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**Research Materials/Source Documents  
ENLISTED FIRSTS**

**FILE TITLE: Background Material on Selected AF Cross Recipients**

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BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

ENLISTED AIR FORCE CROSS RECIPIENTS

(WITH RESEARCH EMPHASIS ON PARARESCUE RECIPIENTS)

1. Nineteen Air Force enlisted personnel have been awarded the Air Force Cross since the award was established by Congress on 6 July 1960. (3:11) (1:1) The second highest medal in our nation, it is awarded for acts of extraordinary heroism. (1:1) Ten of the enlisted personnel who have been awarded the Air Force Cross were Pararescuemen. The primary purpose of this paper is to provide historical information on the ten Pararescuemen who have been awarded the Air Force Cross. The secondary purpose is to highlight the heroic efforts of all nineteen enlisted Air Force Cross recipients. Finally, this paper will attempt to preserve Air Force enlisted heritage by gathering original documents and research.

2. In the first part of this paper, I will discuss the development and history of the Air Force Cross, along with its criteria for award. In the remainder of the paper, I will provide a complete list of enlisted recipients of the Air Force Cross. Also, I will provide a snapshot of the events leading to each award. You will find more information on the Pararescue recipients, because this was the primary focus of this paper. Attached, will be historical documents related to each Pararescueman's award, and two other enlisted personnel, Airman

First Class William Robinson, and Staff Sergeant Eugene L. Clay.

But first, let's discuss the Air Force Cross.

3. The Air Force Cross was established on 6 July 1960 by Congress to parallel the Army Distinguished Service Cross and the Navy Cross. Prior to 1960, the Air Force awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The Air Force Cross design was started in 1959 by Miss Eleanor Cox, Chief of the Air Force Heraldic section. (5:48) This office is now a portion of the Air Force Historical Research Center at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. The Cross was sculpted in 1960, by Thomas Jones, of the Army's Institute of Heraldry. Mr. Jones is best known as the designer of the Tomb of the Unknowns. Around the end of 1960 a ribbon was designed that did not duplicate any other known ribbon. The medal, which was painstakingly designed over a five year period, was first manufactured in late 1963. The first recipient of the Air Force Cross was Major Rudolf Anderson (posthumous), who was shot down over Cuba on 27 October 1963. (5:48)

4. "Simply described, the Air Force Cross is a bronze cross, with an oxidized satin finish, suspended from a ribbon of brittany blue, edged with white and finally with old glory red. Centered on the front face is a gold plated eagle with wings spread against a cloud formation. This is encircled by a laurel wreath finished in green enamel." (5:47)

5. "The Air Force Cross is awarded for extraordinary heroism: while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or, while serving with friendly foreign

forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party."

(1:1) Now that you know about the Air Force Cross, let's learn about the recipients.

6. The Air Force Cross has been awarded to nineteen enlisted recipients since it was established in 1960. The following is a brief look at each of these heroes:

Airman First Class William Robinson (POW 20 Sep 65 to 27 Feb 73)

Aircraft position: HH-43 Helicopter Flight Mechanic

Airman Third Class Arthur N. Black (POW 20 Sep 65 to 27 Feb 73)

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Incident date: 20 Sep 1965

Place of incident: 40 miles South of Vinh, North Vietnam

Unit: 38 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Tan Son Nhut AB, Republic of Vietnam

(helicopter departed for mission from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand)

Synopsis: On 20 September 1965, HH-43 helicopter #62-4510, was shot down while attempting the rescue of a downed F-105 pilot near Vinh, North Vietnam. All four crew-members were captured and became prisoners of war. Crew-members were: Captain Thomas J. Curtis, Pilot; First Lieutenant Duane W. Martin, Copilot; Airman First Class William A. Robinson, Helicopter Flight Mechanic; and Airman Third Class Arthur N. Black, Pararescueman. All were awarded the Air Force Cross in absentia. (18:--)

While in captivity, A3C Arthur N. Black along with another pararescueman, SSgt Arthur M. Cormier, were offered battlefield

commissions by the Senior Ranking POW. Both accepted. Captain Martin was killed during an escape attempt. He was decapitated by an angry farmer. All others returned on 27 February 1973.

(4:13,14)

Major Arthur N. Black is retired.

See TABs A and L for reference material

Airman First Class William H. Pittsenbarger (Posthumous)

Incident date: 11 April 1966

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Place of incident: 33 miles Southeast of Bien Hoa, South Vietnam

Unit: Detachment 6, 38 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Bien Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam

Synopsis: On 11 April 1966, three HH-43 helicopters from Detachment 6, 38 ARRS were launched to evacuate wounded Army personnel from a fire-fight 33 miles SE of Bien Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam. "Pedro 73," A1C Pittsenbarger's HH-43 helicopter, was able to evacuate one severely wounded soldier to Binh Ba Field Hospital, 8 miles South. Later, "Pedro 73" returned to the extraction site. They lowered A1C Pittsenbarger to the ground by hoist, to assist with litter loading and provide emergency medical care. Afterwards, the helicopter returned to Binh Ba with another litter patient. "Pedro 73" and "Pedro 97" attempted to return to evacuate more wounded and pick up A1C Pittsenbarger. While enroute, they were advised that the fire-fight had intensified. As "Pedro 73" was lowering the Stokes litter for another pick-up, they began receiving heavy small

arms fire. The aircraft commander immediately sheared the hoist and pulled out. The aircraft made it back to Binh Ba, but received major battle damage.

When another HH-43 returned the following morning to recover more wounded, the crew learned that A1C Pittsenbarger had died during the previous night's battle. The area had come under a sustained attack of snipers and mortars cutting off portions of the Army unit that A1C Pittsenbarger was with. The battle ground was quiet that morning, so the HH-43 lowered another pararescueman to search for A1C Pittsenbarger. When the PJ located his team-mate, his rifle was still in his hands. Airman Pittsenbarger had assisted the Army during the night time fire-fight by retrieving weapons and ammunition from fallen comrades delivering them to other soldiers. (7:--)

When found, A1C Pittsenbarger had been shot at least five times and killed. A1C William C. Pittsenbarger received the Air Force Cross for extraordinary heroism. (4:14)

See TABs B, K, and L for reference material

Airman Second Class Duane D. Hackney

Incident date: 6 February 1967

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Place of incident: Near Mu Gia Pass, North Vietnam

Unit: 37 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Da Nang AB, Republic of Vietnam

Synopsis: On 6 Feb 67, two HH-3 helicopters, "Jolly Green 05"

and "Jolly Green 36" launched to attempt the recovery of "Nail 65," a downed O-1F pilot, NW of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam. After A2C Hackney had made one unsuccessful trip to the ground in search of the pilot, both "Jollys" returned to base because of foul weather. Later in the day, the helicopters launched again and were able to locate the survivor. A2C Hackney was lowered to the ground by "Jolly 05s" hoist. After loading the survivor into the Stokes Rescue Litter, they both were lifted out. As soon as they were in the door of the helicopter, the crew reported ground fire. As they exited the area the helicopter was hit with a 37mm round and caught fire. With complete disregard for his own life, A2C Hackney took off his parachute and fitted it to the survivor. "Jolly 05" reported that it was on fire, which was confirmed by a "Sandy," A1E aircraft. In an instant, just as A2C Hackney had gotten another parachute over his arms, he was blown out of the aircraft by an explosion. He managed to pull the ripcord, with the chute opening just prior to hitting the trees. "Jolly 36" immediately made a run in to locate the downed aircraft. When they arrived, they found burning wreckage and a person waving his arms. Miraculously, it was A2C Hackney. He was the only survivor. He was recovered and "Jolly 36" returned to base. (12:--)

A2C Hackney was the most decorated enlisted man to participate in Southeast Asia. His decorations included the Air Force Cross, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, Airman's Medal, Air Medal with nine oak leaf clusters,

Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Purple Heart. (9:52)

Chief Master Sergeant Duane Hackney is retired.

See TABs C, K, and L for reference material

Sergeant Russell M. Hunt

Incident date: 31 March 1967

Aircraft position: UH-1 Helicopter Flight Mechanic

Place of incident: unknown, Southeast Asia

Unit: Unknown

Location of unit: Unknown

Synopsis: Sergeant Russell M. Hunt was a helicopter flight mechanic aboard a UH-1. On 31 March 1967, while attempting the evacuation of American and Allied ground forces, his aircraft was shot down. Despite his own injuries and continuous hostile fire, Sergeant Hunt treated increasing numbers of wounded personnel. When his party was required to relocate to another landing zone, Sergeant Hunt carried his mortally wounded aircraft commander to that site. He then braved enemy gunfire to give manual landing instructions to inbound aircraft. Finally, he refused evacuation until all seriously wounded personnel had been evacuated. (1:13) (3:13)

See TABs K and L for reference material

Staff Sergeant Eugene L. Clay - Posthumous

Aircraft position: HH-3E Helicopter Flight Engineer

Sergeant Larry W. Maysey - Posthumous

Aircraft Position: Pararescue Technician

Incident date: 9 November 1967

Place of incident: Unknown, Southeast Asia

Unit: 37 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Da Nang AB, Republic of Vietnam

Synopsis: Two HH-3E "Jolly Green" helicopters were launched on a night extraction mission that took place on 8 and 9 November 1967. The mission was to attempt extraction of the surviving five members of a special forces reconnaissance team. A C-130 was dropping flares to light the area for the "Jollys" to see. "Jolly 29" made the first pickup of three members of the team before being driven off by hostile fire. "Jolly 29" departed the area due to battle damage and landed at Khe Sanh, RVN. "Jolly 26" attempted to pick up the remaining two survivors several minutes later. After getting the survivors on board, the aircraft was hit by automatic weapons fire and burst into flames. The aircraft crashed at the scene, killing three crewmembers and two survivors. The aircraft commander survived and was rescued seventeen hours later by an Army UH-1D. The crewmembers of "Jolly 26" who gave their lives were Captain Ralph W. Brower, Copilot; Staff Sergeant Eugene L. Clay, Helicopter Flight Engineer; and Sergeant Larry W. Maysey, Pararescueman.

(15:--)

Captain Brower, Staff Sergeant Clay, and Sergeant Maysey were all awarded the Air Force Cross posthumously for giving their lives. (1:4,5,16) (3:13)

See TABs D, K, and L for reference material

Sergeant Nacey Kent, Jr.

Incident date: 5 May 1968

Aircraft position: AC-47 Flight Engineer

Place of incident: Pleiku, Republic of Vietnam

Unit: Unknown

Location of unit: Unknown

Synopsis: On 5 May 1968, Sergeant Kent's AC-47 was defending Pleiku AB, RVN, against a severe mortar and rocket attack. His aircraft was hit by a projectile and crash landed. Although Sergeant Kent's leg was broken during the ensuing crash landing, he assisted in the evacuation of enlisted personnel. Then, he re-entered the aircraft and carried the severely injured navigator to safety. He again re-entered the burning aircraft to fight the fire. (1:14) (3:13)

See TABs K and L for reference material

Sergeant Thomas A. Newman

Incident date: 30 May 1968

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Place of incident: Near Savannakhet, Laos

Unit: Detachment 1, 40 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Nakhon Phanom, Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand

Synopsis: Sergeant Newman's "Jolly Green" crew was launched to rescue a downed F-105 "Thunderchief" pilot near Savannakhet, Laos. While enroute, the helicopter's copilot stated that the downed pilot was incapacitated and that Sergeant Newman may need to descend by hoist. Sergeant Newman volunteered, and upon arrival at the scene descended into the hostile jungle. Knowing that enemy was nearby, Sergeant Newman set up a circular search to locate the survivor in the extremely dark jungle. After making one circle, Sergeant Newman saw automatic weapons fire being directed at the helicopter hovering overhead. Sergeant Newman requested that the helicopter leave the immediate area to protect themselves, and to make it quiet, so he could hear in the jungle. After the helicopter departed, Sergeant Newman saw a muzzle flash to his side. Not knowing if it was the downed crewman, Sergeant Newman dropped to the ground. He saw another muzzle flash that illuminated the pilot. Sergeant Newman inched closer knowing that the downed crewman could mistake him for the enemy. Risking detection by the enemy, Sergeant Newman called out to the crewman. When he was certain that the person barely detectible in the dim light was the survivor he moved to him and prepared him for extraction. (2:--)(1:18)

It was extremely dark. Sergeant Newman and Col Norman Phillips, the downed crewman, could both hear weapons fire and movement around them. Sergeant Newman radioed that he was going to shut down his radio for a few minutes so they could be extremely quiet. Within 20 minutes the noise had subsided and Sergeant Newman called the helicopter back overhead. When the forest

penetrator (rescue device) was lowered, Sergeant Newman lost the cable in the vines. He radioed for the aircrew to take up some of the excess cable on the ground. When the helicopter did so, Sergeant Newman's foot became entangled in the cable and jerked him upward through the trees. He was upside down, some 80 feet up. He lost his rifle and radio, although the radio was still attached to him. Sergeant Newman radioed the helicopter that he was entangled and to lower him back to the ground. At this point, he could also see automatic weapons fire 50-75 yards away being directed at the "Jolly." His body caught the branches as he was descending through the trees. This loosened his foot from the cable, causing him to fall to the ground.

Miraculously, he only sprained his wrist. Sergeant Newman put Col Phillips on the forest penetrator and joined him there, protecting him with his own body during the ascent to the helicopter. As they were being hoisted automatic weapons fire was being directed at the helicopter. (2:--)(1:18)

I was able to accomplish an oral interview with Capt Thomas A. Newman. Captain Newman works for the USAF Occupational Measurement Center, Randolph AFB, Texas. He told me that when Colonel Phillips fired his revolver, he'd noticed that the shot hadn't been directed at him. Captain Newman also said that when he yelled to the survivor, that Colonel Phillips answered with "up here." But, he was still just as cautious as ever when he approached Colonel Phillips from the rear. Captain Newman said he felt pretty bad as he was hanging upside down entangled in

the cable. He'd come to rescue the downed crewman and had botched things up. But, he said he remained calm and collected, and was able to correct the situation. Captain Newman said that he'd almost received an Article 15 because he hadn't worn his aircrew helmet to the ground. (10:--)

Captain Newman was awarded the Air Force Cross for heroism. He was later awarded the "Cheney" award by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. He was the 12th enlisted person in history to win the prestigious award. The annual award recognizes acts of valor, self sacrifice, or extreme fortitude in connection with a military aircraft. (19:36)

See TABs E, K, and L for reference material

Airman First Class Joel E. Talley

Incident date: 2 July 1968

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Place of incident: Dong Hoi, North Vietnam

Unit: 37 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Da Nang AB, Republic of Vietnam

Synopsis: On 1 July 1968, "Jolly Green 27" and "Jolly Green 31" were dispatched to intercept an F-105 aircraft which had received battle damage and was enroute to Gulf of Tonkin. The aircraft didn't make it to the coast and the pilot ejected. "Jolly 27" attempted to rescue the pilot but was driven off by ground fire. Both "Jollys" had to depart the area because "Jolly 27" had jettisoned his external fuel tanks and was running low on fuel. Back up forces, "Jolly Green 29" and "22"

arrived on scene. "Jolly 29" approached the area of the downed crewman and had to withdraw due to battle damage received. "Jolly 29" made another attempt but was again driven off by ground fire. Because of darkness the rescue was postponed until the next day. The next day, 2 July 68, one "Jolly" received battle damage attempting the rescue and had to return to base. An A1E aircraft, "Spads 11," was shot down. The pilot wasn't able to eject. Finally, "Jolly 21" was able to penetrate the heavily defended survivors location to put the PJ (A1C Talley) on the ground. The F-105 pilot had been badly injured during the ejection and landing. Airman Talley was lowered to the ground. It took awhile to locate Lieutenant Colonel Jack Modica, the survivor. Eventually, Airman Talley located the badly injured airman. Colonel Modica had a fractured pelvis and could not be moved. Using his radio, Airman Talley vectored the helicopter overhead to lower the penetrator. Airman Talley placed Colonel Modica on the forest penetrator. Then he climbed on top, providing protection to the survivor and limiting the vulnerable time of helicopter hover. As soon as they were lifted off the ground a hail of gun fire encircled the helicopter. When the hoist had cleared the tree tops the aircraft commander, Lieutenant Lance A. Eagan (USCG), immediately exited the area with both Colonel Modica and Airman Talley still dangling outside. Eventually, they were reeled on board the aircraft. Airman Talley administered emergency medical treatment to Colonel Modica during the return trip.

(17:--)

I was able to conduct an oral interview with Chief Master Sergeant Joel E. Talley. Chief Talley is the Senior Enlisted Advisor for the 39 Special Operations Wing at Alconbury Royal Air Force Base, England. Chief Talley told me that the mission had been a classic SAR trap. He said that the practice missions he'd accomplished in school had really paid off. (11:--). He was awarded the Air Force Cross for heroism. (13:348,349)

See TABs F, K, and L for reference material

Technical Sergeant Victor R. Adams

Incident date: 27 November 1968

Aircraft position: UH-1F Aerial Gunner

Place of incident: Duc Co, Republic of Vietnam

Unit: Unknown

Location of unit: Unknown

Synopsis: On 27 November 1968, Sergeant Adam's aircraft was shot down by hostile ground fire. Disregarding his own injuries and the intense enemy activity in the area, Sergeant Adams re-entered the burning aircraft and rescued the Copilot. He re-entered the aircraft again and saved another trapped man. The intense heat and explosions prevented him from going back in.

(1:3) (3:14)

See TABs K and L for reference material

Airman First Class Charles D. King - Posthumous

Incident date: 25 December 1968

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Place of incident: Laos

Unit: Detachment 1, 40 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand

Synopsis: "Jolly Green 17" was notified on 24 December 1968, that "Panda 01" was down in Laos. They departed airborne alert for the site, later joining up with "Jolly 15" at the orbit point. A parachute had been spotted near where the survivor went down. However, it was thought that the parachute was from another source, because the downed crewman had been seen disappearing into the trees. Since no contact had been made with the downed crewman the search was postponed with all aircraft returning to base. On 25 December 1968, the decision was made to re-examine the parachute that had been seen. Eventually, "Jolly 17" came into a hover over the chute. Both the flight engineer and the pararescueman, Airman King, saw a person hanging in the harness without a helmet on. Airman King volunteered to descend and retrieve the pilot. Once Airman King was on the ground, he called for slack on the hoist cable and moved to the survivor. He fastened the survivor to the hoist and called for the flight engineer to take up slack. He used the hoist to help move the survivor under the helicopter. When Airman King was approximately 10 feet from the hoisting area, gunfire erupted. Airman King called on the radio "I'm hit, I'm hit, pull up, pull up." (14:--) The pilot immediately ascended

as they were being barraged with gunfire. The hoist tore from its mount as the cable snapped. "Jolly 17" departed the area with battle damage, leaving Airman King and the downed crewman on the ground. He was never heard from again. (14:112, 176-178)

Chief Master Sergeant Charles D. King was declared missing in action (MIA) on 25 December 1968. He was promoted in absentia to the rank of Chief Master Sergeant. CMSgt King remained MIA until 5 December 1978, when he was officially declared killed in action. For his heroic actions and selflessness, he was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross. (4:--)

See TABs G and L for reference material

Sergeant Michael E. Fish

Incident date: 19 February 1968

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Place of incident: 25 miles Southwest of Tuy Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam

Unit: Detachment 11, 38 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Tuy Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam

Synopsis: On 18 February 1969, Sergeant Fish's detachment was notified of a downed U.S. Army UH-1 helicopter that had crashed 25 miles Southwest of Tuy Hoa AB, RVN. The report also said there were five people trapped inside. "Pedro 05," an HH-43 helicopter, launched immediately with Sergeant Fish as Pararescue Technician. Once on scene, the aircraft lowered Sergeant Fish and a fire-fighter to the ground from a 100 foot

hover. The area was hostile and sporadic gunfire was evident. A U.S. Army gunship helicopter provided air cover for the personnel on the ground. Sergeant Fish and the fire-fighter were able to free three personnel immediately. They were hoisted aboard "Pedro 05." Because of the seriousness of their injuries, they were transported to a clearing 5 miles away where they were transferred to an awaiting Army helicopter. Another Army helicopter was able to pick up one deceased member and another survivor while "Pedro 05" was away making the transfer. "Pedro 05" had to return to base due to a low fuel state, leaving Sergeant Fish and the fire-fighter on the ground. "Pedro 24," another HH-43, arrived shortly before dark and hoisted the fire-fighter aboard. Sergeant Fish volunteered to remain overnight with the last survivor, who was still trapped in the wreckage. The next day, 19 February 1969, both HH-43 helicopters returned to the scene at dawn. Again, sporadic ground fire was present in the area. "Pedro 05" lowered the Flight Engineer and a fire-fighter equipped with crash access equipment to the ground. Within 15 minutes the trapped survivor was freed and "Pedro 05" hoisted him aboard. A U.S. Army UH-1 recovered Sergeant Fish and a deceased USA ground team member. "Pedro 24" retrieved the final two ground team members, returning to base, and closing the mission. (6:--)

Sergeant Fish received the Air Force Cross for his heroism that night. The enemy tried to infiltrate the area but they were repeatedly repelled. Sergeant Fish was later recognized for his

bravery on the television show "This is Your Life." (4:--)  
See TABs H, K, and L for reference material

Technical Sergeant Donald E. Smith

Incident date: 24 October 1969

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Place of incident: Laos

Unit: 37 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Location of unit: Da Nang AB, Republic of Vietnam. On alert,  
Quang Tri, Republic of Vietnam

Synopsis: Technical Sergeant Smith's "Jolly Green" launched on 24 October 1969, to attempt the rescue of two downed crew-men from "Misty 11." The forward air control aircraft, "Nail 07," radioed that both survivors were in contact and that "Misty 11A" (pilot) had a broken leg. "Jolly Green 28" arrived over "Misty 11A" and deployed TSgt Smith via hoist. TSgt Smith immediately secured the downed crewman to the forest penetrator (three seat rescue device) and gave the up cable signal. Within one minute both men were being hoisted up. When the forest penetrator was approximately 10-15 feet off the ground, a burst of automatic gunfire hit the external hoist mount dislodging it. The hoist assembly fell into the main cabin door knocking the Flight Engineer across the aircraft. Realizing the hoist was now inoperative, the flight engineer sheared the hoist cable. This would give the pararescueman and survivor a chance for survival in the event of a crash. "Jolly 28" lost all of its transmission oil pressure, a critical situation. The aircraft

was able to make it to a marshy area where it landed. "Jolly 04" immediately hoisted the remaining crew-members from "Jolly 28" aboard. "Jolly 04" was denied a request to attempt another rescue attempt on "Misty 11A" and TSgt Smith. "Jolly 04" returned to base. "Jolly Green 76" attempted three other times to recover TSgt Smith and his survivor. All three times they were shot up, receiving extensive battle damage. "Jolly Green 15" and "21" arrived on scene. "Jolly 15" was able to establish a hover over TSgt Smith and "Misty 11A." They were successfully hoisted aboard. "Jolly 15" then made several attempts to recover "Misty 11B," but to no avail. Each time they were raked with automatic weapons fire, finally disabling the hoist and Flight Engineer and Pararescueman's intercom system. "Jolly 15" departed the area to aerial refuel with "King 03." Another Jolly aircraft was finally able to recover "Misty 11B." (16:--)

Master Sergeant (retired) Donald G. Smith received the Air Force Cross for his heroics that long day. Despite his own injuries received during the fall during the first attempt, Sergeant Smith cared for the survivor, directed air assaults against enemy attackers, and repelled enemy probes. (4:--)

See TABs I and L for reference material

Sergeant Theodore Hamlin

Incident date: 25 October 1969

Aircraft position: Radio Operator

Place of incident: Republic of Vietnam

Unit: Unknown

Location of unit: Unknown

Synopsis: As a combat Radio Operator, Sergeant Hamlin was attempting to coordinate the evacuation of several wounded soldiers on the night of 25 October 1969. Sergeant Hamlin was also hit by gunfire. Despite his own injuries, he finally made contact with the rescuers. Sergeant Hamlin could have waited for the rescue helicopters to make their way to the wounded, but he didn't. He went to the landing site and illuminated himself so the helicopter pilot would know where to land. After the aircraft landed, Sergeant Hamlin helped carry wounded to its location. He refused to leave, fighting side by side the others that night. (3:15)

See TAB L for reference material

Technical Sergeant Leroy M. Wright

Incident date: 21 November 1970

Aircraft position: Helicopter Flight Mechanic

Place of incident: Son Tay Prison Camp, North Vietnam

Unit: Unknown

Location of unit: Unknown

Synopsis: The U.S. attempted a rescue mission on Son Tay Prison Camp, North Vietnam, on 21 November 1970. Technical Sergeant Wright was a helicopter flight mechanic aboard one of the troop carrying helicopters. Defensive fire forced TSgt Wright's helicopter to make a rough landing, during which he injured his leg. Despite the injury and the imminent possibility that the

helicopter might explode, he waited until all exited the craft before joining them. Joining the mission, TSgt Wright used uncanny automatic weapons fire to help Army troops advance on their target. TSgt Wright did not ask for assistance, but made his way alone to the recovery helicopter, suffering intense pain. TSgt Wright was the only enlisted member to receive the Air Force Cross for that mission. (3:15)

See TAB L for reference material

Staff Sergeant Charles L. Shaub

Incident date: 15 April 1972

Aircraft position: C-130 Loadmaster

Place of incident: Republic of Vietnam

Unit: Unknown

Location of unit: Unknown

Synopsis: Staff Sergeant Shaub's C-130 was delivering badly needed supplies and ammunition to entrenched U.S. Forces battling the enemy in Vietnam on 15 April 1972. His plane was suddenly hit by anti-aircraft fire which resulted in a potentially catastrophic fire inside the aircraft. He immediately jettisoned some explosive crates that were on fire. The crates exploded within seconds of being thrown out of the aircraft. Despite burns to his hands, arms and face, he brought the blaze under control within minutes. He saved his plane and four crewmen. (3:15)

See TAB L for reference material

Sergeant Charles D. McGrath

Incident date: 27 June 1972

Aircraft position: Pararescue Technician

Place of incident: North Vietnam

Unit: 40 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS)

Location of unit: Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand

Synopsis: On 26 and 27 June 1972, the 40 ARRS was working to rescue two downed F-4 crews. "Valiant 03" and "Valiant 04," from deep inside North Vietnam. Sergeant Charles McGrath was on "Jolly Green 73," an HH-53 helicopter. "Valiant 03 Alpha" had already been recovered. At the holding point, "Jolly 73" joined with "Jolly 57." "Valiant 04 Alpha" was located some 2.5 miles inside the North Vietnam border. It was learned at the holding point that "Valiant 04 Alpha" had received a broken leg, knee, elbow, and jaw. Sergeant McGrath prepared his equipment to go down on the ground for the pilot. "Jolly 73" began its search and located the survivor. They put Sergeant McGrath on the ground to locate and assist the survivor, Captain Lynn A. Aikman. On the ground, Sergeant McGrath could see Captain Aikman laying on his back. When he arrived at his side he realized the tree beside Captain Aikman was too high and big to do a hoist. At this point, Sergeant McGrath dragged Captain Aikman 120 feet through the bushes to a safe place to perform a hoist. In the meantime, "Jolly 73" had taken ground fire and lost their hoist. They were able to climb out and recover. "Jolly 57" immediately came in to pick up the PJ and survivor. "Jolly 57" also received ground fire during the hoist. Just

prior to getting Captain Aikman and Sergeant McGrath into the helicopter, another PJ, TSgt Dennis Reich, was hit as he was trying to get the men on board the aircraft. The combat photographer, SSgt Kelly Schuman, helped the Flight Engineer get the survivors into the aircraft. "Jolly 57" pulled out and made it up to join with "Jolly 73." "Jolly 73" had a severe fuel leak and needed to refuel ASAP. "King 27," an HC-130P, answered the call along with "King 22." Sergeant McGrath immediately began treating TSgt Reich, who was bleeding profusely from the bullet wound in the leg. He applied a temporary tourniquet to get control of the bleeding. Another PJ took over treatment on TSgt Reich, while Sergeant McGrath worked on Captain Aikman. On physical exam of Captain Aikman, the PJ noticed a hole in the pilot's boot. Looking closer, Sergeant McGrath realized that Captain Aikman had been shot through the foot during the hoist when they were nearing the door of the aircraft. The patients were delivered to definitive medical care. (B:--)

Captain Charles D. McGrath (retired) was awarded the Air Force Cross for his heroism.

See TABs J and L for reference material

Staff Sergeant John D. Harston

Incident date: 15 May 1975

Aircraft position: CH-53 Helicopter Flight Mechanic

Place of incident: Koh Tang Island, Cambodia

Unit: Unknown

**Location of unit:** Unknown

**Synopsis:** The USS Mavaguez had been seized by Cambodian Armed Forces. On 15 May 1975, SSgt Harston's aircraft was delivering Marines to Koh Tang Island, where the crew was thought to be. SSgt Harston's CH-53 was hit by gunfire and crash landed on the island. Although he was wounded, he supervised the evacuation of Marines and Crew from his aircraft. (3:15)

**See TAB L for reference material**

7. In summary, I've provided background information on the second highest decoration our nation can bestow on Air Force personnel: "The Air Force Cross." Since 1960, nineteen brave men have received the Air Force Cross for extraordinary heroism. I've given a snapshot view of the circumstances leading to each enlisted recipient's award. When I began this paper, my focus was to provide research on the ten Pararescuemen who'd received the Air Force Cross. A grave error would have been to exclude the other nine heroes from this paper. Although my research concentrated on the pararescuemen, all enlisted award winners are included.

8. Recommendations: First, I was not able to accomplish complete research on the non-pararescue recipients of the Air Force Cross. I challenge another Enlisted Heritage CSA member to finish the research. Lastly, the Air force published Air Force Background Information Pamphlet 70-2, "The Air Force Cross," in March 1970. It has not been updated since then. I am recommending that the Secretary of the Air Force direct "The

Air Force Cross" pamphlet be revised. This will enable us to preserve the history of these extraordinary brave men. I will forward a copy of this package to the Secretary.

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Director  
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JOL-DEC 1965  
No. 1

HISTORY  
OF  
38TH AIR RESCUE SQUADRON  
AIR RESCUE SERVICE (MATS)  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

01 OCT 1990

TAN SON NHUT AB, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

1 OCTOBER - 31 DECEMBER 1965

SMC

RCS: AU-D5 (ARS)

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SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR  
INTERVALS DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER  
31, 1973

MOE BIRNBAUM  
Captain, USAF  
Historian

ARTHUR W. BEALL  
Col, USAF  
Commander

GROUP-4  
Downgraded at 3 year intervals;  
Declassified after 12 years.

2-9418-32

DECLASSIFIED

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Para 7C: 18, Mission 38ARS-950-20 Sep 65. The HC-54 on precautionary orbit was informed of the successful bail out of an F-105 pilot over North Vietnam. Two HH-43 helicopters were scrambled from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand along with two A1E's RESCAP aircraft from Udorn AB, Thailand. The HC-54 picked up the downed pilots beeper as the HH-43's and RESCAP were enroute to the incident site. The A1E's made low passes over the bail out area in an attempt to establish voice or visual contact with the survivor. They experienced no ground fire and felt they had the area the pilot was down in pinpointed. Soon after this, ground activity in the area increased. Troop movement was noted in adjacent areas and ground fire commenced, resulting in minor damage to one of the A1E's. Shortly after this red smoke was spotted, and one of the HH-43 helicopters proceeded in accompanied by A1E's. Visual contact was made with the downed pilot, when suddenly ground fire broke loose from all around the survivor's position. The HH-43 crashed while attempting to make a pickup. Hostile fire is thought to have been the cause of the crash. The second HH-43 that had been orbiting short of the pick up site immediately proceeded toward the crash scene. The helicopter crew jettisoned the internal auxiliary fuel tank to make room for survivors. They encountered ground fire enroute to the area and spotted the helicopter wreckage which seemed fairly well intact, on the first pass. As the helicopter positioned itself for a suitable approach to the pickup area it was under continuous ground fire and as it came to a hover 50 feet above the wreckage a massive and continuous barrage of automatic weapons fire erupted around the helicopter. A white pin flare was also observed at this time although no survivors were spotted. The helicopter was taking a series of hits at this time and initiated an immediate take off. Continual heavy fire was received for the next three minutes. The pararescue man was hit on his flak vest by flying debris but did not suffer any injury. Fuel was now running into the aft section of the cabin; however, the helicopter was able to return to Nakhon Phanom without further incident. The CAP aircraft remained on scene until darkness and reported vehicles and personnel moving into the area. The mission was suspended because of the high probability of additional hostile defense buildup which would make the area impenetrable for search and recovery forces the following day. The crew of the downed helicopter was Captain Thomas J. Curtis, 1st Lt Duane W. Martin, A1C William A. Robinson, A3C Arthur M. Black. The pilot of the second helicopter was Capt Richard A. Laine.

PARA 7D. Types and Nr of ARS acft lost: one HH-43B. ARS Men Wia KIA or Mia: 4 Mia.



R039



K025



B087  
*A2C Black*



C103

Sergeant Ray E. McClure and Airman First Class John F. Heitsch, jumped from an Air Rescue Service SC-54 and attached an auxiliary flotation collar to the capsule. They remained with astronaut Carpenter until all three were recovered by Navy helicopters from the USS Intrepid.

1 September 1964      Soon after the Gulf of Tonkin incident (2 August 1964), four Air Rescue Service provisional detachments were organized in Southeast Asia. This was the beginning of a comprehensive buildup of combat rescue activity which was to continue for the next 11 years. These Air Rescue Service detachments were stationed at Bien Hoa and Da Nang AFBs in South Vietnam, and at Nakhon Phanom Airport and Korat Royal Thai AB in Thailand. All four were attached to Detachment 3, Pacific Air Rescue Center (ARC), which had been located at Saigon, South Vietnam, since 1 April 1962.

1964 - 1965 -- The Sikorsky HH-3 helicopter was introduced in Southeast Asia as an Air Force rescue vehicle. Through the efforts of Major Taylor Haynes, an H-3 pilot stationed at Detachment 5, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery (ARR) Squadron, and permission of the Green Giant Vegetable Company, the "Jolly Green Giant" name and character came to symbolize Air Force rescue HH-3 helicopters. The title of "Super Jolly Green Giant" was later used to symbolize HH-53s upon their arrival in Southeast Asia. The four-toed "Jolly Green Giant" footprint began to appear in all corners of Southeast Asia where the "Mayday call" had gone out from a pilot in distress. That symbol continues today, appearing miraculously and often in seemingly impossible places, giving assurance to all who need his help that there is no sea too deep, mountain too high, or jungle too tough to stop him from coming to their aid.

