INACTIVE

604-03 3d AEROSPACE RESCUE & RECOVERY GP COFF 31 DEC 73; TRF ORGEN JAN 75; RET W NRC JAN 77 - PERMANENT PUC 1 MAY 70 - 31 MAR 72

MACAG-PD (Undated) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Recommendation for the Award of the Presidential Unit Citation

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM,
APO 96222 4 MAR 1973

TO: Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Force, APO 96553

Recommend approval of the Presidential Unit Citation (Third Oak Leaf Cluster) to the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group for the period 1 May 1970 to 31 March 1972.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Ralph J. Maglione

8 Incl
nc

RALPH J. MAGLIONE
Brigadier General, USAF
Director of Personnel

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH AIR FORCE (PACAF)
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96307

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: AR

SUBJECT: Recommendation for the award of the Presidential Unit Citation

TO: COMUSMACV/MACAS-PA

1. The 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group is recommended for its fourth Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism for the period 1 May 1970 to 31 March 1972.

a. 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron
38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (1 May 1970 to 1 July 1971)
39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron
40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron

b. There are no subordinate units not sharing in this recommendation.

c. The authority for the third Presidential Unit Citation presented to the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group is Department of the Air Force Special Order GB-162, dated 24 March 1972.

2. During this period, aircrews of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group rescued 449 persons. Of these a total of 247 were combat saves, where the possibility of death or capture was certain. The personnel of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group performed their duties under extremely hazardous conditions and in a manner epitomizing the virtues of duty, honor and allegiance to country. While the number of lives saved is impressive the acts of heroism behind each save is even more so. Time and again, pararescuemen have descended blindly through dense jungle canopy in hopes of rescuing a downed airman. The extraordinary dedication and heroic determination of the rescue crews, often hovering directly over enemy positions to snatch a pilot from the enemy, has become a legend in Southeast Asia. Their efforts have been an immeasurable benefit to aircrews and have added significantly to the overall performance of the United States Air Force in Southeast Asia. A general description of the functions of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group will provide insight into how this unit of less than 700 people has performed such outstanding service during this period.

OPERATIONS

3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group is organized and equipped to provide a combat search and rescue (SAR) recovery capability in Southeast Asia (SEA). It provides the tactical forces to rescue and recover

personnel engaged in combat operations in or adjacent to hostile territory an area of SAR encompassing more than 1.1 million square miles. Headquarters 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group is charged with command and control of all USAF Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service in SEA. It also controls the operation of a Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) and two subregional Rescue Coordination Centers (RCC) established to control and direct the rescue/recovery mission throughout SEA. The JRCC, "JOKER" located at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam; the RCC, Operating Location Alpha, "QUEEN", at Son Tra Air Base, Republic of Vietnam; and the other RCC Operating Location Bravo, "JACK" at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand; provide planning, organizing, and command and control for rescue operations in their respective areas of responsibility. SAR forces are assigned to subordinate units positioned at strategic locations throughout the area.

Airborne Mission Command (AMC) facilities and functions are provided by the 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRSq), Cam Ranh Bay Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, flying specially equipped HC-130P "KING" aircraft on standard daily orbits in support of SAR operations. The HC-130P also functions as a tanker for aerial refueling of the HH-53C "SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANTS" and previously the HH-3E "JOLLY GREEN GIANTS."

The critical function of Local Base Rescue (LBR) is provided by LBR units located at eight bases throughout Vietnam and Thailand. These units provide HH-43F "PEDRO" helicopters for crash rescue and fire suppression support. In addition, they are responsible for aircrew recovery (ACR) within a 75 mile radius of their respective bases.

The primary SAR helicopter functions are provided by the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, located at DaNang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam and the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, located at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand. Both of these squadrons are now equipped entirely with HH-53C "SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT" helicopters. They are primarily utilized for long range aircrew recovery employing air to air refueling for range extension.

OPERATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the period 1 May 1970 through 31 March 1972 the personnel of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group compiled a brilliant combat search and rescue record. They were repeatedly subjected to extreme danger from hostile air and ground fire, surface to air missiles and enemy aircraft during efforts to save downed aircrews. As the result of 351 SAR missions, 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group units were responsible for 449 saves during this period; 247 combat saves and 202 non-combat saves. (The total number of saves for the 3ARRGp since 1 December 1964 now stands at 3,478; 2,345 combat saves and 1,133 non-combat saves.) In addition to each of these saves representing a human life, these 449 lives include enough aircrew members to man two typical tactical fighter wings. (See Attachment Two)

Subordinate units flew in excess of 56,000 hours during the two years of this recommendation while flying more than 32,000 sorties. This includes nearly 25,000 hours in the HC-130P; 15,000 hours in the HH-43F; more than 17,000 hours in the HH-53C, and approximately 1,000 hours in the HH-3E. (See Attachment Three)

TRAINING

In addition to the primary rescue alert and SAR duties, more than 1,000 aircrew members were initially qualified or upgraded to positions of higher qualification, and more than 16% of the enlisted personnel have been in upgrade on-the-job training during this period. Members of all units also functioned in base defense capabilities and all personnel were trained in the many procedures and responsibilities applicable to living and working in a combat area.

