

# Rope Trick Taught To Pilots

SAIGON (7thAF) — Ever wonder what it would be like to dangle on a string? Hang in a parachute harness near the top of a 200-foot tree?

Could be a very hazardous predicament for a pilot who is forced to bail out over the jungles of Vietnam.

Capt. John B. Stone, 29, of Coffeeville, Miss., is trying to eliminate that hazard for combat crews at his air base in Southeast Asia.

He is teaching them a survival technique he learned while working for the U.S. Forest Service before he entered the Air Force in 1959.

"All that is needed is a rope," the captain says. "The one we use is a 200-foot nylon cord."

Lightweight and thin, but strong enough to do the job, it can be made into a very small roll and easily carried in the crew member's flying coveralls.

By threading the lifeline through his harness and attaching one end to the parachute risers, which remain in the tree, a downed pilot can cut himself free of the parachute and descend slowly to the ground.

"Only one foot and one hand are needed for braking action," says Stone. "The possibility of rope burns is eliminated since you can descend, almost effortlessly, at any speed you choose."

Since being assigned as a combat pilot in Southeast Asia, he has flown 100 combat missions, 97 over north Vietnam. Fortunately, he hasn't had to use his technique, but came "too close for comfort" on his third and 68th missions when his F-4C Phantom was badly damaged by enemy ground fire.