

1965

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1965

The tempo of the SEA conflict increased in 1965. The Viet Cong (VC) intensified its guerrilla activity and began direct attacks on U.S. forces. When the VC scored some impressive victories over South Vietnamese troops, the U.S. increased its forces even more. Officials in Washington D.C. no longer spoke of withdrawing U.S. personnel; rather, they talked of additional U.S. forces for South Vietnam and the president generally approved their recommendations. During the last half of 1965, Viet Cong activity inside South Vietnam continued to increase. Several large scale attacks were launched against U.S. and South Vietnamese positions and in each instance, airpower was used to thwart the enemy efforts. Still, the Viet Cong retained its ability to move from place to place at night, almost at will, and sever any line of communication it desired.

January 65

Det. 4 (Maxwell crews) replaced by another TDY unit

2 March 1965

On Mar. 2, 1965, the USAF instituted its famous "Rolling Thunder" campaign, the systematic bombing of North Vietnam, starting at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Vietnam. Its planes flew from bases in South Vietnam and Thailand. By slowly advancing the target areas northward across North Vietnam, it was hoped the North Vietnamese leaders would eventually be convinced to sit down at the peace table.

North Vietnam. Pararescuemen John Moore and Jon "Combat" Young participate in possibly the first rescue in North Vietnam. Six aircraft are downed by enemy fire. The first HH-43 crew, with Airman Moore on board, fly for more than two and a half-hours in search of survivors. After flying cover in North Vietnamese coastal waters, another helicopter picks up a survivor. Moore's crew proceeds inland for a second pilot. Exposed to constant ground fire, his HH-43 traverses fifteen miles into enemy territory where a second survivor is spotted in the jungle. He is lifted to safety from a one hundred-foot hover and flown back to South Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the second HH-43, with Airman Young on board, rescues a third survivor, then makes an approach to another chute that has been spotted. Airman Young is lowered on the hoist to search for the pilot, but heavy enemy ground fire erupts, damaging one of the helicopter's wooden rotor blades. Airman Young is snatched out of the area, and the crew is forced to withdraw. Although only three survivors are recovered, the heroism displayed by the two crews, in

light of certain death or capture deep in North Vietnam, wins them each a Silver Star. *Source = 50 years*

April 65

Det. 3, PARC (P) activated Ubon. 2 HH-43B's

3 Apr 65

The U.S. began Operation "Steel Tiger" on Apr. 3, 1965 to locate and destroy enemy forces and materiel being moved southward at night into South Vietnam. However, since circumstances made it a highly complex matter in regard to the neutrality of Laos, target approval had to come from Washington. Additionally, the U.S. ambassadors in South Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand were involved in controlling these U.S. air operations.

6 April 65

National Security Action Memorandum 328 authorizes US personnel to take the offensive to secure "enclaves" and to support the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN)

9 April 65

Diary Henry O'Beirne: 0800hrs. We just got airborne. I'm on my first in an HU- 16, an amphibious plane. Huyett is my partner. He just fixed me up with everything I need - I think. My .38 ammo is in a small Crown Royal Booze Bag. My .38 is strapped to my thigh. It looks - and feels - like a cannon next to my small thigh. I've got my rifle behind my seat. Out in the Gulf [of Tonkin] I can see a destroyer ... I wonder which one it is? This damn aircraft is quite noisy and I've got to wear earphones all the time. The back door is open and the cabin is beginning to cool off. The drop tanks are right outside the windows. The one on my side, the right, seems so close. On the headset there is quite a lot of conversation. Now we are about three miles off shore, which is just like any other shorelines. Beneath me the flak vest is hard on my butt. Not very comfortable but safe.

" I 700hrs. There's one down. We are going up to help if possible. We are told it's a half-mile off the beach. Cover is being provided by A- 1 Es. I wonder if they are any good against MIGS?

"1830hrs. We just made a live pickup. A Navy pilot. He gashed his thumb and had some bruises on his legs. Otherwise he's okay. Pulse 100, respiration 16, B.P. 148/78. The VC were firing at us from the coast. The cover aircraft tore them up with rockets.

"2200hrs. It's all over now but the shouting. We were on the water about half an hour ... but it didn't seem so long. When we went in to search the area we opened the back doors on each side of the plane. Huyett took the right and I the left side. Overhead I could see the A-1E's circling while one of them circled the pilot. All of a sudden our pilot jettisoned the drop tanks and that was the first I knew we were going to go in. On the beach the North Vietnamese were firing at us and at the downed pilot, so the A-1E's strafed them. In came the F-100s and they lit up the beach like a Christmas tree. We shut the back doors and got in our seats. It was my first landing in a seaplane and my window seemed to be beneath the surface when we touched down. On the headset I could hear our pilot tell our cover they could hit the beach now and as often as they

liked. When we got the word we opened the back doors again and scanned for the downed flier. One of the cover aircraft directed us to him. Off our aircraft went taxiing over the waves. We had to shut the back doors in a hurry to keep from being flooded. I started to undress in case I had to swim to the pilot. Huyett was in the left door with the engineer, who has handling a boat hook. The right door was closed because it faced the land and the North Vietnamese might get lucky with their pot shots. Through one of the windows I saw the pilot in the water. He was okay and swimming to us. I went back to the door. By now the navigator, engineer and Huyett were starting to drag him in. I grabbed hold of his parachute harness and helped. All in a matter of seconds he was aboard, I was helping him into a seat. I didn't have time to do much for the fellow because we were trying to take-off. It took us four attempts. I thought we'd never get back into the air. We got him out of his wet clothes and into a blanket. He kept a silly grin on his face like he couldn't be happier. He was in pretty good physical shape. All the way back I checked him every 15 minutes. At first he wanted coffee and rest. Later he wanted to talk. We told jokes, where we lived, where we were stationed and other general conversation. *Source = 50 years*

24 April 65

An executive order designates Vietnam as a "combat area" and authorizes "hostile fire pay" for service there

May 65

Det. 5, PARC (P) activated at Udorn. 2 HH-43B's

An HH-43F sustained major battle damage.

3 June 65

An HH-43F was shot down on a CSAR. The aircraft was totally destroyed. All the crewmembers survived and were recovered.

South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and Laos each posed unique problems for rescue forces. The Search and Rescue task force not only had to overcome enemy opposition that varied in intensity with location and time of the war, but also had to deal with the difficulties of terrain and climate. The problem of rescue escort first focused upon Laos where aircrews who went down in enemy territory faced capture and almost certain death, if they were not picked up quickly. Very early in the war the North Vietnamese and their Pathet Lao allies became adept at setting up flak traps, which proved to be very dangerous to rescue forces. P.65#7

June 65

Det. 3, PARC, Tan Son Nhut, has OPCON over 7 helicopter detachments and 2 fixed wing detachments, all of which were detachments of the PARC or parent rescue squadrons assigned elsewhere in PACAF.

Add HH-43 & HU-16 tactics p63#7

Provide organization chart.

These command relationships became increasingly unwieldy. In addition to confused command lines, several chronic problems were experienced during the first year of operations. From an operational standpoint, the crews and support forces did an excellent job. However, administratively, future planning, and continuity of operations, the TDY units fell short. ARS and MATS decided to completely reorganize SAR forces in SEA. p. 22#1

Explain HU-16 problems p63#7

Three HC-54's replace TDY HU-16's based at Udorn. TDY crews were from 79 ARS at Guam and the 36 ARS at Tachikawa, Japan. The HC-54's, with their higher flight ceilings, were better suited for operating over the mountainous terrain in Laos. The SC-54 was weak in on board communications equipment. It served only six months in SEA, until December 1965, when two HC-130H's arrived as replacements. The HU-16's were transferred to DaNang where they conducted SAR operations for the next two years in the Gulf of Tonkin. P43#1 p.64#7

18 June 65

SAC B-52's used for the first time in Vietnam when 28 aircraft flying from Guam bomb VC targets near Saigon.

