

1971

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1971

The U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam continued during 1971 and by December the USAF was down to 277 fighter and strike aircraft and 28,791 personnel from a 1968 high of 737 aircraft and 54,434 personnel. The VNAF was now responsible for 70% of all air combat operations. Enemy guerrilla activity continued to be sporadic.

Because of reported firings by North Vietnamese air defense units at USAF unarmed reconnaissance planes, Washington directed the USAF to strike back. From February through September, USAF fighter-bombers attacked SAM sites, enemy road construction through the DMZ, and oil-storage facilities. Most of these missions were into southern North Vietnam, leaving Hanoi to continue its build-up in the north. By late in the year, the North Vietnamese AF had about 250 MIG's which had become a significant threat to U.S. flyers. As a result, Washington authorized the USAF and Navy to bomb the three MIG airfields in southern North Vietnam and on November 7-8, the U.S. "neutralized" these three bases.

Because of significant stockpiling by North Vietnam in the Laotian Panhandle, South Vietnam launched a military thrust on February 8, 1971. Its goals were to cross into Laos and cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail to thwart a planned North Vietnamese offensive. Aerial support by the U.S., provided by the USAF, Army, Navy, and Marines, was massive. On February 25, North Vietnam launched a counterattack and in the face of heavy opposition, the South Vietnamese Army withdrew from Laos. However, because of its heavy losses, North Vietnam had to postpone its scheduled offensive into South Vietnam.

Later in the year, the USAF began "Commando Hunt VII" into southern Laos. With new technology such as laser-guided bombs, infrared sensors, and night-vision equipment, attacks could be made day and night, under almost any weather conditions. The operation began on November 1 with strikes at several entry points from North Vietnam into Laos. The next phase was against traffic moving down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Communist activity continued within Cambodia and eventually the road from the capital, Phnom Penh, to its seaport, Kompong Som was cut. Supplies then had to be flown in or carried on ships up the Mekong River from South Vietnam. USAF and U.S. Army aircraft provided aerial

escort to river convoys and aerial support to ground operations of the Cambodian Army which nevertheless suffered repeated setbacks.

Excerpt from 3rd ARRGp History July-September 1971, chapter 4, page 12

To accomplish the combat SAR mission, rescue aircraft are strategically positioned throughout SEA to provide quick response for SAR missions. The HH-53C "Jolly Green" helicopters stand ground alerts and fly airborne orbits. The HC-130P "King" aircraft fly airborne orbits and serve as Airborne Mission Commanders (AMC). In addition, the HC-130s and HH-53s operate as a team using air-to-air refueling to provide rapid reaction time for SAR efforts. A-1E "Sandy" aircraft provide rescue escort (RESCORT) and fire suppression of hostile ground forces. HH-43F "Pedro" helicopters provide Local Base Rescue (LBR) and a SAR capability within a 75-nautical mile radius of their assigned base. The authorized force posture for 3rd ARRGp SAR aircraft are stationed as follows:

1. DaNang AB, RVN

(a) Ten NH-53C rescue helicopters call sign "Jolly Green", assigned to the 37th ARRSq.

(b) Two A-1s, call sign "Sandy 7 and 8" of the 56th Special Operations Wing's Forward Operating Location (FOL) are on daily alert to perform RESCORT duties.

2. Bien Hoa AB, RVN

Two HH-53C rescue helicopters, call sign "Jolly Green", positioned at the 37th ARRSq's FOL

3. Cam Ranh Bay AB, RVN

Eleven HC-130P aircraft, call sign "King", assigned to the 39th ARRSq. These aircraft also serve as aerial refueling tankers for the rescue helicopters.

4. Udorn RTAPD, Thailand

Three HC-130P rescue aircraft positioned at the 39th ARRSq's FOL.

5. Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand

(a) Four A-1s, call sign "Sandy 1 -4", from the 56th Special Operations Wing are on daily alert for RESCORT duties.

(b) Eleven HH-53C rescue helicopters, call sign "Jolly Green", assigned to the 40th ARRSq.

6. Ubon RTAFB Thailand

(a) Two HH-53C rescue helicopters, call sign "Jolly Green", positioned as the 40th ARRSq's, FOL.

(b) Two A-1s, call sign "Sandy 5 and 6, from the 56th Special Operations Wing are TDY from Nakhon Phanom RTAFB and are on daily alert to perform RESCORT duties.

7. HH-43F assigned 3rd ARRGp

The five detachments; Dets 3, 4, 5, 12, and 14 of the 3rd ARRGp which remained in SEA on 30 June 1972 performed the vital LBR function. They provided both local and area commanders with a frequently used aircrew recovery and first line medical evacuation capability, as well as the usual fire-suppression and vicinity rescue resource. They were located respectively at Ubon Airfield, Thailand; Korat RTAFB, Thailand; Udorn Airfield, Thailand; U-Tapao Airfield, Thailand; and Tan Son Nhut Airfield, RVN.

In addition, two HH-43F helicopters are stationed at both the 37th ARRSq and 40th ARRSq. While primarily utilized as LBR aircraft, when necessary and as requested by the JRCC, these helicopters perform combat ACR missions.

8. Other Available resources the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force, as required, are diverted to the SAR mission and become a part of the SAR Task Force (SARTF).

Resources of the 3ARRGp are fraggged as follows:

1. Four HC-130P aircraft are fraggged daily for the first light to last light orbits: one in the vicinity of Attopeu, Laos; and one in the vicinity of Paksane, Laos. In addition, an HC-130P stands 30-minute alert at Udorn from first light to 0300 hours the following morning for LNRS equipped helicopter escort/tanker, and one HC-130P stands 30-minute alert at Cam Ranh Bay from first light to last light. This latter aircraft is on 24-hour alert as a backup for use as an AMC or tanker, should the need arise; it reverts to a 45-minute alert posture from last light to first light.
2. Two HH-53C helicopters orbit over the Gulf of Tonkin south of the DMZ, as required. These helicopters are on station while U.S. reconnaissance aircraft are flying in the eastern half of Route Package 1 in North Vietnam. Route Package 1 is in North Vietnam above the DMZ and below 18° North.
3. Two HH-53C helicopters maintained on strip alert at Da Nang; they are on 15-minute strip alert from first light to last light (when not flying the orbit described in paragraph. 2 above). From last light to first light, the alert posture reverts to a 45-minute strip alert for the two aircraft.
4. Two HH-53C helicopters are maintained on 15-minute strip alert at Bien Hoa from first light to last light.
5. Two HH-53C helicopters are maintained on strip alert at Nakhon Phanom; they are on 15-minute strip alert every day from first light to last light (except for the airborne orbit over Central Laos during the last 2½ hours of daylight). This orbit is flown to insure rapid-reaction time before last light in the event a SAR effort is required.
6. Two HH-53C helicopters are maintained on strip alert at Ubon; they are on 15-minute strip alert from first light to last light (except for the airborne orbit over the Southern Laotian Panhandle during the last 2½ hours of daylight).
7. One HH-53C LNRS equipped helicopter is maintained on alert at NKP from 1500 to 0300 hours.
8. Two A-1 aircraft are on 15-minute strip alert at DaNang from first light to last light.
9. Four A-1 aircraft are on 15-minute strip alert at Nakhon Phanom from first light to last light. Two of these aircraft are fraggged to orbit with the "Jolly Greens" if they are airborne.
10. Two A-1 aircraft are on 15-minute strip alert at Ubon from first light to last light. These aircraft are fraggged to orbit with the "Jolly Greens" if they are airborne.

ARRS AOB p.113#7

January

2Jan71 RF-4 SAR Laos

Chris Hobson, Vietnam Air Losses – United States Air Force Navy and Marine Corps Fixed-Wing Aircraft Losses in Southeast Asia 1961-1973, (Hinkley: Midland Publishing, 2001) p. 211

F-4E 67-0359 469th TFW, USAF, Korat
Capt H D Wier (survived)

1Lt R K Brown (survived)

The first aircraft lost in the New Year was a Tiger FAC Phantom that was shot down while controlling a strike on the northern edge of the Plain of Jars. The aircraft was damaged by AAA as it dived on a group of trucks. Capt Wier headed southeast but he and his navigator had to eject just west of the Ban Ban Valley and was rescued by a USAF helicopter.

Christopher Robbins, The Ravens – Pilots of the Secret War in Laos, (Bangkok: Asia Books, 2000), p.299-301

On the second day of the new year, 1971, Chuck Engle was flying over the Plain of Jars when he heard over the radio that a Fast FAC in a Phantom, call sign Tiger, had been shot down just east of the 7/71 Split, the spot where the main route coming onto the Plain of Jars from the east split in two. It was an area which could no longer be worked by Ravens in light aircraft because of the quantity of heavy anti-aircraft guns that the enemy had moved into it. Guns powerful enough to bring down a high-flying F4. But Engle immediately headed toward the location of the downed aircraft, dropping below the thousand-foot overcast in order to conduct a methodical search for the missing crewmen.

After several sweeps over the road junction he saw the burning fighter below him. "Give me Voice or give me Beeper," he radioed, the standard call to a downed pilot. Within minutes he had made radio contact with two survivors, who told him that enemy patrols had already moved in toward them.

