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Jolly Green's Leave DaNang

After six years at DaNang and rescuing 887 downed flyers, the Jolly Green Giants left DaNang, Thursday, November 30.

To the officially minded, the unit was called the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (37th ARRS). But to any downed pilot who ever heard the heavy chop of the six bladed rotors from the HH-53 helicopter, it is the Jolly Green Giant; the men who have the job of going into hostile terrain and picking out our downed airmen.

In most of the rescues made by the Jolly's, the downed pilots were in North Vietnam, while in many other cases the rescues were in threatened areas of South Vietnam. As the men of the Jolly's worked during the last few days they recalled some of the exploits they had shared and the buddies they had lost. I'm glad to be leaving DaNang, said 1Lt Frank Land of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; but I hate leaving the 37th. His comments mirrored the feelings of all the Jolly's who under the command of Lt.Col. Stephen Sutton.

In their rescue operations, the Jolly's were on alert 24-hours a day with five aircraft and 10 crewmembers. With the aid of tanker aircraft the Jolly's could refuel and go anywhere they were needed. On Monday, May 1, of this year Jolly's played a major role in the evacuation of Quang Tri City just before the enemy captured the city. In that incident, they evacuated over 100 South Vietnamese personnel.

Dr. (Capt) Jerry Howell, 29, Enterprise, Alabama, the flying flight surgeon with the Jolly's said "my numerous combat missions with the Jolly's have been the most rewarding of my medical career.

An oddity with the Jolly's is a U.S. Coast Guard officer. Speaking of his tour with the unit, Lt. Jack Stice, 33, Sarasota, Florida said "My tour here has been the best experience of my life. I've saved many more people in the states, but rescuing a guy over here is saving him from becoming a POW and makes a guy feel really great.

Colonel Sutton speaking of his men said, "I cannot describe the dedication these guys have for their job. It's 24 hours a day, seven days a week, always alert and ready to pick someone up so "Charlie" don't get him. When we bring a downed pilot back to DaNang the guys act like he is a long lost brother. They really have empathy for the jet jocks and all men in trouble. They are the greatest bunch of guys I have ever known."

The men of the Jolly's leave DaNang with a proud past because, as evidenced by their 887 saves, they have lived up to their motto, "So That Others May Live."



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As the men of the Jolly's packed during the last few days, they recalled some of the exploits they had shared, the men they saved and the buddies they lost. "I'm glad to be leaving Da Nang," said 1st Lt. Frank Land 26, Baton Rouge, La. "but I hate leaving the 37th." His comment stated the feelings of all the Jolly's who, under the command of Lt. Col. Stephen L. Sutton, 40 Monterey, Calif., experienced one of their most successful years.

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Sgt. Steve Jones, a paratrooper and deadly gunner with the Jolly's secures his mini-gun for the voyage from Da Nang. (U.S. Air Force Photo By 1st Sgt Gus Viner)

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