

18 April 1972

C-130E 63-7775 Detachment 1, 374 TAW, USAF, Tan Son Nhut
Capt Donald B Jensen (survived)
Maj L R Pratt (survived)
3 crew, names unknown (survived)

For several days the 374th TAW's detachment at Tan Son Nhut had been trying to drop ammunition and supplies to the defenders of An Loc, which came under heavy attack from 12 April following the loss of Loc Ninh seven days earlier. Several attempts were made but most of the loads fell into enemy hands and anti-aircraft fire was becoming more ferocious so a change of tactics to low level CDS drops was required. The CDS drops started with a high-speed, low-level approach (250 knots and below 200 feet) until the aircraft climbed rapidly to about 600 feet and slowed to 130 knots for the actual drop. On the 18th a Hercules flown by Capt Jensen approached An Loc at 200 feet to drop its load. It was hit by automatic weapons fire and damaged as it climbed to commence the final run in. The starboard wing caught fire and the load had to be jettisoned but Capt Jensen headed south in the hope of reaching Tan Son Nhut. However, Donald Jensen had to crash-land the aircraft in a swamp near Lai Khe and all the crew were recovered by Army helicopters. CDS drops were suspended after this incident but later attempted again during the resupply of An Loc.