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6-13

DATE: 10 - 11 February 1972

MISSION NUMBER: 8-3-011

FLIGHT DESIGNATION: Jolly Green 32

OBJECTIVE: RESCUE AND RECOVERY of two F-4 crewmembers with call sign Sea Fox 01 (Alpha and Bravo). Initially launched during hours of darkness for attempted night recovery employing the Night Recovery System (NRS) equipment. Attempted NRS pickup was unsuccessful but a first light effort was completed with both crewmembers recovered.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY: At approximately 2000L 10 February 1972, I was notified that the South crews (Upon FOL) had been launched and that I was to report to 40th ARRSq Operations. Crews were being organized as primary back-ups for the two Jolly Greens already on scene. At 2030L, instructions were received to launch from Channel 89 and proceed south towards Channel 82. Departed Channel 89 at 2120L in Jolly Green 32 with high bird Jolly Green 30. It is considered extremely important that prior to launch from 89, both myself and the Aircraft Commander of Jolly Green 30 had enough time to prepare detail maps of the suspected recovery locations. On these maps we plotted the safest course to the area, the most recent intelligence on AAA placements and emergency safe areas. The brief opportunity to preplan and also to study terrain features and elevations prior to becoming airborne proved invaluable during subsequent NRS attempts. Restrictions to airborne visibility due to heavy haze and a 3500' MSL cloud deck resulted in some difficulty in keeping each other in sight during the first portion of the flight towards Channel 82. For this reason I choose to fly low level and remain in Thailand until forced to climb to a higher altitude (8500' MSL) prior to "crossing the fence." We established an orbit above Channel 82 upon arrival at 2230L. Monitoring the radios enroute, I was aware that the South Alert birds (Jolly Greens 52, 53) were established at a forward orbit location but could not attempt a pickup since the on scene Nail aircraft and Spectre had not yet positively pinpointed the location of the downed crewmembers. The weather in the area of the survivors at that time presented a problem, reportedly broken to overcast at 4000' MSL, with terrain elevation as high as 3500'. The orbit was continued in the area of Channel 82 until 2245L and then King 27 was joined for our first air refueling. At 2255L, while taking on fuel from King 27, we were notified by Jolly 30 that we were taking ground fire. This occurred at position 120 degree/45 DME off Channel 82. An estimated 25 to 45 rounds of 14.5MM AAA was fired. I immediately disconnected. All three aircraft went "black-out," separated from one another, and initiated a climb from 8700', the refueling altitude. A second join-up was made after proceeding further to the west, and air refueling completed on a northwesterly heading back towards Channel 82. During the period of our air refueling, Jolly Green 52 flight had exited the forward orbit position and was BEB to Channel 93. Advising King 23, we departed Channel 82 and proceeded to an orbit point 080 degree/50 DME off Channel 82, arriving there at 2355L. This orbit position put us approximately 20 miles west of the survivor's position, which Nail 43 (the on scene commander) now felt he had precisely pinpointed. At this point it was decided to attempt

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a night recovery. The following considerations led to this decision:

1. No hostile activity had been reported by any of the numerous aircraft working the area at low level.
2. Nail 43 had the survivors' position and felt he could lead us to them.
3. The weather had improved considerably: 3/8 coverage at 4500'.
4. Radio contact was established with both Alpha and Bravo.
5. Alpha (but not Bravo man) had an operational strobe light.

