



SHORT BURSTS

3d TAC FTR WG (DXI)

BIEN HOA AB, RVN

27 July 1968

DELTA DAGGER PILOT SAVES PHANTOM JET

RANCH HAND AVERTS DISASTER ON UC-123

3000TH HIT TAKEN BY I2ACS

A quick thinking flight mechanic recently overcame an in-flight emergency and averted a disaster.

Staff Sergeant Melvin L. Simmons, 24, Norfolk, Va., Flight 'C' mechanic with the 12th Air Commando Squadron (Defoliation), by his actions saved the lives of the aircrew as well as the UC-123B aircraft which was on its last mission before being sent to the United States to be modified.

Simmons was in the second plane of a flight of four spray aircraft on a defoliation mission 40 miles north of Bien Hoa Air Base.

The mission began normally with the forward air controller (FAC) advising the 'Ranchhands' they might receive ground fire. The escort F-100 supersabre jet fighters went in over the spray path and laid a protective smoke screen to help camouflage the aircraft.

Simmons said, "We leveled off at about 150 feet and began spraying. After we were about half-way finished, the lead aircraft said over the radio they were receiving ground fire."

"Immediately afterwards I heard a loud bang," Simmons continued, "I then threw a smoke bomb out to mark the approximate origin of hostile fire."

The .30 caliber round came up through the floor of the aircraft and struck the main herbicide spray line, causing the herbicide to come out under pressure and burn on the spray pump manifold.

"Soon the interior of the plane became saturated with harmful spray mist," related Simmons. "I heard Lieutenant Colonel David L. Willoughby, 42, Corvallis, Ore., aircraft pilot, yell, 'smoke in the cockpit' and I immediately dumped the remaining load of spray and jumped out of my post to cut off the spray valve."

At this point another round came up through the rear ramp and cut the main hydraulic line, which operates the rear ramp, and the rudder reverse lock control cable.

"I jumped back into my post," exclaimed Simmons, "and reported the situation to the pilot. We decided to climb to

Air Force First Lieutenant Terry A. Clark, 25, Morrisville, Pa., F-102 Delta Dagger pilot, now assigned to the 405th Fighter Wing, Bien Hoa Air Base, recently was credited with saving an RF-4 Phantom jet.

"The F-4 was in a pretty bad situation," said Clark. "He was struck by lightning while on a mission and with all of his electrical equipment out was orbiting in a clear area surrounded by thunderclouds."

Clark himself had been flying Combat Air Patrol (CAP) in the F-102 and was about ready to land when radar control informed him of the emergency.

"I had to do some quick figuring on the amount of fuel I had remaining and determined that I had enough to make the 80-90 miles to where the F-4 was.

"Ground radar vectored me to the area and I picked up the F-4 visually and could talk to him on his emergency radio. We had to come back to the base right through the thunderstorms. The ceiling was about 500 feet and the storm was really a solid wall, but he stuck with me and landed safely," Clark concluded.

Clark has been in Southeast Asia for 12 months with 9 months of that in Vietnam and has accumulated more than 200 missions.

The 423rd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron commander, in a letter citing Clark's actions stated: "His outstanding airmanship unquestionably prevented the loss of a valuable combat crew and aircraft."

E-4S GET SEP. RAT. 1 AUG.

All airmen in grades of sergeant and above will be authorized to mess separately. The new Aug. 1st. Major commands were notified of the change in policy following a recent Defense amendment to its Air Force Pay and Allowances Entitlements Manual.

To implement the new policy, all sergeants (E-4) will be placed in a separate rations status, effective Aug. 1, unless they notify their local personnel officials to prevent separate ration credit on the military pay record.

For personnel at Bien Hoa AB who do not have to be placed on separate rations, contact Mr. Barnes, Pay Section of CBPO, Ext. 125.

OVER

OVER

RANCHHANDS (Con't)

2,500 feet and assess the damage. We found we had taken a third round in the tail section."

The damaged aircraft remained out of the spray pattern while the three aircraft proceeded on target.

Following the mission the FAC cleared the F-100s to strike the area where the ground fire had originated.

This was the 3,000th hit received by the 'Ranchhands' while in Vietnam.

SEPARATE RATIONS (Con't)

As in the past, airmen may be removed from separate ration status for just cause or by personal request. Upon permanent change of station, separate ration authorization will be stopped on departure with the transfer-out military pay order. It will be resumed at the new station with the transfer-in MPO.