

needed, use plain 8 x 10 1/2 bond paper, the last sheet of which must be signed by the recommending individual in addition to the signature required on this form)

Staff Sergeant Lawrence E. Kimball and Airman First Class Kenneth A. Herdliska distinguished themselves by heroism involving voluntary risk of life near Mauna Loa Forest Reserve, 25 miles West of Hilo, Hawaii, on 23-24 September 1974. On those dates, Sergeant Kimball and Airman Herdliska were standing their alert tour as Pararescue Specialists on an HH-53C helicopter. At 2100 Hours, fourteen hours after the two pararescuemen had reported for duty, the 76th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was scrambled to the "Big Island," Hawaii, to search and locate survivors of a Marine helicopter which had crashed into the thick Hawaiian woods. Approximately two hours after launch the helicopter arrived on scene, but crash assessment was extremely difficult because of darkness, a heavy fog, high winds, and intermittent heavy rain. Hovering the aircraft was difficult at best and grew increasingly hazardous as fatigue became a factor. Both Sergeant Kimball and Airman Herdliska volunteered to don the rescue hoist and descend the 150 feet through a heavy foliage layer to continue a ground search for the downed Marines. Once on the ground, Sergeant Kimball and Airman Herdliska were able to locate the victims, but had to chop their way through the heavily wooded forest and scramble up a steep, muddy slope to reach the crash site. Upon reaching the rescue area, four survivors were contacted, three of whom were in urgent need of emergency medical treatment. In assessing the overall extent of the four downed Marines' injuries, it was found that three had sustained multiple fractures and lacerations. One man had a suspected broken back, which magnified the need for evacuation as soon as possible. Sergeant Kimball and Airman Herdliska immediately began lifesaving treatment which ultimately saved the three injured men. Once the patients' condition was stabilized, the two pararescuemen evaluated the recovery situation. Sergeant Kimball and Airman Herdliska then began chopping out a clearing in the heavy foliage to effect a hoist recovery of the patients by the "Jolly Green" helicopter. In the early morning hours, darkness, rain, and mud, Sergeant Kimball and Airman Herdliska worked to carry their survivors from the wreckage to the selected recovery site which was located some 100 yards away. As soon as the helicopter became stable over the recovery area, Airman Herdliska was hoisted to the hovering aircraft to act as the airborne medical attendant; three of the critically injured patients were hoisted aboard immediately thereafter. Because of a critical need for fuel, Sergeant Kimball was left at the scene with the remaining survivor. Approximately four hours later, the helicopter returned and was able to recover the remaining survivor and Sergeant Kimball. In all the mission lasted fourteen hours, of which nine hours were spent on the ground by Sergeant Kimball and Airman Herdliska. The arduous task of recovering these critically injured Marines under such hazardous and restrictive conditions only exemplifies the outstanding performance of both Sergeant Kimball and Airman Herdliska in living the motto of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service; "That Others May Live." By their courageous action and humanitarian regard for their fellowman, Staff Sergeant Kimball and Airman First Class Herdliska reflected great credit upon themselves and the United States Air Force.

26. TYPED NAME, GRADE AND TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL INITIATING RECOMMENDATION

JAMES L. BUTERA, Lt Colonel, USAF
Commander

27. SIGNATURE

28. ATTACHMENTS

NUMBER

DESCRIPTION (Citation and supporting statements or other official documents)

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Citation