IP with a WP rocket and Jolly Green 67 acknowledges having it in sight. The initial briefing was conducted on FM 38.9 since everyone had good contact on that frequency. At 0915 Sandy 03, a snake bird, arrives so the briefing is altered to allow him to drop the snake.
7. At 0920 I instruct Bilk 11 to call off any other airstrikes and enter the area for a final check. Still all was quiet. The requested targets had been accurately hit. The only movement I could see was the two refugee groups

GROUP-4

Declassified at 3 year intervals;
Declassified after 12 years.

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who were rapidly exiting the area.

8. At 0930 I mark the area for smoke and Sandy 03 puts in a beautiful smoke screen. Sandy 02 begins to lead the Jolly in from the South. Once the final IP is crossed, the Jolly hit the deck and Sandy 05/06 are shooting up everything all around the Jolly. The Jolly crossed the river and started to turn left behind the smoke screen. Just then he began taking hits, just as I called for BAT 21 B to POP his smoke. Sandy 01 saw no orange smoke and by this time the Jolly had made a 180° turn and began backtracking the planned egress route. All the SANDY's were were placing ordnance all around the Jolly and the area where he first called ground fire. The Jolly had his mics keyed thus blocking all transmissions to him. I repeatedly called Jolly turn south then right. Finally the Jolly responded and crossed the river.. Sandy 01 began straffing target 28 and crossed behind the Jolly from right to left, and pulled up on his left side. The Jolly had overshoot his turn to the right and was now headed southwest. Sandy 01 directed "Jolly TURN SOUTH !!" as he began to turn, a fire broke out above the left engine, beneath the main rotor. Parts began coming off the Jolly. The tail rotor seemed to separate and the Jolly crashed and burned. No survivors were seen and no contact was established. JCB JCB

9. The SARTF exited the area RTB'd to Ch 77, landing at 1015. JCB

Fred C. Boli
FRED C. BOLI, Captain, USAF
Sandy 01

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STATEMENT

6 Apr

April 1972

SUBJECT: Sandy Statement (SAR BAT 21 B MAIL 38B)

1. 6 April 1972, day five of the BAT 21 B SAR four for Nail 38B. Capt Morse and Capt Morgan cocked on alert as Sandy 05/06. Communications with all outside activities is very poor. It had rained and all the phones were out. At 0400Z there were three addital possible SAR's, A Navy A-4 lost wet at CRAB, a VNAF A-1, and an unconfirmed F-4. Nothing materialized out of any of these. Joker, through Queen directed a Sandy launch at 0600Z. With difficulty they were convinced by Lt/Col Barbena to launch 2 Sandy's and then 2 more with the Jolly Greens, with an additional 2 Sandy's and Jolly's about one hour later. The request for Sandy recce was based on FAC reports of "absolutly no movement and no ground fire" in the SAR area.
2. Sandy 05/06 Morse/Morgan launch at 0720Z and rendezvous with Jolly Green 67 and 66 at 0740Z at 360/20/69. The weather was clear below 15,000' with outstanding visibility. The strikes being put in on the SAR area could be seen from the holding point.
3. At 0830Z Sandy 01 (Boli) was trolling the proposed ingress route for ground fire. Sandy 01 directed the Jolly's and Sandy's to move to the initial holding point YD 550 240 (see map # 1). We proceeded to that point dropping Jolly Green 66 off at a safe point just south of Quang Tri.
4. Once in the holding area, we had a very clear view of the SAR area. Sandy 01 was giving us the briefing on how he wanted the pick-up attempt to go. At 0845 Jolly 67 reported taking fire from somewhere near a bend in the river at the holding point. I directed him to hold a little further south and requested a more exact position on the source of the fire. Both Sandy 05 and 06 made several intimidation passes on the area in question. The area was occupied by friendly troops and the Jolly couldn't pinpoint the location, so no ordnance was expended. 5 or 6 Tanks or APC's were spotted coming down a road from the west to the east toward our position. I requested Sandy 01 and the Bilk FAC, Bilk 11 to see if they were friendly. All four Sandy's made an intimidation pass on the tanks and they threw out yellow smoke. Bilk 11 and Nail 59 confirmed that they were friendly.
5. At 0900Z Sandy 01 requested that we move further north, across the holding river to position ourselves overhead more friendly tanks and APC's. Jolly 67 stalled to cross the river at the same point that he had taken fire from only moments before. He again reported fire, so both Sandy's 05 and 06 rolled in and put some 20mm strafe on the river. Finally we got the jolly squared away and headed to the new hold point.
6. As briefed, a smoke screen was laid and execution was at 0930Z. Sandy 02 was leading the Jolly, with Sandy 05 and 06 laying ordnance in front, behind, and on either side of the Jolly. The Jolly crossed the river just east of Nail 38B's position, YD 165 608 (see map # 2). The Jolly reported taking ground fire just after crossing the route T 8 B. It then sounded as if he kept his transmitter keyed, for we could hear him breathing. We could not get a definite position on the fire, but we

