

TTN OF: ARXDC (LTC COL EDWARD KRAFKA)
SUBJECT: Corona Harvest Study

TO: Hqs ARRS (ARXLR)
Scott AFB, Ill.

SMC

PROJECT CORONA HARVEST
Harlingen, Texas
24 October 1968
DO NOT DESTROY
CATALOGED
No 0003571

8 SEP 1990

1. In response to your letter, subject as above, dated 24 Sept 1968, the following information related to my SEA tour is presented.

A. I was assigned duty in SEA during the period of 5 Oct 1964 thru 23 Oct 1965. I actually arrived at Tan Son Nhut on 9 Oct 1964 and departed 20 Oct 1965.

B. Designation of unit to which initially assigned was Det. #3, Hqs, Pacific Air Rescue Center. In July 1965, the unit was redesignated as the 38th Air Rescue Squadron. Concurrent with the redesignation, I was assigned to the 38th ARS and served with this unit until tour completion.

C. Duty assignment while serving in Det. #3, Hqs, PARC and the 38th ARS was as Commander with additional duty as Deputy Commander, Hqs, PARC for Southeast Asia.

D. No aircraft were assigned to either Det. #3, Hqs, PARC or the 38th ARS during my tenure with these units. During the period of initial arrival, ARS units in theater consisted of Det. #3, Hqs, PARC (Permanent Unit), 5 Provisional H-43B helicopter detachments and temporarily assigned composite elements of the 41st and 48th Air Rescue Squadrons.

Helicopter detachments were located at Bien Hoa and Da Nang in Viet Nam and Nakhon Phanom, Takhli and Korat Air Bases in Thailand. Detachments were comprised of three aircraft and crews with support personnel at all locations except Korat and Takhli which were two aircraft units. All units performed the LBR mission except the unit located at Nakhon Phanom which had an assigned mission of Rescue and Recovery. The two units stationed in Viet Nam performed in a secondary role as Rescue and Recovery units though their activity in this capacity was extremely limited. There were, to the best of my knowledge, no recorded or documented recoveries by ARS forces in the theater prior to December 1964.

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LOT COL EDWARD KRAFKA

Elements of the 41st and 48th Air Rescue Squadrons consisted of one HU-16B aircrew plus several maintenance technicians from the 41st ARS and one HU-16B with aircrew and maintenance personnel from the 48th ARS. The HU-16B element principally located at Korat, but operating also from Da Nang, was augmented with aircraft, aircrews and maintenance personnel from the 31st and 33rd Air Rescue Squadrons. Only two HU-16B aircraft were initially available in theater. This was increased to three aircraft, crews and support personnel within several weeks after my arrival. The primary mission engaged in by the HU-16B element was precautionary orbit in support of Yankee Team and Queen Bee operations.

During the latter part of Oct 1964, two H-43F helicopter detachments with a primary mission of Rescue and Recovery were assigned to Viet Nam on PCS. Each was comprised of 3 aircraft, commander, 4 aircrews, support personnel and 5 para-rescue men who were additionally qualified as fire fighters to support the secondary LBR mission. The Provisional units at Bien Hoa and Da Nang were moved to Nakhon Phanom and Takhli and units in place at these locations were returned to their parent organizations.

Following the period for which the structure of ARS forces is described, the only constant in the composition and structure was the change necessary to meet the ever increasing tempo of tactical operations. These changes were fully documented and records from which the details can be extracted should be available. These changes relate to the establishment of an H-43B detachment at Ubon, another at Udorn which was later augmented with an additional detachment. Outside of the growing pains normally associated with establishment and gradual increase of forces in a primitive environment, no serious gap in the provision of Air Rescue service prevailed until Rolling Thunder operations began.

This latter operation followed by Steel Tiger resulted in demands for Rescue service which could not be adequately met with equipment in the ARS inventory. Improvisation to meet the demands accelerated the number and frequency of change. These relate to acquisition of two CH-3C helicopters in July 1965, move of HU-16B base of operation to Udorn and later to Da Nang, introduction of HC-54's, assignment of four additional H-43F's and the establishment of an LBR unit at Tan Son Nhut. Again the details associated with these changes with redesignation of Det. #3, Hqs, PARC to the 38th ARS should be available in existing records.