

Flight,

Thought you all might enjoy this 1970 article in the official Americal Division Newsletter.

"Under the Southern Cross"  
June 1970

"POLAR BEARS" UNDER HEAVY FIRE  
71ST AHC LENDS A HELPING HAND

CHU LAI (16th CAG IO) - 196th Infantry Brigade troops from Delta Company, 4th Battalion 31st Infantry were under a massive ground attack near LZ Siberia and called for an immediate combat extraction.

Minutes later the 71st Assault Helicopter Company Rattlers (slicks) and Firebirds (gunships), commanded by Major Tommie James, were airborne and headed toward the hot LZ. As the Rattlers and Firebirds began their approach into the area they began receiving small arms and .50 caliber machinegun fire from the surrounding tree line.

"One of the Firebirds spotted the .50 caliber machinegun's position and immediately showered the area with large volumes of suppressive fire. During the intense action, one Rattler was hit and went down in a small depression surrounded by the enemy.

Captain James E. Duke, Ft. Worth, Texas and Warrant Officer William M. Ellis, Downey, Calif., flew immediately to the wreckage and started a high overhead approach.

Unable to land at the crash site due to high trees and bushes, Captain Duke was forced to remain at a hover while the four crew members and three passengers of the downed craft were hoisted aboard.

Due to the heavy loaded condition of Captain Duke's helicopter, he was unable to hover high enough to turn his ship and was forced to take an uphill departure and fly over the known enemy positions.

As the rescue team cleared the enemy infested area, they received intense small arms and .50 caliber machinegun fire.

The seven soldiers were evacuated to the medical aid station at LZ West and were checked for any injuries. With greater concern for their fellow man than their own personal safety, the crew of Rattler 219 acted courageously in the life saving extraction.

With cool heads and professional competence, these brave men of the 71st Assault Helicopter Company brought great credit upon themselves and their company.

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...as was reported in the official Army press at the time. I thought it interesting reading...

Jim

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Jim McDaniel (WORWAC 67-3)

Dolphin, 174 AHC, Duc Pho 1967

Shark 4, 174 AHC, Duc Pho 1968

Hornet 20, 116 AHC, Chu Lai 1971

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