

**TAN SON NHUT** -- The men who built it named it "Huskie." When introduced into the U.S. Air Force inventory, it set every helicopter record for weight lifting, altitude and distance.

In SEA the HH-43 got a new name, "Pedro." And in SEA it tallied achievements that make it a proud name, too. Pedro is credited with saving 1,880 people from certain death or capture since it arrived in 1964, more than one half of the 3,400 saves of the Third Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, the parent rescue unit in the Republic of Vietnam. In fact, Pedro has rescued more people than any other single U.S. Air Force aircraft in SEA.

Pedro is a unique aircraft in several ways. It is the only active aircraft in the U.S. Air Force inventory to have wooden rotors. Pedro can launch faster than any other aircraft in SEA. Its single jet engine requires no warmup, and its five-man crew is airborne in less than 90 seconds after the crash phone sounds.

Probably its most recognizable eccentricity is the strange tank suspended on a cable under the aircraft, the fire suppression kit. In the event that a downed aircraft bursts into flames, asbestos-clad firemen may be deployed with the kit to extinguish a path in the fire

by which to rescue the downed crew.

Because it has a combat radius of only 75 miles, the tiny Pedro is now assigned primarily to the fire-suppression role and local base rescue. The larger HH-3 and Jolly Green Giants and HH-53 Super Jolly Green giants do the heavy and long-distance rescue work.

It was not always so. In the early days, with 50-gallon fuel drums strapped in the cabin and the fuel hand-pumped into the aircraft's tanks to extend the range, Pedro flew within 40 miles of Hanoi.

Although her days of dashing over the DMZ to pull downed airmen from the hands of the North Vietnamese are over, she still manages to get her fair share of the glory.

Serving side-by-side with active combat units at bases scattered throughout the Republic of Vietnam and Thailand, Pedro rescue helicopters are ready to answer any call for help. During the past 10 months, HH-43s have rescued 13 persons, participated in civic action projects, assisted in numerous medical evacuation missions, fought fires and acted as an airborne command post directing fire fighters.

There's not doubt that Pedro is a life saver. And people affected by the little bird's actions do not forget it.



When the crash

*U.S. Air Force Photos by MSgt. E.V. Agana*



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When the crash phone blares, rescuemen waste no time

# It's called Pedro

*U.S. Air Force Photos by MSgt. E.V. Agana*



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A Pedro with a fire suppression kit hanging beneath it moves into the area of a fire



Pedro

# It's called Pedro



After a mission, the crew goes over the Pedro closely

U.S. Air Force Photos

By Sgt. G. M. Boprie

PHU CAT—Imagine a raging inferno caused by 500 gallons of burning aviation fuel. Then visualize cutting a path through the flames, to rescue trapped aircrew members. Time is an important factor!

Rescuing crewmembers from burning aircraft is the job of the men and helicopters of Detachment 18, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

It's a big job for the men who man the HH-43 Pedro helicopters. Rescue crews are on 24-hour alert. In addition to their crash rescue mission they also perform local base rescues.

The gas turbine-powered, supercharged rotor blades provide the go power for fast rescues. The majority of the missions involve standby for inflight emergencies. "Three or four scrambles a day is average," according to Capt. Joseph Coffman Jr., an HH-43 pilot.

The rescue crews maintain 100 per cent operational response around the clock and regularly practice their techniques. A fire pit on the south end of the runway is filled with 500 gallons of aviation fuel and ignited. The chopper crew responds to the simulated emergency as though it were an actual crash. When the horn sounds at the detachment area, five men race to a waiting chopper. Two are pilots, two are firemen and one is a medical technician.

Airborne, the helicopter hovers over the pad while a fire suppression kit is hooked to the underside of the aircraft. At the "crash site," the helicopter crew sets the firemen and fire suppression kit on the ground and hovers nearby, directing "rotor wash" on the firemen. This blows the flames away and directs cool air on the crash scene.

The firemen spray the fire with nearly 700 gallons of flame smothering foam. "This is enough," said one of the firemen, "to lay down a 10 by 30-foot path to a downed aircrew."

The firemen rush into the base of the flames, safe inside their protective suits. Soon the foam has smothered the base of the fire and the sky darkens as another practice exercise comes to a smoking finish at this central highlands air base.



