

the US forces. An HC-130 soon arrived on the scene and took over as on-scene commander of what proved to be a massive and complex rescue mission. Numerous aircraft including Nail FACs and other Spectres conducted a radio and visual search throughout the night to locate the survivors in preparation for a pick-up attempt at first light. It was discovered that two of the survivors had bailed out soon after the aircraft had been hit and were some 40 miles to the east of the main group of survivors. At first light in a well-coordinated operation four HH-53s from the 40th ARRS picked up 13 men from the main group, one of whom had a broken leg. A few minutes later two Air America UH-34D helicopters protected by A-1s rescued the two other survivors from a well-defended area near the Trail to the east. The huge operation on the night of the 30th/31st had involved seven HH-53s, eight A-1s, three HC-130s, 11 flights of strike aircraft (seven of which made attacks), four EB-66s, six F-105s, 14 Nail FACs, three Raven FACs, three Air America helicopters, four AC-130s and an F-4 Fast FAC. Unfortunately, the successful rescue of the entire crew of Spectre 22 was overshadowed by the attempted rescue of Bat 21 that followed in the next few days but these two operations epitomise the high points and low points that rescue crews faced in Southeast Asia.