

CHAPTER II

OPERATIONS

The 40th ARRS participated in five Search and Rescue (SAR) efforts during the quarter 1 January to 31 March 1971. Four combat saves were credited as a result. Our Alert/Deployment posture was unchanged from the previous quarter. Our assigned pilot strength increased slightly from 26 pilots at the beginning of the quarter to a high of 32 at the end. We do not anticipate a pilot shortage for at least six months.

(S) Our flight engineer resources, however, was and is, continuing to be a major problem. Our strength varied from 8 to 12 throughout the quarter. The 37th ARRS Da Nang Air Base, Republic of South Vietnam graciously loaned us TDY personnel during critical periods of shortages. Little relief is forecast in the foreseeable future.

The 40th ARRS provided 3 pilots and one flight engineer for Flight No. 2 of the Transpacific ferry flight from Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, to Hamilton AFB, California. They left Udorn on the 14th of March in two HH-53B helicopters with an estimated arrival date of 15 April.

(S) On 28 March, three helicopters landed at Udorn having transversed the Pacific from Eglin AFB, Florida, on Flight No 1. These airplanes were the first of the new Limited Night Recovery System (LNRS) equipped models to be delivered to us. A comprehensive Combat Evaluation program is being initiated for this system.

(S) TIGER 02: On New Year's Day, an F-4E was hit by ground fire and both crewmembers bailed out near the Ban-Ban¹ area in north-eastern Laos.

A last-light run-in was attempted but was aborted when both helicopters took hits from heavy small arms fire. One Pararescue man was wounded in this attempt. A first-light effort on 2 January resulted in a successful rescue of both crewmembers.

(S) BIGOT 02: On 3 February, two crewmembers of an F-4D bailed out of Bankari² Pass near the NVN border. 40th ARRS Jolly Greens were scrambled from both Nakhon Phanom Airfield³ and Ubon RTAFB⁴. Low ceilings precluded any attempt that day. A maximum effort SAR was planned on the 4th with 8 Jolly Greens in place at NKP for a first-light effort. HH-53 BUFFs were on continuous airborne orbit from pre-dawn to darkness on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of February. Continued low ceilings and bad weather conditions in the area precluded any rescue attempts. After all radio contact was lost with the survivors at noon on the 6th, and no weather improvement forecast, the active participation of the 40th ARRS ceased. The force of tired and disappointed crews were returned to Udorn that night.

(S) DUDLEY 02: On 16 February, two crewmembers of an F-4D bailed out in eastern Laos. Two Jolly Greens scrambled and both crewmembers were rescued less than two hours after bailout.

(S) WITCHDOCTOR 05: On 5 March, an Army UH-1 helicopter was shot down in eastern Laos with 7 people on board. A last-light run-in was attempted but intensive AAA and small arms fire precluded any rescues. The survivors were rescued by a U.S. Army ground team on 7 March.

~~10~~ BATTLE CRY 315: On 13 March, an A-7 pilot ejected in the Lam Song 719⁵ area. Two Jolly Greens were scrambled and went to an orbit area near the survivor. It was decided to use the Jolly Greens from the 37th ARRS, also in the orbit area, for the attempted run-in. There was no further participation by the 40th ARRS in this mission.