



54th ARRS men receive medals for Vietnam and air-sea rescue

Brig Gen. Frank K. Everest, Commander of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, presented a Silver Star Medal, First Oak Leaf Cluster and two Airman's Medals to three rescue members of the 54th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron here on July 30.

SSgt. Randy S. McCoomb was presented the Silver Star, First Oak Leaf Cluster for his gallantry in connection with the attempted rescue of American Prisoners of War at Son Tay, North Vietnam on Nov. 21, 1970.

Sergeant McCoomb was a crew member on the lead aircraft

which penetrated deeply into enemy territory despite anti-aircraft fire and surface-to-air missile threats en route to the objective. Although the raid was carried out with complete success, the party found no prisoners. They had been previously moved to another site by the North Vietnamese.

Commenting on the raid, General Everest said, "If the prisoners had not been moved, we would have had an excellent opportunity to retrieve them." He continued by saying, "Even though no prisoners were retrieved, our efforts probably served as a great morale booster

to those men still imprisoned in North Vietnam by letting them know we are doing everything possible to get them back."

MSgt. Souza and A1C Arthur Dorrrough were presented the Airman's Medal for heroism involving voluntary risk of life at sea on a mercy mission to a shipping vessel 450 miles northeast of Bermuda on Nov. 1 1970. The two men parachuted to the vessel despite high seas, poor weather, lack of communications and the advent of darkness to aid a seriously ill seaman. Through their humanitarian efforts, they succeeded in saving the stricken seaman's life.

Three awards

During his recent inspection visit to the 54th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Brig. Gen. Frank K. Everest, Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service commander, presented three awards to squadron members. They are, from left, TSgt. Randy S. McCoomb, who received the Silver Star for taking part in POW raid on Son Tay, North Vietnam; and MSgt. James Souza and A1C Arthur E. Dorrrough, both of whom received the Airman's Medal for jumping to the aid of an injured seaman near Bermuda several months ago.

(U.S. Air Force Photos by SSgt. M. David Siegel)