

Pappy's thoughts concerning Eagle Claw Day 2:

The "American Hostage Rescue Mission," code named Eagle Claw, was unarguably the most ambitious rescue attempt ever recorded. The demands were numerous and unforgiving. Men and equipment would be pushed to the limit. It is important to know that the final approved plan was not universally supported. After exhaustive reviews, the Joint chiefs and their Staffs estimated the probability of success to be no better than 70%. Col. Beckwith's estimate was 40%. The distressing factor was success was never defined,

The last week of April was the last time, until late Fall, that the night would be long enough to attempt the rescue of the American hostages held in Tehran. A delay of nearly six months was unsatisfactory. When the deployment order was issued the gunships were ready. We were prepared, well trained, confident and eager. The aircraft were in top shape. Our mission, although extremely demanding, was simple to explain:

- 1, Take off, 4 aircraft, fly formation for about 1800 miles to arrive at work
2. While enroute, refuel twice, (send one ship home\*) descend to low altitude, cross the gulf,  
Climb to enroute altitude.                   \*(only if fuel was not available from the tankers)
3. Arrive at embassy ON TIME (ETA, dependent on Delta), be ready to perform mission.
- 4 SPECTRE'S JOB # 1: Provide a safe working environment for the rescue team.
5. SPECTRE'S JOB #2: Prevent tactical aircraft from launching from Mehrbad Airfield
- 6 SPECTRE'S JOB # 3: Escort rescue force and precious cargo, soccer field-Manzariyeh
7. After rescue team and PC are gone, destroy the helicopters.
8. RTB about 1000 miles to landing, Air refuel, if possible

What would have success look like? If all of the rescue force and hostages are out of Tehran, no aircraft lost.....that would be success. 75% recovered, with some aircraft loses. Would we claim that as success? Failure will identify itself. Everyone is left on the ground in Manzariyeh and/or Tehran.

After 35 years of reflection, I do know some things concerning Day 2. Among those, are that the men of Delta, the recovery teams, (ground and air), were ready and willing. The in-country assets had done their job and done it well. The gunships and crews were the finest close air support force ever assembled. Success or no, there was no alternative. In my mind, failure was NOT AN OPTION. Would we have succeeded? That is something we'll never know.

But, what we do know, Is that when the National Command Authority directed the most difficult rescue of all times.....we had the men with the "THE GUTS TO TRY." I salute you.

PAPPY