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were throwing ordnance all around the area he had been when he called ground fire. Sandy 01 directed the Jolly to turn south. He was in a right hand turn, but it was far too shallow. The Jolly was coming far too close to the village area of Lam Thiong ID 171 609 (map # 2). His shallow turn continued while we were all trying to get him to steepen it up and head south. He came very near the village of Thon Rich Giang as well. He crossed the river now on a heading of southwest, which was the worst to take. We told him to turn left which he finally did. We had no indication that he was hit until fire broke out on the left side of the Jolly. He entered a steep left descending turn with parts of the aircraft (possibly parts of the rotor) falling off. He impacted, burning, but still fairly intact and still in a left bank. The aircraft burst into flames the instant that he hit the ground. No survivors were seen, no one was observed jumping from the aircraft before impact. No contact could be established. Sandy 01 turned over onscene command to the Nail FAC and briefed the Nail and the Bilk FAC's on where to place their ordnance and what remaining areas he wanted obliterated. The Sandy forces regrouped and RTB'd to Da Nang. Sandy 05/06 landing at 1020Z.

COMMENTS:

It was three days after the SAR kicked off that we were first to learn about the threat and the invasion forces we were up against. The first day and night of the SAR, 2 April 1972, the ground fire was heavy but undisciplined. On the following days, the first line troops were in the field. They had excellent communications. Sam calls were driving us into the small arms threat. Ground fire was accurate and well disciplined. (ie they waited for the best opportunity. It would be quiet for hours and then the whole world would erupt.) The NVA were very definitely monitoring and jamming our communications.

In addition to having to fly on the missions, it was necessary that we do all the planning and coordinating between all the elements involved in the SAR. Debriefing was one place, then one had to go debrief the same thing to the Bिल्ks and Covey FAC's. There was no rest only constant pressure. Da Nang it not set up to handle anything even slightly out of the ordinary. There are no clear cut guidelines of responsibility set out for any of the many organizations who do become involved in a SAR effort. This should be a lesson, but the very same problem exists this very moment

Donald E. Morse

DONALD E. MORSE, Captain, USAF
Sandy 05, Fighter Pilot

Accomplishments (U)

(C) From 1 April 1972 to 30 June 1973, SAR forces in SEA were credited with 365 combat saves and 120 non-combat saves. ¹⁰⁹ Since 1966, SEA rescue forces have been credited with 2,713 combat saves and 1,253 non-combat saves. This is a combined total of almost 4,000 saves.

(U) The story of SAR is a complicated one as evidenced by the many organizations and types of equipment involved. To best show the interaction of these diverse elements and to demonstrate the important aspects and developments in SAR between 1 April 1972 and 30 June 1973, a number of SAR missions are summarized in the following mission narratives.

Mission Narratives (U)

(C) Bat 21. On 30 March 1972, the NVA began a major invasion of SVN. Three days after this invasion began, an SA-2 SAM downed Bat 21 (an EB-66) in Military Region I. Seventh Air Force established a "no fire zone" 27 kilometers in radius encompassing most of the 3d Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) area of operation (AO) and launched a massive SAR effort. ¹¹⁰

(C) This immense SAR effort, involving many different organizations, lasted from 2 April to 13 April 1972 and employed as many as 90 aircraft per day. During the SAR mission, two OV-10 FACs were lost to SA-2 missiles, and heavy small arms fire destroyed Jolly Green 65 of the 37th ARRSq, killing all six crewmembers. ¹¹¹

