

Covey 64



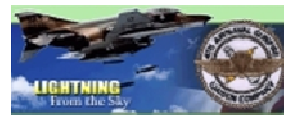
Wolfman 44

Dec. 19, 1972

December 19, 1972, Republic of Vietnam, I Corps. An Air Force OV-10 was shot down by an SA-7 Heat Seeking Missile. Capt. Frank Egan was flying the OV-10, as a FAC (Forward Air Controller) along with Marine Capt. Jon Patterson as the ANGLICO (Artillery-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company) back seater. Army Capt. Warren Fuller was flying a U21 for ASA (Army Security Agency) and became the on scene commander for the rescue. Army Capt. Joe Bowen was the AMC in a UH-1 C&C for F Troop, 4th CAV and extracted Capt. Patterson and the body of Capt. Egan.



On Dec. 23rd, 2009, I put out a request for help to Cpl Vance Hall, on the 1st ANGLICO website.



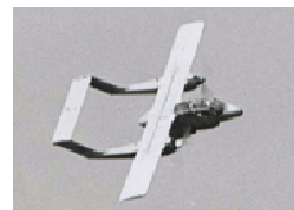
The request was as follows:

My name is Warren E. Fuller, I was assigned to the 138th RR Avn Co. , 224th Avn Bn. from February 1972 until February 1973. We were stationed in Phu Bai until October 1972, when we moved to Da Nang. I flew a RU21d and performed an airborne direction finding mission in I Corps, my callsign was *Vanguard 969*. Capt. Egan (*Covey 64*) and I were “*sky brothers*”, which is to say that we only saw each other while we were flying our missions. When an aircraft entered an AO (*area of operation*), the procedure was to broadcast your call sign and the altitude that you would like to maintain. After which, you would negotiate altitudes to be maintained for air safety.



U21-D, Laffing Eagle Mission

The first time I “*really met*” Capt. Frank Egan, was on an early morning mission. I had just checked in to the AO and asked to work at Angels 10 (*10,000 feet MSL*). He then informed me that he was working at Angels 8.5. We wished each other luck and that was that. About 30 minutes later, as we were working a target, I had this uneasy feeling to look to my left and down the end of the wing.



To my surprise, there was an *OV10* just off of my wing ... a conservative estimate would put his wing about 2 feet from my wing. My heart immediately lodge in my throat and I could hardly breathe. He just looked at me and gave me a thumbs up as he veered off to his left. The ensuing “*chatter*” we had on the radio would make this report **XXX** rated, suffice it to say that we became instant friends.

Our missions were 4 hours in length, and we were given Air Force in-flight lunches. Frank would always ask me what I was having for lunch. I always tried to get the tuna fish lunch, which also came with a can of peaches...which I hated. Our standing joke was that *I'd slide the peaches out on to the end of left wing for him to pick up at his leisure*.



Frank had taken a hit from an SA-7 (heat seeking missile) and was heading to the coast, so that he and his back seat observer (*Call sign Wolfman 44*) could punch out. I immediately got a visual on his aircraft and started descending towards him, keeping him in view at all times. He told me that he would have to punch out when he got to 800 feet. While following him, I declared myself as the “***on scene commander***” and established radio contact with everyone that I thought could help.

I had a US Navy ship head in our direction so as to lend support, a flight of Huey helicopters from Da Nang for pickup, a local ground commander who was in the vicinity of the beach and a pair of jet fighters who were in our general area and might have been working with Frank earlier. As they approached the coast, they punched out at 800 feet, but I only saw one parachute deploy.



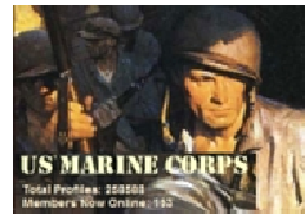


Wolfman 44 contacted me when he hit the ground and then told me that Frank's parachute never deployed and that he appeared to be dead. I was later to find out that the failure of a D-ring prevented the parachute from deploying. At this point, my memory fails me in that I think Wolfman 44 and Frank were picked up by a Huey and taken to the US Naval ship, where Frank was pronounced dead.

A day or so later, Wolfman 44 came over to my unit to meet and thank me for my help, but I was out on another mission. I've searched the Internet on a number of occasions to try and find out who Wolfman 44 was, but without success.

***** end of initial request for help *****

Before I knew it, members of Marines TWS and Air Force TWS got involved,... and the search for Wolfman 44 took on a life of its own. It took two weeks to track down Wolfman 44, who turned out to be Capt. Jon Patterson and was very much alive and doing well.



