



NEVER ALONE The Marty Mahrt Story EDUCATION KIT

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What does it mean to be Never Alone?

When Marty Mahrt woke up to start his day on May 10, 1966, he had no idea that at least 30 people would be needed to help save his life!

Marty had been flying combat missions in his F-105 Thunderchief since the Fall of 1965. On May 10 of 1966, he was highly experienced with 82 missions under his belt. He was used to danger and felt confident in his abilities.

Yet, flying the F-105 into North Vietnam was one of the most dangerous things a pilot could be doing in 1966. The North Vietnamese defended military targets with ferocity and skill. As the F-105 was the primary strike-aircraft of the United States Air Force, it shouldered the burden of flying missions into North Vietnam — by the end of the war, nearly 40% of all F-105s had been lost due to combat action! Marty was one of those losses.

At the time, ejecting over North Vietnam was especially problematic in that survivors risked being captured by civilians (and killed) or being made a Prisoner of War (POW) and tortured. When Marty's F-105 was hit, he knew he faced the potential of either bad days ahead or the concerted effort of many to rescue him.

He parachuted so deep into enemy territory that his rescue was the furthest-north of any of the war to-date. He had to hide from North Vietnamese soldiers, villagers and was even attacked by MiG-17 jet fighters trying to shoot his rescue helicopter down. Yet, by the end of the day, he was returned to his base, safe with only minor injuries that resulted from the ejection.

To Marty, "Never Alone" means that there are always others ready to provide help and support in time of need.

Marty understood that he was smart, highly trained and strong — still, he had to rely on the work of others.

**MARTY MAHRT
SAYS IT BEST
See Page 6 for
online interview**

Published by



Produced by



Support from

**The Mary Chilton DAR Chapter
Highmark Credit Union
SD Air & Space Museum**



PHOTO: Forest Lewis

Marty Mahrt, age 13

Marty Mahrt - Vietnam War pilot BACKGROUND AND FACTS

Birthplace: Rapid City, SD
Birth date: Nov 6, 1933
Occupation: Military pilot

FACTS:

- Marty's father owned a Buick dealership
- Marty's mother worked for the Forest Service
- Marty had one brother, one sister
- Marty originally aspired to be a teacher
- Marty joined the Air Force in 1955
- Graduated from Notre Dame University in 1955
- Marty served just short of 30 years in the U.S. Air Force
- Today Marty is a charter member of the veteran's support program, "Operation Black Hills Cabin"



