

3d ARRGp WINS PRESIDENTIAL CITATION



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TAN SON NHUT AB, RVN (7AF) — The 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group recently was presented the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in military operations against opposing armed forces in Southeast Asia from July 1, 1967, to January 31, 1969.

Presentation of the nation's highest award, second given to the most highly decorated unit of comparable size in Air Force history, was made by Gen. George S. Brown, commander, 7AF, to Col. Malcolm C. Frazee, commander of 3rd ARRGp, on Nov. 26.

The award citation, recently signed by President Nixon, cited 3rd ARRGp aircrews and support personnel for saving the lives of more than 1,370 persons during this period.

"The majority of these rescues were performed over heavily defended hostile territory, often at sites where aggressors had established ambushes for the unit's lightly armored, vulnerable helicopter," the citation read.

The 3rd ARRGp and its four squadrons operate five different types of special rescue helicopters and the HC-130P Hercules fixed-wing aircraft out of 22 separate operating locations in the combat zone and Thailand. The helicopters are the famed Sikorsky HH-3 "Jolly Green Giant," the nimble little Kaman HH-43 "Pedro" (responsible for more saves than any other Air Force helicopter in Southeast Asia), and the strongly armed and armored HH-53 "BUFF" (Big Ugly Friendly Fellow). Modified versions of the Pedro and BUFF constitute the other two types of helicopters.

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3d ARRGp EARNS COVETED CITATION FOR SECOND TIME

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The Lockheed HC-130 "King" aircraft carries highly sophisticated electronic surveillance and homing gear to find, identify and direct rescue of downed airmen in the most difficult of environmental conditions. It also has aerial refueling capabilities for the Jolly Green and Buff helicopters.

To date, more than 2,800 people have been saved from almost certain death since 3rd ARRGp was activated in Southeast Asia in 1964. Most of these saves were made under extremely hostile conditions, many before the bombing was halted in the north. Mission summaries of 3rd ARRGp read like best-selling war fiction.

On reading some of these summaries, former Air Force Secretary Harold Brown said: "When the history of the war in Vietnam is finally written, the story of Air Rescue may well become one of the most outstanding human dramas in the entire history of the Air Force."

Fulfilling the motto of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, "That Others May Live," has not come without loss, however, more than 100 members of 3rd ARRGp have been killed, more than 25 wounded, and 20 listed missing in action.

Aircrews of fighter and bomber aircraft which provide indispensable fire support for rescue efforts in hostile areas have taken similar losses in providing outstanding assistance to the vulnerable helicopters.