

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.