
Capt Miers and Crew



Capt Miers

LAST FALL in Southeast Asia, Capt James R. Miers and crew, 40th ARRSq, were involved in a combat rescue operation in their HH-53 helicopter. They were at 8500 feet proceeding to their assigned search and rescue orbit when they felt an explosion and saw number two engine flameout.

Capt Miers immediately applied maximum power to the remaining engine and directed his copilot, Capt Robert E. Ruddick, to secure the dead power plant. Even with full power on number one, however, they were unable to maintain level flight at their high gross weight.

As they turned back to home base, Capt Ruddick started dumping fuel to lighten the chopper, while SSgt John B. Mahoney, flight engineer, went aft to check the number two engine for external evidence of damage. He also checked to make sure there was not an undetected fire or

damage as a result of enemy ground fire. By the time the fuel load was down to 3000 pounds, Capt Miers was able to level off at 5000 feet. Capt Ruddick and Sgt Mahoney computed new performance data while monitoring the aircraft systems and instruments, as Capt Miers concentrated on aircraft control and looked for a place to land should the good engine also fail.

They were still 40 miles from base when the number one engine Nose Transmission Pressure caution light illuminated. Although the temperature gage for this critical area remained within limits, Capt Miers decided on an immediate precautionary landing rather than risk a complete power loss of a second engine.

Realizing he didn't have enough power to make a normal landing, Capt Miers started a descent while looking for a suitable landing site. Ideally, this would be a hard surface

that would allow a roll-on landing which requires less power than a zero ground speed landing. Normal single engine touchdown speed is 20 to 30 knots, but the area below the crippled chopper was covered with rice paddies, requiring a near zero ground speed for landing.

During the final approach, Capt Miers gradually dissipated airspeed and altitude while Capt Ruddick and Sgt Mahoney monitored engine performance and kept him advised of critical power settings. At approximately 15 feet, with the airspeed near zero and a rate of descent of 200 to 300 feet per minute, Capt Miers increased the collective pitch to maximum power, and the 'copter settled gently and safely to the ground with no damage.

For their display of professionalism and outstanding teamwork, THE MAC FLYER is proud to say Good Show, Capt Miers and crew! ✪



GOOD SHOW



Full power on number one engine wouldn't maintain level flight.