

Rescue Men Break All Records in '68

By Maj. Carroll Shershun

TAN SON NHUT AB—Every existing record established by the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service in a combat environment was eclipsed during 1968. During the past year, rescue crews of the 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Gp. (ARRG), whose "soul" mission is the saving of human lives, were responsible for more than 900 persons being able to usher in the new year.

In 1968, a total of 915 lives were saved by the rescue unit's "Jolly Green Giant" and "Pedro" helicopter crews, which are located at more than 20 sites throughout Southeast Asia.

A total of 571 combat saves were included in the overall total.

A save is credited when an individual would have met certain death or enemy capture if he had not been rescued. The "combat" classification results from the individual being exposed to enemy action or having been recovered from a hostile area.

Since air rescue operations began in Southeast Asia, a total of 2202 persons have been rescued. Of these, 1507 are classified as combat saves.

Following is a year-by-year breakdown of rescue statistics:

Saves	'64-'65	'66	'67	'68	Total
Combat	127	403	407	571	1507
Non-combat	34	80	237	344	695
Total	161	483	644	915	2202

(Note: Non-combat saves should not be confused with "medical evacuation" flights, which involve the transfer of patients by air. The 3d ARRGp. units have made thousands of med-evac flights, but statistics are not maintained because of the high volume involved.)

Of the 1507 combat saves made to date, the largest number have been of U.S. Army personnel (472). A total of 449 USAF personnel have been rescued. U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel account for 274 combat saves. The remainder have been of other friendly forces, including Vietnamese, Thai, Korean and Australian personnel.

Involved in virtually all air rescue behind enemy lines, many as far North as Hanoi-Hai-phong area (prior to the bombing halt over North Vietnam), have been three types of helicopters of the 3dARRGp. These are the HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant," the HH-43 "Pedro" and the HH-53 "Jolly Green Buff," newest addition to the search and rescue chopper team.

HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant" crews of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Sq. (ARRS) and Det 1, 40th ARRS, made a total of 300 combat

saves—many over North Vietnam. Of these combat saves, 162 were of downed aircrews. To date, the "Jolly Green" crews have made 628 combat saves.

The little HH-43 "Pedro," workhorse of the 38th ARRSq. and its 14 detachments, and its crews accounted for 171 combat saves during 1968. Of these, 79 were of downed aircrews. The "Pedros," however, continue to enjoy the distinction of having made the greatest number of combat saves in Southeast Asia — 732. Stationed in Vietnam since Dec. 1, 1964, the 38th ARRSq. carried the brunt of the search and rescue mission through 1965. Prior to the advent of the "Jolly Green Giants" in late 1965, "Pedro" crews flew into North Vietnam with extra 50-gallon drums of fuel, hand-pumping it into their tanks to extend their range far North.

The HH-53 "Buff" arrived in Southeast Asia in late 1967 and is assigned to the 40th ARRSq. To date, they have made a total of 100 combat saves, all but one during calendar year 1968. Of these, 21 have been aircrew recoveries.

The only fixed-wing aircraft used by the 3dARRGp. is the HC-130P. Used as airborne coordinators to fly preplanned orbits near Seventh AF and other strike activity, the HC-130Ps also serve as aerial tankers—refueling HH-3E and HH-53 rescue choppers.

Although not assigned to the 3dARRGp., A-1 "Sandys" and "Spads" of the Seventh/Thirteenth AF are vital members of the combat search and rescue team, providing firepower for the relatively slow-flying helicopters. In addition, aircraft ranging from Navy A-7s to Air Force F-4s and Army "Gunship" helicopters participate in the rescue effort. Prior to their departure from Southeast Asia in early 1967, HU-16 "Albatross" amphibious aircraft of the Pacific Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center completed 47 aircrew recoveries, which are included in the save record of the 3dARRGp.

The Seventh AF Joint Search and Rescue Center (JSARC), manned by 3dARRGp. personnel at Tan Son Nhut AB, controls and coordinates all rescue missions in SEA through two subordinate rescue coordination centers, located at Udorn, Thailand, and near Da Nang, Vietnam.