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Para 7C: 18, Mission 38ARS-950-20 Sep 65. The HC-54 on precautionary orbit was informed of the successful bail out of an F-105 pilot over North Vietnam. Two HH-43 helicopters were scrambled from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand along with two A1E's RESCAP aircraft from Udorn AB, Thailand. The HC-54 picked up the downed pilots beeper as the HH-43's and RESCAP were enroute to the incident site. The A1E's made low passes over the bail out area in an attempt to establish voice or visual contact with the survivor. They experienced no ground fire and felt they had the area the pilot was down in pinpointed. Soon after this, ground activity in the area increased. Troop movement was noted in adjacent areas and ground fire commenced, resulting in minor damage to one of the A1E's. Shortly after this red smoke was spotted, and one of the HH-43 helicopters proceeded in accompanied by A1E's. Visual contact was made with the downed pilot, when suddenly ground fire broke loose from all around the survivor's position. The HH-43 crashed while attempting to make a pickup. Hostile fire is thought to have been the cause of the crash. The second HH-43 that had been orbiting short of the pick up site immediately proceeded toward the crash scene. The helicopter crew jettisoned the internal auxiliary fuel tank to make room for survivors. They encountered ground fire enroute to the area and spotted the helicopter wreckage which seemed fairly well intact, on the first pass. As the helicopter positioned itself for a suitable approach to the pickup area it was under continuous ground fire and as it came to a hover 50 feet above the wreckage a massive and continuous barrage of automatic weapons fire erupted around the helicopter. A white pin flare was also observed at this time although no survivors were spotted. The helicopter was taking a series of hits at this time and initiated an immediate take off. Continual heavy fire was received for the next three minutes. The pararescue man was hit on his flak vest by flying debris but did not suffer any injury. Fuel was now running into the aft section of the cabin; however, the helicopter was able to return to Nakhon Phanom without further incident. The CAP aircraft remained on scene until darkness and reported vehicles and personnel moving into the area. The mission was suspended because of the high probability of additional hostile defense buildup which would make the area impenetrable for search and recovery forces the following day. The crew of the downed helicopter was Captain Thomas J. Curtis, 1st Lt Duane W. Martin, A1C William A. Robinson, A3C Arthur M. Black. The pilot of the second helicopter was Capt Richard A. Laine.

PARA 7D. Types and Nr of ARS acft lost: one HH-43B. ARS Men Wia KIA or MIA: 4 MIA.

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"TRUE TYPED COPY"

PARC

TACC Rescue Control Element
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
APO San Francisco 96237

Classification (cancelled) (changed to UNCLASS)
effective on 13-5-85 by 10/1 under the authority of
23 SEP 1965

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: TACC/1ST LT Head

SUBJECT: Narrative Report, Mission Number 950

TO: Hqs PARC, Hickam AFB Hawaii

On 20 September 1965, HO-54, Herod 30 was on a normal orbit mission number 950 at Lima Site 36. CH-30, Organ 85, was on ground alert also at Lima Site 36. At 0710Z Compress advised Herod 30 that Essex 4 was shot down and the pilot successfully bailed out at coordinates 18.06N-105.42E. Essex flight was remaining on the scene. At 0711Z Herod 30 was directed by Compress to proceed to the crash site via coordinates 17.38N - 105.38E where we would rendezvous with two HH-43 choppers, Duchy 22 and 41 out of Nakan Phanom, and two A-1E aircraft, Sandy 11 and 12 out of Udorn. We advised Organ 85 to remain on ground alert at Lima Site 36 and monitor HF radio. At approximately 0730Z UHF contact was made with Duchy 22 who was already in contact with Sandy flight. Duchy 22 and 41 with cover from Sandy was estimating the area at 0840Z and could remain on station fifty minutes. Herod 30 could make an orbit position eight miles south of the crash site at 0822Z. Top Rescap had previously been requested by Compress and were also enroute. At 0745Z UHF contact was made with Essex 3. He had the downed pilot's beeper on 243.0 loud and clear, but no voice contact. Hudson flight arrived at the crash site and was briefed on the area by Essex 3. Essex 1 and 2 were cycling on the tanker. At bingo fuel Essex 3 appointed Hudson 1 in command as fighter coordinator and went to recycle off the tanker. At 0813Z Hudson, who also had the beeper loud and clear, advised that his doppler indicated the coordinates as 18.00 - 105.41E. At 0820Z Herod 30 overtook Duchy and Sandy flights at 40NM on the 055 degree radial of CH65 TACAN (Nakan Phanom). We continued 15NM further to our orbit point. Herod 30 arrived on orbit at 0825Z and assumed role of on-scene commander. We orbited on 055 degrees between 55 and 65 NM CH65 TACAN at FL120. We advised Hudson when the choppers would arrive and of their limited time on station. Sidewinder flight arrived and was shown the area by Hudson. We briefed all fighters that we wanted a maximum effort to pin point the downed pilot's position and to determine if there was any ground fire prior to the choppers arrival. Duchy also talked to the fighters to clear any questions he had. All fighters plus Herod 30 had the beeper, but no voice contact. We requested Sidewinder to go to guard and attempt voice contact at low level over the area. No contact was made so we asked that he transmit in the blind on guard that choppers were enroute and for the downed pilot to show himself or signal by smoke or any other means possible when the choppers appeared over his position. This he did. At 0838Z Sandy 11 and 12 let down into the area. Sandy nor Sidewinder flights experienced any ground fire. They appeared to have the position pin pointed and

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Ded. 104 to 455 F Hoop March
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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DDO 01

DECLASSIFIED

12 MAY 1978

ARDC #654810

655308

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2 hrs 18 minutes
after notification
of outbreak.