During this period the HH-53C "SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT" helicopters arrived in theater and gradually replaced the HH-3E "JOLLY GREEN GIANT" helicopters in the first combat zone transition of its type. The transition was completed in an outstanding manner with no degradation of the mission with the last HH-3E departing SEA in December 1970.

In the course of planning and executing SAR missions, new and imaginative rescue techniques were developed including the development of tactics for employing the Limited Night Recovery System (LNRS).

At CSAF request, ARRS (MAC) was tasked to conduct a 90 day combat evaluation of the PAVE IMP Limited Night Recovery System to determine the feasibility and applicability of a night rescue vehicle in a combat theater enviornment. The 40ARRSq at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand was selected to undertake this demanding and hazardous evaluation, within their theater of operations, in addition to their heavy workload of maintaining a day SAR posture. The test period began 6 April 1971.

The personnel of the 40ARRSq developed battle tactics and concepts of operations, monitored equipment reliability/maintainability, and determined applicability of this important new system to the covert night rescue role. The evaluation sorties were flown by highly dedicated volunteer crewmembers. These airmen found it necessary to maintain proficiency in day SAR posture as well as develop proficiency and knowledge of the night rescue system. Maintenance and supply functions blended in to provide intricate system support from in-house resources for the five specially configured HH-53C helicopters. This was in addition to the extremely demanding workload applicable to the basic HH-53C aircraft.

The pilots and crewmembers, averaging 10 flying sorties per month diligently gathered data related to operational performance, during hazardous and harrowing blackout, low altitude night air work. Equipment malfunctions and the use of untried tactics produced immeasurable degrees

of danger and the slightest miscalculation would have resulted in disaster. Only through outstanding professionalism and extreme dedication coupled with diligent preplanning, were the results safely secured. Concepts were developed that were applicable directly to a covert night SAR. They were derived from the varied backgrounds and experience of the flyers, and drew upon ingenuity, fortitude and hunches to exercise the equipment of this system to the extremes of its capability.

The 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron is currently the only unit in the world training personnel in the use of this system and has completed training 76 crewmembers during this period.

Further, all LBR units converted to the use of a new fire suppression agent "Aqueaous Foaming Film" or "Light Water". This agent is vastly superior to the previously used protein foam and has enhanced the life saving capability of the LBR units significantly. To initiate the effective use of this new fire-fighting agent an extensive training program was necessary to qualify all 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group pilots and rescue specialists in SEA. This was accomplished in minimum time under adverse combat conditions.

The HC-130P "KING" unit has conducted an intensive and difficult training program to qualify selected pilots to act as Airborne Mission Commanders (AMC). This program takes approximately three months and provides pilots qualified in all aspects of directing the use of rescue forces to include employment of tactical fighter/bomber aircraft and specialized ordnance. Additionally, Group personnel participated in the flying of nine HH-53's across the Pacific Ocean, seven from the CONUS to SEA and two from SEA to CONUS. These were the first helicopters ever to fly transpacific and the success of these 9,000 mile flights have added significantly to the legend of the HH-53C "SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT" helicopters. Group crews also ferried HH-3's to Clark Air Base, Philippines.

This period saw the SAR posture change drastically, with the phase down of forces in SEA, rescue forces also reduced. While the total number of units and aircraft decreased, the SAR forces were required to maintain complete rescue coverage over Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, as well as the adjacent waters. HH-53C "SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT" helicopters have continued to maintain their alert postures, flying orbits to cover major operations and having a fifteen minute ground alert posture. HC-130P "KING" aircraft fly a daily orbit to provide daylight operations coverage and maintain a strip alert posture to cover night missions.

COMBAT LOSSES

While prosecuting combat SAR missions the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group has lost six rescue helicopters to hostile fire during the period of this recommendation. These six combat losses have cost sixteen rescue crewmembers their lives and one member is missing. The total number of rescue aircraft lost in combat since December 1964 totals thirty-five with fifty-seven rescue crewmembers killed in action and eight missing

in action. The crews of these aircraft have truly lived and died the rescue motto "THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE."

MAINTENANCE

The principle mission of the Maintenance Section of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group and its subordinate units is to provide operationally ready aircraft for all SAR needs. The overall maintenance record is well above the USAF minimum standards and reflects the outstanding performance of the maintenance personnel at all levels. (See Attachments Three and Four for OR/NORM/NORS rates).

The 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group maintained one of the highest operationally ready rates of any rescue unit world wide. This was accomplished despite critical manpower shortages, and the constant threat of hostile action combined with monsoon rains, typhoons and intolerable heat, making the maintenance task all but impossible. Despite all these handicaps the maintenance personnel not only continued their fine record but undertook numerous major projects all of which were completed in an outstanding manner.

These included Project Pacer Bronze which was an HH-43 retrofit project involving installing the T-53-L11A engine in the HH-43B under TCTO 1H-43(H)B-593. Modification was scheduled to start in May 1971 at Phan Rang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam and Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand and involved a total of fifteen aircraft. 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group resources were prepared to implement the modification on schedule, however, the TCTO kits were late, delaying the start of the project. The retrofit was still completed ahead of schedule with the site at Phan Rang Air Base closing in September after completing work on five aircraft and the site at Korat closing in October after retrofitting ten aircraft. While this project required the LBR units to maintain a 24 hour alert posture with only one airframe the maintenance crews performed in such an outstanding manner that all LBR's were operationally ready throughout the period of the project.

