

83

(5/6/9)

FROM: Det 7, 305th AASG, APO 96337

SUBJECT: Narrative of Rescue Mission, #1-3-107

TO: 3rd AARGp (AARG), APO 96307

1. On 15 July 1967 at 0022 hours (1622Z) Danang Air Base was struck by an enemy rocket attack. The crash phone immediately rang announcing the attack and the alert trailer lights failed simultaneously. The only personnel in the trailer at this time were the primary alert crew—Lt Col John H. Schafer—RSC, 1/Lt Alfred R. Jacob Jr.—RSCP, TSgt James L. Johnson—III, SSgt Hugh A. Pike and A2C David A. Helton, RS, and A2C David A. Carl—RS. At the first impact all personnel took shelter either in the trailer which had limited space and poor protection, or in the concrete block building adjacent which offered more protection. After approximately 15 minutes enemy fire subsided and personnel were assembled. The crew now had one additional member, A2C Joseph M. Duffy who had proceeded to his duty station from the quarters while the attack was underway. A2C Helton was directed to remain at the communications console and SSgt Pike proceeded to the aircraft to lend his assistance in the forthcoming medical evacuations. During this phase the tower operator had remained at his post and was calling incoming rockets over the crash phone. We were thus able to establish a pattern and when it was broken by a lull in the firing we proceeded to the aircraft, Pedro 93.

2. Our inspection of the aircraft revealed no damage, so the crew boarded and commenced the start. As the A-1 RPM reached 15-20% another group of incoming rockets detonated approximately 1000ft. behind the helicopters. Falling debris could be seen striking the ramp in front of the helicopter. Since the integrity of the aircraft was now in question the start was discontinued and the crew dived from the helicopter for the relative safety of a gowage ditch adjacent to the ramp and taxi-way. This safety was quite relative since two 3 inch JP-4 lines ran above ground about 2ft. from the ditch. All personnel proceeded down the ditch to a sandbag bunker about 75 yards distant. Another lull soon developed and the RSC and RSCP ran to the aircraft to perform an inspection and start. Three hits we sustained by the alert helicopter however none were serious. The other helicopter, which was out for an overdue time change flap cable, received two hits, one by a large piece of shrapnel and required a rotor blade change. As soon as the aircraft was ready to take off, the remainder of the crew left the bunker and proceeded to the south ramp which appeared to have the greatest damage.

3. Pedro 93 was airborne at approximately 0110L. Three Marine helicopters were in the area and Danang Mobile asked for assistance at the Base Hospital to evacuate casualties from the 4 adjacent 2-story airman quarters which had received hits and were burning. I then called the Marine UH-1's on Guard and asked them to follow me to this area as they were not familiar with local landing spots. There actually was no designated pad but a safe landing could be effected by performing a steep approach over power lines into the parking lot. This approach was complicated by the lack of lights, the fact that its path was through the smoke of the burning buildings, and the thick dust encountered during final phase of landing. A safe landing

12E6 151987

was made, however, and 2 patients loaded for the NSA Hospital. Danang's hospital is only of dispensary size, and was overwhelmed by the influx of patients from the immediate area. The hazards on the approach were passed to the Marine UH-1's while we were unloading patients. I then made a max performance takeoff from the confines of the pick-up point. At NSA the authorities were queried on operating room space etc, (all phones were out) and I relayed this information to Danang so that they could segregate patients for transfer to NSA or 1st Marine Hospital (Charlie Med). Since we were on the ground again at Danang we lifted a second load to NSA. While flying from NSA we picked up additional Marine helicopters at Marble Mountain Marine Base who flew loose formation with us so that I could lead them to the Danang Hospital.

4. After our second trip the Marines had been adequately oriented, traffic patterns and altitudes established, and Marine gunship orbit altitude raised, so we proceeded to the northwest corner of the airfield with the idea in mind of deploying the PJ's into the 1st LAM area which had been severely hit. Almost as soon as we landed the PJ's discovered 3 seriously wounded personnel. One had been left for dead, however a pulse and breathing was discovered by Airman Duffy who administered medical aid. Three patients were loaded for NSA. Enroute I directed the UH-1's to the NW ramp to pick up additional injured. This procedure continued for 2 hours and 25 minutes of flying time, and 22 sorties to many locations on the base. We refueled twice and each time thoroughly checked the helicopter for additional damage. We found none other than some severely lacerated tires caused by landing on the south ramp which was covered with debris. We airlifted 21 critically injured personnel. There were no deaths enroute. Additional coordination was made with other agencies including the hospital ship USNS Sanctuary.

5. The following additional pararescuemen greatly assisted the orderly evacuation by locating injured, administering to them, and preparing them for airlift. Without their efforts we would not have been nearly as effective. These men entered into areas of questionable safety despite exploding ordnance, fuel, and the constant threat of renewed attack. They prepared the injured for lift, and when the areas were cleared of critical patients they sought new areas: SSgt John H. Stemple, A1G Michael P. Beano, A2C Robert F. Gabourel, A2C John C. Jeffers, A2C Duane D. Hackney, A2C Walter White, A2C Richard H. Garlie, A2C Steve M. Northern, and A2C, David W. Sliger.

John H. Schaffer
JOHN H. SCHAFER, LTCOL, USAF
RESCUE CREW COMMANDER

OPERATIONS

MISSIONS

1. Mission 1-3-107, 15 July 1967. Pedro 93 was scrambled following a heavy rocket attack on the base. The crew of Pedro 93, in evacuating many injured, was credited with 21 saves, including the 1000th Combat Save for ARRS in SEA.
2. Mission 7-38-5, 11 August 1967. Pedro 93 scrambled on an F-4C that crashed Northwest of the field. One pilot was recovered alive, and was recorded as one combat save.
3. Mission 1-3-122, 12 August 1967. Pedro 93 was scrambled for an F-4C airborne emergency which developed into a bailout of the pilots 10 miles North of DaNang. Both pilots were rescued by Pedro 93, and two combat saves were recorded.
4. Mission 1-3-126, 21 August 1967. Both Pedro 93 and 95 were scrambled by Queen to pickup several injured marines approximately eight miles Southwest of DaNang Air Base. Pedro 95, in attempting the hoist pickup, came under enemy small arms fire. In attempting to pull out of the area, the hoist cable was entangled in the jungle foliage and was cut by the pilot. Both Pedro's were returned to base. No combat saves were recorded.
5. Mission 1-3-127, 21 August 1967. Pedro 95 escorted a CH3E, 37th ARRS on the pickup of a wounded marine Southwest of the Base. The marine was successfully recovered and Pedro 95 credited with an assist on one combat save.