

Rescue Unit Helps Save Seven Lives In Seven Days

PLEIKU — Detachment 9 of the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, located at the Pleiku AB, recently saved seven lives in seven days.

The first emergency took place when the detachment was notified at 5:50 a.m. that a C-130 had crashed on a landing approach one mile east of the Pleiku runway.

The alert crew was airborne in five minutes and proceeded to the crash scene. Because of early morning ground fog, the wreckage could not be seen until their H-43 helicopter was within 200 yards.

The rescue commander, Capt. Lawrence F. Marcum, landed as near the flaming cockpit as possible. Co-pilot 1st Lt. Gordon O. Tooley, fire-fighter A1C Lester Long and pararescue man A2C Roy E. Kelsey started toward the aircraft, finding two survivors groping their way out of the wreckage.

The survivors were taken to the helicopter while others continued to search for survivors, aided by a second rescue helicopter crew of Capt. Dale R. Tyree, 1st Lt. David Stevenson, SSgt. James Johnson and A2C Allen Stanek. Exploding detonator caps in the vicinity did not deter them from the search.

No other survivors were located, and Captain Marcum and crew returned the two injured persons to the Pleiku AB dispensary. They received emergency treatment there and were then air evacuated to a hospital. Both have since recovered.

The second mission took place six days later just after sundown, when an emergency call to Detachment 9 informed its members that five American soldiers were suffering from heat prostration and needed immediate evacuation from the Chu Pong mountain area. One in fact was so near death that he was receiving artificial respiration.

These soldiers had been clearing a landing strip in enemy territory and their water supply had run out. The clearing was not yet large enough for

Army helicopters to land on it, so the Air Force was given the call for help.

The alert crews, Capt. Richard L. Cardwell, Capt. Fredrik M. Bergold; mechanic, A2C Bertrum E. Brundridge, and Airman Kelsey; and Captain Marcum, Lieutenant Tooley; mechanic, SSgt. James Johnson, and pararescue man SSgt. George Schipper, departed Pleiku after a quick mission planning and briefing.

They evaded trees surrounding the cleared area that reached as high as 150 feet, with Captain Cardwell landing first with the doctor. After 20 minutes of first aid treatment for the soldiers, Captain Cardwell took off with two of the sick men and then Captain Marcum eased his helicopter into the confined area and picked up the three remaining.



A1C LESTER E. LONG, 832nd Civil Engineering Squadron, is reenlisted by Capt. Dale R. Tyree, Detachment 8, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron commander, while on a training flight over Vietnam. Airman Long is currently TDY to Pleiku Air Base, Vietnam, where he is assigned to the detachment as an airborne fire-fighter. (Air Force Photo)