



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION, Headquarters Seventh Air Force
TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
APO San Francisco 96307

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
6-67-018

PARARESCUEMAN HAS BUSY THREE DAYS

Da Nang (7AF) --"The greatest job in the Air Force." That's the way a 25-year old native of Gilbertsville, N.Y., describes his job as a pararescueman in Vietnam.

Staff Sergeant John F. Tobey, is a veteran of 12 combat saves during his 10 months in Vietnam. He is assigned to the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

During a recent three day period the sergeant was shot down, rescued by a U.S. Marine Corps helicopter crew and participated in the rescue of five USMC personnel.

It all started when an HH-43 helicopter of Detachment 7, 38th ARRS was scrambled to pick up four U.S. Marines who had been injured while on patrol 12 miles southwest of Da Nang.

"They were in mountainous terrain at about 3,000 foot altitude," the pararescueman explained. "We had to hover about 90 feet above them due to foliage. We lowered our jungle penetrator to them, but they had difficulty figuring out how to use it, so I suggested that I be lowered to give them aid," he said.

"We had the first three aboard and as the last guy was severely wounded I decided to ride up the hoist with him.

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DOWNED
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"We were at about tree-top level when a sniper raked the side of the chopper and it started losing power. The aircraft commander called for the hoist operator to let us down as he could not hover much longer.

"Our penetrator got hung in the trees, but I was able to get us loose without difficulty. I started unstrapping the wounded man from the penetrator before we hit the ground and got him off as soon we touched ground.

"I looked up and saw the chopper was just starting to settle in the trees. The aircraft commander at this time took the controls and threw it hard to the left in an effort to keep it from falling on top of us. It came down about 30 to 40 feet away.

"I ran to the chopper afraid of what I might find. The fuel was splashing out of it, but the pilot was able to get everything shut off before the fuel ignited. I called to the hoist operator who said he had a compound fracture of the left arm but could get out by himself.

"We got the rest of the people out of the chopper and while I was treating the wounded, a Marine patrol came in and set up a defensive perimeter.

"About an hour later a Marine Corps CH-46 helicopter came in to attempt the pickup. They were chased away after two of the crewmembers were injured by ground fire. A few moments later an HH-3E Jolly Green Giant from the 37th ARRS came in, escorted by two U.S. Army HU-1E gunships, to attempt the rescue. They were also forced to leave after one of the crew was injured by ground fire.

"By this time a cloud layer had rolled in and we were unable to call in any air strikes," Sergeant Tobey said.

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"We spent the night there. Between treating the patients as required and artillery fire all the way around our position to keep the enemy away, it was a sleepless night.

"The clouds lifted about 8:30 a.m. and a Marine chopper came in and was able to pick up our injured hoist operator and pilot and the most seriously wounded Marine before it was driven off by ground fire.

"We called for air strikes and received three Marine F-8 Crusaders loaded with 750-pound bombs. They dropped their ordnance where we thought the ground fire was coming from. After they finished their runs we called for another chopper which came in and picked up the rest of us without any resistance.

"While going up the sling the only thing I could think of was that I had stood right below and seen four helicopters take casualties. I knew if they started firing now they had me.

The next day Sergeant Tobey was a member of a Jolly Green Giant crew from the 37th when they were alerted to pick up five Marines who had gone down west of Hue.

"I was in the secondary bird that day," he recalled, "and after the lead helicopter was forced to leave after taking ground fire we went in and made the pickup," he continued.

"We brought the more severely injured up first and I was busy giving them first aid while they brought the rest of the downed crew up the hoist. We had the last two on the sling when the ground fire became more intense and we had to get out of there," he said. "The two Marines got quite a ride on the sling, but were unhurt," he concluded.

Pararescue Man Shot Down, Is Rescued, Then Saves 5

The Observer 5 July 1967

Da Nang (USAF) — Air Force Staff Sergeant John F. Tobey, a pararescueman with 12 combat saves to his credit, describes his work as "the greatest job in the Air Force."

The 25-year-old Gilbertsville, N.Y. native, assigned to the

37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, flies in HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters.

