

U.S. Copters Complete 9,000-Mile Pacific Trip

DA NANG, South Vietnam (AP)—The first helicopters to fly across the Pacific Ocean arrived here Monday after a nine-day, 9,000-mile journey from Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

The 12 crew members of two HH-33 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopters were greeted with handshakes, champagne and a traditional doubling by a fire hose.

Officers said the flight cut 75% off the time it normally takes to freight such aircraft to Vietnam and showed the helicopters' worldwide tactical capability.

"We proved the concept of being able to fly anywhere in the world and then doing our business," said the mission commander, Maj. James L. Bueta, 33, of San Diego.

trip from Shemya Air Force Station in the Aleutian Islands to Misawa Air Base, Japan. The trip took 14 hours and required four aerial refuelings.

Each helicopter carried six men, one with four pilots and two flight engineers, the other with three pilots, a flight surgeon and two engineers.

The helicopters will be used by the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron. Its men, flying HH-33s and smaller rescue aircraft, have saved the lives of hundreds of downed airmen and soldiers in Indochina.

Spokesmen said that plans are now being made for three more HH-33 helicopters to fly across the Pacific in October.

The helicopters which landed Monday began their journey from Florida Aug. 15, flying via air bases in North Dakota, Alaska, Japan, Okinawa and the Philippines.

• Their longest stop was the 1,700-mile transpacific