Two of those B-52's enroute to bomb North Vietnam collided in mid-air. An HU-16 launched to recover the men who ejected from the bombers and landed in the South China Sea. Bill Vargas and John Tobey were PJ's on the HU-16. The amphibious aircraft landed on the water to rescue survivors. The first survivor pulled through the cabin door was a navigator/bombardier. This survivor felt obligated to make the following observation. "SAC goes to war for the first time and then fucks it up." In true military fashion, the Strategic Air Command classify the accident. This way no one hears about it for a long, long time. Vargas folder

23 June 65

A typical search and rescue mission occurred on 23 June 1965, when Major Robert Wilson's F-105 was shot down by ground fire while on a mission in North Vietnam. Add in details p.66-67#7

1 July 65

The first of a continuing series of organizational changes took place on 1 July 65, when the 38th ARS was organized, with Headquarters at Tan Son Nhut AB, replacing the outgrown Detachment 3. Lt. Col. Edward Krafka assumed command. Under the 38th, all the rescue helicopter detachments in SEA became PCS units. The aircraft and unit equipment would now stay in theater. Crews and support personnel would be assigned PCS on one-year remote tours. The fixed wing aircraft remained on TDY status, until the 37th ARRS became operational in the summer of 1966. Prior to U.S. involvement in SEA, the 38 ARS had been an active unit stationed at Misawa AB, Japan. It was activated in November 1952. It's HU-16's flew a number of CSAR missions in the Korean War. It was deactivated in September 1957. P.22-23#1 New org chart.

Rescue achievements during the first year of operations were noteworthy considering the limited resources and increasing demands as the air war quickened. Between 1 August 1964 and 31 July 1965, 8780 sorties were flown in support of combat operations throughout Vietnam and Laos. The skill and aggressiveness displayed by rescue crews in saving 74 lives during this period is attested to by the fact that over 250 individual decorations were awarded including 16 Silver Stars and 10 Purple Hearts.

5 July 65

On 5 July 65, Det 1 38 ARS at Nakhom Phanom, received two CH-3C's on loan from the Tactical Air Warfare Center at Eglin AFB, FL. These aircraft considerably improved SAR coverage in Laos and NVN, but were only interim vehicles pending arrival of the combat version, the HH-3E. The H-3's would usher in a new era for SAR in SEA. Their added range, armor, M-60 machineguns, and increased carrying capacity made them a significant improvement over the short range HH-43's. Because of their large size, camouflage green color, and happy mission, they were nicknamed the "Jolly Green Giants." It was a name that would become infamous and would stick to rescue helicopters for decades past this war. When a downed pilot was told that a Jolly was inbound he knew exactly what that meant. When off duty, in an Officers or NCO club, Jolly crewmembers could rarely buy their own drinks.

The HH-43's at NKP were reassigned to Udorn. This increased Udorn's HH-43 inventory to four aircraft. From Udorn they were staged forward to Lima sites in Northern Laos to provide limited SAR coverage in central NVN. p. 26 p.36#1 p.66#7

23 July 65

The U.S. lost its first plane to a Soviet-built SA-2 SAM missile. SAM (Surface-to-Air Missile) sites were first detected in North Vietnam on Apr. 5, 1965. In May a U.S. Navy aircraft was shot down by an SA-2. The U.S. began a series of special missions named "Iron Hand" against the rapidly expanding missile sites. Most were near the Hanoi-Haiphong area, but Washington had exempted these from air attack. However, sites in other areas were fair game. By the end of the year, 56 SAM sites had been located by U.S. reconnaissance aircraft. The SA-2 had a velocity of 760 mph, a slant range of 25 miles and an effective ceiling of 60,000 feet. It would prove itself to be a deadly weapon to many American pilots who found themselves inside its kill envelope.

Find SA-2 photo and SAM site photo

26 July 65

ARS received its first HC-130 from Lockheed-Georgia. They would find their way to Vietnam in less than 6 months.

August 65

HH-3E's and aircrews assembled at Stead AFB under the codename "Limelight 36". Thereunder the command of Major Baylor R. Haynes, they had a brief orientation and training period. These same crews and helicopters arrived at Udorn in October 1965. P.26#1 *Discuss HH-3E p.41-42#1*

In August 65, the 602nd Air Commando Squadron began rotating it's A-1E aircraft from Bien Hoa to Udorn to provide RESCORT in Laos and North Vietnam as one of its primary missions. P.37#1 *Add A-1 data p94-95#7*

This match up of A-1's and rescue helicopters would prove to be successful and would last until the end of the war. The addition of A-1E's resulted in a full rescue task force being operational. Over the year's equipment improved and aircraft changed but the search and rescue task force of 1965 closely resembled that of 1973 in tactics and procedures.

20 September 65

HH-43B shot down in NVN while attempting to pick up pilot of A-1E shot down on an F-105 SAR. Mission suspended because area too hot. HH-43 A/C was Capt. Tom Curtis. He and his crew were listed MIA. Captain Curtis spent the next seven years as a POW in North Vietnam. The HH-43 co-pilot 1st Lt. Duane W. Martin remained a prisoner of the Pathet Lao. Lt. Martin escaped captivity in 1966, but was killed by a Laotian peasant before he could be rescued. The A-1E pilot and F-105 pilot were not recovered. P.40-41#1 p.67#7

20 Sep 65.

The HC-34 on precautionary orbit was informed of the successful bail out of an F-105 pilot over North Vietnam. Two HH-43 helicopters were scrambled from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand along with two A1-E RESCAP aircraft from Udorn AB., Thailand. The HC-54 picked up the downed pilots beeper as the HH-43's and RESCAP were enroute to the incident site. The A1-E's made low passes over the bail out area in an attempt to establish voices or visual contact with the survivor. They experienced no ground fire and felt they had the area the pilot was down in pinpointed. Soon after this, ground activity in the area increased. Troop movement was noted in adjacent areas and ground fire commenced, resulting in minor damage to one of the A1-E's. Shortly after this red smoke was spotted,, and one of the HH-43 helicopters proceeded in accompanied by A-1E's. Visual contact was made with the downed pilot when suddenly ground fire broke loose from all around the survivor's position. The HH-43 crashed while attempting to make a pickup, Hostile fire is thought to have been the cause-of the crash. The second HH-43 that had been orbiting short of the pick up site immediately proceeded toward the crash scene. The helicopter crew jettisoned the internal auxiliary fuel tank to make room for survivors, They encountered ground fire-enroute to the area and spotted the helicopter wreckage which seemed fairly well intact, on the first pass. As the helicopter positioned itself for a suitable approach to the pickup area it was under continuous around fire and as it came to a hover 50 feet above the wreckage a massive and continuous barrage of automatic weapons fire erupted around the helicopter. A white pin flare was also observed. At this time although no survivors were spotted. The helicopter was taking a series of-hits at this time and initiated an immediate take off. Continual heavy fire was received for the next three minutes. The pararescue man was hit on his flak vest by flying debris but did not suffer any injury. Fuel was now running into the aft section of the cabin; however, the helicopter was able to return to Nakhon Phanom without further incident. The CAP aircraft remained on scene until darkness and reported vehicles and personnel moving into the area. The mission was suspended because of the high probability of additional hostile defense buildup which would make the area impenetrable for search and recovery forces the following day. The crew of the downed helicopter was Captain Thomas J. Curtis, 1st Lt Duane W.