(C) After the 11-day SAR effort, the Bat 21 crewmember was rescued by a U.S. Marine team which arranged to secure the crewmember while he

was floating down the Cam Lo River in a Sampan. They transferred the crewmember to an armored personnel carrier which took him to a helicopter landing zone for evacuation to Da Nang. 112

(C) The success of the mission in rescuing the crewmember was shadowed by the loss of life, the expenditure of resources, and the criticism that the prolonged no fire zone designation gave an important advantage to the NVA. Major David A. Brookbank, 3d ARVN Liaison Officer Advisor, was on the scene during the rescue attempt. Major Brookbank 113 reported that:

(C) With three enemy divisions plus heavy artillery striking the AO, the 3d ARVN was unable to return fire or request TACAIR in the area. Some specific targets were struck after considerable delay in obtaining clearance. In my opinion this gave the enemy an opportunity unprecedented in the annals of warfare to advance at will. . . . This operations cost the 3d ARVN dearly in not being able to fire at known targets of urgent tactical importance. 114

Major Brookbank added: (U)

(S) Another SAR no fire zone was further northeast. . . . U.S. advisors on the bridges (in the area) could observe the tanks coming south but were unable to fire into the Seventh Air Force zone. After the zones were terminated, the enemy was already south of the Cua Viet and Mieu Gang rivers in strength.

(C) The Bat 21 operation demonstrated that circumstances on the battlefield dictate the amount of effort that should be diverted to a SAR mission. Brigadier General R. G. Cross, Jr., USAF, Deputy Director of Air Operations, MACV commented: 115

(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

On 2 April, one special problem on clearances to fire occurred when 7AF initiated a large scale Search and Rescue (SAR) effort, code named Bat 21, in the Cam Lo area. An EB-66 had been downed by an SA-2 missile. At first, 7AF set up a "no-fire" zone 27 KM in radius which virtually encompassed the entire area of operation (AO). With enemy divisions, including heavy artillery striking in the AO, the 3d ARVN were unable to return fire or request TACAIR in the area. Eventually, some specific targets were struck by air and ground artillery, but only after considerable delay in obtaining clearance. Although the "no-fire" zone was later reduced, the area covered the center of the main NVA offensive thrust. It was through this area that the enemy moved large concentrations of artillery, tanks, and infantry. Still, the advantage to which the enemy used the fire restriction can only be estimated. It is worth noting that extensive SAR fire support was directed against enemy targets ^{45/} in the restricted area.

The SAR mission was faced with new problems as a result of the NVA offensive. Because of the enemy environment, the normal SAR team could not operate effectively. As demonstrated in the Bat 21 mission, enemy artillery and weapon fire were serious threats to the slow-moving HH-53 Jolly Green helicopters, A-1 Sandy escort aircraft, and the OV-10 FACs. During the 11-day SAR effort (2 April to 13 April), SA-2 missiles downed two OV-10 FACs, and ground fire caused the loss of a Jolly Green and its ^{46/} entire crew. The enemy in the SAR area now numbered in the thousands. High caliber automatic weapons and even artillery replaced the normal

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ground fire. Consequently, the enemy threat dictated several changes in tactics. The suppression of enemy fire, previously handled by A-1 aircraft in a matter of hours, now required fast moving F-4 aircraft for perhaps days. The rescue attempts of a single EB-66 crewmember required as many as 90 TACAIR strikes per day to suppress enemy fire in order to enable the Sandy and Jolly Green team to rescue the survivor.

Despite such heroic efforts, air rescue was not possible in the Bat 21 effort, and the crewmember was eventually rescued on 13 April in a daring venture by a U.S. Marine team who arranged to secure the crewmember while he was floating down the Cam Lo River in a sampan. From this retrieval location, he was transferred to an armored personnel carrier and taken to a helicopter landing zone, where he was successfully air evacuated to DaNang. ^{47/}

The ultimate rescue, although not actually accomplished by the USAF SAR team, was nonetheless a dramatic demonstration of the contributions of air resources in rescuing downed crewmembers. The Bat 21 mission, which actually included several complementary missions, was possibly the most extensive SAR effort ever attempted in SEA by 7th Air Force. In addition to the normal SAR team components, it included TACAIR, reconnaissance (RECCE), and Arc Light missions.

However, the success of the SAR effort must be weighed against the effect this mission had on the overall situation in Quang Tri Province. According to Major Brookbank, "this SAR restriction gave the enemy an opportunity unprecedented in the annals of warfare to advance at will."

