

62-4224

DECLASSIFIED

SECRET

Ref ID: 31556

32

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NARRATIVE OF RESCUE MISSION 30 JUNE 1966

MSN 2-3-82

Pilot Rescued: Captain Robin K. Nierste, F-105, Korat RTAFB

Coordinates: 18 13N 103 59 E

We were standing strip alert at Lima Site 98 with Jolly Green 56 as low bird and Jolly Green 55 as high bird. At 1430L we heard a call on the HF radio that Savannah 2, an F-105, had received battle damage and was headed in our direction, and to be prepared for a scramble. After two air starts, Savannah 2's engine flamed out for the third time. The third astart attempt was unsuccessful and we received word that he was bailing out. We scrambled immediately, contacted Crown 61, and they gave us the bailout position as 17 miles on the 131° radial of Channel 79. The position was later revised to 23 miles on the 111° radial. The cloud coverage of the entire area was very thick, with clouds down in the narrow valleys and completely covering most of the mountains and hills. Some of the buildups extended over 15,000 feet, and the 9,246' mountain peak was completely hidden. Upon arriving in the area of the downed pilot, we were advised that a Continental Porter, 'Butterfly 44' had voice contact with the downed pilot, but could not pin-point the survivor's location due to the thick cloud coverage. We established voice contact with the survivor but could not get a compass wing on his exact position due to the high cloud buildup directly over his position, extending all the way down onto the mountain. We found a "small sucker hole" in the overcast and let down with the visibility about 1/4 mile and ceiling from 0 to 150 feet. We worked our way up the valley in his direction at about 30 knots airspeed, with barely enough room for an 180° turn to get out. The survivor, Savannah 2, could hear our 'chopper' and kept telling us we were west of him. We kept working our way up the narrow valley and homed on his Beeper for about two miles, but ran into a dead-end cloud bank. The hole appeared to be closing in so we were forced to make a 180° turn and pull out. We told the survivor of our problem and he agreed to contact us in 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, the hole in the cloud had moved some distance north east of the first position and we again established contact with the pilot. After about 30 minutes of unsuccessful attempts to re-locate him, we asked him to give us another call after 30 minutes and to try to work his way east down the valley to a small clear area. After about 10 minutes, Jolly Green 55, the high bird, saw a small break in the clouds approximately over the downed pilot's position. The survivor saw the Jolly Green and activated his beeper. After getting a UHF-DF compass wing on him for the first time in two hours, we were able to pin-point his position. We then saw him fire a flare and reestablished voice contact with him. The MSL altitude of his position was 5,000 feet. He was on side of a 9,246' mountain at the end of a narrow valley with tall trees and very thick jungle growth surrounding him. For our helicopter, Jolly Green 56, to hover at this high altitude, we would have to jettison the tip tanks and dump fuel. We jettisoned the tips and dumped fuel for about 5 minutes, all of the time making a very tight turn due to the high mountain slopes on both sides. We dumped fuel until we could safely maintain a hover out of ground effect at our gross weight, increased our topping adjustment one revolution, and then set up our approach for the pick up. The pilot set off a red smoke flare and the ~~CLASSIFICATION~~ CANCELLED barely missing our helicopter, his last one. The hole was closing up and we had to

ARODC #

16C-2276

1A 1 AFR-208.2

13 MAY 66

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS

DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

DOD DIR 5200.10

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REF ID: A62474

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665-CC217

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g. Enemy action in target area: Heavy flak and moderate small arms fire from unknown source. The flak was suppressed by fighter bombers and the Sandys apparently suppressed the small arms fire.

h. The downed crewmember was uninjured, had bruises and scratches, but was able to get onto his penetrator-seat by himself.

i. Method of recovery: Hoist, penetrator-seat, hampered by foliage and thick growth of tall trees and vines.

j. Crew coordination: Excellent and as briefed.

k. Suggestions: Suggest a modification of the hoist be made as soon as possible to increase the speed of lowering and returning. It takes over three minutes to extend 240 feet of cable and even longer to retrieve it. During a hoist pickup in a combat zone such as this, it requires more than 5 minutes in a hover, while extremely vulnerable to snipers and other small arms fire. Also, suggest a better communications set-up between Compress, Rescue Alert and control tower so that scrambles may be expedited.

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL RESCUED: John D. Whipple, Captain, , 333 Tactical Fighter Squadron

LOW BIRD (JOLLY GREEN 54)

RCC, Captain Robert D. Furman
RCCP, Captain Dale V. Hardy
HM, A1C Robert E. Crites
PJ, A2C Franklin Stevenson

HIGH BIRD (JOLLY GREEN 58)

RCC, Major Ealam Stearman
RCCP, 1st Lt Dennis W. Stiles
HM, SSgt Theodore M. Youngblood
PJ, A2C William D. Brotton

Robert D. Furman

ROBERT D. FURMAN, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

11/ AF 2-275-2

25 MAY 1972

GROUP 4
Downgraded at 3 year intervals
Declassified after 12 years

5. CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED

Or Changed to UNCLASSIFIED

By Authority of 1-125
(Date) 13 May 75

66 RCLC 1331
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SC No. 662115