

PAVE HAWK Combat SAR Mission Saves Soldier Hurt in Afghanistan

An airborne Combat SAR alert turned into a life saved when a U.S. Air Force rescue flight of two HH-60Gs was tasked to recover a Special Forces soldier critically injured by a rocket propelled grenade.

The soldier had fragmentation wounds to the head, torso and arms. His vital signs were getting worse during each radioed update. Updated threat intelligence was passed to the HH-60G flight and a route was quickly developed for the Dec. 20, 2002, mission.

Knowing time was short and the patient's situation was extremely critical, the flight maneuvered through rugged terrain while avoiding areas of known small arms and shoulder-launched missile threats.

The lead aircraft peppered the landing zone area with suppressive fire as the other PAVE HAWK picked up the critically wounded soldier.

After the patient assessment, a request was made by the pararescue specialists for a helicopter to return to the area and retrieve a severed body part that could potentially be reattached by the surgical team.

The lead aircraft reversed course about five minutes after the patient pickup and went back for the body part. The aircraft with the injured soldier continued to Kandahar.

The soldier was flown to the Field Surgical Team at Kandahar for further medical treatment.