

FROM: Det 9, 38 ARRS (9-38/Capt Johnson/2824)

4 Apr 1968

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative 9-38-01, 9 Jan 68

TO: 3JSARC

(7e)

1. At 2100Z 7 Jan 68 JSARC notified Det 9 that an RF-4 was missing from a low level mission. The route of flight of the missing aircraft was from Tan Son Nhut, Bon Me Thout, Kontum to target and return same route.

2. Two HH-43Fs were launched at dawn to search area of last known position. Last known position was 107 degrees 55 minutes east, 14 degrees 49 minutes north. II DASC diverted FACs to aid in the search. Upon arrival in the search area the H-43s started searching ridge lines on the assumption the aircraft may have hit the top of a hill. FACs searched lower slopes, and investigated numerous fires in the lower valleys and canyons. Smoke was caused by artillery that had been bombarding the area during the night. Numerous U.S. Army helicopters joined the search and assisted in covering the search area. At 0100Z, a U.S. Army helicopter found a new crash site at 15 deg 54 min 30 sec north, 107 deg 54 min east. Pedro 56 investigated the crash site. A PJ was lowered by hoist into the crash site. The aircraft had hit the peak of a ridge line about 10 feet below the top. The ridge line ran roughly north and south, and was covered with twenty foot trees and heavy brush. The east and west slopes of the ridge line were extremely steep. The eastern slope had a 45 degree slope and the west slope was almost vertical for the first 500 feet, then continued on down to the valley floor at about 35 degrees. The slopes were covered with dense brush and forest. The further one went down the slope, the trees became taller and thicker. The aircraft had hit the ridge at high speed. It tore a hole through the trees on the ridge top. The PJ reported no sign of bodies, only pieces of wreckage in the surrounding brush, and pieces of metal imbedded in the soil. The largest piece of metal, part of a tip tank, was hoisted on the helicopter to help in identification of the aircraft. It appeared that the aircraft was traveling in a NNW direction, hit the ridge top, blew up, and the pieces continued on over the top and fell down the western slope. We continued our search along the western slope, searching for more wreckage and bodies. The forest were so thick that it was impossible to see the forest floor. High winds and poor visibility were hampering the search, but all areas were searched several times.

3. During the entire operation Crown One coordinated, and controlled all aircraft in the search. The U.S. Army provided HU-1 gunships to cover the HH-43F helicopters during the mission. Pedro 74 and 56 reported to Crown One on the situation. Crown One terminated the search at 0600Z. Both Pedro's returned to Pleiku at 0635Z.

4. Both Pedro's logged 9:45 (day VMC) flying time on this mission.

HAROLD O. HOPPE, Lt Col USAF
Commander

1 Atch
List of Crew Members

1. What is the purpose of the study?

RCC - Capt Johnson
CP - Maj Hastings
FE - SSgt Andersen
PJ - Sgt Baguio

[illegible]

RCC - Capt Butler
CP - Capt Gilligan
FE - Sgt Abara
PJ - SSgt Smith

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GIVEN

MISSION WAS CLOSED AT 1120Z 5 MAR 68.
BT