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3rd GROUP GETS CROSS OF GALLANTRY

TAN SON NHUT AB, Republic of Vietnam (7AF)—The Vietnamese Unit citation streamer of the Cross of Gallantry with Palm was awarded to the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (3rd ARRGp) in recent ceremonies.

Maj. Gen. Thirn Van Minh, commander, Republic of Vietnam Air Force (VNAF), attached the streamer to the guidon of the 3rd ARRGp and presented medals to the commander and vice commander of the unit before a formation of VNAF airmen in front of VNAF Headquarters.

The members of the 3rd ARRGp,

VNAF COMMANDER PLACES STREAMER ON UNIT'S GUIDON

responsible for search and rescue in an area covering more than a million square miles in Southeast Asia (SEA), were cited for saving the lives of 2,406 people, including 317 Vietnamese, during the period of Jan. 8, 1966, through July 28, 1969.

The citation was signed by Gen. Cao Van Vien, Chief, Joint Staff, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces.

The citation emphasized that the rescuemen had performed thousands of flights evacuating wounded soldiers, including more than 1,900 in February, 1968. It also praised 18 missions flown to save VNAF crewmembers and aircraft involved in four crashes.

MISSION CITED

A rescue performed on an aircraft which crashed May 5, 1968, while on a flare dropping mission some 500 meters from Tan Son Nhut AB, was also described:

"The aircraft was in flames and in danger of explosion because of the flares but, with traditional bravery of the HH-43 Pedro crewmembers of the 3rd ARRGp, they rescued all the crewmembers of the downed plane who were still in the cockpit," the citation read.

Air Force rescuemen in SEA fly the HH-3 "Jolly Green," HH-43 "Pedro," and the HH-53 "BUFF" helicopters.

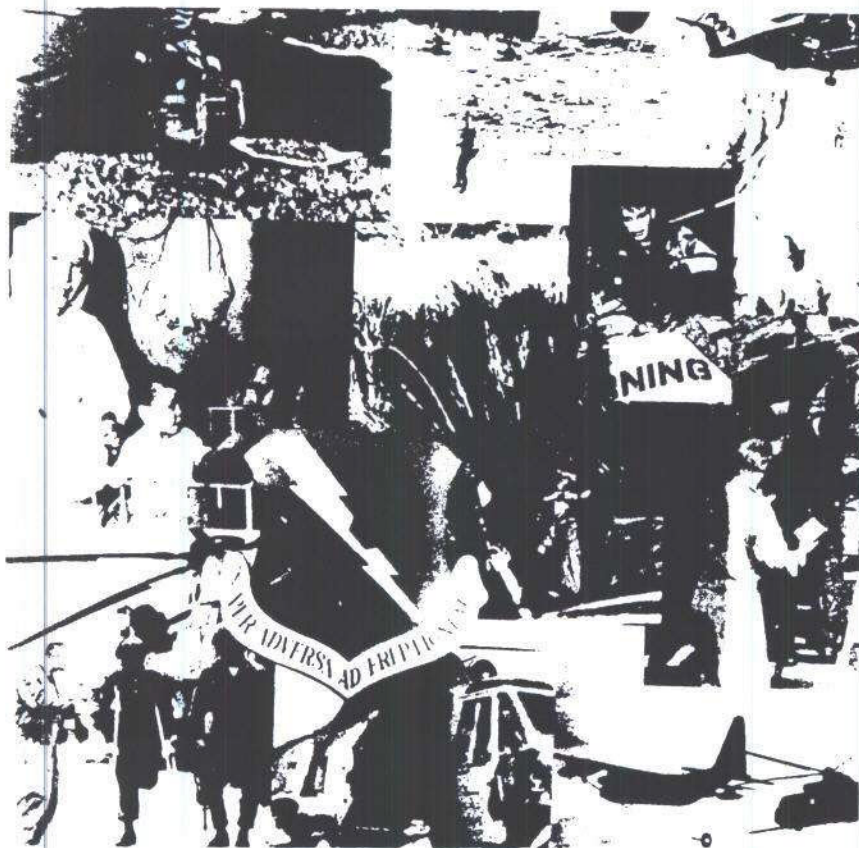
A specially equipped version of the C-130 Hercules aircraft serves as an aerial command post and refueling tanker for the helicopters during rescue missions.

One of the most highly decorated units in Air Force History, the 3rd ARRGp was recently awarded its second Presidential Unit Citation for "... extraordinary heroism in combat from July 1, 1967, to Jan. 31, 1969."

GROUP COMMANDER

Col. Malcolm C. Frazee, who has held numerous rescue assignments since 1945, commands the 3rd ARRGp. Col. Frederick V. Sohle, Jr., with 10 years of Air Rescue experience, is vice commander.

