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MISSION NARRATIVE - 18 Jul 67

(S) (GP-4) Jolly Green 37 and Jolly Green 36 were scrambled from Lima Site 36 in Northern Laos at 0850 to the position 38 miles south of Hanoi where two Navy A-4 pilots had ejected. We were airborne at 0855 and set a direct course of 075° to the initial coordinates of 2033N, 10545E. ETA to the area was 1025 with a bingo fuel time of 1130. As we approached the Laos-North Vietnam border, we were instructed by Crown 4 to hold at the border until a Mig Cap could be obtained. We made two 360 degree turns at 9,000 feet until we were cleared to continue. Escort into the area was Sandy 3 and Sandy 4, A-1E aircraft. Jolly Green 37 did not have an operational Tacan and was navigating by pilotage and with the assistance of JG 36. Villages, roads, and rivers were avoided whenever possible but in many cases overflight was unavoidable. On one occasion, the crew reported ground fire from a village but the aircraft received no hits, and we pressed on. As we approached the survivor's area, we could see the SAR Cap aircraft delivering ordnance around his position which was on a karst formation just south of a large valley. This valley was reported to contain several anti-aircraft sites and two SAM sites. A large road runs from east to west in the valley about 1/4 miles from the position of Magicstone 6, the only survivor whose position had been pin-pointed. Big Mother 69, a Navy H-3 helicopter had arrived 15 minutes before us and was in the process of attempting a pick-up. Big Mother 69 reported taking hits while the Navy Lockets (ALHs) were attempting to suppress the fire. Then Big Mother 69 called out that she was taking a lot of fire and one of her crew members had been shot through the chest. They said they were breaking off the attempt and returning to their ship. We checked in with the Locket Aircraft and notified them we were starting our descent. Sandy 1 and 2 had reached bingo fuel and returned to base. Sandy 3 had radio difficulty and was unable to pass on very much information. All radios were saturated with transmissions and it was difficult to understand who was actually running the SAR mission. Locket 7 picked us up in the descent over the karst area and led us north towards the valley. About one ridge line prior to the valley Locket made a turn to the west, dipped her wing and said the survivor is on that mountain. The crew reported a lot of ground fire during the descent and again as we approached the survivor, we relayed this information to the AIs as we continued our approach. As we arrived at the hill where Magicstone 6 was evading enemy troops, we could see considerable ground fire coming from the next ridge line to the North and notified Locket of the enemy's position about 100 yards away. We had the right hill but still hadn't pin-pointed the survivor, so we were forced to start a search at 30 knots around the cone shaped karst. Radio contact was attempted with Magicstone 6 but we were unable to get him to give us smoke to mark his position. He did tell us when we passed his position so that we were able to make a hovering turn and to close in on his location. Then we heard automatic weapons fire, the aircraft shuddered and the crew said we were taking hits. We called this out to the Locket several times and he assured us he was rolling in on the positions around and below us. The Co-pilot caught a glimpse of the survivor and pointed out his position. We brought the aircraft to a hover as the RCC attempted to see him in the very dense jungle. Finally, he saw his face and hands amongst the trees and attempted to place the aircraft over him as he instructed the FE to start the hoist down. The

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25 JUL 1990

IAW AFR 205-2

(Date)

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ARDC#

670930

GROUP 4

~~SECRET~~DOWNGRADE AT 3 YEAR INTERVAL
DECLASSIFY AFTER 12 YEARS

67 AD 3550

67S-0129

264 #152337

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crew again called out that we were taking heavy ground fire but we elected to continue with the rescue attempt as the A-1s were circling overhead, attempting to suppress the enemy activity. With the penetrator on the way down, the Flight Engineer was finally able to see the survivor by leaning out the cabin door on his gunner's belt and looking straight down thru all the tall trees. His directions to the pilot resulted in the penetrator being placed directly in the survivor's reach. The survivor, Lt. JG Larry Duthie, got on the penetrator and gave us a thumbs up signal. We raised the helicopter straight up until he was clear of the trees and started an immediate exit from the area. As soon as we had Lt Duthie on board, we accelerated rapidly and stayed at tree top level until we were out of range of the ground fire. We climbed out to the SW and were well out of the immediate area when Magicstone 7 called to say that he had the second survivor, Magicstone 5 in sight and asked us to return. We checked our fuel and found that we could return to the area, hover for 5 minutes, and still get to the nearest safe site in Laos. We told Magicstone 7 that we were returning but we must be directed right to the survivor as we had no fuel to cover any delays. We descended back into the area but then could get no further contact with the Magicstone aircraft. We tried calling for any aircraft to give us directions but neither Bandmaster or ourselves were ever successful. We attempted contact with the survivor directly with no results. Migs were called in the area about this time, but none were sighted. When we hit bingo fuel, we started the return leg on a heading of 255°. Our Sandy escort aircraft had binged on our first departure from the area and JG 36 elected to stay and continue the search so we returned alone. JG 36 stayed in the area for an additional hour but had no further success. Crew coordination on this mission was very good. The pin-point navigation of the Co-Pilot, Lt Privette, got us into and out of the area with the minimum delay possible. The FE and PJ were very effective in their jobs and continued to keep me informed of the ground and air activity all through the mission. The weather was VFR with light broken cumulous 7000, to 14000 feet, located about 6 west of pickup area.