At 0045L, 11 February 1972, I received a final briefing from Nail 43 while Sea Fox 01 Alpha and Bravo were briefed by the Spectro aircraft. I then briefed the crew on my intentions and completed final preparations for the run-in. Approximately 1500 pounds of fuel were dumped to insure 15 percent power reserve for an out-of-ground effect hover. The PJs and Flight Engineer assumed their scanner positions wearing the night goggles, while the CP and myself set up the LLTV and night recovery equipment. At 0058L, Nail 43 came out to lead us into the immediate vicinity of the survivors. Following Nail 43, at approximately 1000 AGL, we attempted unsuccessfully to locate Alpha's strobe light on our LLTV. A second attempt at leading us over the survivor was made. On this run-in, I elected to slow down and follow Alpha's vectoring instructions while continuing to search for his strobe light. At no time during the next 1 plus 00 hours were we able to positively identify Alpha's strobe through the use of the LLTV, although my Flight Engineer felt he momentarily sighted it with the night vision goggles. The inability to locate a sustained return from the strobe light was due to extremely thick foliage and jungle canopy and also Alpha's position half-way down a sharp 70 degree ridge. At one point during the search, the Flight Engineer, using night vision goggles, vectored me towards a flashing light which he sighted a short distance away. Upon arriving directly over the light source, another steady light was visible. Suddenly the flashing light changed to a steady light, so that there were two steady lights similar to flashlights pointing directly up at us. The Engineer promptly advised me that neither light was a strobe light. I immediately pulled off anticipating a possible trap. Alpha also confirmed we were not at that time close to his actual position. During the sustained close search for Alpha, I tried to make use of the Hover Trim mode of the HRS equipment to provide the precise hover control which is critically necessary under conditions of darkness in mountainous terrain. However, on each of 3 attempts, this proved unsuccessful because of apparent equipment malfunction. With continuous vectoring from Alpha, I at one point felt certain our aircraft was flying a tight circle directly above him. Zeroing the doppler as a reference point, I proceeded outbound to attempt an automatic approach back to that location. It should be noted that even with an inoperative hover trim mode, it would be possible to fly an automatic approach using the approach mode only for a possible recovery. Although our

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automatic approach returned us to Alpha's approximate location, we again failed to detect his strobe light - an absolute necessity for continuing the night recovery attempt. The search was continued for the strobe in that location using LLLTV, crewmembers' night vision goggles, and Alpha's vectoring instructions until low fuel prohibited any further attempt. It should be noted that throughout the close search, the IR light from the Spectro aircraft was clearly visible both on the LLLTV and through the night vision goggles. While sweeping across the ground in the immediate search area, the IR light afforded a much more clearly defined picture of terrain features as well as increased depth perception. It appeared on the LLLTV as a circular lighted area (spot) approximately 500 feet in diameter. Upon reaching bingo fuel at 0200L, it was necessary to exit the scene. My wingman, Jolly Green 30, who had not previously dumped fuel, took over in the rescue effort while I proceeded to a rendezvous point for another air refueling with King 27. Jolly Green 30 was also unable to locate the strobe light. At 0230L he departed and air refueled with King 27. Following air refueling Jolly Green 30 joined us over Channel 82 at approximately 0300L. At 0330L, King 23 advised that first light forces were being readied and that I was designated the primary rescue helicopter. From that time until 0500L, we orbited in the area of Channel 82. At 0510L, the final on-load of fuel was taken from King 27 on a refueling track that took us towards the forward orbit location, 082 degree/50-60 DME off Channel 82. Only enough fuel was taken to complete the pick-up, eliminating the need to later dump fuel prior to the run-in. Approaching first light, Sandy 01 and 02 arrived on scene, were briefed by the Nail, and Sandy 01 took over as on-scene commander. At this time, after advising Sandy 01, we proceeded to a closer orbit position which was between two route structures immediately north of the survivor's general location. This precluded having to cross the route structure in full daylight. On-scene weather, clearly visible from this new holding point, was low scattered stratus with patchy ground fog. Terrain elevations over 3000' MSL were above these clouds and in the clear. Alpha and Bravo were both at approximately 3200' MSL. Both Jolly Greens remained in orbit until Sandy 01 was ready for the recovery attempt and had briefed the situation to all Sandy's, Jolly Greens, and downed crewmembers. At 0710L, Sandy 02 led us down to the IP point where I started the run-in. Minor difficulty was encountered in locating the survivors due to extremely heavy foliage. Bravo was located and pick-up completed at 0717L. Alpha man was within 75 yards of Bravo, around a slight bend in the ridge line. After requesting Alpha to pop his smoke, we saw his location and hovered into position. Alpha was situated at the base of a large tree, but was unable to move due to the ridge's 70 degree slope. He was at the edge of a severe drop-off. Some difficulty was therefore encountered working the penetrator close to Alpha. Once this was done, and Alpha had secured himself to the jungle penetrator, I hovered out away from the ridge far enough to provide clearance from the tree limbs. Alpha was on board at 0724L. Both survivors were apparently free of injuries and

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required no medical attention from the pararescuemen. The route structure was paralleled during the exit and a climb initiated to 10,000' MSL before crossing the route structure. At 0030L, 11 Feb 72, the flight was terminated at Channel 93. The survivors were met by an ambulance.

