

61-0135 MAHAT

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Ri #45056

55-⁹ 100

MISSION NARRATIVE 10 MAY 1966

2-3-53. 20WNG ADDED

153-2051

Jolly Green 56 and 51 were maintaining strip alert at L-59 and keeping listening watch on HF. Approximately 1500 local, we heard that a aircraft had been shot down in the vicinity of the Red River in North Vietnam. We then quickly plotted a course to the crash area located 21 56N 104 35E a few miles from the Red River and over 120 miles northeast of our takeoff point. Compress alerted us and directed us to proceed to the area at approximately 1503L. We were airborne at 1510L and proceeded north on our planned course. Our first heading was 015° for approximately 65 miles and then to a heading of 043° until reaching the area located approximately 35 to 40 miles from Communist China.

Our course naturally was dog legged to avoid hazardous areas and SAM sites. Our altitude most of the way up was between 8M and 10M. The 8M was not enough to clear the high mountains and ridges of North Vietnam. The cloud base was 8M over the entire course and required IFR flight for many miles through unfamiliar and mountainous terrain. We attempted to stay clear of most villages and crossed roads at right angles.

We arrived in the target area approximately 1615L and contacted the Sandy aircraft already in the area. They had located the pilot and had radio contact with him. We could also hear him on our guard frequency. Sandy aircraft said that there was no reported ground fire in the area. We flew over the area at a high altitude and switched to guard channel to talk to the downed pilot. He stated that he was injured and was unsure if he could get into the sling. We advised him that we would use the forest penetrator and told him how to use it. If he had not been able to get into the seat by himself we were prepared to lower the paramedic into the area to assist the injured pilot. Sandy aircraft dropped a white phosphorous bomb to pin point the area, determine winds, and to effectively seal off an entrance to the area. Once we had visual contact with the survivor, we proceeded to the pickup point which was in a densely tangled jungle type foliage and terrain in a very steep canyon. There was a very small clearing within the canyon to which we asked the survivor to proceed. The survivor had started a large fire in the area by accident when his flare landed in the brush. The fire caused thermals and up drafts which in turn caused available engine power to drop off. Auxiliary fuel tanks were jettisoned prior to our entrance into the confines of the canyon.

In order to position the helicopter for a hoist recovery, we had to hover sideways into the steep canyon. This maneuver, of course, caused the helicopter to be below the rims of the canyon and helpless from snipers shooting down at us. We had asked the pilot to climb to a better pickup area higher up the canyon walls, but he was injured and unable to walk up the steep canyon sides. Our helicopter mechanic along with the rest of the crew could hear sporadic automatic small arms fire but we could not determine the location. As far as we know, we did not receive any hits from these weapons. As we approached the survivor, we prepared the

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tree penetrator to its full length of cable(240 feet). The survivor attempted to reach the penetrator but could not. Since we had all the hoist cable out, we then had to lower the helicopter lower into the canyon in order for the hoist to reach the ground. We then had to plan our way out over the canyon walls with an additional man aboard the aircraft and already at topping power.

Upon recovery of the pilot we proceeded out of the area on a heading of 220°. Our paramedic administered first aid to the survivor as soon as we were clear of the area. He was badly bruised and had a severe sprain or broken arm.

Approximately 35 miles out⁴⁵ we were jumped by a flight of MIG type aircraft. Sandy 11 and 21 saw the aircraft also and advised the two Jolly Green's to hit the deck. Since we were quite high I flew into the clouds instead of taking to the ground. It was apparent that the hostile aircraft were interested in the Jolly Greens since they turned away from Sandy's 31 and 41 and flew in the opposite direction back to our position. A few minutes prior to the MIG alert, we saw large canister type containers falling to the ground at about our 3 o'clock position one to two miles. One container fell between the two Jolly Green's which were in trail positions. For a while, we thought that they were expended missiles. The F-4's maintaining MIG cap came to our rescue and gave chase to the MIGS and we were not further harassed.

Following this encounter, we proceeded to Lima Site 59 where we refueled. We departed L59 at 1900L and proceeded to Udorn through adverse weather conditions and local thunderstorms and landed at Udorn 2100 hours.

The F-4's did an excellent job keeping the MIG's from actually encountering the Jolly Green's and the two Sandy escorts. A word of praise to the Sandy aircraft in finding the downed pilot is certainly in order also, along with high praise for crown and TACC.

This recovery was number 13 for our crew and I would like to commend them for an outstanding accomplishment considering the distance traveled into North Vietnam. Also, Jolly Green 51 deserves much credit since they remained nearby throughout the mission.

