

Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service Recounts Its Year-End Accomplishments

By Maj. Carroll Shershun
TAN SON NHUT — 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 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (ARRG), whose "soul" mission is the saving of human lives, were responsible for over 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.

COMBAT SAVES

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.

Not all air search and rescues involved downed aircrew members or downed aircraft.

In fact, of the 1507 combat saves made to date, the largest number have been of U.S. Army personnel. A total of 449 U.S. Air Force 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 the Hanol-

Haiphong area (prior to the current bombing halt over North Vietnam), have been three different helicopters of the 3ARRGp. 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 Squadron (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 HH-3E "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 have accounted for 171 combat saves during 1968. Of those, 79 were of downed aircrews. The "Pedro's," 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 38ARRSq 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.

and F-8s to Air Force F-4s and Army "Gunship" helicopters, participate in the SAR effort. Numerous saves have been made by Army "Dustoff" and Huey "Gunships" and Navy "Big Mother" rescue helicopters, the latter operating from aircraft carriers off-shore.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

The Seventh Air Force Joint Search and Rescue Center (JSARC), manned by 3ARRGp personnel, located at Tan Son Nhut AB, controls and coordinates all rescue missions in SEA.

Also during 1968, more than 900 lives were saved by personnel of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group. Of this total 578 are classified as combat saves.

The largest rescue effort of 1968 or any other year came over

JOLLY GREENS

The HH-53 "Buff" member of the "Jolly Green" family arrived in Southeast Asia in late 1967 and is assigned to the 40ARRSq. 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 3AARGp is the HC-130P. Used as airborne coordinators to fly preplanned orbits near 7th Air Force and other air strike activity, the HC-130P aircraft also serve as aerial tankers — refueling both HH-3E and HH-53 "Jolly Green" rescue choppers.

Although not assigned to the 3AARGp, A-1 "Sandys" and "Spads" of the 7/13 Air Force are vital members of the combat search and rescue team, providing essential firepower for the relatively slow-flying helicopters. In addition, all jet aircraft of the SEA aerospace arsenal, ranging from Navy A-7s,

the Memorial Day weekend when USAF and USN aircraft flew 189 strike sorties to aid in the rescue of a Navy pilot.

HC-130P "Crown" aircraft flew as mission controllers and "Jolly Green Giant" helicopter crews flew more than 62 combat hours throughout the three-day effort.

The Navy pilot, flying from an aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Tonkin, was downed by North Vietnamese ground fire, May 31. In spite of ground fire and poor weather which hampered the rescue effort, the pilot was picked up on the morning of June 2.

While flying close air support for the rescue operation, an A-1 "Sandy" pilot was downed by enemy ground fire and rescued immediately.