

FROM: Det 8, 38 ARRSq

SUBJECT: Narrative Report of Mission #8-38-20-3 Aug 67

TO: 3rd ARRGp (RGOP)

1. Activating the primary crash system at 0728Z, Cam Ranh Bay Tower informed the Detachment 8, 38 ARRSq, rescue alert crew that an aircraft was burning on the runway. While scrambling to the helicopter, we could see a mass of flame and smoke billowing from the skidding aircraft. We (Pedro 04) were airborne with the fire suppression kit (FSK) at 0730Z and arrived on the scene at 0731Z.

2. The F-4C had turned 90 degrees left and crashed sideways into support pilings for the runway approach lights. It had stopped among pilings at the edge of the water off the end of Runway 20L. As we made an approach toward the wreckage, which was engulfed in flames, tower warned us the aircraft was carrying six 750 pound bombs. During our approach, flames were coming from both open cockpits so intensely it was impossible to see if anyone was still in the aircraft.

3. Fire trucks arrived as we vainly searched for an area in the debris to release the FSK, so we maneuvered to assist them with our rotor wash. The rotor wash was pushing back some of the fire, but we still could not see into the cockpits. The Fire Chief then signaled us to withdraw and as we backed away Lt Farrow spotted a pilot lying face down in the water approximately 70 feet from the wreckage. He was weakly moving his hands to attract attention. We quickly set the unused FSK on the edge of the runway, clear of the fire trucks, and landed in the sand 100 feet from the survivor. As we were landing, tower advised us to evacuate the area as the 5 minute time factor was up and the fire vehicles were already moving away. The entire crew was aware of the dangerous situation. Sgt Carter, Sgt Perkins, and ALC Koppenhofer deployed from the helicopter and were rushing toward the blazing wreckage to rescue the pilot, when several explosions occurred. They did not hesitate, but continued on to the critically injured pilot's aid. They were having difficulty carrying the disabled pilot through the soft sand and stopped 50 feet from the helicopter to remove his water soaked survival kit. This was taking precious time, so Lt Farrow rushed to assist in getting the pilot aboard the helicopter.

4. We were airborne at 0742Z, flew directly to the hospital, landed in the small parking lot outside the emergency room, and released the pilot to waiting attendants at 0742Z. We then flew to the alert pad to wait until the crash scene was secured. The body of the second pilot was later found in the front cockpit of the aircraft after EOD secured the area.

5. Pedro 04 aircrew members were: Capt. Allen R. Martin, Rescue Crew Commander; 1st Lt. Willie L. Farrow, Copilot; SSgt Jacob V. Carter, Medical Technician; SSgt Hubert R. Perkins, Firefighter; and ALC Gunther Koppenhofer, Firefighter. This was Sgt Carter's first alert duty period as he had received final certification as a rescue aircrew member at 0200Z that morning.

Allen R Martin
ALLEN R. MARTIN, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander