

SMC

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CORONA HARVEST STUDY

PROJECT CORONA HARVEST

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18 SEP 1990

No 0005152

My tour of duty with ARRS in SEA covers a period from Dec 1963 to Sep 1967. I was PCS to the 33rd ARRS at Naha, Okinawa during the entire time. For a matter of record, I took the first HU-16B into Vietnam in Dec 1963 and flew the last HU-16 out of Vietnam in Sep 1967. My first tour started at Saigon under control of the 2nd Air Division. After about two months we moved up to Danang and set up operations. Around Jun 1964, we moved over to Korat, Thailand as Det Prov IV. At this time, I was commander of the squadron consisting of three (3) HU-16s, crews, and maintenance people plus a LBR composed of two (2) HH-43s, crews, and maintenance people. During this period we maintained two (2) crews and aircraft in Thailand and one (1) aircraft and crew at Danang assisting the 31st ARRS. I departed Okinawa in Dec 1964 PCS to Eglin AFB, Fla. At about this time, the Det Prov IV Squadron moved to Udorn AB, Thailand. In Jan 1967, I was reassigned to the 33rd ARRS and immediately returned TDY to Danang. I was TDY to Danang from Jan to Sep 1967 in the capacity of Flight Commander and Operations Officer attached to the 37th ARRS.

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The problem areas encountered during this entire period (Dec 1963 to Sep 1967) were mainly in communications and facilities. When we first started operating, our operational controlling agency was Det 3, PARRC located in a small broom closet at 2nd Air Division, Saigon. All reports were transmitted via SSB to Saigon and there was a long time delay between time of occurrence and the execution of rescue forces. The Rescue Crew Commander was entirely on his own most of the time especially if atmospheric conditions were bad for communications. This was bad in view of the sensitive areas we were operating over. This problem area was improved and on my second tour over there communications and reaction time was outstanding.

The facilities problem has improved but I feel that continuing emphasis must be put on this subject. When we first arrived at Korat, Thailand we had to construct all of our own facilities including our PSP parking ramp. Upon my return on my second tour, I was amazed at the improvements made at all bases except Danang, RVN. When I was at Danang in 1963-64 we were using a "hootch" next to the club as our quarters and operations and in 1967 when I returned. I was billeted in the same quarters, almost the same bed. Facilities improved with the establishment of the 37th ARRS but I never felt that they were adequate enough.

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A vast change in operational concepts has occurred. At first, rescue forces were sent into SEA without any higher headquarters support. There were no clear, definite lines drawn on what rescue forces an on-scene commander could use when an emergency was encountered. We had to operate at the local level almost all of the time. Sometimes, my crews were averaging 8-10 flying hours per day accumulating over 100 hours in a two week period, all over hostile territory, without RESCAP. These were some of the problems encountered in the early days but by the time of my second PCS tour they were all resolved. The concepts now in effect are outstanding which is evident by the record established by ARRS in SEA.

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second PCS tour they were all resolved. The concepts now in effect are outstanding, which is evident by the record established by ARRS in SEA.

I feel that my tour of duty in SEA was unique in that I was involved in the initial input of rescue crews and had a helping hand in establishing some of the procedures that are still in use in SEA. I started work with Major Saunders, Det. 3, PARRC at the 2nd Air Division and finished with Colonel Lovelady at the 3rd Group. I had the privilege of working under General Brooks, Colonel Mask, Colonel Lovelady, and Colonel Vette.

As a final comment, I have just returned from the 33rd ARRS, and when I departed Okinawa, the squadron had just completed a TDY commitment in Korea since January 1968. This mission was similar to early SEA, but we learned from mistakes made in SEA and corrected them immediately. However, there are still problems that, to the best of my knowledge, are not being resolved by higher headquarters. For example, communications at JSARC and the fixed-wing Sandy RESCAP.

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/s/ James Chubner, Maj, USAF
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