



VOL 4, NO 6

MAC/OII/STOP 100D, SCOTT AFB, IL 62225

June 1974

3rd Group earns presidential kudos

NAKHON PHANOM RTAFB, THAILAND—The Third Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group here recently was presented its fourth Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism while engaged in operations against enemy forces. The citation covered a period from May 1, 1970 until March 31, 1972.

During this period, aircrews of the 3rd Group rescued 449 persons, many of them pilots downed in enemy-held territory during the Vietnam Conflict. During the war, the determination of rescue crews in picking up downed aircrews, often hovering directly over enemy positions, became legend.

As one Jolly Green pilot said after a save, "If a man went down, he counted on us to attempt a save." The number of saves was indeed significant; the lives saved included enough aircrews to man two tactical fighter wings.

Although operations are usually given the spotlight in most citation nominations, maintenance in the 3rd Group did not take a back seat in this one.

Maintenance on HH-3s and later, HH-53s reflected some of the highest ready rates in rescue forces worldwide. This was accomplished, a nominating officer wrote, even though there were critical manning shortages, threats of hostile enemy fire and monsoon rains.

Despite all the special maintenance requirements, the official continued, major moves experienced by the three squadrons (due to the end of the Vietnam conflict), several typhoon evacuations and several evacuations because of suspected sapper attacks, maintenance people

of the 3rd Group maintained one of the best records in ARRS.

Because of the nature of the combat rescue operations job, it is natural that individual heroism should appear in the 3rd Group. During the reporting period, four Air Force Crosses and 53 Silver Stars were presented to rescuemen. These were just a portion of the 3,300 indi-

vidual decorations that were earned by the Jolly Greens.

"It gives us a good feeling to make a save," one Jolly pilot remembered recently. "All Jollies—and I think that's why they're Jollies—can go home with a sense of pride in doing something constructive.

"He can say, 'I was helping people. I was saving lives.'

"And that's a great feeling."

How to rip-off \$50

Last month the AIR RESCUE's front page opened a contest for new name and flag, or nameplate, of the ARRS newspaper. It offered a \$50.00 savings bond (or two \$25.00 bonds) to the Rescue individual(s) submitting the winning name and/or illustration by the July 10, 1974 deadline.

So far, SSgt. Franklin Perkins, Det. 1, 39th ARRWg. at Homestead AFB, FL is the only entrant.

However, good old-fashioned competition is still alive and well in matters involving the AIR RESCUE. Moreover, there are 3,800 competitive people in Rescue. Shouldn't there be just about that many entries?

Drawings should be horizontal to fit an 11-inch wide by three-inch height form. Entries should represent the overall mission of the ARRS. All ARRS personnel should readily identify with the name and flag; i.e., no select group, function or area should be over-emphasized.

Fifty dollars await the winners' palms. Send your entries to: AIR RESCUE Editor, MAC/OII/Stop 100D, Scott AFB, IL 62225 by July 10. Please include your full name and address. No entries will be returned unless requested.

---Editor



"Taking fire from everywhere"

By
1st Lt. David T. Rivard
67 ARRSq. Information Officer

"We were taking fire from everywhere and just when we thought we had him, he disappeared." This was the way TSgt. John R. Carlson, now assigned to the 67th ARRSq., RAF Bentwaters, England, recalled a rescue attempt which earned him and the crew of the Jolly Green the Silver Star.

The mission began at first light Dec. 27, 1972 from Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand. The Jolly Green crew was scrambled to rescue a pilot who had been forced to bailout only 20 kilometers from Hanoi.

Although the mission began at first light, the actual rescue attempt did not take place until 3 p.m. The Jolly Green entered the rescue area across the Black River and flew down a corridor of smoke put down by the Sandys, who also were attacking the guns which protected the area and a MIG field just the other side of a nearby mountain.

The downed pilot was located on the side of a mountain. To make the rescue even more difficult, there were three 51-calibre machine guns located around him. The other para-rescueman with Carlson, A1C Robert W. Jones, took out one of the guns on the way in but then heavy ground fire

began from other enemy troops on the ground.

