

Phantom crew rescued by Da Nang's 37th ARRS

DA NANG AFLD – The crewmen of an Air Force F-4 Phantom, severely damaged by ground fire during a mission southwest of Hue, were rescued from the sea Aug. 9, about 15 minutes after they ejected from the stricken fighter.

Capt. Jim Beaver, pilot, and 1st. Lt. Andy Haskle, weapons system operator, parachuted to safety after their F-4 was rocked by an explosion as they tried to fly the Phantom back towards Da Nang over the South China Sea.

Beaver said, "We were hitting enemy troop

locations about 15 miles southwest of Hue when we were hit by what I think was automatic weapons fire. The plane still flew okay so we headed for the water."

However, as the crew turned toward Da Nang, Haskle noticed a small fire and then the plane was rocked by an explosion. The crewmen ejected and were pulled from the ocean about 15 minutes later by a USAF HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopter from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron based at Da Nang.

The HH-53 aircraft commander, Capt.

Dennis Boroczko, explained that his crew was on a training flight when they received word of the plane in trouble.

"We saw the F-4 blow up," he said, "and the wingman was circling over the survivors. We made the pickup and I don't think the crew was in the water more than 15 minutes."

Along with Captain Boroczko was Coast Guard Lt. Jack Stice, copilot; and Sergeants Jimmy Cherry, flight engineer; and Delber Beauchamp, Mike Wagner, Robert Lamplant and Curtis Towns, all pararescue specialists.