In September 2010, Janie (my wife) and I hosted Jon and Gail (his wife) to a lunch in Winston-Salem, NC. When Jon and I began to talk about the shoot down, he held up his hand for me to pause. He reached down into a bag that was sitting by his chair and pulled out the exact *ejection seat handle* that he used in the shoot down **38 years earlier**.

Gail, Jon, Warren, Janie at Luncheon with Wolfman 44 And Vanguard 969

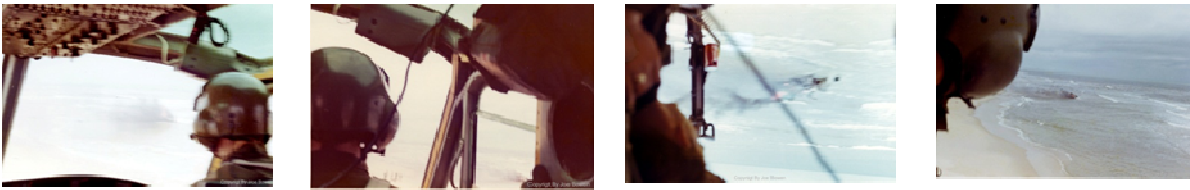
On February 2nd, 2011, I received an email from Capt. Joe Bowen, who was with *F Troop, 4th CAV (Callsign Centaur 3)* and was the Huey Army Mission Commander. His Troop was based at Tan My and responded immediately to the May Day call in a C&C Huey. They were refueling at the Coast Guard station when the May Day call came over the radio. They tried to scramble the Troop but could not raise the TOC to have the standby Cobras and Blues launch. En route they thought that the Troop was right behind them, but for some reason, the Troop had not heard the calls to scramble and they pressed on without them—not knowing.



*The Vietnamese (RVN MARINES or NVA?) put Capt. Egan (COVEY64) in the aircraft from the right side and he was prone the whole time. Someone and I can't remember who now tried to give him CPR but when they did the "chest compression", their hands seemed to go to the floor as it appeared his chest was completely crushed. No one gave him morphine. It was apparent after the pulse check and the attempt at CPR that he was already gone. There was no hurry to get him to medical treatment and as the Marine did not seem to be badly injured I decided to go back the way we had come, down the beach then **OVERLAND** to the nearest good medical and that was at Hue 1st ARVN HQ.*

I was under the impression that they may have flown out to the US Destroyer for medical help. But Capt. Bowen cleared that up for me.

Pictures taken from the Centaur Rescue Huey that day ...



Covey 64 FAC down 19 Dec 1972

I found this part of the email extremely interesting:

“Wolfman 44 ... Contact! You are one fortunate Marine!
My interpreter onboard told me the soldiers that helped you and us were NVA....
He was yelling on the intercom that we “**must turn around!!! about twenty times**” as we approached you. Those dudes that helped you were supposedly deserting NVA Recon guys trying to get to Hue and the PX for a Coke. They were out of the fight but knew not to try and surrender to the Viet Marines. The senior guy supposedly asked for some food and water and our interpreter told the gunner who pushed out two cases of LLRPs. I guess they were on their way to the PX after that with full bellies.



NVA Soldiers with pith helmets

I thought it was hog wash until two weeks later when he showed me a picture he had taken as we turned around and headed to get you to a medic. There in the scrub were four guys with pith helmets and holding AK's in a series of five pictures he took when he figured that we were not going to die there on the beach. I tried to get copies but never did and tried to look him up after the Cease Fire. I guess we will not know for sure if they were bad guys on the run or not, until one of them pops up on the net and says he was there and helped Wolfman 44 that day—whoever they were—they definitely helped us all.

I was volunteered (and got two HUEY's to support) to stay there with the Four Power Military Commission at the MACV Compound until 31 March when we all left.”



Regards,

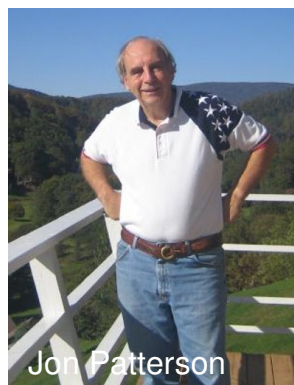
Centaur 3
F Troop, 4th CAV
Joe



Joe Bowen



Frank Egan



Jon Patterson



Warren Fuller