

Det 12, 38 ARRS Unit History January - March 1969

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(2) Mission Number 12-38-002-2169. At 1815L Det 12 received notification over the primary crash net that Pedro 20 was going down two miles SW of Nha Trang (Ref: 12-38-001-2169). Pedro 21 scrambled at 1820L with crewmembers: 1st Lt Willis J. Thayer, RCC; Major Richard G. Lauderdale Jr., RCCP; Sgt John M. Dunbar Jr., FE; and Sgt James R. Pospichel, RS. Tower frequency was monitored, a heading of 230 degrees was established and a visual search for Pedro 20 was initiated. The sun was on the horizon in the Southwest and visual search was ineffective on our 230 degree heading. Pedro 20 was heard on UHF guard frequency but excessive chatter on tower frequency blocked the transmission. Tower notified us that a FAC aircraft was circling over Pedro 20. We immediately spotted the FAC and found that we had overflown the site by one mile. Pedro 20 was sighted and we landed in the small clearing beside the stricken aircraft at 1827L. At this time we learned that Pedro 20 had made a precautionary landing, that there were no injuries to the crew, and that an escort UH-1D had taken the wounded Marine that had been aboard Pedro 20 on into the 8th Field Hospital at Nha Trang. Pedro 20 had landed due to complete loss of engine oil through a 7.62 mm bullet hole in the engine oil cooler. The damage was surveyed and we decided to attempt emergency repair and recover the aircraft in the remaining daylight. Major Richard G. Lauderdale Jr., Sgt James R. Pospichel, Sgt John M. Dunbar Jr. and A1C Timothy M. Reynolds remained as perimeter guard for Pedro 20 while the other three crewmembers of Pedro 20 were returned to Det 12. Pedro 20

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Pedro 21 relaunched from the Pedro pad at 1850L with Major Robert J. Kazmerchak, RCCP; TSgt Harold R. Massengale, FE; and A1C Robert J. Brooks, FE, plus tools and equipment for a field fix on Pedro 20. The field fix was unsuccessful in that damage to the oil cooler was more extensive than initially thought. All detachment personnel returned to the camp at 1920L. Installation Defense Command supplied a team of CIDG personnel to guard Pedro 20 for the night. Mission 12-58-COL suspended at 1920L. At 0700L on 22 Jan 69 the mission was reopened. Installation Defense Command was contacted and arrangements were made to continue CIDG perimeter defense which we were told had not been continuous through the night. The 14th Field Maintenance Squadron provided two EOD specialists to check the aircraft and surrounding area for possible overnight sabotage. Det 12 maintenance personnel assembled necessary equipment to effect a field fix on Pedro 20. Pedro 21 launched at 0850L on the first of eight sorties flown in support of the maintenance crew in the field. Maintenance performed in the field under hostile conditions included: (a) Engine oil cooler pulled (b) Cooler core taken to base welding shop to close two 7.62 mm bullet holes (c) Flushed and replaced oil cooler core (d) Stress panel in cabin pulled and rotor brake hydraulic line traced to point of break (e) Pilot's seat and access panels pulled and junction box wiring examined for battle damage. (f) Walkway between pylons pulled and area inspected for damage (g) Battery replaced (h) Engine oil tank serviced. Pedro 20 was

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then flown back to Nha Trang with Pedro 21 as escort. Both aircraft landed at 1150L and Mission 12-38-002-2169 was closed. Crewmembers for sorties flown on 22 Jan 69 were as follows:

Pedro 21 (8 sorties)

1st Lt Willis J. Thayer (RCC)
 Captain John A. Lenda (RCCP)
 Captain Daniel A. Nicholson (RCC) (PAX)
 Major Robert J. Kazmerchak (RCCP) (PAX)
 Captain Karl R. Bossi (EOD) (PAX)
 TSgt Don Devening (EOD) (PAX)
 TSgt Harold R. Massengale (FE)
 SSgt James L. Miller (PJ)
 SSgt Huel W. Wilson (RS)
 SSgt John B. Gent (FE)
 A1C James I. Arnold (Heli Mech) (PAX)
 A1C Robert J. Brooks (FE)
 A1C Timothy M. Reynolds (PJ)

Pedro 20 (1 sortie)

Captain Daniel A. Nicholson (RCC)
 Major Robert J. Kazmerchak (RCCP)
 TSgt Harold R. Massengale (FE)
 SSgt John B. Gent (FE)
 A1C Robert J. Brooks (FE)

Four combat saves recorded on 21 Jan 69 and one combat save on 22 Jan 69.

(3) Mission Number 12-38-003-9030. At 0715L on 30 Jan 69

Det 12, 38 ARRSq was notified by the 14th SOW Command Post of an aircraft crash approximately 5 miles SW of Nha Trang AB. Pedro 21 launched at 0745L and was vectored to the site by Walt 31 (FAC). Weather was clear with 15 miles visibility. Pedro 21 arrived on scene at 0800L.