Pilot recovered: Capt Martin N. Mahrt,

Low Bird-Jolly Green 56

RCC- Capt Robert D. Furman
CP - Capt Dale V. Hardy
HM - A1C Robert E. Crites
PJ - A2C John Dagnau

Frank J. Schmitt

ROBERT D. FURMAN
Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED

Or Changed to LICLTS
By Authority of LDS

By DS (Date) 13 May 75

High Bird-Jolly Green 51

RCC- 1/Lt Forrest M. Kinsey
CP - Capt Charles P. Bush
HM - SSgt Theodore M. Youngblood
PJ - A2C William D. Brotton

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13 May 75

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TUES MAY 66

HIGH
PRIORITY

Rescue Pilot Tells of 'Meeting' 2 Missiles

By JOE SCHNEIDER
S&S Vietnam Bureau Chief

TAN SON NHUT AB, Vietnam—How did you feel when you saw three deadly communist jet fighters bearing down on your unarmed helicopter?

"Slightly apprehensive," said Air Force Capt. Robert D. Furman with a grin.

Furman of the 38th Air Rescue and Recovery Sq. was the pilot of a helicopter that picked up a downed F-105 pilot fewer than 50 miles from the north Vietnam-communist China border Tuesday.

The three MIG-17s fired three Sidewinder-type missiles at the two "jolly green giant" helicopters that teamed up to rescue Air Force Capt. Martin H. Mahrt of Custer, S.D.

Furman said the first man in his helicopter to spot the MIGs was Capt. Dale V. Hardy of Enfield, N.H., the copilot. Others in the crew said they could see the silver bellies of the MIGs as they came within two miles and then saw "containers" shoot from the enemy aircraft.

It wasn't until they had landed that they learned they had been fired upon. The enemy planes were sighted about 35 to 45 miles away from the pickup area. The missile seemed to lose thrust and did not hit the choppers, other pilots said.

After the MIGs fired their missiles Air Force F4C Phantoms arrived. The communist planes fled before the Phantoms could close in.

Mahrt's plane was hit during a bombing raid about 80 miles northwest of Hanoi. He flew south before ejecting and was sighted by A1E Skyraider escort planes about 35-40 miles from the Republic of Vietnam border.

The Thunderchief pilot established contact with his rescuers and Furman descended in a canyon to pick up Mahrt who had been on the ground less than two hours. The second helicopter hovered above on emergency standby.

Furman said Mahrt had suffered "bumps and bruises" in bailing out of his stricken jet. He was able to jump aboard the chopper.

Mahrt was later treated and released at a medical center.

Furman said he could not remember

the rescued pilot's exact words upon being picked up except that he was highly elated and highly grateful for his ride home.

Furman, of Great Falls, Mont., has been flying helicopters most of his five years in the Air Force. He has flown 40 rescue missions since he arrived in Southeast Asia last October, including five pilot rescues "up north."

The chopper pilot seemed worried that he would get too much credit for the rescue.

He praised the downed pilot for "helping himself" and accurately guiding the rescuers in for the pickup.

He also praised the Skyraider and Phantom pilots and the pilot and crew of the second helicopter as well as his own crew.

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5. We received small arms and automatic weapons fire in the "low bird" during descent north of the immediate area so we moved across the ridge closer to the downed pilot. The descent was made in that area to avoid the heavy flak area in the valley south of the ridge where the pilot was down. We received no ground fire from the small bowl like valley where we were circling while making passes over the downed pilot until the pass just prior to hovering. However, the ground fire was far enough away that I did not feel we would be in any great danger in a hover. About the time we started pulling out of the hover we detected ground fire from a ridge about one third mile away. I called for the Sandys to suppress the area and we came back for one more pass over the parachute. As we passed directly over the parachute, we heard ground fire and got one round that came almost straight up through the forward fuel tank, between the PJ and Flight Mechanic, and dented the armor plate protecting the control rods. After that, we pulled out and returned. The PJ returned fire with his M-16 to the muzzle flashes of automatic weapons from the ridge across from the downed pilot.

6. As we were crossing the Red River, leaving the area, the "high bird", Jolly Green 54, was crossing about two miles down the river and started picking up heavy flak from 37 and possibly 57MM AAA. They turned back and crossed further up stream with no difficulty. They were not hit. Jolly Green 58 received two hits by small arms, one through the forward fuel tank and the other through the tail rotor and tail pylon.

6. The crew coordination, bravery, and performance was outstanding. The cooperation and support from Jolly Green 54 and fighter aircraft was the best.

LOW BIRD J658

RCC- Major Ealum L. Stearman
CP - Capt Charles P. Rush
HM - SSgt Theodore Youngblood
PJ - A2C William Brotton

Charles P. Rush
EALUM L. STEARMAN
Major, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

HIGH BIRD J654

RCC- Capt William R. Uhl
CP - 1/Lt Robert Letton
HM - TSgt Donald Jones
PJ - A2C Robert Ward

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