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The U.S. Marine advisors shared this opinion and asserted that the USAF requirement to impose a "no-fire" zone around the downed aircraft resulted in "a critical restriction upon the defensive fire support plan all along the Cam Lo River and Mai Loc Combat Base line."^{48/}

In another instance, a SAR "no-fire" zone was established near FSB C-1 and Route 1, about 8 KM north of the Cua Viet River. This route was being heavily used by NVA tanks moving toward Dong Ha. U.S. advisors on the bridge at Dong Ha could observe the tanks moving south but were unable to fire into the zone. After 7AF lifted the restriction, the enemy was already south of the area in strength.^{49/}

Another type of "no-fire" restriction was applied when short rounds or even possible short round reports were received. On 4 April, there was a reported short round striking a Vietnamese naval station located at the mouth of the Cua Viet River. A FAC had directed naval gunfire and subsequently TACAIR against seven enemy tanks fording a river. Four tanks were destroyed and three forced into retreat to the north. I-DASC called off the strikes when it somehow received word that friendly troops were being hit. The 3d Division TACP checked with the sector TACP and RF/PF forces in the area, and learned that only one man was wounded in the engagement and that the probable cause of the casualty was from NVA tank or artillery fire. Neither the 3d Division nor territorial force command was concerned about the incident.^{50/} It is easy to see how confusion could occur concerning short rounds during the beginning of the offensive. The

Dramatic Rescue Of 2 Crewmen Cost 7 Lives



Lt. Col. Iceal E. Hambleton is given a glass of water after being found near Dong Ha, South Vietnam, by a rescue team. He had hidden for 11 days behind enemy lines. (AP)

Compiled From AP and UPI

SAIGON — The biggest U.S. air rescue effort of the war, including the use of B52 bombers, paved the way for an American-led commando team to snatch two downed crewmen from the middle of a North Vietnamese invasion force after nearly two weeks.

In disclosing the rescue Friday, U.S. sources said it cost the lives of seven other airmen shot down and took a personal order from Gen. Creighton Abrams, the American commander, to use the giant B52 bombers as a diversionary ploy.

Despite a broken arm, a sprained back, lack of food and water, and his 52 years, one of the crewmen, Lt. Col. Iceal Hambleton, managed to evade North Vietnamese troops swarming across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) for 11 days. Sometimes they came within a few feet of his position.

Asked how he found the stamina to survive at his
(Continued on Back Page, Col. 2)

Dramatic U.S. Rescue Frees 2 Crewmen

(Continued From Page 1)
age, Hambleton replied: "because I did not want to be a war prisoner."

Hambleton was a navigator aboard an EB66, a modified bomber being used to jam North Vietnamese radar sites. The plane was hit by Communist fire April 2 just above the DMZ and Hambleton bailed out just on the South Vietnamese side of the border. The other five crewmen are listed as missing.

The other man rescued, Lt. Mark N. Clark of Los Angeles, was shot down April 3 in an OV10 spotter plane while participating in the search for Hambleton. Clark's copilot is missing and presumed dead.

A Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter was shot down April 6 during the search for the missing men, and all six of its crewmen were killed. Clark was rescued April 11 and Hambleton two days later, but meanwhile two other planes not connected with the search were shot down in the same area and their four crewmen were missing. The U.S. Command would not allow disclosure of the rescue of Hambleton and Clark until Friday, after the search for those four men was abandoned.

Both Clark and Hambleton were snatched from behind enemy lines in the Dong Ha area just below the DMZ by a volunteer team of South Vietnamese commandos led by U.S. Navy Lt. Tom Norris.

Informed sources said the

team used secret techniques which they were not at liberty to disclose. But they reported that Hambleton was taken out by sampan and floated downriver until the South Vietnamese lines were reached.

Norris said Hambleton used a pocket radio and continued to call in air strikes against enemy forces despite his injuries and weakened condition.

When the commando team reached him at midnight, he could not walk and was barely able to crawl to a nearby stream to wash his face.

Norris said the team was spotted by three North Vietnamese but managed to evade them. The Vietnamese members of the patrol said they made an all night sampan ride through enemy lines within sight of North Vietnamese tanks and troops to reach Hambleton.

