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38th ARRSq Hist, Jul - Sep 1969

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On 10 July 1969, HH-43B #60-278 crashed when the pilot thought he had experienced engine failure while on a training flight. The crew received only minor injuries but the aircraft was damaged beyond economical repair.

On 19 July 1969, HH-43B #59-1562 was destroyed when it was struck by blast and flying debris when a crashed and burning B-52 blew up. Two of the Pedro crewmembers were killed in the crash² and one was severely injured.³

On 7 August 1969, HH-43B #60-282 was lost at sea after experiencing complete engine failure while being flown from Tuy Hoa to Cam Ranh Bay. The crew escaped the sinking aircraft with minor injuries, and were rescued by an Army helicopter.

On 13 August 1969, HH-43F #62-4508 was extensively damaged when it rolled on its side after snagging a runway barrier cable during landing roll after a practice autorotation. The crew escaped with only minor injuries. This aircraft will hopefully be returned to operation after extensive repairs.

2. Major Davis, Warren K. [REDACTED]
TSgt Cohen, Harry H., 1
3. SSgt Miles, Tommy T., 1

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3ARRGp Hist., Jul-Sep 1969

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the Jolly Greens daily in Southern Laos. Two A-1 aircraft are also on 45 minute ground alert at NKP from dark to first-light.

10. One HC-130P is on alert at Tuy Hoa AB as a backup aircraft during daylight hours for use as a tanker or A/C, should the need arise.

Combat and Non-Combat Saves

(U) The units under 3ARRGp were responsible for 39 combat saves and 26 non-combat saves for a total of 65 saves for the quarter.⁶ The total number of saves since 1 December 1964 is 2747; 1881 combat and 866 non-combat.

3ARRGp Flying Hours

(U) 3ARRGp units flew a total of 10,244.7 hours during the quarter.⁷

Aircraft Accidents

a. On 10 July 1969, an HH-43E, SN 60-278 assigned to Det 12, 38ARRSq, U-Tapao RTAFB, Thailand was involved in a major aircraft accident. There were no injuries or fatalities. The accident board determined that the primary cause of this accident was a pilot factor, in that the pilot attempted a

6. Appendix 2 lists the number of combat and non-combat saves for each month of the quarters.

7. Appendix 3 gives the flying hours by airframe for each month of the reporting period.

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low approach at low airspeed in a downwind condition, failed to recognize and provide for normal engine acceleration lag time, and thereby allowed the helicopter to settle into a tree. A contributing cause of this accident was miscellaneous unsafe conditions (inadequate crew rest) in that the pilot was fatigued as a result of high noise levels in the alert facility in which he spent the night preceding the flight and by working more than 85 hours in the facility during the previous week.

b. On 19 July 1969, an HH-43B, SN 59-1562, assigned to Det 12, 38ARRSq, U-Tapao RTAFB, Thailand was involved in a major aircraft accident when ordnance on a B-52 that had aborted on takeoff exploded. There were two fatalities and one critically injured survivor. The accident board determined that the primary cause of this accident was due to miscellaneous unsafe conditions, in that the complete destruction of the helicopter rotor system by shrapnel and debris from the explosion of bombs and fuel aboard the B-52 rendered the helicopter totally uncontrollable and made the resulting crash and destruction inevitable.

c. On 7 August 1969, an HH-43B, SN 60-0282, assigned to Det 11, 38ARRSq, Tuy Hoa AB, RVN was involved in a major aircraft accident. There were no fatalities or injuries. The

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

TO

TOMMY MILES JR.

Staff Sergeant Tommy Miles Jr., distinguished himself by heroism while participating in aerial flight as a Pararescueman at U-Tapao Airfield, Thailand, on 19 July 1969. On that date, Sergeant Miles was on a crew of a HH-43 helicopter participating in a rescue of crewmembers of a burning B-52 which was fully loaded with bombs. The helicopter, because of reduced visibility from the driving rain, hovered directly over the burning B-52, insuring that all the crewmembers had been evacuated. Following successful evacuation of the aircrew the bomb load of the burning aircraft exploded and, because of the heroic efforts of the helicopter aircrew in moving their aircraft closely into the crash scene to affect the rescue, the helicopter was fatally struck by debris. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Sergeant Miles reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Nineteen July 1969 began as a dreary overcast day with scattered showers. Members of DET12 38th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Utapao Royal Thai Air Force Base were going about their normal day to day duties.

