

Following is verbatim transcript of tape recording forwarded to this Hq by Hq 7AF in connection with recommendation for award of Medal of Honor to AlC William H Pitsenbarger.

AlC William H Pitsenbarger, the son of Mr and Mrs William F Pitsenbarger of 626 Gordon St, Piqua, Ohio, has given his life upholding the principles of his organization's motto "That Others May Live." A pararescue specialist with Detachment 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq at Bien Hoa Air Base, "Pit", as he was known to his friends and co-workers, was no stranger to death as a number of downed pilots and wounded ground troops owe their lives to his selfless devotion to duty.

Army Sgt Fred C Navarro of Hutchins, Kansas, is a squad leader with C Company, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, First Infantry Division. Sgt Navarro is recovering now from a wound he sustained the night that Amn Pitsenbarger was killed. Sgt Navarro can you tell us what happened the night that Pit was killed?

Ans - Well, sir, when it first started there was sniper fire and we were hit by artillery and the rescue chopper came in to take some of the men out and they had taken five or six of them out when there was heavy enemy fire and the chopper was forced to leave the area. Then about 10 minutes later the firing was pretty heavy and Pits, knowing that this area where he was was getting hit the hardest he took his pistol and gave it to one of the wounded men that couldn't hold a rifle. He took his rifle and then he went from place to place while the fire was going on trying to get ammunition from the wounded and

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people that had been killed to get them ammo. Ten or fifteen minutes later he was back in the same area where he had left before. Then he was in the area about 10 to 15 more minutes when he was hit.

Q - You say he was left there. Could you tell us why he was left in the area?

Ans - Well, after they had took two or three men out, he came in on the hoist from the rescue chopper to help evacuate the wounded. He was unable to rescue about six guys when the Air Force chopper was under heavy fire and it was forced to take off. And then after the chopper left the basket that the wounded were being put in was caught in a tree and Pits wanted to climb the tree to get the basket so the same chopper could come back later because he told us if we waited until another chopper came then it would be too late. So he went ahead and done it.

Q - How long was he on the ground before he was hit?

Ans - He was on the ground for about one hour and 20 minutes and he was running from one place to another picking up ammo from the wounded, from the dead that couldn't fire, then after he distributed all this ammo out to the people then he went back to get some more and he came back with a handful of ammunition. Then he lay down there beside the section that was getting hit the hardest and he started firing, then he was hit.

Q - Were you able to talk to him at any time?

Ans - I talked to him when he was - when the chopper was fired at and it took off. They told us we were going to leave the area and set up in another place, and I talked to Pits when he was cutting

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trees to make litters and to carry the wounded out.

Q - While he was picking up this ammunition and bringing it back was he also taking care of the wounded?

Ans - Yes, he was, he was helping bandage and putting dressings on the wounded and making stretchers, and all that stuff. When it first started it was bad because they were firing from all directions and they had us surrounded, the fire was pretty heavy and Pits knew that the part that he was in was getting hit hard and that all the guys had run out of ammo. They couldn't get out because the fire was so bad, but somehow Pits made up his mind that he was going to get up and he got up. He ran all over the perimeter picking up ammunition then he came back and he distributed the ammo out to each guy that was still alive. When he came back to lay beside me, he must have had 20 magazines of ammunition. He lay there and he must have been able to see where the VC were because he was probably one out of 15 of the company that was firing semi-automatic. Everybody else that couldn't see anyone was firing automatic hoping that they would hit the VC.

Q - Could you tell us what time of night Amn Pitsenbarger got killed?

Ans - I think it was about 7:30.

Q - What happened immediately after this?

Ans - Well after that first time the fire stopped, about 15 minutes later and it was dark and then VC women and children came in and they started slitting throats and taking weapons.

Q - You say these were VC women and children, were you fighting these women and children?

Ans - No. See those were hard-core VC and the hard-core VC come into a South Vietnamese village and they tell the South Vietnamese people that if they don't help them fight that they will destroy their village, kill all the women and children and if they don't help them fight that they'll take their wives and their kids away and take them off somewhere, so actually the South Vietnamese civilians don't have any choice but to go along with the VC. And usually in an attack with regular North Vietnamese you have the South or the local VC's making the first part of the attack and then the North Vietnamese come in.

Q - What were you doing during this time?

Ans - What time are you speaking about?

Q - Well while the women and children you say were slitting the throats of the GIs. What were you doing?

Ans - I was about 20 or 30 meters from them. At the time I didn't know this was going on. You must recall it was dark because the jungle had a triple canopy and you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. The interpreter told us later that the women and kids that had slit the throats and taken the weapons and carried the dead VC that we had killed off to make us think that we hadn't gotten anybody.

Q - Did you see any hard-core Viet Cong?

Ans - I seen a few drop out of the trees with 50 calibers.

Q - Did you stay there the rest of the night?

Ans - Yes, Sergeant, we did. After the fighting stopped we heard probably 100 Congs hollering at each other saying that they were going to destroy us. I was told by our Vietnamese interpreter, he told our Lt, to hurry and call in artillery all around us because they were going to

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assault us. And we called in the artillery and five or six rounds came in every 15 seconds from 8:30 that night until possibly seven that morning and they didn't get a chance to come in and get us. .

Q - Did any of the artillery rounds land near your position?

Ans - They were landing pretty close, they had to drop them close to us because the VC were right on our back and the fighting was real heavy. The artillery probably landed 25 - 30 meters from us but actually if the fight would have started again, they would have had to drop it right on us.

Q - What was your location?

Ans - 45 miles east of Saigon about 12 miles west of Vung Tau.

The operation was Operation AVALANCHE.

Q - Sgt Navarro, were you wounded?

Ans - Yes sir, I was.

Q - How many men were originally in your squad.?

Ans - I had 10 in my squad.

Q - Could you tell us how many of those men made it?

Ans - Three, sir.

Q - Well how do you feel now?

Ans - I feel lucky just to be here.

A1C Henry J O'Bern, friend and co-worker of Amn Pitsenbarger's, had this to say, when asked if Pits knew what he was getting himself into when he volunteered to go down the hoist to rescue the wounded on the ground.

O'Bern - Yes, I do. Bill had gone down many a time before, he had gone down on his own. In fact only two weeks ago he went down there in very dense jungle. Later on he went in with the help of a Special Forces team. The Special Forces team themselves even said that if we're hit, which there were six of us down there at the time, they said we would definitely be killed in minutes. And Pits himself had gone in there three hours earlier on his own looking for a pilot and got the pilot and got him out in spite of the VC. He knew the score pretty well and he had been fired at quite a bit before. He knew the chance he was taking and it wasn't a case of going in there blindly.