During one three day period Sergeant Tobey was shot down, rescued by another helicopter, and participated in the rescue

of five U.S. Marines. The action started when his rescue ship arrived in mountainous terrain 12 miles southwest of Da Nang to pick up four Marines who were injured while on patrol.

The chopper was forced to hover about 90 feet above the ground due to the dense foliage. Sergeant Tobey was lowered by cable to aid the injured men. Since the last man to board was badly injured, the sergeant rode the hoist with him.

"We were at about tree-top level when a sniper raked the side of the chopper and it started losing power. The hoist operator let us back down, as he could not hover much longer," related Sergeant Tobey.

"I saw the chopper was starting to settle in the trees. The aircraft commander threw it hard to the left to keep it from falling on top of us. It came down about 40 feet away."

The pilot, the crew and the injured men got free of the helicopter, and together with a Marine patrol which joined them, they set up a defensive perimeter.

An hour later a Marine Corps CH-46 helicopter attempted to rescue the men, but was chased away by ground fire after two of its crew were wounded. Moments later an HH-3E Jolly Green Giant with two Army Huey gunships as escorts came in to attempt the rescue. They were also forced to leave empty. A cloud layer rolled in and the group was forced to stay the night.

"Between treating patients and the artillery fire around our position used to keep the enemy away, it was a sleepless night," said Sergeant Tobey.

The next morning a Marine helicopter was able to get the most seriously wounded out before being driven off by ground fire. Air strikes were called in and three Marine F-8 Crusaders dropped 750-pound bombs on the enemy ground fire positions.

According to Sergeant Tobey, "After they finished their runs we called for another chopper which came in and picked up the rest of us without any resistance."



BUSY JOB—Sergeant Tobey adjusts sling on his aircraft, an HH-3E Jolly Green Giant. (USAF Photo)



Rescueman Has Busy Trip

DA NANG AB, Vietnam—"The greatest job in the Air Force!" That's the way a 25-year-old NCO describes his job as a pararescueman in Vietnam. SSgt John F. Tobey, assigned to the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq., has 12 combat saves in 10 months in Vietnam to his credit.

During a recent three-day period the sergeant was shot down, rescued by a U.S. Marine Corps helicopter crew and participated in the rescue of five USMC personnel.

It all started when an HH-43 of Detachment 7, 38th ARRS was scrambled to pick up four Marines who had been injured while on patrol 12 miles southwest of Da Nang.

"They were in mountainous terrain at about 3000-foot altitude," the pararescueman explained. "We had to hover 90-feet above them due to foliage. We lowered our jungle penetrator to them, but they had difficulty figuring out how to use it, so I suggested that

I be lowered to give them aid," he said.

"We had the first three aboard and as the last guy was severely wounded I decided to ride up the hoist with him.

"We were at about tree-top level when a sniper raked the side of the chopper and it started losing power. The aircraft commander called for the hoist operator to let us down as he could not hover much longer.

"Our penetrator got hung in the trees, but I was able to get us loose without difficulty. I started unstrapping the wounded man from the penetrator before we hit the ground and got him off as soon as we touched ground.

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the trees. The aircraft commander at this time took the controls and threw it hard to the left in an effort to keep it from falling on top of us. It came down about 30 to 40-feet away.

"We got the rest of the people out of the chopper and while I was treating the wounded, a Marine patrol came in and set up a defensive perimeter.

"About an hour later a Marine CH-46 came in to attempt the pickup, but was chased away after two of its crewmembers were injured by ground fire. A few moments later an HH-3E Jolly Green Giant from the 37th ARRS came in, escorted by two Army HU-1E gunships, but it also was forced to leave after one of the crew was injured by ground fire.

"We spent the night there. Between treating the patients as required and artillery fire all the way around our position to keep the enemy away, it was a sleepless night," he continued.

"We called for air strikes the next morning and received three Marine F-8s loaded with 750-pound bombs. After they finished their runs, another chopper came in and picked up the rest of us.

"While going up the sling the only thing I could think of was that I had stood right below and seen four helicopters take casualties. I knew if they started firing now they had me 'cold turkey'."

The next day Sergeant Tobey was a member of a Jolly Green Giant crew from the 37th when they were alerted to pick up five Marines who had gone down west of Hue.

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