Another project completed during this period included the preparation and shipment of HH-53 aircraft on C-5 Galaxy aircraft on July 30, 1971. Two HH-53B's were airlifted by C-5 marking the first time that HH-53's had ever been airlifted. The aircraft were prepared and loaded by personnel of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, located at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, at the time, and were airlifted directly to Hill Air Force Base, Utah. Preparation for the shipment was quite extensive and was accomplished with no difficulties. A project booklet was developed which contained a step by step description of the preparation and loading including photographs and film of the entire operation. This package was used in January 1972 when the operation was repeated with the shipment of two HH-53C aircraft from Cam Ranh Bay Air Base, Republic of Vietnam by both the 37ARRSq and the 40ARRSq personnel.

Further, the maintenance personnel developed a 16mm motion picture camera system for the HH-53 "SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT" helicopter. This camera system permits greatly improved coverage of SAR missions in SEA for combat documentation and for public news releases. The installation is portable and has been developed at extremely low cost. It has proven itself to be extremely effective.

Maintenance personnel of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron devoted 14 to 16 hours a day maintaining the specialized equipment germaine to the Limited Night Recovery System. Days sometimes passed while specialists searched for answers and pondered remedies to equipment difficulties. No technical manuals existed for this new system and manufacturer's specification literature was often the only information available on a piece of equipment. Personal fortitude and ingenuity were gleaned to the utmost to provide the necessary experience to overcome the lack of information. These dedicated maintenance personnel evaluated the maintainability and supportability of the Limited Night Recovery System in the combat theater and formulated maintenance and supply procedures. The dedication, enthusiasm and resourcefulness of all personnel of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron led to the documentation of this exciting new concept in rescue capabilities and set the stage for follow-on equipment which has improved the capabilities of a combat rescue situation.

With the phase down of air operations in SEA several bases were closed during this period. As a result several of the LBR detachments were closed and four HH-43 "PEDRO" helicopters were completely disassembled and shipped to the CONUS. This project was accomplished entirely with 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group resources and without degradation to the mission.

Also during the period of this recommendation one HC-130 "KING" aircraft and four HH-3 helicopters underwent IRAN maintenance at contractor facilities. Six HC-130's were sent through the Center Wing Modification Program at contractor facilities at Marietta, Georgia. In addition, 126 isochronal inspections of HC-130 aircraft were made at Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines and unit rehabilitation programs serviced six HC-130P aircraft; thirty-nine HH-43 helicopters; and twenty HH-53 aircraft. (See Attachment Five for Details on this maintenance).

Despite all the special maintenance requirements, major moves experienced by three squadrons, several typhoon evacuations, several evacuations because of sapper attacks against aircraft and monsoon rains the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group personnel continued to have one of the best records for maintenance in the world-wide Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service. The 37th ARRSq was selected as the Outstanding Maintenance Organization in ARRS for the fiscal year 1971.

The personal sacrafice and devotion to duty of unit maintenance personnel has directly contributed to the 449 lives the 3ARRGp has saved during this period.

SAFETY

The 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group completed the entire period of this recommendation without a major or minor flight accident. Subordinate units have flown nearly 60,000 hours during this time, more than half of which was helicopter time. The accident free flying time for the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group has now been stretched thirty-one months and the individual units have flown more than 140,000 hours since their last flight accident. (See Attachment Six for details). The period of 31 months without a flight accident is unequalled in combat SAR operations in SEA.

The Group flying safety record is even more impressive considering that the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group mission was accomplished using four different types of aircraft, the HH-43, HH-53, HC-130 and HH-3. (See Attachment Three for total flying time of each type aircraft).

As the pilot experience level has been continually decreasing with annual rotations and replacement of crewmembers an additional workload has been placed on unit training and safety programs. This loss of pilot experience is compounded by the fact that most of the helicopter pilots assigned during this period are fixed wing conversion pilots and a high percentage of these have arrived without being fully qualified.

The missions of mercy flown by 3ARRGp personnel were flown in some of the most hazardous areas and under the most hostile flying conditions ever experienced during war time. On numerous occasions enemy troops had to be neutralized before aircrew recovery attempts could be initiated. Tropical typhoons, monsoon rains, ever present thunderstorms, frequent low ceilings and limited navigational aids contributed to the hazards encountered making the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group safety record all the more spectacular.

A vast amount of training is required to maintain proficiency in the Night Recovery System. Training in the complex and critical maneuvers of locating the objective, approaching and hovering in total darkness without the use of lighting and learning how to use the night viewing goggles and low-light level TV were all accomplished accident free in theater with more than 75 aircrew members being upgraded in the use of the system.

Despite numerous moves, inactivations, consolidations, and the operation of numerous Forward Operating Locations required to provide the SAR coverage, the Group continued its accident free flying.