1 December 1964 - 31 December 1975 -- Air Rescue Service (later Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS)) personnel saved the lives of 4,120 personnel in Southeast Asia. Of this number, 2,780 were combat saves.

20 September 1965 - 12 February 1973 -- Air Rescue Service HH-43 #62-4510 was downed by enemy fire about 40 miles south of Vinh, North Vietnam, while participating in a search and rescue (SAR) mission of a downed F-105 pilot. The crew, who became prisoners-of-war (POWs) were: Captain Thomas J. Curtis, pilot; First Lieutenant Duane W. Martin, copilot; Airman First Class William A. Robinson, flight mechanic; and \*Airman Second Class Arthur N. Black, pararescue-man. All four men were awarded the Air Force Cross, in absentia. Sometime between 15 and 20 July 1966, Captain Martin and a Navy A-1 pilot, Dieter Dingler, escaped. Captain Martin was killed during the escape by a farmer who decapitated him. Dingler continued to evade capture and was later rescued. The other three men of the crew remained POWs until 27 February 1973.



Master Sergeant William Robinson (right) and Captain Jeremiah Denton, Jr. (left), ex-POWs arriving at Scott AFB, Illinois, on 14 February 1965.

6 November 1965 - 12 February 1973 -- Air Rescue Service CH-3 #63-9685 was hit by ground fire and crashed 40 miles south southwest of Hanoi, North Vietnam, while participating in a SAR mission for a downed A-1E. The crew, who became POWs, were: Captain Warren R. Lilly, pilot; First Lieutenant Jerry A. Singleton, copilot; and \*Staff Sergeant Arthur M. Cormier, para-rescueman. The fourth crewman, Staff Sergeant Berkeley Naugle, flight mechanic, was successfully rescued on 7 November 1965.

\* While in captivity, SSgt Cormier and A2C Black were offered and accepted battlefield commissions by the senior POW officer for their actions as POWs.

16 March 1966 -- The Gemini mission was aborted after only six orbits and made an emergency splashdown about 500 miles off the eastern shore of Okinawa. An ARRS three-man pararescue team parachuted into the ocean from an HC-54 and secured the spacecraft. These pararescuemen were: Staff Sergeant Larry D. Huyett, Airman First Class Eldridge M. Neal, and Airman Second Class Glenn M. Moore, who just graduated from the Pararescue School and was the jumpmaster for this mission. The astronauts were Neil A. Armstrong and David R. Scott. The *USS Mason* picked up the five men. This mission elevated the interest of a beret for pararescue. It was worn for the first time by these three men on the Ed Sullivan Show when they were presented to the nation as heroes.

11 April 1966 -- Three HH-43s from Detachment 5, 38th ARR Squadron rescued wounded U.S. soldiers from a firefight 33 miles southeast of Bien Hoa, South Vietnam. Nine casualties were recovered.

During the rescue effort, pararescueman Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger was mortally wounded by enemy small arms fire while descending by hoist into the firefight. Airman Pitsenbarger managed to hold on. Once on the ground, he worked under heavy enemy fire to aid the wounded soldiers. The hoist operator on the HH-43F hauled up as many wounded GIs as the little chopper would hold. Airman Pitsenbarger chose to stay behind to help the remaining soldiers, all of whom were wounded. He continued to fight off the Viet Cong as his helicopter flew away. The next day another HH-43F showed up, and the helicopter's pararescueman surveyed the now quiet battle scene below. He rode the hoist down and found that the enemy had killed Airman Pitsenbarger and left many wounded soldiers. For his bravery, Airman Pitsenbarger was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross. Airman Pitsenbarger was the first enlisted man to receive this award.



*Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger.*

26 May 1966 -- General John P. McConnell, USAF Chief of Staff, approved a distinctive uniform featuring a maroon beret and bloused trousers over combat boots for ARRS pararescuemen. The beret became a symbol of esteem signifying the blood sacrificed by pararescuemen and their devotion to duty in aiding others in distress.

TAB B

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OPENING/CLOSING/ <del>REOPENING</del>
MISSION NUMBER: 6-38-80-11 APR 66
SUBJECT: USA (17)
2 HH-43F

UNCLASSIFIED

FROM: Det 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq, APO US FORCES 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

15 April 1966

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Group (JSARG), APO US FORCES 96307

1. Mission Number: 6-38-80-12 April 1966
2. SAR Alerted by: 3rd JSARG
3. SAR Aircraft used: 2 HH-43F

Crewmembers of Primary Aircraft were:

RCC	1/Lt Mark C. Schibler	FR77929
CP	Capt Edwin A. Henningson	FV3039781
HM	A1C Alexander Montgomery	AF19535951
RS	A1C Henry J. O'Brirne	AF12580938

Crewmembers of Secondary Aircraft, from Det 10 were:

RCC	Maj Charles R. Kay	FV3006182
CP	Capt John R. Denham	FR66306
HM	A1C Malcolm G. Aldridge	AF14802117
RS	SSgt Leon Fullwood	AF14626923

4. Reaction time from notification to pickup: 1+30
5. CAP Assistance: 1 OLF, 2 UH-1B
6. Area and type of pickup: The helicopter from Det 6 (Pedro 97) landed in a clearing blasted in the jungle. Casualties were then litter loaded on the aircraft. The helicopter from Det 10 (Pedro 91) made two hoist pick-ups with the stokes litter from an area of dense jungle.
7. Casualties were located by directions from the FAC.
8. Survivors names: Unknown
9. Summary of Events:

Det 6 was alerted at 0934, 12 Apr 66 for a possible requirement to evacuate Army wounded. At 0944 we were given a definite "go" and were told that another HH-43F from Det 10 would join us for top cover. We launched at 0950 and rendezvoused with Sidewinder 23 at 1025. When we arrived in the area a Sidewinder 21 was conducting an air strike  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south of the pick-up

point so we were told to orbit to the west. We orbited for approximately thirty minutes until the air strike was complete. We then contacted the Army unit on the ground and asked them to mark their position and we would begin our pick-ups. The Army replied that they would have a clearing blasted in about twenty minutes, so we waited. When the clearing was blasted a CH-47 made the first landing in the area. He had room to hover, but could not land. Pedro 97 landed next and was able to set down. Three severely wounded were immediately loaded on the aircraft. Due to the height of the trees and limited amount of maneuvering room we elected to leave our Para-medic and all the gear we did not need on the ground, to give us a power reserve. We then flew the wounded to a field hospital at Binh Ba. While we were enroute the Army cleared more brush and trees out of the landing zone which gave us more room on subsequent landings. When we landed in the hole the second time we off loaded ten gallons of water and six stretchers and picked up three more wounded. At this time we were informed that the para-medic who was left on the ground the night before had been fatally wounded when the unit he was with was overrun. We then took off and delivered our wounded to Binh Ba. We and our cover ships refueled this trip and picked up twenty gallons of water to return to the troops at the landing zone. Enroute back to the LZ we were informed by Sidewinder 23 that there was a hoist pick up required. With the water we had no room to maneuver the stokes litter in the cabin so we informed 23 that we would make one more trip to the LZ. By the time we arrived the Army had enlarged the LZ enough that the Chinooks and Dustoff helicopters could land so we determined there was no longer a need for us in that area and we could go make the hoist pickups. However, before we could land to drop off the water and pick up our para-medic, Pedro 91 reported in and it was decided they would make the hoist pickups. We then landed and picked up our para-medic and two Army personnel and returned to Binh Ba to await further developments. We refueled and when Pedro 91 landed we were informed that there was no further requirement for us and we were released. On the return flight to Bien Hoa Pedro 97 carried two severely wounded patients back to the 93rd Field Evac Hospital. We landed at Bien Hoa at 1410. Mission completed.

10. Comments: None

*Mark C. Schibler*  
MARK C. SCHIBLER, 1STLT, USAF  
Rescue Crew Commander

FROM: Det 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq, APO US FORCES 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Group (JSARC), APO US FORCES 96307

1. Mission Number: 6-38-80-11 April 1966
2. Det 6, 38th ARRS alerted by hot line from 38th JSARC
3. SAR Aircraft used: 2 HH-43F, 1 HH-43B

First Aircraft Pedro 97

RCC	Capt Ronald L. Bachman	FR66227
CP	Capt Raymond L. Murdon	FV3087594
HM	A1C Thomas C. Story	AF14653201
RS	SSgt David E. Milsten	AF19601684

Second Aircraft Pedro 73

RCC	Capt Harold D. Salem	FV3027257
CP	Maj Maurice G. Kessler	FV3024099
HM	A1C Gerald C. Hammond	AF11365690
RS	A1C William H. Pitsenbarger	AF15680744

Third Aircraft Pedro 46

RCC	Capt John H. Larson	FV3057565
CP	Capt Peter C. Kelly	FR67176
HM	A1C William Amendolare Jr	AF14760022
FF	SSgt Calvin H. Warren	AF14349956

4. Reaction time from initial notification to first pickup: 0+33
5. CAP Assistance: 2 OLF FAC, 2 UH1 Armed helicopters, 3 F-100, and artillery on station at all times. One flare ship (C-47) was orbiting for night operations.
6. Summary of Events:

At 1507 hours, Det 6 was notified by 3rd JSARC that 6 or more Army casualties were located at 1044N 10719E and would require extraction by hoist. Pedro 97 and Pedro 73 were airborne at 1512 hours enroute to the area 33 miles southeast of Bien Hoa. The helicopters were vectored into the area which was marked by smoke from the ground party. The pickup point was

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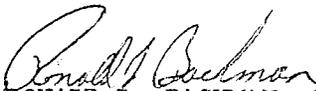
in dense jungle with trees approximately 150 feet high. There was a small open area in the 150 foot trees down to trees at the 100 foot level. Below the 100 foot canopy there was dense brush to approximately 30 feet. There was a hole in the 30 foot canopy just large enough for the stokes litter. It was necessary to hover with the right rotor blades within 3 to 5 feet of a tree, to lower the litter through the hole. Arriving in the area at 1535 hours, Pedro 97 immediately started the first pickup which was completed at 1545 hours. Pedro 97 moved out to transfer the patient from the stokes litter to the folding litter while Pedro 73 made a stokes litter pickup. Pedro 97 then moved back in and made one more stokes litter pickup and then both helicopters proceeded to Binh Ba, about 8 miles south, to transfer the patients to a field hospital. Pedro 97 refueled and Pedro 73 returned to make another pickup. At this time Pedro 73 placed their paramedic on the ground to assist in loading patients and administer first aid. As Pedro 73 departed the pickup point with one litter patient, Pedro 97 moved in to make another pickup. Pedro 73 proceeded to Binh Ba with the patient while Pedro 97 picked up one litter patient and two more patients on the forest penetrator. Upon arriving at Binh Ba, Pedro 73 refueled. Pedro 97 deposited the 3 patients at Binh Ba and while enroute to the pickup point I was notified by Sidewinder 23 that the pickup point was under heavy small arms and mortar attack. The mortar attack was neutralized when Pedro 97 arrived at the pickup point so I proceeded to extract two litter patients. As Pedro 97 departed the pickup point, Pedro 73 arrived and proceeded to lower the litter for another pickup. When the litter was approximately 10 feet from the ground, Pedro 73 was hit by a burst of automatic small arms fire from the left rear and from approximately a 30° angle from verticle. The pilot immediately cut the hoist, called "Ground fire" and started to depart the area. Immediately after starting to climb out it was noticed that the rotor and engine RPM could not be controlled. The throttle was jammed in the full open, max power position. The aircraft required at least 4 inches of right rudder to maintain coordinated flight. Approximately 2 miles from the hoisting area there was a small clearing in a rubber plantation, but not knowing how secure it was, the pilot decided to try to make a road further west. About this time the pilot felt he had the emergency under control and he elected to try and take the aircraft to Binh Ba which he knew was secure. The possibility of using emergency fuel in flight was ruled out because the throttle could not be brought down to flight idle. The pilot and co-pilot evaluated the situation and decided a shallow approach and running landing was the best way to land the aircraft. Clearance was obtained and Pedro 97 stood by as the approach and landing was made. The landing was made with no injury to the crew. The only way to shut the engine down was to turn off the fuel and oil shutoff valve. The oil could be shut off but not the fuel. It was discovered that the fuel portion of the valve had been rendered inoperative by a bullet. The mechanic tried to manually move the fuel control to the off position with no success. He then considered the possibility of disconnecting or masking the fuel line to starve the engine. Then he hit on the idea to drive the

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the fuel control to the off position with a hammer which successfully shut the engine down. During shut down it was found that the rotor brake had also become inoperative but the blades coasted to a stop creating no further problems. A quick investigation of the aircraft revealed nine hits. Both sets of blades were ruined along with many other items on the aircraft. It was also noticed that the armor plating in the cabin had successfully stopped two 30 caliber armor piercing rounds destined for the hoist operator. Transportation was arranged to take the crew back to Bien Hoa so plans could be made for removing the aircraft to Bien Hoa. When Pedro 97 heard the call of ground fire hits from Pedro 73 he immediately returned to Binh Ba, transferred the litter patients and returned to escort Pedro 73 back to Binh Ba. When Pedro 73 was safely on the ground, Pedro 97 returned to the pickup point where there were 7 more known casualties and Pedro 73's pararescueman. I was told to orbit west of the pickup point at altitude because the ground forces were in heavy enemy contact with the enemy too close for air support. Very shortly afterward, artillery was called in and the pickup point was completely encircled in artillery fire. At this time Pedro 46 arrived on scene and joined the orbit. Pedro 46 departed the orbit for Binh Ba and refueled, as it became dark. When Pedro 46 returned to the orbit, Pedro 97 returned to Binh Ba for fuel. As Pedro 97 returned to the orbit point we were advised by Sidewinder 22 (ground FAC) that the situation was such that no more extractions could be made and the two Pedro aircraft should return to home stations. Airman Pitsenbarger, the Pararescueman from Pedro 73, remained at the pickup point. Upon arrival at Bien Hoa I was notified by 3 DASC that during the night the pararescueman and 7 remaining casualties were moved to an area where an LZ would be cleared and they would be extracted by Army helicopters at first light the next morning.

Arrangements were made to have an Army CH47 sling load Pedro 73 to Bien Hoa from Binh Ba for repairs.

Pedro 97 recovered 7 casualties, and Pedro 73 recovered 2 casualties. Nine (9) combat saves were claimed. HH-43F's flew eight (8) sorties for 6+15 hours. HH-43B flew two (2) sorties for 2+30 hours. = 9

  
RONALD L. BACHMAN, Capt, USAF  
Rescue Crew Commander

## For Extraordinary Heroism

by SMSgt. JAMES A. GEORGE  
The Airman Staff

# ONE DAY AT A TIME

**That's how he'd survived nearly 250 combat missions. But time ran out. When they found him he had a rifle in one hand, a medical kit in the other.**

LATE in the afternoon of April 11, 1966, the 1st US Infantry Division's Charlie Company, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, was engaged in a scorching sweep named Operation Abilene. The company had pushed its way into an area 45 miles east of Saigon and 12 miles west of the resort area of Vung Tau. Then, Viet Cong small arms and mortar fire abruptly turned the peaceful jungle into a roaring hell. The barrage came from all sides. The men of Charlie Company found themselves swiftly cut off from the rest of the US forces.

Army Sgt. Fred C. Navarro, leader of a 10-man rifle squad, was hit. Seven of his men were killed. But Navarro was able to continue fighting. Within the hour following the deadly ambush Navarro met a 21-year-old parascoutman whom he came to know as "Pits." Their acquaintance was all too brief. About an hour and a half after the two young Americans met, A1C William H. Pitsenbarger was killed by the enemy.

For extraordinary heroism on that incredible day, Pitsenbarger was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross—the first USAF enlisted man to be presented the nation's second highest military award.

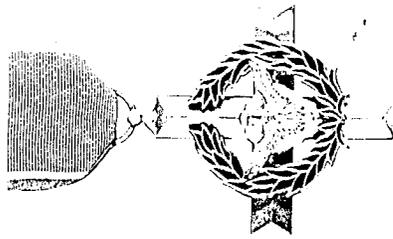
No stranger to peril, the Pipos, Ohio, parascoutman was nearing his 300th combat mission in Vietnam. He had ridden jungle penetrators into hostile territories on several occasions to rescue men in trouble. Just a month before Operation Abilene—on March 7—he'd been lowered from a hovering chopper into a burning minefield to rescue a Vietnamese soldier. The soldier had lost part of a foot when he stepped on a land mine. Pitsenbarger considered the dangerous rescue a routine part of his duties as a member of Det. 6, 38th Air Rescue Squadron, Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam. Modesty notwithstanding, he was awarded the Airman's Medal (also posthumously) for the rescue.

But April 11, 1966, was different. When Pitsenbarger's HH-43B commander shouted "Let's go," to his crew at Bien Hoa there was an urgency in his voice. Capt. (now major) Harold D. Salem lifted his *Hoosier* off the pad at Bien Hoa and, along with another HH-43B, raced for the battle area to help evacuate Charlie Company's wounded soldiers.

It was about a 30-minute flight. Pitsenbarger used the time to check his equipment and prepare himself mentally and physically for the mission. When Captain Salem arrived over the jungle area where C Company was fighting for its life, he put his copter into a hover just over the tops of the highest trees. But it was too high. The hoist cable, only 200 feet in length, wouldn't reach the ground. There was a small opening in the treetops, so Captain Salem cautiously worked his craft lower, until he was actually flying below the top canopy. Later, he described that narrow opening as a "little bity hole." But it was the only way in, and he took it.

Pitsenbarger pulled down one of the three spring-loaded seats on the penetrator hoist, straddled it, and was lowered into the smoke-saturated jungle. Inside the *Hoosier*, Sgt. Gerald Hammond operated the hoist. As soon as Pitsenbarger was on the ground he gave a thumbs-up signal. Hammond reeled the hoist in, un-

The Airman

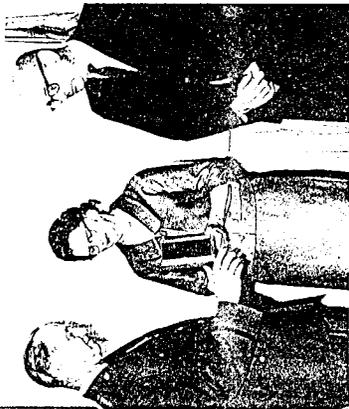




Pararescueman A1C William H. Pitsenberger made open-air jump to prepare for mission.



Maj. Harold D. Salam was HH-43B rescue pilot.



Mr. and Mrs. William Pitsenberger accept posthumous award of Air Force Cross from USAF Chief of Staff General John P. McConnell at Pentagon.

to permit the *Chinooks* to land with reinforcements. An airman from the air rescue helicopter found Pitsenberger—a rifle in his hand, a medical kit in the other. "Navarro estimated that Airman Pitsenberger was killed at about 7:30 p.m., while he was helping the Army riflemen defend against enemy snipers. Five enemy bullets had found their mark, and the day ended with swift finality for the youthful pararescueman.

Less than 20 of the 180 infantrymen from the "Big Red One" company had survived the ambush and night-long attack.

As a pararescueman, Pitsenberger had learned to live just one day at a time, taking each day as it came and dealing with its problems to the best of his ability. On September 22, 1966, Air Force Chief of Staff General John P. McConnell presented the Air Force Cross to Airman Pitsenberger's parents.

Ohio Senator Frank Lausche was there as the Figlia, Ohio, couple accepted the medal that was awarded posthumously to their only son. The Senator, deeply moved, inserted a tribute to Pitsenberger in the *Congressional Record* (September 22, 1966) that concluded:

"I was present when this high award was made to the mother and father of William Pitsenberger. They stood there heroically; in my opinion reflecting the courageous and stalwart character of their son.

"The mother was brave. The father shed tears. But both were proud.

"At the conclusion of the award, I felt that I was spiritually cleansed and fortified for better rendition of service in the responsibility which I have for my government. I only regret that others were not present.

"Ohio is proud of Airman First Class William H. Pitsenberger and his parents, Figlia, the little village from which Pitsenberger came, likewise has great reason to express honor and pride in the achievements of this young man."



## PASS THE WORD

by **CMSgt. PAUL W. AIREY**  
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

**R**EGARDLESS of how well 1968 treated us, or how badly, chances are we could have made it better for ourselves, and more meaningful for others.

How? By communicating with our men more directly and more often.

Lack of proper communication has plagued military men throughout history. It isn't too difficult to imagine that when George Washington crossed the Delaware one of his men missed the boat. Either he didn't get the word or didn't get it correctly.

A cardinal rule of good management is to "keep your men informed." Yet, haven't you met men in supervisory positions who still believe it isn't necessary to give

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basket and come out with us. Pits just gave him a wave-off. So we hoisted out of there—at 12,000 feet. The basket got hung up in the trees, and we had to cut the cable ropes to get out." Not far from the ambush scene, the HH-43B pilot made an emergency landing.

Pitsenberger had made a split-second decision when he saw the *Hoosier* taking direct hits overhead and Hammond waving at him. Without hesitation he elected to stay with the wounded Army survivors. The decision cost him his life.

Sergeant Navarro later told how Pitsenberger continued to treat the wounded as the badly mauled Charlie Company tried desperately to keep the Viet Cong at bay. When the infantrymen began coming out of ammo, the young pararescueman traded his pistol for a rifle, and left Navarro's side. He ran from man to man, through the smacking jungle, gathering ammo clips from those who could spare them—or from those who could no longer use them. Soon he came diving back and hit the ground beside Navarro. He had distributed ammo clips to some of the other defenders, and brought back about 20 clips for Navarro's dwindling squad. Then he took up a position alongside the riflemen and added his weapon to their defensive firepower.

"We had planned to withdraw from the area and set up a new defense somewhere else," Navarro said, "but the enemy fire was coming from every side. They were lobbing mortars in on us, too."

"When the firing stopped," Navarro said, "it was so dark in the jungle that you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. There must've been a hundred VC out there, and they were yelling back and forth to each other that they were going to make an all-out assault to finish us off. Our Vietnamese interpreter told us what was going on, and urged our lieutenant to call artillery in on our position to keep the enemy off our backs. Meanwhile, we learned later, VC women were slipping

hooked it, attached a litter basket, and sent it back down through the heavy foliage.

When he reached the ground, Pitsenberger immediately started giving medical treatment to wounded infantrymen, readying them for air evacuation. He and Hammond worked together to get three men into the HH-43B. Then Captain Salem and Maj. Maurice Kessler, his co-pilot, pulled out of the trees and headed for Bien Hoa with their cargo. Pitsenberger stayed with the 17 or 18 survivors of Charlie Company who were still trying to fight off the enemy. The men were being picked off by deadly sniper fire and blasted by occasional mortar rounds.

The second HH-43 maneuvered gingerly into the treetop hole above, and Pitsenberger started sending up more wounded Americans. While he was busy treating the injured, backing splints from shattered vines and trees, placing the wounded in the basket, and signaling the hoist operator when to haul it up, Pitsenberger was continually exposed to enemy fire. He ignored it.

Shortly after the second *Hoosier* crew pulled out of the trees with several wounded soldiers, Captain Salem returned for another load. He described what happened.

"We had just worked into position in that narrow opening. It was almost impossible to see anything below because of the smoke. (The infantrymen were using smoke grenades to camouflage their positions and hide their movements.) Hammond was lowering the litter basket, still 8 or 10 feet above Pits' head, when all hell broke loose.

"The VC really poured it on us from below, apparently aiming everything they had right at us to knock us out of the treetops. We took hits all over the airfield, including our oil lines, and we immediately began losing RPM at a rapid rate. We either had to go down, or get out of there fast before we lost all power.

"Hammond could see Pitsenberger below, looking up at us. And when Hammond beckoned him to grab the

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41

/ TAB C

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF  
THE AIR FORCE CROSS

TO

DUANE D. HACKNEY

Airman Second Class Duane D. Hackney distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a Paramedic on an unarmed HH-3E rescue helicopter near Mu Gia Pass, North Vietnam, on 6 February 1967. On that date, Airman Hackney flew two sorties in a rescue effort of an American pilot downed in a heavily defended hostile area. On the first sortie, despite the presence of armed forces known to be hostile, entrenched in the vicinity, Airman Hackney volunteered to be lowered into the jungle to search for the survivor. He searched until the controlling Search and Rescue agency ordered an evacuation of the rescue forces. On the second sortie, Airman Hackney located the downed pilot, who was hoisted into the helicopter. As the rescue crew departed the area, intense and accurate 37MM flak tore into the helicopter amidship, causing extensive damage and a raging fire aboard the craft. With complete disregard for his own safety, Airman Hackney fitted his parachute to the rescued man. In this moment of impending disaster, Airman Hackney chose to place his responsibility to the survivor above his own life. The courageous paramedic located another parachute for himself and had just slipped his arms through the harness when a second 37MM round struck the crippled aircraft, sending it out of control. The force of the explosion blew Airman Hackney through the open cargo door and, though stunned, he managed to deploy the unbuckled parachute and make a successful landing. He was later recovered by a companion helicopter. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of hostile forces, Airman Hackney reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

## FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM

by SMSgt. JAMES A. GEORGE  
The Airman Staff

# THE SHORTEST LINE

It led to a distant, war-torn land and several close brushes with death.

**L**IKE most 18-year-olds with the scent of June graduation coiffages still fresh in their nostrils, Duane D. Hackney was undecided.

The basic trainee was faced with selecting a career field that would not only hold his interest for the next four years, but would satisfy his strong desire to be of genuine service to his nation and to the Air Force.

Unable to decide, and impatient with his indecision, Hackney simply chose the shortest line he could find during the career counseling sessions at Lackland AFB, Tex. That short line was deceptive, however. It was to lead him into several encounters with danger thousands of miles away. A scant year and a half later, it also led him back to the US and a formal military parade where a four-star general pinned the Air Force Cross to his blouse.

But waiting in line that hot summer day in 1965, the Flint, Mich., youth who had lettered in football, baseball and swimming at Beecher High School had never heard of the Air Force Cross, the United States' second highest military decoration.

Nor had he any way of knowing that he would also return from Vietnam wearing the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross with two oak leaf clusters, the Airman's Medal, the Air Medal with nine oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Purple Heart.

Hackney could not have known either that he would be named Airman of the Year in the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service and in its parent Military Airlift Command; or that he would be presented the 1967 Cheney Award for "an act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest performed in connection with aircraft."

When he approached the end of that career counseling line at Lackland, however, and met the pararescuemen in the maroon berets, Hackney knew suddenly that he had somehow picked exactly the right line to stand in.

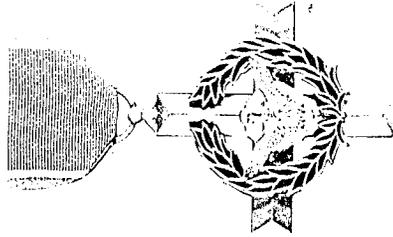
### Made to Order

The young airman soon discovered that he faced about a year of constant, strenuous training to qualify as a pararescueman. His skills of parachutist, scuba diver, medic, mountain climber, survival specialist and other rescue and recovery techniques were carefully and painstakingly woven together in a series of training schools that helped qualify him for his extraordinary job.

The learning process for a PJ is physically and mentally demanding and the candidate for the pararescueman's badge must be thoroughly convinced that this is what he really wants to do—or odds are that he won't make it. Duane Hackney never doubted for a minute his desire, or his ability, to meet these demands. He volunteered for duty with Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service units in Southeast Asia even before he received his maroon beret and pararescueman's badge.

Almost before he could say "Jolly Green Giant" he was on his way to Da Nang Air Base in Vietnam for duty with the 37th ARK Squadron. He began

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...within minutes and returned to duty. Next day, helicopter rescue men from other units picked up the remaining men at the scene of the untimely crash.

That 10th mission was memorable, but not nearly as vivid in Hackney's memory as the mission nearly a year later when he was blown out of his helicopter—the mission which won him the Air Force Cross.

It started early on the morning of February 6, 1967. A pilot was down in the dense jungle near Mu Gia Pass in North Vietnam. There had reportedly been some voice (radio) contact with him, but apparently he had not been spotted from the air.

"He was down at the bottom of a pass, covered by dense swamps of jungle growth," Hackney said. "Clouds were low, making it difficult to see very much of anything." The rescue HH-3E circled over the area as crew members searched anxiously for some sign of the pilot. Then Hackney spotted something below — something shining and asked if he could go down and look.

"There was flak all around us, but it was falling short," he remembered. The 6-foot, 180-pound PJ waited until his pilot peeked the Jolly Green Giant into position above the jungle, then rode the penetrator hoist to the ground and began pushing his way through the dark, heavy foliage.

Stumbling over rocks and roots, Hackney moved slowly through the dense growth. Finally, he found footprints that had obviously been made by American combat boots.

"I wanted to call out, but I was afraid I'd get Uncle Ho's (Ho Chi Minh) boys on me." He followed the prints but found nothing except a piece of tinzel. Then he was contacted by his crew and told to return to the cockpit. Disappointed, but low on fuel, they flew back to a forward operating base. Later that afternoon

the crew was called out again for another try. Air Force pilots had spotted the downed flyer and marked his position. Two HH-3E helicopters headed for the area.

"This time we saw him," Hackney said. "I went down to help him get on the hoist. We made it up the hoist together and into the Jolly Green. I was bending over him, trying to treat his abrasions, when the flak hit us. There was smoke and flames everywhere. The pilot had just rescued reached out an arm. I grabbed a parachute and put it on him as fast as I could (Hackney gave the airman his own chute). Then I found one for myself. I had it partially on when the second round of flak hit us."

Aircrew members in other USAF aircraft, at the rescue site said later that the HH-3E was engulfed in flames and that there were gaping holes in the pilot's and copilot's areas of the cabin. Hackney didn't see the damage to his aircraft, however. He was suddenly dumped into open space, just a few hundred feet above the top tier of jungle growth.

"The sudden pressure (from the explosion) threw me back—hard. I felt a sharp pain in my left arm. I remember reaching for the door. Next thing I saw was the helicopter—*from outside*. I'd been blown out the rear door."

Trained to survive, Hackney reacted swiftly to his training. He pulled the D-ring on his chute, and hugged the un buckled harness tight under his arms to keep from slipping out. As he hit the highest of the jungle trees, the chute opened just enough to break his fall. His crash through the branches was halted with a jolt when the chute rips and half climbed, half slid to himself from the harness and half climbed, half slid to the ground. He was the only survivor from the HH-3E.

"I guess I looked pretty rotten," Hackney said later. "I had blackened my face to prevent detection. My left arm and back were bleeding and burned and my right arm was rubbed raw." In addition to flash burns, the PJ had taken a few shrapnel hits.

"I knew the other helicopter would come back for me—either later in the afternoon or the next day." So the 19-year-old veteran of some 200 rescue missions in Vietnam began taking stock of his situation.

"I had my medical pouch with me, a pistol with six rounds of ammo, and some pencil smoke flares. I'd been wearing my camouflaged flight helmet when we were hit, but it was gone. When I heard sounds in the jungle I was worried, but I didn't see anything." Hackney wasn't worried about being picked up. He was more concerned about a Valentine card. It had cost him a buck and now he wondered if he would be able to send it to his girl friend in time.

Minutes later he heard an aircraft engine, then a US Air Force plane flew almost directly over him. "I got out the red smoke flare, opened it to mark my position and found a pretty good spot to wait out the helicopter that I was sure would be arriving soon."

Actually, he was on the ground only about 30 minutes from the time he plummeted into the jungle trees until another HH-3E came in to pick him up. A former classmate in PJ training schools, A2C Luther Davis,

came down the hoist to get Hackney out of the jungle. The end of a long and hair-raising day was almost over as the Jolly Green Giant raced for an air base in Thailand, but Hackney had one more "scare" in store for him. At the base dispensary a reading of his blood pressure showed that it was extremely high—210 over 180. But the exhausted Hackney had gone "out like a light" on a hospital stretcher.

When he heard a medical technician yelling for the doctor because he thought the young PJ had died, Hackney woke up suddenly. "That really scared me," he said.

February 6, 1967, was a day that Sgt. Duane D. Hackney will always remember. It was a day on which he nearly lost his life; a day when he did lose some of his closest friends after their helicopter was blown out of the sky. It was also a day when a young paratrooper man had helped save a pilot's life, only to lose the man minutes later; and a day when it was the PJ's turn to be rescued. That Hackney survived his sudden, low-level "bailout" was a near-miracle. It was also a tribute to the thoroughness of his training.

Today, the 21-year-old paratrooper is assigned to the 41st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Hamilton AFB, Calif. He has been awarded the Air Force Cross and numerous other decorations; has named Military Airlift Command bases as the MAC Airman of the Year; was introduced to millions of TV viewers on *The Ed Sullivan Show*; was guest of honor during Hackney Day in Detroit, Mich.; received the coveted Cheney Award; and has had his fill of being a celebrity. And it all started that day in June 1965, when Airman Basic Duane Hackney went to stand in the shortest counseling line he could find at Lackland AFB, Tex.

The story of Sgt. Duane D. Hackney is the first in a series of planned articles about US Air Force men who have been awarded the Air Force Cross, presented for extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of the Medal of Honor.

Ninety-two\* USAF officers and enlisted men have been awarded the Air Force Cross since it was authorized by the Congress on July 6, 1960. The first eight awards were made posthumously—the first to Maj. Rudolf Anderson, Jr., killed while flying a reconnaissance mission over Cuba in 1962.

The first enlisted man to be presented the Air Force Cross was honored posthumously, A1C William H. Pisenbarger, a paratrooper, gave his life while attempting to save others. Sergeant Hackney was the first living enlisted man to be presented the Air Force Cross. As this article was prepared, only one other enlisted man—Sgt. Russell M. Hunt—has been presented the medal.

The AIRMAN welcomes any information from readers that will assist us in the preparation of stories about the gallant airman who have received the Air Force Cross. This information would be especially helpful in re-creating the stories of those honored posthumously.

\* As of August 21, 1968.