Martin, A1C William A. Robinson, A3C Arthur M. Black. The pilot of the second helicopter was Captain Richard A. Laine. *38ARRS unit history p6a*

20 September 1965 to 27 February 1973 - AIRMAN THIRD CLASS ARTHUR N. BLACK. HH-43 is launched from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, to attempt the rescue of a downed F105 pilot near Vinh, North Vietnam. The Vinh area is "hot"; it always has been. That is why the "Thud" was shot down. Now the HH-43 is following suit. Time is running out, North Vietnam's infamous weather is closing in on the extraction site. The crew rushes; fuel is low. Unbeknownst to them the bad guys have set up a flak trap around the survivor. No sooner does the tiny compact helicopter establish a hover than it is blasted from the sky. All four crewmembers of the '43 are immediately captured and become ARS's first prisoners of war. They are: Captain Thomas J. Curtis, pilot; First Lieutenant Duane W. Martin, copilot; A1C William A. Robinson, flight mechanic; and A3C Arthur N. Black, pararescueman. Ironically, Airman Black had just arrived and signed into the 41st ARRS at Hamilton AFB, California, when he volunteered for this ninety-day TDY to SEA. He hadn't even totally processed into the base before he left.

While in captivity in Hanoi, North Vietnam, Airman Black, along with fellow pararescueman, Staff Sergeant Arthur Cormier, are battlefield promoted by the senior ranking POW to the rank of

Second Lieutenant. Additionally, in absentia, the entire crew has been awarded the Air Force Cross. All, except Lieutenant Martin are released from prison in 1973. He is killed by villagers during an escape attempt with Navy pilot Dieter Dengler, who is successfully rescued. When the USAF repatriation C-141 bearing Art, stops at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, a large crowd is waiting. In that crowd are approximately twenty pararescuemen. Although each POW is given a rousing cheer when he steps off the aircraft, it is a deafening roar, led by PJ's who have come to this home coming, that greets Art Black. He is later awarded the Legion of Merit and other awards for his actions as a prisoner of war. *Source = 50 years*

1 October 65

38 Air Rescue Squadron (ARS) Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN 2 HH-43B's

Detachment 1, 38 ARS Nakhon Phanom AB, Thailand

Detachment 2, 38 ARS Takhli AB, Thailand 2 HH-43B's

Detachment 3, 38 ARS Ubon AB, Thailand 3 HH-43B's

Detachment 4, 38 ARS Korat AB, Thailand 3 HH-43B's

Detachment 5, 38 ARS Udorn AB, Thailand 3 HH-43B's

6 HH-3E's

1 CH-3C

4 HC-54's TDY

Detachment 6, 38 ARS Bien Hoa AB, RVN 3 HH-43F's

Detachment 7, 38 ARS DaNang AB, RVN 3 HH-43F's

1 HH-43B

4 HU-16's TDY

Detachment 9, 38 ARS Pleiku AB, RVN 2 HH-43F's

Detachment 10, 38 ARS Bien Thuy AB, RVN 1 HH-43B

1 HH-43F

Detachment 1 Provisional, 38 ARS Cam Ranh Bay AB, RVN 2 HH-43B's

Organization chart from 38 ARS history 1 Oct – 31 Dec 65

5 October 65

Det 6 38 ARS, Bien Hoa scrambles 2 HH-43F's to MEDEVAC U.S. Army forces in war zone "D." They flew 18 sorties, during which they evacuated 24 WIA and 7 KIA. They also resupplied the

ground forces by airlifting in 1700 pounds of weapons and equipment. The HH-43 pilots were Capt. Raymond L. Murden and Capped Charles P. Nadler. Credited with 5 saves and 19 assists.
38 ARS history 1 Oct – 31 Dec 65

9 Oct 65

At 1345L, the 173rd Airborne Brigade requested the MEDEVAC U.S. Army forces in war zone "D." Det 6 38 ARS, Bien Hoa scrambles 2 HH-43F's to the pickup site where three seriously wounded soldiers were picked by the rescue hoist using a stokes litter. Pilots were Darvan E. Cook and Dale L. Potter. Credited with 3 saves.

11 October 65

Henry O'Beirne Diary: 1900 hrs. At the moment I'm in my hut at Bien Hoa Air Base. Wet from sweat and rain, dirty from mud and dust. Our hut is made from aluminum sheeting and wooden frame. It houses thirty-two men and we have to bunk double to get that many in. I have one wall locker to myself (soon I'm to lose that as we are getting rid of half our lockers and doubling up in the remaining half). No drawers in it, just two shelves. I hope to get a wooden footlocker tomorrow, but it too has to go inside my locker. We've just finished building our bomb bunker with sand bags and P.S.P. Everybody is filthy with mud-and the base just turned off the water, so no showers. Even when we get water it isn't hot. Always cold showers.

". A Navy F4-Bjet had been shot down and the pilots had bailed out. Since we only had one bird we took all the gear with us, Stokes litter, chain saws, five gallon gas can, and the climbing rope. We were quite full in the back. In the air Capt. Murden, our RCC that day, called the 38th ARS at Tan San Nhut and asked them to send an HH-43B as a back-up bird. Also we asked for firepower cover. We were told that cover was already in the area and that the second chopper was on its way. When we got to the crash area we were told one of the pilots had been picked up by friendly forces in the area. We were also told that our firepower cover had been the crashed jet's wingman and that he had to return to the aircraft carrier due to lack of fuel. Great, no firepower cover. On top of that we hadn't yet spotted or been able to contact our second chopper. We had come forty miles from Bien Hoa and we had expected him to contact us at anytime. The fellow who gave us the news was a FAC plane circling the area, and he led us in to the other downed pilot. Capt. Murden spotted his 'chute and told me to prepare to go down on the hoist. Perky (the flight engineer) and I got all set in the back. Then Capt. Murden changed his mind as he saw a spot he could land in that was about 40 yards from the pilot. I saw the fellow lying there. He wasn't moving very much and his 'chute lay spilled across a small tree. When we landed I jumped out, grabbed the litter and took off in his general direction. About 50 feet from the chopper I stopped to get my bearings better as to where he was. Perkins coming up behind clobbered me in the back and told me to get a move on. I took off running again and spotted the pilot. As we came up to him he said 'Watch out, I've a broken pelvis and hip.' We got the litter in place and got set to get him on it. I decided to give him some Morphine. While I was getting it out of my pocket Perky decided to straighten out the pilot's legs. The flyboy gave out with a decent yell of pain. Perk quit what he was doing. About that time a bunch of Air Force ground people, Army people, and Vietnamese Army broke out from the trees. They quite surprised me but I was glad to see them. They gave us a hand getting our patient on the litter and I was glad for the extra help. Just then I notice Capt. Nadler, our copilot that day. He had gotten out of the chopper and come to give us a hand. Once the litter was loaded Perk and I carried it to the chopper and loaded it into the back. We took off, went a short distance to the convoy that the American people had come from and tried to pick up the second pilot for they were the 'friendlies' that had picked him up. We flew about five miles to An Loc where a C-123 was waiting with a doctor aboard. Both patient, pilot, and gear were transferred to the bigger craft and it took off for Tan San Nhut while we toddled on home. At Bien Hoa we finally found our lost second chopper. The pilot of it, some Lieutenant, told us that he had been kept sitting in the chopper for half an hour by higher

headquarters and then finally told to go to Bien Hoa Air Base and no further years

Source = 50

13 October 65

Major James Randell was making a second bombing pass on a bridge in North Vietnam when he was forced to eject. His wingman notified the pilot of the airborne alert HC-54. The HC-54 proceeded to the bailout site and requested the CH-3C and A-1E's from Udorn be scrambled. Major Randell had landed in a valley, near a village. He began climbing a nearby hill. He observed two men with rifles coming towards his position. Upon reaching the top of the hill he made contact with his flight using his survival radio. He was informed that the CH-3 would require one hour to reach his location. Major Randell requested that the orbiting aircraft leave his immediate area so that they did not compromise his position. When the helicopter arrived, it drew ground fire. The A-1E's suppressed the ground fire and the H-3 went in for the rescue. Due to a hoist malfunction, the H-3 had to land to pick up the survivor. High vegetation resulted in damage to the rotors, but the H-3 was able to fly uneventfully back to Thailand. The pilot of the H-3 was Capt. Jerry W. Jennings.