This record becomes even more meaningful when it is realized that the aircrews making this outstanding safety record have been faced not only with physical and psychological stresses of war, but also the constant turnover of personnel. This turnover of personnel resulted in more than 1,700 flight crew members being initially qualified or upgraded

to a higher crew position. Strong leadership, guidance and direction by the Group, squadron and detachment commanders has helped to mold relative newcomers to rescue and the old timers into a truly dedicated and professional group. During the period of this report this professionalism was spotlighted with individuals receiving six individual awards; four USAF Well Done awards and two MAC individual Outstanding Safety awards for professional performance and skill in coping with emergency situations.

Personal staff supervision through frequent Group visits to field units has provided necessary command emphasis. These visits have strengthened the Group Accident Prevention Program by allowing staff members to personally highlight the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group philosophy and objectives.

OTHER SUPPORT AND SELF HELP

During July and August 1971 the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron moved from Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand. This move was made for operational necessity and was planned, programmed and carried out entirely by group personnel and through utilizing group resources. Group staff agencies were directly responsible for assisting the smooth transition of the unit. The move was accomplished without degradation of the mission.

During 1971 the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was required to move its entire operation and living quarters across the field at DaNang. This move required extensive self-help in order to prepare office space, hangars and living areas. The enlisted member's quarters for example, had been previously utilized by the U. S. Marines and had been abandoned for some time. They had leaky roofs, missing doors and were of the typical louvered wall design prevalent in Vietnam but were missing screens. The 3rd ARRGp staff helped the squadron obtain building materials and tools and the squadron completely renovated the hootches through the use of self-help planning and labor.

Following the move the 37ARRSq aircraft was evacuated in October 1971 when a typhoon struck the base at DaNang, damaging the roof of the office complex of the squadron, flooding the offices and quarters and in general causing havoc with the newly renovated facilities. The personnel again accomplished all repairs through the almost exclusive use of self-help. Another example of the outstanding self-help program instituted by this unit was the building of the HH-43 alert facility. The LBR unit was moved into an unused hangar and through self-help turned that facility into one of the best alert facilities in Southeast Asia. They tiled the floors, put up walls and sound-proofing, and actually built the facility inside the shell from the former hangar.

The success of the project while under the constant threat of enemy rocket and mortar attacks is a tribute to the morale and resourcefulness of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

Detachment 3, located at Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand has become one of numerous units voluntarily participating in an active manner in civic actions programs. They have flown doctors and medical supplies to areas inaccessible by jeep and thus helped local authorities and the USAF assist the people who otherwise could not receive medical attention. Their assistance to the host wing commander in his civic actions program has been truly outstanding.

The 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron donated enough money to a local orphanage for them to build a badly needed roof. In addition, the squadron personnel bought critically needed medical supplies for the orphanage.

These are but two examples of the vast civic actions work carried on by 3rd Group units. The Group itself supports the Viet Hoa Orphanage providing English classes, food, clothing and money for operating expenses.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ITEMS

The 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was selected as the outstanding rescue squadron world-wide for 1971 and was the recipient of the MAC Commander's Trophy emblematic of that honor. In addition, Detachment 5, 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group was selected as the outstanding Local Base Rescue detachment for 1971 and received the MAC Commander's Trophy for that honor. Both trophies were presented by the Commander, Military Airlift Command, General Jack J. Catton, at a ceremony at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam.

Individual members of the Group have been presented with more than 3,300 individual awards and decorations during the period of this recommendation. These awards include:

Air Force Cross	4
Silver Star Medal	53
Legion of Merit	3
Distinguished Flying Cross	575
Airman's Medal	17
Bronze Star Medal	149
Meritorious Service Medal	12
Air Medal	2178

Air Force Commendation Medal 320

Purple Heart 51

Accolades have been received by the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group from Air Marshal Swasdi Ponchamni, Commander of the RTAF Tactical Air Command, who stated in a letter to the Chief of the Air Force Advisory Group USMACT/JUSMACT on 19 April 1971.

"It is my great pleasure to inform you of the able assistance and cooperation the Detachment 4 of the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group stationed at Korat (sic) RTAFB has rendered to the Royal Thai Air Force and other agencies of the Royal Thai Government in many areas of operations.

While performing duty in Thailand, the commander as well as members of the Det 4, 38th ARRS has not failed to provide necessary assistance in rescue escort and coverage and also aeromedical evacuation to the RTAF and the local units nearby.

For these commendable deeds, I would like to express on behalf of the Royal Thai Air Force, our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Det 4, 38th ARRS for the job well done."

Many letters have been received from satisfied customers and the commanders of those who have been rescued. The following letter from the Commander of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing on 23 December 1971 is one example:

"1. On behalf of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing, I want to express my gratitude to all unit personnel for their participation in the SAR effort on 10 and 11 December 1971. The effort to recover the crew of Ashcan 01 was performed in an outstanding manner, under adverse weather conditions, and despite the threats of enemy missiles and AAA.

2. It has been truly reassuring to have observed the dedication to duty and "esprit de corps" displayed by your organization during this urgent and demanding situation. Your performance during this mission has reflected great credit upon your unit and the United States Air Force. Again I extend my congratulations for a job well done."

Deeds of heroism have not gone unnoticed by top military officials as is noted in the following message from CINCPACAF on 13 March 1972:

"Subject: Congratulatory Message.

