

Det. 18 aces week of 'saves', inspection

PLATTSBURGH AFB, NY — Monday, Feb. 3, started normally for the 24 members of Detachment (Det.) 18, 48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron here. Little did anyone know the next seven days would include nine "saves" and a week-long inspection by the Military Airlift Command Inspector General.

Shortly after the start of work Monday, the inspection team arrived to check the unit's activities, aircraft and capabilities. Maj. James R. Murtha, Det. 18 commander, was determined to

improve on the unit's August 1973 inspection.

About 10:30 that night, the detachment was notified that two FB-111 aircraft were involved in an inflight accident over southern Vermont. A KC-135 Stratotanker on the scene reported all four crewmembers had ejected and were apparently uninjured.

But temperatures of 25 degrees below zero and 35-mile-an-hour winds were predicted. The chill factor was minus-95 degrees, sufficient to freeze flesh in less than one minute.

At 11:20 p.m. one of two UH-1N

Huey helicopters launched. Forty-five minutes later, as it flew to the crash site, the unit's second Huey took off to take a security police team to the wreckage.

Nearing the scene, the first Huey established radio contact with the circling KC-135 and ground search parties. Using directions from the KC-135 crew, all four FB-111 crewmen were found in the heavily wooded area of Glebe Mountain near South Londonderry, VT. Coast Guard Air Station, Brooklyn launched two HH-3s to provide on scene il-

lumination for the recovery with "Night Sun" searchlights.

For the next half hour the Huey hovered at 100 feet as each man was brought up by the rescue hoist. By 1:00 a.m. all were safely aboard and making the 90-minute flight to Plattsburgh AFB. Four "saves" were credited.

Less than eight hours later Det. 18 was again called to medevac a critically ill infant. Another "save" was credited, earning the det. five "saves" in 12 hours.

In the next five days Det. 18 crews transferred four critical patients and were credited with "saves" on each mission. Also, several flights were made in support of the FB-111 accident investigation board.

In all, Det. 18 earned nine "saves" in six missions during the week. True to form, the unit also did well in the inspection. Col. Alton H. Deviney, inspection team chief, reported: "It should be noted Det. 18 is the best LLH (light lift helicopter) unit inspected in this cycle."

Crewmembers involved in the missions were: Major Murtha; Captains Joseph H. Pate, Roy M. Allen and Dr. Adam Romeiser; 1st Lts. Arthur J. Kenney, Edward Englebrecht and Frank Brunelle; 2nd Lt. J. P. Gant; TSgt. Gary P. Bryant; SSgt. Edwin C. Holster; Sgts. James Smith, Paul Dunn and Frank Schiller; and A1C William G. Hicks.



RESCUE Review

AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE

Vol. 1, No. 4

Headquarters, ARRS, Scott AFB, IL

March, 1975

Injured pilot saved in Idaho after three days in wreckage

MOUNTAIN HOME AFB, ID — A plane passenger who suffered several broken vertebrae in an emergency, wheels-up "pancake" landing, stumbled nearly 10 miles in deep snow Jan. 27 to get help for the pilot friend he left behind.

Nick Cizmich, 38, had huddled with Roy Rice, 36, for three days in freezing temperatures before staggering to the ranch where he called authorities. It was Detachment (Det.) 22, 48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron here that finally rescued the pilot, and ended a 3-day search.

Rice and Cizmich had attended an Idaho Health and Welfare Department meeting near Idaho Falls and were returning to Boise Jan. 24 when their engine developed trouble at low altitude. In the crash landing, Rice lost six teeth, received a gash on his nose and broke several vertebrae. Although he could move his legs, he had lost all feeling below the waist and could not walk.

"It was a matter of waiting it out, hoping like hell he (Cizmich) would be in shape to walk out," Rice later told Idaho newspapermen. "When he left, he looked like a 95-year-old man with a cane — it was horrible."

"I thought under a duress situation I could make it, and I did," Cizmich said. "When I got to the Clinton Ranch, I was on my last leg."

Rancher LaVan James said Cizmich was indeed at the point of collapse. "Any further and he wouldn't have made it."

Once notified, Idaho authorities called for help from Det. 22 and sent an ambulance to pick up Cizmich. He would not leave until Rice was rescued, and made the ambulance wait.

"It's hard to find anyone out in the desert," said 1st Lt. Gary

Perkins, copilot of the UN-1N Huey helicopter. He said a Civil Air Patrol plane spotted the wreckage and got a "fix" before losing it again in low clouds.

