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TO: 3825 (HOA)
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

PART A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Director:

Responsible for the operation of a combined HH-53 "Super Jolly," HH-43 "Pedro" combat rescue and recovery squadron with assets and supplies valued at more than \$20 million. Responsible for the health, welfare, and morale of all assigned and attached squadron personnel. Responsible for combat recovery and medical evacuation of friendly forces.

The primary mission of the 37th ARRS was to provide quick-response rescue capability for downed aircrew members in SEA. All con-
tested rescues were undertaken with support as required from
American and South Vietnamese aerial and ground forces. Typical
mission configuration was two HH-53's accompanied by two A-1
"Sandy" aircraft. One HH-53 (Alpha Low) was primary for picking
up survivors, while the other HH-53 (Alpha High) remained at
hand to aid Alpha Low as required. The Sandy aircraft attempted
to clear the pick-up area of enemy troops prior to the entry
of Alpha Low and then led Alpha Low to the exact location of
the survivors. At this location a rescue hoist cable was
lowered from Alpha Low to the survivors. If the survivors were
unable to help themselves, paramedical personnel (PJ's) were
lowered to the ground to assist.

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Maintenance of the six HH-53 and two HH-43 aircraft assigned to the squadron was exceptionally good in every way. A young, aggressive, and wise Captain was able to get the most out of his subordinates while still maintaining high morale. When maintenance teams were sought to repair aircraft marooned in enemy territory, there was always a large excess of volunteers. There was a period of several months when bench stock was limited and parts delivery was unusually slow. This situation was alleviated when it was brought directly to the attention of the Chief of Maintenance of the host wing--the 6498th Air Base Wing. With respect to support of the 37th, the Commander, 6498th Air Base Wing, was always responsive to our needs.

Because the 37th was charged with rescue coverage in a very large geographical area, it was difficult to always obtain desired intelligence data. For those areas being worked by Forward Air Controllers, the intelligence was usually excellent. However, many aircrews were downed in areas remote to the more intense activities of the friendly forces. A lack of intelligence in these areas necessitated that rescue crews "play it by ear." Clearly, this type of operation was exceptionally hazardous. The danger might have been somewhat alleviated if timely intelligence reporting from Air America pilots or other friendlies working the remote regions had been made available to our crews. Further aggravating this situation was the rapid turnover of crew members. They seemed to become experts on SEA terrain and enemy capabilities at about the time their tours ended. The new pilots invariably had difficulty in assimilating the information that was available. Just terminology, alone, that is peculiar to combat operations and to the SEA geography was difficult to comprehend in a short time. This tended to reduce considerably the effectiveness of mission planning. Fortunately, the planning that was done was good enough to accomplish our missions successfully without loss of personnel, but mission accomplishment could have been more efficient if we had had greater access to intelligence and crew members had become familiar with terminology before arriving in SEA.

Rocket attacks on DaNang Airfield were a constant threat to men and materiel. While local self-help projects resulted in fairly satisfactory protection for personnel, the helicopters remained exposed to rocket shrapnel. During my tour as Commander, shrapnel destroyed one HH-53 and damaged five others and two HH-43's. This occurred in spite of the presence of 12 feet high sand-filled steel-covered walls that protected most of the aircraft on three sides. Requests for fully enclosed protective hangars were never approved by higher headquarters.

FM JCS/NMCC
TO AIG 707A6

THIS IS AN EXECUTIVE MESSAGE. EFFECTIVE 272359Z JAN 73, AN INTERNATIONALLY SUPERVISED CEASE-FIRE IN SVN AND THE DMZ WILL BE INSTITUTED. AT THAT TIME, DISCONTINUE ALL ACTS OF FORCE INITIATED BY US FORCES IN NVN AND SVN AND THE DMZ. ALL AIRSTRIKES, ARTILLERY FIRE, AND NAVAL BOMBARDMENT AS WELL AS OTHER FIRE OR MUNITIONS EXPENDITURE TARGETED AGAINST NVN OR SVN AND THE DMZ ARE PROHIBITED.¹¹²

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