

MR. NEE

AEROSPACE RESCUE and RECOVERY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

15 November 1966

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

ESKIMO COUPLE AIDED. Two Thule helicopters responded to a summons for help on 21 October when they rushed Sirkok Majok and his wife from their isolated island village to medical facilities at Kanak, 65 miles north of Thule. Both Eskimos were suffering from pneumonia. Crewmen on the Det 18, EARRC, aircraft said it was the worst time of year for evacuation from Kekertassuak; the ice was too thick for kayaks and too thin for dogsleds. Kekertassuak has no direct communication with the outside world other than signal lights and a radio receiver. When Orla Sandborg, inspector of Northern Greenland, saw the lights he called by radio and began asking questions. The ailing couple answered using pre-determined light signals. Just over an hour after the HH-43B's departure from Thule with a doctor and interpreter, the Eskimos were aboard. They were taken to Kanak Hospital where Mr. Majok's condition was listed as serious.

When the Blen Hoa control tower, the busiest in Southeast Asia, experienced a total power failure recently, ARRS came to the aid of the air traffic controller. An HH-43 helicopter was just returning to its scramble pad directly in front of the control tower when the power failure occurred. The air traffic controller grabbed a portable crash radio to keep ground contact, and ran to the chopper. Soon, he and Captain David L. Wiest, the Rescue pilot, were hovering some 50 feet above the ground alongside the runway. For 30 minutes, Captain Wiest kept his aircraft hovering while all air traffic control was conducted via the helicopter's radio system. A dangerous situation was averted because of the on-the-spot readiness and versatility of ARRS.

PILOT EJECTS FROM DISABLED JET. A pilot of the 356th Tactical Fighter Squadron ejected from his disabled F-100 at 1015 on 9 November, and was picked up by an HH-43B crew from Det 7, PARRC, at 1022 -- just seven minutes later. The pilot left his Super Sabre after making certain that it would not impact in a populated area. The jet crashed into a small grove of trees about two miles from Misawa AB. The pilot appeared to be unhurt, suffering only scratches, and the Rescuemen rushed him back to rescue operations where an ambulance waited to carry him to the base hospital for a complete examination.

For more than five years, the members of the 36th ARRSq at Tachikawa AB, Japan, have been giving aid to the Akitsu Crippled Children's Home. During these years, more than \$1000 has been donated, usually in the form of fuel, clothing, hospital needs and rehabilitation equipment. The squadron project officer, SSgt Walter Ewing, makes frequent checks with the home to find out its needs, and visits the home when funds are accumulated. There are a number of sanatoriums for crippled and mentally retarded children in Japan, but the Akitsu Home is the only one which will accept untrainable children. The 36th has chosen a commendable method of proving that Rescuemen care for human life, both professionally and on their own time.

RESCUEMEN KEPT ON THE GO. ARRS crews in Vietnam know of two type days -- busy and busier. One occasionally comes along, however, that makes all others appear serene, and such a day was experienced recently by an HH-43 crew of Det 1, 38th ARRSq, at Phan Rang AB. Captain Leonard D. Fialko and his Huskie crew were on an early morning training flight when word was received that a fighter aircraft was inbound carrying a bomb that had failed to release. The captain hastily returned to the alert pad, picked up an FSK and orbited his helicopter near the runway. Minutes later the fighter landed safely.

This emergency was hardly over when crew members spotted a gasoline fire near an Army communications tent. The chopper helped control the blaze with rotor downwash while a ground crew applied sand. The tent was saved and the helicopter crew continued their training mission. But again practice was cut short. An Army helicopter had made an emergency landing in an insecure area 10 miles from the base, so Captain Fialko headed for the spot, located the downed aircraft, recovered two pilots and returned them to base.

The crash phone interrupted the crew's few minutes on the ground. Another aircraft was coming in with a weapon that had failed to drop. As the crew scrambled to get into position they picked up a distress signal from a two-man F-4C crew ejecting a short distance from Phan Rang. Spotting the F-4C crash, Captain Fialko turned his chopper in that direction. Learning that the two had jumped from the burning aircraft, he landed long enough to let off a fireman and to get rid of his FSK, lightening the helicopter's load. The crew then proceeded at full speed to the crash site, spurred by a message from one of the downed crew members that he could hear crashing sounds around him and bullets whizzing through the trees. During the pickup of one of the downed jet pilots, the Rescue crew discovered that the crashing sounds were caused by a nearby herd of cattle and the bullet-like sounds were pieces of metal from the burning aircraft.

Delivering the recovered pilot to Phan Rang, the Rescuemen returned to search for the other F-4C crewman. He had been killed, however, and was later found by a ground party. Applying the old adage, "the busier the day, the faster it goes," Rescuemen at Phan Rang look forward to an awfully short year.

Airman Second Class Gordon C. Thayer, Det 6, 38th ARRSq, was awarded the Silver Star in a ceremony at Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN. The presentation was made on 5 November, by Lt General W. W. Momeyer, 7th Air Force Commander. Thayer received this high award for his actions on 25 August 1966, while participating in a mission to evacuate wounded U.S. soldiers from an area near Phouc Vinh. Thayer's helicopter was shot down by enemy fire, and although considerably shaken by the crash landing, Thayer with complete disregard for his own safety under continuing hostile fire, administered medical aid to the wounded until another evacuation helicopter arrived. Airman Thayer, who also has the DFC, Air Medal, and Air Force Commendation Medal, has been separated from the service at his own request. However, he has not yet had his fill of Southeast Asia and intends to return to Vietnam, if possible, as a civilian employee of a contracting firm.

A SAFETY CHECK MAY SAVE YOUR NECK.