Congratulations are offered to all those who participated in the rescue of NAIL 31 and SANDY 01. The coordinated effort and skilled application of air resources again demonstrates the professionalism of all involved and reaffirms our determination and willingness to take

care of our own. All participants are commended for their courage under fire and their ability to execute complex missions in critical situations. "Well Done" to all crew members and ground personnel who participated in this operation."

These are but a few of the numerous letters and messages commending the efforts of the rescue team.

All of the accomplishments of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group and all the accolades do not explain the significance of the rescue missions that members of the unit are called upon to perform. On 31 December, 1971, for example, seven Army helicopter crew members who had been shot down near Khe Sanh were rescued. During this mission, the HH-53 SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANTS received numerous hits from enemy ground fire and had to withdraw from the SAR area due to severe battle damage. After area denial ordnance was delivered they again reached the survivors. Ignoring the continuing intense enemy opposition, rescue forces extracted all seven survivors before the area was overrun. Enemy forces were so close they were throwing hand grenades at the downed crew and firing point blank at the helicopter. As the rescue forces exited the area, they were followed by a trail of enemy fire.

On 11 July 1970 the HH-53's of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron rescued a United States Marine pilot near Quang Tri, Republic of Vietnam. The first helicopter to attempt the rescue was driven off by intense ground fire and received heavy battle damage. The second SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT completely disregarded the ground fire and dashed in for the pickup. This time, although still receiving heavy hostile fire he successfully rescued the Marine, saving him from certain death or capture.

On 30 June 1970 four HH-3 JOLLY GREEN GIANT helicopters tried to rescue the crew of a downed OV-10. The first attempt resulted in one of the JOLLY GREEN GIANTS being forced to return to his base after suffering battle damage from intense ground fire. A second attempt was made and the results were tragic as one of the HH-3's was shot down by enemy fire and all five members of the crew were killed. Although the enemy continued to throw a barrage of fire at the rescue force they again made a rescue attempt. This time they successfully hovered over the lone survivor of the OV-10 and lowered a pararescue specialist on the jungle penetrator to help the downed crewmember who was wounded and unable to mount the penetrator by himself. Although the rescue chopper continued to take hits from communist ground fire the crew successfully extracted the airman and the pararescue specialist. The helicopter, damaged by the ground fire, was able to limp into a landing area.

On 17 December 1971, an F-4 was hit by a surface to air missile and the crew ejected near the Mu Gia Pass late in the evening. All night long tactical fighter bombers conducted bombing and straffing strikes around the two downed crewmembers who were in the midst of enemy troop concentra-

tions. The next morning the SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT helicopters were above the survivors at dawn and immediately extracted the back-seater. The pilot, however, was hanging in his parachute more than 70 feet above the ground. A pararescueman was lowered on the jungle penetrator and assisted him in freeing himself by hacking through the lines and the heavy foliage. Both were then hoisted into the rescue chopper.

On 12 December 1971 one of the most dramatic rescues took place when an F-105 Thunderchief pilot was rescued from the Mu Gia Pass of Laos. This suspenseful rescue was possible only because of the dedication and heroic efforts of the rescue crew. For twenty continuous hours the combined forces of the free world used their devastating fire power to cordon off the survivor from the communist forces surrounding him. Throughout the period the SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT crew made one rescue attempt after the other. Despite direct enemy ground fire, air-to-air missiles, intense flight turbulence over the pass and thick clouds at tree-top level, the crew pressed on to accomplish the impossible. One HH-53 suffered severe battle damage and the crew changed aircraft. They made a treacherous tree to tree hover through impenetrable fog to the survivor who was too seriously injured to mount the penetrator by himself. A pararescueman was lowered to assist him and succeeded in securing him to the penetrator which then hauled them to safety. The chopper flew back through the enemy fire. At one point in this mission, a surface-to-air missile passed just under the helicopter.

The accomplishments of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group have been made under the most difficult conditions. While engaged in an armed conflict with an opposing armed force, the support personnel have come under rocket attacks, sapper attacks and constant threat of enemy ground infiltration. They have continued to perform in an outstanding manner contributing directly to the 351 SAR missions which resulted in 449 lives saved. The combat crews have displayed an extraordinary high level of sustained gallantry, heroism and devotion to duty while flying repeatedly into the heart of enemy held territory. They have repeatedly subjected themselves and their aircraft to extreme danger from hostile ground fire, surface-to-air missiles and enemy aircraft in efforts to save downed aircrews. Their selfless efforts have truly been outstanding and unique during this time.

3. The service of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group has been honorable subsequent to the service for which recommended.

4. Other organizations are not being recommended for the same act or service.

5. An unclassified citation is attached.

6. Other recommendations for awards to the same organization are not pending.

7. A previous award has not been made to the organization for the same act or service described.

8. If the recommendation is approved, the award should be presented as soon as possible. Award elements should be forwarded to 7th Air Force, Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam for presentation.

