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SUPPORTING DOCUMENT 21

528

33

Mission Narrative Report (1-3-037-29 Mar 69)

(S) On 29 March 1969, Jolly Green 21 (low) and Jolly Green 22 (high) were on alert status at Da Nang AB. At 0340Z both aircraft were scrambled to pick up one survivor (Detroit Lead), located on the 090 radial for 22 nm from Channel 72. Jolly Green 21 took off at 0345Z, immediately followed by Jolly Green 22. Both aircraft were instructed to rendezvous with the Spads at a point 50 miles on the 250 degree radial from Channel 77. Jolly Green 21 and 22 climbed to an enroute altitude of 8500 feet on top of a broken layer of clouds with tops at approximately 7500 feet. In flight visibility was approximately four to five miles. Jolly Green 21 arrived at the rendezvous point at 0425Z and made radio contact with Spad 01 and Spad 02. Spad 01 advised that they had the survivor pin-pointed at 28½ miles on the 090 degree radial of channel 72. Spad 01 then cleared Jolly Green 21 and 22 to proceed from the rendezvous point to the pick-up area. Spad 02 proceeded out bound to intercept the helicopter and lead them into the area. Spad 01 remained with the survivor to sterilize the area. Visual contact could not be made between Spad 02 and Jolly Green 21 due to cloud coverage and limited visibility in haze. However, contact was made between Spad 01 and Jolly Green 21 approximately three miles to the east of the survivor as Jolly Green 21 was descending. Spad 01 advised Jolly Green 21 that he had radio contact with the survivor and that the survivor was not injured. He also directed Jolly Green 21 to stay to the north of the survivor because there were gun positions to the south. The terrain was extremely mountainous in the pick-up area with peaks ranging from 2000 to 7000 feet to the northeast. The survivor was situated in a ravine that ran generally from northwest to southeast. The ravine was shaped like a "V" with a box canyon at the northwest end forming a juncture of two ridge lines, the east and west boundaries of the ravine. The survivor was approximately 150 yards down into the ravine away from the top of the eastern ridge line. On the opposite side of the same ridge was a large clearing containing numerous houses or huts. Spad 01 reported that he had picked up no ground fire and cleared Jolly Green 21 in to pick up Detroit Lead. At this time Jolly Green 21 had voice contact with the survivor and jettisoned his tip tanks. Jolly Green 22 remained clear and set up an orbit at approximately 5000 feet MSL. Spad 01 preceeded Jolly Green 21 into the area and dropped napalm on the western side of the ravine. Then he told Detroit Lead to pop his smoke. The smoke was clearly visible to Jolly Green 21 and visual contact was made with the survivor's parachute and then the survivor. Jolly Green 21 made a right spiraling descent and came to a hover over the survivor at 0500Z. It was found that there was enough power available to hover, but not enough to hoist the survivor. A go-around was initiated and 600 more pounds of fuel were dumped, leaving Jolly Green 21 with 700 pounds of fuel in each internal tank. Jolly Green 21 made

69-37-119

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529

34

another approach and came to a hover over Detroit Lead. Meanwhile Spad 01 and Spad 02 had set up a "daisy-chain." Jolly Green 21 had to hover down in the ravine on a heading of 130 degrees with a quartering tail wind from the right. This was done in order to put the wall of the box canyon in the rear of the aircraft and allow for an avenue of escape down the ravine. In order to drop the penetrator to the survivor, the aircraft had to be positioned tightly against the slope of the ridge line. This put the slope on the left side of the aircraft which left the RCC with minimal hover references. Also, since the ridge to the left of Jolly Green 21 had a slope of approximately 60 degrees, the main rotor blades were extremely close to the side of the hill. The close proximity of the rotor blades to the hill side and the lack of hover references for the RCC necessitated close coordination between the RCC and the RCCP in order to maintain a stable hover. The pick-up was further complicated by turbulence caused by the wind blowing over the ridge lines and down through the ravine. The survivor came on board Jolly Green 21 after approximately seven minutes of hovering. Jolly Green 21 then began his departure in a south easterly direction, down the ravine escorted by Spad 01 and Spad 02. A left turn was made and Jolly Green departed the area on a north easterly heading accompanied by Jolly Green 22. At this time Jolly Green 21 made voice contact with Crown 6 and requested in-flight refueling. Since Jolly Green 21 had to dump an appreciable amount of fuel due to gross weight considerations for an GCE hover, it was doubtful that the mission could have been completed successfully without in-flight refueling. At 0530Z, Jolly Green rendezvoused with Crown 6 for fueling. Jolly Green 21 requested, and was given, 1000 pounds of fuel. Refueling was accomplished at 8500 feet without incident. Crown 6 was a definite asset to the accomplishment of the mission. The crew should be commended for their display of outstanding professionalism. Jolly Green 21 and 22 landed at Da Nang at 0600Z. The survivor, Detroit Lead, was not injured except for minor abrasions on his neck, sustained during bail out.