The Alert Crew that day was (P) Major Warren K. Davis, (CP) Capt James Lerda**, (FE) John B. Gent, PJ/FF Tom miles and PJ/FF Harry Cohen. Unknown to this small group, circumstances would require the ultimate sacrifice reinforcing the Air Rescuemen's Creed

**"THESE THINGS I DO, THAT
OTHERS MAY LIVE".**

**Capt Lerda was released from flying that day and was not on board during the mission.

At about 1300 hours, B-52s could be heard starting their engines for preflight checks in preparation for their afternoon launch. Within the hour, with worsening weather the BUFFs were roaring down the 13,000 foot runway.

The Crash Phone rang announcing that a B-52 had run off the departure end of the runway and was on fire. Running from the Detachment, Maj Davis started the cocked Huskie, Tom Miles and Harry Cohen donned their aluminized crash turn-outs and John Gent connected the sling loaded Fire Suppression Kit getting the H-43 airborne in under a minute.

Pedro 70 headed through the rain towards the burning BUFF. At the same time, the B-52 crew was escaping from the fully loaded aircraft (300,000 lbs of fuel and 108 Mk82 500lb bombs). Five crewmembers were picked up by a Maintenance Van which notified Utapao Tower that the Tail Gunner was unaccounted for.

PJ/FF Tom Miles related the following, "We launched quickly and were on-scene Pronto. Major Davis after talking to the tower stated "I can see his escape rope"and then pulled up and away from the inferno. "I got one short look at the BUFF burning...then all I remember was a BRIGHT FLASH and waking up in Wilford Hall Medical Center 22 weeks later.

Pedro 70 was blown from the sky with only one survivor. It should be remembered that during the Viet Nam War;

**ALL GAVE SOME, BUT SOME
GAVE ALL**

This mission, by its loss, demonstrates the ultimate meaning of the Air Rescue Creed

FM STEVE MOCK

H 43 WEBSITE

Name: Technical Sergeant Harry Cohen

Date of Birth: February 8, 1933

Home of Record: Chicago, Illinois

Date of Casualty: July 19, 1969

Age at Loss: 35 years old

Vietnam Veteran's Memorial
Wall Panel 2E - Row 20

Detachment #12, 38th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron
Utapao Air Base, Thailand

Aircraft Model: HH-43B

Aircraft Tail Number: 59-1562

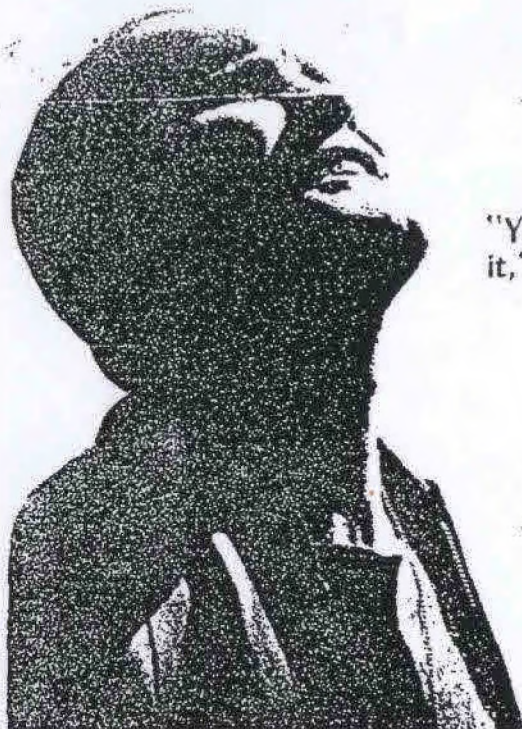
Callsign: Pedro 70

INCIDENT SUMMARY

Technical Sergeant Cohen and his crew scramble in response to a B-52 which has aborted its take-off. The B-52's nose gear collapses, the aircraft crashes and begins to burn. There is a question of whether the tail-gunner has evacuated the burning aircraft. Major Davis flies his helicopter by the burning aircraft while his crew attempts to locate the tail-gunner. The ordnance on the B-52 begins to explode. Major Davis' helicopter is struck by shrapnel and debris and his helicopter crashes. Major Davis and one of his crew members is killed. A third crew member is very seriously injured but survives the crash.

A/C MAJOR WARREN A. DAVIS KIA

2 CREW KILLED COHEN WAS #2



therapy.

"I guess I was one of their worst patients," chuckles the PJ. "I wanted to do everything for myself, and if I couldn't, I would get mad. I never wanted anyone to help me. I gave them a pretty good ration of grief in P. T., but they finally brought me through."

"You've made it, you've really made it," reflects Miles after his jump.

They brought him through alright, but only after many months of determined effort by both the therapists and Tom himself. The anger and frustration that comes from a disability, either permanent or temporary, is something that only a disabled person can comprehend.

Lots of help

Pararescueman Tom Miles met this frustration and beat his disabilities, but not alone. He gives a lot of credit to the therapists and other

could do."

