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Dear Stephen,

This follows-up on my e-mail of this morning.

During the summer of 1966, HALSEY served in the Tonkin Gulf and was successful in saving a number of Navy and Air Force pilots as well as a squad of South Vietnamese Rangers inserted into North Vietnam in a rescue attempt.

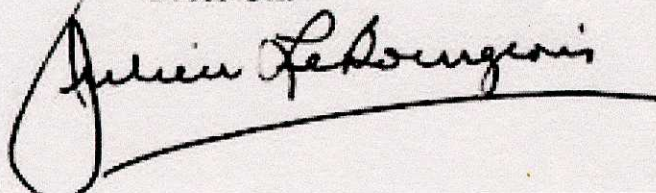
We were assigned to the Southern Search and Rescue Station during each of two month-long periods. On the last day of the second period, an Air Force F-5 pilot ejected well inland near the Laotian border. We vectored our embarked helo to effect the rescue. The technical details of this rescue are the story for another day. Suffice it to say now that the four star Commander, Seventh Air Force called the rescue "one of the cliff hangers of the war".

It being completely dark by the time our helo arrived at the scene, our pilot descended into a pitch black valley, dropped a "jungle penetrator" through the trees and pulled out the pilot who thought it strange when he was told to put on a life jacket - he had assumed that he had been picked up by an Air Force helo. The first time he realized that the Navy had rescued him was when he stepped out on deck at which point the attached photo was taken. We had a contest on board for the best caption. The winner was "A ship! I thought I had been rescued."

The pilot's travails for the day were not over. As we were departing the Gulf about midnight, I was told to highline the pilot to a nearby CVA which, as you will recall, would control the tension on the highline. All was well until HALSEY and the CVA began to roll out of synch toward and away from each other. The CVA first put the Air Force pilot's feet in the water as the ships rolled toward each other. You can only imagine his thrill as the ships rolled apart. He probably believed he was being vectored toward the Moon. But, all's well that ends well. He made it over and we did not see him again until he visited the ship in San Diego to attend a ceremony at which our pilot was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry.

You can just imagine the other wonderful stories waiting to be told from the history of our great ship. There are still plenty from my time in command.

Press On!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julien LeBourgeois". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the signature.