16 October 65

Change command 38 ARS/CC. Lt. Col. Donald F. Karachner assumes command. Replaced Lt. Col. Edward Krafka.

22 October 65

Captain Melvin C. Elliot was flying an A-1E on a CAS mission against VC that were attacking the Special Forces Camp at Plei Me, SVN, when he was shot down. He bailed out at 0100L and landed within 200 yards from the perimeter of the camp. A large VC force had the camp surrounded and were positioned between Captain Elliot and the camp. Patrols sent from the camp to rescue him ran into stiff opposition and had to abandon their rescue attempt. Captain Elliot spent the next 34 hours evading the VC. An U.S. Army helicopter that attempted to rescue him was driven off by heavy ground fire. On 23 October, two HH-43F's from Bien Hoa ingressed the SAR site with UH-1B gunships providing protective cover. Captain Dale Potter in an HH-43 made the pickup. *38 ARS history Oct-Dec65 p5 p67#1*

28 October 65

A USN F-4B crewed by Lt. Comdr. A. M. Lindsey and Lt. Robert W. Cooper ejected over Laos. His wingman requested SAR and two A-1E's and one HC-54 scrambled from Udorn. Two HH-43's from NKP were also launched. A navy A-1H arrived on scene first, aided by emergency beacons from the survivors. The A-1 found the chutes on the ground and then located the survivors positions, about one mile apart. Each of the HH-43's picked up one survivor and then returned to NKP. The HH-43 pilots were Capt. Bureaux and Capt. McMillian.

30 October 65

At 1209L, the radio operator at Quang Tri, RVN, intercepted a May Day call from an Army UH-1B that had crashed. Two HH-43 helicopters that were on alert at Quang Tri scrambled, and an HU-16 was diverted to the incident site. The downed helicopter was located and its crew rescued. The HH-43 pilots were Capt. John Keen and Capt. Arvo.

31 October 65

The war got hotter for Air Rescue forces when the Viet Cong carried out a sneak attack on Bien Hoa AB. Raiders infiltrated the outskirts of the base and mortared the flight line, killing five Americans, destroying five B-57 jet bombers, and 1 HH-43F. Thirteen B-57's and the remaining HH-43B and HH-43F were damaged. The next day, when one of the damaged HH-43F's had been repaired, it flew the first night mission, picking up a VNAF A-1 pilot. For the first night combat mission flown in SEA the pilot was awarded the DFC. P.62#7 *add in M-60 situation*

November 65

Linked up with ADVON and immediately became operational. Det. 5 assumed all duties of Det. 1 at NKP and Det. 1 was deactivated. P.26#1 *Add HH-3 data p.18#2*

1 November 65

An HH-43 at Tan Son Nhut scrambled with a fire suppression kit for an inbound P-2V with one engine out. The P-2V blew a tire on landing, and as the aircraft came to a stop on the runway a magnesium fire broke out in the left tire area; the flames engulfing the entire wing. The HH-43 hovered and used its rotor wash to keep the flames from igniting the fuel tanks or the flares mounted under the wing. They continued this until the fire trucks arrived and extinguished the flames. Due to the action of the HH-43 pilot, Capt. Alden, the 13 crewmembers of the P-2V escaped without injuries.

1 November 65

Capt. Higgins was forced to eject from his RF-101 over the North Vietnamese coast. He hit the water approximately 100 yards from shore. Fortunately, another RF-101 was in the area and was immediately able to locate the survivor in his raft. An HU-16 Albatross diverted to the scene. The HU-16 began an approach for a water landing but was forced to go around because a sampan was approaching the downed pilot. The A-1H RESCAP aircraft were directed by the HU-16 A/C to fire across the bow of the sampan. This was done but the sampan continued on towards the survivor. On the next pass the A-1 sunk the sampan. The HU-16 then water landed, and as it was taxiing to the survivor observed that three armed swimmers also attempting to reach Captain Higgins. During this entire time, machinegun fire from the shore was being directed at both the survivor and the HU-16. Captain Higgen's was now engaged in a pistol duel with the swimmers. The A-1's now engaged the swimmers before they could capture Capt. Higgen's. Their persistence resulted in their deaths. The HU-16, piloted by Captain David Barger rescued Captain Higgen's and flew him back to DaNang.

1 November 65

Lt. Cmdr. Billy V. Wheat ejected from his A-4C over North Vietnam. His wingman observed the successful bailout and alerted the HU-16 on precautionary orbit over the Gulf of Tonkin. The HU-16 notified the RCC at Udorn. The RCC diverted an HC-54 that was already in the air and scrambled two HH-43's from NKP to the scene. Occasionally beacon signals were heard, but no visual or voice contact was made by the time the HH-43's were at bingo fuel. A CH-3C was scrambled from NKP to relieve the HH-43's. The CH-3C made voice contact with the downed pilot, who was able to vector the rescue helicopter to his location. A PJ was lowered to assist the injured survivor. Following the successful rescue Lt. Cmdr. Wheat was taken to NKP for additional medical care.

3 November 65

Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) authorized the use of riot control agents. Add p95#7

5 Nov 65

Oak Lead SAR p37-39#1

2 A-1E, 1 CH-3, 1 Navy H-3 all shot down on this SAR

Oak 01 returning from a mission near Hanoi flew into a cloud and disappeared. His wingman reported Oak 01's last known position. Because of approaching darkness and deteriorating weather a SAR would have to wait until the next day. *Add in story p.7-73#7*

Mission report located in 38 ARS history, Oct-Dec 65, p7

6 November 1965 to 12 February 1973 - STAFF SERGEANT ARTHUR M. CORMIER. On 5 November 1965, "Oak 01," an F-105 returning from a mission over Hanoi, enters a cloud and disappears. The following day, "Sandy 11" and "Sandy 12" a pair of A-1s go to the scene in an attempt to locate the missing flier. Anti-aircraft fire hits Sandy 12, and the pilot ejects. Jolly Green 85, one of two CH-3C helicopters recently assigned to the air war in SEA, races forward. As it reaches the scene, enemy fire stitches across the sky and into Jolly 85. Its pilot manages to keep the flaming, badly damaged helicopter airborne long enough for everyone to bail out. Because of mechanical problems, the other CH-3C, acting as high bird, is unable to effect an immediate recovery. The other two A-1s, "Sandy's" 13 and 14 race eastward to the Gulf of Tonkin to intercept the aircraft carrier USS Independence which scrambles its SH-3 helicopter, "Nimble 62."

Once back in the fray, Sandy 14 peels off to engage anti-aircraft fire but disappears into a cloud. Sandy 13 and Nimble 62 search for him until their fuel runs low. After refueling, they return to both search areas. When darkness falls, the Nimble 62 copilot sees a small light. The forest penetrator is lowered and the flight mechanic from Jolly 85, Staff Sergeant Berkely Naugle, is pulled to safety, temporarily. That light? It was his cigarette lighter. But, while exiting the area, Nimble 62 takes heavy ground fire and is forced to crash land. A second SH-3 from the carrier swoops in and picks up all 62's survivors and returns to the carrier.

