



Sergeant Harvey checks the lowering device hook on an HH-53 before attaching the penetrator for hoisting downed airmen

'Dean' Enjoys Tough Rescues

By Sgt. Ken Hollis

DA NANG AFDL Vietnam — Twenty-four years and still going strong, MSgt. Harold W. Harvey, in length of service, is to the USAF Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service what J. Edgar Hoover is to the FBI or what Satchel Paige was to baseball.

The 44-year-old sergeant is the only member of the first Air Force pararescue class of March 1948 still wearing the coveted maroon beret of this strenuous and harrowing specialty.

A member of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron here, the dean of Pararescuemen does most of his work these days "in and out" of HH-53, over the jungles of Southeast Asia. Like his 300 fellow PJs stationed worldwide, he lives to "shoot" a rescue mission.

"Rescues are really what we're paid for. It may be dangerous, but it's also very exciting and very satisfying. I can't describe how good it feels to save a man's life," Sergeant Harvey states.

A dangerous mission New Year's Eve is especially fresh in his mind.

"An OH-6 Loach and an UH-1 Huey were downed near the Cambodian border in Vietnam. We went in after their crews, but had to pull out because of heavy enemy ground fire. The backup Jolly finally made the pickup of eight men. Back at Da Nang, I discovered that the pilot of the Huey was my cousin whom I had never met."

Another mission on which he had his closest brush with death is etched in his mind. The mission involved being lowered to the ground from a Jolly Green to rescue two Army Loach pilots.

The bad guys were no more than 200 yards away. The AK-47 fire was very heavy, and one bullet passed about 18 inches behind my head. When they fired on the chopper, it sounded like popcorn popping."

For a PJ, Sergeant Harvey had a larger-than-normal part in saving a man's life on another mission. After spending 25 minutes on the ground searching a Viet Cong staging area, he sent an injured F-100 jet fighter pilot up to a Jolly Green in a litter.

Back aboard the chopper, Harvey discovered that the pilot had stopped breathing and his heart had stopped beating. He managed to revive the pilot by massaging his heart and giving him mouth to mouth resuscitation. During the one hour ride to Da Nang, he twice repeated the process.

As a pararescueman, Sergeant Harvey has served as a gunner, medic and sometimes scuba diver aboard mine fitted wing aircraft and six types of helicopters. The list includes C-46, C-47, C-82, L-5, L-19, B-29, PBV, SA-16 and B-17 conventional type craft and H-5, H-19, H-21, H-43, HH-3E and HH-53 choppers.

"Looking back, I really have enjoyed my work," he admits. "I guess you could say I love it."

He volunteered for pararescue service because, "I thought it would be challenging, and I was looking for something different." Drafted into the Army in 1945, he was an infantryman, a tank driver and finally a paramedic with the Army Air Corps before trying pararescue.