JAMES W. MCINTYRE, Capt, USAF
Aircraft Commander

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SEAFOX 01

(C) At 1815 local Nakhon Phanom time, on the evening of 10 February 1972, Jack notified the 56th SOW Command Post that a SAR had been declared for Seafox 01. The aircraft was an F-4 that had been downed on the 289 degree radial at 42 miles of TACAN channel 94 (289/42/94). Peach Anchor, a SAC KC-135 out of U-Tapao, had good voice contact with both Alpha and Bravo.¹³¹

(C) All Pave Nail aircraft in the vicinity of the SAR objective area were pressed into service to determine the precise locations of the survivors. At 1853L, two Limited Night Recovery System (LNRS) equipped helicopters, Jolly Greens 52 and 53 were launched from Ubon. A decision was made to try for a night recovery so, another set of LNRS choppers were launched, Jolly Greens 32 and 30. No ordnance was requested at the time since no enemy activity was noted in the area. Furthermore, it was better to attempt the night recovery covertly. Nevertheless, fast movers were loaded with various types of ordnance and A-1 "Smoke" aircraft were loaded with CBU-22 and placed on ground alert.¹³²

(C) The night recoveries failed because the helicopter pilots could not maintain visual contact with a reference point; a weakness of the LNRS at the time. The jungle canopy was so

131. SARCO Report for Seafox 01, 12 Feb 72, (Doc 62).

132. Ibid.

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thick that the survivors' strobe lights could not be used for the required reference. It was decided to wait until first light for another attempt.¹³³

(C) Jack ordered CBU-24 and CBU-49 loaded fast movers to be over the SAR area at first light and to cycle every thirty minutes. Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) A-1s would also be available from 0630L, in flights of three, carrying Mk-81s and Napalm. At 0420L, Sandys 01 and 02 took off from NKP followed by Sandys 03 and 04 at 0620L. Out of Ubon came Sandys 05 and 06 and from DaNang, Sandys 07 and 08. The DaNang helicopters, Jolly Greens 64 and 72 were delayed because of aircraft malfunction but did arrive on scene at 0630L.¹³⁴

(C) Sandys 01/02 arrived in the area 20 minutes before sunrise at 0530L. Sandy 01 assumed on-scene command from Nail 25 who had been "babysitting" with the survivors during the early morning hours. If it was at all possible, an aircraft stayed in the objective area at all times on SARs. This procedure not only facilitated communications checks but were a great consolation to the survivors. Good contact had been maintained with Seafox 01 Bravo, but Alpha had not been heard from for three hours. King feared that he had experienced radio malfunction. At 0545L, the Sandys entered the area and immediately both Alpha and Bravo came up on their radios stating that they could hear

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid.

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aircraft above them.¹³⁵

(C) Sandy Ø1 descended into the area to conduct a search while Sandy Ø2 and Nail 25 held overhead. After about ten minutes searching Nail 25 spotted a chute hanging in a tree. Sandy Ø1 was directed to the chute and almost immediately he sighted the second chute very closeby. The survivors were located near the top of the East side of a North-South ridge line. Weather in the SAR area was outstanding for a SAR. Low clouds and fog covered known enemy positions in the valleys on either side of the ridge while the ridgetops were clear. It was realized that a pickup should be attempted before the sun burned off the fog and exposed the SAR force to enemy guns.¹³⁶

(C) Sandy Ø1 expended CBU-25 and 20mm to test enemy reactions in the immediate vicinity of the survivors. None was noted. Meanwhile, the Sandy Ø7/Ø8 flight out of DaNang arrived and held East of the route structure. A pickup was planned for 0650L, but had to be delayed while Sandys Ø7/Ø8 flew into the area and located the holding point. After a briefing, the run-in commenced at 0715L. Jolly Green 32, who had been airborne for nine hours, misunderstood the briefing and believed the survivors to be on the West side of the ridge. Sandy Ø1 had to lead Jolly Green 32 around the South side of the ridge and brought him over Bravo's position. Bravo's pickup was uneventful, but the

135. Ibid.

136. Ibid.

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Jolly had trouble seeing Alpha's smoke because of the dense foliage and high surface winds. After Alpha was aboard, the SAR force exited the area to the West. No enemy reaction was noted throughout the entire SAR.¹³⁷

137. Ibid.

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