Another task force converges on the area the following day, desperately searching for 85's survivors. Two A-1's check out a beeper signal when they, too, are seriously damaged by enemy fire and are forced to return to Udorn. Their comrades roll in and return fire. But opposition against them is furious, and they are forced to back off for fear of more shoot downs. Grudgingly, rescue controllers call off any further rescue attempts. On the ground, Captain Warren Lilly, Lieutenant Jerry Singleton, and pararescueman Staff Sergeant Art Cormier evade, but eventually become the products of a relentless enemy's search. Nature conspires against them also, systematically reducing their ability to skillfully elude the North Vietnamese, they are all captured and soon on their way to Hanoi. Like Black, Cormier receives a battlefield commission. Both finish their military careers as officers in other career fields. (Authors' Note: An interesting story accompanies the recovery of the flight mechanic, Staff Sergeant Berkely Naugle. When Captain Lilly ordered the crew to bail out, Sergeant Naugle still had his gunner's belt secured over his parachute. When he jumped, he remained attached to the helicopter, which was rapidly plunging earthward. The time it took him to get released, the aircraft's flight trajectory had carried him further away from the heavy concentration of enemy forces. It kept him from being captured and experiencing a similar fate as the rest of his crew. *Source = 50 years 38 ARS history Oct-Dec 65 p.7-8*

7 November 65

Lt. Cmdr. Charles Wack's A-4E was hit by ground fire while attacking his target. He immediately headed "feet wet" and punched out in the Gulf of Tonkin, about 12 miles from the coastline. His distress call on guard was monitored by the airborne alert HU-16, piloted by 1st Lt. Joseph Kirby.

Kirby pushed the HU-16's throttles to maximum power and head for the bailout site. By this time, North Vietnamese sampans were also racing towards the downed pilot. The HU-16 arrived when the sampans were approximately one-half mile from Cmdr. Wack. Without hesitation, Lt. Kirby jettisoned his external fuel tanks and water landed his HU-16. The downed pilot was brought aboard the HU-16 just 17 minutes after his bailout. The uninjured survivor was taken to DaNang AB. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p8*

8-10 November 65

At 1230L on 8 November, The RCC received a request to MEDEVAC battlefield casualties . A large scale operation was taking place and over 100 casualties were reported. Rescue helicopters from both Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut were scrambled on this mission that was to last two days. The recovery site was in heavily wooded jungle with trees 150 to 180 feet high. There were no clear areas, so all the wounded had to be picked up from a high hover. A PJ was lowered by hoist with a chain saw to cut out a landing zone; but the chainsaw malfunctioned. Seventy-one sorties were flown by the HH-43's. A typical sortie went like this. The were escorted in by armed UH-1B's and waited in a high orbit until the Huey's made several firing passes to suppress VC ground fire. The Huey's frequently received hits from small arms but pressed on with their task. When they felt that they had silenced the opposition, the HH-43's were directed in. While hovering over the 180 foot trees, a PJ was lowered with a stokes litter. The casualties were then recovered by hoist and transported to a forward aid station. Ammunition and C-rations were also flown in by the HH-43's to the troops still at the battle scene. During this SAR the HH-43's recovered 50 wounded soldiers. They also resupplied the troops with 8 cases of ammunition, 2 cases of high explosives, 10 cases of medical supplies and 30 cases of rations.

Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p8

10 November 65

2 HH-3E's arrive at Udorn on 10 November 1965. They became Det 5, 38 ARS. By the end of December, Det. 5 would consist of six HH-3E's p. 69#7 *add in H-3 capability p.70#7*

add in Lima sites for refueling p.82#7

add in H-3 tactics p.83#7

14 November 65

A major battle erupts in the Ia Drang Valley, southwest of Pleiku. In 1992, the book "We Were Soldiers Once... and Young by Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore (retired) and Joseph L. Galloway chronicled this major battle. In 2006, the movie (same name) was released. It is one of the most realistic movies about the Vietnam War that was released by Hollywood.

17 November 65

An F-8E, piloted by Cmdr. Robert Chew, was hit by ground fire in North Vietnam. He turned out to sea and ejected off the coast. His wingman remained on scene and requested SAR. An HU-16,

piloted by Capt. David Richardson monitored the emergency call and proceeded to the scene. The HU-16 was vectored to the survivors position by Cmdr. Crew's wingman. Following the HU-16's water landing and survivor recovery they all returned to DaNang AB. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p8*

18 November 65

Change command 38 ARS/CC. Col. Arthur W. Beall assumes command. Replaced Lt. Col. Donald Karachner.

18 November 65

An F-105 was shot down over North Vietnam. Its pilot, Captain Larry Mahaffey managed to coax his battle damaged aircraft over to mountainous terrain prior to ejecting. His parachute landed in trees over 100 feet high and he made no attempt to reach the ground. An HC-54, on airborne alert, proceeded to the bail out scene and two HH-43's were scrambled from NKP. The downed pilot made contact with RESCAP aircraft using his RT-10 survival radio. The helicopters had difficulty finding the pilot due to dense foliage. The survivor fired several pen gun flares that were spotted by the HH-43 crew. The forest penetrator was lowered, and the uninjured pilot rescued and taken to NKP. The HH-43 that picked up Captain Mahaffey was piloted by Captain John B. Reiderick. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p8*

21 November 65

A C-123 crashed one mile short of the runway at DaNang AB. The LBR crew was scrambled and directed to the crash site by the control tower. The helicopter landing was complicated by gusty winds, heavy rain, and darkness. The HH-43 had to land in a mine field to pick up two of the most seriously injured crewmembers. The flight to the hospital was a busy one for Paramedic A1C Michael D. Leonard. Both survivors (A1C Michael Kelly and A1C Kirby R. Whellern) were in deep shock and required extensive medical care. The hospital was unlighted and obscured by clouds and rain but made a successful landing. The HH-43 aircraft commander was Captain Alva Graham. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p9*

25 November 65

Detachment 9, 38 ARS assumes operational status upon receipt of 2 HH-43F's. It is presently manned by TDY personnel. This unit built its own facilities

Detachment 10, 38 ARS assumes operational status. It is presently manned by TDY personnel. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p4*

26 November 65

An Army UH-1B made a forced landing in hostile territory in SVN. An HH-43B from Tan Son Nhut was scrambled. The HH-43's aircraft commander was Captain Franklin Chase. The proceeded to the incident site with an armed escort of UH-1B's and F-100's. The HH-43 landed inside a defense perimeter set up by the six survivors. All six were rescued in good condition and returned to Tan Son Nhut. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p10*

28 November 65

Lt. JG Frank Harrington was hit by ground fire over North Vietnam. He was able to nurse his damaged F-8E over to the Gulf of Tonkin prior to ejecting. Upon hitting the water he found himself

in a very precarious position. Several North Vietnamese sampans were in the area, and they were all heading to capture him. The airborne alert HU-16 was alerted to the bailout by a USN destroyer and provided vectors into the area. Two A-1H RESCAP aircraft were sent ahead. They fired warning shots across the bows of the sampans. Three of the sampans continued their quest to capture the downed pilot. Both A-1H pilots commenced strafing and 2.75" rocket attacks against the boats, which they severely damaged. By this time the HU-16 was in the area and made an approach and water landing. After taxiing close to Lt. Harrington, the Pararescueman, TSgt Raymond Hawco, jumped into the water and assisted the survivor to the HU-16. The slightly injured survivor was treated on the aircraft and taken to DaNang. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p10*