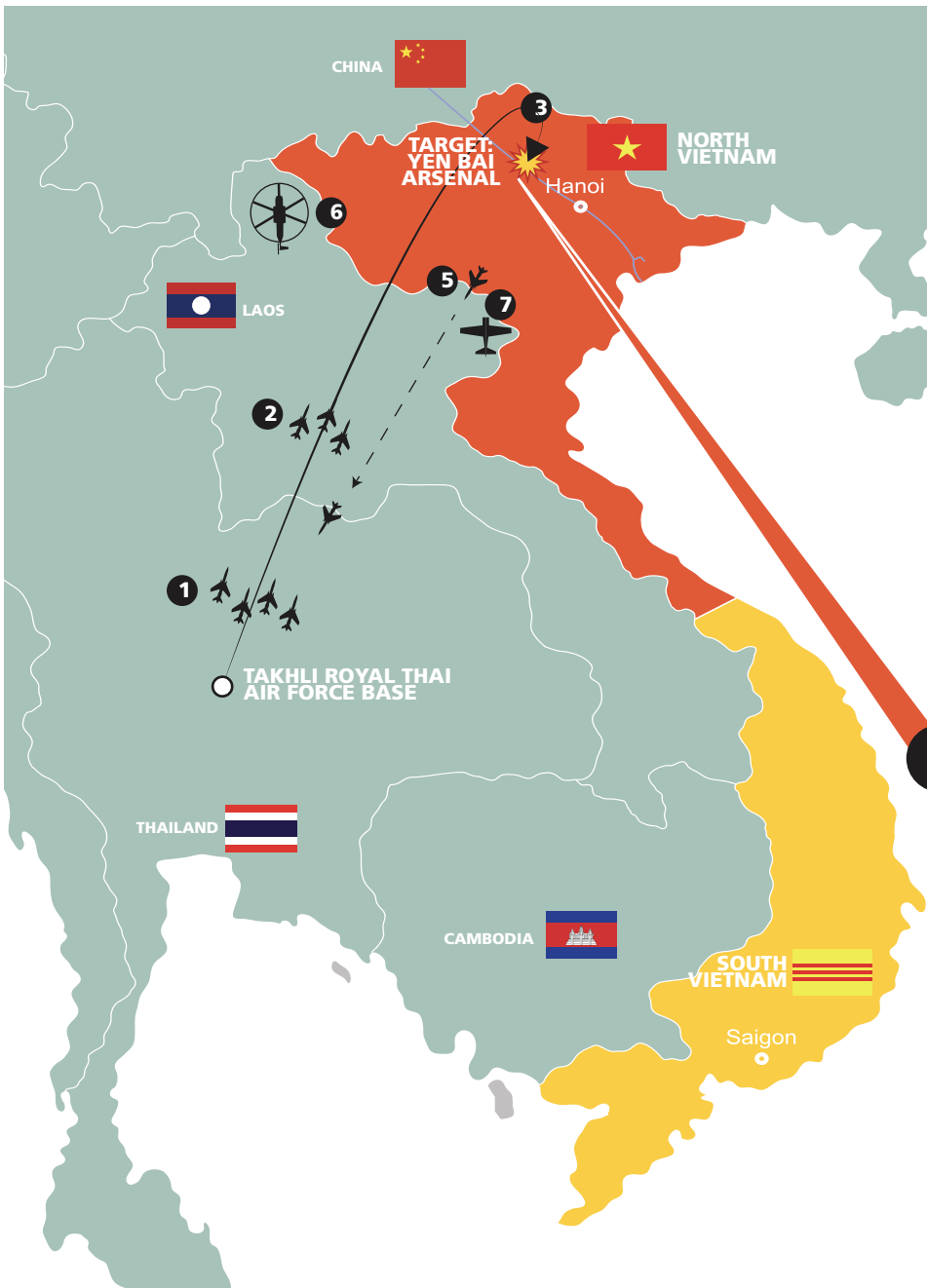
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TARGET: Yen Bai, North Vietnam, May 10, 1966



1. Four F-105s took off from Takhli AFB to attack the military arsenal at Yen Bai. The mission was supposed to take about three hours, total.
2. One F-105 had a mechanical issue and returned to base; the rest received more fuel from a tanker airplane and made a low-altitude (4,000 ft) dash to the target.
3. The three F-105s popped up to about 20,000 feet and rolled into a dive for their bomb runs.
4. Marty was hit from 37mm anti-aircraft fire after dropping his two 3,000lb bombs.
5. Bob Gobble decided to stay with his friend even if it meant running out of fuel; a brave tanker crew refueled him at the last moment over North Vietnam. Gobble awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for helping his friend.
6. HH-3 "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters waiting in northern Laos answered the rescue call.
7. A-1 Skyraiders with code-name "SANDY" loitered near the border of North Vietnam to provide protection for the HH-3 helicopters and Marty while he was waiting for help on the ground.

