

Hawk 6 Crash Soc Trang September 5, 1963

Pilot: 1.Lt. J. B. Bisbey Observer: Ng Hoy Binh

Aircraft # 61-2706

They were "homely" those Mohawks. You know...the kind of ugly that's beautiful. Three tails, how strange. Kind of sway-backed. To top it off, they had a pugh nose. They went out that day, just like always. Then word came back that she had been hit. The hydraulics were out on the left gear. Couldn't get it down. They brought her back to Soc Trang Airfield that morning. You want to be close to home you know.... It's quiet up there, lonely too, even with an Observer at a time like this. Twice before, not too long ago this scene was played out. Twice before 2 parachutes failed. She soared and wheeled and dove, to no avail. That old gear was stuck for sure. Hawks carry 800 gallons of JP-4. That's several hours of flight time. It's going to be awhile. Then a desperate move....Captain Bisbey talks to the "Old Man", why not bounce it loose? Three times he brought her down... Three times a perfect landing on a nose and right gear... 3,200 feet of runway. That ole' wheel was just flat stuck? Noth'n left to do...take her up high and point her East and pull the pin. Twice before those Martin-Bakers failed...twice before two brave men were lost. You got 10 pounds of TNT under your BUTT. That's supposed to blow you, 300 feet into the air. The ARVN Observer weighted only 100 pounds. When he went out he just flat disappeared. UP...UP...still up he went. Just a tiny black dot. No one was breathing.....A MIRACLE!...the chute popped open, tears were flowing, we took a hesitant breath. Captain Bisbey radios..."I'm going out"... He and the seat went up, not quite as high, they got to the top of the arc, a pause, like an arrow before it falls to earth. Then slowly, the seat fell back and the Captain fell forward...and down...down...the chute streams out...and with a SNAP it pops open. Two MIRACLES that day... There is a GOD! But the old girl wasn't ready to die, not yet anyway. The Captain forgot to trim out the tabs for the lost weight. She nosed up and over and slowly dove towards the West end of the field... What seemed to be inches from the ground she pulled up...you could see her grinning. "I'm not ready yet", I heard her say. UP she soared, she rolled out and looked down, this time faster, diving towards the POL dump. Ten huge black whale like bladders of volatile aircraft fuel. Again inches.... a bigger grin... "just kidding", I heard her whisper. "Not yet", I heard her cry... "I'm not ready yet!" One more time she dove, right towards the Bomb dump. Several hundred 200 pounders and other things that go BOOM were there. Again just millimeters this time. She pulled up. I heard her say... "I wouldn't hurt you, It's time now... I'm ready... I'm tired. The bailing wire and green tape aren't holding me together any longer. I'm tired of War", and with that she dove into the Aircraft Graveyard. One final bit of glory... A Red Ball of Flame. It was over. I saw Hawk 6 die that day. A HERO!

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