December 65

Two HC-130's arrive as replacements for the HC-54's based TDY out of Udorn. The 79th ARS and the 36th ARS provided these aircraft and crews. By the end of 1965, rescue forces in SEA had grown to a total of 30 helicopters. This included 5 CH-3C's, 25 HH-43's, 5 HU-16's and 2 HC-130's. They were dispersed at 12 bases in South Vietnam and Thailand. P.19#2

2 December 65

While on a bombing mission in SVN the crew of a USN F-4B, piloted by Lt. JG Potter and Lt. Schmidt, was forced to eject. An HH-43 was scrambled from Bien Hoa AB, and vectored to the incident area by a C-123. While the HH-43 was enroute the C-123 pilot notified the RCC that one of the survivors appeared to be injured. The HH-43 spotted the first survivor in a field and landed to make the rescue. The PJ, A1C Henry O'Beirne went to the survivor and provided medical care for a probable fractured pelvis. The survivor was given morphine and then moved to the HH-43. The second survivor was located approximately one mile away. The HH-43 again landed in a field and the uninjured survivor ran to jump on board. The C-123 was orbiting overhead and just happened to have a doctor on board as a passenger. The C-123 aircraft commander, Captain Raymond Murden, suggested that the HH-43 transload the survivor at a secure airfield five miles from the bailout location. The HH-43 proceeded to this airfield and transferred both survivors to the awaiting doctor and C-123.

Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p10

10 Dec 65

Friday, we were on 2nd Alert. We relieved 1st Alert for chow at 1100 hrs. About 1120 we were scrambled for an A-1E coming in with its left brake out. We flew alongside it as it landed. It was on my side so I watched all the way in. It traveled along the runway for a short distance. Then either the pilot kept his foot on the right brake or it stuck, because it veered off the runway and plowed in the grass at the edge of it. Over the intercom Capt. Nadler again flying copilot, said 'Why the hell doesn't he cut the engine.' We all wondered, and wondered why he didn't bring up the gear and cause his aircraft to fall flat on its belly. Capt. Nadler yelled 'He's going over.' Indeed he was, as we all could see, however the copilot has to let us know what's going on. We jumped into action. On went our helmets, the chopper set down the fire kit, out went Perk, and I came after him lugging the medical kit and closing the door on the Pilot's side. I thought Perkins had grabbed the crash entry kit as he had [taken] it from me while in the plane. Later I found out he hadn't but had left it for me as it's my job. Thank God we didn't have any use for it later. On the ground Perk grabbed the nozzle and pushed forward. I say pushed because the grass was about five feet high and thick and intermeshed. A fellow in fatigues came from nowhere and started to help Perk lug the hose. I threw out the remainder of the hose from its basket and followed them. By the time we got to the plane it was obvious that there was no fire brewing. Perk yelled at me 'Get the pilots out.' I went forward and found the canopy release. It was the dial type. I dialed

away but nothing gave. It was jammed between the ground and the plane. Perk released the rear canopy hatch, same thing. I haven't mentioned but we were standing in three feet of water doing this. A small rice paddy runs along the runway, I should say swamp, and it was this that the plane's front wheels had gone into causing it to tip over. Now the canopies were submerged beneath the water surface. I noticed a small hole in the rear canopy. Looking into it further I saw it was possibly big enough for me to get through. Off came my bunkers. I got down into the water. It came up to the level of my mouth and I slid into the rear of the plane. I worked my way forward until I came to the wall that separates the front and rear cockpits. Putting my hands down into the space between the wall and the canopy I could feel the pilot's head, shoulders, arms and then I found his hands. I tugged but he wasn't moving. I could bring his hand above water but that was all. I went outside and told the firemen what I had found. I suggested that we put a rope around the plane and try to tip it over with the help of a fire truck. Just then one of the men told me that a crane was on it's way and almost here. Back into the aircraft I went and Perkins followed. We tried again to move the pilots but it was no use. Outside the crane arrived. Everybody was standing around waiting to be told what to do. I yelled 'Let's tip the plane over.' With the help of some of the firemen I was hoisted on to the back of the plane and started to wind a cable around the tail-wheel. At that moment the Vietnamese crane operator started to yell and point at the front, so everybody left me and ran with the cable to the front. I slid down to the ground and joined them. By now I was in my stocking feet, . . .1 mean bare feet as the mud sucked my socks off. The hook was stuck into the engine cowling and the crane started to lift. Twice it slipped and the plane fell back into the mud. Ken Perkins went forward and wrapped the cable around the propeller shaft and told the crane operator to haul away. This time the crane lifted the plane clear. The canopies fell loose and out fell the bodies. Someone grabbed hold of them and ran them in the direction of the flight line where the medics from the dispensary were. Since there were medics up there and not as worn out as me I turned back to pick up my gear. When I reached the tail I saw one of the two pilots we had just taken from the water lying on our litter. I went over and started to get the lifeless pilot out of his gear. It was obvious that nobody had worked on him and this made me mad. I started artificial respiration but I knew I was too exhausted to do it properly. I went forward and got Perkins and Nadler. We took the body to the doctors who were working on the other guy. After a while they gave up. Epinephrine injected into the heart hadn't helped plus quite a bit of chest massage and artificial respiration. Chaplain Johnson was there really working out trying to bring those guys back to life. We picked up our gear and went back to our parking space while the ambulance took the bodies away. Later they were declared officially dead by drowning. *Source = 50 years*

15 December 65

Captain Dewitt was forced to eject from his crippled F-105 over the Gulf of Tonkin. An airborne alert HU-16 immediately took up a heading to the bail out site. As the HU-16 made its approach and water landing to pick up the survivor it came under fire from shore batteries. This continued throughout the pick up. Several sampans in the area increased the adrenalin of all involved. The HU-16 pilot, Captain Nicholas, taxied towards the survivor, who was then recovered. After the survivor was on board, he was treated for a broken leg and shock. He was taken to DaNang and transferred to a waiting ambulance. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p10*

17 Dec 65

Friday. First alert again today. It was 0803 hrs. I was told that an A-1 had gone in. I took it to be an

A1-E. Perk helped me gather the gear together. The downed plane was about twenty miles north-west of Bien Hoa. On our way there Perk again asked what type of aircraft it was. Capt. Murden (our RCC that day, Capt. Nadler, our copilot) told him that it was an O-1, a FAC (Forward Air Controller). When we got to the downed area I found out that nobody knew for sure where the aircraft was. It seemed that he had been missing over the area that we, and several other aircraft,

