

'Doc' field tests new cold water suit



DR. (LT. COL.) G. KRESS LOCHRIDGE wraps a life raft after jumping into Lake St. Clair during a successful field test of a new diving suit designed to protect pararescuemen in extremely cold water and air existent in the Arctic.

In two days three active duty and one reserve pararescuemen made approximately 25 scuba equipped parachute jumps from a 305th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron HC-97 Stratocruiser into the icy waters of Lake St. Clair in Michigan.

The pararescuemen successfully field tested a new diving suit, the unisuit, made in Sweden designed to protect pararescuemen who will conduct combat, space (Skylab) and humanitarian rescue and recovery in the extremely cold water and air existent in the Arctic.

The field test culminated three years of work performed by Dr. (Lt. Col.) G. Kress Lochridge, who is pararescue qualified and a specialist in aerospace medicine. The doctor was the ARRS staff surgeon until recently.

Dr. Lochridge explained the program, "Prior to this time ARRS has been limited in performing our world-wide rescue mission in the Arctic locales nor could we properly support the Skylab project programmed for next year, because present diving and exposure suits do not provide prolonged thermal protection in the unique conditions faced by pararescuemen."

Jumping with Dr. Lochridge, were MSgt. George X. Heffernon, NCOIC of the 305th pararescue section; Capt. Russel T. Jones, pararescue qualified nurse anesthetist, 39th ARPWg, Eglin AFB, Fla.; and MSgt. John Stemple, HQ ARRS.

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Super Jolly Green Giant saves F-4 crew

DA NANG AFLD, RVN -- An Air Force F-4 Phantom crew surrounded by communists was pulled to safety by HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giants from the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

Captains Peter G. Kulzer and Robert W. Comstock were forced to parachute into enemy-held territory near Hue after a surface-to-air missile downed their F-4.

"The area didn't look good," stated Maj. Anthony A. Gates, commander of one of the four rescue helicopters involved in the mission.

The mission plan called for Captain Comstock to be picked up first, but a smoke signal released too soon dissipated before the helicopters arrived on the scene.

"While we were waiting for another signal from Captain Comstock," Major

Gates continued, "Captain Kulzer came up with a signal. We were halfway between them so we went after the good signal."

A jungle penetrator was lowered on a hoist to Captain Kulzer who had moved into a clearing. Within three minutes the rescue team pulled him on board their helicopter.

"Then we moved over to Captain Comstock," Major Gates explained. "We found him and the hoist was going down when ground fire opened up on us."

Capt. Gary A. Date, copilot on Major Gates' helicopter, added, "Once you pick up ground fire like that you've got to go out and wait until they clean it up."

After air strikes pounded the area, a second helicopter commanded by Maj. Jerry J. Gilbert, moved in for the rescue.

"We spent two or three minutes going back and forth over the area looking for him, then one of my crew members shouted, 'I've got him in sight.'"

Thick jungle approximately 40 feet high hampered the operation for only a moment while the hoist was being lowered for the rescue.

"As soon as I saw him grab hold of the penetrator, I started him up," SSgt. William A. Simm, flight engineer, explained. "He got dragged through some trees but he got out."

Also on Major Gates' crew were SSgt.

David Garcia, flight engineer; and Sergeants Michael L. Wagner and Craig A. Marsh, pararescuemen.

Major Gilbert's crew included Capt. Darrel R. Knutson, copilot; and Sergeants Cole E. Panning and Charles B. McQuod II, pararescuemen.