Interviewer - In other words he volunteered to go in knowing what was on the ground.

Ans - Yeah, he did and he's been down picking out Army before, he's been under sniper fire before. He knew all about it.

Q - Well what type of guy was Pitsenbarger?

Ans - Well the usual thing everybody says is that he was a really fine fellow but in this case it's the honest truth. I think just about everybody in the squadron liked him. He was very pleasing, you can't even say anything really bad about him. He's probably had some small faults, just about everyone has, but all over everybody liked him. I'd say that he was almost the most popular guy in the squadron.

*Letter from Bien Hoa AB Public Info Office
to ARRS historian at Orlando AFB (HQ ARS)
Apr 13 1966*

Bien Hoa, Vietnam
Wednesday, April 13

Dear Van

Am circumventing policy tonight. Any stories or photos which leave my office are supposed to go through headquarters 7th AF, then to MACV for clearance. But for two reasons, I'm sending you the enclosed without going through channels. The first is that you're a buddy in the same business to whom I will always owe favors. The second is that, like most of us who even casually knew this pararescueman, I was very impressed by him and would like to see him get all the posthumous eulogies he deserves.

His last mission began at 1500 Monday, April 11. He and his crew were alerted to rescue fifteen number of U.S. Army casualties from Operation Abilene which is still going on about 75 miles east of Saigon. The wounded troops of

"Damage Charlie Five" company out of the 2nd Brigade of the Big Red One, were down in thick jungle. The tree canopy extended about 130 feet up and the only way of getting the wounded out was with a hoist-equipped chopper. Two H-43's from our Detachment 6, 38th AARS, were scrambled. In the first one ^{were} ~~was~~ Captain Harold D. Salem, pilot; Major Maurice G. Kessler, copilot, A/1C Gerald C. Hammon, crew chief, and A/1C William H. Pitsenbarger, pararescue specialist.

They were trailed by a second H-43 flown by Captain Ronald L. Bachman, pilot; Captain Raymond L. Murden, copilot; S/Sgt. David E. Milsten, pararescue specialist and A/1C Thomas C. Story, crew chief.

Both choppers got to the rescue point within one half hour after being alerted. They found a spot in the thick jungle where they could lower and hover below the tops of the trees and just ^{above} ~~about~~ the secondary growth. The area was too tight for a loaded Huey to lift out of and much too small for a Chinook to get into. So the job fell on the Air

Force.

Between 1530 and 1700 the two craft had made a total of five flights in and out of the area. They carried 9 wounded soldiers in Stokes litter baskets to a field aid station about seven miles away near the village of Binh Ba.

On the sixth flight, the third for the crew in the first chopper, Salem and his crew reached a hover, started lowering the basket and watched as the men on the ground were reaching for it, when their chopper was suddenly hit by a volley of fire from a .30 cal machine gun. The chopper lurched, the power and rpm went screaming over the red lines and the pilot pulled up rapidly and at the same time, armed and fired the cable cutter separating himself from the basket and the survivors on the ground.

Those left on the ground included Airman Pitsenbarger who had been lowered during the first pick-up to assist with getting the wounded into the stokes litter, strapping them in and hooking the basket to the cable.

With both power and rpm raging above the maximum and with his rudder controls locked, Captain Salem managed to get the chopper to Binh Ba and made a running landing. The engine couldn't be shut down by either the normal or emergency procedures. It was finally stopped by Airman Hammond who removed a few panels in the roof of the cabin and with a hammer beat the fuel controls closed.

There were nine holes in the side of the chopper and two of the four rotor blades had been hit.

The second chopper, meanwhile, attempted to get back into the pick up point but as soon as the enemy's automatic weapons stopped, the VC began ^{when they} ~~launching~~ mortars into the area. Friendly artillery from about three different points was called in and it fell with pinpoint accuracy all around the trapped Americans. ~~Notably~~ the chopper couldn't lower into that

(MORE)

fire fight and Captain Bachman recovered at Bien Hoa.

In the battle which followed, the VC overran the American position. They attempted to kill all wounded but two managed to survive until morning when other friendly forces finally reached their position. One of the two, an Army sergeant who saw Airman Pitsenbarger shot and killed in the battle, is now at the 93rd Field Hospital between here and Saigon. I'm sending one of my staff there tomorrow to interview this sergeant and get his story on tape. I'll send you a dub of that taped interview.

Of a company of about 180 men, only 14 escaped that battle uninjured. Most were killed. All others were critically wounded. Our losses, in terms of the MACV casualty reports were "heavy".

A few added comments on Pitsenbarger. He was described by the man who perhaps knew him best and respected him most, Captain Dale Potter, rescue pilot, as a "young, eager kid who was always ready to go and always willing get into the thick of the action where he could be ~~most~~ ~~valuable~~."

Pitsenbarger had already completed 350 rescue missions.

He's been recommended for the Airman's medal for one episode and should have been awarded at least a DFC for his heroic efforts to save a VNAF survivor of chopper shot down in D Zone last September. *(He was never submitted for it)*

He planned to get out of the Air Force next Fall and had already applied to Arizona State where he hoped to study to become a medical technician or male nurse.

There's a move under way here to name the newly organized, *local* VFW Post in his honor. He was one of the most active and instrumental of the charter members of this, the first post to be ~~open~~ opened in a combat zone.

As Potter said, "You don't replace people like Pits".

NARRATIVE - RESCUE MISSION - RECOVERING CASUALTIES FROM "C" Company, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, by SSgt David E. Milsten.

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The mission started around 3 PM on the 11th of April - my bird was on primary and Pits' was on backup. A company of 1st division troopers had been hit by light sniper fire and then got caught by some support artillery when they called in the heavy stuff to eliminate the snipers. Altogether, they had 9 or 10 critically wounded litter cases and around 15 ambulatory cases. They were in heavy jungle with the trees topping out at around 175-200 feet, and the nearest clearing for a heli pad was around 4 miles away. Our birds are the only ones in this whole area with hoists - so 38th sent us out to get them.

My bird went in for the 1st load - we were able to drop down in a small hole to around 100 feet from the ground. We made one stokes litter pickup and then moved away to allow the backup bird to go in. While they made the 2nd litter pickup, I transferred the guy we had from the stokes to a folding litter, and then we dropped back into the hole for another litter pickup. Two guys made a full load for us and for some reason Pits elected to pick up just the one, so both birds flew to a small airstrip located around 8 miles from the hole (the strip was called BINH BA - located around 20 miles NNE of Vung Tau on the coast).