(U) Survivor: 1st Lt R. D. Stafford, FR3178314, 388 TFW, 34 TFS.

(U) Jolly Green Crewmembers:

JOLLY GREEN 21

RCC Major Robert E. Booth  
RCCP Capt Martin E. Richert  
FE Sgt Duane I. Beland  
PJ Sgt Stephen T. White

JOLLY GREEN 22

RCC Lt Col Henry E. Simpson Jr.  
RCCP Lt Col Homer H. Howell  
FE Ssgt James K. Hall  
PJ Ssgt Allen J. Avery

(U) Comments: Spad 01 did a superior job as On Scene Commander. His directions were explicit and there was never any doubt in anyone's mind as to what he wanted them to do. The planning and leadership displayed by Spad 01 contributed effectively to the success of this particular SAR mission.

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251

Date: 29 Mar 1969

31 Mar 1969

Mission Number: 11-3-037-29 Mar 69

Flight Designation: Crown 6

Distressed Aircraft: Detroit 01

Location: 090/28.5/72

Saves: 1, combat

1. At approximately 0340Z as Crown 6 was approaching orbit we heard Crown 4 talking to Spad 01 and Detroit 02. Detroit Lead had bailed out and Detroit 02 was in voice contact with him. Jolly Green 21 and 22 were scrambled and proceeded to an orbit point of 090/52/72. Spad 01 and 02 were in the area of the down pilot and Spad 01 was designated OSC. There was another mission on Guard just North of Detroit -1 and Crown 4 had to tell Spad 01 to stay off Guard till the other pickup was made (Larist 03).

2. Misty 31 and 41 were over Detroit's position and instructed by Crown to work with Spad 01 in the evaluation of the area. Crown 6 relieved Crown 4 and assumed command of SAR. Fast movers were requested in the event they were needed for gun suppression.

3. At 0424Z Spad 01 reported no activity in the area at all. Detroit Lead reported he was in good shape and had not heard any activity around him. Crown advised Spad 01 that it would be desirable to send Spad 02 out to escort the Jolly Greens into the area. Meanwhile Sandy 7, 8, 9 and 10 and Jolly Green 74 and 68 were launched from Channel 89. Gunfighter and Bobbin flights were available if needed. Tanker was coordinated.

4. Jolly Green 21 made the pickup after having some difficulty finding Detroit Lead and dumping fuel in order to hover for the pickup. Pickup accomplished at 0508Z while Spad 01 and 02 dropped ordnance around the survivor. Jolly Green 21 had requested refueling as soon as possible after pickup. Crown 6 was in descent while the pickup was being made and A/R was completed at 0528Z. Provided Jolly Green 21 and 22 with heading to DaNang.

5. Forces Utilized:

Spad 01 and 02

Jolly Green 21 and 22

Misty 31 and 41

Detroit 02

Orange Tanker

Spad 01 and 02 (Only ones to expend ordnance)

Despite faulty radio communications, Lt. Busico made contact with a rescue helicopter by using his day smoke flares and was successfully recovered and flown to the Phan Thiet hospital for treatment of his <sup>73/</sup> burns.