**For Extraordinary Heroism**

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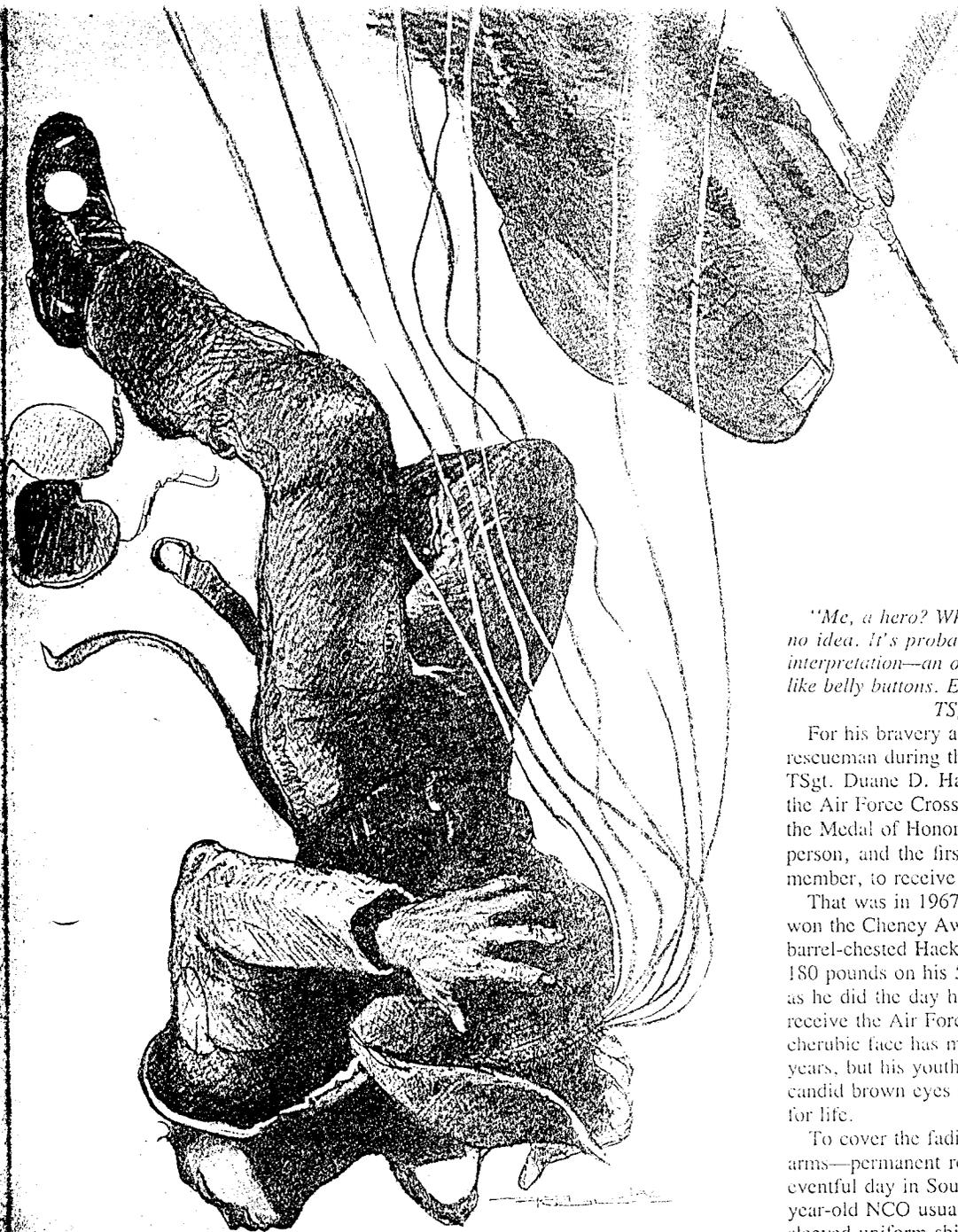
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Two months after being blown out of his helicopter, Hackney, kneeling, was being helped with Air Force Cross. Hackney will forever remain...



*"Me, a hero? What's a hero? I have no idea. It's probably somebody's interpretation—an opinion. Opinions are like belly buttons. Everybody's got one."*

*TSgt. Duane D. Hackney*

For his bravery as a 20-year-old pararescueman during the Vietnam conflict, TSgt. Duane D. Hackney was presented the Air Force Cross, second only to the Medal of Honor. He was the youngest person, and the first living enlisted member, to receive the medal.

That was in 1967, the year he also won the Cheney Award. Today, the barrel-chested Hackney carries the same 180 pounds on his 5-foot-10-inch frame as he did the day he stood at attention to receive the Air Force Cross. The once cherubic face has matured in the last 17 years, but his youthful appearance and candid brown eyes match his enthusiasm for life.

To cover the fading burn scars on his arms—permanent reminders of that eventful day in Southeast Asia—the 36-year-old NCO usually wears the long-sleeved uniform shirt with a tie. On his chest are eight rows of ribbons, which stretch from the top of his pocket nearly to the collar. The 54 medals make up enough fruit salad to serve lunch to a Jolly Green Giant helicopter crew.

TSgt. Hackney tells his stories with just the right mix of gusto, salty language, and humor laced with pathos. When recounting his Vietnam experiences, he punctuates his tales with slicing hand gestures and rolling eyeballs.

His emotions alternately soar, while remembering the adrenaline-pumping rush of combat, or plunge when he remembers the friends left behind forever in a distant jungle.

Blunt almost to a fault, TSgt. Hackney

A hero of the Vietnam War,  
TSgt. Duane Hackney is also a . . .

# Survivor!

by TSgt. Dan Allsup  
AIRMAN Staff Writer

Illustrations by SSgt Roel W. Wielinga  
AFCSC, Kelly AFB, Texas



## Project Warrior

said he joined the Air Force at 17 "on a whim" in 1965 to "get out of cutting the grass back home."

That snap decision wasn't the only one. His decision to join and become a pararescueman (PJ) in the Air Rescue and Recovery Service was also made on the spot; the line at the career counseling desk for the air rescue career field was shorter than the others at Lackland AFB, Texas, during basic training. He hated standing in long lines.

Despite being the youngest and smallest in his PJ class, and warnings that he probably wouldn't make it through the grueling, year-long training, he not only made it, he graduated with honors.

One benefit of being the class honor graduate was having first choice of assignments, which ran the gamut from Vietnam to Bermuda and Europe. The youngster opted to join the air rescue detachment at Da Nang AB in the Republic of Vietnam. Choosing a war zone for his first tour of duty wasn't just foolish bravado; he was ready for whatever the future had in store.

"By the time we got out of PJ school they had us so pumped up we thought we could walk on water," he said, "or at least give it a hell of a try. For me, there was really no choice about the assignment. The top graduates got lucky and could pick Vietnam; the others got stuck with Bermuda or England. We all knew where the action was."

It didn't take the young airman long to see the action he yearned for. Stepping off a C-130 onto Vietnamese soil for the first time, he and a buddy spotted a nearby Marine and shouted, "Hey Sarge! Where's the war?"

The reply was sobering. The grizzled veteran gave the overeager new troops a withering look and replied, "Look around, dummies! You're in it!"

He was indeed, especially on the morning of Feb. 6, 1967, near Mu Gai Pass in North Vietnam.

"Oh, man, that was so long ago," he says now. "We had just picked up our flight equipment to go on alert status when we heard a plane had gone down. They scrambled us at about 9 a.m."

"We were the primary rescue helicopter, an HH-3E *Jolly Green Giant*. As soon as we got near the area, we heard the downed pilot on the radio, but we couldn't see him. I was lowered to the

ground on a hoist. I looked around and saw footprints all around—Vietnamese footprints. I knew they were Vietnamese because the tread on their shoes was a lot different than the tread on our combat boots.

"We had lost radio contact with the pilot, so I figured the North Vietnamese were probably chasing him and he had to stop communicating for a while."

The PJ was in the jungle for nearly two hours, tripping over tangled vines and roots while trying to locate the downed pilot and avoiding contact with the enemy. Finally, the poor weather got worse and the rescue team was forced to abandon the search. They flew back to Da Nang and waited at base operations until late in the afternoon, when the downed pilot was heard from again.

"Once we knew the pilot was still alive, we decided to try it again—to go for it," TSgt. Hackney continued. "We knew we had to get him out before dark, because after the sun dropped, our chances for getting him would drop from about 90 percent to 30 percent."

"When we went in again, a *Sandy* [an A-1 *Skyraider* escort aircraft] told us not to go over this one ridge because of heavy AAA and small-arms fire. But we had to—that's where the pilot was! Once we got over the area, they lowered me on a hoist again, and this time I found the pilot. He was pretty messed up.

"I got him into the hoist, but on the way back up to the helicopter we started drawing more fire, so the *Sandy* dropped in and knocked them out. Then the enemy's anti-aircraft gun picked us up on radar. The first hit jarred us pretty bad, and there was a lot of fire and smoke. I knew we had to get out of the chopper."

In the confusion, TSgt. Hackney managed to find his parachute and strap it on the rescued pilot before helping him out of the HH-3E. Groping around in the heavy smoke looking for the fire extinguisher, the PJ found another parachute, this one oil-soaked. He had his arms through the harness when the second enemy round hit. The anti-aircraft shell severed the fuel line and blew the PJ through the closed door of the helicopter, 200 feet above the ground.

Semi-conscious, and weakened by shrapnel wounds and third-degree burns, TSgt. Hackney managed to pull the rip cord and hug the unbuckled parachute to his chest. He fell into a tree, which probably saved his life, but from there he plummeted downward onto a ledge in a crevasse about 80 feet below the jungle floor.

"When I came to on the ledge I could

look up and see the Vietnamese jumping from one side of the ravine to the other—looking for me. If they had ever looked down, they would have spotted me. I saw four of them, but I figured there were more in the area.

"A little later I heard an A1-E *Skyraider* over me and popped a flare. He saw my smoke and called in a *Jolly Green Giant* that came in and picked me up. I guess I was probably on the ground less than an hour the entire time."

The PJ later learned he was the only survivor of the aborted rescue effort. His four fellow crewmembers and the pilot he had pulled out of the jungle were never heard from again.

For giving the pilot his own parachute, at great risk to his own life, then-Sgt. Hackney was presented the Air Force Cross by Gen. Howell M. Estes, then-commander-in-chief of the Military Airlift Command.

In the ceremony, conducted during an 800-man military parade at Scott AFB, Ill., Gen. Estes also presented the young pararescueman the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. Sgt. Hackney added those medals to the Distinguished Flying Cross with three oak leaf clusters, and an Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, awards he had earned on previous missions.

The ceremony opened the flood gates for other honors and national recognition. His heroics that day in February 1967 also won him the 1967 Cheney Award, presented to airmen who perform an "act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian mission in connection with an aircraft." He was also named the 1967 Military Airlift Command Airman of the Year.

Curiously, even during the anti-war, anti-hero era of the late 60s, the American people seemed eager to grasp the handsome, articulate airman and hold him high as an example to their youth. On a breathtaking, whirlwind public appearance tour, Sgt. Hackney was a guest on "The Tonight Show," "The Dating Game," and on the Art Linkletter and Joey Bishop programs. He spent the 1968 Christmas holidays in Monaco with Prince Ranier and Princess Grace.

But it wasn't all glory for the fair-skinned, blond PJ, who wouldn't have to shave regularly for another four years. He found himself looking for ways to dodge all the probing interviewers with microphones and cameras. The public appearances were frustrating chores that kept him from performing the lifesaving work he had trained for.

As a result, after less than eight years

in the Air Force—and with a line number for promotion to master sergeant—TSgt. Hackney decided to give civilian life a go. He said the decision was made because “the war was winding down and I didn’t see any future for combat rescue.” Others, some who were close to him, said the pressure just got to be too much for him to handle.

Whatever the reasons, TSgt. Hackney soon became Deputy Hackney of the Genesee County Sheriff’s Department near his hometown of Flint, Mich. At first, he was attracted to police work, and eventually volunteered for duty with the department’s scuba diving and riot control teams.

He liked police work so much it took him nearly four years to realize that something was missing.

“The main reason I came back to the

Air Force was because I missed the traveling and the camaraderie,” he said.

“When I had an opportunity to get back in uniform as an E-4, I jumped at it.”

He made it back through the ranks quickly, earning promotions to both staff and technical sergeant the first time he was eligible. After completing basic rescue training again, he became a PJ instructor at McClellan AFB, Calif. He later transferred to Iceland, then to England before his air rescue career came to an abrupt halt.

In 1981 the PJ suffered a serious heart attack. Although the doctors couldn’t be certain, they speculated it may have been the aftermath of injuries he sustained while mountain climbing in Northern Wales.

TSgt. Hackney’s thirst for adventure had finally caught up with him. After

four months in various hospitals, his case went to a medical review board, and his appeal to remain in pararescue was denied for medical reasons.

Today, TSgt. Hackney is assigned to the intelligence division of 23rd Air Force Headquarters at Scott AFB. He’s reconciling himself to “life after pararescue” and becoming more aware of the important role his new duties play in the Air Force mission.

TSgt. Hackney recently married the former SRA. Carole Matlack—a controller with Scott’s Rescue Control Center—whose knowledge of the Vietnam War comes mostly from history books. The NCO has mellowed with marriage and the passing years, he says, but he can still tell a good story.

Like when he was showering after his first mission in Vietnam and realized he had caught a .30 caliber round in his leg hours earlier. Afraid he’d be grounded if he reported the wound to the doctors, the PJ ran naked through the barracks to his buddies’ room and coaxed them into removing the bullet with a medical probe, while he anesthetized himself with a bottle of whisky. Still as green as a pair of Lackland fatigues, the airman had been in-country for all of three days.

And there’s the story of how he convinced his parents he was working as a clerk-typist. He didn’t want them to worry about him, and they believed him until they saw his name in the newspaper headlines.

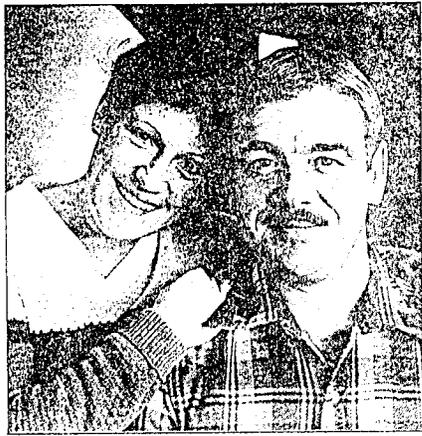
Then there was the time he landed at Travis AFB, Calif., fresh from the jungles. He was a two-striper, and a security policeman held him in custody until the major general who was meeting the returning hero verified that the young airman had actually earned all those medals he was wearing.

And he hasn’t forgotten the day the helicopter he was flying in caught a barrage of enemy small-arms fire. The chopper managed to limp back to the base, but then its tail rotor got caught in concertina wire while trying to land. With the chopper spinning wildly out of control, the crew was able to scramble out the door and run for about 50 yards before it exploded.

Such “war” stories are exciting, and TSgt. Hackney has quite a few, many of them about his friends’ exploits. But underlying the combat adventures of most wars are the memories of fallen comrades.

“I really don’t think about Vietnam very much any more—only when somebody asks me about it,” TSgt. Hackney said. “There’s a vivid picture of it still in my mind, but you get to where you like





to forget about things like that. I lost a lot of good friends over there, but I can't let myself dwell on it.

"There's today, and there's tomorrow. Yesterday is gone, and you can't change that. But don't worry about it, and if there's a lesson to be learned, then learn it, and press on."

The former PJ learned his lessons well and, in his own way, he remembers his friends who didn't make it back. In front of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service headquarters building at Scott AFB is a small plaque commemorating the pararescuemen who lost their lives in Vietnam.

Although younger airmen in the organ-

photos by SSgt. Lou Comeger, AAVS  
Arlington, Va.



**TOP:** SrA. Carole Hackney admits she wasn't aware her husband was a war hero until she read about his Vietnam actions while studying for a promotion test.

**LEFT:** TSgt. Hackney doesn't hesitate to help maintain this plaque commemorating his fallen friends who died so "that others may live."

ization are usually detailed to trim the grass around the marker, visitors are sometimes startled to see one of the Air Force's most decorated war heroes kneeling there in fatigues and clipping the grass with shears.

"I figure it's my job, too. If I don't cut the grass, who will? The young airmen out there may do it, but for them it's probably just another work detail." With a glance at the plaque, he said, "This plaque honors my friends—my buddies." He didn't have to say more.

Another insight into the character of Duane Hackney can be gleaned from a letter his sister, Dianne, wrote to his wife. Without her brother's knowledge, Dianne sent Carole a package of news clippings and photographs detailing her brother's heroism and combat missions in Vietnam.

"Duane said he didn't want these anymore because they bring back too many memories," Dianne wrote. "He lost a lot of friends and saw a lot of death, despair, and unhappiness. As he would say, 'It was something one does out of instinct.' I think that's why he was part of an elite group. . . . He was above average in instinct."

His instincts enabled him to help save others. They also helped him to survive.



## The Air Force Cross

In November 1962, Maj. Rudolph Anderson Jr. was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross after his unarmed U-2 aircraft was shot down over Cuba while flying aerial reconnaissance.

His previous flights had provided photographs proving the existence of long-range offensive missiles, information that helped establish President John F. Kennedy's military and diplomatic course of action during the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962.

Maj. Anderson was the first to be awarded the Air Force Cross after it was established on July 6, 1960. One hundred-eighty-one airmen have since received the decoration, second only to the Medal of Honor. Many of them, like Maj. Anderson, were honored posthumously.

The first enlisted member awarded the Air Force Cross was A1C William H. Pitsenbarger, a friend and fellow pararescueman of TSgt. Hackney. The citation accompanying the posthumous award noted that on April 11, 1966, A1C Pitsenbarger rode a hoist more than 100 feet to the ground to organize rescue efforts of American casualties in a dense South Vietnam jungle. After recovering the ninth casualty, the rescue helicopter was disabled by small-arms fire and forced to

make an emergency landing.

Soon after rescue efforts were abandoned, the area came under heavy sniper and mortar fire. A1C Pitsenbarger repeatedly was exposed to enemy fire while gathering rifles and ammunition from fallen comrades to pass along to fellow defenders. He died of wounds sustained in that encounter.

Designed in 1959 by Eleanor Cox, then-chief of the Air Force Heraldic Section, the Air Force Cross is awarded for ". . . extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of the Medal of Honor, while serving in any capacity with the Air Force; while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly forces in an armed conflict against an opposing force in which the United States is not a belligerent party."

The medal itself is a sculptured bronze cross with an oxidized satin finish. Centered on the cross is a gold-plated American bald eagle, its wings spread against a cloud formation. The eagle is encircled by a laurel wreath finished in green enamel. The ribbon is light-blue, with narrow white and red stripes at each edge.

—TSgt. Dan Allison

6 February 1967 -- Airman First Class Duane D. Hackney, a pararescueman with the 37th ARR Squadron, appeared in numerous after-action reports as he established a combat save record making him legendary in the world of combat rescue. During one mission, Airman Hackney searched for a downed pilot in the underbrush of a North Vietnamese jungle. He found the injured pilot, strapped him into a Stokes litter, and both of them rode to the safety of the helicopter. As the men reached the helicopter door, North Vietnamese Army troops began firing at the chopper. The pilot pulled the HH-3E up, but an enemy gunner found his mark and the Jolly Green Giant began to burn. Airman Hackney quickly put a parachute on the injured man and then climbed into one himself. The helicopter suddenly exploded, throwing Airman Hackney out. His parachute opened just above the trees.



A1C Duane D. Hackney operates a rescue hoist equipped with a forest penetrator.

The second HH-3E, the "high bird," rushed in and its pararescueman went down to search for survivors. He found only Airman Hackney, dazed but not seriously injured, and brought him to safety.

A month later, on 13 March, Airman Hackney was one of two pararescuemen aboard an HH-3E Jolly Green that flew deep into Viet Cong territory just south of the demilitarized zone. A Marine H-34 troop transport helicopter was down, and the survivors reported enemy soldiers closing in for the kill. A second Marine helicopter crew overheard the radio transmission calling for help and turned their larger H-46 troop and cargo helicopter toward their beleaguered comrades. Airman Hackney's Jolly Green arrived in time to see the H-46 fall out of the sky onto the first downed helicopter.

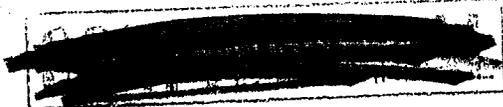
On the ground the Marines gathered their injured and set their defenses against the enemy forces closing in from all sides. Above, in the door of the HH-3E, Airman Duane Hackney watched as Air Force A-1s darted in to blast the Viet Cong. When the Skyraiders had laid down a smoke screen, the pilot cautiously moved the Jolly Green over the embattled Marines. As soon as the giant chopper came to a hover, Airman Hackney was on the Stokes litter and on his way to the ground. He loaded as many injured men as he could on the litter and rode up with them. Just as Airman Hackney and a wounded Marine got in the door, the pilot saw warning lights flash on, indicating hydraulics were out. With bullets smashing into the fuselage, the pilot pulled the chopper up and headed for Da Nang AB. Meanwhile, Airman Hackney, who was working in the cabin treating the wounded, suddenly slumped to the floor. An enemy bullet had grazed his helmet, knocking him out. He soon regained

consciousness and continued to set fractures, tend head wounds, and apply tourniquets. For his efforts, Airman Hackney received the Air Force Cross from General Estes on 9 September 1967. Duane Hackney was the most decorated enlisted man to serve in Southeast Asia. That in itself is quite an accomplishment because pararescuemen had thus far, and will continue to, earn more decorations than any other group of men in the Air Force serving in Indochina.

It was difficult for the audiences of the many national television shows that Airman Hackney was featured on to believe that the modest and shy, baby-faced young man could have accomplished the many daring feats he had. It was also difficult for Security Policemen at Travis AFB, California, to believe that such a young man could have actually been legitimately awarded all the medals he had pinned to his chest, even an airman returning from a tour in Southeast Asia. On one return trip to the States, he was held in confinement until a telephone call verified that he was indeed authorized the medals he was wearing.

September 1967 - August 1972 -- Sergeant Chuck Morrow, a pararescueman, spent two tours in Southeast Asia at several locations for a total of 38 months. He was awarded three Silver Stars, five Distinguished Flying Crosses, and numerous Air Medals during tours at Udorn AB, Thailand and Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai AB, Thailand for combat rescue missions flown into North Vietnam.





HISTORY  
 OF THE  
 37TH AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SQUADRON  
 AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE (MAC)  
 UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
 DA NANG AIR BASE, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM  
 1 OCTOBER - 31 DECEMBER 1967

*John B Mctasney*  
 JOHN B. MCTASNEY  
 Captain, USAF  
 Historian

*Kenneth D Caughron*  
 KENNETH D. CAUGHRON  
 Lt Col, USAF  
 Commander



GROUP 4  
 Downgraded at 3 year  
 intervals; declassified  
 after 12 years

37 ARRSq Hist, Oct - Dec 1967

9.

(19) (C) 1-3-182, 8 & 9 Nov 1967, at 1505Z Jolly Green 29 and 26 were scrambled from Da Nang AB, RVN to attempt an extraction of the surviving five members of a Special Forces Team located at 2620/40/69. At 1550Z the Jolly Greens were in the area and advised by a USAF O-2, to hold while three U.S. Army UH-1B gunships, softened the area with rockets and machine gun fire. A USAF C-130, was providing flare support for the mission. At 1630Z Jolly Green 29 attempted the pickup and managed to pick up three of the five survivors before being driven off by hostile fire. Because of battle damage, Jolly Green 29 departed the area and made an emergency landing at Khe Sanh, RVN. At approximately 1650Z Jolly Green 26 attempted to pick up the remaining two survivors. After getting them on board the aircraft, Jolly Green 26 was hit by automatic weapons fire and burst into flames. The aircraft crashed on the scene with the loss of three of the crew and the two survivors. The Rescue Crew Commander of Jolly Green 26 was picked up seventeen hours later by a U.S. Army UH-1D. The three survivors of the Special Forces Team picked up by Jolly Green 27 were all indigenous personnel, names unknown. The deceased crew members of Jolly Green 26 were Captain Ralph W. Brower, SSgt Eugene L. Clay, and Sgt Larry W. Maysey. The survivor of Jolly Green 26 was Captain Gerald O. Young.

(20) (C) 1-3-182, 9 Nov 1967, at 2354Z Jolly Green 04 was scrambled from Quang Tri to 27 miles South South-East of Khe Sanh, 1650/27/85, to aid in the recovery of survivors of Jolly Green 26

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals; declassified after 12 years

[REDACTED]

37 ARRSq Hist, Oct - Dec 1967

10.

which had crashed the previous night. Jolly Green 04 arrived on scene at 0030Z and held at a safe altitude while Sandy 5, 6, 7, and 8 (USAF A-1Es), a USAF O-2, and USAF F-4Cs were conducting the search. At approximately 0130Z two possible survivors were spotted and Jolly Green 04 made a pass over the area. The pickup was not attempted at this time by order of the Commander, 7th AF. At 0720Z Jolly Green 04 was given permission to attempt the pickup, but no survivors could be sighted. Jolly Green 04 was returned to base at 0815Z and upon landing an automatic weapons hit was found in the tail of the aircraft. Jolly Green 04 was on scene for eight hours and 10 minutes and made three air refuelings.

(21) (U) 1-3-183, 12 Nov 1967, at 0245Z Jolly Green 25 was diverted from orbit to assist the US Navy in evacuating personnel from a floundering boat, Greenfish, at 18°10'N/106°45'E. Jolly Green 25 transported damage control equipment from Killer Whale, a USN destroyer to Greenfish. Since it was determined Greenfish was in no danger of sinking no survivors needed to be evacuated.

(22) (U) 1-3-184, 14 Nov 1967, at 1625Z Jolly Green 28 and 25 were scrambled to 113°17'94, 17 miles East South-East of Da Nang, to medivac a snakebit victim. Jolly Green 28 made the pickup at 1715Z and evacuated the victim, name unknown, to Marble Mountain AB, RVN.

(23) (U) 1-3-185, 20 Nov 1967, at 0145Z Jolly Green 04 was diverted from orbit to attempt the pickup of the crew of a USAF F-4C at 340°/20/109, 20 miles North-West of Dong Ha. Jolly Green 04 arrived on the

[REDACTED]

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals; declassified after 12 years

TAB E

RECOMMENDATION FOR DECORATION

DATE 15 JUN 1968

TO: (Organization and address)  
3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group  
APO 96307

FROM: Organization and address)  
Det 1, 40th ARRS (MAC) PAS HKQPTO  
APO 96310

RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMEND INDIVIDUAL INDICATED BE AWARDED

1. NAME OF DECORATION (Indicate number of clusters, if appropriate)

AIR FORCE CROSS

App 68-83

2. RECOMMENDATION IS BASED ON:

- HEROISM
- MERITORIOUS SERVICE  
(Based on completed period of service)
- OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

B

3. INCLUSIVE DATE(S) OF ACT, ACHIEVEMENT OR SERVICE

FROM ON

TO

30 May 1968

PERSONAL DATA ON INDIVIDUAL BEING RECOMMENDED

4. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL

NEWMAN, THOMAS A.

5. AFSSN

AF16817354

6. GRADE

Sergeant E-4

7. PRESENT ORGANIZATION AND STATION

Det 1, 40th ARRS (MAC) PAS HKQPTO  
APO S.F. 96310

B PRESENT DUTY ASSIGNMENT

Pararescue Specialist

9. PERMANENT HOME ADDRESS

2709 N. 36th St  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53210

10. ORGANIZATION OF NEXT DUTY ASSIGNMENT (if applicable)

N/A

11. ORGANIZATION, DUTY ASSIGNMENT AND GRADE AT TIME OF ACT OR SERVICE

Det 1, 40th ARRS, APO 96310, PAS HKQPTO  
Pararescue Specialist, III-3E, A92350  
Sergeant E-4

12. DATE OF PROMOTION TO GRADE IN WHICH SERVING

1 October 1967

13. INDIVIDUAL'S SERVICE IN AIR FORCE SINCE ACT OR SERVICE HAS BEEN HONORABLE

YES  NO

14. DATE OF REASSIGNMENT, RETIREMENT OR SEPARATION, AS APPLICABLE

RETIREMENT OR SEPARATION IS  VOLUNTARY  INVOLUNTARY, AND THE FOLLOWING SERVICE DATES APPLY

DEPOS: 25 February 1969

CDOS: TAFCSO: TAFMSD: PLSD: TFCSD: TMSD:

15. PREVIOUS UNITED STATES DECORATIONS, COMPLETE AUTHORITY THEREFOR, AND INCLUSIVE DATES OF SERVICE RECOGNIZED (Do not include service medals, battle credits, unit citations or foreign decorations)

NONE.

16. ARE OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARDS TO THIS INDIVIDUAL PENDING? (If yes, state awards)

AIRMAN'S MEDAL  YES  NO  
AIRMAN'S MEDAL (1st OLC)  YES  NO

17. ARE OTHER INDIVIDUALS BEING RECOMMENDED FOR THE SAME ACT OR SERVICE?

YES  NO

18a. IF ANSWER TO ITEM 17 IS YES, ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OTHER INDIVIDUALS FORWARDED AS A PART OF THIS RECOMMENDATION?  YES  NO

b. IF ANSWER TO ITEM 18a IS NO, EXPLAIN REASON FOR DELAY, INCLUDING DATE RECOMMENDATION(S) WILL BE FORWARDED, AND IDENTIFY THE INDIVIDUAL(S) BY GRADE, NAME, SERVICE NUMBER, PRESENT ORGANIZATION AND STATION.

N/A

19. HAS PREVIOUS AWARD BEEN MADE TO THIS INDIVIDUAL FOR THIS ACT OR SERVICE?

YES  NO

20. HAVE ALL AVAILABLE RECORDS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION THAT WOULD HAVE A BEARING ON THIS RECOMMENDATION BEEN CONSIDERED AND NO CONDITION EXISTS WHICH WOULD MAKE APPROVAL OF THIS AWARD INAPPROPRIATE?

YES  NO

IF AWARD IS POSTHUMOUS, OR INDIVIDUAL RECOMMENDED IS MISSING IN ACTION OR A PRISONER OF WAR, LIST NAME, ADDRESS AND RELATIONSHIP OF NEXT OF KIN.

N/A

14 AUG 1968

22. DATE WHICH PRESENTATION OF AWARD IS DESIRED, IF APPROVED.

As Soon As Possible

23. IF APPROVED, FORWARD FOR PRESENTATION TO (Organization and address)

3ARRGP, APO 96307

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

SPECIAL ORDER  
GB- 521

3 October 1968

1. By direction of the President, OGE THOMAS A. NEWMAN, AF16817854, is awarded the Air Force Cross for extraordinary heroism while participating in military operations against an opposing armed force on 30 May 68.
2. By direction of the President, MAJ J LYNN McBRIDE, PR65427, is awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service from 1 Sep 64 to 1 Aug 68.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE



JOHN F. BASI, Colonel, USAF  
Director of Administrative Services

J. P. McCONNELL, General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

DISTRIBUTION  
GO

GB-521

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

5 March 1969

SPECIAL ORDER  
GB- 111

The Cheney Award for 1968 is awarded to SERGEANT THOMAS A NEWMAN, AF16817854, who distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism and valor in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E Pararescue Specialist in Southeast Asia on 30 May 1968. On that date, SERGEANT NEWMAN voluntarily descended into a hostile jungle environment to rescue a downed Air Force pilot. With complete disregard for his own life, and hampered by darkness and concentrated automatic weapons fire, he requested the rescue helicopter above him to enter a nearby orbit, both for the safety of the crewmembers and to prevent the hovering aircraft from revealing the survivor's position to the unfriendly ground forces. When the rescue helicopter returned for the pickup, SERGEANT NEWMAN was severely injured in the first hoist attempt. Nevertheless, he succeeded in securing the injured pilot to the forest penetrator and protected him with his own body from hostile fire as they ascended to the helicopter. SERGEANT NEWMAN'S courageous act reflects the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE



JOHN F RASH, Colonel, USAF  
Director of Administration

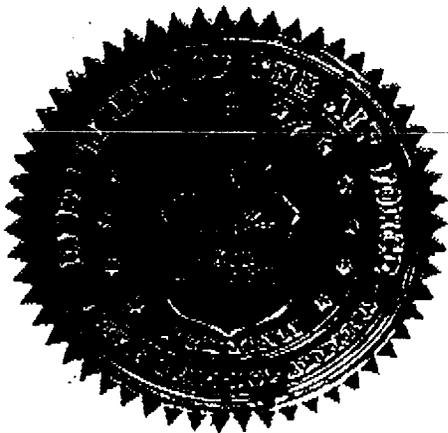
J. P. McCONNELL, General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

DISTRIBUTION  
GO

GB-111

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF  
THE AIR FORCE CROSS  
TO  
THOMAS A. NEWMAN

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Sergeant Thomas A. Newman for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E Helicopter Pararescue Specialist in Southeast Asia, on 30 May 1968. On that date, Sergeant Newman voluntarily descended into a hostile jungle environment to rescue a downed Air Force pilot. With complete disregard for his own life, and hampered by darkness and concentrated automatic weapons fire, he requested the rescue helicopter above him to enter a nearby orbit, both for the safety of the crewmembers, and to prevent the hovering aircraft from establishing the survivor's location for the unfriendly ground forces. When the rescue helicopter returned, he secured the injured airman to the forest penetrator and protected him with his own body as they ascended to the helicopter. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness, Sergeant Newman reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Description of the act, achievement or service, including specific dates, places and facts. If additional space is needed, use plain 8 x 11 bond paper, the last sheet of which must be signed by the recommending individual.)