DOWN GRAD TO AT 2 YEAR INTERV
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negative and Herod 30 requested light ordnance and especially rockets. At approximately 1045Z Herod 34 arrived in the area with Organ 85. TAC Command Post advised us to notify Oldsmobile not to expend, but to hold for escort of chopper if necessary. At 1110Z Herod 30 was advised by Sandy that it was getting too dark for further strikes or pickup attempt by Organ 85. Herod 30 determined another pickup attempt was not feasible. At 1113Z Compress advised Herod 30 they could not evaluate conditions, for us to use our own discretion. We advised Compress we would harass troops and keep aircraft over the area to discourage any ground search until total darkness. This would be a last resort to aid escape and evasion of the downed Essex 4 and possible survivors of HH-43 crash. At 1123Z Sandy spotted two possible strobe lights, approximately 100 yards apart, one mile from crash site. They were yellowish in color and ground fire plus darkness prevented thorough investigation. At 1130Z all aircraft departed for home bases.

s/Harry D Head
t/HARRY D. HEAD
1st Lt, USAF

Cy to: 38th Air Rescue Sq

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DO NOT REMOVE AT 10 YEAR INTERVALS
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ARODC # 654110

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ARSH-65

190

(U) Mission: 38ARS - 950 - 20 Sep 65²

(S) HH-43B helicopter, 62-4510, Duchey 41, piloted by Captain Thomas J. Curtis was shot down by hostile ground fire at 1635 hours at 18-01N 105-47E, 38 NM south of Vinh, North Viewnam and 10 NM inside the western border of that country, while attempting to rescue an Air Force F-105 pilot.

(S) Captain Curtis had launched at 1519 hours, accompanied by another HH-43B helicopter (Duchey 22), and by F-4C and two A-1E aircraft for top cover. His objective, an F-105 pilot, was still covered by two F-105s from the same flight, orbiting beneath clouds which were broken to overcast at 11,000 feet, and in rain showers. The downed pilot has been observed by his wing man prior to the arrival of the helicopters at 1641 hours. An intermittent radio beacon signal was heard, also.

(S) After their arrival in the area the HH-43B pilots orbited in a clear area until pilots of the combat air patrol (CAP) aircraft reported a good beacon fix and the sighting of a colored smoke signal. Captain Curtis flew to the indicated position and requested radio silence -- his last radio transmission.

2. Data obtained from mission reports in ARSCP files.

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ARSH-65

192

and was forced to designate the four men as missing in action (MIA) -- the first lost in the Southeast Asia conflict.

(S) The names and the home bases, from which they were on temporary duty to Det 1, 38th Air Rescue Squadron, at Nakhon Phanom Airport, Thailand, of all crew members of HH-43B, 62-4510, are given below:

Pilot:	Captain Thomas J. Curtis, Detachment 9, Central ARC England AFB, Louisiana
Copilot:	1st Lt Duane W. Martin, Detachment 9, Western ARC Portland International Airport, Oregon
Mechanic:	A1C William A. Robinson, Detachment 3, Central ARC Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota
Pararescueman:	A3C Arthur N. Black, 41st Air Rescue Squadron Hamilton AFB, California

(U) Mission 38ARS Udorn - 1110 - 6 Nov 65³

(S) The second loss of men and the third loss of an helicopter in a combat situation by ARS occurred on 6 November 1965, when Captain Warren R. Lilly went to the aid of Sandy 12, the pilot of an Air Force A-1E aircraft.

3. Data obtained from mission reports in Mission Folder 54 in ARSCP files.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

SPECIAL ORDER
GB-327

30 November 1965

1. DP, each of the following is awarded the Air Force Cross for extraordinary heroism while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force on the dates indicated:

MAJ DEAN A PROGREBA,

5 Oct 65

CAPT THOMAS J CURTIS,

20 Sep 65

CAPT LAWRENCE T HOLLAND,

12 Jun 65

1STLT DUANE W MARTIN, |

20 Sep 65

2LT ✓ A1C WILLIAM A ROBINSON,

20 Sep 65

A3C ARTHUR N BLACK,

20 Sep 65

2. DP, COL ROBERT T PEEL, FR2856, is awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service from 1 Jan 63 to 30 Nov 65.

3. Each of the following is awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for meritorious service during the period indicated:

LT COL EMIL W POLIVKA,

Oct 63 to 30 Nov 65

(FIRST OAK LEAF CLUSTER)

CWO (W-4) JOSEPH E BARRETT,

27 Jun 63 to 30 Nov 65

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE:



J. P. McCONNELL, General, U. S. Air Force
Chief of Staff

R J PUGH, Colonel, USAF
Director of Administrative Services

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