The commando team and Hambleton made it back to a South Vietnamese tank unit just after dawn. He was flown to a hospital in Da Nang and then to Clark Air Base, the Philippines.

"Hambleton was surrounded by enemy forces during most of his ordeal," said one officer. "The search and rescue forces made repeated efforts to extract the men with no success. One problem was that they were caught in the North Vietnamese invasion across the DMZ. The enemy was passing through the area and it couldn't

have been worse. Many times the enemy search teams were within five feet."

The B52s made several raids in efforts to divert North Vietnamese troops away from the two downed airmen. It was the first time the eight-engine Stratofortresses were reported used in a rescue effort.

Officers said that in addition to the B52s, fighter-bombers and the biggest gunship the U.S. Air Force has, the four-engine, computerized AC130, flew constant cover for the operation.

Speaking of the rescue, Hambleton said, "It was a hell of a price to pay for one life. I'm very sorry."

Hambleton spoke to a newsman by telephone from his hospital ward at Clark AB, where he is recovering from his 11-day ordeal during which he lost 45 pounds.

Hambleton's plane was hit by a Russian built surface-to-air missile while flying just below the DMZ. He recalled that after the missile hit the middle of the plane "I was the first in rotation to bail out." He never saw the plane or the other five crew members again.

After hitting the ground "the first thing I did was look for a place to hide," Hambleton said.

Hambleton, who knew he was below the DMZ but also behind the lines of the invading North Vietnamese, landed with a radio transmitter, a broken wrist and

finger, and confident that someone would save him.

"I never ever lost hope," he said. "I knew I would come out of there."

It was almost dark and after finding a hiding place "in a little brush patch," the first thing he did was try out his radio. It worked.

For four days, as the U.S. command tried to figure a way to get to him, Hambleton stayed in his hiding place venturing out only at night to scrounge meals of banana stalks, green corn, berries and roots.

"Then it became apparent I would have to move so I began moving," he said. "We had to change tactics while they decided where I should go. They knew just where I was all the time."

For the next seven days, guided by instructions from his radio, Hambleton moved slowly and cautiously to a river rendezvous point.

North Vietnamese troops were constantly around him. At one point, Hambleton recalled, "They were within five feet of me. I just kept thinking how long it would take our guys to get me out of there. But I never lost hope."

To keep Communist troops from finding Hambleton, Abrams ordered B52 bombers, tactical fighter bombers and gunships into the area on a round-the-clock basis to batter Communist positions and keep the enemy off balance.

Pilot's Last Words: 'I'm Just a Decoy'

By STEWART KELLERMAN

QUANG TRI, Vietnam (UPI) — A downed U.S. Air Force pilot made his way through Communist-held jungle for 10 days, and on the 11th day, one helicopter after another sent to pick him up was shot down or damaged.

When last heard from, he radioed his would-be rescuers, "I'm just a decoy down here. Don't send any more planes. It's too dangerous."

Then he turned off his pocket-size radio transmitter or had it turned off for him. Military sources said Friday he was probably captured.

The sources declined to identify the pilot or say what plane he had been flying when he was shot down April 7 in the Communist-held portion of Quang Tri, South Vietnam's northernmost province.

North Vietnamese troops occupy the northern half of the province from the Demilitarized Zone down to the Cua Viet River. The Communists have moved heavy anti-aircraft defenses into the region, including Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles and radar-guided 37mm guns.

The sources said the pilot hid out in the rough, jungled hills of northern Quang Tri Province for 11 days, working his way south to flatlands where he could be picked up by rescue choppers.

He lived on food from his green survival flight vest and

used the vest's tiny radio to notify U.S. officials early Tuesday when he had reached what he considered a good place for a pick-up.

U.S. and South Vietnamese choppers went in again and again to pick up the pilot, but were turned back by heavy ground fire. A big American AC130 Spectre gunship and Allied fighter-bombers covered the rescue aircraft from above.

One South Vietnamese sky-raider fighter-bomber, two government Huey utility choppers, one U.S. Jolly Green Giant helicopter and one or two American Pedro choppers were damaged or downed by the Communists, the military sources said.

A U.S. Army air cavalry helicopter team was on the way to the scene, however, when radio contact with the downed pilot was lost.

"It's possible that he's still free," the sources said. "But it's highly unlikely. It's almost certain he was captured when he lost contact."