The first fighters on station were the Skyraiders, and although Engle brought them down below the overcast they were forced by the low ceiling to jettison their bombs along the road, but returned to strafe the area surrounding the survivors. Both Tigers reported that all three aircraft were taking heavy ground fire on each pass, but Engle continued to direct the fighters onto the smoke of his marking rockets to buy time while a search-and-rescue could be assembled.

More A-1s arrived, carrying CBU and strafe, and relieved their colleagues until one of the planes took a hit in the engine and was forced to break off and head for home. Two Phantoms, carrying "snakes and nape," high drag bombs and napalm, arrived next. They dropped their bombs on the road, unable to use them because of the proximity of enemy patrols to the survivors, and returned to use their napalm in close support. As they prepared to make their second pass the Tigers reported an enemy patrol moving directly toward them.

The problem of how to drop the napalm without hitting the Tigers was compounded by the steep hills rising on three sides of the survivors. The only possible route for attack was to fly directly over the Tigers, a course which demanded precision marking by the Raven and split-second timing for the drop by the fighters.

Engle took the O-1 down low and flew over the heads of the Tigers to fire a marking rocket at the foot of the hill in the direction from which the enemy were approaching. The Skyraiders followed on his tail, dropping their napalm to splash uphill until the end of the flame hit the smoke. It wiped out the enemy patrol and hit so close to the Tigers that a gob of burning nape splashed onto one's boots.

Engle continued to direct the fighters around the survivors, ringing them with burning napalm as a wall of protective fire. Only when he had fired all of his rockets and was low on fuel

did he return to base. That night he heard that it had grown dark before the Tigers could be picked up.

In the Raven hootch the general opinion was that the Tigers were SOL—shit out of luck. Engle's courage and accurate marking had bought them time, but the enemy would move in even more anti-aircraft guns overnight and surround the area. Anyone returning the following morning was going to be eaten alive by flak.

In case the men were forced to spend another day and night on the ground, two "survival" kits were prepared. Each one contained an M-16, bandoliers and clips of ammunition, hand grenades, a lined field jacket, gloves, a radio, batteries, food, and water. They were wrapped in a blanket and held together by nylon fiber packing tape. The plan was for a CIA Pilatus Porter to pre-position itself at Lima 35, and if anti-aircraft fire thwarted a successful SAR, the plane would make a high-speed, low altitude pass over the survivors at dusk the following day and kick out the bundles.

But Engle was in his O-1 at 4:30 A.M. to fly onto the plain. The same cloud deck as the previous day covered the area around the 7/71 Split, and he dived beneath the overcast to make contact with the survivors. They had suffered badly from exposure during the night, and reported that the enemy were all around them and closing in.

Two Phantoms, loaded with napalm and CBU-24, checked in at first light. Engle brought them down beneath the clouds, where they would be forced to operate in an extremely cramped arena. He told them to run parallel to the road, three hundred meters apart, and to drop their ordnance the moment he fired his smoke rocket. Their explosives fell within feet of the survivors.

Despite a barrage of anti-aircraft fire from the guns, which had been moved in overnight as predicted, Engle brought another set of Phantoms down through the clouds and continued to lay an ever-widening circle of ordnance around the survivors, forcing the enemy back. When the Jolly Green went in to make the pickup it looked as if the Tigers were on a barren island surrounded by a black sea of scorched ground. Both men were snatched from the ground alive.

Chuck Engle became the toast of fighter squadrons throughout Thailand, and his reputation reached its zenith. There was no question about Engle's courage, the Ravens agreed, but there were limits. The guy was crazy, people muttered, and there was more talk about his subconscious death wish. But Engle shrugged it all off, and swung the chain around his neck holding the bullet. It was simple—the enemy had taken their best shot and missed.

Note: Chuck Engle awarded the Silver Star for this mission

20Jan71

F-4E 67-0267

366 TFW, USAF, DaNang

Capt E A Warner (survived)

Maj H E Kiefer

A Phantom was hit by small arms fire seconds after it took off from DaNang and was climbing through 1000 feet. One of the aircrafts engines caught fire so Captain Warner turned the Phantom out over the sea and he and Major Kiefer ejected a few miles off the coast. They were both picked up safely by a USAF helicopter

Chris Hobson, Vietnam Air Losses – United States Air Force Navy and Marine Corps Fixed-Wing Aircraft Losses in Southeast Asia 1961-1973, (Hinkley: Midland Publishing, 2001) p. 211

37th Squadron Chalks up 600th Save

DaNang Airfield, Republic of Vietnam

The 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron chalked up “save” number 600 recently with the rescue of USAF Captain David A. Warner. Captain Warner and the second crewmember Major Herman E. Kiefer III, both of the 431st Tactical Fighter Squadron ejected from their F-4 Phantom fighter-bomber when it exploded and burned shortly after takeoff.

The jet fighter pilots were picked up by two HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopters from the 37th ARRSq. The aircraft commander of the first Super Jolly Green on the scene was Captain Garry H. Hoven. “We were returning to DaNang from another mission,” he said, “when we saw a fireball in the sky. At first we had no idea what it was so we went to investigate. Then my copilot spotted two parachutes and we radioed out that we were going in after them.”

We were circling when the pilots hit the water and our pararescuemen were already getting into their water gear. The pilots had been in the water less than two minutes when we made our pass and dropped the first PJ into the water. We immediately went over to the other downed pilot and dropped off another PJ,” related Captain Hoven.

The two pararescuemen were MSgt Malcom E. Williams and SSgt Joles C. Smith.

SEARCHER – Newsletter of the 41st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing, April 1971, p. 1

20 JAN	HOVEN	71	599	HERMAN KIEFER, MAJ	16-07N, 108-33E	NO
	WALDER				GUN FIGHTER 03B	
	KRILETICH			421TFS, APO 96337		
	WILLIAMS					
	SMITH, J.C.					
20 JAN	MUDD	70	600	DAVID A. WARNER, CAPT	16-07N, 108-33E	NO
	MERCHANT				GUNFIGHTER 03A	
	WOLFE			421TFS, APO 96337		
	AVERY					
	PETTY					

37th ARRS Duty Officer's Log 1971, located at the USAF Museum archives, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio

13 Mar
Battle Cry 315 SAR USN

13Mar71 Battle Cry 315

Saturday, 13 March 1971: after two and a half months without any Navy aircraft combat losses (but six operational losses, five if them during landing and takeoff) an A-7E Corsair II from VA-113 based on the USS Ranger (CVA-61) was hit by AAA fire over a valley about 25 miles northwest of the infamous A Shau Valley.

The heavy fire came from area Oscar Eight, the code name for a transportation nexus containing a major road junction (highway 92 and 922) the Hoi An River, the control center for the Ho Chi Minh trail, headquarters for the 559th Transportation group, and the largest NVA storage facility outside of North Vietnam. It was festooned with expertly camouflaged defensive guns, from small arms up through heavy caliber AA guns, some mounted on platforms in trees. Oscar Eight was a bad place; more American planes were downed in the Oscar Eight area than any comparably sized area in Laos.

His Corsair II's starboard wing sheared off by a 23mm hit, **Lt Barton Creed** just barely had time to eject from the violently gyrating plane, breaking a leg and a arm, but escaping alive. On the ground, he was able to communicate with his wingman circling him, who sounded the alarm for rescue forces. The on scene FAC, OV-10A Nail 34 immediately established Creed's correct position, and then marked a false location with smoke in an attempt to draw the enemy away from the immobile man's location.

Over the next several hours, Creed kept radio contact with the planes above him, while preparations were made for a rescue attempt.

Finally, after 11 suppression sorties of ordnance, Nail 34 reported no return fire. Creed told Nail he thought he might pass out, and motivated by this second factor Sandy lead [OSC] coordinated a pickup attempt. Lt Col Royal A. Brown Jr., commanding a HH-53C, Jolly 64 of the 40th ARRSq moved in for the pickup. He and his crew received light small arms fire as they ran in. Someone thought they saw movement in the grass about 100 feet from Creed's position, but Brown continued on into a hover over their survivor. The flight engineer, TSgt. Charles C. Jack, began lowering a rescue PJ by hoist and reported seeing Creed lying 10 feet from his parachute and waving a hand. The PJ was within 30 feet of the ground, suspended helpless between Heaven-&-Earth when the NVA sprang their ambush, opening small arms fire in a crossfire from northwest and northeast. The helicopter began to take hits immediately, wounding another PJ, Airman 1st Class Michael A. Curtis. Brown broke off the hover, streaming the suspended PJ below them as they withdrew from the area.

Brown was informed that Curtis had a flesh wound in the thigh, but was game to continue. Checking the hits on the aircraft and determining they were minor, Brown

reported that the enemy was within 100 to 150 yards of Creed and if he was not rescued immediately, he would be lost. He ventured that the Sandys could strafe that close to Creed and wanted to make another try ...right away.