JOHN W. VOGT, General, USAF
Commander

8 Attachments
1. Citation
2. Lives Saved
3. Total NORS Hours
4. OR/NORM/NORS Percentiles
5. Scheduled Maintenance
6. Flying Safety
7. Summary of Recommendation
8. Proposed White House Press Release

Attachment 1

Citation

CITATION

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, I have today Awarded

THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (AIR FORCE)

FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM

TO THE

3RD AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY GROUP

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

The 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, Military Airlift Command, distinguished itself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against opposing armed forces in Southeast Asia, from 1 May 1970 to 31 March 1972. During this period, aircrews of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group daily risked their lives by exposing themselves to intense hostile fire to rescue other downed aircrew members. Their selfless courage and dedicated professionalism resulted in the rescue and recovery of 449 American and Allied personnel. Of these personnel, 247 were saved from almost certain death or capture by enemy forces. The rescues had profound impact on the morale of combat aircrews serving throughout Southeast Asia. The professionalism, dedication to duty, and extraordinary heroism demonstrated by the members of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group are in keeping with the finest traditions of the military service and reflect the highest credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States.

Attachment 1

Attachment 2

Lives Saved

LIVES SAVED
1 MAY 1970 - 31 DECEMBER 1970

QUARTER	MISSIONS	SAVES - COMBAT/NON-COMBAT	AIRCRAFT	
May and June	38	31/ 9		
3	31	9/ 18	HH-43	3/16
			HH-53	4/ 1
			HH-3	2/ 1
4	59	34/ 52	HH-43	17/12
			HH-53	17/10
			HH-3	Ø/Ø
			HC-130	Ø/30
TOTALS	128	74/79		

1 JANUARY 1971 - 31 DECEMBER 1971

1	54	57/ 15	HH-43	12/13
			HH-53	18/ 2
			HC-130	27/ Ø
2	41	26/ 26	HH-43	4/22
			HH-53	18/ 2
			HC-130	10/ 1
3	28	19/ 43	HH-43	4/16
			HH-53	9/22
			HC-130	Ø/ 6
4	29	47/ 23	HH-43	2/17
			HH-53	42/ 4
			HC-130	1/ 2
TOTALS	152	149/107		

1 JANUARY 1972 - 31 MARCH 1972

1	71	24/ 16	HH-43	Ø/ 6
			HH-53	22/ 6
			HC-130	1/ Ø

1 MAY 1970 - 31 MARCH 1972

TOTAL SARS 351
TOTAL SAVES ..... COMBAT 247
..... NON-COMBAT 202

TOTAL SAVES SINCE DECEMBER 1964 ..... 2345 COMBAT
..... 1133 NON-COMBAT

Attachment 2

Attachment 3

Total NORS Hours

TYPE AIRCRAFT	MAY-JUN 70	JUL-SEP 70	OCT-DEC 70	JAN-JUN 71	JUL 71-MAR 72	TOTAL
HH-43						
Flying Hours	1,569	2,144	1,905	3,889	4,637	14,288
Possessed Hours	42,384	46,368	46,368	91,184	121,181	347,485
Norm Hours	3,822	5,008	6,714	9,250	12,402	37,196
Nors Hours	1,664	2,226	2,644	3,002	8,511	18,047
HH-53						
Flying Hours	1,422	2,249	2,381	4,872	6,497	17,421
Possessed Hours	23,424	46,368	45,988	93,640	130,491	339,911
Norm Hours	3,774	5,981	5,690	14,873	22,094	52,412
Nors Hours	956	1,716	2,223	2,568	5,174	12,637
HC-130						
Flying Hours	2,319	3,799	3,317	6,520	7,675	23,630
Possessed Hours	16,104	24,288	19,443	38,593	62,493	160,921
Norm Hours	1,474	2,781	3,269	6,629	14,217	28,370
Nors Hours	624	996	494	963	3,524	6,601
HH-3						
Flying Hours	524	305	125			954
Possessed Hours	13,276	11,040	4,392			28,708
Norm Hours	1,978	1,424	545			3,947
Nors Hours	668	408	211			1,287

Attachment 3

Attachment 4

OR/NORM/NORS Percentiles

OR/NORM/NORS PERCENTILES

1 MAY 1970 - 31 MARCH 1972

AIRCRAFT	FLYING HOURS	OR%	NORM%	NORS%
HH-43	14,288	84.1	10.7	5.2
HH-53	17,421	80.9	15.4	3.7
HC-130	23,630	78.3	17.6	4.1
HH-3	954	81.8	13.7	4.5 (1 May-31 Dec 70)
TOTAL	56,293			

Attachment 4

Attachment 5

Scheduled Maintenance

SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE

MAINTENANCE	1 MAY - 30 JUN 70	1 JUL - 30 SEP 70	1 OCT - 31 DEC 70	1 JAN - 31 MAR 71
IRAN	2	1	2	3
CWM	-	-	-	2
ISO	11	16	16	19
REHAB	19	14	16	-

	1 APR - 30 JUN 71	1 JUL - 30 SEP 71	1 OCT - 31 DEC 71	1 JAN - 31 MAR 72
IRAN	2	1	2	1
CWM	1	1	1	1
ISO	20	13	11	16
REHAB	-	-	-	-

