

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
37TH AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SQUADRON (MAC)
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96337



REPLY TO
ATTN OF: 370

3 April 1968

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report (1-3-30, 30 Mar 68) (U)

Classified by
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED ON 3/1/84

TO: 37C *epk*
3rd ARRGp (JSARC)
IN TURN

1. (U) This report is submitted IAW ARRSN 55-2/3rd ARRGp Sup 1 dated 15 June 1967.

2. (C) At 0330Z Queen advised 37th Operations of a pending mission 19 miles west of Hue. JG 10 (1st Alert) and JG 24 (2nd Alert) crews were to be at Hue Phu Bai at 0430Z for a briefing on the mission. JG 07 (Low) and JG 25 (Hi) were advised to attend the briefing. All four JG crews were present at the 0430Z briefing.

a. The previous afternoon, a Marine H-46 (Space 1-5) had been shot down at 250/20/ch 69. In an attempted rescue, a UH-1B helicopter (Scarface 8-1) was also shot down. Still later, a second UH-1B was shot down after picking up some of the survivors. Finally at 29/1000Z, a fourth helicopter (H-46) was shot down attempting to locate the survivors. At the time of the briefing, it was believed that only 8 survivors remained alive and uncaptured. They were located near the scene of the first downed helicopter.

b. The briefing by the Marine pilots who had flown through the area all morning revealed that there was a heavy concentration of North Vietnamese regulars in the area surrounding the downed helicopters. There was ground fire directed toward the crash site from all directions and many of the guns were firing from protected positions. The crash site was ringed with hills from which many of the enemy guns were firing. The low ceilings of 800-1000 feet would make it necessary to fly below some of the peaks and across the heavily fortified roads at a very low altitude. The Marine briefing officer stated that it would be impossible to completely sterilize the crash area and that heavy ground fire could be expected.

c. It was determined that JG 10 would attempt the first rescue, then JG 24, JG 07, and JG 25. The area surrounding the survivors was to be saturated with ordnance prior to the recovery attempt. Falcon 21 was to be on scene commander.

3. (C) At 0600Z, all of the Jolly Greens departed Hue Phu Bai, accompanied by two Army Huey Cobras (Trouble 11 & 15). An orbit was established at 270/12/69 because of the low ceilings (800 ft to 1000 ft) in the entire

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year
intervals; declassified
after 12 years

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

Atch 6

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

area. The Jolly Greens were to orbit here until Falcon 23 decided the area was ready for a rescue attempt.

4. (C) At 0655Z, Falcon 23 advised that a Huey gunship had been shot while strafing the area and that his crew, with some critically wounded, had managed to join the other survivors. At 0700Z, Falcon 23 advised that a Medivac H-34 had attempted a landing and was also shot down and ground fire was being directed at the survivor's position from all four quadrants. At this time, JG 10 advised Crown 5 of the situation and that Falcon 23 would soon ask JG 10 to attempt a recovery.

5. (C) At 0705Z, Falcon 23 asked JG 10 to try to recover the 14 people, three of which were seriously wounded. JG 10 was directed into the area flying at 800-1000 ft up the valley because of the low ceiling. He was escorted by the two Huey Cobras. The survivors were located amidst the wreckage of six downed helicopters and voice contact was established. On the first attempted approach, the survivors advised JG 10 to go around because of the intense ground fire. JG 10 made an immediate 360° turn and the two Cobras rocketed and strafed the area from where the ground fire emanating. JG 10 began another approach, this time from the east and established a hover over the survivors. The two most seriously wounded were hoisted aboard and the hoist was lowered for a second time. The Cobras were directed by the copilot of JG 10 to saturate the surrounding area with ordnance, however, after several passes, they had expended most of their ordnance and they stopped firing. When the next two survivors were half way up, the FE called ground fire from the 2 o'clock and 4 o'clock positions. The Huey Cobras also called the ground fire and reported that hand held rocket fire was being directed at JG 10. When the survivors were near the door, JG 10 made a steep departure from the hover. The Cobras had seen ground fire but were out of ordnance and Falcon 23 had no other gunships immediately available. JG 10 advised Falcon 23 to get more ordnance on the area before attempting another recovery. Due to a shortage of fuel, fluctuating auxiliary servo pressure, and severely wounded on board, JG 10 climbed into the overcast and departed the area. First aid was administered to the survivors enroute to Hue Phu Bai. JG 10 landed at 0730Z.

