



MAJOR BUTERA POSES BESIDE HIS HH-53 "SEA ANGEL"



HC-130N HERCULES ESCORTED THE GIANT HELICOPTERS

HELOS MAKE FIRST TRANSPAC FLIGHT

DANANG AIRFIELD, Vietnam. The first helicopters to fly across the Pacific Ocean arrived here last week (Aug. 24) after a nine-day, 9,000-mile journey that started from Eglin AFB, Fla.

The 12 crew members of two HH-53 "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters were greeted with handshakes, champagne and

the traditional dousing with a fire hose.

Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service officials said that the flight cut 75 percent off the time it normally takes to move such aircraft to Vietnam and showed the helicopter's world-wide tactical capability.

"We proved the concept of being able

to fly anywhere in the world and then doing our business," Maj. James L. Butera, mission commander, said.

The helicopters will be assigned to the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron here. Its men, flying the HH-53s and smaller rescue aircraft, have saved the lives of hundreds of downed airmen and soldiers in Indochina.

The helicopters that landed Monday began their journey from Florida Aug. 15, stopping at Minot AFB, N. D.; Elmendorf AFB, Alaska; Shemya AFS, Alaska; Misawa AB, Japan; Kadena AB, Okinawa; and Clark AB, Philippines before arriving here.

They were delayed for a day at Ft. Nelson, B. C. Canada, for a maintenance check and another day at Elmendorf because of bad weather.

The longest leg of the trip was the 1,700-mile transpacific flight from Shemya to Misawa. The trip took 14 hours and required four aerial refuelings.

The final leg -- which took six hours and ten minutes -- was made from Clark.

The helicopters were accompanied



HH-53 SILHOUETTED AGAINST AN ALASKAN SKY DURING THE MISSION

FIRST TRANSPAC HELO FLIGHT

(Continued from Page 1)

by HC-130N tankers from the 54th ARRSq, Pease AFB, N. H.

Each helicopter carried six men, one with four pilots and two flight engineers, and the other with three pilots, a flight surgeon and two engineers. The pilots rotated at the controls every two hours.

The flight surgeon, Maj. Gordon K.

Lochridge, was along on the trip to study stresses on the body caused by long helicopter flights. He said he was interested at how well the airmen had passed their "stress tests."

ARRS officials added that plans are now being made for three more HH-53 helicopters to fly across the Pacific in October.