As the Sandys rolled in strafing, Jolly 64 moved in, again taking small arms fire on the run in. Once more in the hover, one of Brown's three mini guns jammed, and a burst of AK-47 fire shattered the cockpit windscreen, hitting the co-pilot Maj. Frank J. Pehr. A round broke his femur and cut an artery and another hit his left hand. Pehr passed out, and Brown with copilot down, one gun jammed and taking more hits broke the hover and fled the vortex of fire, again without Creed.

Curtis, Jack, and another PJ, Airman 1st Class Seven Rhoady, pulled Petr from his seat, stopped the bleeding and started an IV. Brown headed the HH-53 for Quang Tri and better medical aid, escorted by Jolly 73.

HC-130E King 26 relieved King 24 and after three hours of additional suppression, four Sandys [two dispensing CBU smoke] escorted Jolly 73 in for the pickup. It was the 37th ARRSq turn in-the-barrel, with rescue crew commander Maj Donald L. Jensen having the honor of the second rescue attempt.

Again Jolly took light small arms fire on the run in, ceasing as the helicopter pulled into a hover over the chute, with no sign of Creed. Then heavy fire opened up from the south and east, no more than 200 feet away. Immediately a hit and severed all communications and no one could talk to or hear anyone else.

An engine fuel control also took a hit causing the engine to lose power and forcing the copilot Maj. William J. Osley to employ the manual throttle control to keep it on line. Jensen, weighing these factors, as well as feeling the engine surges and hearing the guns faltering behind him, broke his hover and fled.

Once clear, Jensen discovered that two of his PJs were wounded: TSgts Eugene L. Nardi and Richard M. Crowley. He flew his ailing helicopter and crew to Quang Tri safely, while the flight engineer, SSgt. David Cutillo, and PJ Airman 1st Class Gust Dinos, tended Nardi and Crowley. With the two WIA PJs delivered to the dispensary, Jensen and his three fellow crewmembers counted 20 hits in the Jolly's main transmission, electronics compartment, rotor blades, auxiliary fuel tank, and the main cabin.

Two more Jollys arrived, numbers 60 and 62, but before they could be employed, Jolly 62 experienced an engine fire and had to shut down the number one engine and retire, escorted by Jolly 60.

After a total of 15 fast-mover strikes and the arrival of two more smoke A-1 Sandys, Sandy 09 [the new OSC lead] organized the third rescue attempt.

King 26 tried to get additional Sandys, but there were no more. He tried to get backup Jollys, but there was no more, and when he tried to get more fast-movers, none was available from Hillsboro, the EC-130E ABCCC airborne command post, and they were running out of daylight.

Smoke and CS gas were dispensed and Jolly 73, again from the 37th ARRSq [its crew in gas masks] began its approach in the twilights last glimmer, the sun having just set.

With full knowledge of the results of the two previous efforts, the pilot, Lt. Col. Harry S. Copperthite Jr., took his HH-53 northeast up the left side of a column of smoke, with Sandy calling for a hard right turn at the end of the smoke wall to find the rescue area ahead.

Numerous small fires and the smoke made for confusion, but Copperthite made the turn correctly. Jolly 73 flew right into another vortex of converging small arms fire and the bird was riddled by gunfire from right below them. MSgt. James D. Scott, the senior PJ was immediately hit, as was Copperthite himself. He aborted the run and turned into the smoke wall for concealment. An engine rolled-back despite the best -1 emergency procedure efforts of the copilot, Capt. Donald G. Beattie, and flight engineer, TSgt. Alfred R. Priante.

Scott administered first aid to Copperthite and himself, assisted by the junior PJ Airman 1st Class Ervin A. Petty. Jolly 73, the third rescue helicopter to be stricken, managed to return to Quang Tri on its remaining engine and the crew was treated for injuries. They had not seen either Creed or his chute at the rescue scene.

The OSC Sandy lead realized he had not heard from Creed since before the first rescue attempt. Barton Creed's last radio call was *"Get me out now, get me out now! They are here"*.

After dark, a fourth attempt was made with an Air Force Jolly lowering a PJ to the jungle floor for a ground search. This audacious effort found no trace of Creed or of the enemy and the PJ was withdrawn without incident.

The original SAR Nail FAC went back looking for Creed the next morning and sighted his parachute about 500 meters from the previous days location. The parachute was spread out carefully, an overt advertisement that no evading airman would do. It was clearly a trap, and the bait was not taken. Sometimes the best and most courageous efforts are for naught.

Barton Creed was one of only two naval aviators lost in action in 1971, making his loss noteworthy for that. He was also notable on another grim list: he is one of four men known to have been held in captivity in Laos ...only a few of these POWs returned at the end of the war.

Creed's name was [reportedly] recorded in a National Security Agency (NSA) intercept opening the possibility he might still be alive. In addition to Creed, Air Force Capts. David Hrdlicka and Charles Shelton and civilian Eugene Debruin were known captives who were not returned at the end of hostilities. All are presumed dead now, two hundred ninety four others are missing in Laos, and 99 could have survived their crash but were not proven to have been captured and are still unaccounted for.

credit: LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND, by LCDR Tom Phillips, USN [via John David Birch, USN SAR swimmer]

Notes:

1. During this SAR the Jolly crews suffered several WIA that included one pilot, one copilot and four PJs

Copperthite P	Pehr CP	Curtis PJ	Scott PJ
		Nardi PJ	Crowley PJ

2. Have several mission reports on this SAR. Need to develop time line from above USN article. Then rewrite the narratives using the USAF reports.

28 March 71

Three of the PAVE IMP, Limited Night Recovery System (LNRS), modified HH-53's arrived at 40th ARRS Udorn. P23#3

A Vietnam Review, April–July 1971

United States policy toward Vietnam remained unchanged in 1971, President Nixon told the Congress in his foreign policy report on 25 February 1971. The “one irreducible objective” was “the opportunity for the South Vietnamese people to determine their own political future without outside interference.” To accomplish this purpose, the United States would continue to pursue a negotiated settlement. But, failing in that, the United States would transfer combat operations to the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces and withdraw US troops.

History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and The War in Vietnam 1971–1973*, Willard J. Webb and Walter S. Poole, Office of Joint History, Washington, DC 2007, p. 20

1-6 April 71

Lam Son 719 invasion of Laos

U.S. casualties in this operation included 253 KIA; 1149 WIA; 107 helicopters downed; 618 helicopters damaged; and 5 planes shot down.

9 April 71

Two 37th ARRS PJ's WIA during a SAR. A1C Petty seriously wounded when hit by .51 cal round through his right arm. SSgt Hackney took a round through his helmet resulting in a minor scalp wound. One Sandy downed and pilot KIA on same SAR.

17Apr71 SAR Laos 37th ARRS

Battle Cry 305 A-7E downed 17Apr71 rescued 18Apr71

37th ARRS HH-53 JG 65 15°22'N 107°01'E Laos

Pilot – Capt Walder, Glen W

Co-Pilot – Capt Gemmill, Otto G

FE – TSgt McKinney, Carlos J

PJ - A1C Moreno, Ralph R

PJ – A1C Zonker, Randy L

PJ – A1C Morris, Michael D

Survivor – Lt. Forman, Richard E

Note: Only the Jolly A/C was put in for a medal and he was awarded a DFC

Downed Navy Pilot Pulled Out of Laos

DA NANG (Special) - A U.S. Navy pilot was hauled out of dense Laotian jungle Sunday after spending 15 hours on the ground. Lt. Richard E. Forman, 28, flying from the USS Ranger, was shot down late Saturday about 20 miles into Laos. He was picked up by a crew from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq.

"I was making my third and final pass over the strike target when I was hit by the enemy fire. The aircraft burst into flames and went into uncontrolled flight, so ejected," Forman said. Forman described the area where he was shot down as having "rolling hills with a road winding through them. I landed in a pretty heavily vegetated area, so it was easy to find cover. Although he did not see any enemy troops in the area, the lieutenant received ground fire while parachuting down. He also said he could hear vehicle traffic on the road some distance away.

"Early in the morning I got quite a scare when I heard some noise in the bushes around me. At first, I thought the enemy was out looking for me. It really startled me when I found out it was just a bunch of wild turkeys," he said.

An Air Force forward air controller (FAC) from the 20th Tactical Air Support Sq., 1st Lt. Richard K. Ottem, 25, was directing the Navy pilot when he was hit, "The bullets ripped all along the belly of the aircraft," Ottem said, "but I saw a good chute and was able to make radio contact with the pilot after he had landed and found out he was all right." Although he was low on fuel, the FAC stayed over the downed pilot until another aircraft came in to relieve him. FACs maintained a constant vigil over the area throughout the night. Early the next morning Ottem returned to the area to resume the search and rescue effort. "I saw the chute go down and knew right where the man was, so I wanted to be there to help in the rescue effort," he said. "It was a great relief when I heard that he had been picked up."

