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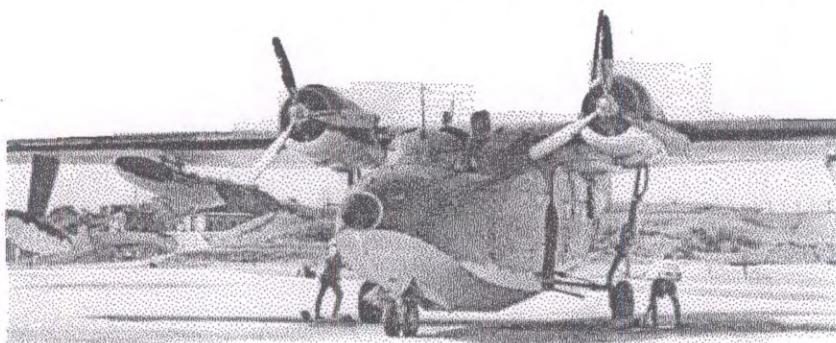
NEWSLETTER OF THE PACIFIC AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY CENTER

Vol. 1 No. 1

November 1968

PACAF RP 64-1

RESCUE COVERS PACIFIC, SOUTHEAST ASIA



THE 33rd SQUADRON said goodbye to the last HU-16 Albatross in the Pac ARRC inventory recently at Naha AB, Okinawa. This aircraft was soon to leave the Pacific.

LAST ALBATROSS LEAVES PAC ARRC AFTER 18 YEARS' PACIFIC SERVICE

The amphibious HU-16 Albatross has been retired from the Air Force rescue inventory in the Pacific after more than 18 years service in humanitarian and combat rescue.

The last Albatross recently left the Pacific Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center's (Pac ARRC) 33rd Squadron at Naha AB, Okinawa, bound for the continental United States.

The old amphibian bows out after supporting flying operations in two Pacific conflicts (Korea and Vietnam) and building an unequalled reputation as one of the great instruments of humanitarian rescue.

In Southeast Asia alone, the HU-16 recorded some 62 combat and non-combat saves in three years of limited service.

The buildup of flying operations at the outbreak of hostilities in Korea brought the HU-16 into the Pacific for the first time in 1950. The Albatross quickly showed its versatility as an aircraft that could touch down on land, rivers, coastal

waters and even on the open sea.

Following the end of hostilities in Korea, the Albatross began a lengthy period of peacetime humanitarian service.

One of the most memorable missions early in its career involved a Cathay-

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(Editor's Note: In a diversified, widely dispersed command such as the Pacific Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center, it is important that each member understand how he and his unit fit into the overall picture. This article is dedicated to that end.)

In the past few years, the world has focused its attention on the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Much of America's military might has been concentrated in this part of the earth.

With this influx of military men and machines, including aircraft, a large and highly responsive rescue organization took shape to patrol water and land from the coast of California to the Indian Ocean. The command charged with this extensive and important operation is the Pacific Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center (Pac ARRC).

Pac ARRC, under the command of Colonel Donald T. Smith, is composed of five Pacific squadrons and the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (3rd ARRGp) with its five squadrons in Southeast Asia. In addition, there are detachments of these units throughout the Pacific. There are more than 2,350 men and 107 aircraft in the command located at 31 different locations.

SAVING LIVES

Statistics do not adequately tell the story of an organization who's mission is the saving of human lives.

But, even so, Pac ARRC's statistics are impressive. Hundreds of persons have been rescued throughout the Pacific and the 3rd Group has recorded more than 1,382 combat and 646 non-combat saves in Southeast Asia.

Pac ARRC's men and machines are noted for being close at hand and responding quickly when help is needed. One of its important missions is escorting single-engine aircraft over the vast stretches of the Pacific in case they should get into trouble.

SPACE RECOVERY

As the name indicates, Pac ARRC is concerned with recovery as well as rescue. Since the early days of the Mercury space

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RESCUE WATCHES OVER VAST AREA

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program, Pacific rescue units have supported the recovery of returning space vehicles and their astronauts.

RESCUE AIRCRAFT

The prime fixed-wing aircraft for Pacific ARRC is the rescue-modified Lockheed HC-130 Hercules, a four engine turbo prop plane used for escort, space recovery, air-to-air refueling of helicopter and rescue.