We unloaded our patients at a small receiving hospital there, and then decided to send both PJs down to start the Army out on our chain saws to try and get an area cut out big enough to set down in. Past experience (this was our 20th operation like this since last October) has also showed us that the loading process is much faster with a PJ on the ground to help organize things. We can only make 2 litter pickups per flight using our

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Stokes litters, but if the less severely wounded are capable of riding, the penetrator up we can get 4-5 a flight. Normal procedure is to send a man down (if there are more than a couple of loads of casualties), get things organized, and then have his come back up on a 2 man penetrator pickup.

My bird had to re-fuel so Pits and crew went back to the hole first and Pits rode the penetrator down. He didn't take the saw down, so must have decided against trying to cut a larger area out. He sent a stokes litter case up to his bird, and from here on we tried to keep a regular shuttle going. One bird making pickups while the other was dropping off patients. His bird could only take on one litter case at a time (the HM can only handle one Stokes litter patient without the PJ aboard to assist) so they made the one pickup and flew out for the drop off point (5 minutes each way).

Pits had things going real smooth on the ground, so I stayed in my bird to help the HM. We picked up two litter cases and returned to the strip. Pit's bird was refueling, so we returned to the hole. We made another litter pickup and then Pits signaled for the penetrator. Instead of coming up with one of the wounded, he put two on the penetrator, even though they were pretty badly hit. We assumed that he was waiting for his own bird to return and go up to them - but we'll never know for sure. The other bird was waiting above the hole, so we moved out with our three wounded and they went in.

They started to send a stokes down, but Pits signaled for the penetrator instead. There were still a couple of litter cases on the ground, plus a dozen that could ride the penetrator up, so I think he planned to come up and then help the HM with the two litter cases. The HM placed the penetrator inside of the litter since the litter was already outside of the

door, and started them both down. The litter was around 10' from the ground and Pits was just reaching for it when 2 30 caliber automatic weapons cut loose at the bird from the opposite side. The bird received 9 hits - not one was hurt but one or two of the hits did quite a bit of damage. A round tore through a bundle of wires and caused the throttle control to jam in the wide open position, throwing max power to the engine. They also lost partial rudder control and had some other touchy problems. The bird surged forward and up - the pilot couldn't do a thing but hang on and ride it out. The litter started dragging through trees and hanging up, so the PI called for a cut to keep the bird from being pulled down. Luckily, no one was on the hoist, so they were able to get free and escape from the hole.

We were halfway to the strip with our load of patients when we received word that the backup bird had been hit. We thought that they had gone down, so we dropped down and unloaded our patients and then bugged back to get the crew. They were still staying airborne, so we escorted them down and then returned to the hole to get Pits and more wounded.

Up to this time the area was supposedly "secure" - with 3 companies holding it. We tried to go in but the FAC ordered us away from the hole to enable our artillery to cover it and knock off opposition around it. We found out later that VC mortar rounds were walking in while we were making pickups, and they had just zeroed in on the area when the 30 cals cut loose and sprayed our bird. The VC mortar was eliminated, but the guys on the ground started drawing sniper fire again. We stayed in an orbit near the area, waiting for things to quiet down so we could go back in. By this time (5:30 or 6PM) a "B" model from Saigon had joined us to replace our downed bird. We stayed there until 8:30, ready to go in for pickups in the dark by then. Sometime about then the guys on the ground called in our artillery

right on top of themselves - and the FACs sent us home for the night.

We still didn't have any idea of what was going on at the spot, but we were all set to return at daybreak and continue the pickups and get Pits back. A "F" model from Binh Thuy (down south) was on the way to assist also. We received a call from the Army and 38th early in the morning telling us that a LZ had been cleared during the night and that Army choppers were going in to get everyone out at once. We didn't find out until around 9 that the LZ wasn't cleared and the two birds went back (the second being Binh Thuy's). Our on-coming alert crew replaced mine, so O'Beirne went out as the PJ on this one, backed by Fullwood from Binh Thuy on the other. O'Beirne and crew arrived in the area, but our fighters were still blasting the surrounding area, so they had to go into an orbit nearby. The army set off a few dynamite blasts at the pickup point to clear trees for an LZ and then they decided to send in an Army CH47 Chinook first. It couldn't get in because of its size, so then the army called in our 43's.

They went in and managed to go all of the way down. O'Beirne loaded 3 critically wounded on and then had to stay on the ground while they flew the wounded out. HULs started coming in to help carry out the wounded, and a CH47 finally made it in too. A USA captain told O'Beirne that Pits had got it the night before and showed him where Pits was laying. Up until this time we all thought that Pits was okay - we recieved a false report from the Army after the VC had been pushed away the night before that they had moved to a different spot and that Pits was still okay. O'Beirne got busy helping evacuate the wounded, in fact he pretty well ran the show since most of the Army guys were just standing around like they were lost. O'Beirne would locate a wounded trooper, call for stretcher bearers to carry him to the choppers, and got every one else busy looking for wounded and carrying them out.

After 30-40 minutes, they had all of the wounded out and our bird picked up O'Beirne and returned to Bien Hoa with the bad word about Pits.

They flew two wounded over to the 93rd Field Hospital near here, and as it turned out both of them (a Lt. and a SSgt) were with Pits the whole time including being right beside him when he was hit. The Sergeant's story goes something like this.

They were making a 3 company push, staying fairly close together, when his company started receiving sniper fire. Six of their guys were hit so they called in support artillery to eliminate the sniper fire. The first rounds came in a little too far to one side, so they asked for a correction. Unfortunately someone corrected the wrong way and a few rounds fell near the company. This is where they received their casualties and we were called in. Before they called us, the area was declared "secure" again and they had a perimeter defense set up.

He said that Pits came down the hoist and started helping them with the hoist loading, plus Pits worked on the wounded in between hoist loads. He kept on going strong up to the time that the bird received the 30 cal. fire. The fire came from pretty close, so it's my feeling that their perimeter defense was pretty thin.

At this time the sniper fire started again, in fact a few rounds had been directed at the 43 before the heavy automatics cut loose. Pits saw the bird drag the litter through the trees and take off, and the litter must have remained in their sight. Pits wanted to go out and get it back since it would be needed when the birds returned, or at least when the other one came back in. The Army Lt. wouldn't let Pits take the risk of getting hit climbing up to get the litter, and he decided to move out to another location, carrying the remaining litter cases with

them. Pits was running around treating the wounded and organizing the cutting of litter poles ect. at this time. They started out with Pits helping carry one of the litters, but only got around 20-30 yards when the VC opened up on them.