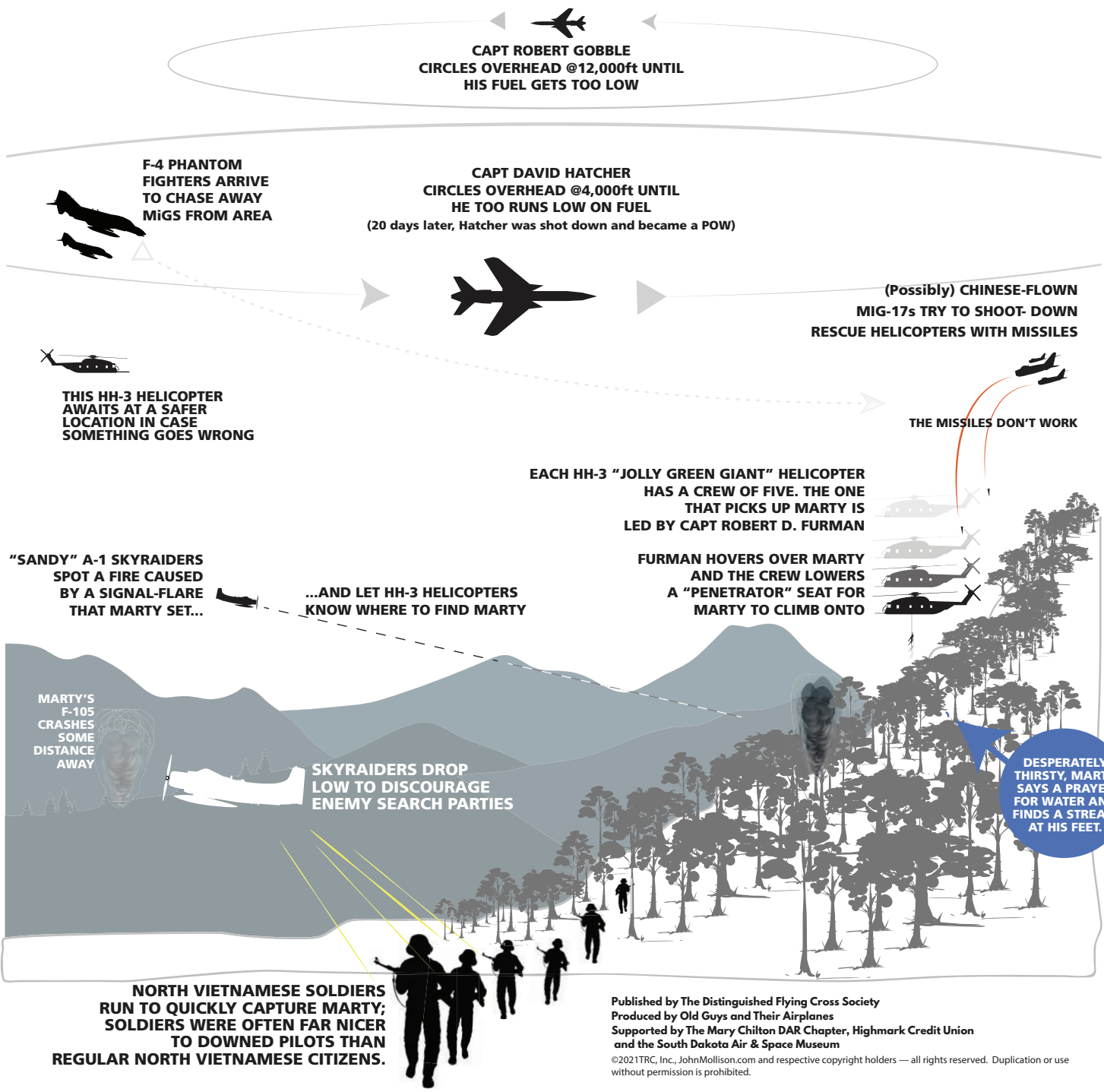




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The Rescue: two tense hours, many helping hands.



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Marty Mahrt's F-105D fighter-bomber!

BIG NAME:

The Republic Aviation Company used the word "Thunder" in many of their aircraft, from WWII's P-47 Thunderbolt to the Korean War F-84 Thunderjet to the Vietnam War's F-105 Thunderchief.

Legend has it that the Thunderchief's nickname of "Thud" came about because the airplane could not glide for very long if the engine quit (and therefore go THUD when it hit the ground).

BIG JOB:

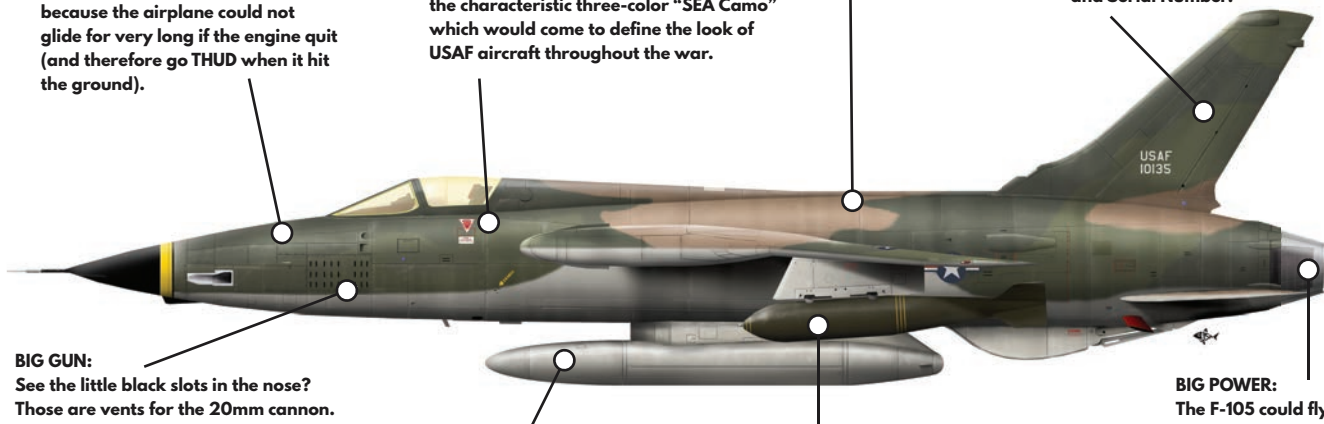
F-105s flew over 20,000 combat missions during the Vietnam War and flew well over 70% of all the air strike missions over North Vietnam.

