

Helicopters in Action

Rescuers Save Army Men, Help Viets Nab Prisoner

DA NANG AFLD., Vietnam — Seven Army helicopter crewmen have been rescued by an Air Force team that put up a heated fight against communist forces lurking nearby.

The Army men, from the 17th Air Cavalry Regiment at Phu Bai, were picked up by an HH-43 from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

The Army UH-1 was shot down by enemy ground fire near Khe Sanh. Within moments, A-1s piloted by 1st Lt. Clifton E. Groves and 1st Lt. Robert B. Carlsen arrived and "began laying ordnance around the area," according to Lieutenant Groves.

The enemy was in elephant grass about 25 yards from the downed copter. When the A-1s arrived, they stopped firing rifles and began throwing grenades.

But after a while the ground fire stopped. "We thought we had pretty well sanitized the area," Groves said. So, Capt. Peter H. Chapman flew in with an HH-53 to try a rescue.

The communists suddenly opened fire again and peppered the helicopter with bullets, giving it some control problems. The A-1s came back to strafe the area while Chapman's copter limped back to base. One A-1 dropped smoke.

That enabled Capt. Rodney S. Griffith to get in close to the men even though, in his words, "The Skyraiders were dropping their ordnance so close it even scared me."

The HH-53 crew carried on a running duel with communists below, and as the seven Army men got aboard, they added their fire to that of the Air Force men. The entire operation took about 10 minutes.

ing Russian seaman from the deck of a Soviet fishing vessel and flew him to an Alaskan hospital where he was treated for a burst appendix.

The trawler Luchegorsk had requested permission to put 44-year-old Bashmakov Vasiliy Andrevich ashore on Nunivak Island. The Coast Guard had allowed this, but the boat couldn't get close enough because of ice jams.

So an H-3 from Elmendorf was sent to the scene, accompanied by an HC-130 from the 71st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron. This plane gave navigational assistance on the 49-mile journey and provided two in-flight refuelings.

Lt. Col. Darrold A. Stoeber, a flight surgeon, and SSgt. Donald

P. Mulhall, a pararescue technician, were lowered to the deck. They examined the patient and placed him in a Stokes litter. He was flown to Bethel where he was transferred to the HC-130 that continued to Anchorage and the Alaska Native Medical Center.