

DET 12, 38 ARRS
MISSION 12-38-10 NARRATIVE

411

Det 12, 38 ARRS was alerted by Nha Trang Tower at 0115Z on 8 Oct 68 of an O-2 that had spiraled into a heavily wooded area at BP 835650 - a point about 17 NM northwest of Nha Trang Apt. Pedro 99 (a HH-43F) scrambled off at 0120Z and Pedro 20 (a "B" model) at 0125Z. After arriving at the crash site, Pedro 99 observed smoke and fire with negative emergency signals having been received. Capt Field, the RCC, decided that a crew member should be lowered to ascertain if there were any survivors, and Sgt DeShae, a para-rescueman, volunteered. A hover was established above the 80 foot trees and Sgt DeShae was lowered to the ground on the forest penetrator. The hoist was then brought up, and Sgt DeShae covered the 15 yards to the crash site. Once there, he reported burning wreckage and the charred remains of one body. While attempting to get aircraft and personnel identification, Sgt DeShae reported that he was under enemy ground fire, and he then took evasive action. The hoist was immediately lowered, and he was brought into the helicopter. During this hoisting operation, Pedro 99 took two hits, one in the rotor blade and one in the vertical stabilizer of the tail, and a strange whistling noise was heard. Although flight characteristics remained unchanged, Capt Field decided to fly to the nearest secure area to check on damage and advised the other aircraft of his decision. Pedro 99 with Pedro 20 flying

cover flew about 3 NM north to Duc My - a MACV camp - and shut down. Blade damage was then found from contact with trees and enemy ground fire on the left set of rotor blade tips, and the aircraft was grounded. Blade change was accomplished the following day, and Pedro 99 returned to Nha Trang. Pedro 99's crew was: RCC - Capt Cortland D. Field; RCP - Maj Richard G. Lauderdale Jr.; FE - Sgt John B. Gent; and PJ - Sgt Edward A. DeShae. Pedro 20's crew was: RCC - 1st Lt Willis J. Thayer; RCP - Maj James N. Madsen; FE - Sgt William (NMI) Grimes; and PJ - Sgt Louis C. Felker.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Weather was VFR and 6 plus. An O-1 (call sign "Cutie 20") had observed the O-2 crash and assisted Pedro 99 in locating the site. Radio discipline was good during the hoisting operation which was begun at approximately 0145Z, although excessive chatter was encountered prior to that time by aircraft that were trying to be of assistance. Pedros 99 and 20 departed the area about 0155Z and landed at Duc My at 0205Z.

2. A ground force was put into the crash site area on the afternoon of the 8th and found the total crew of two deceased.

Cortland D. Field

PREPARED BY: CORTLAND D. FIELD, Captain, USAF
Rescue Crew Commander

James N. Madsen
APPROVED BY: JAMES N. MADSEN, Major, USAF
Commander, Det 12, 38 ARRS

CHAPTER III

OPERATIONS

1. MISSIONS:

a. Mission Narratives:

(1) Mission Number 12-38-10. Det 12, 38 ARRS was alerted by Nha Trang Tower at 0115Z on 8 Oct 68 of an O-2 that had spiraled into a heavily wooded area at BP 835650 - a point about 17 NM northwest of Nha Trang Apt. Pedro 99 (HH-43F) scrambled off at 0120Z and Pedro 20 (HH-43B) at 0125Z. After arriving at the crash site, Pedro 99 observed smoke and fire with negative emergency signals having been received. Capt Field, the RCC, decided that a crew member should be lowered to ascertain if there were any survivors, and Sgt DeShae, Pararescueman, volunteered. A hover was established above the 80 foot trees and Sgt DeShae was lowered to the ground on the forest penetrator. The hoist was then brought up, and Sgt DeShae covered the 15 yards to the crash site. Once there, he reported burning wreckage and the charred remains of one body. While attempting to get aircraft and personnel identification, Sgt DeShae reported that he was under enemy ground fire, and he then took evasive action. The hoist was immediately lowered, and he was brought into the helicopter. During this hoisting operation, Pedro 99 took two hits, one in the rotor blade and one in the vertical stabilizer of the tail, and a strange whistling noise was heard. Although flight characteristics remained unchanged, Capt Field decided to

fly to the nearest secure area to check on damage and advised the other aircraft of his decision. Pedro 99 with Pedro 20 flying cover flew about 3 NM north of Duc My - a MACV camp - and shut down. Blade damage was then found from contact with trees and enemy ground fire on the left set of rotor blade tips, and the aircraft was grounded. Blade change was accomplished the following day, and Pedro 99 returned to Nha Trang. Pedro 99's crew was: RCC - Capt Cortland D. Field; RCP - Maj Richard G. Lauderdale Jr.; FE - Sgt John B. Gent; and PJ - Sgt Edward A. DeShae. Pedro 20's crew was: RCC - 1st Lt Willis J. Thayer; RCP - Maj James N. Madsen; FE - Sgt William Grimes; and PJ - Sgt Louis C. Felker.

(2) Mission Number 12-38-11. On 31 Oct 68, Nha Trang Tower notified Det 12 that an Army UH-1D (Super Coach 524) was down 4 miles from Nha Trang on the radial. Pedro 21 was scrambled at 0842L and flew to the crash site which was marked by smoke and flames. ALC Jones, Pararescueman, was lowered through a dense canopy to a point 100 feet above the crash. He searched the crash and immediate vicinity for 25 minutes, finding two bodies in the wreckage but no survivors. He was hoisted back aboard Pedro 21. No enemy activity was encountered and Pedro 21 returned to Nha Trang at 0930L. Pedro 21's crew: RCC - Maj James N. Madsen; RCP - Capt Cortland D. Field; FE - Sgt William Grimes; and PJ - ALC Thomas B. Jones Jr.