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HISTORY

OF

3D AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY GROUP
AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE (MAC)
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
TAN SON NHUT AB, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

1 JULY - 30 SEPTEMBER 1966

RCS: AU-D5 (ARRS)

Howard L. Hall
HOWARD L. HALL
Captain, USAF
Historian

Arthur W. Beall
ARTHUR W. BEALL
Colonel, USAF
Commander

MICROFILMED
Project: CHICO
19 OCT 70

DECLASSIFIED
REF: DOD Directive 5200.1R, para 3-201
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By: *James J. Dupre*
JAMES J. DUPRE, MAJOR, USAF

GROUP 4
Downgraded at 3 year intervals
Declassify

VHPA 180

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3d ARRGp Hist, Jul-Sept 66

1. (U) UNIT: The official designation of this organization is 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group. It consists of a Joint Search and Rescue Center (JSARC), two Rescue Coordination Centers (RCC) and two Squadrons (ARRSq).
2. (U) PERIOD OF HISTORY: 1 July thru 30 September 1966.
3. (U) STATION: Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam.
4. (U) ASSIGNMENT: 3d ARRGp is assigned to the Pacific Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (MAC) and comes under the operational control of the Commander, 7th Air Force. The 3d ARRGp exercises control over the following units:

Joint Search and Rescue Center (JSARC), Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN

Det 1, 3d ARRGp (RCC), Danang AB, RVN

Det 2, 3d ARRGp (RCC), Udorn AB, Thailand

37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (37 ARRSq), Danang AB, RVN

Det 1, 37 ARRSq, Udorn AB, Thailand

38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (38 ARRSq), Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN

The 38th ARRSq controls the following Detachments:

Det 1, 38 ARRSq, Phan Rang AB, RVN

Det 2, 38 ARRSq, Takhli AB, Thailand

Det 3, 38 ARRSq, Ubon AB, Thailand

Det 4, 38 ARRSq, Korat AB, Thailand

Det 5, 38 ARRSq, Udorn AB, Thailand

Det 6, 38 ARRSq, Bien Hoa AB, RVN

Det 7, 38 ARRSq, Danang AB, RVN

Det 8, 38 ARRSq, Cam Ranh Bay, RVN

Det 9, 38 ARRSq, Pleiku AB, RVN

Det 10, 38 ARRSq, Binh Thuy AB, RVN

Det 11, 38 ARRSq, Tuy Hoa AB, RVN (designated but not operational)

Det 12, 38 ARRSq, Nha Trang AB, RVN

Local Base Rescue Flight (LBR), Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN

5. (U) COMMANDER: Arthur W. Beall, Colonel, USAF.

6. (U) MISSION: To provide for Commander, 7th Air Force, PACAF, a Recovery Operations Center to plan for, coordinate and control personnel and/or material recovery operations in support of SEA in PACAF area of responsibility; provide technical supervision for the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons and Detachments within its geographical area of responsibility.

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To provide a 24 hour Rescue Coordination Center (JSARC) and provide supervision of two ARR Squadrons which in turn (are programmed to) have 13 Detachments. The primary mission deals with the recovery of aircrew members; the secondary mission is to provide Local Base Rescue for air bases where tactical aircraft are stationed.

7. (U) OPERATIONS:

a. (U) The Commander, 7th Air Force has search and rescue (SAR) responsibility in the Southeast Asia sub region. This sub region includes the Saigon, Bangkok and Rangoon Flight Information Regions (FIRs) which encompasses the countries of Republic of Vietnam (SVN), North Vietnam (NVN), Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma and waters within the FIRs. Commander 7th Air Force discharges his SAR responsibility for the Bangkok and Saigon FIRs through the Commander, 3d ARRGp who in turn commands the Joint Search and Rescue Center. The JSARC is designated the central coordination agency for all SAR activity within the 7th Air Force's area of responsibility. A "contingency" Rescue Coordination Center is being organized under the Commander, 631 Combat Support Group, Don Muang Airport, Thailand and it will be responsible for SAR efforts within the Rangoon FIR. This contingency RCC will be under the control of the 7th Air Force/3d ARRGp. Although the JSARC has responsibility for coordination of SAR activity within a very broad area, its primary mission is to direct the recovery of downed aircrews in the combat zone of NVN, Laos, SVN and the Gulf of Tonkin. 3d ARRGp aircrews in carrying out this mission have retrieved approximately 85% of those downed airmen declared rescue opportunities in this quarter.

b. (U) The phrase number of rescue opportunities is defined as that number of times when an incident occurred wherein rescue was requested to respond and the best intelligence available indicated a rescue was feasible within equipment capability. A combat save is any save made as a result of action by hostile forces or personnel retrieved from a hostile area. A non-combat save is any save made that resulted from incidents not directly caused by hostile actions and a hostile environment was not involved. By month the figures were:

| | <u>COMBAT RESCUE OPPORTUNITIES</u> | <u>COMBAT SAVES</u> | <u>NON-COMBAT SAVES</u> |
|-----------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| July | 54 | 44 | 2 |
| August | 24 | 19 | 7 |
| September | <u>39</u> | <u>37</u> | <u>3</u> |
| Total | 117 | 100 | 12 |

Note: Of those 17 opportunities not recovered by rescue, 6 were believed captured, 10 were picked up by other friendly aircraft and one drowned in the Gulf of Tonkin.

