

FRIDAY, JAN. 20, 1967

Huskie Crew Saves 2 in Blazing F-4C

DA NANG — Crew members of an Air Force HH-43 Husky rescue helicopter recently headed off what might have become a flaming inferno at Da Nang.

An F-4C Phantom alert crew flashed an in-flight emergency call while enroute back from a strike mission north of the demilitarized zone.

The Husky alert crew, commanded by 1st Lt. Frederick D. Gregory, Washington, D. C., scrambled to their helicopter and were aloft and waiting for the stricken Phantom.

The F-4C landed but was unable to engage the barrier and skidded wildly past the overrun and into the mud.

"We were following him slightly to his rear," related Lieutenant Gregory, "when they went off the end of the runway. When they came to rest, the aircraft burst into flames but there was no explosion. The fire was pretty big," he stated.

"I saw the pilot and aircraft commander starting to get out," said 1st Lt. Donald D. Sams, Herniston, Ore., the Husky co-pilot. "The pilot got out right away but the aircraft commander was still there and it looked like the flames were about to reach him so our pilots brought the chopper around and fanned the flames away from him while he got out," he said.

"We were O.K.," said Capt. Charles A. Cotten, of Lynn, Mass., "but I sure was glad they got there right away and were watching the fire for us."

After the pilots were safely away, a helicopter crewman dropped to the ground and detached the aircraft's fire suppression kit.

"Although this is the first time we've ever used a fire suppression kit on the real thing, it worked perfectly," said A1C Wayne

L. Boteler, of Chalmette, La.

Working feverishly, the firemen put out the blaze before the first crash truck arrived.

The two pilots were picked up and taken to the dispensary for a checkup.

Captain Colton's rear-seat pilot was 1st Lt. Nicholas J. Ide, of Hartland, Vt.