Col. Hollon H. Bridges, former commander of the unit, who now serves as deputy director for operations of the 60th Military Airlift Wing at Travis AFB, Calif., was cited for his leadership and inspiration during the period of the award. Although he couldn't attend the ceremony, he also was awarded the Cross of Gallantry with Palm.



SOME OF THE REASONS for the most recent honor (Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm) bestowed upon the much-decorated 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group are represented in this montage. In the midst of all the activity pictured above is the group's shield, proclaiming that its men proceed to the rescue despite adversity.

Det 14, 38th ARRSq
Hist, Apr - Jun 1968

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so they were able to walk on board the helicopter. Pedro was unable to avoid flying over hostile territory on takeoff. During takeoff, Razorback 45 advised us to take evasive action because we were receiving ground fire. Also, we learned that the downed crew had been under light sniper fire prior to our arrival. No battle damage was received by Pedro 46. There were no injuries. Later information revealed that friendly forces were in heavy contact with 110 enemy troops in the immediate vicinity. The Razorback crew was returned to their helicopter pad where they crewed up another helicopter and went back to war. The mission was terminated at 1515 hours (local). Five Combat Saves are claimed. Crew Members: RCC Captain P.D. McComb; RCCP - Major D.L. Jordon; MT - TSgt R. Rodriguez; FE - SSgt W.R. Gladish.

2. Rescue/Recovery Mission. 14-38-05-5 May 68. 2 Sorties - 0+30 hours. The alert crew was notified by crash telephone at 1949 hours (local) that an unknown aircraft was down and burning on the west side of Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Pedro 46 was airborne with the FSK at 1950 hours. It turned out to be a Vietnamese Air Force C-47 flare ship and its location was about 500 yards outside the base perimeter. Pedro 46 arrived on scene at 1952 hours and deployed the FSK, the firemen and medic. The cabin and cockpit were already engulfed in flames. Shortly after the firefighters began cutting their path, the flares in the cabin of the C-47 began exploding, sending sparks and flames more than 100 feet high. By this time

the whole inside of the fuselage was completely gutted with flames. The firefighters got close enough to determine that one body was completely burned and partially mutilated. At this point, the co-pilot saw five survivors approximately 50 yards from the wreckage. Since there was obviously no hope for any survivors inside the C-47, attention was diverted to the injured survivors. The medic treated the most seriously injured survivor (compound fracture, leg). He was placed in the helicopter on a litter. Two other survivors with seemingly less serious injuries were taken on board the helicopter. The remaining two survivors, with no apparent injuries, returned to Tan Son Nhut in a Security Police jeep that had arrived on scene. The crew and helicopter were receiving ground fire from a village just south of the wreckage during the whole operation. Vietnamese Army troops arrived after about five minutes and set up a perimeter defense for us. Tan Son Nhut tower scrambled one Army UH-1B gunship (Razorback 42) to give airborne cover. The Razorback received ground fire while orbiting above the crash site. No hits were taken by the Pedro crew or helicopter. The three injured survivors were taken to Tan Son Nhut and transferred to a waiting ambulance at 2010 hours. There was no further need for Pedro which returned to the alert pad and terminated at 2020 hours. The FSK was left at the scene to be picked up when the area becomes more secure. It is significant to add that SSgt Green and Sgt Evans continued to fight the fire with no regard for their personal safety even though the pyrotechnics

were exploding and they were under sniper fire. The Medic, TSgt Rodriguez, calmly and efficiently administered first aid under these same conditions. Three combat saves are claimed. Crew Members: RCC - Captain P.D. McComb; RCCP - Major D.L. Jordon; MT - TSgt R. Rodriguez; RS - SSgt E. Green; RS - Sgt J.R. Evans.

3. Rescue/Recovery Mission. 14-38-06-14 May 68. 1 Sortie - 0445 hours. The primary alert crew was alerted at 0840Z by Saigon tower that an Army OH-6A helicopter was down southeast of Saigon at UTM coordinates XS900/915. The alert crew was airborne in Pedro 46 at 0845Z. The area was located, however the aircraft wreckage was not spotted until the downed crew ignited a MK-18 smoke flare (time was approximately 0900Z). Helicopter gunship cover was requested through Paris Control (Saigon GCI); however after some delay, Paris advised that no gunships were available. Pedro 79 arrived on the scene and assumed a high bird orbit for cover. The Pedro 46 crew elected to take a close look to determine the security of the area. From a lower altitude, Vietnamese Army troops were observed in the area. Pedro landed at the scene at 0903Z, while Pedro 79 maintained high bird cover. The OH-6A was badly damaged, but the crew of two was uninjured. Pedro 46 and crew remained on the ground for approximately ten minutes where the Army crew stripped their helicopter of weapons and other vital equipment. At 0913Z Pedro 46 was airborne headed for the survivors home base of Di An, RVN. Pedro 46 returned to Tan Son Nhut after delivering the survivors