

HELO PILOT SAVES 32 IN 16 MONTHS

By Capt. Mike Freel

DANANG AFLD. Republic of Vietnam (7AF) - - Four months into his second Vietnam tour, Lt. Col. Royal A. Brown Jr., a helicopter pilot with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron here, has already rescued 16 men from the jungles of Southeast Asia.

This equals his first tour total and runs his 16-month string to 32 saves.

During his first SEA tour at Nakhon Phanom (NKP) Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, the native of Flomaton, Ala., flew search and rescue missions into North Vietnam, picking up four downed flyers.

"The saves up North were made before the November 1968 bombing halt," stated Colonel Brown.

Talking about his experiences flying in the North, the colonel admits, with a mixture of pride and modesty, that he has the distinction of being credited with rescuing the last downed flyer from North Vietnam, an Air Force pilot, eight days before the bombing halt.

"One particular mission I recall most vividly," he continued. "A U. S. Marine combat team found itself in the middle of an enemy mine field west of Da Nang and had to be airlifted out as it was too risky for them to attempt to walk out.

"The 10-man patrol was scattered throughout the mine field, which meant the rescue helicopter had to be repositioned for each pick up. This was a particularly dangerous operation because

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JOLLY GREEN
PILOT LT. COL.
ROYAL A. BROWN
JR. CREDITED WITH
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32 RESCUES

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the possibility existed that the downwash from the helicopter might set off one of the mines, thus causing a chain reaction."

"Another mission I recall with great clarity also happened during my present tour. We had two F-4 Phantom crewmen on the ground and one of them was injured. Because of his injuries we had trouble extracting him, and both pararescuemen rode the jungle penetrator down to aid him.

"As a result we had to hover over the scene for exactly 61 minutes. . . . 61 minutes that I will not soon forget."