On 30 May 1968 Sergeant Newman was scrambled to recover an F-105 pilot shot down by 37mm anti-aircraft fire west of Khe Shan. While enroute to the survivor's position, he was advised the pilot had broken an arm following bail out and would require assistance getting on the forest penetrator. Sergeant Newman immediately volunteered to descend on the hoist to assist the injured airman. Major Reagan, the co-pilot, then briefed Sergeant Newman that the area into which he would be placed was within range of several anti-aircraft weapons, and contained concentrated unfriendly ground forces with hand-held automatic weapons. Sergeant Newman checked and prepared his gear for hoist descent. The poor visibility caused by approaching darkness hampered the pararescue specialist's chances of evaluating the area, and orienting himself towards the best escape route should he be required to evade ground forces until the following day. When the rescue helicopter was called in following the sterilization of the area by the fighter escort aircraft, Sergeant Newman heard the downed pilot state that his injuries prevented him from igniting a smoke flare to pinpoint his position beneath the jungle canopy. Once the rescue helicopter came to hover over the downed airman's suspected position, it was evident he could not be seen beneath the dark jungle unless the pararescue specialist was put down to direct the rescue helicopter over the survivor. Sergeant Newman then secured himself to the forest penetrator and was lowered to the ground. He established radio contact immediately with the hovering helicopter; however, he was unable to talk to the downed airman. Beneath the dense foliage the pararescue specialist found it too dark to see more than a few feet. He immediately began an expanding circle search for the survivor and completed one circuit without success when he saw the hovering helicopter subjected to automatic weapons fire from the ridge above him. Because of the noise from the helicopter he was unable to hear the unfriendly forces surrounding him and, fearing for the safety of the crewmembers above him and realizing the aircraft above him would draw the enemy to his position, he requested the rescue helicopter depart until he could locate the downed pilot. As the helicopter departed the area, he observed it was subjected to heavy automatic weapons fire. After the departure of the helicopter the pararescue specialist heard a shot and caught a glimpse of a muzzle flash in his peripheral vision. Unable to pinpoint the source, and unwilling to give away his position or risk a shot that could hit the survivor, Sergeant Newman dropped to the ground and began crawling towards the shot. Within seconds another shot allowed him to pinpoint the source, and for a fraction of a second illuminated the person firing; believing this to be the downed pilot, Sergeant Newman, with complete disregard for his own life should the survivor mistake him for hostiles and fire at him, and risking that his voice might give away his position to the hostile forces surrounding him, called to the survivor and began inching his way to the barely visible injured man. Once assured he had found the survivor, he quickly cut him free of his life preserver, G-suit, and survival gear. As he worked he could see muzzle flashes and hear weapons firing, both towards his position and at the aircraft orbiting above. The pararescue specialist and the pilot could hear people moving

25. TYPED NAME, GRADE AND TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL INITIATING RECOMMENDATION.

JOSEPH L. WELLS, Lt Col, USAF  
Commander

26. SIGNATURE

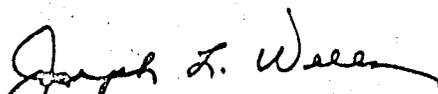
*Joseph L. Wells*

27. ATTACHMENTS

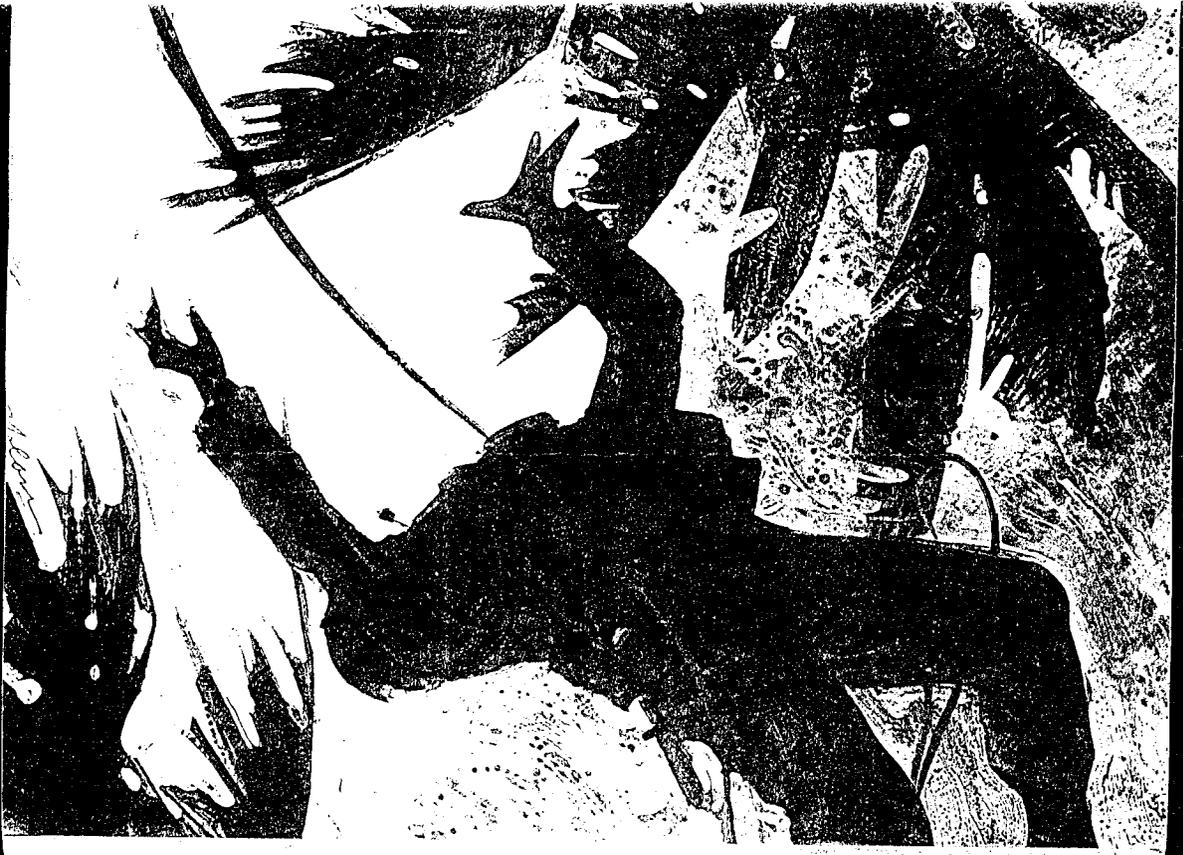
NUMBER	DESCRIPTION (Citation and supporting statements or other official documents)
1	Citation

(Item 24, AF Form 642, Air Force Cross recommendation for Sergeant Thomas A. Newman, AF16817854)

through the brush as they closed in on their position. Sergeant Newman advised the crew of the orbiting rescue helicopter that he would be shutting off his radio for a few minutes to evaluate the situation before calling them in and subjecting them to close and accurate fire. For the next 10-20 minutes he and the pilot remained motionless as they kept watch around them for signs of unfriendly forces. This apparently prevented the hostile troops from pinpointing their position, and when the noise of movement in the undergrowth appeared to be dying away, Sergeant Newman called in the rescue helicopter for a pickup. Once again ground fire was received as the helicopter came into a hover and lowered the penetrator. As Sergeant Newman turned to assist the injured crewman in getting on the hoist, he lost sight of the penetrator in the darkness; after confusing the cable for one of the many vines in the area he finally located the hoist line and realized there was considerable excess cable on the ground; unable to follow it to the forest penetrator, he requested the hovering helicopter take up the slack. Apparently this statement was misinterpreted, and before he became aware that he was standing in the midst of tangled hoist line, the cable was reeled in catching him around the ankle and jerking him inverted. With the violence of the jolt, he lost his weapon; his radio, though secured to his vest, fell from his grasp. Before he could react the cable had become taut and locked to his ankle pulling him feet first up through the jungle. From his inverted position he could see muzzle flashes within 50-75 yards of himself and the rescue helicopter. His body became entangled in a tree, and his leg and ankle were violently wrenched as he was pulled through the branches by sheer force. He went through the second tree canopy; dangling inverted above the trees, he retrieved his radio with the strap securing it to his vest, and notified the helicopter crew he was tangled in the cable and requested to be put back on the ground. At this point he was 70-80 feet above the ground, and within 20 feet of the helicopter; he could dimly see the penetrator hanging some 30 feet below him. As he was lowered head-first to the ground through the foliage he was able to use his hands to avoid becoming entangled in the trees. Dropping through the second canopy, his downward motion was momentarily arrested loosening the cable around his ankle, and he fell the last 20 feet to the jungle floor, breaking the impact with his hands and spraining his left wrist. By then the survivor had reached the penetrator, and Sergeant Newman quickly secured the injured pilot, strapped himself on, and then advised the rescue helicopter they were ready. The unfriendly forces were firing with increasing accuracy as the survivor, protected by the para-rescue specialist's body, was lifted out of the jungle and safely secured on the helicopter. During the return flight to home base Sergeant Newman made a thorough inspection of the survivor's wounds, applied splints to his broken left arm, checked his dislocated right shoulder, cleaned a wound on his head, and treated him for shock. He then made the pilot as comfortable as possible until he was turned over to the flight surgeon upon landing at home station.

  
JOSEPH L. WELLS, Lt Col, USAF  
Commander

14 AUG 1968



Hanging by one ankle 80 feet above  
the ground while people are shooting  
at you isn't only undignified,  
it's downright dangerous!

# AN ACT OF VALIORS

by TED R. STURM

Through a growing darkness heightened by the dense forest, Sgt. Thomas A. Newman saw the outline of a man.

Flashes from a gun muzzle first attracted his attention, and as he inched his M-16 forward, it occurred to him to hold his fire. It was possible the shadowy figure was the injured F-105 pilot.

On the other hand, it could very well be an enemy soldier. They were all around, constantly announcing their presence by small arms fire. But even if it were the pilot, Newman wasn't sure how to reach him. More likely than not, the man was nervous, and would shoot at anything that moved.

The sergeant watched for another moment and then, even though he might give his position away to the enemy, he decided to shout. Immediately he heard a reply from the figure ahead.

"Over here," the man answered.

"Sounds American," Newman muttered to himself. "Still, you can't tell. Almost everybody speaks a little English." There was only one way to find out.

Still on his stomach, Sergeant Newman inched forward. It was the pilot, all right, still in his life preserver, G-suit and survival gear. His arm was broken, as Newman had heard earlier. In a matter of minutes, the sergeant cut him free of his gear, and administered first aid.

Both he and the pilot, Col. Norman P. Phillips, could hear people moving through the brush, closing in on their position. Obviously, they had to get out of there in a hurry. But it was not to be an easy, routine rescue this time. Old Dame Fortune was feeling mischievous and had a few more surprises cooked up for this *Thunderbird* pilot and the paratrooper who had come to save him.

But some days are like that. Some days you never forget. And the fact that this was Memorial Day—May 30, 1968—only served as an additional reminder that sometimes the difference between a memory and a memorial can be a fraction of an inch, a single strand, or a split second.

Some men wonder when they find themselves in a very tough spot, how they came to be there. Newman didn't wonder. He knew. When he joined the Air Force in 1965, he wasted no time in getting to where the action is. While he was still in basic, he volunteered for paratrooper duty. About a year later, after seven tough, grueling schools that transformed the former high school student into a rescue expert, he was shipped to Guam. That was his first step toward the jungle he now shared with Colonel Phillips and an unknown number of enemy troops.

Newman was a busy man during the 19 months he spent on Guam. Before he left, he managed to help save a civilian seaman suffering from acute insulin shock; assisted a Navy corpsman in saving a chief petty officer who suffered a heart attack aboard a submarine; was credited with saving the lives of two Japanese fishermen who suffered severe burns in an engine room fire on board the fishing vessel *Shoichi Maru*, and aided in the treatment and evacuation of four more. In each of these cases, the indomitable sergeant had to parachute into the open sea.

Sergeant Newman was accepted for duty in Southeast Asia and departed for Eglin AFB, Fla., in December 1967. There he took paratrooper specialist training in the HH-3E helicopter. After PACAF Jungle Survival School at Clark AB in the Philippines, he arrived at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand, in March 1968.

That's the kind of a man in whose hands Colonel Phillips' life now lay. And although all paratrooper men are the kind of people you trust in any

situation, Newman had a deep inner strength that he would be forced to draw on before the day ended.

In fact, even before he got on the ground to find the downed pilot, the situation got a little sticky. Newman and his "Jolly Green" crew had been scrambled to recover Phillips after his F-105 had been clobbered by 37mm antiaircraft fire west of Khe Sanh. He had bailed out and, because of the broken arm and a dislocated shoulder, was unable to get himself on the forest penetrator hoist that was to be lowered to him.

So Newman volunteered to ride the hoist down through two layers of jungle treetops and help strap the pilot on. Phillips was down in an area dotted with antiaircraft weapons and numerous enemy units armed with small arms and hand-held automatic weapons. Not only that, but the poor visibility brought on by approaching darkness made it impossible for Newman to evaluate the area. He was unable to predetermine his escape routes should he and the pilot be forced to get to an alternate pickup area on foot.

As fighter escort aircraft strafed and bombed the area, Newman's chopper moved in. It was then the radio crackled with another bit of bad news. Because of his broken arm, the pilot was not able to ignite a smoke flare. Finding him would be tough.

Nevertheless, Newman secured himself to the penetrator, and as the helicopter hovered over the downed airman's suspected position, the paratrooper man was lowered to the ground. He immediately established radio contact with the hovering Jolly Green, but could not contact Colonel Phillips.

There was only one way to find the pilot in the darkness and the dense foliage—hunt for him! Newman began to work his way in a constantly expanding circle. He had just completed the first circuit when he noticed that his hovering Jolly Green was catching a lot of automatic weapons fire from a ridge above him.

This situation brought three immediate problems into focus. First, the noise from the helicopter prevented Newman from hearing the enemy or the downed pilot. Second, he feared for the safety of the helicopter crew, and third, the hovering bird would soon draw the enemy forces to his position. Sergeant Newman asked the helicopter to leave. As it moved out, it was subject again to a barrage of heavy automatic weapons fire.

It was only a matter of seconds after the helicopter left that Newman saw the muzzle flash and the shadowy figure that turned out to be Colonel Phillips.

Now, as the colonel and the sergeant huddled in the foliage, they decided the enemy was too close to risk a pickup.

Getting his helicopter crew on the radio, Newman advised them to stand off. He also told them he would be shutting off his radio for a few minutes to evaluate the situation before he called them back in. There was still the danger of their being shot down by ground fire.

For nearly 20 minutes he and the pilot remained motionless, listening and watching for sounds of the enemy. Neither man moved nor made a sound, preventing the enemy from pinpointing their position. Soon the noise of movement in the undergrowth died away.

Now the sergeant called the helicopter in for the pickup. Again, as the chopper moved over their position, it received ground fire. Still they lowered the hoist, the first sight of the penetrator in the darkness. The numerous vines hanging from the trees all looked like the cable, and Newman had to search more by feel than sight. Finally, he found it, but realized the heli-

... He was hanging upside down 70 to 80 feet above the ground.

Born only 10 years ago, the laser is here to stay. Its applications are manifold but its dangers still lie in the relative unknown. That's why Air Force scientists in Texas are working on the . . .

ology Branch of the Clinical Sciences Division, School of Aerospace Medicine, Brooks AFB, Tex.

According to Everett O. Ritchie, Oculo-Thermal Function Chief, the Brooks-based study has two major projects: "Our primary function is first to determine laser irradiation which will cause biological damage. Then, on the basis of our findings, build in appropriate safety factors and make recommendations to the Surgeon General as to what levels of laser irradiation Air Force people can be exposed to without causing permanent damage."

To determine biological effects, a task force headed by Lt. Col. Paul W. Lappin conducts experiments with Rhesus monkeys, since their eyes most closely resemble the human eye. "The eye is the most susceptible to laser energy," says Lappin. "The laser is a highly concentrated beam of light, and the eye has the ability to focus on that beam. Since the laser generates a great deal of light energy on such a small point, it can easily cause blindness by burning the eye's retina. This is only one type of laser effect we are studying. We must determine permissible levels of exposure—we've got to know when the exposure level becomes dangerous."

Once danger levels are established, the second part of the overall project gets in high gear, so to speak. Working with established danger levels, the preventive measures project, headed by Lt. Col. John A. Carpenter, must design and fabricate devices to protect the human body from unacceptable levels of laser exposure. "As Colonel Lappin said," states Carpenter, "the human eye is the most vulnerable, but we aren't limiting the research to the eye only. We're involved in basic research that may afford protection to the skin and other parts of the body."

Work involving laser research isn't as simple as it may sound. Though the people involved have information generated by earlier studies, they feel they have a long way to go in refining safety stand-

Golfing used it as a weapon. So did the bad guys in a Matt Helm adventure. In both movies, warped individuals with evil designs used intense rays of light to kill in their quests for power.

Science fiction? Most definitely. The laser is a long, long way from being an unstoppable weapon. However, lasers already have many military applications. The 10-year-old creation of science, its name an acronym from Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation, is being tested as target illuminators and accurate bombing illuminators' components. Lasers may overhaul bombing, giving practically 100 percent accuracy on payload delivery. Frontally, the bombing advancement will save money and, more importantly, lives. Combat strikes can be reduced significantly due to pinpoint accuracy. Bombs will hit the target—period.

Lasers have greatly excited the scientific world. The sharpest, purest, most intense light known to man, it can at close range vaporize any substance on earth. Scientists have worked on laser applications in communications, radio astronomy, heating and cooling, welding, precision alignment, radar and navigation, photography and medicine to name a few. Laboratory and practical applications have shown it to be a light of promise for all mankind.

But with all the promise shown by lasers, the art of laser applications may be outstripping the human element. Lasers can be dangerous. They are machines of light/heat/radiation. These elements affect the human body—many times adversely. Therein lie the dangers.

Early in the development of lasers, Air Force scientists began to study the biological effects of the intense light beam. Simultaneously, other Air Force scientists were working on practical applications of the newly found device.

Not completely satisfied with the smaller, early programs on biological effects, the Air Force consolidated the efforts. Now, laser biological effects are studied in the Ophthalm-

copter crew had dropped too much cable. Because of the excess on the ground, Newman could not follow it to the penetrator seat itself.

That's when it happened! One of those incidents occurred that can never be anticipated. Apparently Newman's statement was misinterpreted, and before he realized he was standing in the midst of the snarled hoist line, the cable was reeled in. It looped his ankle, jerking him skyward, upside down. The violence of the jolt tore his radio and weapon from his hands. As he rose higher and higher he became entangled in the trees and his leg and ankle were wrenched brutally as he was pulled through the branches by sheer force. Then he went through the second tree canopy, buffeted and banged by the branches, lashed by the vines. Below, he could see the enemy's muzzle flashes, not more than 75 yards from him and the helicopter. Fortunately, his radio was tied to his vest and he pulled it to him. Incredibly calm, he informed the helicopter crew of his predicament and asked them to lower him. At this point he was hanging upside down 70 to 80 feet above the ground and within 20 feet of the helicopter. Dimly, he could see the penetrator dangling some 30 feet below.

Most of the return trip was far less violent and much more comforting! Using his hands, he was able to avoid entanglement with vines and branches. But as he dropped through the trees the cable loosened around his ankle and he fell the last 20 feet to the ground.

Breaking the impact with his hands, Newman sprained his left wrist. By then, however, the colonel had reached the penetrator. Newman secured him to the seat, strapped himself on and told the chopper to reel away. Again on the trip up, interestingly accurate ground fire gave them a wild ride, but, amazingly, neither man was hit.

As they flew home, Sergeant Newman took care of the pilot's wounds, splinted his broken arm and checked his dislocated shoulder. He then treated him for shock, making him as comfortable as possible.

It had been a day to remember all right. Sergeant Newman and Colonel Phillips would never forget it. Neither would the United States Air Force. Weeks later, Sergeant Newman became the third living enlisted man to be awarded the Air Force Cross. As Gen. Howell M. Estes, Jr., former commander of the Military Airlift Command, pinned the nation's second highest award on Sergeant Newman's chest, the words of the citation captured a little of the spirit of Newman's Memorial Day.

"Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness, Sergeant Newman reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force," the citation read.

But the Air Force was not finished rewarding this intrepid airman. Some 20 months after he rescued Colonel Phillips, Thomas A. Newman stood in the office of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and became the 12th enlisted man in history to receive or share in the receipt of the Cheney Award.

The award, established in 1928 in memory of 1st Lt. William H. Cheney, who was killed in an air collision during World War I, consists of a certificate, a bronze medal and a \$500 honorarium. Annually it recognizes an "act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest performed in connection with aircraft."

Today Tom Newman is a technical assistant at Doctor's Hospital in Milwaukee, Wis. He left the Air Force early in 1969. But this former airman has carved a niche in Air Force history. And it will stand through the ages as a testimonial to the courage, fortitude and valor of America's airman. ✎



Thomas A. Newman, now a civilian, receives the Cheney Award from Chief of Staff John D. Ryan in honor of his act of valor.

Detachment 17, 100th Air Refueling Squadron, rescued a downed F-105 pilot near Savannakhet, Laos. After Sergeant Newman was lowered into the jungle at the location of the survivor, enemy fire threatened his crew and aircraft. Sergeant Newman requested that they evacuate. Later, another HH-53 descended and lowered its hoist in the darkness. In response to a tug, the crew reeled up the hoist, but lowered it again because Sergeant Newman was having difficulty keeping the coiled cable from ensnaring himself or the survivor in the dark jungle. Finally, they reeled in the pararescueman and the downed pilot, who had a broken arm and leg. Sergeant Newman was later awarded the Air Force Cross and the coveted Cheney Award for heroism.



*Sergeant Thomas A. Newman.*



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

HISTORY  
 OF THE  
 37 AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SQUADRON  
 AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE (MAC)  
 UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
 DA NANG AIR BASE, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM  
 1 JULY 1968 - 30 SEPTEMBER 1968

*Paul D. Ashley*

PAUL D. ASHLEY, MAJOR, USAF  
 HISTORIAN

*John J. Devlin, Jr.*  
 JOHN J. DEVLIN, JR., LT COL, USAF  
 COMMANDER

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year  
 intervals; declassified  
 after 12 years

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

OCT-DEC 68

mary Report 1-3-65, 1 Jul 68

(C) At 0850Z, 1 Jul 68, Jolly Greens 27 and 31 were scrambled from Da Nang AB, RVN, to intercept an F-105 which had received battle damage and was heading for the Gulf of Tonkin. The F-105 pilot was unable to reach the sea and ejected northwest of Dong Ha, North Vietnam. Misty 41 (an F-100 FAC) had established a visual reference of the location of the F-105 pilot entering heavy forest. At 1045Z Misty 41 established voice contact with the survivor who stated he was injured. Spads 11, 12, 13, and 14, and Covey 171 arrived on scene and commenced a visual search for the survivor with Misty 41 assisting. Although the survivor's position had not been pinpointed, Jolly Green 27 was cleared for ingress because of the nature of injuries to the F-105 pilot. Jolly Green 27 was driven off by ground fire. Since he had disposed of external tanks it was necessary to depart the rescue area with Jolly Green 31 escorting. Back-up forces, Jolly Greens 29 and 22, were cleared for ingress at 1120Z. Jolly Green 29 approached the location of the survivor but sustained battle damage and was forced to withdraw temporarily. Jolly Green 29 made a second attempt to ingress the area but was again driven off by ground fire. Darkness had approached therefore all SAR forces were withdrawn for the night. On 1 Jul 68 at 2215Z Jolly Greens 24, 22 and 31 were launched for the rescue area. At 0045Z on 2 Jul 68, Jolly Green 24 departed the scene for refueling. Jolly Green 31 was cleared for an attempt at rescue at 0055Z but received extensive battle damage and was forced to withdraw to home plate. Spad 11 had received battle damage, lost oil pressure and crashed with the canopy in place. Jolly Greens 24, 22 and 31 were replaced by Jolly Greens 21 and 28 at approximately 0145Z. SAR forces were withdrawn temporarily while other missions were performed in the area. At 0700Z SAR forces (Jolly Greens 21 and 28), Spads 13 and 14, Sandy 3, 4, 5 and 6; and Covey 112) were reformed in the area of the survivor. Jolly Green 21 penetrated to the survivor's position at 0730Z, confirmed that help was essential, and lowered the rescue specialist. After a difficult ground search the survivor was located, placed aboard the forest penetrator with the rescue specialist, and hoisting into the helicopter began. As the penetrator departed the ground at 0745Z intense ground fire was experienced with resultant battle damage to the helicopter. Upon the penetrator clearing the trees a successful egress was made. Survivor was Lt Col Jack Medica Jr., 333rd Tac Ftr Wg.

OCT-DEC 68

[REDACTED]

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

HISTORY  
OF THE

HQ 3D AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY GROUP

1 APRIL - 30 JUNE 1969 (U)

PREPARED BY  
2D LT MARVIN R. FRENCH  
UNIT HISTORIAN  
HQ 3D AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY GROUP

CLASSIFIED BY \_\_\_\_\_  
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR  
INTERVALS DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER  
31, 1977

APPROVED BY:

*Rayvon Burleson*  
COLONEL RAYVON BURLESON  
COMMANDER  
31 JULY 1969

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

DECLASSIFIED

Downgr  
Decl

[REDACTED]

AD-69-1673

UNCLASSIFIED

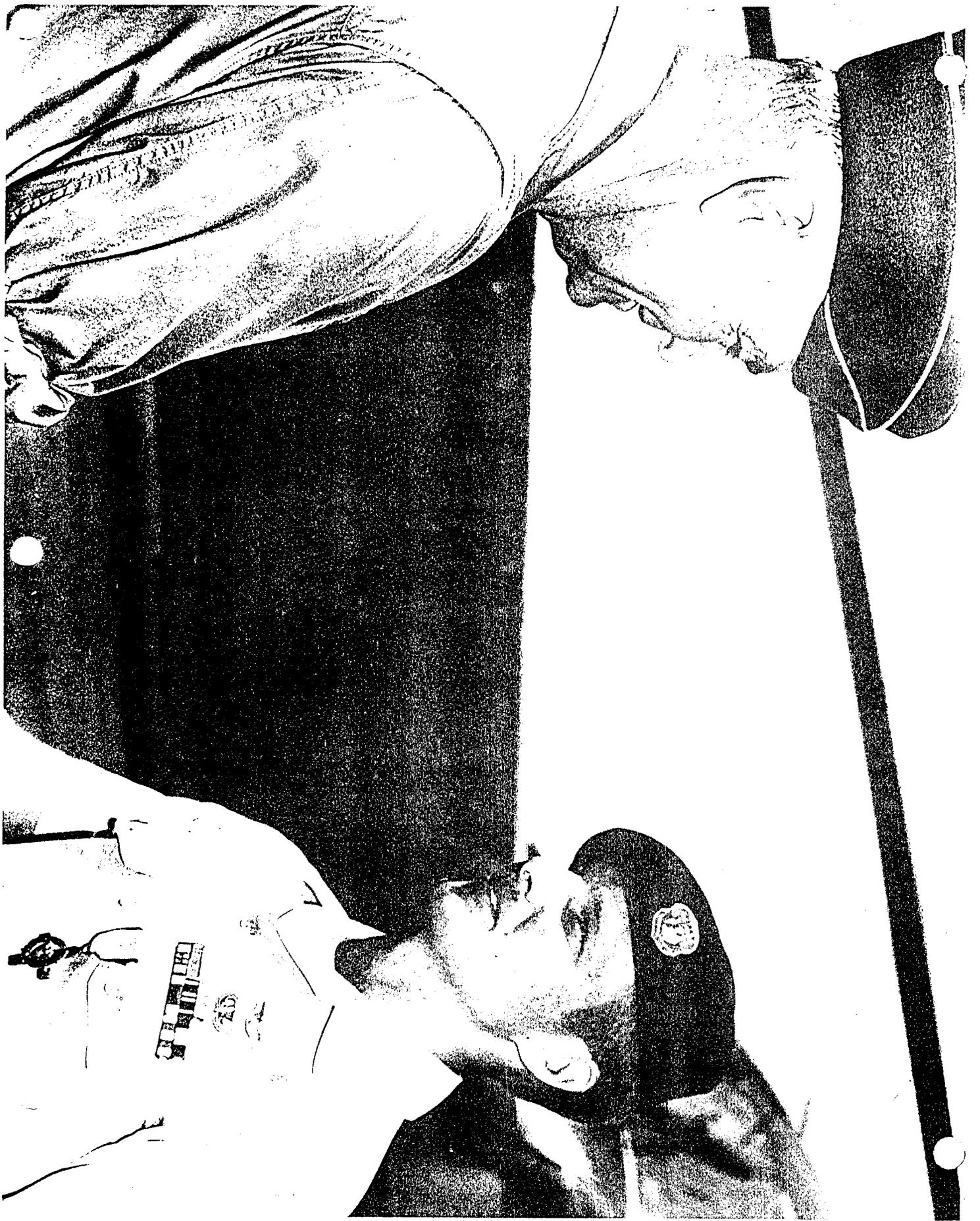
3ARRGP Hist., Apr-Jun 1969

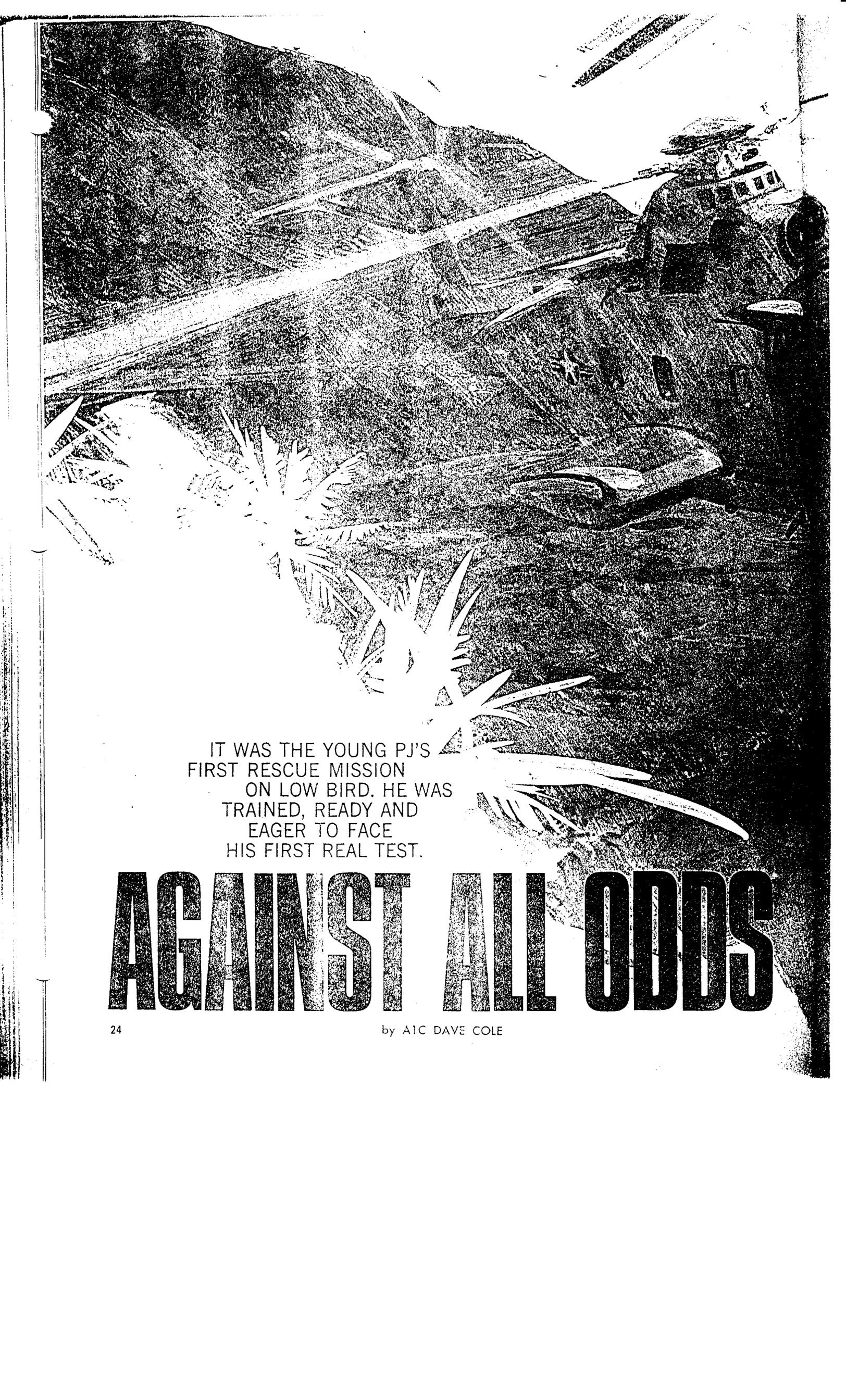
69

TALLEY RECEIVES AIR FORCE CROSS

Airman First Class Joel E. Talley, 21, Farmland, Ohio, receives - congratulations from General Howell M. Estes Jr., Commander, Military Airlift Command, after the general presented him the Air Force Cross. The second highest Air Force military decoration was presented to Talley for his rescue of a downed F-105 pilot in the jungles of North Vietnam July 2, 1968. Talley was assigned to 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

UNCLASSIFIED





IT WAS THE YOUNG PJ'S  
FIRST RESCUE MISSION  
ON LOW BIRD. HE WAS  
TRAINED, READY AND  
EAGER TO FACE  
HIS FIRST REAL TEST.

# AGAINST ALL ODDS



#### THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA . . .

A1C Joel E. Talley was a newcomer to the aerospace rescue business on July 2, 1968. He wasn't a rookie in terms of know-how or ability — he had been through a year of intensive training, earning the right to wear the maroon beret of a pararescue specialist . . . a PJ.

#### AUTHORIZED BY TITLE 10, SECTION 8742, UNITED STATES CODE . . .

But, he was a newcomer to Vietnam. Less than a month had passed since he stepped off the aircraft and into the heat of his first Southeast Asian afternoon.

#### AWARDS THE AIR FORCE CROSS . . .

Looking out of the briefing room window at the HH-3E, *Jolly Green Giant* helicopter warming up on the pad, he thought about the year before—the year of training—that had prepared him for the mission he was about to fly.

"One helluva year," he silently recalled.

#### TO AIRMAN JOEL E. TALLEY . . .

It all began in basic training, during career counseling. Talley had been classified in the mechanics field, but was looking for something special.

#### FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM . . .

So he was really tuned in that day in the big, green-walled classroom at Lackland when an NCO talked about some career fields that were open to volunteers. One of them was pararescue, and there was even a team of three PJs there to explain their jobs.

"It sounded fantastic," Talley explains now, "so I thought I would try to get into the field." A week later, he and 19 other volunteers began to test. Physical fitness, mental aptitude and a variety of other tests were required. Not everyone can cut it as a PJ.