Firemen in asbestos suits approach practice fire

At Phu Cat

# Foaming down the flames



A fireman lets loose with the foam



The helicopter, with suppression kit, hovers near the fire's edge

# Pedro — saving lives

By Amn. Randy W. Day

PHAN RANG — The aircraft is small in size compared to the giant C-5 Galaxy or C-141 Starlifter transports. It does not compare to the F-4 Phantom II jet fighter in speed or range and unlike the F-111 it carries no sophisticated weapons systems.

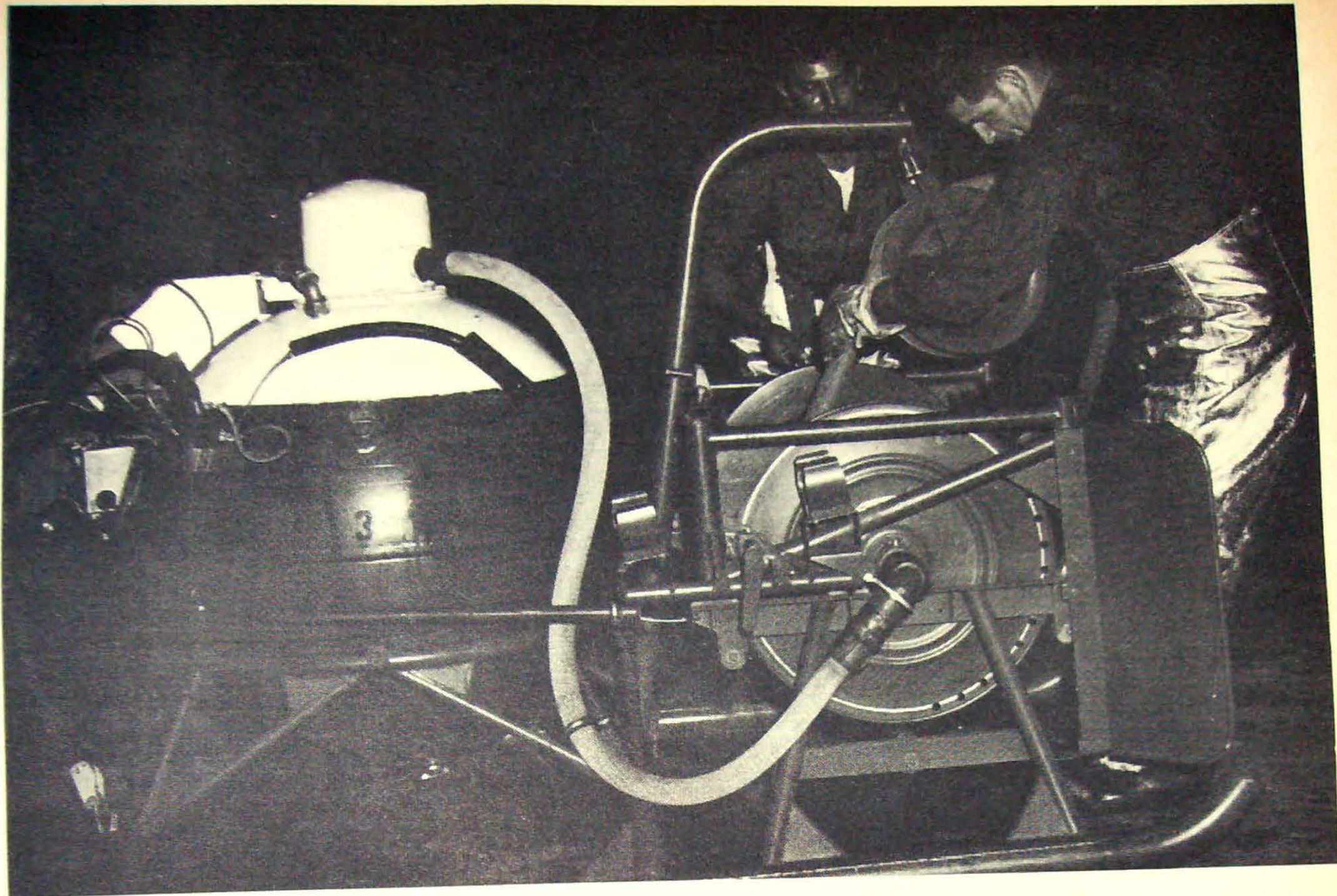
It has a simple name — Pedro. It's a helicopter and its mission is to save lives. It is flown by the aircrews of Detachment 1, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, who are on alert

24-hours daily, ready to scramble their twin-rotor life-saver to respond to any trouble call from a disabled aircraft or one that has an unsafe condition.

