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FROM: Det 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Sq, APO US FORCES 96227

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report 6-23-12 February 1966 13 Feb 66

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Group (JSARC), APO US FORCES 96307

1. Mission number: 6-23-12 Feb 66.
2. SAR Alerted by: 3rd ARRGp JSARCC.
3. Type SAR aircraft used: Two (2) HH-43F helicopters.

Primary Recovery Helicopter:

RCC	Capt Edwin A. Hemmingson	Det 6, 38th ARRS
CP	1st Lt Mark C. Schibler	Det 6, 38th ARRS
HM	TSgt Richard A. Connon	Det 6, 38th ARRS
RS	SSgt David E. Milsten	Det 6, 38th ARRS

Secondary (Top Cover) Helicopter:

RCC	Capt Maurice G. Kessler	Det 6, 38th ARRS
CP	Capt Dale L. Potter	Det 6, 38th ARRS
HM	TSgt Kenneth L. Perkins	Det 6, 38th ARRS
RS	A1C William H. Pitsenbarger	Det 6, 38th ARRS

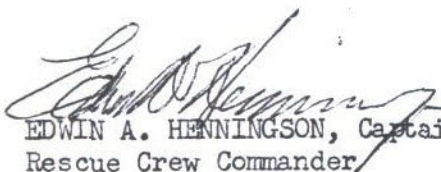
4. Reaction time from initial notification to pick up: Forty-five minutes.
5. CAP assistance: One (1) USAF O-1F FAC; Rescort: Four (4) Army UH-1B helicopters "gunships".
6. Area and type of pick up: Recovery made with rescue hoist and stokes litter from hostile area heavily wooded with trees 180 feet high.
7. Signalling equipment used to locate wounded evacuees: Smoke grenades.
8. Survivor's name and serial number: Last name and unit only information available - Hall, First US Army Infantry Division.
9. Summary of events:

At 1045 hours word was received that a critically wounded First Infantry Division casualty needed immediate pick up at coordinates 10° 42' N, 107° 08' E. We were advised that the survivor was located deep within heavily wooded terrain and that a hoisted stokes litter pick up would be required for the recovery. The area was reported as not secure at that time, and air strikes and artillery fire were being conducted in the immediate vicinity of the pick up scene. This area was located 128°

at approximately 27 miles from Bien Hoa Air Base, therefore it was necessary to top off the fuel load in both helicopters. POL response was excellent, and the first helicopter was launched at 1050 hours for a reaction time of only five minutes. The second (top cover) helicopter was scrambled and airborne approximately two minutes later. The recovery helicopters arrived in the general area of the pick up with little difficulty. However, slight to moderate difficulty was encountered in locating the exact area for the recovery since the ground was obscured by a thick canopy of jungle foliage approximately 180 feet above the ground. Although personnel on the ground at the scene had attempted to mark the area with at least two smoke grenades, due to the density of the forest coverage it took a considerable period of time before even a little of the smoke had penetrated the jungle cover; most of it had hung or dissipated in the trees. Meanwhile, the USAF Forward Air Controller (FAC) at the scene proceeded to brief the recovery helicopter crews and the armed UH-1B escort gunships on details of the situation on the ground: Though a secured perimeter had been established around the immediate pick up scene, wide spread and continuous contact with the Viet Cong were reported in all quadrants. Other helicopters operating in a nearby clearing were reporting continuous groundfire all around the area. The FAC recommended an approach and departure route to the site, and we proceeded with an approach to the area faintly marked with the smoke. Once over the smoke saturated jungle canopy we found that we were still not in visual contact with personnel on the ground. Finally the ground party was located, with assistance from a ground radio, by hovering back and forth over the 180 foot trees. It took a total of approximately twenty minutes hovering hoist work and a skillful bit of stokes litter maneuvering by the hoist operator before the casualty was secured on board the rescue helicopter. He had suffered a gaping wound in his upper chest which was bleeding profusely; it was not possible to stem the flow of blood with a tourniquet and we had been advised that immediate surgery would be required if he was to live. Just as the survivor had been secured in the cabin, the ground radio party requested one (1) deceased be recovered and evacuated also. Almost at the same instant the hoist operator advised the RCC that the hoist cable had sustained damage and was not serviceable. At that time the primary recovery helicopter requested the top cover helicopter come down and make the recovery. The second (top cover) helicopter also experienced some difficulty locating the exact pick-up site. However, once the site was located, the recovery of the deceased was completed without incident. As the primary recovery helicopter started a climb out on the pre-suggested course, the FAC directed a hard break into a 180 degree turn for climb out. Just then several rounds of artillery impacted directly on what would have been the climb-out course of the recovery ship. While the pick up was in progress, considerable sniper fire had been reported, and the armed "Heuey" gunships had made several firing passes to suppress this groundfire. The FAC led the first helicopter around the artillery barrage to the field hospital at X. Go Dau. The landing there was uneventful (though sniper

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fire had been reported in that area also) and the casualty was off loaded by hospital personnel. At that time, the FAC radioed that he had fighters "backed-up" for target strike and requested that the primary recovery ship return to the pick-up site to lead the second helicopter around the artillery barrage, so that he (the FAC) could be released. We complied with this request arriving back at the scene just as the second ship was on climb out from the pick-up. The flight back to the hospital was uneventful, and as soon as the deceased had been off-loaded, both recovery helicopters returned to Bien Hoa AB. The statistical summary for the mission reflects a total of 6 sorties for 3+10 hours, one combat save, and one deceased evacuated. Weather was not a factor at any time during the flight. The control and coordination provided by the FAC at the scene was outstanding; this minimized radio "chatter" - communications discipline was excellent. The protective coverage and fire support by the armed UH-1B gunships was extremely prompt, timely and effective. The overall support from all personnel involved in the effort was excellent. An EUR will be submitted on the sheared hoist cable; this is only one of 2 or 3 experienced by this crew alone. It is suggested that an information sheet describing the technique for getting signal smoke up through a thick, jungle canopy be mass printed and distributed to all units in South-east Asia. This procedure is as follows: A weight is attached to one end of long piece of shroud line or rope. The smoke grenade is attached to the other end. The weight is thrown up over a branch of the tree, and is used to hoist the then ignited smoke grenade up near the tops of the trees.


EDWIN A. HENNINGSON, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander