

# A Helicopter Nightmare

With U. S. Combat Air Forces, Vietnam-Sergeant Michael E. Fish of Lake Oswego paused in his attempt to free the injured pilot from the aircraft wreckage as he watched his own hovering helicopter pull up and depart for a third and final time for the night.

Badgered by enemy fire that split the darkness, the 21-year-old pararescue medic continued to aid the trapped flier as the small circle of Army troops stood guard.

Sergeant Fish, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence D. Fish, S. W. Blue Heron Road, Lake Oswego, had been aboard the first of three HH-43 Huskie helicopters to fly into the rugged, confining canyon in Vietnam in an effort to evacuate survivors of a downed Army gunship and a trapped Army patrol.

Under protective surveillance of allied gunships, the sergeant's crew had brought the Huskie to a shuddering hover over the crash site and Sergeant Fish and the firefighter aboard had voluntarily broken through the heavy foliage astride a forest penetrator to reach the "angle floor."



SGT. MICHAEL FISH, pararescue medic with U. S. Combat Air Forces, Vietnam, brought pilot back safely after all night rescue mission. - 151s

Sergeant Fish's aircrew returned for a third time but was forced by darkness to abandon a pick-up attempt and once again departed.

The sergeant administered to the pilot as they waited through the night, aided by two AC-47 Dragonship crews that dropped flares to light the surrounding area.

At dawn, Sergeant Fish's helicopter returned and the crew lowered equipment and two men to assist in releasing the pilot. Working feverishly as the gunships held the attacking enemy at bay, the men on the ground finally freed the pilot and he was hoisted aboard and the Huskie departed. In rapid succession, a second chopper came in, Sergeant Fish was reeled upward and a third copter moved in to pick up the remaining troops. Fighting continued as the long-drawn-out recovery operation ended.

Sergeant Fish is assigned at Tuy Hoa Air Base as a member of the global Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service. He entered the Air Force in 1966 and volunteered for the rigorous training to qualify as a member of the Air Force's highly specialized corps of pararescuemen.

