

GAZETTE

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 28

DA NANG AIRFIELD

SEPTEMBER 5, 1970

HH-53C'S CROSS PACIFIC, LAND HERE

Two giant Air Force HH-53C search and rescue helicopters arrived here after a nine-day, 7,600-mile journey from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Ala.

The historic flight marks the first time that a helicopter accomplished a trans-Pacific crossing.

The HH-53Cs, unofficially nicknamed Super Jolly Green Giants, will be used for search and rescue missions in Southeast Asia by the

37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, (ARRS) stationed here.

The 11-hour, 1,500-mile trans-Pacific leg of the flight was flown from Shemya Air Force Station in Alaska's Aleutian Islands to Misawa Air Base, Japan.

The 2,000-mile flight shortened the delivery time of the shoppers to Vietnam by 75 percent and again demonstrated the long-range capability of helicopters

refueled in the air.

During the trans-Pacific leg of the flight the two helicopters refueled in-flight using KC-130N tankers. The tanker feeds 300 gallons of fuel a minute to the Super Jolly Greens without refueling the HH-53 can fly 575 miles.

In-flight refueling is considered a breakthrough in helicopter operations. Once restricted to specific distances, helicopters can fly anywhere to the rescue of a downed pilot, with its range limited only by the endurance of the aircrew.

The feasibility of in-flight refueling was first demonstrated by ARRS three years ago when two smaller HH-3E helicopters were flown non-stop across the Atlantic from New York to Paris. Since then, aerial refueling of helicopters during rescue missions in Southeast Asia has become almost routine.

Other stops for the helicopters on the long flight were Minot AFB, N.D., and Elmendorf AFB, Alaska prior to the Pacific crossing. From Alaska the aircraft stopped over at Kadena AB, Okinawa, and Clark AB, Philippines, before arriving at Da Nang.

24 AUG 70

The powerful HH-53Cs are the largest helicopters in the Air Force inventory. They are capable of cruising at speeds near 300 miles an hour and can carry 840 gallons of fuel internally. In addition, they are equipped with two removable exterior fuel tanks each holding 650 gallons for the trans-Pacific flight.