were flying. Shortly after we got there another FAC spotted what he thought to be the wing of an aircraft. An American A-1E said that it might be a napalm canister as they had been dropping some there. The FAC went in for a closer look. It began to dawn on me that they had been fighting there earlier that day. Our 2nd Alert was in the area, it got there before us. Just then the AC came over the radio with the news that there were some more VC on the ground. He called in the bombers. We had a grandstand seat. It was like a World War II movie. The planes would dive, pull up and out, and below them the earth would suddenly explode, and then the noise would reach us. It was quite a sight. When napalm was used the smoke was black and almost hid the flames that were licking at its heels. When the A-1E's had exhausted their ammo they went back to Tan San Nhut, it was the Army Huey's turn then. Over the radio, messages were being relayed like: 'They're in the ditch.' 'A bunch of them are running across the field.' 'I see them, god what a target!' 'Hit that ditch with everything you've got.' 'Wait a minute, maybe our guy is in that ditch. If I got shot down, that's where I'd head.' 'If our guy is in that ditch he's dead by now, there are about 30 VC in there.' 'Heading for the ditch with bombs.' 'Good shot on the ditch, they are running across the field, see if you can get them in the open.' 'Did you see that, my bomb was right in the middle of them.' 'Bull's-eye, good shooting!' 'They've gone up the field into that little row of trees.' 'Hit the trees but not the mud hut.' 'Why not the mud hut.' 'Okay, hit the mud hut.' 'There's a couple of foxholes that some of them have gone into, see if you can get it, it's at the bend in the hedge.' 'No, a little further to the right.' 'Say, this is Red Marker 2, I just saw what looked like a mirror reflection from those trees in the upper right-hand corner of the field, could it be our boy?' 'Maybe, but I doubt it.' 'I just got close to that field where those two haystacks are and our bird is in one of them, the one near the stream, I got the tail number.' 'Looks like Charlie spread the straw over it to keep us from seeing it.' 'They're going up that ditch to the trees, going in with napalm.' 'Say we've got to go back to Tan San Nhut for fuel and a reload, be back as soon as we can.' 'This is Sidewinder 32, thanks a lot, we've got an Army fire-power team here now who'll take over.' 'Mustang, are you ready?' 'Ready.' 'There's a bunch of them in that little stream, how about it?' 'Sounds great, going in!' Around this time and several times later it seemed that somebody would depress his mike-button in the choppers and the rattle of the machine guns would be loud and clear. 'I'm hit, I'm hit, take it, take it, take it, get me back to Tan San Nhut quick, Tan San Nhut quick!' One of the Huey pilots got hit in the leg and hand, both right, on a low level pass. He was almost screaming as he gave that message above. 'This is Mustang, pulling out to escort our wounded bird back to Tan San Nhut, be back soon.' 'This is Sidewinder 32, thanks, jets on their way here now, come on back when you can as we'll need you to escort Pedro 74 (Rescue, us) in.' 'This is Saber 5, where do you want us to hit?' Up at the far end of that field where the white smoke is coming from, 'Got it.' 'Going in with CBUS.' 'They are making a break across the rice paddies, get them Saber 3.' 'Sorry, bomb fell short.' 'This is Sidewinder 32, what did you say Dragon Diamond (Dragon Diamond was some Vietnamese A-1E's and it wasn't easy to understand them).' 'Sorry Dragon Diamond, I didn't understand you.' Capt. Nadler said, 'Ground fire.' 'You are receiving ground fire, where?' 'The trees near the smoke.' 'This is Saber 5, I hit the tree area.' 'They are in the open again.' 'Saber 4 going in.' 'They are in some trenches, it seems there is quite a bunch of trenches down there.' 'Yep, it's a stronghold.' This went on for 3 1/2 hours. Every so often they would talk to us about going in, then somebody would spot some VC near the wreck area and we would be told to wait. On our Rescue chopper we carry no guns other than our own rifles and they are no match for machine guns. Besides we make a sitting target when we land. Anybody with a rifle could pick us off and we'd never know where the shot came from. Around ten o'clock we had to go refuel. When we came back out 2nd alert went to refuel. Just then Sidewinder 32 asked us to go in. We said we'd rather wait till our second bird came back. The two birds work as a team. If #1 bird gets shot down, #2 bird is supposed to go in and pick up the downed crew when they can. Perk got busy in the back closing the armor plating, across the rear end, and shoring up to cover most of my door at the side. We flew around and waited for the other bird to put in its appearance ... By now we figured that the downed pilot was dead but we wanted to make sure and if possible get the body out. 'This is Pedro 74 calling Sidewinder 32. Go ahead 74. "Don't see our other bird, we're getting low on fuel again so if we're going in we might as well do it." This is Pedro 73, I'm behind you and above you.' 'This is Sidewinder 32, how about it Mustang are you ready to cover Pedro 74?' 'Ready.' 'Good, go in and look the area over and let us know what you find.' 'Area looks okay.' 'This is Pedro 74, Mustang

can you put two choppers, one on either side of me, as we go in.' 'Can do.' We went in. Perk motioned to me to take the door strap off. I did. When we got to about the 200 foot mark we hear a clack-clacking sound like gunfire, then the chopper on our right opened up on the little bit of a village that was there. Capt. Murden on radio: 'Ground fire, making a left and up turn.' I grabbed at the door strap. Perk saw me do it and we both had the same idea. On radio, Perk: 'Capt. Murden, I think that sound was caused by the door strap banging on the armor plating,' and to me he said angrily, 'always hook that damn thing up.' I had goofed and I felt bad. Capt. Nadler bad let go with a burst from his M-16, it filled the whole chopper with noise. Capt. Murden on radio: 'This is Pedro 74, let's make a second run Mustang.' 'Okay with us Pedro 74.' We came back around. My heart was pounding in my chest. I really felt frightened. Capt. Murden: 'How many of you are going on the ground?' I looked at Perk. Perk on the radio said, 'two of us.' I chipped in, 'I could do with some help if I have to lug a big body.' Normal procedures call for Perk to get out beside the chopper door and cover me as I make the recovery. We landed fifteen feet from the wreck. Capt. Nadler on intercom: 'The pilot is right in front of the chopper.' Perk said later that this made him think that the pilot was still alive, just wounded. As we were touching down Perk said, 'watch out for booby-traps and punji sticks.' Capt. Murden: 'Punji sticks, where are they?' Perk: 'No, I don't see any, just watch out for them.' Perk is a pretty cool head, I'm damn glad I've got him as a partner. As we touched down Perk pulled back the armored plating and I jumped out. The rice paddy was good and firm which was a blessing. Water would have made things extra difficult. With Perk right behind me I ran forward to the body. We got there together, Perk on its right side and I on its left. I completely forgot Perk's warning and grabbed an arm. Perk said later he forgot about booby traps too when he saw the body, I think he's trying to spare my feelings. As I pulled the arm towards me the head rolled at an odd angle. It had been laid open from the hairline at the rear of the head almost to the top. A piece of skin held it together, the bit of skull and brains flopping in the breeze. Just then all hell broke loose. Behind me there came a terrific explosion. Looking over my right shoulder I saw a hut about 50 feet away disintegrate in a cloud of dust and smoke. An Army Huey was pouring rockets and machine gun fire into it. The other Huey was right behind it pouring lead into another hut and the general area. I grabbed the bodies left leg and arm, Perk got the right side. In a half run we made it back to the chopper. I meant to throw the body into the side door, Perk got it into his head to put it into the back. Just as we got to the side door Perk left me and ran around the back. At this time noise was everywhere. Guns were going off, who was shooting I didn't know, I just knew I wanted to get into the chopper and out of there. Rockets boomed with a terrible noise, and I was scared, God was I scared. When Perk left me and ran around the back of the chopper, I think I panicked. The dead pilot's head rolled around and lay on my arm, half of it that is, the other half was dangling in the breeze bouncing off my thigh. I stood there frantically wondering if Perk has seen VC coming towards us or if he had got the sign from the pilot to get in the chopper. I screamed 'Perk.' Just then he reappeared around the corner and grabbed the body again. Between us we lugged it to the back door and unceremoniously threw it in. I jumped in, grabbed the ankles and pulled it further inside. Perk jumped on the rear edge and the chopper was moving out. Later I learned that Capt. Nadler was looking back and when he saw we were in he told Capt. Murden and he made it. I also learned that as we reached the body the Army Huey's told Capt. Murden that Charlie's (VC) were in the area and to get the hell out fast. With us on the ground he had to stick around till we were back in. It takes a cool head at a time like that. As we left the ground, with our safety net dangling in the breeze and the back of the chopper wide open I saw the Huey's spray the ground with machine gun fire and then get out of there. I started to look the body over. Blood was all around the neck it was somewhat gooey so I gave up. Perk went back and secured the safety net. When we landed, or as we were landing Perk said, 'You get the droop stops, I'll put the body in the body bag.' I said, 'Thanks, Perk, but I'm the medic I'll do the dirty job, it's my job anyway.' Perk smiled and shrugged his shoulders. As we touched down Perk jumped out and went out front. I followed and went to the rear. I released the safety net. I pulled the body from the chopper and hurriedly stuffed it into the body bag. I knew people were watching me all around and we wanted to avoid people seeing the body. It's supposed to hurt morale. To hell with their morale, what about mine. The morgue people were there and they took the body away. I asked Perk why he had left me at the side door. He laughed when I explained what I had thought. No, he told me, he hadn't run out on me. He had run around the back of the chopper to unhook the safety net. When he got back

there he saw the an-nor plating still hooked up and blocking our way in. He jumped in and unhooked it. That's what took him so long. Then he had come back to me. The rest of the day went quietly, thank God... *O'Beirne diary*