Jumping again

TSgt. Tom Miles did show them what he could do recently, when he made his first jump in over three years on a training mission. "When I got up in the door of the aircraft, I was a little apprehensive," reveals Tom. "I was set to make a perfect jump", and he did.

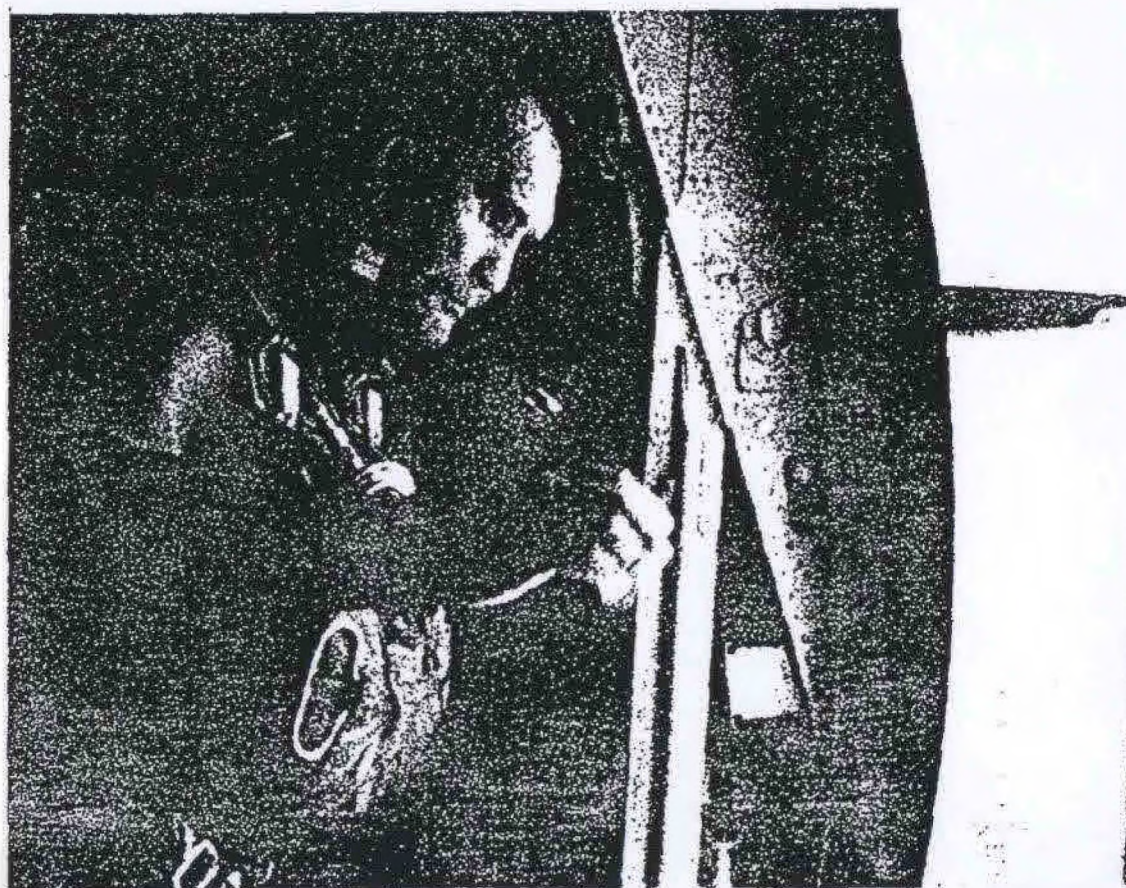
"Yes I was apprehensive before the jump... but when I went out of the aircraft, it was beautiful" he describes. "I looked up and saw the chute and the sky, and I said to myself, 'You have really made it, you've really made it!'"

A ten year Air Force veteran, Sergeant Miles was trained as a PJ at Eglin in 1966 after serving his first four years in the military as a physiological training specialist. He is currently serving in Keflavik, Iceland, and holds the Silver Star Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism, Air Medal, Purple Heart, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

by SSgt. Ken Peterson

"Yes, I was apprehensive before the jump..."

FIRST JUMP -- Apprehension reflects in his face as TSgt. Tom Miles readies to make his first parachute jump in over three years. Sergeant Miles, severely injured in Southeast Asia, made the jump in full pararescue gear over the Gulf of Mexico near Eglin.



MAY 16 1973

Pararescueman Tom Miles was . . . too tough to die

DET 12 38ARRS

Heavy, hot torrents of rain were streaking down upon the alert shelter at U-Tapao, Thailand, as pararescueman Tom Miles, then a staff sergeant, sat with his alert partner thinking the myriad of thoughts that only a man stationed in Southeast Asia can think. Home, wife, kids, mission, life, death . . . all may have been speeding through his brain.