	TOTAL
IRAN	14
CWM	6
ISO	122
REHAB	49

Attachment 5

Attachment 6

Flying Safety

FLYING SAFETY

UNIT	DATE LAST ACCIDENT	TOTAL FLYING HOURS SINCE LAST FLYING ACCIDENT
Det 1	28 Jun 69	4,284 (Deactivated)
Det 3		5,091
Det 4		4,714
Det 5		4,914
Det 6		4,842 (Deactivated)
Det 7		4,682 (Deactivated)
Det 9		4,272 (Deactivated)
Det 12	19 Jul 69	1,715
Det 13		4,083 (Deactivated)
Det 14		3,540
37ARRSq	9 Jul 68	21,172
39ARRSq		65,284
40ARRSq	2 Apr 69	16,373

Attachment 6

Attachment 7

Summary of Recommendation

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

FOR PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

3RD AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY GROUP

MISSION: The mission of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group is to conduct combat search and rescue (SAR) missions; to operate the Joint Rescue Coordination Center which plans, organizes, coordinates and controls all SAR activities in Southeast Asia; to provide all tactical forces to conduct SARs; and to conduct local base rescue operations.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS: Headquarters, 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group is charged with command and control of all USAF Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service forces in the Southeast Asia sub-region. It also maintains the Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) and two sub-regional Rescue Coordination Centers established to coordinate the Rescue/Recovery missions throughout Southeast Asia. SAR forces are assigned to subordinate units comprising three squadrons and five detachments at strategic locations. The squadrons, the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron and the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, are equipped with HH-53 heavy-lift helicopters. These helicopters are used primarily for long range aircrew recovery and employ air-to-air refueling for range extension. The 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron has HC-130P tanker aircraft which act as airborne mission control and also provide airborne refueling capability for the HH-53's. HH-43 helicopters perform the local base rescue (LBR) mission, firefighting, and aircrew recovery within 75 miles of their base, and now operate as detachments of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group. Each heavy-lift helicopter squadron also has HH-43's for the LBR mission. Combat aircrews of the group frequently penetrate deep into the heart of enemy held territory and the enemy homeland of North Vietnam in order to save downed aircrews. The outstanding performance of the rescue mission is clearly reflected in the record of 449 lives saved during this period.

EXECUTION: During the period 1 May 1970 to 31 March 1972, the personnel of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group compiled a brilliant combat SAR record. They repeatedly subjected themselves and their aircraft to extreme danger from hostile air and ground fire, surface to air missiles and enemy aircraft in efforts to save downed crewmembers. Demonstrating the highest degree of airmanship, courage and heroism, the members of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group are credited with 449 "saves". The full measure of the outstanding success attained in the SAR mission is felt when one considers that 247 of the "saves" were bitterly opposed. These combat saves were made in North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and in the Republic of Vietnam near such infamous places as Khe Sanh, Mu Gia Pass, Bam Karai Pass, and the Fishes Mouth, and the Huk Plantations. At all times, the primary objective of saving a human life and relieving suffering was paramount.

Attachment 7

During this period personnel of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group flew 351 SAR missions and recorded over 56,000 flying hours in its rescue aircraft, the HH-53 SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT, HH-43 PEDRO, HH-3 JOLLY GREEN GIANT (which has now been replaced by the HH-53) helicopters and the HC-130 KING. To fully utilize the importance of this outstanding feat of airmanship, one must consider that these life-saving missions are flown in monsoon rains, extreme heat, over treacherous mountains, and dense triple canopied jungles in addition to the extremely hostile environment.

In the course of prosecuting a SAR mission, new and imaginative techniques and tactics were developed and employed. These included the development of the Night Recovery System for the HH-53 Jolly Green helicopters. It utilizes low-light level TV, Automatic Hover Couplers and night viewing goggles. This system was tested and evaluated by members of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group who then developed the new tactics required by introduction of such a new and complicated system. In addition, crews had to be trained in-theater, a prohibitive task for a combat unit. All this was accomplished while maintaining the SAR posture and has provided the rescue force with a completely new capability for night rescue.

The 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group completed the entire period of this recommendation without a flight accident, stretching the total accident free flying time of the 3ARRGp to 33 months. Such an accident free time span is unequaled in combat rescue operations in Southeast Asia dating back to 1964. Individual members of the 3ARRGp have received numberous safety awards including one United States Air Force Well Done and two Military Airlift Command individual outstanding safety awards.

During this period the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group maintained one of the highest operationally ready maintenance rates of any rescue unit world-wide. Further, the maintenance personnel were responsible for numerous taxing projects including Project Pacer Bronze, a retrofit project consisting of the replacement of the single jet engine of the HH-43's with a more powerful, more efficient engine, and the establishment of maintenance procedures for the complex equipment of the Night Recovery System.

However, all of the accomplishments of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group and all the accolades do not explain the significance of the rescue missions that members of the unit are called upon to perform. On 31 December 1971, for example, seven Army helicopter crewmembers who had been shot down near Khe Sanh were rescued. During this mission, the HH-53 SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANTS received numerous hits from enemy ground fire and had to withdraw from the SAR area due to severe battle damage. After area denial ordnance was delivered they again reached the survivors. Ignoring the continuing threat of enemy opposition, rescue forces extracted all seven survivors before the area was overrun. Enemy forces were so close they were throwing hand grenades at the downed crew and firing point blank at the rescue helicopter. As the rescue force exited the area, they were followed by a trail of enemy fire.