JOLLY GREEN 37 - Low Bird

RCC - Maj Glen P. York
RCCP - 1st Lt. Billy N. Privette
FE - SSgt Theodore A. Zerbe
PJ - A2C Randy S. McComb

Glen P. York

GLEN P. YORK, Major, USAF
RCC

Jolly Green 36 - High Bird

RCC - Capt Gregory A.M. Etzel ✓
RCCP - Capt Harry W. Walker
FE - A2C Daniel L. Allen
PJ - TSgt Kerry Kelly

Downgraded to CONFIDENTIAL
35 JUL 1970 IAW AFR 203-2
(Date)

Classified by _____
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS. 7 FEB 1977
DECLASSIFIED ON _____

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Det 1, 37th ARRS, History, Jul - Sep 67.

2. (S)(GP 4) Maj William Lloyd, Lieutenant Andrew Gonos, A1C Ronald Malone, and A2C Luther Davis picked up Capt Robert Bennett, an Air Force F-105 pilot, in Thailand, on 6 July.
3. (S)(GP 4) On July 7, Capt Robert Svoboda, Capt Richard Orsini, SSgt Jerry Johnson, and A2C Patrick Allaire, picked up Mr. Rainville, Mr. Parker, and a Laotian Lieutenant from an Air America H-34, in Laos.
4. (S)(GP 4) Capt John Firse, Capt Clyde Fechser, SSgt Floyd Watson, and A2C Michael Fraboni, picked up Major Maurice Seavers, an Air Force F-105 pilot, in Laos, under fire, on 10 July.
5. (S)(GP 4) On 18 July, Major Glen York, Lieutenant Billy Privett, SSgt Theodore Zerbe, and A2C Randy McComb, rescued Lt. J. G. Larry J. Duthie, an Navy A-4 Pilot, under fire.
6. (S)(GP 4) Lt Col Warner A. Britton, Capt Harold Bradley, SSgt Floyd Watson, SSgt Harvey Keyes, and A2C Luther Davis, picked up Major Joseph Holder and SSgt Albert Sellers from an OLE, in Laos, on 21 July.
7. (S)(GP 4) On 28 July, Capt Evan Thompson, Lieutenant Edward Sichterman, SSgt Floyd Watson, TSgt Charley Smith, picked up Lt. Karl Richter, an Air Force F-105 pilot, in Laos.
8. (S)(GP 4) Capt Robert Dowdy, Major Edward Russell, SSgt Vincent Androwsky, and A2C David Sliger, picked up Capt John Bischoff, an Air Force F-105 pilot, in Laos, on 3 August.
9. (S)(GP 4) Capt Richard Orsini, Major Powell Moore, SSgt Vincent Quinn, and A2C David Sliger, picked up Capt Joseph Otto and Capt Loy Meeks, USAF RF-4C pilots, in Laos, on 7 August.
10. (S)(GP 4) Capt Robert Greer, Lieutenant Andrew Gonos, A1C Roger Graham, and MSgt Ted Hawkins, picked up Maj DeMarque and Lieutenant Piet, USAF F-4C pilots, in Thailand, on 23 August.
11. (S)(GP 4) Major Gerald Haynes, Major Richard Wagner, A1C William Jaynes, and A1C John Pighini, picked up Capt Shanon, an Air Force F-105 pilot, at night, in Thailand.
12. (S)(GP 4) Capt Evan Thompson, Major Powell Moore, SSgt James Brooks, and A2C Michael Fraboni, picked up Capt Patterson, an Air Force F-101 pilot, and McComb, a Jolly Green, Para-rescue Specialist, in Laos, under fire.

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Det , 37th ARRS, History, Jul-Sep 67.

