

NCO Sings Praises of Rescuemen

HICKAM AFB, Hawaii — A 22-year-old MACman, recently assigned here after an 18-month tour in Southeast Asia, is singing the praises of the pararescueman.

Sgt. Franklin D. Stevson, a pararescueman himself, recently completed the 11th in a series of ballads he has been writing and singing since May, 1965.

Sergeant Stevson entered the Air Force in March 1965, and while in basic training at Lackland AFB, Tex., he volunteered for pararescue. Once accepted, he had to pass a series of grueling physical tests to qualify for the advanced training that followed, including rigorous schooling in parachuting, global survival, medicine, underwater swimming, mountain climbing and pararescue transition.

While undergoing training in rescue work Stevson wrote the first of his ballads, "Parares-

cue," a tribute to the men he was preparing to serve with. He followed this song with "Long Dust Road" and "Maybe."

After completing his schooling and earning the distinctive maroon beret of the pararescueman, Stevson was assigned to Udorn RTAFB, Thailand as a crewman aboard a "Jolly Green Giant," the Air Force's HH-3E rescue helicopter.

In Thailand he composed, "Jolly Greens," a ballad which tells of an actual rescue mission. As a crewmember, Stevson took part in 19 actual rescues and once was in danger himself when his aircraft came under intense ground fire and had to withdraw from the area while he searched for a man.

Stevson continued the search after calling in Skyraiders to rake the hills where small arms fire was keeping him pinned down. Both men made good their escape

about an hour later when a Jolly Green came back into the area and picked them up.

To date, "Prisoner of War" is the song Stevson considers his best work, while "Sandy," a ballad about pilots who fly the

A1-E Skyraiders in support of rescue choppers, was the most difficult to write. The latter song depicts a rescue mission through the eyes of the Skyraider pilots.

These songs were quickly follow-

ed by "My Side," "Who Pays?," "You Don't Know Do You?," "Don't Let It Happen Here" and "It All Comes Out In The Wash." "I've been singing all my life," claims Sergeant Stevson. I feel it's my best method of communication.