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5 September 1967

STATEMENT OF LTJG CARPENTER

On 19 May aircraft 502 was hit by a SAM while flying number three in a flight of six aircraft. I was flying number two position. The flight had broken as the missile approached and as we continued our turn, I could see two good chutes floating down and observed the aircraft impact explode and burn. We continued on the mission. On egress from the target the flight had been separated completely and I was alone. As we passed over the crash site, I heard two separate beepers followed by a transmission "This is RAYGUN 502;" LT PATTERSON's voice. I answered "this is 505; read you loud and clear." His reply was "Is that you, Steve?" "Negative; this is Nick. What is your condition?" "I am OK, but I have a badly broken left leg and won't be able to move." I rogered that and about that time I got another call: "This 502 on deck;" LCDR MCDANIEL's voice. I replied "Roger; I read you. What is your condition?" He replied "I am OK". By this time I had passed the area. I still had a full load of bombs and diminishing fuel, so I could not remain in the area. When I returned to the ship I learned that I was the only person to hear from either individual and was the only one fairly sure of their position.

I launched again at first light in an A-6A with four (4) F-4 Phantoms as escorts. As we crested the suspected ridge line, I immediately got two beepers, and determined their position to be in a "U" shaped valley. As the Phantoms circled to the north, I stayed low in the valley and attempted communications. At low altitude you could only hear and talk to the downed crewmember as you passed almost directly over him. Voice communications were made with LT PATTERSON only, though a separate beeper believed to be LCDR MCDANIEL's was heard. LT PATTERSON's conversation consisted of a reconfirmation of his badly broken left leg, no activity in area, and when queried as to LCDR MCDANIEL's position he replied "he's over the hill." I took this to mean that he had landed on the other side of a small ridge on the side of the large ridge. As we circled we finally spotted LT PATTERSON's position. We saw the chute on the ground in a clearing and an object next to it believed to be LT PATTERSON. Each time we passed over he would call "Now, Now!" when we were directly overhead. We exited the area. The following morning I again went into the area in the back seat of an F-4C to drop the kits for the Fulton Extraction System and a survival equipment kit. As before, when we entered the valley, we again heard a beeper, followed by voice communications with LT PATTERSON. The conversation consisted this time of relocating his position and explaining what we were going to do (drop kits to him). We located him by mirror flashes and dropped the kits to him. They landed in a clearing about 100 yards down the side of the hill from him. We attempted to find out LCDR MCDANIEL's status from him but could not. We began to get MIG calls in the

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Enclosure (2) to CO, VA-35
ltr serial 03267 of

UNCLASSIFIED

SEP - 7 1967

UNCLASSIFIED

5 September 1967

area and we were low on fuel so we left the area with LT PATTERSON moving toward the kits. That evening I launched in the C130 recovery aircraft and the two F4C's that went in with me that morning went in prior to the C130 to confirm that the system was set up and ready. They established communication with LT PATTERSON and learned that he had not gotten the kits; the "Cooks" got them and almost captured him trying to get them. He further stated that he was back up the hill where it was safer and was remaining there. He was asked again "is anyone with you?" He replied yes, that he had just spoken to Bob WALKINSHAW that morning. Bob WALKINSHAW is a civilian technical representative attached to Attack Squadron THIRTY-FIVE and the mention of his name has led to much speculation as to what was meant. For example; delirious after having been in the jungle for two and one-half days with little or no food and water; trying to say he had talked to some civilians; trying to say he had seen LCDR MCDANIEL and did not want to reveal his name. The C130 and F4C's departed the area. The following morning an F4B from ENTERPRISE went into the area and received no emissions of any kind from either crewmember. This terminated the rescue effort.

H. M. CARPENTER

Enclosure (2) to CO, VA-35
ltr serial 032-67 of

2

SEP-7 1967

UNCLASSIFIED