The Sgt estimated they were hit by around 300 hard core VC. They had positioned themselves in trees with 30 cal's and had at least 2 50 cal's up there somewhere too. He didn't know how many were in the trees, but they were caught in heavy fire from both above and on the ground. In his words, "The lead was flying so thick that if you stuck up your hand it would have been shot to pieces." Most of the army troops had M14s and were firing in full automatic since they couldn't see the VC. Pits had his M16 plus his .38, but he spent most of his time at this point crawling around gathering clips of ammo from the dead and wounded and passed it around to the army troops. After doing this for awhile, he gathered up around 20 M16 clips or so and started shooting back himself. The Sgt didn't know how long Pits was returning fire before he was hit, but did notice that Pits was one of the few firing on semi-automatic, so he figured that Pits could see a few of them. A little later he noticed that Pits wasn't moving anymore, indicating that he had been hit hard instead of being just wounded. Pits was wearing his flack vest and had a hard helmet (he borrowed one from one of the guys we picked up - but the vest didn't stop anything. He had been hit 4 times as far as we could find out. They called support artillery right in on their own position and the VC pulled out around 8:30 PM. Pits was hit somewhere around 7:30, just before it got completely dark. There were 8 guys in Pits' little group in the heavy fighting - 2 made it out.

That is about everything I know about the operation. We have lost a good friend and he was one of the best PJ's in the game. I don't think

that there was anything that Pits didn't excel in as far as duty or anything else goes - as I'm sure you well know. He died doing his job, and if he would have known the consequences of going down that hoist it wouldn't have slowed him up a bit. We know thers army recovery operations are no picnics, but up until now we have been real lucky. Counting the 9 we pulled out with Pit's help on the ground, our outfit has pulled out 141 casulties since last October, and this is the first time we've ran into serious difficulties. This figure is only the army troopers we have pulled out - not our regular air crew recoveries or stuff like that.

I feel that it's not our job, but as long as there isn't anyone else to do it down here, we will continue to do it as long as the need exits. Loosing Pits won't show us down ~~anyx~~ as far as support of this type goes. I only hope that we don't lose anyone else. My PJ's are going to continue going down if they are needed (and only if they are needed) we all know what the risk is. It's just too bad that the army can't get helicopters over here (like the HH3) that are capable of recovering their own casulties from the jungle. The army "Dust-off" medical evac HULs are doing a great job, but they can only pick up casulties from landing pads - we're the only ones with the hoist capability. We could do a much better job with HH3s - picking up 10-15 at a time, but as long as we only have our 43s, we're stuck.

Incidently, the armor plating received several direct 30 cal hits, and the slugs didn't even dent the platting. The Hm would have been killed if it wouldn't have been for that plating.

If any of you have any questions about this, or about SEA - drop me a line. I'm usually slow at answering letters, but will put forth a "max" effort to answer youu

Dave Milsten

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Thank you Amn O'Bern.

It can truly be said that AlC William H. Pitsenbarger gave his life in the tradition of the men of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service "that others may live."

This is SSgt Ron Sears from Bien Hoa Air Base.

11th April, '66.

The ^{war} Mission of Pits.

The army suffered some casualties deep in the jungle and called for us to hoist them out. Pits was lowered in to help expedite the loading. On the ground he got things moving by getting the wounded up quickly into the chopper and helping to clear a landing zone in which the choppers could eventually land. Two of our birds were ~~at~~ doing the hauling out. On the sixth run in, one of the HH-43's took eight hits in the side, engine, and blades, all from a .30 cal. A bullet smashed into the fuel controller and jammed it open, causing the bird to lurch out of the hole. Going out it dragged the stokes litter through the trees and was forced to cut the cable. Fortunately nobody was in the litter. The chopper made it into a landing strip some seven miles away without any casualties, but the engine and blades had had it. Before they hit the bird, the VC had been using it as a reference point to "walk" in their mortar rounds, and the chopper wasn't long out of the hole before the rounds started to explode among the ground troops. The army told the second chopper not to come in anymore as the fighting was getting pretty bad. At this time - I got all my information from people who survived the battle on the ground - Pits wanted to climb up into the trees and get the stokes litter. He told them that it would help expedite the loading, but they wouldn't let him go after it. Pits then started to aid the wounded that were lying about. Those in charge on the ground decided to move to a different position. Pits, I'm told, started to make litters out of saplings and ponchos, with help, of course, from the army guys. They moved about 20 yards before they were hit by heavy sniper fire and two .50 cal. machine guns. Then the trees became alive with the VC firing at the G.I.s, they breached their perimeter, and overran them. During this time Pits had taken a weapon (M-14), a steel helmet, and a gas mask from a dead guy and was using all three. He radioed a FAC overhead, by means of his URT-10, and asked him to drop in some M-16's as they had only M-14's on the ground. Then he was seen to crawl around searching for ammunition clips, and as he found them he called out to find out who needed ammo, and threw it to any G.I. who answered. After a while he crawled back to his own little circle of six guys. An army guy told me that during this time if a person raised his hand up he'd definitely be shot through it because the small arms fire was so heavy. Just before final darkness Pits was shot and killed. I understand he died instantly. Of the six in his group, two survived. Both were shot up, one fellow having been shot four times. The next morning an area was dynamited clear and we were able to land. While the bird took the wounded out I was left on the ground to help. Both of the army guys, now lying on stretchers, asked to see me, and they were both full of praise for Pits and the way he worked out. I went back in the jungle to where Pits lay. I can assure you that he died quickly. With the help of an army guy I put him in a body bag. I had to leave him then as I had a lot of badly wounded to get out. I found out from one of the army guys that after the battle, the VC sent in some women and children to collect the weapons of the dead (dead G.I.s) and to kill off our wounded who couldn't protect themselves. One fellow had his throat cut and others were shot. It's a filthy way to fight a war. Those damn civilised countries ~~x~~ in the western world don't know what the hell they are doing by placing restrictions on American. I wish to hell we could go up and bomb Hanoi.

STATEMENT

On April 11, 1966 I, Martin L. Kroah, then a 1st Lt. was serving as 3d platoon leader of C Company 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division in the Republic of South Vietnam. At about noon on that day our company made contact with an enemy force of approx. 500 Viet Cong. A Firefight started and lasted into the early hours of the following morning. When the battle was over the company had recieved 80% casualties. I'm not certain of the number of dead or wounded exactly but I'm certain that the death count would have been much higher had it not been for the heroic efforts of Airman William H. Pitsenbarger.

I first saw Airman Pitsenbarger when he was being lowered from an Air Force helicopter sent to medivac our wounded. I observed him several more times during the course of the day. To put down on paper what that battle was like is an impossible task. At times the small arms fire would be so intense that it was deafening and all a person could do was get as close to the ground as possible and pray. It was on these occasions that I saw Airman Pitsenbarger Moving around and pulling wounded men out of the line of fire and then bandaging their wounds. My own platoon medic, who was later killed, was totally ineffective. He was frozen with fear, unable to move. The firing was so intense that a fire team leader in my platoon curled up in a fetal position and sobbed uncontrollably. He had seen combat in both WWII and Korea. The psychological pressure was beyond comprehension.

