

304TH ARRS ASSISTS WITH VANCOUVER TORNADO

Vancouver WA in April of 72 experienced a Force 3 Tornado

Photo by Major David Wendt, who also authorized use

Photo received from Felix McLarney



TWO 304TH ARRS HH-34S PROVIDED SUPPORT

304TH ARRS
ASSISTS WITH DC-8 CRASH
NEWS ARTICLE AND PHOTO COURTESY OF FELIX McLARNEY

Oregon Journal 12/30/78

'Copters chop evacuation time

PORTLAND, Ore. (UPI) — Air Force Reserve helicopter crewmen preparing for routine night flying training were credited Saturday with cutting precious minutes off normal airborne time to bring injured passengers to the hospital from the DC-8 crash Thursday night.

Major Dave Mullen of the 304th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron was the first into the air after getting the word of a plane down from Portland International Airport control tower.

"We flew over the area and were surprised by its size," said Mullen, who thought a small aircraft was down.

Turning on the chopper's search lights, he saw it was a United Airlines jetliner.

Meanwhile, another member of the 304th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Tech. Sgt. Walter Jones, who lived near the crash scene, went out and used flares to light up a tennis court, allowing the 'copter to land

less than a block from the downed aircraft. Two critically injured passengers were immediately flown to the Portland Adventist Hospital.

Two Reserve choppers flew with litters, paramedics and gear to the Glendoveer Golf Course, the nearest large open area to the crash scene, to help out in the disaster that claimed 10 lives, including two members of the United crew. Aboard the 'copters were some of the 30 members of the 304th, who had heard of the crash, went quickly to the Portland Air Base and volunteered their services.

Major Deb Ward conveyed eight large, portable lighting units with generators to the crash site. Major Pinar Crane circled the crash site to serve as a mission commander of air rescue operations.

Staff Sgt. Michael J. Herr, a member of the 141st Support Battalion, said he was talking on the telephone with his wife who was visiting her sister a few blocks from the crash when she said, "All the

lights have gone out."

Hess, who also is a Gresham commissioned reserve police officer, said he decided to go to the area, found other emergency units in the area, put on his police badge and volunteered his services.

"My God, it's another San Diego," he said when he spotted the tail of the DC-8 and thought of the recent airliner crash in the Southern California city.

The quickness of the Reserve and Guard members' response to the emergency was said by officials of the 304th and Oregon Air and Army National Guard to have resulted from exercises conducted by the military units. The semi-annual Portland Metropolitan Medical Emergency Exercises, one of which involved an air crash, had initially shown in September 1972 there were weaknesses in communications and certain medical procedures, which were improved on in later exercises.