#### IN MILITARY OPERATIONS . . .

Five of the volunteers were selected to begin training. Talley was one of them. With a single stripe freshly sewn on their new, green fatigues, the five airmen proceeded to the Aerospace Rescue and Re-

covery Service Headquarters, then in Orlando, Fla., for three weeks of intensive physical training. Three tough weeks. And that was only the beginning. "A team of seasoned PJs was there to prepare us for the schools to come," he recalls, pauses, then adds, "and they did."

#### AGAINST AN OPPOSING ARMED FORCE . . .

Jump school at Ft. Benning, Ga., was next. "It was rough but really interesting at the same time," Talley recalls. "PJs have a reputation for being gung-ho."

#### AS RESCUE SPECIALIST . . .

From jump school, the fledgling pararescuemen went to Fairchild AFB, Wash., for Air Force survival school, back to Orlando for more physical fitness training and then to Navy Scuba School in Key West, Fla. "That was the toughest of them all," he explains. "We stayed there a month and went back to Orlando."

#### ON AN HH-3E HELICOPTER . . .

After a ride in the altitude chamber, "for our flying status," it was on to Shepard AFB, Tex., for medical training. "Essentially," Talley explains, "we are parachuting medics and they really crammed a lot of medical knowledge into us during that school."

Completing medical training, they went on to Eglin AFB, Fla., for transition training. "This is where we got it all together," he recalls, with a quick laugh. During the Eglin school older, seasoned pararescue experts teach the neophytes how each phase of their training will be used to complete a very important mission—aerospace rescue and recovery.

#### IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ON 2 JULY 1968 . . .

During their three months of transition, the new PJs learn effective use of their unique equipment, advanced survival techniques—under many conditions—and continue physical training.

January 18, 1968, Airman Talley donned the maroon beret of pararescue specialist, a full-fledged PJ. After putting on the trademark he would wear with distinction during the next three years, he

and his fellow PJs returned to Orlando to pick up their personal gear and await assignments.

Talley wasn't surprised at all to get orders to Da Nang AB, Republic of Vietnam. He took some leave, returned to Orlando for a familiarization course on helicopter operations and then headed for the West Coast and a ride to SEA.

He stepped off the aircraft in early June and began duty with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq. A local checkout and he was ready to go.

#### ON THAT DATE . . .

A few days less than a month had passed since his first day in Vietnam. Today, July 2, 1968, he would have to put his training to use—in the jungle. It would be his first rescue mission on low bird, the primary rescue chopper that would go in for a survivor. *Numero uno*. Number one. It wouldn't be just another training exercise where only a grade or perhaps the scorn of an evaluator counted. There would be no room for a rookie in the rescue bird today—no room at all, and he knew it.

The word had come in the day before. A *Thud* jock was down in the jungle. Worse yet, it was in North Vietnam, just inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

To further complicate the situation, the F-105 pilot, Lt. Col. Jack Modica, was right in the middle of a hornet's nest of North Vietnamese regulars. But instead of taking Colonel Modica prisoner, or killing him, the soldiers had set a death trap—baited with the downed pilot!

After his F-105 had been blasted with 37mm ground fire, the colonel had punched out into a small U-shaped valley and the NVA troops had set up positions on the ridges and in the dense jungle which surrounded the airman. It was a common NVA trick, and they awaited the rescue forces, with a variety of small arms, .30 and .50 caliber machineguns, primed and ready.

During the afternoon and early evening the *Jolly Greens* and supporting A-1Es—the *Spads*—made several attempts to go

in for the colonel. Each time they had been driven away by walls of small arms fire and heavy machineguns.

Darkness comes quickly in the jungle, the red sun blinks and dies with little warning. And at dark, most of the rescue aircraft had to withdraw. But two *Jolly Green Giants* stayed, keeping a constant watch over the colonel.

Late in the evening, other rescue crews began planning for a first-light effort to pull the pilot out of the trap before it shut . . . permanently.

*Jolly Green 21* would scramble before dawn and rendezvous with supporting A-1Es. They would gather below the DMZ.

Meanwhile, the two choppers that had stayed the night made another attempt to rescue the survivor and were again driven away by enemy fire. One of the A-1Es, attempting to cover the rescue attempt, was shot out of the sky.

The morning dawned hot and bright as the crew of *Jolly Green 21* prepared to make another attempt. Lt. Lance A. Eagan, an exchange pilot from the Coast Guard, Maj. Robert E. Booth, and flight engineer Sgt. Hervert H. Honer were ready to go.

So was Airman Talley—his year of pararescue training about to undergo a test of life or death.

The airmen aboard *Jolly Green 21* knew the risks. They knew that the soldiers surrounding the colonel had had time to reinforce their positions and were stronger than ever. They also knew there wouldn't be another chance. It was now or never.

*Jolly Green 21* waited as the *Spads* flew in to soften the area. Raking the sides of the valley with rocket and machinegun fire, they tried to silence the formidable enemy positions.

After they had worked over the area for a time, *Jolly Green 21* was called. As the chopper moved into position, 37mm. antiaircraft artillery began to burst around it, jarring and rocking the ship.

Diving violently to the left, the pilot took the bird down on the deck to avoid



A1C Joel Talley rides a hoist to the floor of South Vietnam's jungle during a rescue operation.



Talley donned the maroon beret of a pararescue specialist in January 1968 and has worn it with distinction ever since.

the exploding triple-A. Close to the trees they continued on their way toward the rescue point.

Lieutenant Egan, the crew commander, planned to make a pass over the area to see if they would draw ground fire and possibly to spot the colonel, pass over the area again and then repeat the maneuver. On the final pass, the jungle penetrator hoist would be lowered from the chopper and the survivor would strap himself on and be pulled to safety. They hoped!

It was considered too risky to lower a rescuer with the penetrator because of the concentration of enemy troops surrounding the area. Much too risky.

But Airman Talley was willing to take the risk. Again and again he volunteered to ride the penetrator down into the jungle trap.

On *Jolly Green 21*'s first pass, Talley and Sergeant Honer spotted the smoke from a survival flare filtering through the dense growth of trees. It was then that Lieutenant Egan made a decision.

There had been no ground fire on the first pass—maybe, just maybe, the A-1Es had really cleaned up the area and the North Vietnamese soldiers had pulled out. It was a chance. And since they also had spotted the survivor's smoke, they knew where he was—or at least pretty close.

They also knew that the *Spads* had hit only the ridges surrounding the survivor, but not close in. The ground could still be crawling with the enemy—even if they had left their position on the hill—just waiting for the rescue specialist to be lowered into their sights. Talley agreed to go in for the colonel and Lieutenant Egan decided to attempt rescue on the first pass.

Talley checked his equipment, adjusted the harness and started down on the jungle penetrator. Down—70, 60, 50, 40, 30 feet above the ground in the cover of the trees and heavy foliage.

Before leaving the helicopter, Talley had oriented himself to the survivor's suspected position in relation to that of the hovering chopper. But on the way down, the penetrator began to spin around and around. When he reached the ground he

had lost the positions he had set for himself and had to call back to *Jolly Green 21* for a bearing. The flight engineer pointed toward the direction where they had hoped the survivor was located.

Pistol in hand, Talley began his search. He crouched low and began inching his way through the heavy underbrush.

Dense jungle had turned the terrain into a dim background of shadows. Talley searched on, looking for both the enemy—who may have been lurking in the darkened corners—or the colonel who was so close to rescue.

Hovering above, *Jolly Green 21* had still not taken any ground fire. *Was the enemy waiting? Were they about to spring the trap?*

After a few minutes of searching and following the smoke of a flare, Talley lost radio contact with the colonel. He then slowed his pace and continued moving slowly through the underbrush, looking, watching, concentrating on finding another point of reference.

Then he spotted the glow of a night flare Colonel Modica had ignited. He quickened his pace toward the spot where the flare burned. He could only catch quick glimpses of the sizzling signal through the deep green growths. But at least he was going in the right direction.

The problem now was to keep a bearing on the flare and locate the colonel. Easy enough? But the night flare would only burn a short time and then the jungle would quickly darken and close. Time was critical.

He continued moving through the underbrush, across a gully and toward a large tree.

Then he spotted him, lying on the side of a small hill.

Talley rushed to his side, checked him for wounds and began directing the helicopter toward the spot where they waited. Because of the pilot's injury—a broken pelvis—Talley decided it would be too much of a strain on the colonel to carry him to the penetrator, so he signaled the chopper to come in closer.

The dense canopy of trees made it im-

possible for the crew of the rescue bird to see Talley and the survivor, but from the ground the chopper was visible. Using Talley's radio directions, the pilot moved the bird into a good pickup position and dropped the penetrator about 30 or 40 feet from the men.

Still the jungle was silent. No small arms fire crackled from the green.

Talley carried the colonel to the penetrator, strapped him on and gave a signal to the chopper to pull them on board. But the injured man slipped from the hoist before they started up.

Again strapping him into the harness, Talley radioed that they were ready to go. "Take us up," he called.

Almost before the electronically amplified words could reach the chopper, enemy fire erupted from the jungle. The enemy had monitored the rescue radios and the signal to "take us up," brought an instant response.

"All hell was breaking loose around us," Talley recalls.

Deadly accurate fire came from every angle as the crew began a desperate effort to pull Talley and the survivor on board the ship. One round, fired from a position on the side of the valley pierced the windshield of the chopper and passed between the two pilots.

Knowing that the most vulnerable time during a rescue operation was when the penetrator began its upward journey, the enemy had waited. When the survivor and the pararescueman were dangling in space, they opened fire on the bird.

From the jungle floor and the sides of the valley, the shots crackled.

Before the chopper could climb to safety, the men dangling below had to clear the tops of the trees. If not, the branches and limbs would tear them from the hoist and drop them into enemy hands.

They rose 10, 20, 30 feet. Ground fire continued to erupt from the jungle.

Forty, 50 feet. The hoist cleared the trees and the chopper raced to safety. Talley and Modica still dangled below. Slowly the men were pulled into Jolly Green 21.

On board, Talley and the flight engineer administered first aid to the pilot and made him as comfortable as possible as they sped to a nearby hospital.

After landing on the medical evacuation pad outside the hospital and seeing that the colonel was on his way to emergency treatment, the crew checked over the damage done to their helicopter.

More than 60 rounds had pierced her skin, four of the main rotor blades had been hit and nine holes had been punched in the fuel tanks.

On the way home, the flight engineer asked Talley to look to the rear of the chopper. "Sunlight beamed through the dozens of holes the ground fire had made in the aircraft," he explains. "It was amazing none of us was hurt or that the bird could still fly."

"You know," Talley recalls now, "you don't think about what is happening when it is all happening. You just do what you are trained to do and that is that."

Throughout the flight of *Jolly Green 21* on that day in July, Talley explains, he didn't think any of the crewmembers really thought about the dangers involved. "We were all fully aware of what had to be faced, but we just thought about the best ways of getting the job done.

"Even when I was on the ground, I was concentrating only on finding the man. Everything else was secondary."

Talley had spent 17 minutes searching the jungle floor for the survivor—a very, very long time when surrounded by the jaws of a well-laid death trap.

Now a Staff Sergeant, Talley is working for the 57th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq., Lajes Field, Azores. Before leaving Southeast Asia, he flew a total of 276 combat sorties and logged 294 combat hours. But even if Talley were to fly a million hours, he probably won't forget his first life and death test.

*Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship and aggressiveness, Airman Talley reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.*

✪

Finally, an H-3 penetrated the enemy defenses, and Airman Talley descended and located the injured pilot. While Airman Talley and the survivor were being hoisted, enemy fire raked the helicopter, leaving more than 40 hits. The aircraft immediately exited the area, dragging the two men through the trees on the hoist below. Both were successfully recovered. Airman Talley was later awarded the Air Force Cross.



*General Howell M. Estes, Jr., presents the Air Force Cross to Airman First Class Joel E. Talley.*

2 July 1968 -- Airman First Class Joel E. Talley, a pararescueman assigned to the 37 ARR Squadron, Da Nang AB, Republic of North Vietnam, on his first combat mission distinguished himself during a dangerous rescue mission near Dong Ha, North Vietnam. A downed F-105 pilot was injured and quickly surrounded by enemy forces who established a "flak trap" (antiaircraft gun positions) for the rescue forces. Rescue attempts on 1 July resulted in battle damage to an H-3. On 2 July another H-3 was heavily damaged and forced to withdraw. Another F-105 was shot down by ground fire attempting to soften a route for the rescue helicopters to retrieve the pilot.

LAB G

~~SECRET~~

*OK*

HISTORY  
OF THE  
HQ 3D AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY GROUP  
1 OCTOBER - 31 DECEMBER 1968

PREPARED BY  
2D LT MARVIN R. FRENCH  
UNIT HISTORIAN  
HQ 3D AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY GROUP

APPROVED BY:

*Raymond H. Bridges Col.*  
COLONEL HOLLON H. BRIDGES  
COMMANDER  
25 MARCH 1969

**GROUP-3**  
Downgraded at 12 year intervals;  
Not automatically declassified.

AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

~~GROUP 1~~  
~~at 3 year intervals;~~  
~~after 12 years.~~

~~SECRET~~  
~~SECRET~~

(This page is unclassified)

Copy 1  
AD-69-0896

Pararescue Technician Missing in Action

(S) A1C Charles D. King, USAF, from Det 1, 40ARRSq at Nakhon Phanom, was reported Missing in Action (MIA) after 24 December 1968 Rescue effort.<sup>5</sup>

SAR Training Exercise

(S)(GP-4) Several positive actions resulting from the SAR Training Exercise conducted in Thailand during September 1968 are:

(1) 7th Air Force Life Support has included an add-on to SEAOR 114 (Survivor's Protective Face Mask) for protective face mask designed specifically for Rescue aircrew members. In addition, ASD advises Goodyear Aerospace Company have been contracted to develop a survivor throw away mask. OT & E in SEA is scheduled for June 1969.

(2) 7th Air Force Plans and Requirements have requested impact testing for the CBU-19 and CBU-30 to reduce the danger of ground fire during delivery of the riot control agent by RESCORT aircraft.

(3) CBU-19's are now stockpiled at the RESCORT launch bases, Da Nang and Nakhon Phanom.

Standardization

(U) Arrival of Personnel

Major Joe B. Green replaced Major Robert A. Bunker as Chief of Aircrew Standardization on 1 November 1968.

See Supporting Document 1 for mission narrative.

DECLASSIFIED

JAN MAR 69

RCC

29 December 1968

Mission Narrative Report (2-3-082-8359, 24-25 Dec 68) (U)

Det 1-40 C  
3rd ARBGP (JSARG)  
IN TURN

1. (U) This report is submitted IAW ARBGM 55-2/3rd ARBGP Sup 1, dated 11 July 1968.
2. (S) On 24 December 1968, Jolly Green 17 was flying airborne orbit in the vicinity of channel 89 when alerted by "Shoestring" for a possible SAR mission. Jolly Green 17 proceeded to the border of Laos east of Channel 89 and commenced climb prior to crossing. At 1610L Combase cleared Jolly Green 17 to proceed to holding area approximately 103°/60/89. Jolly Green 17 was joined by Jolly Green 15 at the orbit position and Sandies 9 and 10 were flying cover. The weather in the entire area was clear. Sandies 1 and 2 and a Mail FAC were searching for the survivor of Panda 01 at 102°/68/89 without success. A chute was spotted at the approximate location where the survivor went down but it was thought to be from some other source because the survivor had been seen to disappear into the trees in a different place. As no contact was made with the survivor, the SAR forces were returned to base at 1735L, landing at 1830L. A first light effort was planned for the following morning and at 0515L, Jolly Green 17 (low) and 09 (high), departed Channel 89 for the same holding point. The holding area was reached at 0555L with Sandies 3 and 4 escorting the helicopters. Sandies 1 and 2 and a Mail FAC were conducting the search. Still, no radio contact with Panda 01 and at approximately 0650L, the decision to send Jolly Green 17 in for a look at the chute was made to determine from the air whether anyone was in the harness. Before any action could be started, Sandy 2 developed trouble with one of his wing ports coming open causing him to have to RTB to Channel 89. He was escorted by Sandy 1. It was decided to wait until Sandies 7 and 8 arrived to replace 1 and 2. Sandies 7 and 8 arrived on scene and took over for 3 and 4 who went to the scene with Sandy 1, to be shown the location of the chute. Everything was set and Jolly Green 17 and 09 moved from the holding point and crossed route 911 to high karst NE of the scene. Jolly Green 17 dropped tips and commenced descent at approximately 0815L. After arrival at tree top level, Sandies and the Mail FAC tried to vector Jolly Green 17 to the chute but could not do so as they had lost sight of the location. After several minutes of tree top flying, Jolly Green 17 was told to climb back out until the chute could be relocated. As the climb

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out was initiated one of the Sandies spotted the chute again and was able to vector Jolly Green 17 to the location. At approximately 0825L Jolly Green 17 came to a hover over the chute. The Flight Engineer and Pararescue Specialist reported seeing a man hanging in the harness, inert and helmetless. There had been no ground fire or sighting of any personnel by any of the SAR forces up to this time. The Pararescue Technician, A1C Charles D. King, volunteered to descend on the penetrator to recover the pilot. As the hoist started down the chute was dislodged by rotor blast and fell to the jungle floor. Jolly Green 17 was hovering in the tree tops approximately 125 feet above ground. The area of hover was covered by a double jungle canopy with a dense jungle under-growth allowing only occasional glimpses of the ground. The Flight Engineer, Technical Sergeant Jerome H. Casey, stated that after Airman King was lowered to the ground, he asked for more slack and dragged the penetrator to a distance of about 30 feet through the underbrush and under a large fallen tree or large branch to the inert pilot. He released the chute and attached the man to the penetrator. Then called for up hoist and was using the hoist to drag the man over to the area beneath the helicopter. While he still had about 10 feet to go, automatic weapons fire broke out and Airman King was heard to call out "I'm hit, I'm hit, Pull up, Pull up". At the same time Jolly Green 17 started taking hits in the forward part of the main cabin area from directly beneath the helicopter. The pilot immediately initiated a climb out of the hover. The penetrator snagged and snapped the cable after pulling the hoist loose from its mounts. Jolly Green 17 climbed to altitude and returned to base. Airman King was left on the ground. His condition is unknown as no further contact was made with him though the SAR force remained in the area until 1000L. The above actions took place between 0825L and 0830L. The weather during the entire mission was clear, visibility unrestricted with light winds. Jolly Green 15 and 16 were dispatched at 0805L as back-up and arrived in the holding area at approximately 0845L. The condition of the pilot in the chute was never determined due to the attack on Airman King and Jolly Green 17. No surviving crew member of Jolly Green 17 ever saw the enemy personnel doing the firing. Airman King's warning to pull up, undoubtedly kept Jolly Green 17 from being shot down. The action scene was near the junction of route 911 and 912, the major North Vietnamese infiltration route to South Vietnam. Escort, Crown and Mail WAC support was excellent. Radio discipline was good throughout the mission. The enemy apparently had the chute located and carefully withheld firing until the helicopter was in its most vulnerable position. The pilot in the parachute never did give any signs of life. The armor plating in the floor under the copilot definitely saved him from a serious wound. Jolly Green 17 was the only rescue vehicle hit. The bullets were .30 caliber probably fired from AL-47 type weapons. Three bullets penetrated the front fuel tanks, one under the copilot's seat and three in the space between the fuel tank. Electronic search for Jolly Green 17 pararescue specialist was maintained 2 days. The next day, 26 December 1968, several beeper signals were

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picked up from near the area. The SAR forces were dispatched at 1416L and proceeded to the Panda area. On arrival all beeper signals ceased. The SAR force was returned to base at 1605L with 2 Sandies remaining in the area to conduct further electronic and visual search. With no success, the Sandies returned to base at 1620L.

- 3. (U) There was no survivor on this mission.
- 4. (U) Jolly Green Crewmembers Were:

24 December 1968

JOLLY GREEN 15 (Low)

Capt Richard Harwood	RCC
Capt Roger Gibson	RCCP
TSgt Arthur Krumm	FE
Sgt Clinton Caffall	RS

JOLLY GREEN 17 (High)

Lt Col William Cameron	
Capt James Oliver	
TSgt Jerome Casey	
AIC Charles King	

25 December 1968 - Alert

JOLLY GREEN 17 (Low)

Lt Col William Cameron	RCC
Capt Robert Heron	RCCP
TSgt Jerome Casey	FE
AIC Charles King	RS

JOLLY GREEN 09 (High)

Capt Richard Harwood	
Capt Roger Gibson	
TSgt Arthur Krumm	
Sgt Clinton Caffall	

25 December 1968 - Back-up

JOLLY GREEN 16 (Low)

Major Thomas Reinhardt	RCC
Major Dale Jordan	RCCP
MSgt Lee Maples	FE
AIC Barry Hebert	RS

JOLLY GREEN 15 (High)

Capt James Oliver	
Lt Col John Morse	
Sgt Henry Burnett	
AIC Leland Sorenson	

26 December 1968

JOLLY GREEN 09 (Low)

Lt Lance Eagan (USCG)	RCC
Capt Samuel Abate	RCCP
MSgt Lee Maples	FE
AIC Barry Hebert	RS
TSgt Dalford Widner	RS

JOLLY GREEN 15 (High)

Capt James Oliver	
Lt Col John Morse	
TSgt Leroy Wright	
AIC Douglas Horita	

*William G. Cameron*  
 WILLIAM G. CAMERON, Lt Col, USAF  
 Rescue Crew Commander

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DETACHMENT ONE, FORTIETH AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SQUADRON

1 OCTOBER 1968-31 DECEMBER 1968

Prepared by  
Major Thomas E. Reinhardt  
Detachment Historian  
Detachment One, Fortieth Aerospace  
Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Approved By:

*John H. I. Morse*  
JOHN H. I. MORSE  
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF  
15 February 1969

THIRD AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY GROUP  
PACIFIC AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY CENTER  
AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE  
MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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GROUP 3  
AT 12 YEAR INTERVAL;  
ATICALLY DECLASSIFIED.

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JAN-MAR 69

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DET:1, 40 ARRS-69/1

- 6 Nov - Grommet 02 mission continued.
- 27 Nov - Retrieval of Raven 30 by Jolly Green 17.
- 28 Nov - Colonel Burlison, Vice Commander 3rd Group and Lt Col Gamble, JSARC arrived for visit.
- 4 Dec - Rescue of Tampa "A" and "B" by Jolly Green 17 (326 - 327).
- 6 Dec - Rescue of Dallas 03 by Jolly Green 36 (328).
- 12 Dec - Rescue of Ridge "A" by Jolly Green 15 (329).
- 13 Dec - Rescue of Candlestick 44 by Jolly Green 16 (330).
- 20 Dec - Rescue of Milestone 407. First light effort for detachment with Jolly Greens cycling two pairs of Jolly Greens. Pickup finally made by 37th ARRSQ. Late afternoon scramble for Litter 81.
- 21 Dec - Rescue of Litter 81 by Jolly Green 36 (331).
- 23 Dec - Medical evacuation from Sakhon Nakhon to Korat by Jolly Green 16. Non-combat, non-aircrew save.
- 24 Dec - Scramble for Panda Lead. Search called off because of darkness.
- 25 Dec - A1C Charles King, PJ on Jolly Green 17, MIA during continuation of Panda mission.
- 26 Dec - Medical evacuation from Ram Chit Chi to Korat by Jolly Green 16. Non-combat, non-aircrew save.
- 29 Dec - (S) Jolly Green 16 made an emergency landing at abandoned Lima Site 80.
- 30 Dec - Jolly Green 16 repaired and retrieved.

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ARRS-69/1

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CHAPTER II

5

## Operations and Training

Operations

Onset of the dry northeast monsoon in October marked increased activity for Detachment One. Eleven combat saves were effected during the period. Six medical evacuations, three of which were instrumental in saving lives, were accomplished. A rescue specialist was missing in action on Christmas day. Periodic civic action flights to the Tha Rae mission and to Amphoe Phaeng continued.

Detachment One continued to maintain fifteen minute ground alert at Nakhon Phanom. The Fortieth ARRSq from Udorn RTAFB conducted the north orbit mission. By the end of September the HH-43s from the Fortieth were orbiting north two out of three days and Detachment One was orbiting north every third day. In addition to the two ground alert crews at NKP two more crews were designated as back-up each day. The back-up crews often flew training or support missions and assumed ground alert at NKP if the primary crews were scrambled. The morning briefing was moved to 0530 to coincide with the Sandy (Al Rescort) briefing. These are comprehensive briefings of the rapidly changing order of battle in the Barrel Roll, Steel Tiger and Hound areas. Briefing the two organizations at the same time is an important factor in the successful Sandy/Jolly Green effort.

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JAN-MAR 69

1968 through 1974 -- Sergeant Gene Nardi, a pararescueman, survived without a scratch, five tours, for a total of 58 months in Southeast Asia. He completed four continuous tours at Da Nang AB, Republic of South Vietnam, and one tour at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai AB, Thailand. He personally recorded 55 lives saved during combat missions, earning him a Silver Star, 10 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 30 Air Medals, and the Vietnamese Gallantry Medal with a star. As of this writing, Senior Master Sergeant Nardi is the Superintendent of the 55 ARR Squadron Pararescue Team at Eglin AFB, Florida.

December 1968 -- Sergeant Steve M. Northern, a pararescueman, completed 30 months in Southeast Asia and personally recorded a total of 51 combat saves. He also received two Silver Stars and numerous Air Medals during his tours in Southeast Asia. Later in 1970, Sergeant Northern was killed in an industrial accident in Los Angeles.



*Sergeant Steve M. Northern.*

24 and 25 December 1968 -- HH-3 aircrews from Detachment 1, 40th ARR Squadron, were engaged in a mission involving the rescue of a downed pilot in Laos. On 24 December a parachute was spotted. On 25 December a rescue team force lowered pararescueman Airman First Class Charles D. King, who located the downed pilot and secured him to the hoist. Enemy automatic weapon fire impacted the HH-3 and Airman King under the helicopter. Airman King transmitted the message, "I'm hit. I'm hit. Pull up. Pull up." The helicopter



*Chief Master Sergeant Charles D. King.*

responded, snapping off the hoist cable. Airman King was declared missing in action (MIA) and was later promoted to chief master sergeant until 5 December 1978, when he was declared killed in action (KIA).

January 1969 -- HH-53 crews from the 40th ARR Squadron at Udorn Royal Thai AB scrambled to get airborne for a combat rescue mission to pick up a fighter pilot shot down the previous night over North Vietnam. Pararescueman Sergeant Tom Pope was the tail-gunner during the run-in for extraction. While airbursts from antiaircraft weapons encircled them, the men of the Jolly Green, covered by a protective "daisy chain" of A-1E "Sandy" fighters, came onto the scene. The Jolly Green settled into a hover and made the pickup in less than five minutes. Enemy tracer fire from the left began to draw in closer. As the HH-53 pulled away from the battle scene, the enemy gunners found their mark and scored a direct hit on Sergeant Pope's position. Although seriously damaged, the HH-53 managed to remain airborne. The pararescueman manning the left window gun saw Sergeant Pope dangling below the tail of the helicopter by his gunner's belt where the ramp used to be. He quickly pulled the unconscious Sergeant Pope into the helicopter and surveyed the damage. Sergeant Pope was bleeding profusely from where his left leg used to be and was in serious condition.

The rapid action and treatment by the other pararescueman prevented Sergeant Pope from becoming an even more grim statistic. Several weeks later, before leaving on a Military Airlift Command C-141 medical evacuation flight, Sergeant Pope,

*Last flight for Sergeant Tom Pope (center), who lost his left leg from enemy gunfire on an HH-53 he was flying gunner for in January 1969. From left to right: Lieutenant Colonel Rataliff, Sergeant Pope, and Sergeant D.C. Johnson.*

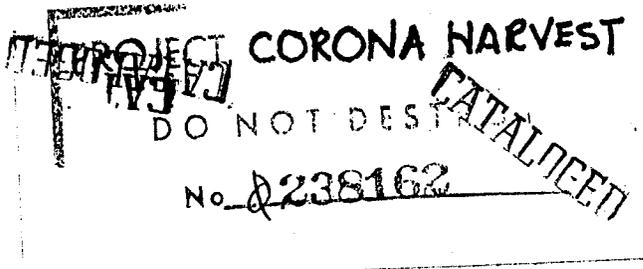


TAB H

HISTORY OF DETACHMENT 11  
38TH AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SQUADRON

1 JANUARY 1969 - 31 MARCH 1969

Prepared by  
Capt William F. Austin  
Unit Historian  
Detachment 11  
38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Squadron



Approved by:

*Morgan A. Downing*

MORGAN A. DOWNING, Major, USAF  
Commander  
16 April 1969

Det 11, 38th ARRSQ, Hist., Jan-Mar 1969

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11-38-008-12 Feb 69 - the detachment operations was notified by the 39th ARRSQ operations officer that an aircraft had crashed approximately 35 miles west/northwest of Tuy Hoa AB. The type of aircraft was unknown. Pedro 24 launched immediately and arrived in the approximate area 20 minutes later. While enroute radio communications had been established with Crown 6, an HC-130 aircraft orbiting the area. As Pedro 24 arrived at the scene, the downed aircraft was sighted by an O-2 aircraft. Pedro 24 received vectors from the pilot of the O-2 aircraft and hovered over the wreckage. The downed aircraft was a U.S. Army O-1. Both crewmembers were trapped inside the fuselage. The pararescueman from Pedro 24 was deployed to free the trapped crewmembers. He discovered that one of the men was deceased. The survivor and the deceased were hoisted aboard the helicopter using the semi-rigid litter. The pararescueman was then hoisted aboard and Pedro 24 flew to Phu Hiep AAF. One combat save.

Sorties and flying time: 2/1.9

Crewmembers were:

RCC Capt William F. Austin

RCCP Maj Morgan A. Downing

FE SSgt Leroy W. King

PJ ALC Ian T. Burr

11-38-009-18 Feb 69 - the detachment was notified at 1630 that a U.S. Army UH-1 helicopter had crashed approximately 25 miles southwest of Tuy Hoa AB and that five people were trapped inside. Pedro 05 launched immediately however, Pedro 24 was awaiting a functional check flight and was not released for the mission until 1800. Pedro 05, upon

Det 11, 38th ARRSQ, Hist., Jan-Mar 1969

11-9

arrival at the scene, lowered the pararescueman and a firefighter from a 100 foot hover. The area was hostile and sporadic groundfire was received. U.S. Army helicopter gunships provided suppressive fire. Three of the trapped survivors were freed immediately and were hoisted aboard by Pedro 05. Because of their serious condition they were transferred to a U.S. Army UH-1 helicopter which had landed in a clearing approximately 5 miles from the crash site. In the meantime, one survivor and one deceased were picked up by an Army helicopter. Pedro 05 returned to the crash scene but was unable to pick up any more people because of a low fuel state. The helicopter returned to Tuy Hoa. In the interim, Pedro 24 was enroute and arrived at the scene shortly before dark. One crewmember, the firefighter from Pedro 05, was picked up but the pararescueman, Sgt. Michael E. Fish, could not be picked up because of insufficient power. The pararescueman spent the night on the ground. He administered first aid to the man still trapped inside the downed helicopter and was credited with personally saving the man's life. Pedro 24 and 05 launched at 0620 on the 19th and flew directly to the scene using vectors from Tuy Hoa Approach Control. Pedro 05 hovered over the crash shortly after U.S. Army helicopter gunships arrived on the scene. Once again sporadic small arms fire was received. Pedro 05 lowered a flight engineer and a firefighter equipped with additional crash access equipment. They freed the last trapped survivor in 15 minutes and Pedro 05 hoisted the injured man aboard plus the two crewmembers and one U.S. Army ground team member. They departed the scene. Pedro 24 which had departed the area to refuel, was enroute back to the scene. In the interim, a U.S. Army UH-1 helicopter picked

Det 11, 38th ARFSQ, Hist., Jan-Mar 1969

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up the detachment pararescueman and one deceased U.S. Army ground team member. Then they departed the scene and Pedro 24 moved over the site to pick up the final two ground team members. The mission was closed at 0930, 19 Feb, when Pedro 24 delivered the last two survivors to Phu Hiep AAF. 7 combat saves. Sorties and flying time:

13/11.3

Crewmembers were: 18 Feb 69

Pedro 05

Mission #1

RCC Capt Daniel A. Nicholson

RCCP Capt Charles T. Wohlneck

RS SSgt Norman F. Reeves

PJ Sgt Richard E. Evans

PJ Sgt Michael E. Fish

Pedro 24

RCC Capt Henry P. Fogg

RCCP Major Edgar R. Whitney

FE SSgt Leroy W. King

RS SSgt Robert A. McAllister

19 Feb 69

Pedro 05

Mission #1

RCC Capt Daniel A. Nicholson

RCCP Maj Edgar R. Whitney

FE TSgt Thomas B. Margagliano

FE SSgt Leroy W. King

RS SSgt Robert A. McAllister

Mission #2

RCC Capt Daniel A. Nicholson

RCCP Capt Charles T. Wohlneck

PJ Sgt Richard E. Evans

Mission #2

RCC Capt Daniel A. Nicholson

RCCP Maj Edgar R. Whitney

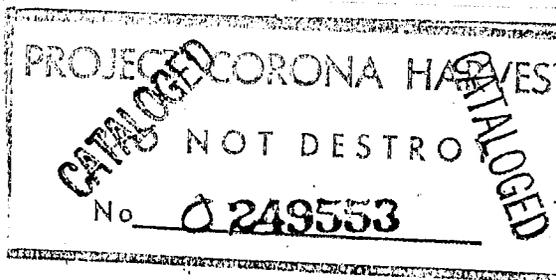
FE TSgt Thomas B. Margagliano

RS Sgt Michael E. Fish

TAB I

HISTORY OF THE  
37TH AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SQUADRON

1 October 1969 - 31 December 1969



Prepared by  
Captain George M. Hittle  
Unit Historian  
37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (MAC)  
United States Air Force  
DaNang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam

Approved By:

  
SIDNEY A. SOSNOW  
Lt Col, USAF  
Commander  
18 Jan 70

PACIFIC AIR FORCES, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Survivor and the Rescue Specialist were taken to the hospital after Jolly Green 42 returned to DaNang AB. (Supporting Document #2, p 42.)