In two events, similar in effect but contrasting in details, an RF-4C navigator and an F-105 pilot went through the ejection-downed-recovered experience within a two week period in March-April, 1969. On 20 March, 1st Lt. Ronald D. Stafford, of the 388th TFW, was hit by ground fire on his second attempt at a Bullpup missile launch. Suddenly <sup>74/</sup> his aircraft was upside down, and then in a spin.

29 MAR 69  
SAR

Lt. Stafford described the situation as follows: <sup>75/</sup>

...I continued around one spin in the revolution and made one transmission: "I'm hit; I'm in a spin." I could see the ground coming up at me. I knew I had no control over the aircraft. I proceeded to punch out.

...I ejected with the mask on, the visor down and my head all the way back. There was very little turbulence or windblast. Almost immediately I felt the "butt-snapper" separate, and I was in my chute. All systems worked automatically.

...I could see huts below me and to my left. I counted ten in all. At this time, I think I picked up some automatic weapons fire from the ground. There weren't any tracers but something was whizzing past. I cut the four lines and started experimenting in what direction I could direct the chute.

...I continued working with my parachute risers and slipped toward a ridge above the huts. As I got closer to the trees I put on my mask, lowered my visor, and prepared for a tree landing. I raised my arms and put my face into the crook of my right arm.

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My knees were bent; my seat pack wasn't deployed. I possibly could have protected myself better from some scratches if I'd deployed my LPUs.

...I hit the tree canopy, which broke my fall somewhat. I continued down and hit the ground fairly hard. I ended up sliding down the hill face forward; when I finally stopped, it was a struggle to sit up because I was on a steep hill. I sat up and found the beeper, turned it off and got out my radio. I checked to see if the beeper was transmitting and didn't get anything. I then started transmitting, "Mayday, Mayday."

...I continued to talk with Detroit 02, Misty 31, and Spad 01. During this time I moved uphill ten to twenty yards and some of my transmissions were being cut off by the hills around me. I took a bearing to the southwest on two AAA pieces and told Misty 31 that they were about two miles from my position.

Lt. Stafford continued to work with the SAR forces until the Jolly Greens arrived to pick him up. After some momentary confusion caused by not knowing which was the High Jolly and which was the Low, he directed 76/ them over his position and was spotted. He continued:

...They were right over me and I could see the penetrator coming down. I was thinking about letting the penetrator touch the ground first, but grabbed it after it hit the trees to prevent it from sliding down the steep slope. I got the strap around me, lowered two seats, and gave them the "thumbs up" to start hauling me in. About half way up, the chopper began to move out of the area. I reminded myself to let the PJ pull me in, and not try and help.

Lt. Stafford's final observations on his experience summed up 77/ much of what he had done well:

My URT-10 radio was tremendous. When the SAR force got close to me I had great communication...I have no recommendations to make. I think it is the individual's

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choice whether or not to deploy the seat kit when coming in for a tree landing. I happened to hang onto mine. I decided a long time ago that I was not going to deploy the kit because I didn't want to have the life raft catch in the trees and having me hung upside-down in the trees.

A scant two weeks later, the RF-4C backseater began his experience in much the same way (this one over South Vietnam, however) and ended it in a successful recovery. In the interim period, a momentary lapse created a few uncomfortable moments, until he assessed his situation and determined how to get out of it. From that moment on, he did an excellent job in contributing to one of the rare night recoveries in SEA records. The Captain described part of his experiences as follows:

...After the aircraft commander ordered him to eject/ I ejected when the altimeter read 7,000 feet. I was disoriented due to the heavy weather, but I think the aircraft was right side up. I assumed the aircraft was right side up. I took the bailout position...my helmet was secure and the visor was down...I used the primary system.

I remember my head being thrown back by the wind-blast. The visor shattered and tore away from the helmet. I was still disoriented because I was tumbling forward and in the clouds. I don't recall seat separation. The first thing I remembered to do after ejection was to separate from the seat but it was already gone. That's when I felt the opening shock of the chute. The shock was moderate. I couldn't see the [chute] canopy because I was in the clouds. I could barely make out the ground until I was about 1,000 feet above it. I deployed the seat kit; almost immediately the oscillation stopped. [Author's note: More frequently, the opposite appeared to be the case; the parachute oscillations increased upon seat kit deployment.]