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Nov 6, 1968

DATA LOGGED

No. 0003572

Subject: CORONA HARVEST Study (U) (ARXDC Ltr, 3 Oct 68)

TO: ARXDC

1. (U) The following background information is provided as requested in your letter.

a. Period assigned to SEA: 10 Jan 62 to 2 Apr 62.

b. Designation of unit to which assigned: SAR Center in the AOC, which eventually became Det 3, PARRC.

c. Duty assignment while in SEA: SAR Controller.

d. Type of aircraft assigned: None.

2. (C) The following is a narrative of events during the period of assignment:

a. We initially went to Tan Son Nhut AB to establish a SAR Center in the AOC, and a SAR network for South Vietnam. The authority establishing our unit in SEA was a PACAF Operations Order which also established the AOC and other actions to meet this contingency. Initial personnel consisted of three officers and three airmen. The SAR Center operated under the auspices of the 13th Air Force JSARC. We reported in to the AOC which was a Jamesway hut adjacent to the runway at TSN. Initially, facilities were inadequate in that we could not even obtain a desk within the AOC. However, all functional areas were quite crowded and we did the best we could. Eventually (approximately 30 days) we transferred to a building which housed the AOC. The initial concept of operations was not to involve any ARRS aircraft in Vietnam, since the magnitude of the operation at that time was limited. Also, the total

Air Rescue posture was limited. To establish a SAR network, Captain

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McGuire and myself contacted the Army advisors to each of the Corps areas in Vietnam and were authorized to arrange rescue support with the Army helicopter squadrons on a non-interference basis. The cooperation of the Army in this effort was excellent. We used the existing communications system as best we could to arrange contacts to alert the Army helicopters for search and rescue, when required. Also, the USAF forces at Bien Hoa composed of C-47, B-26, and C-123 aircraft were to be used for search and a communications CAP. SAR network was established through the AOC and the outlying ASOCs in each Corps area, and SAR procedures were developed for duty controllers in the ASOCs. In addition, we contacted the Navy MAAG in downtown Saigon to utilize whatever Navy forces might be available in the event of an emergency. The communication picture initially in South Vietnam was very poor. As a matter of fact, we (SAR controllers) developed the first communication diagram for use within the AOC, using all the various communication forces we had located, to assist us in contacting the Army, Vietnamese bases, etc. Timely SAR efforts were hampered by poor communications, lack of a system of filing flight plans and passenger lists, and the lack of an adequate flight following capability. More often than not, search would be initiated when an aircraft did not return in the evening. Although I do not paint a very bright picture, we did the best we could with the limited facilities at hand and did have an established SAR network approximately ten days after arrival.

b. In my estimation, the combat aircrew recovery capability of rescue service in 1962 was practically nil. The HU-16 was limited and the HH-43s

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were tied to a local base rescue mission. The old "saw" that wartime SAR is an extension of peacetime SAR is not adequate. Local base rescue and duckbutts were the main capabilities. I realize this was not the desire of Rescue Service, but an expediency for achieving budget reductions. I think one of the most important things to emphasize in the CORONA HARVEST Study is that Rescue Service maintain an aircrew recovery capability during peacetime. We must realize that you can't fully utilize a wartime capability during peacetime, however, timely response and a capability to operate in a hostile environment must be maintained.

c. Another item is to insure that we maintain a reaction standard commensurate with that of the tactical forces we are supporting, i.e., CONUS LBR/ACR must be ready to respond as a unit. Maintaining the capability to respond is not enough - the rescue unit must be alerted for deployment in the initial Operations order which deploys the tactical forces. Due to a time lag in identifying rescue requirements during the Gulf of Tonkin, the tactical forces always moved before we could get an LBR enroute. Rapid reaction can only be achieved through close coordination with the major command and/or Air Force component commander deploying tactical forces.

d. We encountered great difficulty in acquiring rescue helicopters for Vietnam. Actually it took months of work at PARC. We finally got the HH-43F which was really too little and too late. It took a long time to convince Air Force that we should have HH-3 helicopters; namely, we needed the range and lift capability of these aircraft. This has become our ACR force. I reiterate, we must maintain this ACR during peacetime.

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Another problem we encountered was breaking loose LBR rescue units from CONUS to support the war in Vietnam. CONUS LBR units should be identified to move with the tactical forces deploying overseas. It seems to me that it is more important to provide LBR rescue to those tactical forces operating in a wartime environment than to continue support in the CONUS if we have to make a choice between the two. With regard to the LBR unit deploying to Takhali AB, Thailand in June 1962, I have very little detailed knowledge, except that this unit was employed primarily in the classic LBR role. We also established a SAR Center at Don Mueang Airport in Bangkok. This SAR Center provided SAR control for Thailand and was operated under the 13th Air Force, JSARC.

3. (U) If I can be of assistance to expand on these comments, or provide additional information, please contact me at extension 2847 or 2536.
4. (U) These comments are classified CONFIDENTIAL since they reveal the capability to react during contingencies.

SIGNED

/s/ Albert R. McNamee
ALBERT R. MCNAMEE, Lt Colonel, USAF
Special Plans Division

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