CHRONOLOGY

- 3 Jul 67 - Capt Etzel, Capt Bradley, ALC Cotter and A2C Pighini made pickup number 182.
- 6 Jul 67 - Maj Lloyd, Lt Gonos, ALC Malone and A2C Davis made pickup number 183.
- 7 Jul 67 - Capt Svobada, Capt Orsini, SSgt Johnson, and A2C Allaire made pickups numbers 184, 185 and 186. General Benjamin Davis visited Jolly Greens.
- 10 Jul 67 - Capt Firse, Capt Fechser, SSgt Watson and A2C Fraboni made pickup number 187.
- 18 Jul 67 - Maj York, Lt Privette, SSgt Zerbe and A2C McCombe made pickup number 188.
- 20 Jul 67 - Capt Thompson and Capt Walker set up a static display for the Air America Wives.
- 21 Jul 67 - Lt Col Britton, Capt Bradley, SSgt Watson, SSgt Keyes and A2C Davis made pickups 189 and 190.
- 27 Jul 67 - Capt Thompson and Lt Sichterman set up a static display at Nakhon Phanom for Thai Intelligence Officers.
- 28 Jul 67 - Capt Thompson and Lt Sichterman, SSgt Watson and TSgt Smith made pickup number 191.
- 3 Aug 67 - Capt Dowdy, Maj Russell, SSgt Androwsky and A2C Sliger made pickup number 192.
- 7 Aug 67 - Capt Orsini, Maj Moore, SSgt Quinn and A2C Sliger made pickups numbers 193 and 194.
- 18 Aug 67 - Col Lovelady, ComMander, 3d ARRGp and Maj Ewing of PACAF Jungle Survival School arrived at Udorn.
- 20 Aug 67 - Col Lovelady presented DFC's to Maj Moore, Lt James, A2C Pighini, ALC Malone(Basic & 1st OLC), Capt Orsini (1st OLC) and A2C Banno(1st OLC).
- 23 Aug 67 - Capt Greer, Lt Gonos, ALC Graham and MSgt Hawkins made pickups numbers 195 and 196.

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Valor

By John L. Frisbee, Contributing Editor

Down in the Delta

The Air Force and Navy teamed up in one of the more dramatic rescues during the early months of the Vietnam War.

IT HAS been noted in earlier "Valor" stories that during the Vietnam War, USAF's Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service saved more than 3,800 lives. Of that number, 2,800 were US military, including 680 Naval aviators. This is a story about the rescue of one Navy pilot, Lt. j.g. Larry Duthie, downed by enemy ground fire near Nam Dinh in the Red River delta about forty-five miles southeast of Hanoi, on July 18, 1967.

The Navy had its own air rescue system, using carrier-based helicopters. When Lieutenant Duthie bailed out of his burning aircraft, his wingman alerted the carrier on emergency frequency. A Navy helicopter was dispatched to locate and pick up the downed pilot.

Almost simultaneously, the Air Force launched a search-and-rescue (SAR) force of two HH-3E helicopters escorted by four A-1E "Sandys" as backup to the Navy. The lead was flown by Maj. Glen York.

This was going to be a difficult and dangerous mission for all concerned. At the time, North Vietnam had about 7,000 AA guns and automatic weapons in the field, most of them in the north where Duthie had bailed out. There also were MiG fighter bases within seventy-five miles of the rescue site.

Navy pilots escorting their rescue helicopter located Lieutenant Duthie. As he was in reach of the rescue bird's forest penetrator, the helicopter took a burst of flak that killed one crew member, and the Navy rescuers had to pull out. In the meantime, Duthie's wingman, who had stayed in the area to cover his flight leader, was hit by ground fire and punched out a few miles from Duthie's position.

Now Sandys One and Two, who had arrived ahead of the HH-3Es, set about silencing enemy guns. A

MiG made one unsuccessful pass at the USAF on-site commander, Maj. Theodore Bronczyk (Sandy One). He jettisoned his bombs, rockets, and external fuel tanks in evasive action, then continued attacking the guns with his 20-mm cannons. With extensive battle damage and low on fuel, he and Sandy Two, flown by Capt. William Carr, were forced to depart.

After a pause to regroup the rescue force, Capt. Paul Sikorski, pilot of Sandy Three, assumed control of the rescue effort, with Capt. J. W. Kilbourne (Sandy Four) on his wing. Sikorski continued to lead Air Force and Navy planes in attacks on enemy gun positions, taking many hits but staying in the game. With enemy fire at least temporarily quieted, he called in Major York, who had been orbiting his HH-3E at 8,000 feet. York was well aware that he was flying into what the enemy troops believed would be his death trap. He knew