"Surprisingly, the night seemed to go by pretty rapidly," Forman said, "The first thing in the morning, I saw the FACs accompanied by A-1 Skyraiders in the area, The A-1s, really saturated the area with their bombs." After the area had been saturated by the Skyraiders and jet fighter-bombers, an HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopter piloted by Capt. Glen W. Walder, 34, went in to make the pickup. Other crewmembers

on the rescue helicopter included Capt. Otto G. Gemmill co-pilot, TSgt Carlos J. McKinney flight engineer, and three pararescuemen A1C Ralph R. Moreno, A1C Randy L. Zonker, and A1C Michael D. Morris

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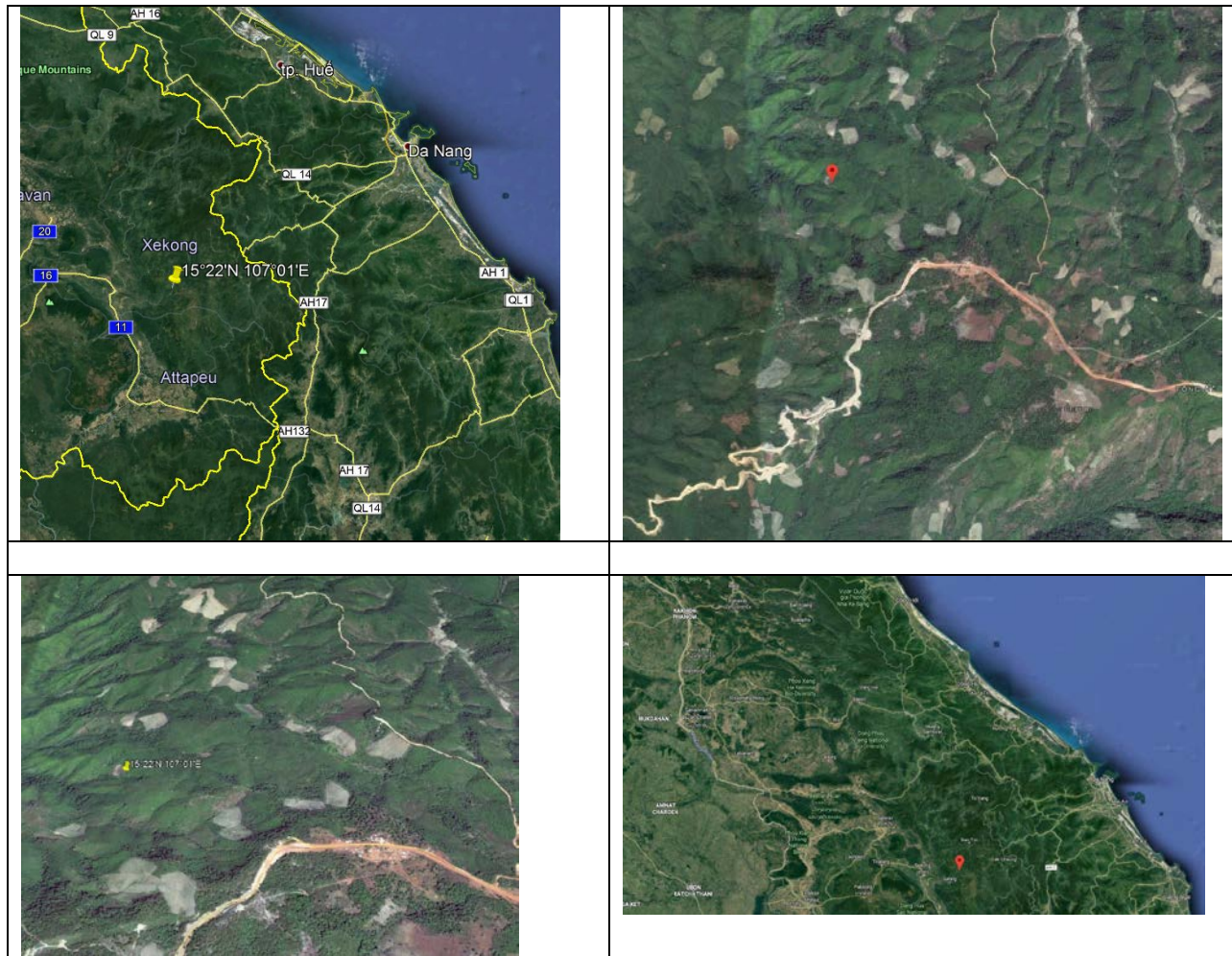
in to relieve him. FACs maintained a constant vigil over the area throughout the night.

Early the next morning Ottem returned to the area to resume the search and rescue effort. "I saw the chute go down and knew right where the man was, so I wanted to be there to help in the rescue effort," he said. "It was a great relief when I heard that he had been picked up."

"Surprisingly, the night seemed to go by pretty rapidly," Forman said. "The first thing in the morning I saw the FACs accompanied by A1 Skyraiders in the area. The A1s really saturated the area with their bombs."

After the area had been saturated by the Skyraiders and jet fighter-bombers, an HH53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopter piloted by Capt. Glen W. Walder, 34, went in to make the pickup.





22 April 71 16°25'N 104°56'E

40th ARRS rescues two F-4 pilots in Laos south of Savannakhet. (Wolf 07) took small arms fire in his fuel tanks and flamed out before he could hook up with his tanker. The crew bailed out and landed on the Laos side of the Mekong River. Two Jolly Greens were enroute to NKP to assume alert and were diverted for the pick-up. Both crew members were rescued successfully and returned to Ubon RTAFB, Thailand.

27 April 71 17°23'N 105°37'E

40th ARRS rescued two O-2 pilots: while flying a mission near Mu Gia Pass, an O-2 aircraft (Nail 83) was shot down by SAM late at night. A first light effort was organized. The first crew member was picked up with little difficulty. However, the second crew member, who had spent the night hanging in a tree, was blown from the tree into a crevice in the karst by the rotor wash. A PJ was sent down to assist him and he was also recovered successfully. Both pilots were returned to their home base at NKP.

28 June 71

Lt Col William E. Moore assumes command of the 37th ARRS. He relieves Lt Col Royal A. Brown who served 14 months with the 37th. Col Brown had assumed command of the 37th on 1 April 1971

30 June 71

38th ARRS at Tan Son Nhut deactivated. LBR units remaining in SEA become detachments of 3rd ARRGp.

June 1971

U.S. troop levels fell from 415,000 in June 1970, 239,000 in June 1971

July 1971

The final report of the Pave Imp Combat Evaluation Project was published in July. The combat evaluation of the HH-53 Pave Imp Project was accomplished at the 40th ARRSq at Udorn RTAFB. A total of 219.9 flying hours were expended during this 90 day evaluation. The evaluation concluded that the HH-53C LNRS possesses a limited capability to accomplish night rescue recoveries. This capability exists in a permissive environment over relatively flat terrain, under VFR conditions. To accomplish a LNRS recovery, the survivor must be in a relatively open area with an operational strobe light. The LNRS system does not provide an unlimited, all weather night recovery capability – nor was it planned to. However, it does provide a significant increase to our existing combat night recovery capability and should be utilized to the fullest extent possible within its capability.

The USAF Pave Low Project should be continued to improve the operational capabilities of the Pave Imp Project until an unrestricted all-weather night rescue helicopter is available in the USAF inventory.

Source = 3 ARRG History Jul-Sep71

Pave Nail OV-10'S arrive at NKP

Pave Nail were OV-10As with improved night and poor weather operational ability, as well as enhance precision strike capabilities. A stabilized nighttime periscope sight, LORAN navigation equipment, a combined laser rangefinder and target illuminator, and a Lear Siegler LORAN coordinator was installed. This combination of equipment was designated Pave Spot, and the aircraft was referred to as a Pave Nail aircraft (since the callsign for the 23rd TASS which flew them was *Nail*.) The equipment was housed in an external pod located underneath the rear crewmember's position. The aircraft could put a laser beam on a target for guiding laser-guided weapons, or an accompanying aircraft could make an offset attack. The Pave Nails were flown by the 23rd TASS and often flew in pairs, the high aircraft handling incoming attack aircraft and the low one illuminating targets and acting as the battlefield controller.

1 July 71

Hq MAC Special Order G228 deactivated the 38th ARRSq effective 1 July 1971. All SEA LBR's became detachments under the 3rd ARRGp.

5 July 71

Five airmen of the AF 366th Field Maintenance Squadron are KIA in a rocket attack on DaNang AB. 38 others were WIA.



9 July 71

Final report of LNRS system published by 40th ARRS. p24#3

List findings

List 7 AF recommendations to remove from theater p24#3

List final decision p25#3

21 July 71

40th ARRS and its HH-53's moved from Udorn RTAFT to Nakhon Phanom (NKP) some 150 miles ESE of Udorn. HQ PACAF Movement Order Number 15 (dated 2 July 1971) was the authority for the 40th ARRS relocation from Udorn RTAFB to Nakhon Phanom (NKP) RTAFB. Unit relocation effective on or about 21 July 1971. 40th ARRS completed relocation on 1 August 1971 and paragraph 1 of HQ MAC Special Order G-365 (dated 20 August 1971) made the announcement that the location of the 40th ARRS is NKP RTAFB.