Little did Tom know, that on that July 19th in 1969 at approximately 2 p.m., a drama would begin that would affect his life 24 hours a day for more than three years . . . It was Tom's turn to wrestle with fate.

"My alert teammate and I were just sitting, and waiting that day. That's all you can do on alert . . . wait," Miles reflects. Suddenly, the horn went off and the scramble began.

As Tom and his partner made their way to the chopper on the pad, they were told that a B-52 had crashed and was burning. Their job was to scramble along with the HH-43B's pilot on a fire suppression mission. They were airborne within 10 minutes, on what seemed to be a routine mission, so routine in fact, that the chopper's co-pilot did not have to accompany them. They soon found out, however, that it would be far from routine.

A few minutes after take-off, they spotted the giant bomber with the entire nose section engulfed in flames. The crew, with the exception of the tailgunner, was assembled outside of the burning bird. The pilot made a pass at the aircraft from 12 o'clock to the 6 o'clock position, searching for the gunner. Suddenly, the pilot said, "I see his escape rope." He pulled the Huskie into a turn over the aircraft. There was a great rumble as the B-52 exploded, blowing the helicopter out of the sky, killing the pilot and Miles' partner.

"The last thing I remember was a flash," says

Tom. "The next thing I knew, I mean really knew, was that I was in a hospital bed." At that time though, Tom did not know that six weeks had elapsed and he was not in Thailand, but in Wilford Hall Hospital where he was destined to spend an entire year undergoing extensive medical care.

Extensive injuries

As that B-52 exploded, Miles had been knocked out of the rear end of the chopper, and had fallen some 200 feet to the jungle floor. An ambulance from the base made it to the scene and picked up the unconscious airman. In the accident, he had sustained multiple injuries. Both of his legs and his arm were broken, his jawbone was fractured in two places, he had a punctured stomach, a hole in his hard palate and extensive head, facial and internal injuries. His only chance for survival was to air-evacuate him to the U. S.

Doctors attended his immediate wounds, and arranged to fly him out on an evacuation flight, a flight that would return him to his homeland, but not before he had "died" twice. Two times as he lay suspended in limbo, Tom's breathing and heart stopped. It was only some inner "strength" and quick action by medical personnel he never saw, that saved his life.

Upon arrival at Wilford Hall, he was admitted into the intensive care unit, where he lay unconscious to the world around him and the efforts that were being made to save his life. "They took great care of me there," praises Tom.

After being transferred from intensive care, Tom underwent lengthy orthopedic treatment. His broken bones were mended, and he then began the seemingly endless cycle of casts and cast changes that patients with severe bone injuries must undergo. With treatment complete, he started on the long road up through physical therapy.

"I guess I was one of their worst patients," chuckles the PJ. "I wanted to do everything for myself, and if I couldn't, I would get mad. I never wanted anyone to help me. I gave them a pretty good ration of grief in D. C. but I

pararescuemen. "They really did a great job. They motivate you and if it wouldn't have been for the other PJ's coming down to see me, I probably would have never made it."

"I had an attitude like, 'You're hurt boy, you may not make it'. Then they challenged me with bits like, 'Hey boy, what's wrong with you, you can't walk like me.' That makes you think, and give your all to get straightened out."

After his discharge from Wilford Hall, Miles was assigned to Eglin, where he worked with the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Training Center as a Field Committee instructor for one year. But he wasn't satisfied. "I was a pararescueman, but not a flying or jumping PJ," he relates. He worked hard at his job of providing students with field, survival and ground navigation training, but something important was lacking from his life . . . he wasn't "operational".

To Tom, a master parachutist with 67 jumps before his injury, being operational is the most important part of his job. When you look at Tom Miles, his whole being radiates action and determination. It was this determination that led him to the conclusion that he had to get back in the air. There was one problem . . . he couldn't pass the physical.

He began an intense physical and mental campaign to put himself in top condition to pass that flight physical, bearing in mind his own philosophy that, "If you have the right mental attitude, you can do just about anything." After more hard months of strain and frustration, Tom finally passed the physical that would open the door to flight and jump status once again.

Once again, Tom gives a majority of the credit for this accomplishment to his fellow airmen in his present unit, the 55th ARRSq. "People like my commander, Lt. Col. Coy Farrar and fellow PJ's like CMSgt. Joe Vigare really challenged me. They gave me a goal to meet. They made me mad, and I wanted to show them what I could do."

Jumping again

TSgt. Tom Miles did show them what he could do recently, when he made his first jump in over three years on a training mission.





Miles43.jpg