

Rescue Force

Vietnam is fast fading from memory. But the bar stories are soft cover for some hard-core heroics. This ode is dedicated to the SAR crewmen—then and now.



by Maj J. Alan Hassell
MAC Aircrew Stan/Eval

They brief at two, take off at four,
before the sun has risen
And fly an orbit every day,
to sit and wait and listen.
King flies a track of fifty miles
at twenty thousand plus
And hopes the day will be a bore,
but doubts that very much.

They pass the time with talk of home,
and then they hear the call:
An aircraft's down, the pilot's out,
but far behind the wall.
The effort's on, the Jollies launch,
a FAC is on the way.
The RCC is notified
to get them help this day.

The Sandys strafe, the hoist is down,
the FAC directs some strikes.
"You're takin' fire from eight o'clock,"
screams Sandy in the mike.
"Survivor's up, we're comin' out!"
All smile—his fate is known
As down a slope and round a ridge,
The Jolly sprints for home.

The rescue chopper needs some gas,
his fuel is mighty low;
So King swoops down from twenty thou
to rendezvous below.
AR complete, they've got it made.
The field is just in sight.
They cross the fence, relax a bit,
and know they've done it right.

The Rescue Force is homeward bound,
another man they've saved.
But tomorrow is another day;
they pray their luck won't change.
The men who fly the long-range SAR,
they risk their lives this way
To buy a chance for those gone down,
to fight another day.