21 July 71

An HH-53, Jolly Green 54, is shot down while attempting to recover a drone which has landed in Laos. The Jolly was tasked as a single ship and was crewed by Major Clyde Bennet, pilot, Captain Butch Robins, co-pilot, J.D. Adams, FE and PJ's Jon Hoberg and Chuck McGrath. These unmanned drones were used to conduct photo reconnaissance of high threat areas in North Vietnam and Laos. They were supposed to return for landing in friendly territory. Now and then, one would land in enemy territory. Because of high technology classified material on the drone, we tried to recover them in areas that did not appear to be too dangerous. This drone had landed in a small clearing just north of the PDJ. The plan on this date was to swoop on in, lower a PJ by hoist to the drone, the PJ would attach a sling on the drone, then the PJ would attach the other end of the sling to the cargo hook on the hovering HH-53. Finally the PJ would be recovered by hoist and we would fly the drone back to friendly control. Jon Hoberg was the lucky PJ for this mission and would get to ride the hoist. This mission, like many others, would not go according to plan.

While in a hover over the drone, with Sergeant Hoberg about 30 feet below the HH-53 on the forest penetrator, Jolly 54 took ground fire and was shot down. As the doomed helicopter was going down, the pilots punched off the tip tanks in an effort to lighten the HH-53 and save it from crashing. When the helicopter hit the ground, it rolled over a couple of times and ended upside down against some trees on the down slope side of the clearing. Major Bennet, Captain Robbins, and Sergeant Adams ended up near the helicopter. Sergeants Hoberg and McGrath ended up near the center of the clearing near the drone. The only positive thing about this whole unfortunate affair was that the HH-53 did not explode into a fireball after it crashed. This factor would result in all members of the downed Jolly surviving the crash.

An Air America Huey was in the area and came to the crash site to begin rescue operations. It did not have a hoist, so it came to a low hover near the wounded FE Sergeant Adams. J.D. grabbed the Huey skid and the Huey pilot conducted a low hover taxi dragging the FE to the middle of the clearing near the two PJ's. Turned out that J.D. had ruptured some disks in his spine. Sergeant Hoberg had also been injured during the crash. He had been dropped to the ground while sitting on the penetrator, he had also been hit by one of the rotors during the crash. I started an IV on Jon.

We got the Adams on the Huey and then Hoberg. McGrath passed Hoberg's IV bottle up to someone in the Huey and then got in himself to treat his injured teammates while enroute back to a friendly base. The Huey was overloaded and McGrath had to get off. Once off the helicopter, it spot turns, comes close to giving Chuck a crewcut with the tail rotor, and then successfully exits the crash site. About ten minutes later, an Air America H-34 comes to a hover and lowers a horse collar down on the hoist. Major Bennet went up, then Captain Robbins, and finally Sergeant McGrath. This was not going to be Chuck's best day on this earth. When he is about ten feet off the ground the hoist cable breaks, and he finds himself back at the crash site, this time alone. While taking stock of his situation, Chuck hears periodic ground fire. About 10-15 minutes later another H-34 arrives on scene, lowers a horse collar and rescues our intrepid PJ. All the helicopters recovered to Lima Site 54. When Sergeant McGrath arrives only Captain Robbins is still there. They both catch a ride back to Udorn on an Air America C-130. Upon arrival, they are ordered to the hospital where they spend one night in observation.

The next morning some A-1's were sent to Jolly 54's crash site to see if the drone or the HH-53 were recoverable. The A-1's were greeted with so much ground fire that they were ordered to destroy the Jolly and drone. The injured crewmembers Sergeants Adams and Hoberg are air evacuated for additional medical care. Major Bennet, Captain Adams and Sergeant McGrath are given a couple of days off, have a few beers at the Jolly Green Bar and are promptly put back into the flying schedule.

Jolly 54 folder

30 July 71

On 30 July 1971, the 40th ARRS loaded two of its HH-53B aircraft on an Air Force C-5A Galaxy and then flown to the 1550th ATTWg, Hill AFB, Utah. This was the first HH-53 reduction in the continuing drawdown of U.S. military forces from the Viet Nam War.

August 1971

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To accommodate increased VNAF activities in support of Vietnamization, the 37th ARRS at DaNang was ordered to relocate from their facilities on the west side of the base to facilities on the east side of the base. The DaNang west facilities included two hangers and nine revetted aircraft parking spaces.

Excerpt from the 11 August 1972 "Gunfighter Gazette"

Excerpt from the 11 August 1972 "Gunfighter Gazette"

Jolly's make another "feet wet" rescue

An Air Force Phantom jet was severely damaged by enemy groundfire about 15 miles southwest of Hue Wednesday. The crew managed to get the jet out over the ocean before ejecting. They were picked up almost immediately by a rescue helicopter from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at DaNang.

Describing the incident, Captain Jim Beavers, the F-4 pilot said, " We were hitting enemy troop locations about 15 miles southwest of Hue. I think we were hit with automatic weapons fire, the airplane still flew alright and we made for the ocean and turned for DaNang, however, my backseater, Lt. Andy Haskell, noticed a small fire. An explosion followed and we ejected."

The aircraft commander of the HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopter, Captain Dennis Boroczko, then said, "We were on another training flight when we got word of the plane in trouble, we saw the F-4 blow up and the F-4's wingman was circling over the survivors. We came in to the area and picked up both men. I don't think they were in the water more than 15 minutes."

The crew of the Jolly were Captain Dennis Boroczko, aircraft commander; Lt. Jack Stice (Coast Guard), co-pilot; Sergeant Jimmie Cherry, flight engineer; and Sergeants Delbert Beauchamp, Mike Wagner, Robert LaPointe, Doug Wilson and Curtis Towne, Pararescuemen.

Excerpt from Hobson book "Vietnam Air Losses"

F-4D 65-0599 7 TFS, 49 TFW, USAF, Takhli
Capt J L Beavers (survived)
1Lt W A Haskell (survived)

A flight of Phantoms from Takhli was temporarily based at DaNang to provide close air support for friendly ground troops about 12 miles southwest of Hue. Capt Beavers was on his fourth pass dropping Mk82 bombs on enemy troops when his aircraft was hit by automatic weapons or small arms fire. The Phantom's rear fuselage caught fire and Capt Beavers headed out to sea where he and his WAS ejected about 15 miles north of DaNang. They were quickly picked up by a USAF SAR helicopter. Capt Beavers had been shot down while on a previous tour with the 12th TFW during a mission near Katum on 17 April 1969

Extract From Jolly Green Gazette

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Excerpt from Hobson book "Vietnam Air Losses"

9 August 1972

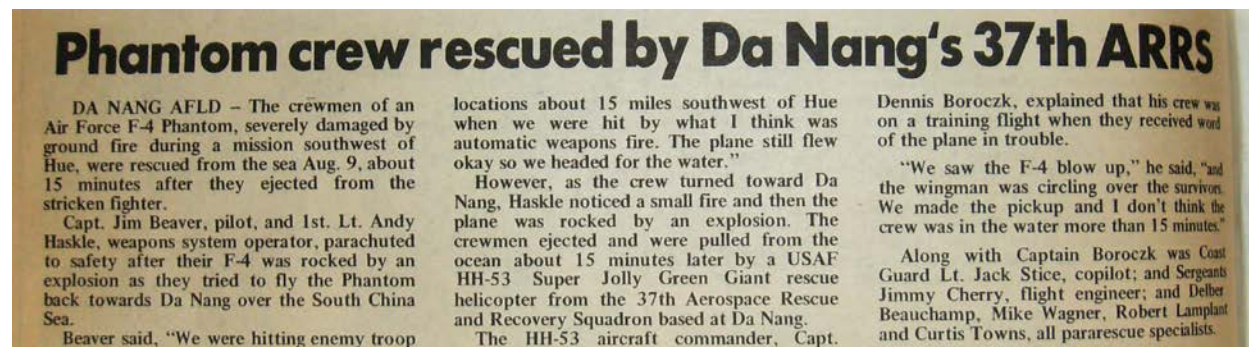
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Trainer Strike Again

Captain Boroczko and his faithful trainer crew were diligently training when low and behold who should pop out of the sky but an F-4 pilot and naviguessor. Full Lieutenant Stice was eager to cease training, but Capt B pressed on with "You're going the wrong way, Jack. The wind is out of the other north." While the Alpha crews were going through translational lift, King Somebody told the TRAINER to stop training and proceed to the downed crewmen. Chip light Cherry was ready with the hoist, while Doug Wilson and C.E. Towne got into their bathing suits. While Jack was figuring which way the wind was blowing, Denny B. came to a hover and began pulling out two more grateful aircrew members. The story has it that everyone on board got in the act. Mike Wagner and Bob LaPointe cheered the swimming PJ's as they paddled around the hostile water. The Alpha's did manage to get airborne in time to land with our heroic trainer. We must say that the whole crew reflected great credit on training and the United States Air Force.

Extract from Pacific Stars and Stripes



Phantom crew rescued by Da Nang's 37th ARRS

DA NANG AFLD – The crewmen of an Air Force F-4 Phantom, severely damaged by ground fire during a mission southwest of Hue, were rescued from the sea Aug. 9, about 15 minutes after they ejected from the stricken fighter.

