

SUBJECT: Mission Narrative Report

TO: 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Group (JSARC), APO US FORCES 96307

1. Mission Number: 6-38-80-11 April 1966
2. Det 6, 38th ARRS alerted by hot line from 38th JSARC
3. SAR Aircraft used: 2 HH-43F, 1 HH-43B

First Aircraft Pedro 97

|     |                        |
|-----|------------------------|
| RCC | Capt Ronald L. Bachman |
| CP  | Capt Raymond L. Murdon |
| HM  | A1C Thomas C. Story    |
| RS  | SSgt David E. Milsten  |

Second Aircraft Pedro 73

|     |                             |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| RCC | Capt Harold D. Salem        |
| CP  | Maj Maurice G. Kessler      |
| HM  | A1C Gerald C. Hammond       |
| RS  | A1C William H. Pitsenbarger |

Third Aircraft Pedro 46

|     |                           |
|-----|---------------------------|
| RCC | Capt John H. Larson       |
| CP  | Capt Peter C. Kelly       |
| HM  | A1C William Amendolare Jr |
| FF  | SSgt Calvin H. Warren     |

4. Reaction time from initial notification to first pickup: 0+33
5. CAP Assistance: 2 OHF FAC, 2 UH1 Armed helicopters, 3 F-100, and artillery on station at all times. One flare-ship (C-47) was orbiting for night operations.
6. Summary of Events:

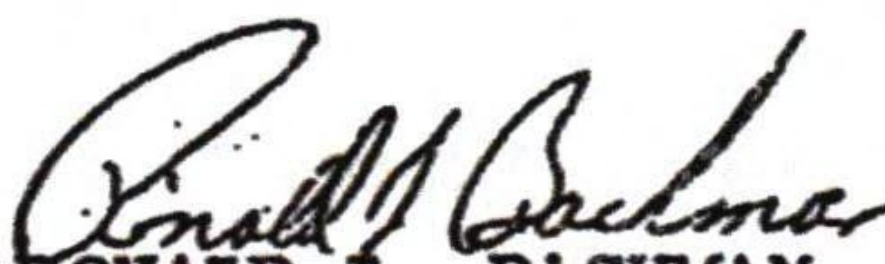
At 1507 hours, Det 6 was notified by 3rd JSARC that 6 or more Army casualties were located at 1044N 10719E and would require extraction by hoist. Pedro 97 and Pedro 73 were airborne at 1512 hours enroute to the area 33 miles southeast of Bien Hoa. The helicopters were vectored into the area which was marked by smoke from the ground party. The pickup point was

in dense jungle with trees approximately 150 feet high. There was a small open area in the 150 foot trees down to trees at the 100 foot level. Below the 100 foot canopy there was dense brush to approximately 30 feet. There was a hole in the 30 foot canopy just large enough for the stokes litter. It was necessary to hover with the right rotor blades within 3 to 5 feet of a tree, to lower the litter through the hole. Arriving in the area at 1535 hours, Pedro 97 immediately started the first pickup which was completed at 1545 hours. Pedro 97 moved out to transfer the patient from the stokes litter to the folding litter while Pedro 73 made a stokes litter pickup. Pedro 97 then moved back in and made one more stokes litter pickup and then both helicopters proceeded to Binh Ba, about 8 miles south, to transfer the patients to a field hospital. Pedro 97 refueled and Pedro 73 returned to make another pickup. At this time Pedro 73 placed their paramedic on the ground to assist in loading patients and administer first aid. As Pedro 73 departed the pickup point with one litter patient, Pedro 97 moved in to make another pickup. Pedro 73 proceeded to Binh Ba with the patient while Pedro 97 picked up one litter patient and two more patients on the forest penetrator. Upon arriving at Binh Ba, Pedro 73 refueled. Pedro 97 deposited the 3 patients at Binh Ba and while enroute to the pickup point I was notified by Sidewinder 23 that the pickup point was under heavy small arms and mortar attack. The mortar attack was neutralized when Pedro 97 arrived at the pickup point so I proceeded to extract two litter patients. As Pedro 97 departed the pickup point, Pedro 73 arrived and proceeded to lower the litter for another pickup. When the litter was approximately 10 feet from the ground, Pedro 73 was hit by a burst of automatic small arms fire from the left rear and from approximately a 30° angle from verticle. The pilot immediately cut the hoist, called "Ground fire" and started to depart the area. Immediately after starting to climb out it was noticed that the rotor and engine RPM could not be controlled. The throttle was jammed in the full open, max power position. The aircraft required at least 4 inches of right rudder to maintain coordinated flight. Approximately 2 miles from the hoisting area there was a small clearing in a rubber plantation, but not knowing how secure it was, the pilot decided to try to make a road further west. About this time the pilot felt he had the emergency under control and he elected to try and take the aircraft to Binh Ba which he knew was secure. The possibility of using emergency fuel in flight was ruled out because the throttle could not be brought down to flight idle. The pilot and co-pilot evaluated the situation and decided a shallow approach and running landing was the best way to land the aircraft. Clearance was obtained and Pedro 97 stood by as the approach and landing was made. The landing was made with no injury to the crew. The only way to shut the engine down was to turn off the fuel and oil shutoff valve. The oil could be shut off but not the fuel. It was discovered that the fuel portion of the valve had been rendered inoperative by a bullet. The mechanic tried to manually move the fuel control to the off position with no success. He then considered the possibility of disconnecting or masking the fuel line to starve the engine. Then he hit on the idea to drive the

the fuel control to the off position with a hammer which successfully shut the engine down. During shut down it was found that the rotor brake had also become inoperative but the blades coasted to a stop creating no further problems. A quick investigation of the aircraft revealed nine hits. Both sets of blades were ruined along with many other items on the aircraft. It was also noticed that the armor plating in the cabin had successfully stopped two 30 caliber armor piercing rounds destined for the hoist operator. Transportation was arranged to take the crew back to Bien Hoa so plans could be made for removing the aircraft to Bien Hoa. When Pedro 97 heard the call of ground fire hits from Pedro 73 he immediately returned to Binh Ba, transferred the litter patients and returned to escort Pedro 73 back to Binh Ba. When Pedro 73 was safely on the ground, Pedro 97 returned to the pickup point where there were 7 more known casualties and Pedro 73's pararescueman. I was told to orbit west of the pickup point at altitude because the ground forces were in heavy enemy contact with the enemy too close for air support. Very shortly afterward, artillery was called in and the pickup point was completely encircled in artillery fire. At this time Pedro 46 arrived on scene and joined the orbit. Pedro 46 departed the orbit for Binh Ba and refueled, as it became dark. When Pedro 46 returned to the orbit, Pedro 97 returned to Binh Ba for fuel. As Pedro 97 returned to the orbit point we were advised by Sidewinder 22 (ground FAC) that the situation was such that no more extractions could be made and the two Pedro aircraft should return to home stations. Airman Pitsenbarger, the Pararescueman from Pedro 73, remained at the pickup point. Upon arrival at Bien Hoa I was notified by 3 DASC that during the night the pararescueman and 7 remaining casualties were moved to an area where an LZ would be cleared and they would be extracted by Army helicopters at first light the next morning.

Arrangements were made to have an Army CH47 sling load Pedro 73 to Bien Hoa from Binh Ba for repairs.

Pedro 97 recovered 7 casualties, and Pedro 73 recovered 2 casualties. Nine (9) combat saves were claimed. HH-43F's flew eight (8) sorties for 6+15 hours. HH-43B flew two (2) sorties for 2+30 hours.

  
RONALD L. BACHMAN, Capt, USAF  
Rescue Crew Commander