

Keeping the Gulf of Tonkin Safe

30 April 1968

Vic Prislusky's crew was flying the usually boring COMBAT APPLE mission over the Gulf of Tonkin.

Also airborne that day was a DC-130 carrying four jet-powered Ryan Firebee drones, used by the Air Force for reconnaissance and electronic warfare missions over North Vietnam. One of those DC-130 drones went astray that day and some ground observers thought it was a bogie and a potential threat to our RC-135M.

Red Crown's Navy fighter cap might have been bored, too, until the report came in. Spring-loaded for action, and thinking the drone was an enemy fighter, one of them shot the drone down immediately.

When disabled, the drone deployed a parachute, which Greg Krosnoff (our Nav Two) saw out the left side pilot window and reported 'a chute down'. That was misinterpreted by the Navy jocks, Red Crown, and RC crew as confirmation of an enemy kill. There was joy on the carrier, reportedly a bogie sign painted on the aircraft, and drinks all around.

When the incident was fully investigated, it was all cleared up to the disappointment and chagrin of the Navy jocks.

True story.

- *Max Moore*