

enroute to LZ Lolo. (That story is on the 174th's 1971 history page.) The amount of AAA fire forced an awkward approach into the LZ, referred to in other tapes as a "buttonhole" approach. As can be heard, because of the extremely heavy anti-aircraft fire, UH-1Hs were falling out of the sky this day.

You'll hear Dolphin 29's radio call when he was shot down in flames, "Two-nine's on fire! Two-nine's on fire and going down!" Another Dolphin was shot down just after him when he tried to go in after him. A third helicopter (Dolphin 17) did manage to get in under heavy fire and get out Dolphin 29's crew. With all the anti-aircraft fire, the hits, and the shoot-downs taking place, the courage of these helicopter crews is personified in the radio transmission you hear when a crewman on Dolphin 17, knowing full well the intensity of the fire and the general situation, and after they'd safely cleared the area, asks his AC if they can go back to see if Dolphin 29 is on a LZ. To assist, and then rescue three of the four Dolphin crewmen. The fourth crewman, however, was killed, and the crew of the other Dolphin that was shot down was also killed. (Dolphin 29, UH-1H, was shot down on 10/10/71 at LZ Lolo, Laos.)

Another crew, UH-1H, was shot down there, too. A crewman had is Captain David L. Nelson (a Medal of Honor recipient) who was shot down in Laos. The rest of the crew was killed. Captain Nelson took heavy fire while attempting to land at LZ Lolo. He was shot down and killed. Several of the AMV's crew members were also killed. One of the crew members was WO1 Delah Mardra, and the crew chief was SP4 Tom Hatten. Captain Nelson's courage and sacrifice is what inspired me to write this article. In a stressful situation, as he reports on his condition when he bled off his aircraft into the LZ. His aircraft had a "Wing Hit" and he was unable to land. He had other wounded troops onboard, he was losing fuel from where the bullets penetrated the fuel cells and his cargo floor, and he was attempting to attack and take his injured bird back for "Kilo Sierra" (Khe Sanh) where he could land. Soon after that transmission, his bird just blew up in midair, at altitude. There were no survivors. It would take over 19 years, until October 1990, before the remains of Captain Nelson and his crew were recovered from Laos and interred in a common grave at Arlington National Cemetery. For additional information on the recovery of the Phoenix crew, and their burial at Arlington, as well as details on the loss of "Mucic One Six," a Cobra helicopter and crew, visit Mike Sloniker's article about these two losses.

These men were heroes all.

Right after Captain Nelson's radio call, you'll hear the short "Get em out of that LZ..." segment that is on the Website's front page. The voice is the commander of the 174th AHC, Major Dale Spratt, as he very succinctly tells the aircraft in LZ Sophia to quickly clear the LZ because the trailing slicks were jammed up behind each other and were taking heavy fire from 23 millimeter anti-aircraft guns (Major Spratt crammed a lot of information and meaning into this short transmission). The Dolphin slicks were really hanging it out with low airspeed at low altitude. LZ Sophia is about 7 miles east

of Tchepone, Laos. (This LZ is marked on the Laos map on the Website's Maps page.)
Note: The photo of the CA on the Website's front page is not the actual CA from Lam Son 719 in which this radio transmission was made. The front page photo is representative of CA's, but is from a CA in the Americal Division area between Chu Lai and Duc Pho.

While the Dolphin crews are still struggling with the rescue of Dolphin 29 and trying to account for the missing copilot, you'll hear the reports of the Dolphin crewmen who witnessed a nearby Cobra helicopter gunship that took antiaircraft hits and blew up in flight while on a gun run. Both pilots were killed.

Listen to the calmness and the control in the voices of all of these crews. Think of the fear they were experiencing. Appreciate the courage they exhibited.

While all the tape segments on this page consist of excerpts, the actual time interval from the beginning to the end of these segments is only a matter of a few hours. Most of the conversations about the Witchdoctor's shutdown, Dolphin 29's shutdown, and the Cobra's shutdown occurred within probably five minutes. Other "miscellaneous" conversations are also included below during the same flights.

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[Huey Starting \(from inside the aircraft\)](#)

[Huey Starting \(from outside the aircraft\)](#)

Shark Pilots Get Excited About Incoming At Khe Sanh

Dolphin 6 Drops His Bundle

Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! Witchdoctor 5 is Down...

Dolphin 6 Attempts to Rescue Witchdoctor 5

...And Gets Chewed-Out For It!

Dolphin 29 Goes Down on Fire

Dolphin 17 Gets Out Dolphin 29's Crew

Cobra Explodes in Midair

Dolphin 29's Copilot Was Seen Alive

Dolphin 6 Recaps His Morning's Losses

Doing 360s in a Hostile Environment

Shrapnel in the Leg

Bye-bye
