

KIA 2 Apr 72

1Lt Byron K Kulland

From: Outfishin55@aol.com
Date sent: Fri, 12 Apr 2002 21:19:42 EDT
Subject: Re: Kulland
To: phoenix50@neb.rr.com

Ken,

Byron Kulland was in my section while he was with the Phoenix. When we stood down he was transferred to a unit, call sign Blue Ghost. There are two good accounts of his story "in print." One accounting appeared in the annual VHPA Directory a few years ago when they were doing those after action reports. Another appears in a book that was published within the last three years about the rescue of Bat 21. LTC Hambleton wrote a book (he was Bat 21) in the early seventies about his ordeal. It was narrow in scope because it focused on his ordeal from just his standpoint. The more recent book was written by one of the FACs who worked the mission and is really good--sorry I can't remember the title.

LTC Hambleton was an EW type (non pilot) flying on an air force EW bird that happened to be over the DMZ on the day the NVA launched the Easter offensive in 1972. They were hit by a SAM and he was the only one to get out. He literally parachuted right into the middle of the armor columns heading south. Shortly after he hit the ground, Kulland along with a couple of cobras tried to get him out. Both cobras got shot up real bad and Kulland's slick got blown out of the sky. It appears both pilots were dead when the aircraft came to rest. One crewmember escaped into the bush the other was pretty badly injured. The NVA showed up, executed the wounded crewmember and caught the lone survivor and took him north. Kulland and the two others remains were recovered shortly after Nelson and Moreira.

Hopefully you have held on to your past issues of the Directory. Also, try to locate the book, its really good. By the way, Hambleton was eventually rescued by a navy seal, who took a sampan up the Cua Viet or Dong Ha river at night and pulled him out. This same seal had rescued another downed aviator behind enemy lines in the same area a few days before (it was a FAC who had been shot down while he was covering Bat 21.) This seal, LT Tommy Norris, was severely wounded a few months later. He was awarded the MH in 1974. President Ford asked him what he wanted to do now (he was being medically retired-lost an eye, plus assorted other wounds). Tommy replied he wanted to be an FBI Agent. So the bureau got its first one-eyed agent. He just retired out of one of our small offices in northern Idaho less than two years ago.

Hope I didn't bore you by digressing, take care,

Don Davis

From: PHOENIX21@aol.com
Date sent: Sat, 13 Apr 2002 11:59:32 EDT
Subject: Re: Kulland
To: phoenix50@neb.rr.com

Kulland was a frequent right seat of mine. He was from New Town, North Dakota. I remember he was married but don't recall kids. He played the guitar and was part of our regular sing and drink gatherings. He was very - VERY- quiet and reserved. Byron had not been in country long enough to rotate home so when the Phoenix stood down in late 71 he transferred to the Cav.

I learned he was MIA from the Army Times. Later he was reclassified Missing - Presumed Dead, and then later to KIA. He was awarded the DFC post-humously. He was shot down while involved in the search for Bat 21. I have tried a few times to locate relatives but so far have had no success. Since Byron was my semi-regular PP, I would really like to talk to family members. I hope this very brief sketch helps you out.

Ken Morrow Phoenix 21