

Det 9, 38APRS Hist, Apr - Jun 68

CHAPTER III

OPERATIONS

MISSIONS

During the reporting period Detachment 9 flew 296 sorties, of which 88 were in support of aircraft or personnel in distress. The remainder were base support, training or maintenance test flights. Most of the rescue sorties flown were routine local Base Rescue Scrambles, however these missions are worthy of mention.

THE O-1 INCIDENT: On 17 May 68, the detachment was notified of an O-1 crash 24 miles northwest of Pleiku. Pedro 74 launched at 1320 crewed by Capt D.L. Adanson, RCC; Maj R.L. Dunton, RCCP; Sgt F.H. Barnes, FE and ALC D.E. Thompson, Pararescueman. Pedro 98, commanded by Major R.J. Hastings followed to provide cover. Upon arriving at the scene Captain Adanson was advised that unfriendly forces were in the area. With 2 armed OH-6 and 2 UH-1 gunships for escort, an approach to the crash scene was made. The aircraft had crashed at the 3300 foot level in the bottom of a jungle ravine. Airman Thompson, the Pararescueman was lowered through the 150 jungle canopy near the crash site. After making his way through the heavy jungle to the wreckage, Airman Thompson determined that the pilot was dead and then attempted to extract the body from the wreckage. After 20 minutes of unsuccessful effort Airman Thompson was hoisted back into the helicopter, with the intent of getting tools to cut away the wreckage. The tools were to be picked up at a Fire Base Camp about 700 yards north of the crash site, but while the helicopter was

enroute, the Camp came under mortar and automatic weapons fire. Due to the hostile action, the steadily diminishing fuel supply, and adverse weather moving into the area, the mission was terminated. After returning to the base, it was discovered that while hovering in the ravine, the rotor blades had struck the tree tops and were punctured in several places.

THE APC FIRE: On 2 June 68, the U.S. Army called with an urgent request for assistance. An Armored Personnel Carrier had been hit by a recoilless rifle round, and was burning, with the crew trapped inside. The Alert Helicopter, crewed by Captain D.A. Adamson, ROC; Major R.W. Hastings, RCOP; SSgt A.J. Williams, Fireman; ALC Thompson, PJ; and SSgt D.R. Stevens, Flight Engineer proceeded to the site, about 20 miles Southwest of Pleiku AB. Upon arriving at the site, which had been secured by a ring of Armored vehicles, the Fire Suppression Kit was expended in an unsuccessful attempt to subdue the flames and gain entry into the vehicle. Due to the intense heat, the hostile environment, and the fuel state, the helicopter and crew returned to Base.

THE A-1 INCIDENT: On 23 June 68, an A-1 returning from a mission with a full load of ordnance, crashed one mile East of Pleiku AB. Pedro 98, crewed by Captain D.A. Adamson, IP; Lt Col H.O. Hoppe, Pilot; Sgt F.M. Barnes, Flight Engineer; SSgt W. Heard, Jr., Fireman; SSgt G. Murray, Fireman; and ALC D.M. Wichman, Pararescueman was on a local training flight and observed the crash. Within one minute the helicopter had landed beside