24 October--Jolly Green 28 and 04 were scrambled from a forward operating base at Channel 103. The SAR effort was initiated in response to a Mayday call from Misty 11, who declared he had experienced an engine flameout and that the two crew members aboard were bailing out. Jolly Green 28 deployed his Rescue Specialist and was bringing the front seater up the hoist with the Rescue Specialist when heavy ground fire was taken. The hoist was shot off and Jolly Green 28 had to pull off. While departing the area it was determined that battle damage was severe enough, that the aircraft was emergency landed. Jolly Green 04 picked up the crew members from Jolly Green 28. After numerous efforts, Jolly Green 15 picked up the Rescue Specialist and the front seater. Jolly Green 19 picked up the backseater. (Supporting Document #3, p 45.)

15 November--Jolly Greens 31 and 42 were launched on a night rescue mission. The pilot of an aircraft, with the call sign of Charger 413, had bailed out feet wet. Numerous flares were dropped to illuminate the area and then Jolly Green 42 made an approach. He landed on the water near the survivor, but the survivor's raft was being blown away. As the aircraft was being hover taxied, engine problems developed. Jolly Green 42 had to leave the area and after several attempts, Jolly Green 31 picked up the survivor. Jolly Green 31 then flew to Channel 69 and

MISSION NARRATIVE 1-3-79 24 Oct 69

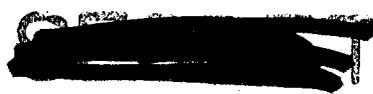
(S) At 0120Z Jolly Green (JG) 28 and JG 04 were scrambled from the forward operating base of Quang Tri, Channel 103. The SAR effort was initiated in response to a Mayday call from Misty 11, who declared he had experience an engine flameout and that the two crew members aboard were bailing out. King 4 vectored the Jolly Greens to a rendezvous with Spads 11 and 12 at 070 degrees for 68 miles from Channel 72. Meanwhile, the on scene commander, Nail 07 was relaying information from the area of interest. It was ascertained, Nail 07 had established radio contact with both survivors and that Misty 11A had sustained a broken leg while Misty 11B was uninjured. At 0240Z JG 28 and JG 04 arrived at the position of 055 degrees for 35 miles from Channel 72 along with the Spad aircraft. At this time Spad 11 assumed on scene command and both Spad 11 and 12 began trolling the survivor's position at approximately 055 degrees for 23 miles from Channel 72 for hostile forces. The Jollys were briefed by Spad 11 and after repeated passes during which no hostile fire was received, Spad 11 layed smoke to the northwest of the survivors' position along a road. At 0305Z JG 28 was cleared in for the rescue attempt with the Spads escorting and JG 04 acting as high aircraft. JG 28 arrived over, Misty 11A at 0315Z. The Rescue Specialist (RS) was deployed and immediately secured the survivor to the forest penetrator. Within less than one minute both men were being hoisted aboard JG 28. When the forest penetrator was approximately 10 to 15 feet off the ground JG 28 was subjected to intense hostile fire. The hoist assembly was shot from its mounting, falling into the main cargo door, striking the Flight Engineer (FE) who had been operating the hoist from the open doorway, knocking him across the aircraft. He immediately recovered, ascertained the hoist was inoperative and sheared the hoist, thus providing the RS and survivor a chance of survival in case JG 28 had crashed in the immediate area. The FE called for a pull off and JG 28 commenced a departure from the area at which time the transmission oil pressure fluctuated and the dropped to zero. JG 04 observed JG 28 to be smoking and spraying fluid from the transmission area and advised JG 28 to land his aircraft. As there were no suitable landing areas JG 28 attempted to exit the area, after flying approximately one and one half miles, a marshy area overgrown with elephant grass was sighted and used as an emergency landing area. Meanwhile, JG 04, jettisoned his external tanks, performed a rapid descent and pulled into a very low hover as near as possible to JG 28. The three remaining crew members of JG 28 were uninjured and exited the downed aircraft expeditiously. Approximately 0320Z, JG 04 completed individual hoisting of the three survivors and initiated a maximum performance climb to depart the immediate area. At this time JG 04 requested and was denied permission to attempt the recovery of the other three survivors, now on the ground. JG 04 was directed to return to Channel 77 and enroute at 0355Z was met by JG 15 and 21 who then

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year  
intervals; declassified  
after 12 years

JAN-MAR 70

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escorted JG 04 the remaining distance, arriving Channel 77 at 0420Z. At 0445Z, JG 15 and 21 were again launched from Channel 77 and proceeded to an orbit point, of 045 degrees for 60 miles from Channel 72. In the interim, JG 76 from Channel 89 attempted three times to recover Misty 11A and JG 28D, the Rescue Specialist. Each time hostile fire forced JG 76 to withdraw, the last time at 0615Z with extensive damage. At 0624Z, JG 15 and 21 departed their orbit for the area of interest arriving at 0630Z. While enroute to the scene JG 15 and 21 were given a comprehensive briefing of the situation by the on scene aircraft. At approximately 1705Z, JG 21 departed the immediate area to effect rendezvous and air refueling with King 3, returning at 0735Z. At this time JG 15 was cleared by Sandy 03 to attempt the rescue and immediately commenced an approach to the survivors. The approach was aborted due to the approach angle and heavy ground fire. Immediately, another attempt was initiated and at 0737Z, JG 15 had established a hover over the survivors. By 0738Z, Misty 11A and JG 28D had been hoisted aboard JG 15. During the hoisting operation sporadic ground fire was received. As JG 15 started to exit the area, heavy automatic weapons fire raked JG 15. At 0742Z, JG 15 commenced an approach to Misty 11B, however, again heavy automatic weapons fire was received and the attempt aborted. Immediately, a second approach was attempted but, discontinued due to poor visibility caused by heavy smoke in the area. A third effort was made and while hover taxiing in an attempt to locate Misty 11B, intense automatic weapons fire raked JG 15 rendering the hoist control and intercom system for the FE and RS inoperative. JG 15 immediately departed the area, notified Sandy 03 that he would be unable to remain in the area and commenced rendezvous for air refueling with King 3 after which he returned to Channel 77 at 0935Z. Meanwhile, JG 21 received moderate automatic weapons fire. The rescue effort was next delayed by rain showers in the area and while orbiting, waiting for the visibility to improve, an inspection platform on the transmission deck of JG 21 came open, necessitating an immediate departure from the area at 0810Z. JG 21 landed safely at Lima 171 where King 3 delivered oil by air drop. After securing the inspection platform, reservicing the oil and a thorough inspection, it was decided to relocate at Channel 89, which was completed at 1200Z. Meanwhile JG 19 and 09 from Channel 89 proceeded to the area and at 0911Z JG 19 recovered Misty 11B and took him to Channel 89.

(U) Survivors:

Recovered by JG 04:

Maj Charles W. Bond	JG 28B	37 ARRS
Capt Charles D. Langham	JG 28A	37 ARRS
SSgt James E. Smith	JG 28C	37 ARRS

Recovered by JG 15:

1/Lt Alvin D. Muller	Misty 11A	416 TFS
TSgt Donald G. Smith	JG 28D	37 ARRS



GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals; declassified after 12 years

JAN-MAR 70

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Recovered by JG 19:

Capt J. K. Clapper

Misty 11B

416 TFS

47

(U) Jolly Green Crews:

JOLLY GREEN 28

AC Capt Charles D. Langham  
 CP Maj Charles W. Bond  
 FE SSgt James E. Smith  
 RS TSgt Donald G. Smith

JOLLY GREEN 04

AC Lt Richard V. Butchka (USCG)  
 CP Capt John K. Coder  
 FE Sgt Joseph Vai  
 RS A1C George P. Hoffman III

JOLLY GREEN 15

AC Lt(JG) Robert Ritchie(USCG)  
 CP Lt Col Sidney A. Sosnow  
 FE TSgt Frank Gaydos Jr.  
 RS SSgt Jon K. Hoberg  
 RS Sgt Edward K. Rendle

JOLLY GREEN 21

AC Capt Robert W. Packer  
 CP Capt Gerald L. Keyser Jr.  
 FE Sgt Harvey A. Lyons  
 RS Sgt John H. Bullock Jr.  
 RS A1C George P. Hoffman III

JAN-MAR 70

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bled from Quang Tri, South Vietnam, to rescue two downed F-100 crewmen in Laos. One of the HH-3s arrived on scene and lowered Technical Sergeant Donald G. Smith to the ground. Enemy fire erupted. It was evident that



*Technical Sergeant Donald G. Smith (left), Brigadier General Frank K. Everest, Jr. (center), and General Jack J. Catton (right) pose after awards presentation ceremony.*

enemy forces had used the downed F-100 crewmen as bait for a "flak trap." Sergeant Smith found one of the survivors and secured him to the hoist, but enemy fire made the hoist inoperative. The flight engineer was forced to cut the cable. Sergeant Smith and his survivor fell back into the jungle. The first H-3 was forced down, but its crew was rescued by another ARRS HH-3 helicopter. Enemy opposition continued throughout the day. Despite his own injuries, Sergeant Smith cared for the survivors, directed air assaults against enemy positions, and repelled enemy probes. After four more attempts by an HH-53 from the 37th ARR Squadron, Sergeant Smith and one survivor were successfully rescued. The other survivor was saved by another HH-3 from the 37th. Sergeant Smith was later awarded the Air Force Cross for his display of courage and gallantry under direct fire by forces superior in number.

TAB J

DATE TIME GROUP: 048200Z

FROM: 7AF TAN SON HNUT

TO: 40 ARRSQ

UNCLAS/CC

FOR CAPTAIN STOVALL AND CREW

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM SECRETARY OF THE

AIR FORCE IS RETRANSMITTED: QUOTE

FOR GENERAL VOGT FROM SECRETARY SEAMANS

PLEASE CONVEY MY PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SEARCH AND RESCUE

FORCE, AND ESPECIALLY TO CAPTAIN DALE STOVALL AND HIS HELICOPTER

CREW, FOR THEIR SUCCESSFUL RESCUE OF CAPTAIN ROGER LOCHER NEAR YEN

SAY, NVN, SUCH ACTIONS EXEMPLIFY THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE USAF

UNQUOTE, ONCE AGAIN, ACCEPT MY PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU.

J. W. VOGT, GENERAL, USAF

BT

//9822

DATE TIME GROUP: 031800Z Jun 72

FROM: CINCPACAF

TO: 13AF/CC  
40 ARRSQ

UNCLAS E F T O/CC

REF: RESCUE MISSION B-3-047 1 Jun 72

THE MISSION DETAILS AND PARTICULARLY THE GRATIFYING RESULTS OF THE SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY OF CAPT ROGER C. LOCHER ON 02 JUNE IS NOTED WITH EXTREME PRIDE, THIS MISSION IS INDICATIVE OF THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONALISM, COOPERATION AND DEDICATION TO DUTY DISPLAYED BY RECOVERY FORCES DURING EACH AND EVERY ACR MISSION ALL CONCERNED ARE COMMENDED FOR THEIR EFFORTS DURING THIS EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS AND DIFFICULT MISSION, ESPECIALLY DESERVING OF HIGHEST PRAISE ARE THE AIRCREW MEMBERS WHO PERSISTED UNDER THE MOST HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY, CAPT LOCHER IS TO BE PERSONNALLY CONGRATULATED FOR HIS OUTSTANDING EFFORTS IN EVADING CAPTURE. PLEASE CONVEY MY PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL FOR ANOTHER JOB WELL DONE.

BT

#2582

DATE TIME GROUP: 040615Z

FROM: 3ARRGP

TO: 40 ARRS/CC

UNCLAS/CC

SUBJECT: OYSTER O1 BRAVO

1. I WISH TO EXTEND MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE RECOVERY OF CAPTAIN ROGER C. LOCHER, HIS DETERMINATION, BRAVERY AND FAITH IN RESCUE WAS REWARDED WITH A RECOVERY THAT STIRRED THE IMAGINATION OF EVERYONE. THE OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM DISPLAYED IN THE PLANNING, COORDINATION, AND EXECUTION OF THIS MISSION WAS TRULY INSPIRING.

2. TO THE MEN OF THE KING BIRDS, YOUR COORDINATION, IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AND KNOW-HOW CONTRIBUTED IMMEASURABLE TO THE SUCCESS

THIS MISSION. SUPERLATIVES CANNOT FULLY DESCRIBE HOW WELL J DID YOUR JOB. MY GRATEFUL THANKS.

3. TO THE MEN OF THE SANDYS, YOUR BRAVERY IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING ODDS BOARDERS ON HEROISM, YOUR DETERMINATION, DEVOTION AND ENTREPIDNESS HAS ONCE AGAIN FIRMED YOUR HIGH STANDING IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE YOU PROTECT.

4. TO THE MEN OF THE FAST MOVERS, YOUR GALLANTRY, CONCERN AND WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE GAVE RESCUE THE TIME AND THE DIVERSION THEY NEED TO DO THEIR JOB, I WILL ALWAYS HOLD YOU IN THE HIGHEST ESTEEM.

5. TO THE MAINTENANCE MEN, WHO WORKED THE LONG HOURS WHICH GAVE RESCUE THE TOOLS IT NEEDED TO DO THE JOB. WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE THE RESPECT AND ADMIRATION I FEEL FOR ALL OF YOU.

6. TO THE SUPPORT PERSONNEL, WITHOUT WHOSE ASSISTANCE RESCUE COULD NOT HAVE PENETRATED SO DEEPLY INTO THE BACKYARD OF THE ENEMY AND SUCCESSFULLY RACED AGAINST TIME. YOUR EFFORTS WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN.

7. TO THE MEN OF THE JOLLY GREENS, YOUR EXTRAORDINARY EXPLOITS REFLECT THE VALOR, PROWESS AND SUPERLATIVE COURAGE IN FULFILLING YOUR HIGHEST PURPOSE. THE RESCUE OF A HUMAN LIFE, YOU NEVER CEASE TO ASTONISH ME BY YOUR CAPABILITY AND I STAND SECOND ONLY TO CAPTAIN LOCHER IN MY REGARD FOR YOU.

8. SO, AGAIN LET ME ADD MY PRAISES TO THE MANY YOU WILL RECEIVE, MY HAT IS OFF TO ALL OF YOU FOR A MAGNIFICENT JOB.

BT

#2139



LUC

Painting by LOU NOLAN

# BACK OF THE RISH

by Sgt. JERRY W. KENNEDY

**The hoist had been shot out of action. Nothing for the two men in the underbrush to do but watch as the *Jolly Green* left without them.**

A1C Chuck McGrath was lonesome.

He wasn't alone, but he was lonesome. Hundreds of enemy troops filling the air with bullets weren't really much company. Nor could he talk to Capt. Lynn D. Aikman, the injured F-4 pilot he had come to rescue. Aikman was hurting badly. Besides, chatter might give their position away.

The going had been rough on this rescue from the start, but Pararescueman McGrath almost had success in his flight suit pocket.

McGrath had signaled to the HH-53 rescue helicopter overhead to lower the penetrator, which would haul the two men up to safety.

"We can't use the hoist!" came the bad news from Flight Engineer Sgt. George Wright. "It's frozen up. All the lines to the system have been shot out."

Another helicopter would have to come for McGrath and Aikman. Now there was nothing to do but wait. And hope.

It was June 1972, in Southeast Asia. The big air war was on, and there was a lot of business for Chuck McGrath and all the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery crews based in Thailand.

The Aikman rescue mission had begun with the dispatch of two HH-53s. One of them developed trouble. Then the other, the bird McGrath was on, had a malfunction and diverted to Udorn. Problems solved, it took off again.

Another chopper, this one from Nakhon Phanom, rendezvoused with them for the rescue mission.

On the way north, the HH-53 *Super Jolly Green Giant* refueled from *King Bird*, an HC-130 tanker.

Now everything was set. The *Jolly Greens* had M-60 machine guns along for double duty: to back up the three 7.62 mini-guns, and to cover the flight engineer while he's in the door during the rescue (you have to pull the mini-gun out of the way).

At the initial holding point, the

rescue crews learned that Aikman was injured. Pararescueman McGrath knew that he would have to go down, so he got his gear ready. The hoist and the penetrator used for pickups in the dense jungle had to be just right.

Making contact was tricky. They kept getting false beepers.

"The enemy was using captured radios, trying to lure us in," McGrath explained later. Finally, the A-1E *Skyriders* (Sandys), who would supply escort cover for the rescue, got through to Aikman. Using their radio beacon directionfinders, they made several passes over the area and got a pretty good fix on his position.

Now it was Rescue's turn. They would have to pinpoint the downed pilot's position and go get him.

"We knew the area was bad," McGrath recalls. "There were a lot of villages around, and you never knew what to expect. You'd see trucks along the road underneath the trees."

The chopper moved in close. The crew still couldn't see Aikman on the ground, so they asked him to pop his smoke. At first, the smoke flare was invisible in the jungle below. Then McGrath saw it at the seven o'clock position.

They were making a tight right turn. "Chuck! Pick it up across the tail—pick it up as we go by."

McGrath called it out again. Then the pilot, Maj. Leo Thacker, called it (the smoke) for as long as he could see it. As the chopper's tail swung around, the flight engineer began calling it.

Hovering, the rescue crew took a good look at the lay of the land. "It was a tight ravine, a small hill at one end, open at the other, and well-worn down in the middle," McGrath said. "Trails wound along the bottom of the ravine. Sitting smack dab where we wanted to go was a tree, about three feet in diameter and about 140 feet tall. It had an immense crown."

Aikman was there.

"I'm under my parachute, underneath a big tree," he radioed.

The men in the *Super Jolly Green* still couldn't see him.

"I knew I had to go down and find him," McGrath said. He and his teammate readied the penetrator. You can't make it down through the dense forests of Southeast Asia without it. McGrath strapped himself to the penetrator and began his descent.

Earthward bound, McGrath spun around and around. "There was so much noise I don't really know whether they were shooting at me right then or not," he said.

McGrath looked down over the tangle of bamboo stalks, each more than an inch thick. Now he could see what hadn't been visible from the copter: part of Aikman's parachute, in the bushes about 60 feet away.

McGrath crunched down into the primeval vegetation, which promptly swallowed him. Upside down in the bamboo thicket, he called to the flight engineer to pull him back up so that he could get himself untangled.

Back up through the bamboo he went.

"I thought it was going to pull me off the seat," he recalled. "I was just hoping I could hold on. I knew the strap would hold, but something had to break. I wondered if it would be my neck!"

The bamboo, not McGrath, finally broke. He climbed off the penetrator and crawled along the ground. Then he caught his first glimpse of Aikman, about 10 feet away.

The pilot was sprawled on his back and holding his radio. All his gear was scattered around. McGrath told the *Jolly Green* crew where he was.

The chopper's roar was a welcome sound, but along with it came a new problem. The rotor was kicking up a 70-knot wind, knocking branches out of trees. The falling limbs were six or seven inches thick. They made things miserable on the ground.

"I was really worried about getting hit by those limbs," McGrath

said. "I figured the last thing we needed was to have two injured people down there."

At last, McGrath reached Aikman. "His knee was so dislocated that it looked as if his whole leg had been moved up," McGrath said. "His right elbow was also injured."

A king-size battle was still rocking the area. The men on the ground heard the staccato chatter of the mini-guns. The sound of enemy AK-47s was distinct above the bedlam.

"I could also hear the M-60 going off, so I figured something had happened to one of the mini-guns," McGrath said. Later he learned that some of the first rounds to hit the helicopter had knocked out the electrical system that powered the left mini-gun. The enemy seemed to be everywhere. McGrath called in their position to one of the *Skyriders*.

"I'm coming in hot—20 mike-mike and mini-gun," the A-1E pilot responded.

The *Skyriders* strafed both ridges close to where McGrath and Aikman lay. It was time to get out of there. More obstacles confronted them, however. The flight engineer couldn't get the penetrator down past the big tree to pick them up.

McGrath had to move Aikman down a steep slope overgrown with brush. It would be painful for the pilot, but there was no other choice. McGrath dragged him 120 feet through the dense underbrush.

"The longer we waited, the worse it was going to get," McGrath said. "I knew we had to move then. We had to go." McGrath wasn't thinking about anything but getting Aikman down to where they could both be picked up.

"I really didn't even worry about getting shot," he said. "I figured if I'm going to get shot, then I'm going to get shot. If I'm not, I'm not," McGrath recalled.

As McGrath got into position, he received word about the hoist.

Rotten luck. The men watched from the underbrush as the *Jolly Green* left without them.

McGrath popped some smoke to make sure the *Sandys* and the other HH-53s knew their position. He didn't get much red smoke, but it was probably just as well. "The bad guys would have had a better target to shoot at. Fortunately, they weren't pinging around me. They were concentrating on the chopper."

Within minutes, another chopper came in, this one a Nakhon Phanom bird. The penetrator lowered, and McGrath got Aikman ready.

"I got us strapped on and pulled on the cable to signal that we were ready." As they rose toward the rescue bird, McGrath could see the engineer standing in the door. It was SSgt. Richard Simon, "a big guy with a cheerful face," McGrath recalled. "I could just see that big head hanging out. He didn't budge, not a bit."

The guns continued the heated exchange as McGrath and Aikman came level with the bottom of the aircraft.

"I could see the holes opening up in the side of the aircraft. *Ping, ping, ping*, right up the side," McGrath said.

"Simon still didn't move. Finally, they got us to the top and reached to pull us in. We almost got into the helicopter when all of a sudden we swung back out."

Another PJ, TSgt. Dennis Reich, had been helping to get them aboard and now he was hit. Within seconds, however, a combat photographer, SSgt. Kelly Schuman, jumped to operate the hoist while Simon pulled McGrath and Aikman in.

They had made it. But McGrath's work had only just begun. He unhooked and saw Reich lying motionless. "I pulled off his mask, and he opened his eyes," McGrath said. He noted that Reich had been hit in the leg and the bullet had shattered the bone. "I took the tourniquet out of the survival vest and put it on real quick. It was

precautionary, because there was a lot of blood coming out."

Aikman was still on the penetrator on the floor and he wanted off. McGrath checked him over and gave him some water.

Sgt. Mike Nunes, the tail gunner, Schuman, and McGrath put the two men on stretchers.

Nunes worked on Reich and McGrath stayed with Aikman.

"He [Aikman] was coherent. He could talk even though he was in shock. He didn't want anything for the pain. He could breathe O.K., even though he had a few loose teeth in the back of his mouth," the PJ said.

McGrath checked Aikman's leg wounds and put on a pressure bandage. He also tried to apply a pneumatic splint, but it wouldn't stay inflated. An AK-47 round had penetrated the medical kit and gone through the middle of the bundle of splints.

"When I checked his feet, I saw a little hole in his boot. It turned out he'd been shot right through the top of his foot. The bullet came out the bottom. He told me later it happened as we reached the bottom of the door. I thought that was ironic. Here he is, with all this other stuff wrong with him, and we're sitting right together. My legs are behind him and his legs are behind me but he gets shot in the foot and I don't get a scratch," McGrath said.

On the way home, the helicopter pilot, Capt. Dave Stovall, had to decide whether to put in at Udorn or fly back to Nakhon Phanom. If he picked Udorn, they wouldn't be able to fly back to NKP without bringing a whole maintenance crew over to Udorn.

"They needed the helicopters badly because of all the missions going on," McGrath said. The decision was up to McGrath to make on the basis of Aikman's condition.

He decided on NKP. Still, their troubles weren't over. They ran into rough weather just before they went in. "You can't do anything about the weather," McGrath said.

"That's when we really started getting apprehensive. Aikman started slipping into shock. We got in O.K. and as soon as we landed they took him to the hospital. I kept checking his pulse. He came to pretty quick."

For McGrath, it had been "one of those days that you hear about, but never think you'll be involved in," as he put it.

"I guess I was lucky."

By and large, Chuck McGrath makes his own luck. He had decided early in his Air Force career to become a PJ. Then during training, he met an attractive airman named Candy. They were married on May 1, and two weeks later Chuck left for Southeast Asia.

He was assigned to Udorn, and in mid-July, Candy was sent to Korat, also in Thailand. Chuck didn't get to see her right away. He had been shot down on a mission in northern Laos, and had rolled down the side of a mountain in the crashing chopper. But he made it.

Sergeant McGrath never dreamed he would receive the Air Force Cross for his rescue of Captain Aikman. Nor did he suspect that the Air Force Sergeants Association would choose him to receive the Pitsenbarger Heroism Award, the Association's highest. McGrath is the fourth recipient of the award, named for a pararescueman, A1C William H. Pitsenbarger, who sacrificed his life on a rescue mission.

Jonelle McGrath, born last summer, may know when she grows up that her daddy is a reluctant hero. But Chuck McGrath was doing the job he chose to do, saving lives, and he just did the best he could. "Your only goal is to get in and out in one piece—that's the only thing you really think about."

SSgt. Charles D. McGrath claims his successes are just "the luck of the Irish." But men who were with Charles McGrath in the war zone know that he is a special kind of man; one with skill, intelligence, dedication, and—O.K., maybe just a little bit of luck. ☐

1 May 1972 -- The 3d ARR Group evacuated 132 persons from the citadel in the besieged city of Quang Tri, South Vietnam, to Da Nang. Four HH-53s of the 37th ARR Squadron at Da Nang took off for Quang Tri. They planned to have three Jolly Green Giants pick up all the survivors while the fourth chopper loitered outside the city, ready to dash in if needed. The North Vietnamese had moved SA-2 surface-to-air missiles south, and their area of coverage encompassed Quang Tri City. This factor caused the helicopters to approach the city at treetop level in spite of the risk of automatic weapons fire which they usually managed to avoid by flying above 3,000 feet.

Over the nearly demolished outskirts of the city, the three Jolly Greens moved in a single file up a corridor blasted by the A-1s to the walls of the fortress. As the first chopper settled into the citadel, enemy small arms fire increased to an intensity that caused so much confusion, only 37 men managed to climb aboard before the pilot pulled away. Staff Sergeant Robert LaPointe silenced the enemy snipers with the on-board minigun and then departed the aircraft to organize the remaining survivors. With order restored, the second chopper loaded 45 people and quickly took off.

*Staff Sergeant Robert L. LaPointe.*



The third Jolly Green landed in the fortress and loaded the 50 remaining survivors and Sergeant LaPointe just as quickly as the second helicopter. Its pilot pulled up and headed for safety. Minutes later the North Vietnamese flag flew over the citadel ruins. Sergeant LaPointe was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his cool actions under fire.

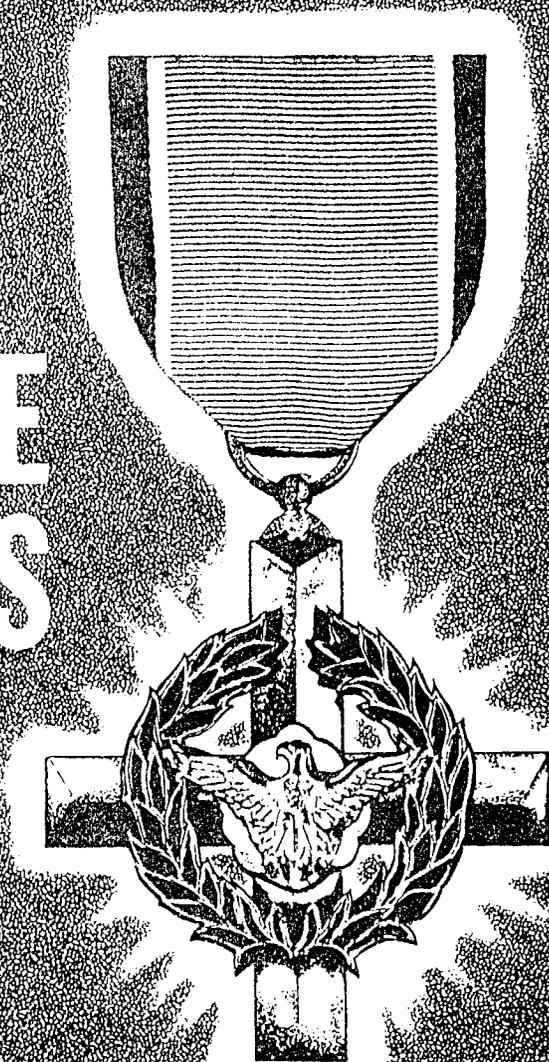
27 June 1972 -- Pararescueman Staff Sergeant Charles D. McGrath, 40th ARR Squadron, flew deep into North Vietnam to rescue two downed airmen. Sergeant McGrath's helicopter penetrated the enemy defenses after another HH-53 was forced to withdraw from the rescue site due to enemy fire. He descended by hoist into the jungle and retrieved the two survivors. During the engagement, Sergeant McGrath's HH-53 received more than 16 hits and several personnel aboard both HH-53s were wounded. Staff Sergeant Charles D. McGrath was later awarded the Air Force Cross.

12 April 1975 -- Eight HH-53s and three HC-130s from the 40th and 56th ARR Squadrons, respectively, participated in Operation Eagle Pull, the evacuation of United States personnel from Phnom Penh, Cambodia. One HH-53 inserted a Combat Control Team prior to the evacuation, and two HH-53s removed the last 15 military personnel from Phnom Penh, completing the evacuation. The Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) operated by the 3d ARR Group at Nakhon Phanom, exercised operational control of rescue forces. There were no ARRS injuries or casualties, although two HH-53s incurred hits from small caliber ground fire.

29 April 1975 -- Eight HH-53s and three HC-130s of the 40th and 56th Squadrons, respectively, participated in Operation Frequent Wind, the evacuation of United States personnel from Saigon, Vietnam. Two of the HH-53s airlifted 362 evacuees from Saigon to the USS Midway. Both aircraft



the  
**AIR FORCE  
CROSS**



**BACKGROUND  
INFORMATION**

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE • OFFICE OF INFORMATION  
INTERNAL INFORMATION DIVISION • WASHINGTON, D. C. 20330

## FOREWORD

All airmen but one awarded the Air Force Cross have received the medal for an act of heroism in the Southeast Asia conflict. The exception is Maj. Rudolf Anderson, Jr., who was honored for his heroic flights over Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis.

This pamphlet contains the current list of Air Force Cross recipients and their citations (as of Jan. 1, 1970). It also provides brief background information on the medal and the criteria for awarding it. It supersedes Air Force Cross Background Information Pamphlet 68-15.

(Many who have been awarded the medal are imprisoned in North Vietnam or are in missing status. Information pertaining to awarding of the Air Force Cross to these individuals in captured or missing status must not be publicized until Headquarters U.S. Air Force officially announces a final determination of the recipients' status. For reference consult Chapter 3, Paragraph 14, AFM 900-3.)

## BACKGROUND

The Air Force Cross is our Nation's second highest military decoration and is awarded to U.S. Air Force airmen for extraordinary heroism.

On July 6, 1960, Congress established the Air Force Cross (Public Law 36-593) to parallel the U.S. Army Distinguished Service Cross and the U.S. Navy Cross. Prior to this date the Air Force awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

## AWARDED FOR HEROIC ACTS

The Air Force Cross is awarded to airmen for extraordinary heroism:

- While engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States;
- While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
- While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

Like the Distinguished Service Cross and the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross may be awarded to members of foreign military forces and to American and foreign civilians serving with the Armed Forces of the United States.

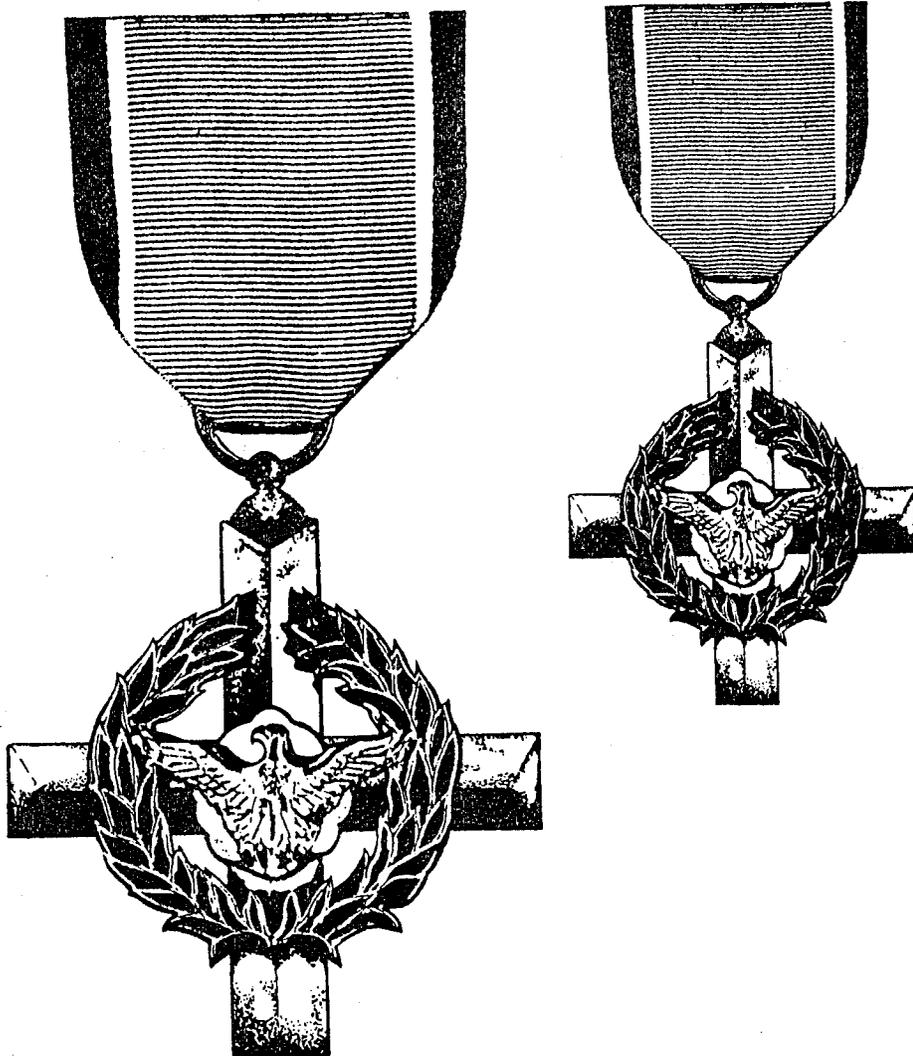
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March 1970

However, all awards of U.S. decorations to foreigners must be approved by the Secretary of Defense.