As the pilot, Capt. Richard D. Shapiro, began to maneuver for the pickup, the ground fire became more intense and accurate. "I remember the copilot, Capt. Miguel A. Pereira, shouting he was hit, but alright," said Sergeant Carlson. "At the same time my minigun malfunctioned and I was forced to use my automatic hand weapon."

Sergeant Carlson also recalled that when he was able to get to the cockpit, to attend to Captain Pereira's wounds, he found the wind screen was shattered from small arms hits; and that Captain Shapiro had small arms hits on both sides of the wall beside his head and on the floor.

Within a few seconds of Pereira being hit, the downed pilot was seen running for the Jolly Green. "We could see him coming and then he was gone. The rotor wash had swept him down the hillside and he was not sighted again. It was a tremendous let down to be so close and then to miss getting him out," Sergeant Carlson remarked.

Throughout this short time span of just three minutes, the Jolly Green had taken a tremendous amount of hits. After seeing the downed pilot disappear, Captain Shapiro decided to exit the area.

"With vital controls damaged, Captain Shapiro had to fly right down the side of the mountain to get up enough airspeed to reach altitude. It was as we were exiting at tree-top level that we discovered another problem - our fuel tanks had been hit," recalled Sergeant Carlson. Sergeant Carlson added that probably the most important factor in their getting out was flying directly into the sun; thereby becoming a poor target for the guns.

"Our problems didn't end there," said Sergeant Carlson. "We were losing fuel, and once out of the area we tried for a hookup with a refueler and found that our refueling probe would not extend. Captain Shapiro made several attempts to hookup without the extension, but to no avail. It was then we knew we had to abandon the aircraft."

A mountain top in Laos was chosen as the site to set the Jolly Green down. "As we approached the site," Sergeant Carlson remembered, "we began taking ground fire again. We managed to set the aircraft down and get onboard the backup Jolly Green with no further casualties, and headed for home."

"For their gallantry and devotion to duty" Sergeant Carlson and the crew of the Jolly Green were awarded the nation's second highest award, the Silver Star.

An epic: Charlie the PJ

Research By
1st Lt. Kathy Gardner
Hq. ARRS Information Officer

HQ. ARRS, SCOTT AFB, IL—
For some unknown reason, people in ARRS have the innate ability to come up with varied and sundry shenanigans. They range from "mysterious, giant-like footprints" on two water towers here (April AIR RESCUE), to fixed-wing aircraft pictures with rotors. (The chopper folk feel it improves the overall appearance.)

And Rescue old-timers simply love to fill you in on other such goodies they have seen or experienced in their careers. One such example is the decade-long travels of a superbly unique character everyone calls "Charlie the PJ."

