

UNCLASSIFIED

SAC

PROJECT CORONA HARVEST

DO NOT DESTROY

INTERVIEW BETWEEN

Ernest J. Trexler, Lt Col USAF
Joseph S. Granducci, Maj, USAF

14 SEP 1990

7 January 1969

No 0005369

Lt Col Trexler: The 13th AF SAR responsibility for SEA included the Manila, Saigon, Bangkok and Rangoon FIR's. Maj Zagrodny was at Det 2, PARC, at the 13th AF JSARC; I wrote him ^{experimentally} what was required to change the 13th AF Regulation.

Maj Granducci: Before you got there, 13th AF possessed the SEAsia SAR responsibility. How did 2d ADVON get the responsibility for SAR?

Lt Col Trexler: I wrote the proposed regulation for 13th AF delegating the Saigon, Bangkok and Burma FIR's to the Commander, 2d ADVON.

Maj Granducci: That was drafted when, Sir?

Lt Col Trexler: I don't know the month -- it was a couple months after I got there -- I would say the latter part of 1962. I also wrote the 2d ADVON Regulation which gave the Bangkok FIR SAR responsibility to the Commander of Don Muang, and we also gave him the Rangoon responsibility. Maj Scott was at Don Muang, TDY from PARC. He had a little desk set up in a tent; he had the maps and everything he would need to run a SAR mission. He was there to control SAR missions in Thailand or Burma.

Maj Granducci: What didn't he have?

Lt Col Trexler: Civil SAR authority which is ICAO. . . he had military SAR.

Maj Granducci: I think what you are saying is that he did not, in fact, have any SAR authority until the 13th AF Regulation was published.

Lt Col Trexler: The same would hold true for us at 2d ADVON. You see, PARC sent Al McNamee and Al Sherry over there TDY as early as, I believe, January 62; there were TDY people there until I arrived in 62 (Jul). It was several months later (when the 13th AF Reg was published) because I was trying to get my feet on the ground and get SAR forces together. It was several months though before I got around to writing the regulation.

Maj Granducci: I'm trying to get at the atmosphere within the AOC when you arrived. The AOC had been controlling the Rescue function. When you got there what were you expected to do? How much problem, if any, did you have in drafting and selling the necessity for proper promulgation of SAR authority and SAR directives?

00491819

7-3428-7

191
Atch 7

UNCLASSIFIED

Lt Col Trexler: When I walked in they said, "You are to assume the entire SAR responsibility for SEA. . . ." There was a period of time between the TDY of the PARC people and when I got there. I got busy writing up rules, regulations and procedures on how to get Vietnamese, Army, Navy, Marine and the few USAF forces together and function as a SAR team.

Maj Granducci: Did you have any indications that there had been any work done in this area before you got there?

Lt Col Trexler: No. I saw not one single piece of paper, procedure or anything else when I walked in. In fact, there wasn't even a desk.

Maj Granducci: How about informal?

Lt Col Trexler: The AOC had been controlling SAR during the period of time when the PARC TDY people were gone; and when I got there, the AOC people were pretty well versed on how to run a SAR mission, where to get forces and the like. I got all the information from them. I then visited the Vietnamese over at their headquarters and the Saigon Fire Department for SCUBA divers and the like. After this, I started putting procedures together on how to get various types of aircraft, boats and the SCUBA divers. The big headache in the whole show over there was lack of equipment to conduct the SAR mission. Also, we had no communications; we didn't even have communications within the base. Trying to get Da Nang and Soc Trang was an impossibility. However, we really had no trouble in accruing SAR forces; the only thing is we had to take what was available, what was not out on a tactical mission, which many times left a lot to be desired. We had the Army H-21 helicopters; but they were not hoist equipped, so I got 250 ft. of rope to put in every helicopter, both Marine and Army. We got litters by sending an emergency requisition out to all bases in the Pacific. We found 8 litters to be carried on helicopters; they were old, either damaged in shipment or broken before they were shipped. So we went downtown, got old rings and cable, fixed them all up and sent them all out to strategic locations. I believe, there were only four of those locations; and they were the same locations for which we later requested dedicated SAR forces: Da Nang, Pleiku, Bien Hoa and Soc Trang. At that time the Army was at Soc Trang.

Maj Granducci: To your knowledge, when you arrived in SEA as the first PCS Det 3 Commander, was there any degree of SAR authority vested in the 2d ADVON?

Lt Col Trexler: To my knowledge, there was nothing published; however, there could have been verbal or printed messages between 13th AF and 2d ADVON indicating or vesting SAR authority for that area. I'm unaware of any written document vesting SAR in 2d ADVON.