6. (C) As JG 10 was making the pickup of his last two survivors, JG 24, while preparing to go in for a pickup, took ground fire orbiting at 270/12/69. It was a very loud airburst, but it could not be determined what type of weapon was used. The burst hit below the helicopter and pitched it up and forward violently, causing an erratic feedback through the controls. The crew immediately attempted to determine if there was any damage to the helicopter, but this could not be accomplished in the air, so the helicopter was flown back to CH-69 and quickly inspected. There was no visual damage and JG 24 returned to the orbit point to back up the other helicopters.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

7. (C) JG 07 entered the pickup area at approximately 0725Z, with two AEs for cover. The decision to go in was made because of the number of people still on the ground and JG 10 saying that he had only minor damage if any. When JG 07 approached the crash site, eight crashed helicopters were counted within the 300 yard radius of the valley, that was completely ringed by mountains. JG 07 came to a hover and the hoist was lowered to its limits and it was necessary for the helicopter to settle in the top of the trees so that the penetrator would reach the ground. While the first two survivors were being hoisted, JG 07 took ground fire (50-cal. small arms) and the helicopter sustained hits. It was also rocked by explosions from bombs being dropped by the AEs. JG 07 pulled up and flew in a circle while the FE brought the survivors inside the helicopter.

The FE examined the aircraft for damage, concluded it was minor, and suggested JG 07 go back for another pickup in spite of the fact that the survivors had advised that the helicopter was drawing heavy ground fire and should leave the area. The second approach and hover was made while the copilot directed the AE strikes at the ground fire positions that were visible to the left side of the aircraft, approximately 50 to 75 yards away. All ground fire ceased after these attacks. Two more survivors were hoisted aboard and JG 07 departed the area because of renewed ground fire and insufficient clearance to orbit while waiting for more fire suppression. JG 07 landed at Hue Phu Bai at 0748Z, and found holes in the rotor blade, an extensive hole in the left side of the helicopter and a small caliber hole through the tail boom.

8. (C) At 0730Z, as JG 07 departed the pickup area, Falcon 21 led JG 25 into the recovery area. Falcon 23 was orbiting over the crash site along with two Spads (AEs) and when JG 25 arrived on scene, Falcon 23 pointed out the location of the survivors, at the scene of their crashed helicopters. JG 25 executed at 360° tactical approach which terminated in a treetop hover over the six survivors. The hoist with forest penetrator attached, was lowered to the jungle floor. It was necessary to lower it three times, picking up two survivors each time. Ground fire was heard by the JG crew while hovering, but its exact location could not be determined. However, the Spads, at the direction of Falcon 23, kept up a continuous ordnance delivery, placing ordnance all around the area close enough to the helicopter for the concussion to be felt. To accomplish the pickup of the last two of the six survivors he rescued, it was necessary to hover at maximum power for 10 minutes, putting the helicopter right on the treetops with no power in reserve. Ground fire was adequately suppressed, allowing JG 25 to complete the pickup and depart the area at 0752Z. JG 25 landed at Hue Phu Bai at 0805Z, terminating the mission.

9. (U) Weather in the mission area was 800-1000 ft broken 2000 ft overcast, visibility four miles with haze. Crew coordination aboard the Jolly Greens was excellent throughout the mission. Ground fire was encountered in the orbit area and heavy ground fire, including rocket fire, was encountered in the SAR area.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals; declassified after 12 years