Capt. Mike H. Nelson, a Pedro aircraft commander and a veteran of both base and regional aircrew rescue missions stated, "We may receive our scramble call from the Phan Rang AB control tower or the Joint Rescue Coordination Center at Tan Son Nhut AB. From the initial call we can plan our mission's needs and be airborne in a very

*Pedro's maintenance men (below) working round the clock if necessary, make sure their bird is in excellent condition and ready to scramble on its next mission. After the initial scramble call, the fire suppression kit is attached to the Pedro (right) for movement to the scene of the rescue.*





Pedro takes aboard a simulated survivor (left) in a training mission. The "survivor" is lifted by a hoist system capable of extracting a man from dense jungle. SSgt. Roy A. Rivera, left, and SSgt. Charles A. Hunt, both aerial firefighters, coil two-inch hose (above) in preparation for another mission.



*Sergeant Long (left) helps his patient from Pedro Helicopter*

**'That others may live'**

***Pedro lends hand on medevac mission***



U.S. Air Force Photo by MSgt. Sam Sears

Bien Hoa's Pedro rescue helicopter was on the spot when 1st Lt. Carl O. Walinski was forced to land his OV-10 Bronco with the nose gear up recently. A little

shaken but unhurt, the lieutenant remarked, "Pedro was a comforting sight."

'That others may live'

## *Pedro lends hand on medevac mission*

PHAN RANG — Within minutes after receiving notification of an emergency medical evacuation, an HH-43B Pedro helicopter and crew from Phan Rang's Detachment 1, 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group were airborne on their first medevac mission.

Medical authorities at the 315th USAF Dispensary here initiated the request for the medevac after determining that an emergency patient required immediate surgery to repair tendons which had been severed in the left middle finger. With this surgical capability not available at Phan Rang, the patient needed immediate trans-

portation to the 483d USAF Hospital at Cam Ranh Bay AB.

The patient was a food services specialist here who had sustained lacerations on both hands while performing duties at one of the base's dining halls. When the accident occurred at approximately 1:30 p.m., services personnel rushed the injured man to the dispensary.

Medical technician SSgt. James R. Dewey, assistant NCOIC of the dispensary's emergency room, assisted Dr. (Capt.) Gilberto Manso with the examination of the patient.

Dr. Manso explained, "With the finger tendons severed, they had to be repaired immediately or they would relax and shrink, rendering them unrepairable." Since there is no surgeon assigned to Phan Rang AB, the doctor requested the medevac in order to accomplish the vital operation.

The HH-43 lifted off its pad on the Phan Rang flightline at approximately 2:45 p.m. Piloting the aircraft were Capt. Michael H. Nelson, pilot; and Capt. Kevin M. Mahan, copilot. Other crew members were SSgt. Lawrence Rosen, flight mechanic, and Sgt. Parks H. Long Jr., an aeromedical technician attached to the rescue unit.

Two minutes after the aircraft was airborne, Captain Nelson maneuvered it into position at the Phan Rang medical facility helipad. With the patient prepared to make the 35-minute flight, Sergeant Dewey escorted him to the waiting aircraft.

Captain Nelson set the helicopter on the 483d Hospital's helipad at 3:25 p.m. where waiting medical personnel escorted the patient to the medical facility.

According to Sergeant Long, the patient endured the flight with no problems other than drowsiness. With the patient in the hands of those able to assist him, Pedro lifted off for the return flight to Phan Rang, just three minutes after landing.

Captain Nelson classified the flight as "a real smooth one with no problems encountered."

fire suppression and air crew rescue unit, the emergency medical evacuation was the first performed by Detachment 1 since it began operations at Phan Rang in March 1966. However, the Pedro's flew two non-emergency missions during the two previous weeks to familiarize the crews with procedures.

The unit still primarily responsible for medevacs is the Army's 247th Medical Detachment Helicopter Ambulance Unit assigned to Phan Rang AB. If for some reason the 247th is not available during an emergency for an evacuation flight, Pedro crews are standing by, ready to back up the words proclaimed by their motto, "That Others May Live."

Presently the 247th is averaging between 20 and 25 medevacs a month, including both incoming and outgoing, at Phan Rang.