

The Rescue of Streetcar 304: A Navy Pilot's Forty Hours on the Run in Laos

Kenny Wayne Fields



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The Rescue of Streetcar 304: A Navy Pilot's Forty Hours on the Run in Laos Kenny Wayne Fields In 1968, during a forty hour period, the Air Force flew 189 sorties to rescue a Navy A-7 pilot, call sign Streetcar 304, in one of the largest rescue efforts of the Vietnam War. Before it ended, four pilots had ejected, seven planes were lost or heavily damaged, and, at one point, seven airmen awaited rescue behind enemy lines. Streetcar 304 now provides his personal narrative about the event.On his very first combat mission, Fields catapulted off the USS America, flew to Laos, dropped his bombs in the midst of an enemy trap and was shot down. Streetcar describes his last tearful farewell night at home with his wife, his tracer ridden bomb runs and a last moment ejection. Cringe when he describes being shot at while floating down in his parachute. Ride along in the cockpit of two rescue pilots as enemy tracers zoom upward and shoot each one down. Feel your heart skip a beat as Streetcar and one Air Force pilot separately evade numerous close encounters with Phatet Lao guerillas, are nearly killed time and again by friendly bombs, and deal with the stress of jungle animals and lack of sleep. Suffer with his wife when she receives word that he is down, fate unknown, and then describes her own forty hours of suspense. Relate to the pilots who are ordered to make one final rescue attempt. Shed a tear with Streetcar when one rescuer is captured by the enemy. Experience the final harrowing rescue attempt during which Fields is wounded by a friendly bomb.

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