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FROM: Det 9, 38th AHSq(38-90PS/4184)

26 August 1967

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative, 9-38-18 - 24 Aug 67 (U)

TO: 3rd AHSgP (RGRC)

1. (C) (Gp-4) Det 9 was notified by II DASC at 08:55Z that an Army UH-1 helicopter had crashed 335 degrees at 22 miles from Pleiku Air Base. A FAC O-1E "Elliot 10" was at the site and reported that three survivors were in need of assistance. JSARC was notified while Pedro 56 prepared to scramble.
2. (C) (Gp-4) Pedro 56 launched at 0830Z when it was ascertained that two A1E fighters were being scrambled for "escort". Pedro 74 was on a training mission and joined Pedro 56 at 0835Z.
3. (C) (Gp-4) While enroute, Elliot 10 reported that the helicopter had crashed in a very swift river. Throughout the operation Elliot 10 did an excellent job of coordinating the operations. Three survivors were in sight, several hundred yards down the river on the shore and on islands. The actual crash wreckage had sunk and was not visible, however, an oil slick was observed coming from one general area. Two of the survivors were located fairly close together, one on a small rock island in the river and the other on shore about 30 feet away. Pedro 56 approached these two in order to effect their pickup. The first man on the island was confused on how to operate the jungle penetrator, so Pedro 56 hovered right up beside him and he was pulled in by the pararescue-man and flight engineer. The other man was given instructions via the loud hailer and he was hoisted up with no problem. It was necessary for Pedro 56 to hover with about 10 feet of rotor clearance from the jungle growth. Once aboard, the survivors told the helicopter crew that nine people were aboard the crash, and one was a Red Cross girl. She was last seen by one of these men swimming for the east shore several hundred yards upstream. Pedro 56 then hovered to the east shore and proceeded upstream to search for the missing girl. Meanwhile A1C Smith, the pararescueman administered immediate first aid to the two survivors aboard the helicopter.
4. (C) (Gp-4) Meanwhile, while these two were being picked up, Pedro 74 spotted another crew member several hundred yards upstream on the west shore. He was recovered by the jungle penetrator and hoist using about 50 feet of cable. Pedro 74 then proceeded downstream to search for more survivors. A few seconds later, the girl was spotted on a small rock island, apparently injured and in shock. Pedro 74's pararescueman, A1C David Ortiz was lowered on the hoist with a semi-rigid litter. She was hoisted aboard, then Airman Ortiz was recovered and Pedro 74 took off for Kontam in order to get the survivors to medical aid and to refuel the helicopter. Immediate first aid was administered to survivors enroute by Airman Ortiz.

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5. (C) (Gp-4) Pedro 56 still had sufficient fuel, so a close search of about 5 miles of the river was made, attempting to locate other survivors. This search was continued for about 50 minutes, but turned up nothing except small pieces of wreckage. Rain storms began moving into the area, so Pedro 56's RCC, Captain Ricks, decided to depart and get their two survivors to further medical aid and join up with Pedro 74 at Kontum. Visibility was dropping lower and lower and darkness was approaching. It was necessary to fly east until intersecting the highway into Kontum, then follow the highway into the base. Visibility with the ground was maintained only by flying about 50 feet off the surface of the highway. Each time the helicopter was raised up in order to clear trees, it went IFR for a few seconds until the ground could again be spotted. This cycle continued several times until passing directly over Kontum Forward Operating Base #2, where Pedro 74 was located. Army helicopter pilots, also at this base, turned on their navigation lights to give Pedro 56 reference for landing. Landing was made and the survivors were given further medical aid.

6. (C) (Gp-4) After the survivors had been given medical aid by the Army medics, the weather had improved, so both helicopters departed Kontum and transported the survivors to the 18th Surgical Hospital at Pleiku.

7. (U) It is suggested that Army personnel in SEA be given as much training as possible on the procedures and equipment that ARRS uses. This should be given as lectures, demonstrations of equipment by ARRS personnel and by intensive coverage in Army publications. This indoctrination would insure safer recoveries of Army personnel.