#### AIR FORCE CROSS DESCRIPTION

The Air Force Cross is a bronze cross with an oxidized satin finish. Centered on the cross is a gold-plated American bald eagle with wings spread against a cloud formation. It is encircled by a laurel wreath finished in green enamel. The cross is suspended from a ribbon of Brittany blue, edged with Old Glory red, and bears a narrow white vertical stripe inside the red edges.



The Air Force Crosses on this page are suitable for reproduction.

AIR FORCE CROSS RECIPIENTS AND THEIR CITATIONS

(Asterisks indicate posthumous awards)

ADAMS, VICTOR R.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Technical Sergeant Victor R. Adams for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a UH-1F Helicopter Aerial Gunner near Duc Co, Republic of Vietnam, on 27 November 1968. On that date, Sergeant Adams' aircraft was shot down by hostile ground fire and crashed in dense jungle. Disregarding his own injuries and the imminence of hostile activity, he assisted the copilot from the burning helicopter and returned to rescue the trapped personnel. He succeeded in pulling another man from the wreckage, before the severity of the fire and subsequent explosions forced him to abandon further rescue efforts...."

ANDERSON, RUDOLF JR.\*

"Major Rudolf Anderson, Jr., distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy from 15 October 1962 to 27 October 1962. During this period of great national crisis, Major Anderson, flying an unescorted, unarmed aircraft, lost his life while participating in one of several aerial reconnaissance missions over Cuba. While executing these aerial missions, Major Anderson made photographs which provided the United States government with conclusive evidence of the introduction of long-range offensive missiles into Cuba and which materially assisted our leaders in charting the nation's military and diplomatic course...."

ARMSTRONG, LARRY D.

"Major Larry D. Armstrong distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-4D Aircraft Commander in Southeast Asia on 8 February 1968. On that date, Major Armstrong led two aircraft against one of the largest, most important, and most heavily defended airfields in North Vietnam. Despite inclement weather, Major Armstrong descended to extremely low altitude for a visual high-speed run across the airfield. Although faced with a barrage of withering antiaircraft artillery fire, Major Armstrong resolutely and skillfully pressed his attack against the target, damaging and destroying several aircraft on the ground. When the lead crew was forced to eject over hostile territory, Major Armstrong remained as top cover and directed the rescue effort, which expeditiously recovered the two downed airmen. As a result of his actions, Major Armstrong was successful in neutralizing a threat to Free World forces in Southeast Asia...."

BAER, ALLAN R.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Lieutenant Colonel Allan R. Baer for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller at Nha Trang, Republic of Vietnam, from 30 January 1968 to 1 February 1968. During that period, Colonel Baer was virtually a one-man command post for the battle of Nha Trang, directing and conducting close air support missions night and day, resulting in the neutralization of over three hundred of the hostile attacking force. On no less than eleven separate occasions, Colonel Baer's aerial skill and courage in the face of intense unfriendly ground fire were the decisive factors in the defeat of the hostile forces...."

BALDWIN, ROBERT L.\*

"Major Robert L. Baldwin distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a UH-1 pilot on 31 March 1967. On that date, Major Baldwin volunteered to pilot his unarmed helicopter to evacuate severely wounded American ground troops under heavy hostile fire. Despite intense and accurately directed automatic weapons fire which severely damaged his aircraft and inflicted serious wounds upon his person, Major Baldwin, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill, successfully delivered ammunition and water to the beleaguered ground forces and began rescue of wounded personnel. Again devastating ground fire struck his aircraft, causing it to crash. Disregarding his own serious wounds, Major Baldwin attempted to save the other wounded until his loss of consciousness prevented any further action...."

BEALE, ROBERT S.

"Major Robert S. Beale distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 Thunderchief pilot on a missile suppression mission on an isolated vital military target near Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 16 December 1967. On that date, Major Beale braved many concentrations of heavy antiaircraft artillery fire and eighteen surface-to-air missiles as he successfully led his missile suppression flight in diverting the hostile defenses away from the main strike force. He contributed to the destruction of one missile site only three miles from the center of the heavily defended target area and damaged at least one other missile complex. As a result of his actions, the main strike force suffered no losses, encountered only four missiles, and successfully destroyed this vital military target...."

BOYD, WILLIAM JR.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Lieutenant Colonel William Boyd, Jr., for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-130 pilot at Kham Duc, Republic of Vietnam on 12 May 1968. On that date, Colonel Boyd flew an emergency evacuation mission into Kham Duc Airfield as it was being overrun by hostile forces. Realizing that the friendly ground forces and Vietnamese civilians remaining at Kham Duc had virtually no chance for survival except evacuation by his aircraft, Colonel Boyd, without regard for his personal safety, flew through a veritable hail of hostile fire into the besieged field and successfully evacuated more than one-hundred troops and civilians...."

BRICKEL, JAMES R.

"Lieutenant Colonel James R. Brickel distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a photo reconnaissance pilot near Thai Ngyen, North Vietnam, on 10 March 1967. On that date, Colonel Brickel led a flight of two RF-101C photo reconnaissance aircraft and four F-4C fighter escort aircraft on a bomb damage assessment mission of one of the most highly defended targets in North Vietnam. Despite a direct hit by anti-aircraft artillery flak that extensively damaged his aircraft, Colonel Brickel continued to the target and acquired one hundred percent photographic coverage. He then made a successful withdrawal from hostile territory on a single engine and landed at his home base...."

BRITT, AQUILLA F.\*

"Major Aquilla F. Britt distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as commander of a strike force of twenty F-105 Thunderchiefs against a heavily defended target in North Vietnam on 25 October 1967. Through extremely heavy barrages of surface-to-air missiles and antiaircraft fire, Major Britt, with undaunted determination and indomitable courage, safely guided the strike force on a devastating attack against the primary target. His superb planning, leadership, and gallantry, displayed under intense conditions, were the key factors that led to the destruction of this highly significant military target...."

BROUGHTON, JACKSEL M.

"Colonel Jacksel M. Broughton distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia on 5 February 1967. On that date, Colonel Broughton was Mission Commander of a flight of a two-wing F-105 Thunderchief strike force which attacked a heavily defended target in North Vietnam. Despite serious aircraft malfunctions, marginal weather, and grave damage to his aircraft from an exploding surface-to-air missile, he placed his armament directly on target, scattering fire and debris which illuminated the target for easy acquisition by the following strike force. Disregarding his dire circumstance with his crippled aircraft, which minimized his chances for recovery to friendly territory, Colonel Broughton then willfully acted as a decoy to divert hostile aircraft approaching the strike force...."

BROWER, RALPH W.\*

"Captain Ralph W. Brower distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E pilot in Southeast Asia on 9 November 1967. On that date, Captain Brower attempted the night extraction of a ground reconnaissance team. Despite full knowledge that two helicopters had been shot down and a third severely

damaged by intense, accurately directed hostile fire, Captain Brower, with determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill, established a hover on a steep slope within one hundred yards of hostile weapons positions and brought the wounded survivors aboard. The hostile forces closed in quickly, and as the helicopter departed, it was shot down...."

BUCHER, BERNARD L.\*

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Bernard L. Bucher for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-130 Aircraft Commander in the Republic of Vietnam on 12 May 1968. On that date, Major Bucher volunteered to attempt the rescue of friendly forces from the Kham Duc airfield. Hostile forces had completely encircled the airfield. The surrounding terrain was extremely hazardous with 300 to 350 foot hills at each end of the runway. Shell fragments, munitions, and other debris littered the entire runway. After careful evaluation of the danger and realizing the hopeless position of the remaining defenders if they were not evacuated, Major Bucher elected to try the landing. Approaching the field from a steep angle of attack to avoid as much of the hail of enemy fire as possible, he successfully landed his aircraft and immediately began loading the defenders. After loading, Major Bucher faced the task of taking off through the heavy hostile fire. An abandoned bulldozer and a crashed helicopter blocked much of the runway. After an amazingly successful takeoff, Major Bucher's aircraft was seen to crash and catch fire. During the entire action, Major Bucher displayed the highest traditions of a professional Air Force officer...."

CAMPBELL, JESSE W.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Jesse W. Campbell for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-123 aircraft pilot in the Republic of Vietnam on 12 May 1968. On that date, Major Campbell volunteered to attempt the rescue of a three-man USAF Combat Control Team from the Special Forces Camp at Kham Duc. Hostile forces had overrun the forward outpost and established gun positions on the airstrip. They were raking the camp with small arms, mortars, light and heavy automatic weapons, and recoilless rifle fire. The camp was engulfed in flames and ammunition dumps were continuously exploding and littering the runway with debris. In addition, eight aircraft had been destroyed by the intense enemy fire and one aircraft remained on the runway reducing its useable length to only 2200 feet. To further complicate a landing, the weather was deteriorating rapidly. Although fully aware of the extreme danger and likely failure of such an attempt, Major Campbell set up the approach from approximately 7300 feet above the airfield. Through a superior display of pilot expertise, he sideslipped the C-123 aircraft steeply to an altitude of 500 feet above the ground. The landing roll was terminated near the point where the Combat Control Team was reported to be hiding. While on the ground, the aircraft was the target of intense hostile fire. A rocket landed in front of the nose of the aircraft but failed to explode. Once the Combat Control Team was aboard, the C-123 succeeded in getting airborne despite the hostile fire directed across the runway in front of the aircraft...."

CAMPBELL, THOMAS A.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Thomas A. Campbell for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an A-1E Skyraider Pilot in Southeast Asia on 2 June 1968. On that date, Major Campbell led a successful search and rescue effort for a downed Navy pilot near the Ho Chi Minh Trail. After his aircraft had been hit by ground fire, he remained in the area for an hour directing aircraft strikes. He voluntarily risked his life on repeated passes to protect the rescue helicopter and suppress hostile gun positions...."

CLAY, EUGENE L.\*

"Staff Sergeant Eugene L. Clay distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E Flight Engineer in Southeast Asia on 9 November 1967. On that date, Sergeant Clay attempted the night extraction of a ground reconnaissance team after his helicopter had been severely damaged. Two other helicopters had been shot down and a third extensively damaged in previous attempts. During the rescue attempt, Sergeant Clay unhesitatingly exposed himself to hostile fire to assist the survivors to the aircraft. The hostile forces closed in quickly, and as the damaged helicopter departed, it was shot down...."

GODY, HOWARD R.\*

"Captain Howard R. Gody distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an Advisor-Pilot of a B-26B aircraft on 24 November 1963. On that date, Captain Gody voluntarily exposed himself and his aircraft during a low-level flight near hidden Viet Cong machine gun installations. This forced the Viet Cong to reveal their position which led to their destruction by cover aircraft. In this action, Captain Gody's aircraft was badly damaged by machine gun fire and he never gained control of his aircraft...."

COLLINS, WILLARD M.\*

"Captain Willard M. Collins distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near A Shau, Republic of Vietnam, on 9 March 1966. On that date, Captain Collins was Aircraft Commander of an AC-47 that was scrambled in defense of a Special Forces camp which was under heavy attack by hostile forces. Arriving over the area, Captain Collins attempted to locate the camp which was surrounded by mountainous terrain in a narrow valley and obscured by heavy clouds. He made two attempts to penetrate into the valley but was forced to withdraw. On his third attempt, he entered the valley at tree top level, and managed to locate the camp. With complete disregard for his personal safety, and fully aware of his aircraft's vulnerability to ground fire, Captain Collins maneuvered into position. He made two firing passes against the hostile forces. It was on the second pass that both engines exploded from the impact of ground fire. Demonstrating superb airmanship and skill, Captain Collins successfully crash landed his battle torn aircraft. After landing, Captain Collins rallied his crew and attempted to establish defense positions away from the aircraft. He then discovered that one crew member was injured and could not be moved, and he refused to abandon the aircraft for more favorable defensive positions; instead, he established a perimeter defense of the aircraft until rescue helicopters arrived. Although attacked by hostile forces in the area, Captain Collins continuously fought off his attackers enabling three of his crew members to be rescued. The valuable minutes which he gave his crew, and for which he paid the supreme sacrifice was directly responsible for their rescue...."

CONLEY, EUGENE O.\*

"Lieutenant Colonel Eugene O. Conley distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism as an F-105 Thunderchief pilot over North Vietnam on 21 January 1967. On that date, Colonel Conley was the Seventh Air Force's mission commander for a two-wing strike force launched against a heavily defended rail yard in the vicinity of Hanoi. Coolly evaluating the hostile force's defensive posture, he skillfully led the first flight through the concentrated flak barrages and picked his way past the deadly surface-to-air missiles. After visually acquiring the target, he scanned the area for the heaviest concentration of hostile fire upon which to unload his deadly weapons in order to minimize the threat to those he led. He attacked his target and then, with complete disregard for his personal safety, he circled the target area to incite the defenders to unleash their full defensive might against him, thereby permitting his followers to destroy the target. Observing a hostile missile site near the target, he marked it, ordered an attack against it, and then fearlessly circled back over the target area to seek out other hostile defenses...."

GORDER, JOHN A.

"Captain John A. Corder distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-4D Pilot in Southeast Asia on 8 February 1968. On that date, Captain Corder led two aircraft against one of the largest, most important, and most heavily defended airfields in North Vietnam. Despite inclement weather, Captain Corder descended to extremely low altitude for a visual high-speed run across the airfield. Although faced with a barrage of withering antiaircraft artillery fire which severely crippled his aircraft, Captain Corder resolutely and skillfully pressed his attack against the target, damaging and destroying several aircraft on the ground. Captain Corder was finally forced to eject over hostile territory. He successfully evaded hostile search parties and was subsequently rescued by a friendly helicopter. As a result of his actions, Captain Corder was successful in neutralizing a threat to Free World forces in Southeast Asia...."

DALLMAN, HOWARD M.

"Lieutenant Colonel Howard M. Dallman distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-130E Aircraft Commander in Southeast Asia on 5 February 1968. On that date, Colonel Dallman was flying a combat mission in support of friendly ground forces engaged in the defense of a beleaguered outpost. The mission was to fly 35,000 pounds of needed ammunition and a medical evacuation team from Da Nang to Khe Sanh, which was under siege. Immediately after landing at Khe Sanh, the aircraft was hit by a volley of armor piercing rounds which ignited the explosive cargo. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Colonel Dallman elected to back the aircraft to a safe area where an explosion would not endanger the defending ground forces. There he directed the orderly evacuation of the medical evacuation team from the stricken aircraft. He then proceeded to fight the fire, which had spread to the cargo department. Through his actions he not only saved lives and a valuable aircraft, but also prevented a large portion of the Khe Sanh airfield from being destroyed by an explosion...."

DONELSON, NICHOLAS J.

"Captain Nicholas J. Donelson distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 pilot over North Vietnam on 23 August 1967. On that date, Captain Donelson was the mission commander for a force of thirty-two aircraft attacking a heavily defended railyard in the vicinity of Hanoi. Repeated attacks against his force by hostile aircraft destroyed two friendly aircraft, and the intense barrage of anti-aircraft fire downed a third and severely damaged a fourth. In spite of this intense opposition, Captain Donelson, at great personal risk, led his force to the target and pressed the attack, inflicting severe damage to the railyard and destroying a large amount of rolling stock. Captain Donelson's firm leadership, timely decisions, and professional competence in the face of intense opposition resulted in the successful accomplishment of this extremely hazardous mission...."

DORSETT, TRACY K.

"Captain Tracy K. Dorsett distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-4D Aircraft Commander in Southeast Asia on 8 February 1968. On that date, Captain Dorsett led two aircraft against one of the largest, most important, and most heavily defended airfields in North Vietnam. Despite inclement weather, Captain Dorsett descended to extremely low altitude for a visual high-speed run across the airfield. Although faced with a barrage of withering antiaircraft artillery fire which severely crippled his aircraft, Captain Dorsett resolutely and skillfully pressed his attack against the target, damaging and destroying several aircraft on the ground. He was finally forced to eject over hostile territory. He successfully evaded hostile search parties and was subsequently rescued by a friendly helicopter. As a result of his actions, Captain Dorsett was successful in neutralizing a threat to Free World forces in Southeast Asia...."

DRAEGER, WALTER F., JR.\*

"Captain Walter F. Draeger, Jr., distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force on 4 April 1965. On that date, Captain Draeger volunteered to fly as a Fighter-Advisor with the Vietnamese Air Force into an area of known heavily concentrated antiaircraft artillery. He participated in a highly successful bombing mission of a vital Viet Cong target, contributing materially to its destruction. On the return flight from the primary target, Captain Draeger's flight leader was shot down by hostile ground fire. Captain Draeger immediately called for search and rescue assistance. Although completely alone and within range of the hostile ground fire, he orbited the area of his downed flight leader until the unarmed search and rescue aircraft arrived in the vicinity. Upon arrival in the area, over which Captain Draeger was flying protective cover, the unarmed rescue aircraft requested fire suppression assistance. Captain Draeger commenced a firing pass to allow the rescue aircraft to safely enter the area. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, he made the strafing run into the hostile fire. Ignoring the air bursts from shore batteries, Captain Draeger pressed his attack and, in so doing, sacrificed his own life...."

DRAMESI, JOHN A.

"Captain John A. Dramesi distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Dong Hoi, North Vietnam, on 2 April 1967. On that date, Captain Dramesi was the leader of a flight of F-105 aircraft scheduled to strike a suspected surface-to-air missile site and perform reconnaissance of a hostile highway. Although intelligence reports indicated the area contained a heavy concentration of 37 and 57MM flak positions, deadly antiaircraft guns, and possible missile fire, Captain Dramesi successfully executed his attack and placed all ordnance on target. He then began his low level reconnaissance of the highway. When only a few miles from the target, his aircraft was hit by an intense barrage of ground fire and immediately burst into flames, forcing him to eject into the hostile jungle. Immediately after ejecting from his aircraft, Captain Dramesi acted as a ground forward air controller, pointing out targets and safest approaches. Repeated rescue attempts were met with withering fire from the ground. As the ground and air battle raged on, he continued to request ordnance, giving corrections which brought each successive strike closer to his own position. The last correction he had given brought the ordnance within a few meters of his last known position and no further transmissions were received from him. By his selfless and heroic concern for the rescue crews in the air, and his continued request for close ordnance delivery, Captain Dramesi displayed outstanding courage and exemplified the highest traditions and standards of the American fighting man's code...."

EPPINGER, DALE L.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Dale L. Eppinger for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a UH-1P Helicopter Pilot near Duc Co, Republic of Vietnam, on 21 April 1969. On that date, Major Eppinger, against great odds, unhesitatingly descended his aircraft through intense ground fire to rescue a seven-man, long range reconnaissance patrol which was surrounded and in imminent danger of being overrun by a large hostile force. When his aircraft was shot down during the rescue attempt, Major Eppinger assumed immediate command of the ground defensive situation and, in a further display of courage and leadership, directed air strikes against the opposing forces until their attacks were thwarted, and all patrol members and aircrew men could be rescued...."

ETZEL, GREGORY A.M.

"Captain Gregory A.M. Etzel distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia as an HH-3E helicopter pilot on 2 and 3 July 1967. On the 2nd of July, Captain Etzel flew his helicopter into one of the most heavily defended areas of North Vietnam to rescue a downed F-105 pilot. Unable to effect a pickup because of oncoming darkness and intense small arms fire that damaged his aircraft, Captain Etzel withdrew from the area. After landing at a friendly base, he volunteered to continue rescue operations the next day. After minimum rest, he took off at first light and flew through intense automatic fire, dodged deadly missiles, and evaded attacking MIGs in search of the downed pilot. In the face of heavy small arms fire that severely damaged his helicopter, he located and rescued this valuable pilot...."

FEUERRIEGEL, KARL T.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Lieutenant Colonel Karl T. Feuerriegel for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller at Nha Trang, Republic of Vietnam, on 30 January 1968. On that date, in conjunction with the Tet Offensive, a large, well-equipped hostile force entered the city, intent on overrunning military installations and releasing a large contingent of hostile captives from the local prison. The hostiles' entrenched positions prevented reinforcements from reaching the battle areas where friendly forces were in dire need of support. Colonel Feuerriegel, despite great personal risk from heavy automatic weapons fire, repeatedly attacked hostile positions in an O-2 aircraft armed with high explosive rockets. He systematically silenced three machine gun positions and neutralized two fortified hostile companies, thereby preventing the annihilation of beleaguered friendly units...."

FINCK, GEORGE C.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major George C. Finck for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-7A Aircraft Commander near Duc Lap, Republic of Vietnam, on 24 August 1968. On that date, Major Finck flew the first night combat airdrop ever flown in a C-7A through a hostile environment of heavy antiaircraft and automatic weapons fire in which five other aircraft had been shot down while attempting to resupply the camp. Despite intense ground fire and battle damage to his aircraft, Major Finck made a second pass over the embattled camp to deliver sufficient ammunition, medical supplies, and water to the beleaguered defenders who would have been overrun without this vital resupply...."

FIRSE, JOHN A.

"Captain John A. Firse distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a Helicopter Rescue Crew Commander over North Vietnam on 11 June 1967. On that date, Captain Firse flew deep into hostile territory to rescue two downed American pilots. After rescuing one survivor from the dense jungle, he hovered over the second, with intense and accurate ground fire tearing into his unarmed aircraft and causing extensive damage. Despite continuing fire, Captain Firse persevered in the recovery effort until the second survivor was safely aboard. Although three of his tires were blown and the hull was extensively damaged from hostile fire, Captain Firse skillfully recovered at a forward operating base...."

FISH, MICHAEL E.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Section 8742, Title 10, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Sergeant Michael E. Fish for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-43B helicopter Pararescue Specialist during a rescue operation near Tuy Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, on 18 and 19 February 1969. During this period, with complete disregard for his personal safety, he was voluntarily lowered through intense hostile ground fire to treat and rescue four seriously injured Army UH-1 helicopter crew members, whose helicopter had been downed by hostile fire in a remote, mountainous, densely-jungled canyon. He elected to remain on the ground overnight, fully realizing that he faced attacks by the hostile forces which completely surrounded him, and for more than fifteen hours, he treated and cared for the pilot, who was trapped inside the wreckage, until he could be freed...."

FLEENER, DELBERT W.

"Captain Delbert W. Fleener distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near the District of Binh Duong, Republic of Vietnam, on 17 December 1965. On that date, Captain Fleener was diverted from his original target to search for a pilot who had been shot down over hostile held territory. With complete disregard for his personal safety, and though exposed to an intensive barrage of small arms, automatic weapons and antiaircraft fire, Captain Fleener continuously flew his aircraft at an extremely low altitude over the hostile positions in an effort to locate the downed pilot. The wreckage was sighted and almost entirely hidden by hostile forces attempting to camouflage the plane. With only four rockets, Captain Fleener made repeated low passes over the wreckage, firing one rocket on each pass. This daring and aggressive attack by Captain Fleener caused the hostile forces to disperse temporarily and denied them access to secret material and valuable radio equipment. After expending his ordnance, he landed his badly damaged aircraft on a nearby airstrip to refuel and rearm his aircraft. After returning to the area, he provided air cover for a helicopter crew which was attempting to discover the fate of the downed pilot. Although wounded in his right leg and in great pain, Captain Fleener continuously provided protection for the helicopter for over thirty minutes before being ordered to leave the area. While fighting off loss of consciousness, Captain Fleener successfully flew his crippled aircraft into a remote airstrip and landed without further incident...."

GIBSON, JAMES K.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major James K. Gibson for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller in Southeast Asia on 2 February 1968. On that date, Major Gibson flew his unarmed aircraft against hostile forces which had attacked a friendly location. Despite intense automatic and antiaircraft weapons fire which damaged his aircraft and wounded him, Major Gibson, with undaunted determination and courage, repeatedly brought confusion and disorder to the hostiles by diving his small aircraft at their positions and firing his individual weapon, thereby driving them out into the open where they came under the effective fire of friendly forces. His control and direction of fighter aircraft resulted in the defeat of the hostile forces and saved innumerable friendly lives...."

GILROY, KEVIN A.

"Captain Kevin A. Gilroy distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism as Electronics Warfare Officer of an F-105 aircraft engaged in a pre-strike, missile suppression mission in North Vietnam on 10 March 1967. On that date, Captain Gilroy guided his pilot in attacking and destroying a surface-to-air missile installation protecting one of the most important industrial complexes in North Vietnam. He accomplished this feat even after formidable hostile defenses had destroyed the lead aircraft and had crippled a second. Though his own aircraft suffered extensive battle damage and was under constant attack by MIG interceptors, antiaircraft artillery, automatic weapons, and small arms fire, Captain Gilroy aligned several ingenious close range attacks on the hostile defenses at great risk to his own life. Due to his technical skill, the attacks were successful and the strike force was able to bomb the target without loss...."

GONZALES, LEONARD A.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Leonard A. Gonzales for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as Aircraft Commander of a UH-1F gunship helicopter near Duc Co, Republic of Vietnam, on 26 November 1968. On that date, Major Gonzales went to the aid of a six-man Special Forces Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol that was in danger of being overrun by a large, well-armed hostile force. Major Gonzales made continued minigun and rocket passes at treetop level, even after his wingman had been hit. His aggressive attacks sufficiently quelled the hostile fire to allow a transport helicopter to pick up the beleaguered patrol...."

GREEN, JOE B.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Joe B. Green for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E Rescue Crew Commander near the A Shau Valley, Republic of Vietnam, on 30 March 1968. On that date, Major Green led a force of four rescue helicopters over hostile territory in low overcast weather to reach the survivors from four downed United States helicopters. Intelligence briefings had disclosed that it was impossible to neutralize the hostile gun emplacements at the rescue site. Despite the knowledge that two additional helicopters were shot down while he was approaching the area Major Green elected to make the initial rescue attempt. He persisted in the rescue attempt after hostile fire forced him away from the site. He made two additional approaches, courageously maintaining the aircraft in a stationary hover until the four most severely wounded survivors were rescued. Only then did fuel shortage, aircraft malfunctions, and the critical nature of the survivors' wounds compel him to leave the area...."

GRIGGS, JERRY M.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Jerry M. Griggs for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as Rescue Crew Commander of an HH-3E helicopter in Southeast Asia on 30 March 1968. On that date, Major Griggs flew over hostile territory in low overcast weather to reach the survivors from six American helicopters which had been shot down by hostile fire. After his aircraft received substantial battle damage from intense opposing ground fire, Major Griggs, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill, persisted in the rescue attempt until he rescued four survivors, although he sustained further battle damage from the intense hostile fire...."

GRUVER, JOHN C.

"Captain John C. Gruver distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as aircraft commander of a UH-1F helicopter near Dak To, Republic of Vietnam, on 21 March 1967. On that date, Captain Gruver flew in support of friendly ground forces who were partially encircled in a bomb crater and unable to take evasive action because of their wounded members. He initially hovered in the hostile field of fire to suppress flames threatening a downed Army helicopter and then returned to evacuate the wounded. With the ground party freed to withdraw, Captain Gruver remained in the area to fly repeated fire suppressing passes in support of their movement. His determination and aggressive airmanship in the face of hostile resistance saved an aircraft from destruction and a highly trained team of American fighting men from capture or death...."

GUSTAFSON, GERALD C.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Gerald C. Gustafson for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 Aircraft Commander over North Vietnam on 19 November 1967. On that date, Major Gustafson's aircraft was severely damaged by a surface-to-air missile while he was assisting another pilot who had received battle damage and had been wounded. Major Gustafson refused to leave his comrade until other escort aircraft could be vectored in to give the wounded pilot assistance in reaching his home base safely. Only then, did Major Gustafson egress to a safer area where he was forced to eject from his own stricken aircraft...."

HACKNEY, DUANE D.

"Airman Second Class Duane D. Hackney distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a Paramedic on an unarmed HH-3E rescue helicopter near Mu Gia Pass, North Vietnam, on 6 February 1967. On that date, Airman Hackney flew two sorties in a rescue effort of an American pilot downed in a heavily defended hostile area. On the first sortie, despite the presence of armed forces known to be hostile, entrenched in the vicinity, Airman Hackney volunteered to be lowered into the jungle to search for the survivor. He searched until the controlling Search and Rescue agency ordered an evacuation of the rescue forces. On the second sortie, Airman Hackney located the downed pilot, who was hoisted into the helicopter. As the rescue crew departed the area, intense and accurate 37MM flak tore into the helicopter amidship, causing extensive damage and a raging fire aboard the craft. With complete disregard for his own safety, Airman Hackney fitted his parachute to the rescued man. In this moment of impending disaster, Airman Hackney chose to place his responsibility to the survivor above his own life. The courageous paramedic located another parachute for himself and had just slipped his arms through the harness when a second 37MM round struck the crippled aircraft, sending it out of control. The force of the explosion blew Airman Hackney through the open cargo door and, though stunned, he managed to deploy the unbuckled parachute and make a successful landing. He was later recovered by a companion helicopter...."

HACKNEY, HUNTER F.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Hunter F. Hackney for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-7A Aircraft Commander near Duc Lap, Republic of Vietnam, on 25 August 1968. On that date, Major Hackney flew two drop passes delivering vitally needed ammunition through vicious concentrations of antiaircraft and automatic weapons fire in which his aircraft sustained severe battle damage, disabling it and causing him to recover at a forward base. Realizing that the defenders of Duc Lap could not survive through the night without resupply of small arms ammunition, Major Hackney obtained a new aircraft and volunteered to reenter this hostile environment in which five other aircraft had perished. With tenacious courage, he delivered his cargo, again sustaining heavy battle damage...."

HALL, JAMES H.

"First Lieutenant James H. Hall distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-4D Pilot in Southeast Asia on 8 February 1968. On that date, Lieutenant Hall led two aircraft against one of the largest, most important, and most heavily defended airfields in North Vietnam. Despite inclement weather, Lieutenant Hall descended to extremely low altitude for a visual high-speed run across the airfield. Although faced with a barrage of withering anti-aircraft artillery fire, Lieutenant Hall resolutely and skillfully pressed his attack against the target, damaging and destroying several aircraft on the ground. When the lead crew was finally forced to eject over hostile territory, Lieutenant Hall remained as top cover and directed the rescue effort, which expeditiously recovered the two downed airmen. As a result of his actions, Lieutenant Hall was successful in neutralizing a threat to Free World forces in Southeast Asia...."

HENNING, HAL P.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Hal P. Henning for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 Pilot in Southeast Asia on 27 October 1967. On that date, Captain Henning was the leader of a force of twenty F-105 Thunderchiefs assigned to attack an extremely vital military storage area in the vicinity of Hanoi, Vietnam. En route to the target, his aircraft was extensively damaged by shrapnel from a surface-to-air missile. Without hesitation and with complete disregard for his own safety, Captain Henning continued on to the assigned target with his crippled aircraft. Diving through intense anti-aircraft fire, delivering his bombs precisely on target, he was successful in heavily damaging the storage complex...."

HICKMAN, VINCENT J.\*

"Captain Vincent J. Hickman distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an Advisor-Navigator of a B-26B aircraft on 14 January 1964. On that date, Captain Hickman voluntarily exposed himself during low level flights over hidden Viet Cong machine gun installations. Despite heavy machine gun fire, which repeatedly struck the aircraft, Captain Hickman aggressively continued his efforts to locate and destroy machine gun installations until the badly damaged aircraft crashed and burned...."

HOGGATT, RALPH S.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Lieutenant Colonel Ralph S. Hoggatt for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an A-1E Skyraider pilot in Southeast Asia on 11 November 1967. On that date, Colonel Hoggatt led a search and rescue force over a heavily defended troop concentration and supply area on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in an effort to rescue a downed pilot. Despite intense and accurate hostile fire which destroyed his wingman's aircraft and crippled his own, Colonel Hoggatt, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill, remained in this hostile area alone and unaided, to provide the fire support and cover necessary to permit the recovery of his wingman from hostile territory in the face of anti-aircraft artillery. Disregarding his personal safety and his heavily damaged aircraft, he remained in the area for nearly two hours after the recovery of his wingman in order to direct follow-on rescue forces to the scene...."

HOPKINS, JAMES R.

"Lt. Colonel James R. Hopkins distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism while participating in aerial flight against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia on 29 June 1966. On that date, Colonel Hopkins was mission commander of a large strike force of F-105 Thunderchiefs tasked with destroying a large petroleum, oil, and lubricant storage area at Hanoi, North Vietnam. Despite adverse weather and the most intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire ever encountered over North Vietnam, including deadly surface-to-air missiles, he led his force in totally destroying this vital military target...."

HORINEK, RAMON A.

"Captain Ramon A. Horinek distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller with friendly forces in Southeast Asia from 16 February 1966 to 19 February 1966. During this period, Captain Horinek repeatedly exposed himself to hostile fire in directing combat air support missions to destroy the unfriendly forces. He destroyed one entrenched position and took an important prisoner. Captain Horinek was under constant hostile small arms fire, automatic weapons fire, and mortar fire for a period of three days. His calm and professional manner of operating was an important stabilizing factor in preventing panic among the friendly forces...."

HUNT, RUSSELL M.

"Sergeant Russell M. Hunt distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a mechanic on a UH-1F helicopter in Southeast Asia on 31 March 1967. On that date, Sergeant Hunt's aircraft was shot down while participating in the evacuation of a beleaguered party of American and Allied ground forces. Despite painful injuries and continuous hostile fire, Sergeant Hunt rendered aid to increasing numbers of wounded personnel. When hostile actions forced a movement of the ground party, Sergeant Hunt assisted in carrying his mortally wounded aircraft commander in an exhausting trek to a designated landing zone. In the landing area, Sergeant Hunt again exposed himself to the hostile field of fire to give manual landing directions to the recovery helicopters, refusing evacuation until all seriously wounded personnel had been airlifted from the scene...."

JEANOTTE, ALFRED J. JR.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Lieutenant Colonel Alfred J. Jeanotte, Jr., for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-123 aircraft commander in Southeast Asia on 12 May 1968. On that date, Colonel Jeanotte and his crew landed at Kham Duc to evacuate the last United States personnel prior to abandoning the airfield to hostile forces. In spite of heavy hostile small arms, mortar, and artillery fire, and the fact that the airstrip was essentially under hostile forces control, Colonel Jeanotte and his crew landed and located these personnel. Although unable to complete the pickup due to the location of these personnel and his inadequate fuel supply, Colonel Jeanotte was able to direct a follow-on aircraft to a pickup point which allowed a successful evacuation...."

KENNEDY, LELAND T.

