

Jolly lands on sandbar

By 1st Lt. Fran Tunstall

KADENA AB, JAPAN—In less than 11 months Jolly 56, a rescue HH-53 assigned to the 33rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, (ARRS), has twice forced its crew to wrestle the big craft to the ground.

The first time the craft spent three weeks on the Japanese island of Kakara after its main transmission failed. This time the big chopper made its unexpected stopover on Torishima, a tiny sandbar in the South China Sea. The piece of real estate is just large enough for two Jollys at high tide.

Aircraft Commander, Capt. Mike Boehme, who incidently was a passenger the last time Jolly 56 went down said "I knew we were going to ditch when I noticed the

primary hydraulics systems going to zero pressure and the aircraft started jumping through the air," (these systems are essential for aircraft control). Everybody on board knew immediately that something was wrong.

"When I heard to prepare to ditch," said Sgt. John Bourcier, flight mechanic, "I started thinking about getting the ramp up because we would have sunk with it down." While Sergeant Bourcier prepared the cabin for water contact, Capt. John Creveling, copilot, broadcast "Mayday" and their position to anyone who was listening.

The rest of the crew on board, pararescuemen TSgt. Cole Panning, SSgt. John Stephens, A1C James Paton and Randy Miller,

strapped in and waited for the big bird to make contact.

The Jolly Green Giant spent two days and nights on its little spot while waves lapped at its wheels. The 503rd Military Airlift Support Squadron's maintenance crew of MSgt. Reed Goodfellow, TSgt. Carol McClosky and Sgt. Alan Truesdale were able to repair the difficulties at the scene and the "island hopper," as one member called it, flew back to Kadena AB under its own power.

The rest of the members who "island sat" Jolly 56 through the long nights were 1st Lt. John Folkerts and A1C Mike Farrow, Steve Yastrub and Peter Keohane.

There was no temporary duty pay for the men because government quarters were furnished . . . Jolly 56.