For Airman Pitsenbarger to expose himself, on 3 separate occasions to this enemy fire was certainly above and beyond the call of duty of any man. It took tremendous courage to expose himself to the possibility of an almost certain death in order to save the life of someone he didn't even know.

I believe that Airman Pitsenbarger's actions that day are deserving of the highest possible honor that his country can give. The Medal of Honor



MARTIN L. KROAH
CAPT. INF
Retired

Statement regarding the Medal of Honor for A1C William H. Pitsenbarger, USAF
Submitted by CMSgt (Ret) David E. Milsten

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I was a pararescue specialist assigned to Detachment 6, 38th Air Rescue Squadron and flew as the pararescueman on a HH43F helicopter, call sign Pedro 97, during Det 6's 11 April 1966 mission to recover critically wounded First Infantry Division soldiers. A1C Bill Pitsenbarger was the pararescueman on the second HH43F, call sign Pedro 73, on this mission.

Our HH43Fs were equipped with a 210 foot rescue hoist, a forest penetrator rescue seat, and a wire stokes litter rigged with cables for hoist recovery. Because of this hoist capability, we were requested by the Army to fly missions to recover critically wounded soldiers who could not be recovered from jungle areas by Army helicopters. We rarely had accurate information regarding the situation on the ground and didn't have direct contact with ground units. On several missions, our helicopters received ground fire while in a hover directly over friendly positions.

The decision to send a pararescueman to the ground on these Army pickups was always difficult to make. Our pararescuemen knew that once we went down the hoist, there was no guarantee on being able to get back to our helicopter. The HH43 cabin was small and it was difficult for the hoist operator to maneuver a loaded stokes litter through the cabin door, even with the pararescueman on board to help. With the pararescueman on the ground, the hoist operator was left without assistance to operate the hoist and care for the casualties.

On the 11 April mission, we were informed that the Army unit had at least six casualties, which made this mission different since most of our missions were for only one or two casualties. My helicopter was the first to go in and we found the unit located in a very small hole through the jungle, which was barely wide enough for us make the hoist recoveries. We made the first litter pickup without any problems and my pilot moved us out of the hole to let Pedro 73 go in. We transferred our first casualty from the stokes litter to a folding litter to free the stokes for a second recovery. When Pedro 73 completed their litter pickup, we went back in and recovered our second casualty. I expected Pedro 73 to go back in again, but they departed with us to transfer the casualties to an Army forward operating base near Binh Ba.

My helicopter had flown an earlier mission and was low on fuel, so we refueled at Binh Ba while Pedro 73 returned to make more hoist recoveries. A1C Pitsenbarger volunteered to go down the hoist to help treat and load the casualties and my helicopter arrived as Pedro 73 completed a litter pickup. They departed for Binh Ba with their casualty and we went back into the hole. We made a litter pickup and Bill signaled for the forest penetrator and sent up two casualties on the seat. We couldn't carry anybody else, so we departed for Binh Ba.

We off loaded the three casualties and departed for the pickup point while Pedro 73 remained at Binh Ba to refuel. While enroute, we were informed the Army unit was receiving heavy small arms and mortar fire. The attack ceased as we approached the area, and we were cleared to go back in. We made two more litter pickups and A1C Pitsenbarger didn't come up, so he must

have had more wounded he was working with. We departed for Binh Ba as Pedro 73 went back in, which was when they were hit by automatic weapons fire. We off loaded our casualties and returned to assist Pedro 73 if they went down. After they made it back to Binh Ba, we returned to the pickup area but were not allowed to go back in since the unit was in heavy contact with enemy forces. We remained on scene until after dark, when we were informed that the remaining casualties and A1C Pitsenbarger would be recovered in the morning and we were directed to return to Bien Hoa.

A1C William Pitsenbarger was one of the most dedicated and capable pararescuemen I have worked with during my 25 years with pararescue. I am convinced that he was a real hero who willingly placed his own life at risk to save the lives of his fellow American fighting men. He had gone down the hoist on many occasions before this and knew he was risking his life every time he went down. According to eyewitness reports from Company C survivors, Bill constantly exposed himself to enemy fire while treating the wounded and recovering weapons and ammunition for soldiers who had run out of ammunition. The Army must have been convinced about Bill's heroism, for it was highly unusual for an Army commander to recommend the Medal of Honor for an Air Force enlisted man. Bill should be awarded the Medal of Honor, which I sincerely believe he fully deserved.

End of Statement
5 February 1999

DAVID E. MILSTEN
CMSgt (Ret) USAF

UNCLASSIFIED

SO G-334, 7AF, 28 Apr 66, ALC William H. Pitsenbarger, , Det 6, 38 ARRSq, Airman's Medal (Posthumously) for heroism involving risk of life 7 Mar 66.

SO G-334, 7AF, 28 Apr 66, ALC William H. Pitsenbarger, , Det 6, 38 ARRSq, Air Medal (6th thru 9th OLC) for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 20 Dec 65 to 14 Mar 66.

SO G-368, 7AF, 5 May 66, Capt Erling R. Drangstveit, , Det 5, 38 ARRSq, Air Medal (1st OLC) for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight 19 Dec 65.

SO G-368, 7AF, 5 May 66, Capt James C. O'Dell, , Det 5, 38 ARRSq, Air Medal for (1st OLC) for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight 19 Feb 66.

SO G-368, 7AF, 5 May 66, SSgt William R. Gladish, , Det 5, 38 ARRSq, Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight 19 Feb 66.

SO G-368, 7AF, 5 May 66, ALC George E. Hunt, , Det 5, 38 ARRSq, Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight 19 Feb 66.

SO G-371, 7AF, 6 May 66, Capt Peter C. Kelly, , 38 ARRSq, Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 1 Nov 65 to 25 Feb 66.

SO G-371, 7AF, 6 May 66, Peter C. Kelly, , 38 ARRSq, Air Medal (1st and 2nd OLC) for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 26 Feb 66 to 15 Apr 66.

SO G-371, 6 May 66, Capt John H. Larson, , 38 ARRSq, Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 3 Oct 65 to 19 Jan 66.

SO G-371, 7AF, 6 May 66, Capt John H. Larson, , 38 ARRSq, Air Medal (1st thru 3d OLC) for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 20 Jan 66 to 15 Apr 66.