BIG PAINT JOB:

F-105s arrived in Southeast Asia in 1964 and did not have camouflage paint. But, late in 1965, the silver aircraft were painted the characteristic three-color "SEA Camo" which would come to define the look of USAF aircraft throughout the war.

BIG LETTERS?:

If you ever see a picture of a USAF aircraft from the Vietnam War and it has two big letters painted on the tail, it means the photo was likely taken in 1967 or later - Marty's F-105 is depicted as it was in 1966 with only the USAF abbreviation and Serial Number.



BIG GUN:

See the little black slots in the nose? Those are vents for the 20mm cannon. When the cannon was fired, it created high pressure that needed to be vented out the side or else it would blow the panel off!

These slots were added after combat operations in SE Asia discovered the problem.

BIG BELLY:

The F-105 had an internal bay that would allow it to carry 8,000lbs of extra fuel or even a nuclear weapon.

However, heavy loads required a lot of fuel. Marty's F-105D is shown with a 650 gal fuel tank. Sometimes fuel tanks were hung beneath the wings and bombs loaded where the fuel tank is shown.

BIG BOMBS:

Marty's F-105 carried two 3,000lb Mk 181 bombs on the May 10, 1966 mission. The bombs were so heavy and created so much drag, they had to be dropped at precisely the same time or else the F-105 could flip over onto its back and lose flight! Delivered properly onto a target, the effect of these huge bombs was devastating.

BIG POWER:

The F-105 could fly at over twice the speed of sound thanks to the enormous power of its jet engine (26,000lbs of thrust with afterburner)!



"100 MISSIONS NORTH"

The 100-Mission patch at left is a highly respected proof of service for any pilot that earned the right to wear it! Typically, the patch signifies flying 100 missions against targets in North Vietnam and Laos some time before April 1, 1968. After this date, bombing missions against "The North" were halted by President Lyndon Johnson. However, bombing of targets in North Vietnam resumed in May of 1972 when President Richard Nixon ordered Operation Linebacker as an attempt to stop the flow of war goods from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. Marty flew 102 combat missions over Laos and North Vietnam but as of his shoot-down, 88 over North Vietnam (which put him short of the 100). Marty bought the "100 Mission Patch" thinking he'd surely achieve the number but seeing that he didn't actually make 100 missions, would not wear it. Today, it sits as a reminder for Marty of those that did.



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Marty had another source of help in his time of trouble

Marty grew up believing in the idea that a greater power existed beyond daily life — his mother and father taught Marty and his brothers and sisters about faith in God.

“I never thought God would give me an easy life. But I figured God would not give me situations I could not figure out, either.”

Marty’s faith in God helped him see his circumstances as part of a greater plan and accept that things may or may not turn out like he wanted but would always work out for the best in the “bigger picture” of things.



Source: USAF film

IT TAKES FAITH TO LOOK UP:
The picture above is of a “PJ” Pararescueman dangling from a rescue helicopter and helping retrieve a downed pilot



Photo: Lt. Col David Hatcher USAF (Ret.) , VeteransTributes.org

TOUGH ODDS FOR F-105 PILOTS

Of the 395 F-105 combat losses, David Hatcher was one of the 101 (26%) F-105 pilots and crew that were made Prisoners of War; 146 (37%) were killed, leaving 148 (37%) rescued.

