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Date: 25 November 1971

Mission Number: 03-019-25 November 1971

Aircraft Designation: King 21

Mission Objective: CH-46 Cuckly 477

Location: 142/18/Ch 115 UTM: WR 908880

Saves: 21 Combat. Seven credited to non-USAF helicopters. Fourteen credited to USAF helicopter Jolly Green 70.

At 0148Z, 25 November 1971, while on normal orbit controlling search aircraft on the Gunfighter 61 mission, we were requested by Joker to proceed to the Ch 115 (Binh Thuy) area where a SAR was in progress for a downed aircraft with 21 SOB's. Location passed was 30 miles south of Ch 115. Joker had already launched Jolly Greens 70 and 73 from Ch 73. Initial call sign passed for the downed aircraft was Cuddy 477(a C-7A). Since we were well beyond UHF-VHF range I instructed the Radio Operator to obtain as much information as possible since details were quite sketchy. Our ETA to the area was 0306Z.

While proceeding to the area I requested a slow FAC in the area from Joker. I also inquired to the possibility of getting Sandy aircraft from Ch 93 to proceed to the area to provide escort and SARCAP for the Jollies. Joker was unable to obtain the requested resources so I requested launch of the Hawks (A-37's) from CH 73 and requested Joker to obtain additional soft ordinance from DASC 4 in case it would be needed.

At this time we were still beyond UHF-VHF range but got MF contact with Jolly Green 70 and 73 who were nearing the SAR scene at 0245Z. They reported the weather was very marginal and that they were staying low under a 100-200 foot ceiling. I cancelled the request for Hawks because of the weather but kept them on a standby posture. Just prior to the arrival of the Jollies in the area, we learned that Navy aircraft were already in the area and were communicating FM which we were without. I requested that Jolly Green or Joker try to get all aircraft involved up on 344.2 and I would talk to them as soon as we were within range. Jolly Green 70 reported that some of the Navy aircraft were unable to come up on that frequency but that 344.0 could be used. By this time I was able to get UHF contact with the other aircraft.

Aircraft in the area at this time were Sealord 6 (UH-1), Black Pony 105, 115 (OV-10), Seawolf 94 and 99 (UH-1), Dustoff 70 and 78, and Jolly Greens 70 and 73. I appointed Sealord 6 as On Scene Commander. Jolly Green 70 heard a beeper at 0235Z and started a DF homing maneuver on it although the crash position had been located. Shortly after commencing this he took small arms fire and received one hit in his external fuel tank. This was confirmed visually by Jolly Green 73 but damage was not extensive. Joker at this time ordered the Jollies away from the area to

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hold high and dry and we gave them a holding point away from the scene.

We determined at this time that terrain in the area was mostly rice paddies with a tree line adjacent to the paddy that the downed aircraft was on. We also determined from Sealord 6 that the downed aircraft was a Navy CH-46 (not a C-7A as indicated by the previously passed call sign) and that there were friendlies near the aircraft with the hostile fire coming from a location approximately one kilometer east of the scene. We received a revision of the position at 14/18/Ch 115 UTM WR 908880. Sealord 6 was overhead accompanied by Seawolf 94 and 99 with guns. He determined that the area was safe enough for a pickup attempt and at 0300Z, Dustoff 70 landed and picked up three survivors who were most seriously wounded (this included the pilots of the CH-46). Sealord 6 picked up four survivors with minor wounds. Dustoff 70 proceeded to Binh Thuy with his survivors and Sealord 6 remained at the scene. Since Joker had previously ordered the Jollies out of the area we contacted Joker to obtain a clearance for them to go in and pick up the fourteen survivors remaining. Joker approved the request and Sealord 6 directed Jolly 70 to the location. Jolly Green 73 remained airborne cover. Jolly 70 picked up the remaining survivors (ten U.S., four indigenous) at 0308Z and remained on the ground until 0314Z to check his damage and to remove some material from the downed aircraft. He was accompanied on the ground by Navy Helo 271 who landed also to check gunfire damage which he had received while flying east of the scene. He was also able to provide gun support while on the ground. While 70 and 271 were on the ground Seawolf 94 and 99 orbited overhead between the location of the two aircraft and the source of the previous hostile fire. At 0314Z, Jolly Green 70 accompanied by Jolly Green 73 left the area to proceed to Binh Thuy to drop off the survivors and also to check battle damage as previously instructed by Joker. Navy 271 remained on the ground until 0327Z and then proceeded to Binh Thuy.

Sealord 6 was near bingo fuel at 0332Z and left the scene. Aircraft remaining at this time were Seawolf 94 and 99, Sealord 1, Black Pony 105 and 115. Seawolf Operation (Sector TAC Operation Center) had arranged for security of the downed aircraft and friendly troops were in the area. At 0336Z all aircraft were released from the scene and returned to Binh Thuy. King 21 proceeded back to normal orbit position to resume the control of search aircraft in the other operation.

Additional Comments:

Our response in this mission was delayed by the distance involved in reaching the area from normal orbit position. King 24 on ground alert at Ch 71 could probably have reached the scene much sooner. Because of the delay in reaching the scene, much of the coordination was already accomplished before our arrival. Also our aircraft was equipped with FM radio but it was inoperative. The mission could have been better

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accomplished if it had been operative. The original call sign of the downed aircraft passed was Cuddy 477, this later was determined to be Cuckly 477.

Crewmembers:

AMC-Capt David J. Preston
CP-1Lt James V. Jordan
N-Maj. James P. Delaney
EE-SSgt Bobby E. Stubbs
EE-SSgt Joseph M. McGee
EO-SSgt Louis W. Borland
EO-SSgt Roscoe Williams
LM-TSgt Gary L. Hegwood

SAR Forces Used

Jolly Green 70, 73
Sealord 6
Seawolf 94, 99
Dustoff 70, 78
Navy Helo 271

SAR Forces Not Used

Black Pony 105, 115
Sealord 1

David J. Preston, Capt., USAF
Aircraft Commander/Airborne Mission Commander

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