20 December 65

Captain John Ruffo (sp. Buffo?) ejected from his F-105 after being hit by ground fire. He landed in a bay about one half mile off the North Vietnamese coastline. He was also within one half mile of several small islands. The survivor came under small arms fire from the mainland and the islands. His day flare was spotted by the HU-16 crew piloted by Major William Dewitt. Major Dewitt water landed near the survivor and ordered his PJ into the water to expedite the recovery. The HU-16 was now coming under intense ground fire and numerous North Vietnamese small boats were arriving in the area. Pararescueman SSgt Dudley Peckinpugh leaped into the water and swam the survivor to the waiting HU-16. Ground fire was now at a crescendo and the Major Dewitt had to thread his HU-16 through the small boats and between the islands. As most of the ground fire seemed to be coming from the islands, he directed the RESCAP to lay its protective fire on them. While the enemy forces on the island were distracted by the RESCORT the HU-16 took off from the bay and headed out to the safety of the Gulf of Tonkin. The survivor was treated by SSgt Peckinpugh for burns and shock. The HU-16 proceeded to DaNang where the survivor was transferred to an ambulance. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p11*

21 December 65

Tuesday I had first alert. Some Army trooper had been shot about twenty-three miles east of Saigon and needed to be taken out of the jungle. We hurried to get ready. Second alert was getting ready and leaped off before us. Capt. Nadler was somewhat mad as he doesn't like to miss out on a mission. By the time we got into the air they were about one and a half miles ahead of us. Our bird was the faster of the two so the distance was soon closed and we became #1 bird again. A FAC was orbiting and directed us in. First we were told that there was one to be picked up. Then the number went up to fourteen, then back down to one. We were told he was a litter patient. Perk motioned to me to take it. I do need the practice and whenever he says 'take it' I jump at the chance. Things went fairly smooth until I forgot to look at the trees on my right. By this time I had the Stokes litter on the ground and the Army guys were getting the patient onto it. Perk yelled, 'Watch the trees, damn it!' I told Capt. Nadler, (our AC) we were getting too close and he moved away a little. We managed to get very low so the pick up went fast. The fellow was very scared coming up. In the chopper I took the back end of the litter and hauled it in to the chopper. Perk took the front end and almost shoved me out the rear end. I ended up jammed against the net. I was off intercom so I couldn't tell him. He looked up and saw me, then eased up on his pushing. We put the patient on the litter, still in the Stokes litter. I took out some Dextran. The crew kept asking me, 'Are you going to give him Dextran?' I couldn't make up my mind. In the end I decided not to. Before I made my big decision the patient pulled me, or motioned me down so that he could talk to me. He wanted a Catholic priest. Only then did I become aware as to why he was so scared. He was convinced he was going to die. Looking over his medical tag I had discovered that he was shot in the groin, right ankle, and had shrapnel in his right arm. He told me he had committed some mortal sins and wanted a priest. I told him I was a medic and he wasn't going to die. I was a Catholic too, and it was not my policy to let Catholics die, I informed him, the Pope would never forgive me. He smiled. Between us we said an Act of Contrition and this seemed to assure him tremendously. He hung on to me like I was his last link with the world. Perk said he didn't know if were necking, we were so close. We brought him to the 93rd Army Evac Hospital and left him in their capable hands." *O'Beirne diary*

21 December 65

A HC-54 on airborne alert was notified by an F-105 that his wingman had ejected over North Vietnam. As the HC-54 proceeded towards the incident site, two HH-3's were scrambled from

NKP, along with A-1E RESCORT. The A-1E's went ahead to locate the survivor. While the HH-3's remained in a high orbit above the clouds, the A-1's spotted the survivors parachute and pen gun flares. After looking without success for a hole to fly his H-3 down through, The H-3 pilot, Captain Butera, asked the A-1 pilot to provide radio steers to place the H-3 over the survivor. The H-3 was then flown IFR down through the clouds and did not break out until they were less than 1000 feet above the terrain. The H-3 soon spotted the parachute and came to a hover over the side of a mountain covered by jungle trees 60 feet high. The hoist was lowered and the downed pilot rescued. The mountainous terrain required an egress that forced the H-3 to fly over a village. As it passed over this village the H-3 crew came under automatic weapons fire. The two A-1E's immediately rolled in and suppressed the enemy fire. The survivor was then flown to Udorn AB. *Unit history 38 ARS Oct-Dec 65 p10*

As 1965 drew to a close, the air war over SEA intensified. Losses to enemy forces rose faster than the growth of SAR forces.

Add in p.74-75#7

Add in enemy air defense capability p.75#7

The Air Rescue force at the end of 1965 consisted of:

38 Air Rescue Squadron (ARS) Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN 2 HH-43B's

Detachment 1, 38 ARS Nakhon Phanom AB, Thailand

Detachment 2, 38 ARS Takhli AB, Thailand 2 HH-43B's

Detachment 3, 38 ARS Ubon AB, Thailand 3 HH-43B's

Detachment 4, 38 ARS Korat AB, Thailand 3 HH-43B's

Detachment 5, 38 ARS Udorn AB, Thailand 3 HH-43B's

6 HH-3E's

1 CH-3C

4 HC-54's TDY

Detachment 6, 38 ARS Bien Hoa AB, RVN 3 HH-43F's

Detachment 7, 38 ARS DaNang AB, RVN 3 HH-43F's

1 HH-43B

4 HU-16's TDY

Detachment 9, 38 ARS Pleiku AB, RVN 2 HH-43F's

Detachment 10, 38 ARS Bien Thuy AB, RVN 1 HH-43B

1 HH-43F

Detachment 1 Provisional, 38 ARS Cam Ranh Bay AB, RVN 2 HH-43B's

Summary of SAR aircraft 28 HH-43 7 H-3 4 HC-54 4 HU-16

Organization chart from 38 ARS history 1 Oct – 31 Dec 65

The idea of refueling a helicopter in flight was conceptualized. Most thought it to be impossible. But creative thinkers in the United States proved it could be done. Major Harry P. Dunn jury-rigged a fuel probe to the front of a CH-3. It was not plumbed to anything but would serve the purpose of an attempted link up with an in-flight KC-130 owned by the Marine Corps. On 17 December 1965, Major Dunn took off to attempt an air-refueling linkup. Many engineers believed that the helicopter would be destroyed by the prop wash and wake turbulence behind the KC-130. Major Dunn's theory proved to be correct when he pulled up behind the KC-130, slipped into refueling position, and plugged his probe into the refueling basket. With the concept proven, Rescue Headquarters ordered an initial modification of eleven HC-130H's. The modified aircraft became the HC-130P. Lockheed would deliver the first of these aircraft in November 1966. Air refueling would revolutionize helicopter SAR. It was to have a profound effect on successful SAR's in SEA. P.84#7

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