Many people endure difficulty by simply having faith in better days.

Dave Hatcher, one of the pilots who guarded Marty on May 10, 1966 was shot down and captured by the North Vietnamese on May 30th of that same month.

In his prison cell in October of that year, he believed he received the following prayer from God and memorized it, repeating it every day — it gave him encouragement to survive over 2,451 days in the infamous “Hanoi Hilton” prison system.

“Good Morning Lord, I'm feeling fine! And thanks to You, I'm doing okay.

Thank You Lord, for a night of rest, thank You for sweet blessedness.

Thank You for Your love divine and for...my peace of mind.

Forgive me Lord for sin's I've done. Forgive me for the men I've wronged. Teach me to forgive my foe and those...who wish me harm.

Now go with me this day, today, help me to resist and say, I love my Lord and I love my land and I'll praise their name as long as I can!”

Published by The Distinguished Flying Cross Society
Produced by Old Guys and Their Airplanes
Supported by The Mary Chilton DAR Chapter, Highmark Credit Union
and the South Dakota Air & Space Museum

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Why not listen to Marty Mahrt in his own words?

NEVER ALONE.
THE MARTY MAHRT STORY

FILM | LIVE Q&A DEBRIEF | EDUCATORS KIT

FEB 10
www.SDPB.org/OGTADebrief

PRODUCED WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM
THE MARY CHILTON DAR FOUNDATION
HIGHMARK FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
and the SD PILOTS ASSOCIATION

PHOTO: Old Guys and Their Airplanes

STORIES ARE BEST TOLD BY THE PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE.

Taking advantage of the benefits provided through studying history is a fundamental aspect of personal success. Though there are excellent books, websites and even movies to help learn history, nothing beats interacting with someone who participated in the moment. Yet, it can be intimidating to talk with others about significant moments in their life, especially difficult moments that are related to war or conflict. To ease that challenge, consider these points:

1. Think about a period of history you're interested in learning about - then ask parents or teachers who they suggest you meet to learn more.
2. Ask questions that require a personal perspective such as, "What did you learn from your experience?" or "Describe your most vivid memory..."
3. If you want to record or photograph your meeting, ask for permission (and let the person know what you intend to do with their story).
4. One conversation may not be enough to understand the person or the moment; try to have at least three meaningful conversations.
5. Getting background information will help build credibility with who you're talking to but be careful to let the other person tell their story without being corrected or interrupted.
6. Be prepared for surprises! You may find that someone's personal story is different than what you've learned elsewhere.
7. You'll acquire humility, wisdom and character through learning about the lives of others so be prepared to share what you learn with others.

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LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE TIMES OF MARTY MAHRT



Col. Marty Mahrt, c.1982. USAF photo

Some of Marty Mahrt's military decorations

LEGION OF MERIT with V device

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

PURPLE HEART

Actions Speak Louder than Medals Education Kit contributors:

Capt. Rich Hall (Ret.)

Col. Bob Gobble (Ret.)

Maj. "Von" Liebman (Ret.)

Howard Plunkett

Forrest Lewis

John Mollison

Additional support from:

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society

South Dakota Air & Space Museum

South Dakota Public Broadcasting

Highmark Credit Union

Mary Chilton DAR Chapter

South Dakota Pilots Association

Old Guys and Their Airplanes

(Dalton Coffey, Rick Lingberg)

www.DFCSociety.org



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Never Alone
Educators Kit
<http://www.dfcsociety.org>



Thud Ridge
History book
Jack Broughton

Thud Pilot
History book
Victor Vizcarra



Surviving Hell -
a POWs Journey
History book
Leo Thorsness

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The Distinguished Flying Cross is a military decoration awarded to individuals who demonstrate heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.

One of the missions of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society is to share the heroic stories of its members with the world. Though especially remarkable, Marty Mahrt's story is just one of many. If you have any interest in learning more about how ordinary people can prevail under extraordinary challenges, the DFCSociety.org website is a great resource. Hundreds of DFC citations are available to read.

On behalf of the DFC Society, may Colonel Mahrt's story inspire you to appreciate those in your life who help you succeed.

Colonel Woody Gilliland, USMC (Ret.)
Chairman, Distinguished Flying Cross Society

www.DFCSociety.org