For local base rescue, the Kaman HH-43 Huskie is utilized throughout the Pacific and Southeast Asia. These helos carry fire suppression kits for landing or take-off accidents and they are often used for rescue of downed airmen.

The HH-3 "Jolly Green Giant" and HH-53 "Super Jolly Green" are rescue prime aircrew recovery helicopters. A present used in Southeast Asia, other Pacific squadrons are slowly acquiring the HH-3.

PARARESCUEMEN

One of the best known members of the rescue team is the pararescueman, a man specially trained in parachuting, SCUBA diving, survival, space recovery techniques, medical aid and other rescue skills. Outside Southeast Asia, they are mainly used as crewmembers aboard the HC-130. They can parachute from the Hercules to aid downed aircrew members or victims of sea disasters and are used in the space program to parachute to aid of returning astronauts.

In Southeast Asia, the pararescuemen are becoming legendary for their exploits. They are crew members aboard the crew recovery helicopters, which will almost anywhere to rescue a downed flyer or evacuate troops from hostile areas. Often they must ride the jump penetrator down from a hovering helicopter to aid an injured flyer at great risk to their own lives.

COMBAT RESCUE

Heroism has been the rule rather than the exception as rescue crewmen go to almost any length to save a life. By these achievements have not been without cost to Air Force Rescue. For every 32 lives saved by Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service men, one member of the rescue team has given his own life.

In terms of pilots alone, the men rescue in Southeast Asia have already saved the equivalent of six and a half aircrew wings (based on 25 pilots per squadron and three squadrons per wing).

This selflessness has resulted in the award of every possible decoration from the Medal of Honor on down, to members of the command.

AMPHIBIAN EXITS PACIFIC THEATRE

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Pacific British airliner shot down on July 23, 1954, by Communist planes as the airliner was flying to Hong Kong. The Albatross landed and rescued nine of the airliner's 18 passengers. The others aboard had been killed in the crash.

When fighting began in Vietnam, the Albatross was called on once again to serve in a combat role. For three years the flying boat was a familiar and welcome sight to downed aircrew members in the Tonkin Gulf.

In September 1967, the HU-16 was withdrawn from direct combat support and it appeared the vintage aircraft would lead a relatively quiet existence until its retirement date came.

But the Albatross was destined to return after 18 years absence, to Korea -- the site of its first introduction to the Pacific Theatre. Beginning early in 1968, the Albatross was on hand to support the buildup of American forces in South Korea following the capture of the Pueblo and its crew.

When the HU-16 left Korea for the second time, it had seen its last hostile environment in the Pacific. By October, 1968, the last Albatross in the Pacific ARRC inventory was winging its way home for retirement.

HH-43 Huskie helicopters, twin-rotor choppers designed for local base rescue, replaced the HU-16s in Korea. HH-3 helicopters, long range aircrew recovery helicopters, soon will perform the duties formerly held by the HU-16s at the 33rd Squadron.

The more recent rescue helicopters, such as the HH-3 have maximum speeds comparable to the Albatross, water land-

ing capability and a lengthy range increased by in-flight refueling.

The Albatross did yeoman's duty in two conflicts, but to most people in the Pacific the aircraft was a friend to be called on when help was needed.

Ryukyuan civilians especially benefited from the 33rd's amphibious aircraft. Missions flown by these HU-16s included medical evacuation of ill civilians and servicemen, pickup of downed aircrew members and rescuing of sea and air disaster victims.

More often than not life hung in the balance when the Albatross was called on. And many times rescues were accomplished in spite of obstacles which might have stymied a less versatile aircraft.

Rough water landings were common, as well as landing on improvised strips on many of the small islands which dot the Okinawan area. On one mission, the Albatross landing gear became mired in the mud of a dirt landing field and local trucks had to pull the aircraft free. The mission went on to success.

Another flight found the HU-16 touching down at night on a make-shift runway illuminated by the headlights of automobiles lining the strip. Another life was saved by the perseverance of an HU-16 and its crew.

But sometimes more than lives were saved, as in the case of a group of American scientists shipwrecked while studying ocean life in the Tonkin Gulf. An HU-16 and crew landed and recovered the scientists as well as their valuable records containing two years of research data.