SO G-374, 7AF, 8 May 66, Capt Louis S. Pottschmidt , 38 ARRSq, Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 16 Oct 65 to 17 Jan 66.

SO G-374, 7AF, 8 May 66, Capt Louis S. Pottschmidt , 38 ARRSq, Air Medal (1st thru 4th OLC) for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 18 Jan 66 to 25 Apr 66.

SO G-374, 7AF, 8 May 66, Capt Joseph E. Symonds, Jr, , 38 ARRSq, Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 3 Dec 65 to 28 Jan 66.

SO G-374, 7AF, 8 May 66, Capt Joseph E. Symonds, Jr, , 38 ARRSq, Air Medal (1st thru 2d OLC) for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 29 Jan 66 to 4 Apr 66.

SO G-377, 7AF, 9 May 66, 1st Lt Charles R. Sweet, , 38 ARRSq, Air Medal (1st thru 3d OLC) for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 6 Oct 65 to 10 Mar 66.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

SPECIAL ORDER
GB-179

30 June 1966

✓ 1. DP, A1C WILLIAM H PITSENBARGER, [REDACTED] is awarded the Air Force Cross (Posthumously) for extraordinary heroism while engaged in armed conflict against an opposing armed force on 11 Apr 66.

2. DP, each of the following is awarded the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service during period indicated:

COL JOWELL C WISE, —
9 Aug 63 to 21 Dec 65

COL ROBERT V SPENCER, —
1 Jun 64 to 16 May 66

3. CAPT ERNEST A SEBASTIAN, — is awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for outstanding achievement during period of 1 Feb 65 to 31 May 66.

4. The 1105th Military Personnel Gp, and its predecessor organization, the 1105th Support Gp (Hq Comd, USAF), are awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for exceptionally meritorious achievement in support of military operations from 1 Apr 63 to 31 Dec 65.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE:

J. P. McCONNELL, General, USAF
Chief of Staff



R J PUGH, Colonel, USAF
Director of Administrative Services

DISTRIBUTION
GO

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE AIR FORCE CROSS
(POSTHUMOUS)

TO

WILLIAM H. PITSENBARGER

Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam, on 11 April 1966. On that date, Airman Pitsenbarger was a Rescue and Survival Specialist aboard a helicopter engaged in the evacuation of American casualties in a dense jungle. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Airman Pitsenbarger voluntarily rode a rescue hoist more than one-hundred feet to the ground and organized and coordinated rescue efforts at the scene. During the rescue operation, he cared for and prepared the casualties for evacuation, and insured that the recovery operation continued in a smooth and orderly fashion. Following the recovery of the ninth casualty, the rescue aircraft hovering overhead was damaged and disabled by automatic weapons fire. The helicopter was forced to abandon recovery efforts to make an emergency landing at a nearby airstrip. Airman Pitsenbarger volunteered to remain on the ground and administer medical treatment to the wounded. Shortly after rescue efforts were interrupted, the area came under heavy sniper and mortar fire. Airman Pitsenbarger repeatedly exposed himself to intensive automatic fire while gathering rifles and ammunition from fallen comrades which he passed among the defenders. His bravery and determination in the face of overwhelming odds are in keeping with the highest standards of performance and traditions of the American fighting man under attack. The extraordinary heroism and aggressiveness of Airman Pitsenbarger reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

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

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

15 April 1966

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

1. Mission Number: 6-38-80-12 April 1966

2. SAR Alerted by: 3rd JSARC

3. SAR Aircraft used: 2 HH-43F

Crewmembers of Primary Aircraft were:

RCC	1/Lt Mark C. Schibler
CP	Capt Edwin A. Henningson
HM	A1C Alexander Montgomery
RS	A1C Henry J. O'Brine

Crewmembers of Secondary Aircraft, from Det 10 were:

RCC	Maj Charles R. Kay
CP	Capt John R. Denham
HM	A1C Malcolm G. Aldridge
RS	SSgt Leon Fullwood

4. Reaction time from notification to pickup: 1+30

5. CAP Assistance: 1 OLF, 2 UH-1B

6. Area and type of pickup: The helicopter from Det 6 (Pedro 97) landed in a clearing blasted in the jungle. Casualties were then litter loaded on the aircraft. The helicopter from Det 10 (Pedro 91) made two hoist pick-ups with the stokes litter from an area of dense jungle.

7. Casualties were located by directions from the FAC.

8. Survivors names: Unknown

9. Summary of Events:

Det 6 was alerted at 0934, 12 Apr 66 for a possible requirement to evacuate Army wounded. At 0944 we were given a definite "go" and were told that another HH-43F from Det 10 would join us for top cover. We launched at 0950 and rendezvoused with Sidewinder 23 at 1025. When we arrived in the area a Sidewinder 21 was conducting an air strike $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of the pick-up

point so we were told to orbit to the west. We orbited for approximately thirty minutes until the air strike was complete. We then contacted the Army unit on the ground and asked them to mark their position and we would begin our pick-ups. The Army replied that they would have a clearing blasted in about twenty minutes, so we waited. When the clearing was blasted a CH-47 made the first landing in the area. He had room to hover, but could not land. Pedro 97 landed next and was able to set down. Three severely wounded were immediately loaded on the aircraft. Due to the height of the trees and limited amount of maneuvering room we elected to leave our Para-medic and all the gear we did not need on the ground, to give us a power reserve. We then flew the wounded to a field hospital at Binh Ba. While we were enroute the Army cleared more brush and trees out of the landing zone which gave us more room on subsequent landings. When we landed in the hole the second time we off loaded ten gallons of water and six stretchers and picked up three more wounded. At this time we were informed that the para-medic who was left on the ground the night before had been fatally wounded when the unit he was with was overrun. We then took off and delivered our wounded to Binh Ba. We and our cover ships refueled this trip and picked up twenty gallons of water to return to the troops at the landing zone. Enroute back to the LZ we were informed by Sidewinder 23 that there was a hoist pick up required. With the water we had no room to maneuver the stokes litter in the cabin so we informed 23 that we would make one more trip to the LZ. By the time we arrived the Army had enlarged the LZ enough that the Chinooks and Dustoff helicopters could land so we determined there was no longer a need for us in that area and we could go make the hoist pickups. However, before we could land to drop off the water and pick up our para-medic, Pedro 91 reported in and it was decided they would make the hoist pickups. We then landed and picked up our para-medic and two Army personnel and returned to Binh Ba to await further developments. We refueled and when Pedro 91 landed we were informed that there was no further requirement for us and we were released. On the return flight to Bien Hoa Pedro 97 carried two severely wounded patients back to the 93rd Field Evac Hospital. We landed at Bien Hoa at 1410. Mission completed.

