

<b>TRANSMITTAL SLIP</b>		DATE
		22 September 1971
TO: Mr. Conley via Mr. Wattles via <del>Mr. Packer</del>		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
REMARKS: <i>9-22-71</i>		
<p>For your information. I plan to include this in the package for the "40 Committee."</p>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE: 13-Mar-2009 </div>		
<i>10/29/71</i> <i>CWK</i> <i>15 OCT 1971</i> <i>we should have been interested</i> <i>for use when the "only interested"</i> <i>undollars" charges</i> <i>up. puc</i>		
FROM:		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
EXTENSION		

FROM: Department of the Air Force  
Headquarters 13th Tactical Fighter Squadron (PACAF)  
APO San Francisco 96237

*in order*  
*TS*

REPLY TO ATTN OF: CC

8 September 1971

SUBJECT: Rescue of Downed F-4 Aircrew

REC'D WAS SEP 20 1971

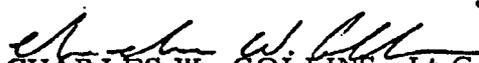
TO: Base Manager, Air America, Inc.  
c/o Air Force Liaison Officer  
Box 62, APO San Francisco 96237

1. On 2 September 1971, one of the aircrews of the 13th TFS "Panther Pack" received battle damage to their aircraft and crashed in a ball of flames. Fortunately, both crew members were able to eject prior to impact, but they were both injured. Incapacitated and helpless on the ground, in the northern part of the Plain of Jars in Laos, they were in imminent danger of capture or death from hostile forces surrounding them. Two Air America helicopter crews saved their lives by landing in the open field to pick them up, even though under enemy fire.
2. A Bell 205, crewed by Mr. Ted Cash, Mr. Wayne Lannin, and Mr. William Parker, rescued Captain Ron Fitzgerald, the Weapons System Officer of the fighter. Both Mr. Lannin and Mr. Parker risked their lives by exposing themselves directly to enemy fire to hoist the injured Captain Fitzgerald aboard the helicopter.
3. An H-34, piloted by Mr. Don Henthorn, landed to pick up Major Jim Compton, the Aircraft Commander of the downed fighter, while a crew member, Mr. Ernie Cortez risked his life by exposing himself to hostile ground fire to lift Major Compton into the helicopter.
4. The two helicopters took off in a hail of enemy fire and airlifted the injured Panthers to a landing site nearby where they were transferred to an Air America Porter aircraft. They were then airlifted to a staging base, where they were attended by a surgeon and subsequently were returned to Udorn RTAFB aboard an Air America C-123.
5. The deep gratitude felt by the 13th TFS towards the valiant Air America crews who saved our comrades is difficult to express. There is no doubt that their prompt, heroic action saved two lives that day. We will long remember and be grateful for their actions. We all hope that we may be of help if Air America crews ever face a similar test.

4- 9/20/71

6. Letters are never as warm as a drink and a handshake. The 13th TFS, therefore, cordially invites Messrs. Cash, Lannin, Parker, Henthorn, and Cortez to be our guests at a going-away "Sawadee Party" for some of our men who are completing their combat tours in Southeast Asia. The party will be held on 18 September at 1900 hours in the main banquet room of the Udorn Officers' Open Mess. The "Panther Pack" is looking forward to thanking all of these men in person.

7. To all of the personnel of Air America, the 13th TFS "Panther Pack" sends a "Well Done" with admiration for the fine work done day after day in support of our allies in Southeast Asia. Keep up the good work!

  
CHARLES W. COLLINS, Lt Colonel, USAF  
Commander