8. (U) A2C Robert E. White of Det 9, was aboard Pedro 74 and took several color slide pictures of the Red Cross girl pickup. These pictures will be forwarded when developed.

9. (U) Crew members who participated:

Pedro 56

RCC	Captain Keith H. Ricks
RCCP	Captain Robert L. Osborne
FE	SSgt Arthur L. Wood
PJ	A1C John A. Smith

Pedro 74

RCC	Major Richard A. Smith
RCCP	Captain Francis B. Gilligan
FE	A1C Jose G. Abara
PJ	A1C David B. Ortiz
Passenger/ Photographer	A1C Robert E. White

Richard A. Smith
RICHARD A. SMITH, Major, USAF
Commander

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CHAPTER III

OPERATIONS

MISSIONS/SAVES

During this reporting period, Detachment 9 flew a total of 34 scrambles in support of aircraft with emergencies or personnel in distress. Several of these missions were especially noteworthy.

On 24 August, one of Detachment 9's helicopters was scrambled for a fire suppression mission on an Air Vietnam C-46. This aircraft, with 25 persons aboard, had crashed and caught fire beside the runway. The 25 persons evacuated the crash while the helicopter suppressed the fire. The Vietnamese pilot was injured and was flown to the hospital, and one non-combat save was credited, although all 25 received fire suppression assistance from the HH-43F.

Later in the afternoon of 24 August an Army UH-1 crashed in a river near Pleiku. Both detachment helicopters responded. Four survivors were plucked from the river including a Red Cross girl. The four persons, all credited as combat saves, were Miss Cynthia Colburn, WO-1 Berryton Witherell, WO-1 Richard Morrison and E-9 John R. Alt.

Five other persons, also on the downed aircraft, are missing in action.

On 25 September, an Army UH-1B crashed south of Pleiku. One detachment helicopter launched and landed at the crash site. Five persons and their gear were recovered. The five persons, credited as combat saves, were WO-1 John J. Foden, 1Lt Francis W. LaRoue, Capt William

AF Crews Rescue 4

PLEIKU — Two Air Force rescue crews from **Detachment 9, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron** at Pleiku AB, plucked a Red Cross field office assistant and three Army personnel from the Ya Krong Bolah river about 12 miles southwest of Kontum.

The Army UH-1H Huey helicopter, from the 19th Assault Helicopter Co., developed engine trouble and went down in the river.

A2C David B. Ortiz, 20, a pararescue specialist from the detachment, went down into the swiftly flowing river to rescue the woman who had a head injury.

Capt. Keith H. Ricks, 29, of
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AF Crews Pluck 4 From River

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Rexburg, Idaho, was scrambled with his rescue crew in their HH-43F Huskie helicopter to find the Huey.

The second Huskie, with Maj. Richard A. Smith, 32, of Fort Worth, Tex., detachment commander, at the controls, was returning to Pleiku AB and joined the search.

Capt. Francis B. Gilligan, 26, of Watertown, N.Y., copilot of Major Smith's crew, said, "The river was more than 200 feet wide in places with dense jungle on both sides. Ricks' crew found the copilot of the Huey and one

of the passengers. We picked up the pilot. Both our helicopters went low and hovered over the river.

"We covered 4 miles both ways from where Ricks picked up the copilot. We found the young girl from the Red Cross on a rock in the river. She had been swept downstream almost a mile from the crash scene."

The two Huskies flew to the Kontum Special Forces Camp where the injured were given first aid and then brought to the U.S. Army's 18th Surgical Hospital at Pleiku.

The fourth member of Major

Smith's crew, was A1C Jose G. Abara, 22, of Long Branch, N.J., flight engineer.

Capt. Ricks' crew included Capt. Robert L. Osborne, 26, of Warren, Ohio, copilot, SSgt. Arthur L. Wood, 31, of Bossier City, La., flight engineer, and A1C John A. Smith, 23, of Hialeah Fla., pararescueman.

This was the second rescue mission in the same day for Captain Ricks and Osborne. Earlier they had been scrambled to successfully aid the passengers and crew of an Air Vietnam C-45 aircraft that crashed on takeoff at Pleiku AB.