10. Comments: None

Mark C Schibler
MARK C. SCHIBLER, 1STLT, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

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

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

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

1. Mission Number: 6-38-80-11 April 1966
2. Det 6, 38th ARRS alerted by hot line from 38th JSARC
3. SAR Aircraft used: 2 HH-43F, 1 HH-43B

First Aircraft Pedro 97

RCC	Capt Ronald L. Bachman ✓
CP	Capt Raymond L. Murdon
HM	A1C Thomas C. Story
RS	SSgt David E. Milsten

Second Aircraft Pedro 73

RCC	Capt Harold D. Salem ✓
CP	Maj Maurice G. Kessler
HM	A1C Gerald C. Hammond
RS	A1C William H. Pitsenbarger

Third Aircraft Pedro 46

RCC	Capt John H. Larson
CP	Capt Peter C. Kelly
HM	A1C William Amendolare Jr
FF	SSgt Calvin H. Warren

4. Reaction time from initial notification to first pickup: 0+33
5. CAP Assistance: 2 OLF FAC, 2 UH1 Armed helicopters, 3 F-100, and artillery on station at all times. One flare ship (C-47) was orbiting for night operations.
6. Summary of Events:

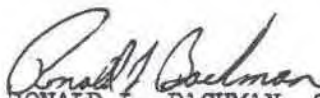
At 1507 hours, Det 6 was notified by 3rd JSARC that 6 or more Army casualties were located at 1044N 10719E and would require extraction by hoist. Pedro 97 and Pedro 73 were airborne at 1512 hours enroute to the area 33 miles southeast of Bien Hoa. The helicopters were vectored into the area which was marked by smoke from the ground party. The pickup point was

in dense jungle with trees approximately 150 feet high. There was a small open area in the 150 foot trees down to trees at the 100 foot level. Below the 100 foot canopy there was dense brush to approximately 30 feet. There was a hole in the 30 foot canopy just large enough for the stokes litter. It was necessary to hover with the right rotor blades within 3 to 5 feet of a tree, to lower the litter through the hole. Arriving in the area at 1535 hours, Pedro 97 immediately started the first pickup which was completed at 1545 hours. Pedro 97 moved out to transfer the patient from the stokes litter to the folding litter while Pedro 73 made a stokes litter pickup. Pedro 97 then moved back in and made one more stokes litter pickup and then both helicopters proceeded to Binh Ba, about 8 miles south, to transfer the patients to a field hospital. Pedro 97 refueled and Pedro 73 returned to make another pickup. At this time Pedro 73 placed their paramedic on the ground to assist in loading patients and administer first aid. As Pedro 73 departed the pickup point with one litter patient, Pedro 97 moved in to make another pickup. Pedro 73 proceeded to Binh Ba with the patient while Pedro 97 picked up one litter patient and two more patients on the forest penetrator. Upon arriving at Binh Ba, Pedro 73 refueled. Pedro 97 deposited the 3 patients at Binh Ba and while enroute to the pickup point I was notified by Sidewinder 23 that the pickup point was under heavy small arms and mortar attack. The mortar attack was neutralized when Pedro 97 arrived at the pickup point so I proceeded to extract two litter patients. As Pedro 97 departed the pickup point, Pedro 73 arrived and proceeded to lower the litter for another pickup. When the litter was approximately 10 feet from the ground, Pedro 73 was hit by a burst of automatic small arms fire from the left rear and from approximately a 30° angle from verticle. The pilot immediately cut the hoist, called "Ground fire" and started to depart the area. Immediately after starting to climb out it was noticed that the rotor and engine RPM could not be controlled. The throttle was jammed in the full open, max power position. The aircraft required at least 4 inches of right rudder to maintain coordinated flight. Approximately 2 miles from the hoisting area there was a small clearing in a rubber plantation, but not knowing how secure it was, the pilot decided to try to make a road further west. About this time the pilot felt he had the emergency under control and he elected to try and take the aircraft to Binh Ba which he knew was secure. The possibility of using emergency fuel in flight was ruled out because the throttle could not be brought down to flight idle. The pilot and co-pilot evaluated the situation and decided a shallow approach and running landing was the best way to land the aircraft. Clearance was obtained and Pedro 97 stood by as the approach and landing was made. The landing was made with no injury to the crew. The only way to shut the engine down was to turn off the fuel and oil shutoff valve. The oil could be shut off but not the fuel. It was discovered that the fuel portion of the valve had been rendered inoperative by a bullet. The mechanic tried to manually move the fuel control to the off position with no success. He then considered the possibility of disconnecting or masking the fuel line to starve the engine. Then he hit on the idea to drive the

the fuel control to the off position with a hammer which successfully shut the engine down. During shut down it was found that the rotor brake had also become inoperative but the blades coasted to a stop creating no further problems. A quick investigation of the aircraft revealed nine hits. Both sets of blades were ruined along with many other items on the aircraft. It was also noticed that the armor plating in the cabin had successfully stopped two 30 caliber armor piercing rounds destined for the hoist operator. Transportation was arranged to take the crew back to Bien Hoa so plans could be made for removing the aircraft to Bien Hoa. When Pedro 97 heard the call of ground fire hits from Pedro 73 he immediately returned to Binh Ba, transferred the litter patients and returned to escort Pedro 73 back to Binh Ba. When Pedro 73 was safely on the ground, Pedro 97 returned to the pickup point where there were 7 more known casualties and Pedro 73's pararescueman. I was told to orbit west of the pickup point at altitude because the ground forces were in heavy enemy contact with the enemy too close for air support. Very shortly afterward, artillery was called in and the pickup point was completely encircled in artillery fire. At this time Pedro 46 arrived on scene and joined the orbit. Pedro 46 departed the orbit for Binh Ba and refueled, as it became dark. When Pedro 46 returned to the orbit, Pedro 97 returned to Binh Ba for fuel. As Pedro 97 returned to the orbit point we were advised by Sidewinder 22 (ground FAC) that the situation was such that no more extractions could be made and the two Pedro aircraft should return to home stations. Airman Pitsenbarger, the Pararescueman from Pedro 73, remained at the pickup point. Upon arrival at Bien Hoa I was notified by 3 DASC that during the night the pararescueman and 7 remaining casualties were moved to an area where an LZ would be cleared and they would be extracted by Army helicopters at first light the next morning.

Arrangements were made to have an Army CH47 sling load Pedro 73 to Bien Hoa from Binh Ba for repairs.

Pedro 97 recovered 7 casualties, and Pedro 73 recovered 2 casualties. Nine (9) combat saves were claimed. HH-43F's flew eight (8) sorties for 6+15 hours. HH-43B flew two (2) sorties for 2+30 hours.


