

STATEMENT

From 18 May through 20 May I commanded a search and rescue mission trying to locate missing crewmen from UH-1H #607 which had crashed vicinity YD 047273.

The wreckage had been marked when the aircraft was shot down 17 May and the crash site was easily identifiable. No sign of life or distress signal had been seen 17 May, after the aircraft had gone down.

On 18 May an attempt to extract the ground party in the vicinity of the downed aircraft was delayed due to an enemy ground attack. After the ground party evaded the enemy, it and the reinforcing party which had attempted to link up the night before were extracted. They were interrogated about the crash and all stated that they had not seen or heard any sounds from the aircraft crew.

The decision was made to suppress and destroy the enemy positions and use air cav to recon the area then insert a larger ground party. The search was intensified when an emergency signal was received on 243.OMC. ★ The Airforce FAC was requested to home on the signal and locate its source. It was found to come from 2 different locations, 5 and 10 Km west, near the Laotian border. This was regarded as a decoy signal and disregarded.

After destroying the enemy bunkers the ground party was inserted and moved 500 meters in two hours to the crash site. At the crash site they located the crewchief who had a broken leg. The ground party then requested extraction by ladder as a fire set during the destruction of the bunker was rapidly approaching the crash site. During this extraction one of the aircraft crewmen located another crewman 300 meters south of the crash site; he was also extracted.

Further ground efforts were terminated however the air cav continued their search along the E & E route, rendezvous points and in a circular 3 Km pattern. Intermittent "beeper" signals were received but no voice communications were established and their source could not be located.

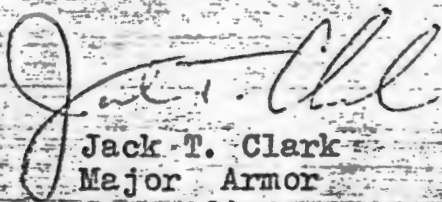
All day search efforts were conducted on the 19th and 20th. The only lead on those days continued to be intermittent "beeper" signals which could not be located. The only exception was an answer on 243.OMC of "This is Phoenix 22" to my blanket call. This signal was received 2 Km SSW of Fire Base Tum Tavern and approximately 5 Km from the crash site.

The only other information I can submit is that the ground party which moved to the aircraft stated that they saw one body clad in nomex clothing which had been completely ground up into small pieces in the crash. They could not identify the individual and made no attempt to extract the body because of its condition. In fact, they did not report its being located until they were extracted.

missions throughout the remainder of the day with negative friendly activity.

During the period 21-26 May 71 reconnaissance teams worked the SAR box three times per day for a minimum of 30 minutes each flight. No friendly activity was noted; however, enemy activity increased. Teams received fire each day and on 26 May 71 an estimated enemy force of two enemy platoons shot at the LOH and AH-1G's. Numerous bunkers were sighted and trail activity increased. Due to the large amount of enemy fire and lack of any friendly activity, I asked to be released from the SAR mission on 26 May 71. This was granted by Squadron.

Based on my analysis of the enemy activity, I feel it would be a high risk to insert troops in this area; and the NVA appear to be well consolidated in the area. All fire has been small arms; however, the enemy has AA weapons within 7km of the area. This area is a known infiltration route and has had continuous activity during the last eleven months that my Troop has worked the area. It is my opinion that the missing men would have an extremely hard time in avoiding capture in this area.

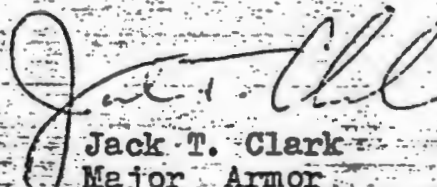

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