Capt. Jim Beaver, pilot, and 1st. Lt. Andy Haskle, weapons system operator, parachuted to safety after their F-4 was rocked by an explosion as they tried to fly the Phantom back towards Da Nang over the South China Sea.

Beaver said, "We were hitting enemy troop locations about 15 miles southwest of Hue when we were hit by what I think was automatic weapons fire. The plane still flew okay so we headed for the water."

However, as the crew turned toward Da Nang, Haskle noticed a small fire and then the plane was rocked by an explosion. The crewmen ejected and were pulled from the ocean about 15 minutes later by a USAF HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopter from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron based at Da Nang.

The HH-53 aircraft commander, Capt. Dennis Boroczko, explained that his crew was on a training flight when they received word of the plane in trouble.

"We saw the F-4 blow up," he said, "and the wingman was circling over the survivors. We made the pickup and I don't think the crew was in the water more than 15 minutes."

Along with Captain Boroczko was Coast Guard Lt. Jack Stice, copilot; and Sergeants Jimmy Cherry, flight engineer; and Delber Beauchamp, Mike Wagner, Robert Lamplant and Curtis Towns, all pararescue specialists.

USE PERIOD SEPT THRU DEC TO EMPHASIZE THE ATTITUDE CHANGE AT 37TH FROM WARRIORS TO PENCIL PUSHERS

September 1971

Drug abuse program received increased attention from all level of command. No notice urine tests, nicknamed "Golden Flow" are common within my squadron. No PJs ever turned up positive while I was at the 37th but several support personnel were caught, counseled, and rehabilitated. Six drug related investigations were conducted resulting in one Article 15 and four administrative discharges.

A two hour course in drug abuse training continued to be given to all incoming personnel. All types of drugs were available at DaNang at very low prices. Amphetamines (called White Horses locally) and barbiturates (red devils) sold for five cents each. A 10x10x30 inch box of marijuana could be bought for twenty-five dollars. The same amount in the U.S. would cost \$50,000. Heroin is also a popular drug with the troops. Heroin sold in SEA is the finest in the world, being 98.5% pure. Purity of heroin in the U.S. was said to be only .5 percent. Heroin was usually snorted or smoke. Clearly, a person inclined to experiment with any kind of drug could

do so a minimum cost in Vietnam or Thailand¹. In spite of easy availability, drug use among aircrews was by choice relatively limited. If caught, you would immediately be removed from flying status. This penalty was usually sufficient to prevent drug use by aircrews. While I was in Vietnam, I never saw or heard of any rescue aircrew member using hard drugs. I did not witness but did suspect that a very small number of PJs may have been using marijuana. If they were, they were discreet enough to keep it out of sight and smell. I myself stayed completely away from illegal drugs. I would not do anything that could result in my losing my maroon beret and membership in the elite pararescue career field.

15 September 1971

HH-43 Pedro's become part of 40th ARRS

19 September 1971

Commander upset at PJs and FEs because someone is bending the safety pins on the new restraining belts on the HH-53. The PJs and FE's are concerned that in an emergency they will not be able to operate these new spring loaded safety pins. They would prefer to continue using the older safety restraining belts that do not have this addition safety pin. The old belts are better because they are easier to operate.

We are told to quit complaining and stop damaging the new belts. This issue will become a major point of contention in November when one of our HH-53s is shot down and crashes into a river. Several of the crew were unable to get the belts released and they drown.

30 September 71

37th ARRS HH-53's tasked to fly VIP (7th AF Vice Chief of Staff) to Monkey Mountain pad.

3 October 71

Pilots reminded that the quarterly unit history is due in final draft no later than 21 October

22-23 October 71

Typhoon Hester made landfall near DaNang with 105 MPH winds and heavy rains. The damage to DaNang was severe. 37th ARRS hanger and the operations section inside the hanger suffered major damage. The hanger doors, which were closed, were blown in at the bottom and forced against the inside wood operations section, knocking down an entire wall. Part of the hanger roof was blown away. The life support section was completely destroyed. Repair and clean up operations were started immediately by all available personnel. The damaged operations and life support section was rebuilt by members of the squadron and a temporary plastic covering put on the roof to prevent further water damage. By the middle of November, base Civil Engineers had repaired the hanger and everything was back to normal.

25 October thru 1 November 1971

3rd ARRGp commander Col. Britton conducts a staff assistance visit to the 37th ARRS.

37th ARRS commander wants OJT records maintained better. Record keeping of all types is becoming a priority at DaNang.

¹ 56th SOW History April – June 1972 Volume 1

27 Oct 71

More VIP visits today at the 37th ARRS and they will continue for the next three days. Personnel reminded to look sharp and be inspection ready. Commander wants a new Jolly sign out front of our hangers. PJs are told to improve the appearance of the latrine. Someone else was tasked to paint the ice box.

Ground Safety Meeting for all squadron members. Issues discussed:

- Speeding

- Use of motorcycles only by those certified IAW AFR 129-5

- FOD on ramp

Flight Safety Meeting followed immediately after ground safety.

Manual Control briefed all aircrew to keep their T.O.'s and manuals up to date

1 November 1971

37th ARRS reminds everyone that they must get their annual flu shot and continue to take their anti-malaria tablets

Det. 13, 3 ARRGp, Phu Cat deactivated. Their HH-43's reinforced Det. 14 3 ARRGp at Tan Son Nhut. P114#7

7th AF requests that twenty HH-53's be equipped with radar homing and warning equipment "RHAW" gear. P122#7

5 Nov 71

Det 13, 3 ARRGp deactivated at Phu Cat AB

8 Nov 71

VNAF H-34 shot down in Cambodia. 37th FOL at Bien Hoa scrambled two HH-53's.

SAR activity for the quarter started on 8 Nov 71 when Captain Rodney S. Griffith and crew were scrambled at the Bien Hoa FOL. The objective for the mission was a downed VNAF H-34 helicopter located deep in Cambodia. Enroute to the crash site the crew was advised that the survivors were in contact with the enemy and being forced to leave the wreckage. At this time the on scene commander, a Mike FAC, began putting the TAC Air provided by both fast and slow movers. Upon arrival in the SAR area the Jollys rendezvoused with two Ubon base sandy's who began preparing the area for the pickup at-attempt. Ordnance was placed within close proximity to the survivors, and a smoke screen laid between the survivors and known enemy positions.

At this time the Sandy's briefed the Jollys on the pickup and an ingress was initiated. As the Jolly approached the pickup point the crew vision became obscured by the smoke screen which drifted over the survivors location. At this time Sandy lead advised the Jolly to make an immediate egress from the area. As Capt Griffith began the pull, out the co-pilot spotted the survivors yellow smoke and red marker panel approximately 50 meters away. The helicopter was slowed and a landing made in a small clearing adjacent to the survivors markers. As the survivors scrambled on board through the aft ramp the Sandy's and Cobra gunships continued to expend around the pickup area. Ground fire was reported throughout the pickup phase, but was not observed by Capt Griffith and crew as a result of the smoke screen. Once the eight

survivors were safely on board a high speed low altitude egress from the area was made and the air craft recovered uneventfully at Bien Hoa AB. 8 combat saves credited.

source=37th History, Oct-Dec71

8 Nov 71

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, the JCS Chairman, arrived in Vietnam and personally approved a request from Lavelle to attack the MiG airfield at Dong Hoi. Moorer even reviewed the bomb damage assessment results that day, before departing Vietnam. Mission results also went to the Pentagon. Instead of questioning the mission, the JCS only suggested more careful planning. The January 26, 1972, message from Moorer, notifying Admiral McCain and General Abrams of the ROE change permitting strikes on GCI radars when hostile MiGs were airborne, contained a congratulatory note for the Dong Hoi raid.

"Meeting of President Nixon and the National Security Council," *The Nixon Tapes*, 367.

8-30 Nov 71

HQ ARRS will conduct a staff assistance visit to the 37th ARRS. All aircrew are told to be prepared for open and closed book tests on the HH-53.

12Nov71

On 12 Nov 71 Capt Griffith and crew were again scrambled from the Bien Hoa FOL. A VNAF UH-1F was reported down twenty miles northeast of Bien Hoa. A RASH FAC Briefed the Jollies on the situation while they proceeded to the area. An army hunter-killer team began preparing the area while the Jollies readied their aircraft for the rescue attempt. The survivors were located in the trees at the edge of a large clearing. Immediately upon arrival they were advised that the area had been thoroughly prepared and were cleared in for the pickup. An authoritative decent and power recovery to a landing was made in the immediate vicinity of the survivors who rapidly boarded through the crew entrance door. During the recovery, ground fire was reported north of the LZ but was never confirmed by the crew. Egress was made from the area and seven survivors brought safely back to Bien Hoa. Seven combat saves credited.

source=37th History, Oct-Dec71

18 Nov 71

General Everest visits 37th ARRS. Col Harris wants everything in the squadron squared away for the generals visit. Increased barracks inspections and standards. All of us troops are thrilled to have all of these visitors come to the 37th and disrupt our daily routines. The war seems to be over for our senior leadership because they are treating units (inspections, records, etc) in a war zone the same as stateside units.

During November, the 37th PJs and FE's were required to give up their airconditioned barracks and move to a modular barracks that was completely empty on the inside. The two story open bay structure was just a shell and required major repairs to make it livable. The PJs and FE's were required to do all of this maintenance while at the same time pull normal alert and training flights. We worked around the clock to partition off rooms using plywood and 2x4's. In spite of shortages in supplies they completely rebuilt the interior of the building. Base supply did not have any doors, so they had to be fabricated by the PJs for their rooms. Air conditioning was installed a couple of weeks later after electricians wired the barracks for the window mounted air

conditioners. The PJs and FE's spent virtually all of their off duty hours for two months in making their barracks livable.

20 Nov 71

A MiG took off from Dong Hoi and fired on a flight of B-52s with air-to-air missiles; the bombers managed to escape harm. General Bruce K. Holloway, the commander of Strategic Air Command (SAC) who controlled the B-52 fleet, then grounded all B-52s in Southeast Asia for 48 hours as a result of the apparent inability of Seventh Air Force to protect his bombers.

Lavelle oral history interview, 593-596

25 Nov 71

HH-53 shootdown. 37th ARRS A/C operating out of Bien Hoa FOL. 3 KIA, 1 MIA, 1 recovered by HH-43.

On 25 November 71 Jolly Green 70 and 73 were scrambled out of the Bien Hoa FOL for a Navy CH-46 shot down ninety miles south with twenty-one people on board. Major problems encountered enroute were navigation being hampered by low ceilings and poor visibility. As a result both aircraft, forced to fly at 100-300 feet AGL, were exposed to enemy ground fire as they approached the down helicopter. King advised the Jollies to withdraw to a safe holding point to await area preparation. Major Robert B. Swench the Alpha Low AC on Jolly Green 70 was advised that Dustoff and Sea Wolf helicopters had extracted seven injured survivors and that his assistance would be required to pickup the remaining personnel. Jolly Green 70 rendezvoused with SEA Wolf helicopter and was briefed on the SAR situation. Approach and landing at the crash site here without incidents and fourteen survivors taken on board. The Jollies proceeded to Binh Thy to unload the survivors and assess battle damage. Jolly Green 70 discovered five hits and Jolly Green 73 one, but the damage wasn't critical and the return to Bien Hoa was begun. The weather had deteriorated and both aircraft were again forced to fly low. After transiting through a heavy rain shower Capt. Richard L. Wall, Jolly Green 73 AC, lost all visual and radio contact with Jolly Green 70. A run through of all normal frequencies proved fruitless and Jolly Green 73 proceeded to Bien Hoa for fuel.

On the ground it was determined that Jolly Green 70 had crashed in the Son Nha Bhe River at the same position where visual contact had been lost. Several aircraft were already in the suspected SAR area and Jolly Green 73 launched to join them. Despite poor weather Capt Wall and crew spotted a survivor, Pararescueman AIC Richard L. Steed, on the river bank and an immediate pick-up was made" The search was continued and it was learned that a Navy helicopter had rescued the Flight Engineer, Sgt Hank L. Theriot, who had been taken to Vung Tau. Low fuel finally forced Capt Wall to return to Bien Hoa. Subsequent search and investigation revealed that Jolly Green 70 had been downed by enemy ground fire.

source=37th History, Oct-Dec71

TECHNICAL SERGEANT JAMES R. THOMAS/AIRMAN FIRST CLASS THOMAS D. PROSE. Sergeant Thomas and Airman Prose are crewmembers on an HH53 from the 37th ARRS at DaNang AB, RVN. The crew is on an airborne alert orbit near Bien Hoa, South Vietnam, and is returning to base. Believing the area to be relatively benign, they are flying just above a lazy, meandering, rice paddy-flanked river. Suddenly, enemy ground fire erupts, impacting the cockpit area. The pilot is immediately killed. Since the huge helicopter is so close to the surface, there is no time for the copilot to react. The helicopter noses over and crashes into the river. A SAR is immediately initiated with an accompanying air armada of close air support aircraft, gunships, and other Jolly Greens. The search for survivors lasts for several days, and in the process, all

bodies except Sergeant Thomas' is recovered. He is listed as killed in action/body not recovered.

A memento from the Vietnam Wall which is now displayed in the Museum of American History in Washington D.C. The unsigned handwritten note reads as follows: "fall 1971, 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery, Jolly Green Giants. Pararescuemen James Thomas and Thomas Prose were at Jolly Green FOL at Bien Hoa when they were scrambled to rescue the crew and PAX from a downed army Chinook in the Delta. After the successful recovery of the Army personnel to their base the HH-53 was returning to Bien Hoa, RVN when they were shot down and crashed and sank in the Na Be River. There were two survivors; PJ Rich Steed and FE Theriqux. The helicopter was raised by Navy barge but the shackle broke and it fell back into the river with the bodies still in their gunner belts. Due to the VC activity they remain there to this date."

29Nov71

A lunch time scramble at the Bien Hoa FOL sent Capt, Steven R, Tyler and crew heading for the hear t of Cambodia to rescue a downed American A-37 pilot on 29 Nov. Enroute to the scene all applicable checklists were run and both Jolly Greens were ready for the rescue attempt upon arrival at the Initial holding point. While the area was being prepared by both fast and slow moving TAC AIR the Jolly's were moved to a position almost directly over the SAR area. Capt Tyler was briefed and was making his final preparations for a run in when the survivor advised that there was intense ground fire in the area and that he was with a group of armed friendlies that could take him to a more secure area. After the survivor was relocated and it was determined that the area was relatively secure Capt Tyler initiated an authoritative descent a round clouds to a barren dirt field. The survivor boarded the aircraft and a near vertical departure was made from the area. The survivor was treated for second degree burns on his face, neck and arms during the return flight to Bien Hoa.

December 71

The 37th ARRS Pedro unit is located in separate facilities about a mile away from the Jolly Green hangers and operations sections. Their mission is to operated and maintain HH-43 helicopters for local base rescue and air evacuation of patients from DaNang to the Army Hospital located about 25 miles away at China Beach. The Pedro's maintain 24 hour alert with the capability of becoming airborne in three minutes during the day and in ten minutes at night. There geographical area of responsibility is a radius of 75 miles of DaNang Air Base. The Pedro's have a unique fire fighting capability using a sling loaded fire suppression kit (FSK). The FSK is essentially a very large, foam filled, fire extinguisher that is operated by two firemen who fly on the helo when the FSK is carried. The DaNang Pedro's had two HH-43 helicopters assigned to accomplish their missions.

In December 1971, the North Vietnamese succeeded in "netting" their various radar systems so that the GCI radars could provide tracking information to SAM sites.⁶⁸ As a result, the SAM operators now had to turn their Fan Song radars on for only an instant to gain a final position reading, which allowed the firing of missiles at the last possible second and minimized—or negated completely—the warning tone that pilots received in their headsets before missile launch. "Crews reported that in many of the SAM incidents they had little or no Fan Song RHAW indications prior to missile sighting," "It is apparent that the Fan Song was being activated almost simultaneously with missile launch, and that the SA-2 [missile] system was relying heavily on data provided by GCI and other search radar equipment."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Colonel Clifford M. Beaton, Seventh Air Force Director of Operational Intelligence, "End of Tour Report, 22 April 1971–23 April 1972," K740.131, AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, AL, Attachment 2, "The SA-2 Threat," 4. Beaton further observed that this "adjustment in North Vietnamese SAM tactics and techniques . . . reduces the warning time available to aircrews and gives the [SAM] site added protection from anti-radiation missiles."

We believe that this tactic was used in the shootdown of the F-105 and F-4 near Mu Gia pass on 10 and 17 December respectively. This tactic must be countered if we are to continue to operate within the SAM threat area. ⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Message, General Abrams to Admiral McCain, Info Admiral Moorer, General Ryan, General Clay, Admiral Clarey, and General Lavelle, 0405Z, January 6, 1972, Subject: "Iron Hand Expenditure,"

1 Dec 71

The 37th ARRS FOL at Bien Hoa deactivated and all aircraft and equipment returned to DaNang

Charlie Horse 14 an Army Huey is downed 12 miles south of the DMZ. Rescued by Jolly Green 21 and 73

4 December 71

37th FOL at Bien Hoa (2 HH-53's) closed and all 37th equipment and personnel returned to DaNang. This closure resulted in a decrease of 37th ARRS aircraft and aircrews. The number of HH-53's at the 37th DaNang stood at 8.

Det. 14 3 ARRGp, Tan Son Nhut, HH-43's begin daily rotations at Bien Hoa to provide local base rescue. P114#7

7 Dec 71

A mortar round hit officer quarters at DaNang causing 7 injuries. 2 serious. 37th ARRS Pedro 60 flew 2 sorties for medevac. 2 non combat saves

At 2315L the Pedro alert crew was notified by the 366th USAF Dispensary that explosions had occurred and several personnel received severe fragmentation injuries. The medevac was required due to the limited facilities at the 366th Dispensary, and the severity of the injuries. At 2345L Pedro 60 took off from Tango ramp, landing at the 366th pad at 2350L. The first patient was unloaded and a Flight Medical Officer accompanied the patient because of his critical condition. Takeoff was accomplished at 2354L and Pedro 50 landed at the 95th USA hospital at 2359L. The patient was offloaded and the doctor remained at the 95th. At 0003L Pedro 60 took off from the 95th pad and landed back at the 366th Dispensary at 0008L. The second patient was unloaded and Pedro 60 again lifted off for the 95th, landing there at 0015L.