RONALD L. BACHMAN, Capt, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

[REDACTED]

During battlefield medical evacuations, the pararescueman descends on the hoist cable to help load the casualties on the Stokes litter. When the low helicopter has loaded two stretcher patients aboard, it leaves the area and the high helicopter descends for another load. The helicopters work as a shuttle until all casualties have been evacuated.

One mission well illustrating rescue work in SVN occurred on 11 April 1966. The U.S. Army had sustained casualties 33 miles south-east of Bien Hoa and three HH-43F's from Detachment 6 were scrambled to evacuate them. The SARTF consisted of the HH-43's, two Huey gun ships, three F-100's and two O-1F light aircraft. In addition, a C-47 flareship was orbiting in case the operation continued into the night. The Army placed artillery fire on hostile positions nearby. The Pedros were vectored in by smoke from the ground party and lowered the Stokes litters through a hole in the jungle canopy. The helicopters then began shuttling the wounded. At one point, friendly artillery fire was landing so close that the low Pedro had to momentarily leave the area. In spite of the close fire support from artillery and aircraft, Viet Cong began closing in. On the fifth sortie, Captain Bachman's helicopter was hit as it was hovering and the throttle jammed full open. Captain Bachman was able to lift-off and made an emergency landing at a friendly field. His pararescueman, A-1C William Pitsenbarger, who had been lowered to assist in the evacuation, was killed when the Viet Cong overran the area. He has been awarded the Air Force Cross (Posthumous). Detachment 147/6 was credited with nine saves during the mission.

Combat Losses

ARRS forces in Southeast Asia lost three rescue men, all aircrew members, and one HU-16B aircraft, #51-71, under combat conditions. In the first instance, Captain David P. Westenbarger, while prosecuting Mission 1-3-18-14 March 1966, landed his HU-16B on the open sea for the purpose of rescuing two downed fighter pilots only to have his aircraft struck and set afire by explosive ground fire from the shore. A1C Robert Larie Hilton, airborne radio operator, and A1C James Edward Pleiman, pararescueman, were killed. The aircraft sank, leaving the remainder of the crew to be rescued by U. S. Navy forces.

The third man killed, was A1C William H. Pitsenbarger, pararescueman. While serving aboard an HH-43F helicopter, #63-9711, call sign Pedro 73, piloted by Captain Harold D. Salam, and attempting to rescue U. S. Army wounded personnel he was left in the ground when the helicopter was struck and driven off by hostile fire. Before he could be extracted from this combat situation he was killed.

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3d ARRGp Hist, Apr - Jun 66

The 3ARRGp including Det's 1 and 2, 37ARRSq, and 38ARRSq with eleven detachments has a total manpower authorization of 217 officers and 548 airmen. The total assigned officers are 156; assigned airmen are 352. At the time of this report, the 3ARRGp is 67% manned.

9. (C) Equipment. Mission Aircraft.

<u>Type, Model, Series</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
HH-43B	18
HH-43F	10
HH-3E	8
HU-16	4 (TDY)
HC-130H	4 (TDY)

10. (U) Additional Remarks.

The Group Operations Officer, Lt Col William A. Ryan, Jr., was shot in the left leg during a terrorist attack in downtown Saigon on the morning of 10 May 66, while waiting for bus transportation to work. Small arms firing began between the military police and suspected terrorists in the vicinity of the Brinks Hotel. Hospitalized for approximately a month, Lt Col Ryan was awarded the Purple Heart for his injury.

Aircrew recovery in hostile areas is often times very hazardous; several of our rescue crewmembers have been wounded by enemy fire during pick-up operations. They are: TSgt Richard A. Cannon (HM) hit in the leg on mission 6-38-98-6 June; ALC Dennis J. Kraft (PJ) hit in the right knee and elbow on mission 2-3-60-18 May; SSgt Bernard D. Loughry (HM) hit in the shoulder on mission 2-3-46-22 Apr.

ALC William H. Pitsenbarger, paramedic, was fatally wounded on mission 6-38-80-11 Apr. Airman Pitsenbarger voluntarily rode a rescue hoist to the ground to help Army personnel prepare casualties for evacuation; after making several hoist pickups, the US Force's position was over-run and ALC Pitsenbarger was killed. For his heroic actions in assisting the defenders during the onslaught, ALC Pitsenbarger has been recommended for posthumous award of the Medal of Honor.

11. Appendixes. None

12. (U) Documentation.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Awards and Decorations	29 thru 37
Special Order G-59	38

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3d ARRGp Hist, Apr - Jun 66

Det 4-38-5-11 Apr

(U) Medical evacuation of one U.S. military person to medical facility by HH-43B.

Det 4-38-6-2 June

(U) Recovered F-105 pilot who bailed out of his aircraft 56 NM NE of Korat AB using HH-43B helicopter which landed in unprepared area for pick-up.

Det 6-38-72-1 Apr

(U) A sick USAF NCO air evacuated from Bien Hoa to Tan Son Nhut by HH-43F.

Det 6-38-73-1 Apr

(U) Two HH-43F's scrambled to pick up survivors of a C-47 that hit a mine at 1031N 10632E; however, US Army UH-1B had already made the pickup.

Det 6-38-74-4 Apr

(U) Two HH-43F's scrambled to pick up an ejected pilot at 1020N 10700E; however, an Army CH-47 had recovered him from the water.

Det 6-38-75-6 Apr

(U) Two USAF patients flown from Bien Hoa to Tan Son Nhut by HH-43F.

Det 6-38-76-7 Apr

(U) Three sick USAF personnel flown from Bien Hoa to Tan Son Nhut by HH-43F.

Det 6-38-77-10 Apr

(U) Medical evacuation of one USAF airman by HH-43F from Bien Hoa to Tan Son Nhut.

Det 6-38-78-10 Apr

(U) Five wounded soldiers were picked up at night through a heavy jungle canopy at 1042N 10718E by two HH-43's using hoists, returning them to Bien Hoa hospital. A flare ship lighted the area and an armed HU-1B provided escort.

Det 6-38-79-11 Apr

(U) One malaria patient flown from Bien Hoa to Tan Son Nhut by HH-43F.

Det 6-38-80-11 Apr

(U) Three HH-43 SAR helicopters were involved in making medical evacuations from an area of intense fighting 33 miles S.E. of Bien Hoa. Nine casualties were recovered; although, one of the helicopters received nine hits from ground fire and had to make an emergency landing at Binh Ba. ALC William H. Pitsenbarger, paramedic, who had been lowered to the ground to prepare casualties for evacuation was fatally wounded when the U.S. Army's position was over-run.

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