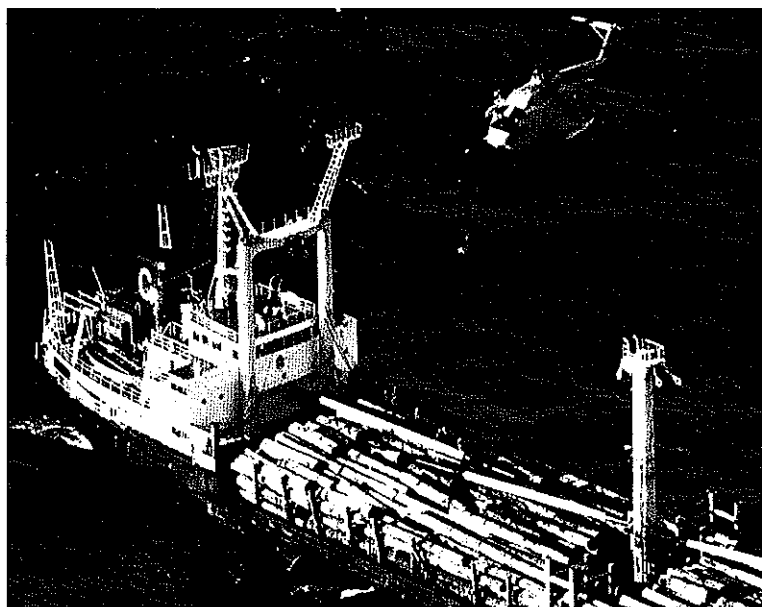
"Even though we flew at 500 to 1,000 feet, it was hard to see the plane in the snow," Lieutenant Perkins said. Before Cizmich had left, the two men had spread out a tarpaulin with a red cross.

"When we landed near the wreckage, I saw Rice crawling in the snow coming toward the chopper," said Lieutenant Perkins. "It was rather strange, because he wouldn't stop. I went out and knelt beside him and he crawled right past me. He was somewhat delirious and just kept crawling . . . ignoring us. It was almost as if he was afraid we would leave without him."

Rice and Cizmich were united with their families that night at Magic Valley Memorial Hospital in Twin Falls, nearly four days after their crash. Rice had not lost his sense of humor. His first comment in the X-ray room was, "It was the coldest damn motel I've ever stayed in in my life."

He continually told hospital personnel that he was hungry. The two only had toothpaste and vitamin E during their ordeal. Rice, with his six broken teeth, did manage to eat some snow to gain liquid. "You think that doesn't feel good . . ." he said.

Crewmembers earning the "save" were Capt. Eric Vranek, pilot; Lieutenant Perkins, copilot; SSgt. Richard A. Henderson, flight mechanic; and TSgt. Ernest D. Casbeer, pararescueman.



KADENA AB, OKINAWA — An HC-130 Hercules and this HH-3 helicopter, which hovers over the Korean freighter Chun Sun, teamed up Jan. 9 to rescue three severely burned seamen. The 500-mile mission, which included two aerial refuelings and an hour-long series of ten hovers, earned the first three 1975 "saves" for the 33rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron here.



A "no notice hosing down" awaited HH-3 helicopter crewmen after the last alert by Detachment 2, 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing. After pre-flight, the crew was strapped to stretchers during egress training with the fire department. Surprising the "injured" crewmen is 1st Lt. Ralph W. Getchell (right). Victims are SSgt. Franceline Tillman (hidden at left); 1st Lt. Robert L. Conner (trying to escape); and Lt. Col. John A. Raper, Det. 2 commander. The fireman was unidentified. (Photo by SSgt. Ron Wooten).

Chopper operations close

HOWARD AFB, CZ — Another era ended March 1 when Detachment (Det.) 2, 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing here closed its HH-3 helicopter operations.

The three "Jolly Greens" were transferred to the 129th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, Hayward Municipal Airport, CA — one of two Air National Guard units recently assigned to Rescue. The move is part of the Department of Defense force realignment program.

Det. 2 will maintain a 10-man

unit to operate the Rescue Coordination Center for the USAF Southern Command.

During nearly four and one-half years of flying operations, Det. 2 helicopters provided search and rescue coverage for Central and South America and 1.6 million square miles of the Pacific and Caribbean Sea. Det. 2 participated in more than 250 missions and earned 96 "saves."

Helicopters of the 24th Composite Squadron and various Army units will assume the flying portion of the rescue mission.

PJ section earns trophy

HQ. ARRS, SCOTT AFB, IL — The 41st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRSq.), McClellan AFB, CA, last month was selected as the first recipient of the Pitsenbarger Memorial Trophy. The annual award was established recently to recognize the outstanding operational pararescue section of the year.

The trophy is presented in honor of A1C William H. Pitsenbarger, the first enlisted man to be awarded the Air Force Cross and the first pararescueman to give his life in that conflict. (See story and photo on page three.)

A selection board of eight senior

officers and pararescuemen assigned to Headquarters Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) selected the 41st ARRSq. from nominations submitted by operational ARRS wings.

Each section is evaluated for mission prosecution, section appearance, equipment maintenance, personnel proficiency, economical operations, safety record and appearance of individual pararescuemen.

Maj. Gen. Ralph S. Saunders, ARRS commander, will present the rotating trophy and accompanying letter soon.