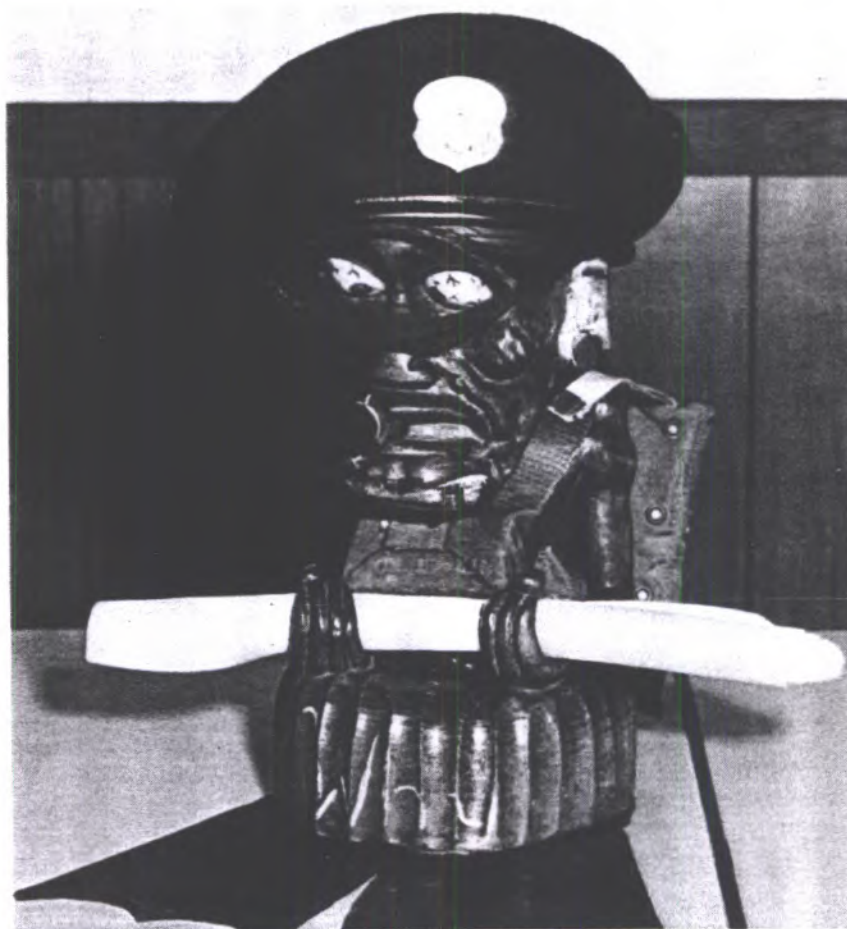
Charlie, an ugly-looking wooden statue about 14 inches tall, became the property of pararescueman Tony Willis during the latter's wanderings through the Fiji Islands Northeast of Australia in 1964.

Several months later Charlie received his initial pararescue qualification from Sgt. Howard Harley at Eglin AFB, FL. That included a maroon beret, parachute, diving goggles and fins.

Later that year, Charlie was ripped-off by an "unknown" assailant and taken to Bermuda, home of the 55th ARRSq. By then, Charlie was becoming a well-known and sought-after personality.

In the spring of 1965, Aaron Farrior liberated Charlie and took him to Tripoli, Libya. Between the summer of 1965 and the summer of 1967, Charlie spent his time in a TDY status in various parts of the Continental United States; Udorn RTAFB, Thailand; and Moron, Spain.

Come 1968 he was once again liberated and taken to Ramstein AFB, Germany to become a member



A GNOME? — Or a factory reject? No, it's Charlie the PJ—a personality of great renown in the ARRS.

of the 40th ARRWg. MSgt. "Dashing Dan" Daniels did the deed that time.

In December of that year, MSgt. Charles Kezer removed Charlie (he liked the name) from the 40th ARRWg. and took him to the 67th ARRSq. at Moron, Spain. In December 1969 the 67th ARRSq. moved to Woodbridge, England and Charlie, with PCS orders in hand, went too.

During the two years that followed, Charlie spent his time between the 56th ARRSq. at Lajes, Azores and the 67th ARRSq. at Woodbridge. During one fateful TDY to Lajes in November of 1972, Charlie went AWOL in the company of his good buddy, Sgt. Alex Wassuta.

A month later he turned up, unexpectedly, at Det. 1, 39th ARRWg. at Homestead AFB, FL. He remained there until August 1973 when TSgt. Transito Trujillo assisted in Charlie's relocation to Det. 15, 39th ARRWg. at Patrick AFB, FL.

Lo and behold, in March of 1974,

Charlie made yet another move. This time to the 55th ARRSq. which had relocated to Eglin AFB, FL. (In case you're wondering, Charlie liked the Florida climate.)

But later that month, MSgt. (now SMSgt.) Aaron Farrior and MSgt. John Stemple escorted Charlie to his new home at Headquarters ARRS here.

Charlie was to be displayed in a place of honor where he'd stay until once again liberated. That liberation came sooner than expected.

It was April 5, 1974. With the skill of professional cat burglars, a four-man team of PJs from the secretive 55th ARRSq. maneuvered into position. Cleverly disguised, the fumble-fingered four once again ripped-off Charlie in an exhibition of great speed and cunning.

And today, our friend Charlie is back enjoying the sun and surf of Florida — fearfully awaiting another conniving force of liberators to rip him off.