On 11 July 1970 the HH-53's of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron rescued a United States Marine pilot near Quang Tri, Republic of Vietnam. The first helicopter to attempt the rescue was driven off by intense ground fire and received heavy battle damage. The second SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT completely disregarded the ground fire and dashed in for the pick-up. This time, although still receiving heavy ground fire he successfully rescued the Marine, saving him from certain death or capture.

On 30 June 1970 four HH-3 JOLLY GREEN GIANT helicopters tried to rescue the crew of a downed OV-10. The first attempt resulted in one of the JOLLY GREEN GIANTS being forced to return to his base after suffering battle damage from intense ground fire. A second attempt was made and the results were tragic as one of the HH-3's was shot down by enemy fire and all five members of the crew were killed. Although the enemy continued to throw a barrage of fire at the rescue force they again made a rescue attempt. This time they successfully hovered over the only survivor of the OV-10 and lowered a pararescue specialist on the jungle penetrator to help the airman who was wounded and unable to mount the penetrator by himself. Although the rescue chopper continued to take hits from communist ground fire the crew successfully extracted the crewmember and the pararescueman. The helicopter, damaged by the ground fire, was able to limp into a safe landing area.

On 17 December 1971, an F-4 was hit by a surface to air missile and the crew ejected near the Mu Gia Pass late in the evening. All night long tactical fighter bombers conducted bombing and straffing around the two downed crewmembers who were in the midst of enemy troop concentrations. The next morning the SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT helicopters were above the survivors at dawn and immediately extracted the back-seater. The pilot however, was hanging in his parachute more than 70 feet above the ground. A pararescueman was lowered on the jungle penetrator and assisted him in freeing himself by hacking through the lines and the heavy foliage. Both were then hoisted into the rescue chopper.

On 12 December 1971 one of the most dramatic rescues took place when an F-105 Thunderchief pilot was rescued from the Mu Gia Pass of Laos. This suspenseful rescue was possible only because of the dedication and heroic efforts of the rescue crew. For twenty continuous hours the combined forces of the free world used their devastating fire power to cordon off the survivor from the communist forces surrounding him. Throughout the period the SUPER JOLLY GREEN GIANT crew made one rescue attempt after the other. Despite direct enemy ground fire, air-to-air missiles, intense flight turbulence over the pass and thick clouds at tree-top level, the crew pressed on to accomplish the impossible. One HH-53 suffered battle damage and the crew changed aircraft. They made a treacherous tree to tree hover through impenetrable fog to the survivor who was too seriously wounded to mount the penetrator by himself. A pararescueman was lowered to assist him and succeeded in securing him to the penetrator which then hauled them to safety. The chopper flew back through the enemy fire. At one point in this mission a surface to air missile passed just under the helicopter.

These are but a few examples of the heroic efforts of members of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group. Each of the 449 saves recorded during this period was earned through superb efforts on the part of the personnel involved and the outstanding performance of the support personnel was instrumental in the prosecution of the mission. Individual members of the group have received numerous honors for acts of extraordinary heroism during this period including the AWA-AVCO Aviators Valor Award.

During this period, the members of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group have been awarded more than 3,300 decorations for their heroism and mission accomplishments including; 4 Air Force Crosses, 53 Silver Stars, 3 Legion of Merits, 575 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 17 Airman's Medals, 149 Bronze Stars, 2,178 Air Medals, 320 Air Force Commendation Medals and 51 Purple Hearts. Unit honors received during this period include the selection of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron as the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service Outstanding Squadron of 1971 and Detachment 5, 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group as the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service Outstanding Local Base Rescue unit of 1971. The 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was also selected as the Outstanding Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service Maintenance Squadron for 1971. In addition the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group was awarded the United States Air Force Flight Safety Plaque for 1971.

Attachment 8

Proposed White House
Press Release

PROPOSED PRESS RELEASE

THE WHITE HOUSE

The White House today announced the award of the Presidential Unit Citation to the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, Military Airlift Command, United States Air Force for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force in Southeast Asia from 1 May 1970 to 31 March 1972.

The members of the group were credited with saving the lives of 449 American and Allied personnel. Of the 449 personnel rescued during this period 247 were saved from almost certain death or capture by enemy forces.

The citation follows:

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, I have today Awarded

THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (AIR FORCE)

FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM

TO THE

3RD AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY GROUP

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

The 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, Military Airlift Command, distinguished itself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against opposing armed forces in Southeast Asia, from 1 May 1970 to 31 March 1972. During this period, aircrews of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group daily risked their lives by exposing themselves to intense hostile fire to rescue other downed aircrew members. Their selfless courage

and dedicated professionalism resulted in the rescue and recovery of 449 American and Allied personnel. Of these personnel, 247 were saved from almost certain death or capture by enemy forces. The rescues had profound impact on the morale of combat aircrews serving throughout Southeast Asia. The professionalism, dedication to duty, and extraordinary heroism demonstrated by the members of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group are in keeping with the finest traditions of the military service and reflect the highest credit on themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States.