

Clark AB Aids Mountaineers

CLARK AFB.—Despite the efforts of the 31st and 32nd Air Rescue teams at Clark Air Force Base, a recent recreational climbing expedition on a Subic Bay mountain ridge resulted in tragedy when two climbers were injured in a rock slide.

Assistance arrived too late to save the life of one of the party, but the other man was flown by a helicopter to the Clark flight line, where an ambulance awaited.

The climbers, including another, uninjured man, were Cubi Point Seabees, out for what they thought would be a pleasant day of mountaineering. They were descending the treacherous ridge when the rock slide occurred, pinning two beneath the debris.

BUILDER 3RD CLASS Rod Kinney dug his friends out, made them as comfortable as possible, and continued down the remaining 3,000 feet of the ridge to get help.

As soon as word was received, the Subic Bay Naval Station called the Clark Air Force Base Rescue Center for assistance. An SA-16 and a helicopter were immediately dispatched.

The SA-16 was piloted by Capt. Adolph Mathias, with Capt. Weldon Edwards, Lt. Herman West,

M/Sgt. Verl Linford, T/Sgt. William Hyatt, T/Sgt. Ted Hawkins and A/IC Udo Fischer as crew members. **PARA-RESCUE**

Captain Donald Dwight, 1st Lt. Harlan Davis, and Medic A/3C Ruben Garza manned the chopper. Para-Rescue chutists were placed on alert.

On approaching the mountain, the helicopter crew discovered the only available landing space to be 1,000 feet below the injured men.

They eased in, and Medic Garza led by BU3 Kinney, worked up the rugged terrain, through bamboo thickets, ten foot cogon grass, and hundred-foot-deep washout areas.

By the time they reached the accident scene, it was almost dark. They discovered that one of the men had died from loss of blood. The other was found to be in good enough shape to withstand a night on the ridge.

This information was radioed to a circling Air Rescue C-47, piloted by Lt. Col. Edward P. Langebartel, 31st Air Rescue Squadron commander, and co-piloted by Col. Lawrence Horras, Commander of the 2nd Air Rescue Group. Para-Rescuemen A/2C Harry Dragoo and A/1C Eugene Slabinski were also aboard. **PARA-RESCUE**

SEABEE GROUND searchers were the first to reach the accident point just after dawn. They were joined a few hours later by the SA-16 crew. The C-47 parachuted food and water to them, utilizing flares, in the half-darkness.

The helicopter managed to find another even tighter landing spot on a slab of volcanic rock 500 feet further up the mountainside. The injured man and dead man were brought down to them in stokes litters, previously dropped by the choppers.

The chopper just escaped another close call upon its arrival at Clark Air Force Base thirty minutes later when its gas supply was found to be almost exhausted.

Actually, the 4-man PJ team disembarked from a SA-16, took raft to shore, then had to find way up the steep mountain slope at night. Some more Seabees arrived by daybreak and helped litter evac of body and injured Seabee. In afternoon, the team finally arrived at the LZ of the H-19. PJ team went with Seabees to their camp, later picked up by SA-16.