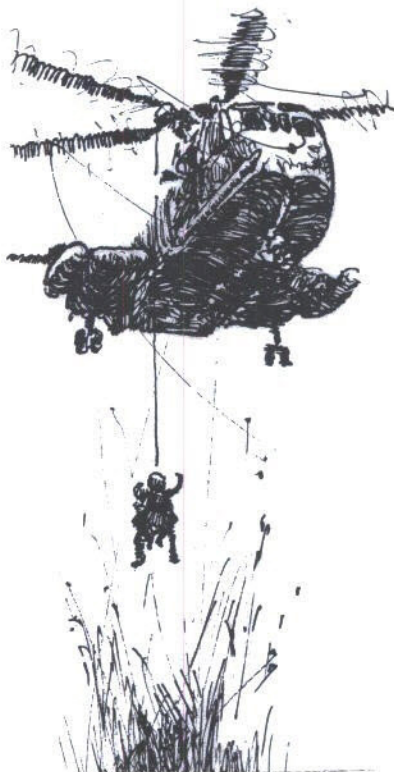
they were holding fire until his chopper hovered directly over their guns.

Major York broke his dive and slowed to thirty knots as he neared the hill where Duthie was hiding. The rescue force had lost voice contact with the Navy pilot, and as York circled the hill trying for a visual sighting, the enemy gunners zeroed in on his HH-3E. The huge Jolly Green, moving at a snail's pace just above the treetops, was a target that could not be missed. How much damage could it take?

As the seconds dragged toward what seemed imminent disaster, Major York's copilot, Lt. W. N. Privette, spotted Duthie through the jungle canopy. Enemy troops were only a few feet from him. York maneuvered the helicopter in a 180 degree turn and hovered over Duthie while the forest penetrator was lowered. As soon as Duthie was in the sling and clear of the trees, York moved out at full speed, using the terrain as cover.

At this point, Sandys Three and Four, critically low on fuel and with battle damage, had to head for home. Nevertheless, the rescue coordinator asked York to try for a pickup of the second Navy pilot. With unknown damage to his chopper and marginal fuel, York agreed. Escorted by Navy fighters, he flew into an even more hostile area, closer to Hanoi. The rescue force was driven off by the most intense fire they had seen that day. Major York headed for an emergency strip where he had to make an instrument approach in mountain terrain, homing on another aircraft. He landed with fuel lights on, a nose gear that would not extend, and a Navy pilot who would fly another day.

There were many heroes that day, when both Air Force and Navy men faced the concentrated enemy fire in Route Package Six-B. On the Air Force side, Major York was awarded the Air Force Cross. The other members of his crew and the four A-1E pilots all received the Silver Star for one of the most daring and dangerous deep-penetration missions flown in the early years of the Vietnam War. ■



AIR FORCE

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Published July 1992. For presentation on this web site, some Valor articles have been amended for accuracy.

[Return to Valor](#)

[Return to AIR FORCE Magazine](#)

1967 (cont)

11 Jun 67 wounded and the helicopter was heavily damaged before departure.
(cont) Captain Firse later received the Air Force Cross.

2 Jul- Captain Gregory A.M. Etzel, an HH-3 pilot from the 37th ARR
3 Jul 67 Squadron, rescued a downed F-105 pilot from a heavily defended
area in North Vietnam. Captain Etzel located the survivor on
2 July, but darkness prevented a rescue attempt. On 3 July
Captain Etzel returned with a rescue task force. After enemy
ground fire had been silenced, Captain Etzel went down and
hoisted the survivor aboard. Later Captain Etzel received the
Air Force Cross.

18 Jul 67 Two HH-3s assigned to the 37th ARR Squadron searched for two
downed Navy pilots located about 38 miles south of Hanoi. The
SAR task force, consisting of both Navy and Air Force aircraft,
located the survivors. A Navy H-3 suffered damage and was forced
to exit the area. Major Glen P. York and his HH-3 crew went
down through the enemy fire and hoisted one of the Navy pilots
aboard. Major York also contacted the second survivor, but fuel
approached a critical point and he was forced to leave. The
second ARRS HH-3, piloted by Captain Gregory Etzel, went down
but failed to locate the second survivor. Major York received
the Air Force Cross as a result of this mission.

8 Nov- Captain Gerald O.
9 Nov 67 Young, an HH-3 pilot
assigned to the 37th
ARR Squadron, won the
Medal of Honor while
participating in a
combat rescue mission
to recover a group of
United States soldiers
surrounded by enemy
forces near Khe Sanh,
Vietnam. Other mem-
bers of Captain
Young's crew were
posthumously awarded
the Air Force Cross.
They were: Captain
Ralph W. Brower, co-
pilot; Staff Sergeant
Eugene L. Clay, flight
engineer; and Sergeant
Larry W. Maysay,



*Captain Gerald O. Young was awarded
the Medal of Honor by President
Lyndon B. Johnson.*