"Captain Leland T. Kennedy distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia on 5 October 1966. On that date, Captain Kennedy, flying as pilot of an unarmed HH-3E rescue helicopter, proceeded deep into hostile territory in attempt to rescue two downed American pilots. Disregarding his own safety, he voluntarily flew through heavy automatic weapons and intense small arms fire to reach the injured airmen. Captain Kennedy succeeded in rescuing one of the downed Americans; however, heavy ground fire forced him from the area before he could reach the other one...."

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(First Oak Leaf Cluster)

"Captain Leland T. Kennedy distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E Helicopter Pilot in Southeast Asia on 20 October 1966. On that date, Captain Kennedy successfully recovered six downed American airmen. Despite the intense, accurately directed, hostile fire which damaged his own unarmed rescue helicopter, Captain Kennedy, with indomitable courage and professional skill, chose to land next to a disabled companion helicopter and retrieve the crew, plus a previously rescued wounded F-4C pilot. With undaunted determination, Captain Kennedy, then amid hostile fire, sought and successfully recovered the second downed F-4C pilot...."

KENT, NACEY JR.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Sergeant Nacey Kent, Jr., for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an AC-47 Flight Engineer near Pleiku, Republic of Vietnam on 5 May 1968. On that date, Sergeant Kent and the AC-47 crew were defending Pleiku Air Base against a hostile mortar and rocket attack when their aircraft was critically damaged by a hostile projectile. Although Sergeant Kent's leg was broken in the ensuing crash, he helped the enlisted crew to evacuate, reentered the burning aircraft to carry the seriously wounded navigator to safety, and then entered the aircraft again to aid the other crew members and to fight the fire...."

KOELTZOW, PAUL F.

"Major Paul F. Koeltzow distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 pilot in Southeast Asia on 12 August 1967. On that date, Major Koeltzow led his force of twenty aircraft against the most heavily defended target complex in North Vietnam. Hampered by marginal weather, mechanical failures, and heavy and accurate hostile fire, Major Koeltzow led his force to the target, and although his aircraft was damaged by flak at the start of his bomb run, he overcame tremendous obstacles and continued his attack, destroying the target. Despite extensive damage to his aircraft, he engaged a flight of hostile aircraft and thwarted their impending attack on a crippled F-105...."

LIELMANIS, ATIS K.\*

"1st Lieutenant Atis K. Lielmanis distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an Advisor-Navigator of a B-26B aircraft on 24 November 1963. On that date, Lieutenant Lielmanis voluntarily exposed himself during a low level flight over hidden Viet Cong machine gun installations. Their fire badly damaged the aircraft, and it crashed, but this revealed the Viet Cong positions and resulted in their destruction by cover aircraft...."

LUKASIK, BERNARD F.\*

"Captain Bernard F. Lukasik distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an Advisor-Pilot of a T-28 aircraft on 18 February 1964. On that date, Captain Lukasik provided airpower against advancing Viet Cong guerrillas who were intent on capturing a Vietnamese airman who had bailed out of his burning aircraft. Despite the danger of hostile gun fire, Captain Lukasik continuously flew his aircraft at extremely low level and remained in the area until he was satisfied that the safety of the downed airman was assured...."

MADDEN, JOSEPH B.

"Major Joseph B. Madden distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller at Dak To, from 7 November 1967 to 11 November 1967. On these dates, Major Madden flew his unarmed C-1 Birdog aircraft in support of friendly forces engaged in defense of their beleaguered fire support base. Despite intense, accurately directed hostile fire which damaged his aircraft, Major Madden, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and superior professional skill controlled over one-hundred close air support sorties that resulted in the neutralization of a hostile battalion...."

MAISEY, REGINALD V. JR.\*

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Reginald V. Maisey, Jr., for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force, as a Security Police Officer in Southeast Asia on 31 January 1968. On that date, an intense night rocket and ground attack was launched by massed hostile forces against Bien Hoa Air Base. With the brunt of the ground penetration concentrated at a key bunker position on the east end of the installation, Captain Maisey drove from the west end of the runway to the beleaguered bunker and directed the actions of his men in defending the position. Captain Maisey exhibited an unrelenting stamina that rallied his men in countering the hostile assault. He persisted in his gallant campaign against the attacking force until an exploding rocket took his life. His supreme courage and undaunted leadership inspired his men to hold the position, thus thwarting the westward progress of the infiltrators across the installation and saving untold numbers of lives and millions of dollars worth of aircraft and other materiel...."

MARTIN, DUANE W.\*

"1st Lieutenant Duane W. Martin distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as Pilot of an HH-43B helicopter over North Vietnam on 20 September 1965. On that date, Lieutenant Martin participated in an extremely hazardous attempted recovery of a downed pilot. The mission required a flight of over 80 miles, mostly over hostile controlled territory. Evaluation of the environment in which the downed pilot was located indicated that maximum performance would be demanded from each crew member if successful recovery was to be effected. Without hesitation and complete disregard for his own safety, and though exposed to intensive hostile ground fire, Lieutenant Martin performed with courage and professional precision in a supreme effort to rescue a fallen comrade. Lieutenant Martin's courageous action and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the American fighting man under attack by an opposing armed force...."

MARTIN, WILLIAM R.\*

"Captain William R. Martin distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force on 18 November 1964. On that date, Captain Martin was leading a flight of two F-100 aircraft escorting an unarmed RF-101 aircraft on a mission of major importance. As they approached the mission area, a heavy barrage of hostile ground fire was directed at the unarmed aircraft. With complete disregard for his own safety, Captain Martin reacted immediately and repeatedly flew his aircraft at extremely low altitudes over the gun emplacements to divert hostile fire. His aggressiveness and determination in pressing his attack allowed the RF-101 aircraft to withdraw safely. On his third overflight of the hostile positions, the full force of their gun emplacements was directed at his aircraft, resulting in the sacrifice of his life. Captain Martin's courage and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the American fighting man under attack by an opposing armed force...."

MARX, DONALD L.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Donald L. Marx for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller near Dak To, Republic of Vietnam, on 12 November 1968. On that date, Captain Marx was flying in an unarmed observation aircraft and was responsible for the safe evacuation of friendly forces under extremely heavy hostile fire. He repeatedly exposed himself to intense antiaircraft fire while locating hostile gun positions directed at the beleaguered force. He voluntarily made repeated passes into the hostile environment to divert fire from the friendly forces and other support aircraft, thereby saving the lives of many friendly soldiers...."

MASON, LARRY B.

"Captain Larry B. Mason distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as aircraft commander of a B-57 tactical jet bomber on 15 March 1966. On that date, while attacking a heavily defended target, Captain Mason's aircraft was hit repeatedly by 57MM and 37MM shells which set fire to the right engine and created extreme vibration in the left engine. One shell exploded in the rear cockpit, wounding the navigator and severing a section of wiring which deprived the crew of most electrical power. Wind, blasting through a large hole in the fuselage, scattered dirt and debris around the cockpit temporarily blinding Captain Mason. As he regained his sight, he realized that a safe bailout could not be affected because of the wounded navigator's condition. With one engine shut down and the other on fire, and with approximately 30 square feet of surface missing from the right wing, Captain Mason, with complete disregard for his own personal safety, attempted the return flight to his home base. Flight conditions were further hampered by inoperative radios, no hydraulic pressure or oxygen, severe airplane vibration.... Through outstanding airmanship he piloted the crippled aircraft to a safe landing...."

MAYSEY, LARRY W.\*

"Sergeant Larry W. Maysey distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E Rescue Specialist in Southeast Asia on 9 November 1967. On that date, Sergeant Maysey attempted the night extraction of a ground reconnaissance team after his helicopter had been severely damaged. Two other helicopters had been shot down and a third extensively damaged in previous attempts. During the rescue attempt, Sergeant Maysey unhesitatingly exposed himself to the hail of hostile fire to assist wounded survivors into the helicopter. The hostile forces closed in quickly, and as the damaged helicopter departed, it was shot down...."

MAYWALD, PHILLIP V.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Phillip V. Maywald for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an O-2A pilot in Southeast Asia on 21 May 1968. On that date, Captain Maywald braved an intense and deadly barrage of hostile gunfire for over two hours while he controlled the successful rescue of a fellow pilot who had been downed by antiaircraft fire deep within hostile territory. Despite the great personal risk involved to his own life, Captain Maywald, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill, repeatedly made low passes over the rescue scene in his light unarmored observation aircraft. At times, he flew within fifty feet of the hostile forces to determine their positions and to deliberately draw their fire on his aircraft. Due to his courage, persistence, and professional skill the downed pilot was safely recovered...."

MEHR, RICHARD L.

"Major Richard L. Mehr distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia as an A-1E pilot on 2 and 3 July 1967. On the 2nd of July, Major Mehr flew through intense hostile fire to provide cover for an F-105 pilot downed in a heavily defended area of North Vietnam. With the onset of darkness and diminishing fuel, Major Mehr returned to base for minimum rest. He volunteered to continue rescue operations that were set up for the next day and took off at first light. Amidst MIG fighters, deadly missiles, antiaircraft fire, and hostile small arms fire, he located the downed pilot. Braving this deadly arsenal that damaged his aircraft, he continued to direct air strikes against the hostile positions and thereby protected the downed pilot and permitted a helicopter to rescue the pilot from the area...."

MITCHELL, CARL B.\*

"Major Carl B. Mitchell distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an Advisor-Pilot of a B-26B aircraft on 14 January 1964. On that date, Major Mitchell voluntarily exposed himself and his aircraft during low level flights over hidden Viet Cong machine gun installations. Despite heavy machine gun fire, which repeatedly struck his aircraft, Major Mitchell aggressively continued his efforts to locate and destroy the machine gun installations until his badly damaged aircraft crashed and burned...."

MONGILLO, PAUL J.\*

"Major Paul J. Mongillo distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 Thunderchief Electronics Warfare Officer against an isolated vital military target near Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 16 December 1967. On that date, Major Mongillo braved many concentrations of heavy antiaircraft artillery fire and eighteen surface-to-air missiles as he successfully led his missile suppression flight in diverting the hostile defenses away from the main strike force. He contributed to the destruction of one missile site only three miles from the center of the heavily defended target area and damaged at least one other missile complex. As a result of his actions, the main strike force suffered no losses, encountered only four missiles, and successfully destroyed this vital military target...."

McALLISTER, WILLIAM W.\*

"Major William W. McAllister distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force over the Republic of Vietnam on 9 and 10 March 1965. On these dates, acting as a forward air controller under extremely adverse weather conditions and at night, he directed numerous air strikes in support of the Vietnamese Marines and their three American advisors. With complete disregard for his own safety, Major McAllister sought out targets ahead of the advancing Marines while under prolonged periods of hostile ground fire at dangerously low altitudes. Through his personal efforts, two American casualties were evacuated and the entire Marine unit effectively assisted in obtaining and securing their objectives. He also flew under extremely hazardous conditions under a low ceiling at night in mountainous terrain in an effort to assist friendly positions...."

McINERNEY, JAMES E., JR.

"Lieutenant Colonel James E. McInerney, Jr., distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as leader of a flak suppression flight near Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 11 August 1967. On that date, Colonel McInerney suppressed six active surface-to-air missile sites defending a strategic highway and railroad bridge. Despite concentrated barrages of antiaircraft fire and three missiles directed against his flight, Colonel McInerney displayed the highest degree of courageous leadership in destroying two missile sites and forcing the other four into sporadic operation. As a direct result of his actions, the strike force suffered no losses and imposed extensive damage to this vital target...."

McTASNEY, JOHN B.

"Captain John B. McTasney distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as Rescue Crew Commander of an HH-3E helicopter in Southeast Asia on 8 November 1967. On that date, after two helicopters had been shot down in rescue attempts, Captain McTasney attempted a night recovery of surrounded ground forces. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Captain McTasney established a hover on a steep slope while under intense hostile fire. He maintained this position and picked up three survivors before hostile fire severely damaged his helicopter, making it imperative that he depart the area. Captain McTasney, demonstrating a high degree of professional skill, proceeded to a forward base and landed safely despite the loss of one engine during descent...."

NAGEL, RICHARD A., JR.

"Captain Richard A. Nagel, Jr. distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-123 pilot at Dau Tieng, Republic of Vietnam, on 26 November 1966. On that date, Captain Nagel's aircraft was struck by intense, accurately directed hostile fire which caused an uncontrollable fire in the cargo compartment, rendered the flap system inoperative, and partially disabled the landing gear mechanism. Although blinded by smoke and on the verge of collapse from intense heat and fumes, Captain Nagel remained undaunted. As the fire engulfed the cargo compartment, passengers began to crowd the cockpit of the aircraft hampering his ability to maneuver the aircraft. Demonstrating superb airmanship and a profound regard for his fellow man, Captain Nagel continued to fly the crippled aircraft and executed a crash landing...."

NEWMAN, THOMAS A.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Sergeant Thomas A. Newman for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an HH-3E Helicopter Pararescue Specialist in Southeast Asia, on 30 May 1968. On that date, Sergeant Newman voluntarily descended into a hostile jungle environment to rescue a downed Air Force pilot. With complete disregard for his own life, and hampered by darkness and concentrated automatic weapons fire, he requested the rescue helicopter above him to enter a nearby orbit, both for the safety of the crewmembers, and to prevent the hovering aircraft from establishing the survivor's location for the unfriendly ground forces. When the rescue helicopter returned, he secured the injured airman to the forest penetrator and protected him with his own body as they ascended to the helicopter...."

NORRIS, WILLIAM C.

"Lieutenant Colonel William C. Norris distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force over North Vietnam on 12 August 1967. On that date, Colonel Norris led a strike force of twenty F-105 aircraft against a key installation in the North Vietnamese supply line. Skillfully evading surface-to-air missile launches, he positioned his force for the bomb run. Four MIG-17's engaged his flight from the rear. Colonel Norris turned toward the MIG's, drew them away from his attack force, eluded them, and returned to successfully attack the target...."

OLDS, ROBIN

"Colonel Robin Olds distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia as strike mission commander on 11 August 1967. On that date, Colonel Olds led his strike force of eight F-4C aircraft against a key railroad and highway bridge in North Vietnam. Despite intense, accurately directed fire, multiple surface-to-air missile attacks on his force, and continuous harassment by MIG fighters defending the target, Colonel Olds, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill, led his force through to help destroy this significant bridge. As a result the flow of war materials into this area was appreciably reduced...."

OLSEN, DON P.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Don P. Olsen for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as Rescue Crew Commander of an HH-3E helicopter in Southeast Asia on 5 October 1968. On that date, Major Olsen volunteered to attempt the extremely hazardous extraction of a Special Forces Team after their insertion helicopter had been shot down and the team surrounded by hostile forces. Despite low cloud cover which prevented the use of fighter escort, Major Olsen, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage and professional skill, penetrated the hostile area and established a hover adjacent to the burning aircraft. In the face of hostile fire, Major Olsen held a prolonged hover and effected the rescue of the two crash survivors and the six surviving team members...."

O'MARA, OLIVER E.

"Captain Oliver E. O'Mara distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force on 5 October 1966. On that date, Captain O'Mara, flying an HH-3E rescue helicopter as Rescue Commander, voluntarily flew into a known area of intense hostile activity in an effort to rescue a downed American pilot. While under intense small arms and heavy automatic weapons fire, during which his rescue aircraft received numerous hits, he made repeated attempts to reach the downed airman. Only after his aircraft received extensive damage which rendered it incapable of rescue operations, did he withdraw from the area; however, he then directed another helicopter to the site for a successful pickup...."

PARR, RALPH S.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Colonel Ralph S. Parr for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-4C Aircraft Commander near Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, on 16 March 1968. On that date, Colonel Parr participated in a flight providing cover for cargo aircraft. Upon arrival over the target, the forward air controller advised the flight that the airfield was under heavy attack by hostile mortar positions, which were located a few feet below a ridge line. Although the target area was covered with dense smoke and haze, Colonel Parr successfully destroyed one mortar position on his first pass, as six well-camouflaged heavy automatic weapons opened fire on him. Although sustaining severe damage to his aircraft, he pressed his second attack and destroyed another mortar position. Again, completely disregarding his personal safety and the withering hostile gun fire, Colonel Parr succeeded in destroying a heavy caliber automatic weapons position. In between his own passes, his accurate and timely directions to his wingman effectively insured the accuracy of ordnance delivery in close proximity to the friendly forces. Only after delivering all of his ordnance at point-blank range in eight consecutive passes did Colonel Parr terminate his attack. By destroying these strategically located weapons, he not only impaired the hostile force's capability to impede the resupply of Khe Sanh, but also reduced further losses to friendly cargo aircraft and crews...."

PITSENBARGER, WILLIAM C.\*

"A1C William H. Pitsenbarger distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam on 11 April 1966. On that date, Airman Pitsenbarger was a rescue and survival specialist aboard a helicopter engaged in the evacuation of American casualties in a dense jungle. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Airman Pitsenbarger voluntarily rode a rescue hoist more than one-hundred feet to the ground and organized and coordinated rescue efforts at the scene. During the rescue operation, he cared for and prepared the casualties for evacuation, and insured that the recovery operation continued in a smooth and orderly fashion. Following the recovery of the ninth casualty, the rescue aircraft hovering overhead was damaged and disabled by automatic weapon fire. The helicopter was forced to abandon recovery efforts to make an emergency landing at a nearby airstrip. Airman Pitsenbarger volunteered to remain on the ground and administer medical treatment to the wounded. Shortly after rescue efforts were interrupted, the area came under heavy sniper and mortar fire. Airman Pitsenbarger repeatedly exposed himself to intensive automatic fire while gathering rifles and ammunition from fallen comrades which he passed among the defenders. His bravery and determination in the face of overwhelming odds are in keeping with the highest standards of performance and traditions of the American fighting man under attack...."

PRICE, DONALD S.

"Captain Donald S. Price distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as Navigator aboard an HU-16B aircraft, in the Gulf of Tonkin, offshore of North Vietnam, on 14 March 1966. On that date, Captain Price participated in a successful rescue of the downed crew of an F-4C aircraft, in hostile waters. As they approached the area, the downed crew members were sighted. A determination was made that an open sea landing would be necessary to effect a successful rescue. At this time, a force of approximately 25 motorized sampans were observed heading toward the downed pilots. After a full stall landing was made and while they were maneuvering toward the nearest survivor, a heavy barrage of hostile gun fire was directed at the aircraft from the nearby sampans. Moments later, the aircraft was struck, exploded, and was almost immediately engulfed in flames. As the heat from the fire became intense, the crew was forced to abandon the aircraft. As Captain Price jumped into the water, he encountered the F-4C pilot who had discarded both his life raft and life jacket and was struggling to remain afloat. Captain Price towed the pilot on his back away from the burning aircraft and continued to render assistance while awaiting rescue. Several minutes later, helicopters arrived on the scene and Captain Price, although in great pain from multiple wounds received in the explosion, remained in the water to complete his mission of rescuing the downed F-4C pilot. He assisted the pilot into a sling and the helicopter departed. Captain Price was now the sole survivor in the water and artillery shells began to fall around him, preventing rescue by another helicopter. As he struggled into a nearby raft, the sampans began converging on him forcing him to re-enter the water and swim seaward. At this time, two F-4c aircraft and a helicopter...effected a successful rescue...."

RICHTER, KARL W.\*

"First Lieutenant Karl W. Richter distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism as the leader of a flight of F-105s on a mission over North Vietnam on 20 April 1967. The target, a very important railroad facility, was defended by several hundred antiaircraft artillery emplacements and SA-2 missiles. Lieutenant Richter's mission was to destroy or limit fire from these defenses immediately before a strike on this facility by fighter bombers. Arriving over the approach to the target, he found clouds obscuring navigational references and increasing the danger from unobserved SAM launches. Despite weather conditions, Lieutenant Richter, with great professional skill and undaunted determination, led his flight through a barrage of missiles to the target. Braving the heavy concentrated fire of the antiaircraft artillery, he positioned his flight and attacked the defenses, causing heavy damage. As a result of his efforts, the fighter bombers of the main strike force encountered only limited defensive fire and destroyed this vital railroad facility...."

ROBINSON, WILLIAM P.

"Major William P. Robinson distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 5 July 1966. On that date, Major Robinson, piloting a specially equipped F-105 Thunderchief, led a flight against hostile SA-2 surface-to-air missile sites which threatened other strike aircraft tasked to destroy a high priority target. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Major Robinson responded professionally in the face of continuous heavy and intense ground fire of all types and attacked four separate missile complexes. Three of the four sites were completely destroyed, and the remaining site sustained extensive damage. This courageous and aggressive action considerably reduced the missile threat against the other strike force...."

RONCA, ROBERT F.\*

"Major Robert F. Ronca distinguished himself while engaged in military operations involving an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia on 19 February 1965. On that date, Major Ronca led an air strike on an objective of extreme importance. After aggressively attacking the target on the first pass, Major Ronca's aircraft was severely damaged by the intense ground fire. Realizing the importance of totally destroying his objective, Major Ronca, with complete disregard for his own safety, reassured his flight that he could continue the mission and did aggressively lead a second attack. Although his aircraft was critically damaged, a determined attack was successfully completed resulting in heavy damages to the opposing forces before his crippled aircraft crashed into the target area...."

ROWAN, JOHN M.

"Major John M. Rowan distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force on 19 March 1967. On that date, Major Rowan made United States Air Force history by successfully leading a flight of three F-105 Thunderchiefs on an unprecedented and daring low-level, high-speed attack on a vital thermal power plant, deep in North Vietnam. This tactic of weapons delivery was an original concept formulated and submitted by Major Rowan to higher headquarters. Despite extremely hazardous flying conditions consisting of extremely low clouds and poor visibility, an intense barrage of antiaircraft artillery fire over the target, and a near miss by an SA-2 surface-to-air missile, Major Rowan heroically led his flight through rugged mountainous terrain to accomplish this highly significant mission...."

SCHURR, HARRY W.

"Lieutenant Colonel Harry W. Schurr distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as commander of a strike force of twenty F-105 Thunderchiefs against a heavily defended target in North Vietnam on 11 August 1967. On that date, though intense, accurately directed hostile fire had damaged his aircraft prior to reaching the target, Colonel Schurr, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill, led the strike in a devastating attack against a key railroad and highway bridge. One span was destroyed and others heavily damaged. As a result, the flow of war materials into this area was appreciably reduced...."

SELLERS, JERRY A.\*

"Major Jerry A. Sellers distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller near Con Thien, Republic of Vietnam, on 25 December 1967. On that date, Major Sellers, while flying a night reconnaissance mission, received a call for assistance from a United States ground patrol. This patrol had been attacked by a superior hostile force and was in imminent danger of being overrun. Weather and terrain conditions made target acquisition virtually impossible. Major Sellers elected to turn on his lights to locate the target and his aircraft was immediately bracketed by antiaircraft fire. He then attempted to direct an AC-47 gunship to the area from which fire had been received but the pilot could not see the target. Without hesitation and with complete disregard for his own safety, Major Sellers illuminated the target with his landing lights and directed accurate fire into the hostile positions. His aircraft was struck by hostile fire and crashed. By deliberately exposing himself to the hostile fire, Major Sellers enabled the patrol to be withdrawn, ultimately saving their lives by the sacrifice of his own...."

SELLERS, KENNETH H.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Kenneth H. Sellers for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller at Nha Trang, Republic of Vietnam, on 30 January 1968. On that date, in conjunction with the Tet Offensive, a large, well-equipped hostile force entered the city, intent on overrunning military installations and releasing a large contingent of hostile captives contained in the local prison. The hostiles' entrenched positions prevented reinforcements from reaching the battle areas where friendly forces were in dire need of support. Captain Sellers, despite great personal risk from heavy machine gun and automatic weapons fire, repeatedly attacked hostile positions in an O-2 aircraft armed with high explosive rockets. He systematically silenced three machine gun positions and neutralized two fortified hostile companies, thereby preventing the annihilation of beleaguered friendly units...."

SHANNON, FRED

"Captain Fred Shannon distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an Electronics Warfare Officer in the lead aircraft of a flak suppression flight near Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 11 August 1967. On that date, Captain Shannon suppressed six active surface-to-air missile sites defending a strategic highway and railroad bridge. Despite concentrated barrages of antiaircraft fire and three missiles directed against his flight, Captain Shannon displayed the highest degree of courageous leadership in destroying two missile sites and in forcing the other four into sporadic operation. As a direct result of his actions, the strike force suffered no losses and imposed extensive damage on this vital target...."

SMITH, ROBERT W.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Smith, for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force. Colonel Smith distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 pilot in Southeast Asia on 19 November 1967. On that date, Colonel Smith led a strike force of twenty F-105 and four F-4 aircraft to the vicinity of Hanoi for the initial strike on an important military target. Colonel Smith gallantly led his force through a hostile aircraft attack, an awesome and extended attack by missiles which downed two aircraft, and into the heavy antiaircraft defenses to strike crippling blows to the assigned target and to a large active surface-to-air missile site. Colonel Smith never wavered from his goal, and with complete disregard for his life, displayed great courage and determined leadership to accomplish an extremely hazardous and difficult mission...."

SMITH, ROWLAND F., JR.

"Captain Rowland F. Smith, Jr., distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a pilot leading a flight of F-105 Thunderchiefs attacking a vital military target in the vicinity of Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 27 October 1967. On that date, with his aircraft hit and burning, Captain Smith exhibited the highest order of courage as he continued to fly through intense and accurate antiaircraft fire to attack and destroy a hostile surface-to-air missile complex that was threatening a large F-105 strike force. With his aircraft still in flames, he remained in the target area while initiating rescue efforts for his downed wingman. Captain Smith then flew his crippled aircraft 300 miles to a skillful emergency landing...."

SMITH, WESTON T.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Section 8742, Title 10, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major Weston T. Smith for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force near Ben Het, Republic of Vietnam, from 24 February 1969 to 25 February 1969. During this period, Major Smith directed close air support against one of the most heavily defended target complexes in the Republic of Vietnam. Despite intense, accurately directed hostile fire which damaged his unarmed aircraft, Major Smith was successful in directing the neutralization of the opposing force. With complete disregard for his own life, he saved the lives of many American and allied soldiers and prevented the strategically located friendly position from being overrun...."

STEVENS, DONALD D.

"Captain Donald D. Stevens distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a Forward Air Controller in Southeast Asia on 19 August 1967. On that date, Captain Stevens braved continuous hostile automatic weapons and anti-aircraft fire for more than eight hours to rescue a wounded American soldier. Captain Stevens made repeated low passes directly into the heavy hostile fire to locate the wounded man and to direct medical evacuation helicopters to the area. Despite sustaining a hit in his unarmed observation aircraft, Captain Stevens persevered in his rescue attempt and finally succeeded in securing the safe extraction of the wounded soldier and the reaction team that had gone to help him...."

STOCKS, BRUCE D.

"Major Bruce D. Stocks distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as the pilot of an F-105 Thunderchief near Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 19 November 1967. On that date, Major Stocks led a flight assigned to suppress the surface-to-air missile threat for a twenty-ship strike force that had been directed to attack a strategic rail yard at the edge of Hanoi. He delivered his ordnance on the most threatening site and warned the strike force of imminent SAM attack. Due to his timely warning they were able to evade a salvo of missiles and depart the target area without battle damage. As Major Stocks turned to follow them out, shrapnel from an exploding surface-to-air missile hit his aircraft, wounding him in the chest and shoulder. When his wingman was hit seconds later, Major Stocks, in spite of his wounds, turned back toward the heavily defended target to successfully escort the damaged aircraft to a safe bailout area...."

TALLEY, JOEL E.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Airman First Class Joel E. Talley for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as Rescue Specialist on an HH-3E helicopter in Southeast Asia on 2 July 1968. On that date, Airman Talley volunteered to be lowered to the ground from a hovering helicopter into the jungle of North Vietnam to rescue an injured pilot, who had ejected the previous day. The downed pilot had parachuted into a concentration of North Vietnamese Army regulars who immediately surrounded him and set up gun positions to trap the forthcoming rescue helicopters. Four rescue attempts were driven off, and a supporting fighter aircraft was shot down by the devastating ground fire which encircled the survivor's position. Despite full knowledge of the well laid trap, Airman Talley voluntarily descended to search the jungle floor. After an extensive search he found the helpless survivor, carried him to the rescue device, and signaled the helicopter to commence extraction. While Airman Talley and the survivor were being hoisted, a fusillade of fire raked the helicopter scoring more than forty hits, forcing the helicopter to exit the area, exposing both airmen to hostile fire. The rescue was successfully accomplished...."

TITUS, ROBERT F.

"Lieutenant Colonel Robert F. Titus distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-4C Mission Commander near Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 22 May 1967. On that date, Colonel Titus led his flight into one of the most heavily defended areas of North Vietnam in direct support of F-105 strike aircraft operations. Undaunted by accurate flak and five surface-to-air missiles that were launched at his aircraft, he repeatedly and unhesitatingly engaged numerous MIG-21s in defense of the friendly aircraft. During these aggressive and courageous aerial encounters, Colonel Titus destroyed two MIG-21 aircraft. As a direct result of his tenacity and extreme bravery in the face of great danger, the F-105 force was able to accomplish its assigned mission...."

TSOUPRAKE, PETER

"Major Peter Tsouprake distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 5 July 1966. On that date, Major Tsouprake, an F-105F Electronics Warfare Officer in the lead aircraft of a flight tasked to support a large strike force, detected hostile surface-to-air missile sites which threatened the other strike force. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Major Tsouprake responded professionally in the face of continuous heavy and intense ground fire of all types and directed his pilot in attacks against four separate missile complexes. Three of the four sites were completely destroyed, and the remaining site sustained extensive damage. This courageous and aggressive action considerably reduced the missile threat against the other strike force...."

TURNER, ROBERT E.

"Major Robert E. Turner distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an A-1E pilot in Southeast Asia on 6 January 1967. On that date, Major Turner diverted his flight to the immediate support of a remote but vital outpost being overrun by hostile ground forces. He descended through 2,500 feet of solid clouds in poorly mapped mountainous terrain and made repeated attacks against entrenched hostile forces. In spite of intense and accurate automatic weapons fire and repeated hits upon his aircraft, Major Turner continued his attacks until his ordnance was exhausted and fuel was critically low. His actions forced the hostile forces to break off their assault and saved the friendly forces from certain defeat...."

WEATHERBY, JACK W.\*

"Captain Jack W. Weatherby distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force over the Republic of Vietnam on 29 July 1965. On that date, Captain Weatherby voluntarily flew an unarmed aircraft at extremely low altitude deep into hostile territory which was heavily defended, to photograph a target of vital significance to the United States Air Force and Republic of Vietnam Air Force. As he approached the target area, his aircraft was severely damaged by accurate ground fire. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Captain Weatherby elected to press on to the target until his badly damaged aircraft exploded and crashed. Captain Weatherby's courage and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the American fighting man under attack by an opposing armed force...."

WHATLEY, WAYNE N.

"Major Wayne N. Whatley distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia on 30 June 1966. On that date, Major Whatley led a flight of four F-105 aircraft against an extremely heavily defended petroleum, oil and lubricant storage complex in North Vietnam. By exhibiting extraordinary flying ability, leadership qualities, and personal bravery in the face of intense hostile fire, Major Whatley successfully struck the assigned target, thus contributing greatly to the objectives of his country. Although sustaining hits on his aircraft, Major Whatley, disregarding his personal safety, stayed with his downed wingman and directed a successful rescue operation...."

WHITE, ROBERT M.

"Colonel Robert M. White distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 Mission Commander near Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 11 August 1967. On that date, Colonel White led the entire combat force against a key railroad and highway bridge in the vicinity of Hanoi. In spite of 14 surface-to-air missile launches, MIG interceptor attacks, and intense antiaircraft artillery fire, he gallantly led the attack. By being the first aircraft to dive through the dark clouds of bursting flak, Colonel White set an example that inspired the remaining attacking force to destroy the bridge without a single aircraft being lost to the hostile gunners...."

WHITESIDES, RICHARD L.\*

"Captain Richard L. Whitesides distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as an Advisor-Pilot of an L-19 aircraft on 24 November 1963. On that date, while piloting his unprotected aircraft, Captain Whitesides directed strikes time after time against heavily fortified Viet Cong positions. Despite their clever attempts at camouflage, he was able to pinpoint numerous Viet Cong positions and marked them for destruction. Even after his aircraft was partially disabled, Captain Whitesides remained in the area, and clearly pointed out the Viet Cong large gun emplacements, which led to their destruction by cover aircraft...."

WILLIAMS, DAVID H.

"Captain David H. Williams distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as the Electronics Warfare Officer for the leader of an F-105 Thunderchief flight attacking a vital military target in the vicinity of Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 27 October 1967. On that date, with his aircraft hit and burning, Captain Williams exhibited the highest order of courage as he continued to guide his pilot through intense and accurate antiaircraft fire to attack and destroy a hostile surface-to-air missile complex that was threatening a large F-105 strike force. With his aircraft still in flames he assisted his pilot in initiating rescue efforts for a wingman down in the target area. Captain Williams then constantly provided positions as the pilot flew the crippled aircraft 300 miles to a skillful emergency landing...."

WRIGHT, GARTH A.

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Garth A. Wright for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as Security Operations Officer, 35th Security Police Squadron, at Phan Rang Air Base in the Republic of Vietnam, on 26 January 1969. On that date, Captain Wright was the key factor in repelling a highly trained and specialized North Vietnamese Army Company that was infiltrating Phan Rang. With professionalism, confidence, and extraordinary coolness under fire, Captain Wright organized and directed a blocking force that broke the attack. Walking into point-blank range of a heavily armed opposing squad concealed in the brush, Captain Wright, through fast reaction and exceptional skill, saved his men from possible annihilation and prevented the hostile forces from overrunning the base...."

YORK, GLEN P.

"Major Glen P. York distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia as Rescue Crew Commander of an unarmed HH-3E helicopter near Nam Dinh, North Vietnam, on 18 July 1967. Despite the knowledge that a preceding rescue force had been damaged and driven away by intensive antiaircraft fire, Major York unhesitatingly entered an extremely hostile area to rescue a downed United States Navy pilot. In the approach to the pilot's position, one of Major York's escort aircraft was hit and forced to withdraw. Major York deliberately disregarded continuous heavy fire from all directions and hovered over the downed pilot until he was safely hoisted aboard...."