The patient was offloaded and the flight surgeon got back in the helicopter and was taken back to the 366th Dispensary landing there at 0020L. Pedro 60 terminated this sortie at 0030L by landing at Tango ramp. The aircraft was serviced in anticipating the medevac of a third patient. The crew was notified at 0215L that it was necessary to medevac the third patient. Pedro 60 was started and took off from Tango ramp 0220L and landed at the 366th pad at 0225L. The patient was unloaded and Pedro 60 took off for the 95th USA hospital at 0230L where the patient was off loaded. Pedro 60 then returned to Tango ramp terminating the mission at 0250L. The aircraft was serviced and the alert crew assumed its alert status. Three noncombat saves were credited

to this mission.
37th ARRS History Oct-Dec71

10 Dec 71

Ashcan 01 SAR p58-62#3

18 Dec 71

Falcon 74 SAR p63-66#3

Gunfighter 82 SAR see folder for details

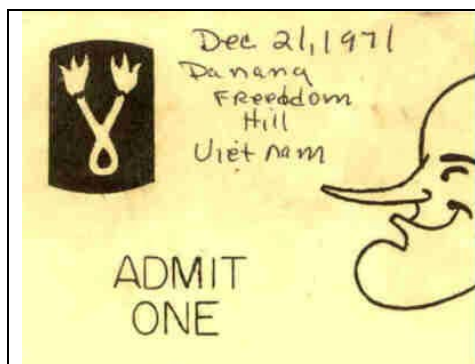
19 Dec 71

At 0035L the Pedro alert crew was notified by Queen Control that a Security Policeman had been shot and wounded by an enemy sniper and required a medevac to the 95th USA hospital. As a result of the wound the victim had sustained a compound fracture of the right femur further complicated by severe bleeding and extensive damage to the femoral nerve network. The aircraft was prepared for a medevac and departed from the alert pad at 0040L. After a short wait the patient was onloaded and takeoff accomplished at 0052L. Pedro 61 arrived at the 95th hospital at 0057L at which time the patient was delivered to awaiting attendants for immediate surgery. Departure was at 0130L and the mission terminated upon landing at the Pedro pad at 0110L. The attending physician stated that the patient required immediate surgery and facilities not available at the 366th Dispensary. One noncombat save was credited for this mission.
37th ARRS History Oct-Dec71

21 Dec 71

Bob Hope Christmas Show starred Jim Nabors, Vida Blue, and Les Brown and His Band of Renown.

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BOB HOPE AT U.S.O. SHOW AT
DA NANG DURING X-MAS 71





26-30 Dec 71 Operation Proud Deep

President Nixon decided to order airstrikes of his own. Dismayed by the continued North Vietnamese build-up just north of the DMZ, the President ordered a 5-day series of attacks dubbed *Operation Proud Deep*. Air Force and Navy fighters combined for 1,000 sorties that reached as far north as the 20th parallel, almost to North Vietnam's heartland. The initial purpose of the raids was to destroy 130-millimeter (mm) heavy artillery that the North Vietnamese had prepared to move south, but the targets expanded as the attacks continued, including the Quang Lang airfield. Dismal weather caused much of the bombing to occur through the clouds using radar techniques, and results were less than desired.⁵⁶ Once again, Nixon displayed his ability to take control of the air war at a moment's notice, perhaps hoping to indicate that he was willing to begin unrestrained bombing of the North.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Thompson, 203; Lavelle oral history interview, 618; Bernard C. Nalty, *Electronic Countermeasures in the Air War against North Vietnam 1965–1973* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1977), 78–80

⁵⁷ In his memoirs, Nixon stated that the *Proud Deep* attacks stemmed from the shelling of Saigon, in violation of the 1968 bombing halt agreement. The failure of North Vietnamese representative Le Duc Tho to meet with National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger in a secret November session during the Paris peace negotiations, followed by a lack of communication from Hanoi in December, likely spurred the airstrikes as well. See Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978), 584.

31Dec71

On 31 December 1971, Jolly Green 73 and 65 were launched from Da Nang AFB to recover two army helicopter crews downed in the vicinity of Khe Sahn. The crews had been briefed on the severity of hostile action in the area prior to takeoff. The Jollies held above a high overcast waiting for the Sandies to confirm that the pickup zone was ready. The Jollies were then advised to descend and establish themselves in a holding area several miles south of the survivors' position. It had been determined that even though several survivors were wounded it would be possible to use the Forest penetrator for the pickup. Sandy lead advised Capt Peter H. Chapman and crew that it looked good for the pickup attempt since no ground fire had been detected during the last thirty minutes and that varied ordnance had been expended around the survivors. Following Sandy 8 Jolly Green 73 made a high speed low altitude run in toward the pickup point. Shortly they were established in the hover and the penetrator only a few feet from the ground, heavy ground fire was received from all sides of the helicopter. As the ground fire intensified a moderate vibration and shuffle was felt in the aircraft. At this time JG 73 pulled off

from the hover and made a high speed egress from the area. JG 73 and JG 65 both returned to Da Nang safely after assessing the damage at Quang Trl.

As Jolly Green 73 and Jolly Green 65 were departing the SAR area the Bravo Alert Aircraft were launched from Da Nang. Enroute JG 21 and JG 66 were briefed on the SAR situation by Sandy 7, They were directed to a holding position in the vicinity of the Khe Sanh to await area sanitization, which was in part being directed by the survivors. An approach to the crash site was made detouring around concentrations of heavy enemy fire. Capt Rodney Griffith placed his aircraft directly over the downed aircrew and the stokes litter immediately deployed. Despite a heavy smokes screen laid down for cover JG 21 began receiving small arms fire from all sectors. The ground fire was returned by JG 21, the survivors and escort aircraft in the area. All seven survivors plus one KIA were hoisted aboard during a fifteen minute hover. After the survivor was aboard an immediate egress was made and course set for the 95th Medevac Hospital. Enroute the wounded survivor was treated for a serious head injury by the pararescue personnel. Seven combat saves.

This mission marked over seven hundred saves by the men of the 37th ARRS.

During the month of December, one 37th ARRS HH-53 was flown to Cam Ranh Bay for shipment back to CONUS via C-5 aircraft. This was part of the drawdown plan to remove U.S. forces from Vietnam.

During the 4th quarter of 1971, the 37th ARRS flew a total of 21,132 hours for the HH-53's and 4,416 hours for the HH-43's. The 37th manning was overall 87% and the main shortage was in PJs where only 22 were assigned for 30 authorized

Extract from end of tour report written by Col William E. Moore, Commander 37th ARRS
DaNang AB RVN – 12Jun thru 21Dec1971

"I believe we could have settled this conflict years ago by destroying strategic targets in North Vietnam. We have seen air power operate under the most adverse restrictions and have led our enemies to believe we will not use power available to us. They may be right. Mu Ghia, Ban Karai, and other passes should have been closed. Haiphong and other ports should have been blockaded or destroyed. The dikes and dams should have been destroyed. We have fought on the enemy's terms. We must force him to react to our tactics and strategy instead of us merely reacting to his."

"These ideas reflect the opinions of most of the officers and airmen in my command and though perhaps naive to the ramifications of such policies, would possibly save lives on both sides by achieving earlier termination of the conflict."

"The people working for me wanted to win, and those I knew in other commands wanted to win. Our tactics and strategy were dictated primarily by political considerations. I doubt that they are correct. I considered the performance of the men under my command to be absolutely superior, including the borderline pacifists and draft dodgers along with the patriots, who were by far in the majority. The big hangup for all of them was, "Why not win it?"



WILLIAM E. MOORE, Colonel, USAF

In SEA during 1971, 101 aircrew members were rescued under combat conditions , while another 29 were saved under non-combat conditions. During the same time period, ARRS saved 46 other people under combat conditions and saved 80 more non-aircrew under non-combat conditions.

U.S. Deaths in 1971 total 2,349 – 1,381 hostile, (59%); 968 non-hostile (41%); wounded in action total 4,767 hospitalized and 4,169 not hospitalized. U.S. troop strength at year end is 156,800

In the last several months of 1971, US and RVNAF commanders became aware of enemy preparations for a large-scale offensive. Various indicators revealed a logistical buildup designed to move supplies through the Laotian panhandle to forces in southern Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam.

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In addition to the interdiction in southern Laos, the United States also conducted air operations in northern Laos in 1971. The United States also continued to use its air resources in Southeast Asia for reconnaissance and the collection of intelligence and for search and rescue operations. The latter category was credited in 1971 with 250 “saves,” of which 142 were “combat saves.” History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Joint Chiefs of Staff and The War in Vietnam 1971–1973, Willard J. Webb and Walter S. Poole, Office of Joint History, Washington, DC 2007, p 107

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