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c. (U) The 3d ARRGp headquarters, Joint Search and Rescue Center (JSARC) and the 38 ARRSq are co-located in the same building adjacent to the 7th Air Force complex at Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam. Colonel Beall, in addition to commanding the 3d ARRGp, is a member of the 7th Air Force battle staff. Within the Group headquarters, Lt Col Marlon D. Wasemiller has been the Chief of the JSARC since the rotation of Lt Col Donald F. Karschner, August 15, 1966. The JSARC is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by an officer controller and an enlisted controller. During each shift a radio operator is also on duty. Daily the officer controllers receive tactical operations plans from the USAF and USN for the next day's activities and after careful analysis preposition their rescue forces accordingly. The JSARC has two Rescue Coordination Centers (RCC) under its control at Udorn and Danang. Each RCC is fully capable of handling all rescue operations in its area. JSARC Representatives provide SAR briefings for new aircrews and for pilots aboard USN carriers as they arrive in the theater. In addition the senior controller gives a daily morning briefing on all SAR activity for the past 24 hours to the 7th AF Commander and his staff.

d. (U) To accomplish the combat rescue mission, 3d ARRGp stages HH-3 helicopters from Udorn at forward operating locations/bases to be immediately available should an aircraft go down; an HC-130 control aircraft from Udorn flies daylight orbit over Laos carrying an Airborne Mission Commander (AMC) who is prepared to assume control over the Search & Rescue Task Force when launched by the JSARC. Danang HU-16s fly daylight orbit off the coast of NVN. The HU-16 will land (sea state permitting) and recover downed airmen or remain over their position while the AMC coordinates the recovery by other means. HH-3 helicopters from Danang or their forward operating locations stand by for rapid reaction to search and rescue missions as directed by the JSARC.

e. (U) HH-43 helicopters of the 3d ARRGp are located at 12 air bases in SEA that have tactical aircraft to provide crash rescue and aircraft fire suppression within close proximity of the base. Also, some of the HH-43s are configured with self sealing tanks, auxiliary fuel tanks, and armor plating. This gives them a combat rescue capability in addition to their local base rescue function.

f. (U) Rescue aircraft perform emergency medical evacuations when directed by proper authority. The U.S. Army is usually able to air evacuate their own wounded from combat areas; however, rescue helicopters frequently are required to evacuate wounded soldiers from areas inaccessible to Army helicopters.

g. (U) Lt Col John A. Price assumed command of the 38th ARRSq 4 September 1966. He filled the position vacated by Lt Col James L. Blackburn who had previously departed for the CONUS. Shortly after his arrival Lt Col Price visited all his detachments in Thailand except Takhli. In SVN, he visited the detachments at Bien Hoa and Binh Thuy.

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h. (U) Detachment 1, 37 ARRSq located at Udorn and commanded by Lt Col Manyard R. Rhoades was declared operationally ready on 4 July 1966. This unit reports directly to the 3d ARRGp Commander. Present plans envision the detachment eventually becoming a squadron. At this time, four HC-130 aircraft are assigned; however, the unit will have a total of eleven when up to strength.

i. (U) During the early morning hours of 8 July 66, the enemy launched a mortar attack against Binh Thuy AB, Vietnam. Aircraft number 59-1587 (HH-43B) assigned to Det 10, 38 ARRSq received a direct hit and was completely destroyed. Aircraft number 62-4560 (HH-43F) was damaged and approximately 1,000 manhours were required to repair it.

j. (U) On 1 Sept 66 an HH-3E helicopter (64-14227) assigned to Det 5, 38 ARRSq on a flight to a classified destination undershot the landing area on final approach and crashed on a mountain top. One of two passengers aboard was killed; the other passenger and the three crew members suffered only minor bruises. The accident investigation board listed the primary cause of this major accident as: Pilot error in that he underestimated flight planning factors on final approach allowing the main rotor RPM to decrease to a point that a recovery or safe landing could not be accomplished. Aircraft was declared not reparable.

k. (U) An HH-43F (63-9712) from Det 6, 38 ARRSq was shot down by heavy ground fire during medical evacuation mission 6-38-118-25 August. After making a controlled crash, the crew was recovered with only minor injuries. The HH-43 was eventually picked up by an Army CH-47 helicopter and taken to Tan Son Nhut for repairs.

l. (U) On 27 August 1966 an officer assigned to Detachment 1, 37 ARRSq was involved in a ground accident. Returning to Udorn AB from town on his motorcycle, the officer was struck from behind by a truck driven by a Thai national. He was thrown backwards but his left leg was pinned underneath the motorcycle which was dragged by the truck for approximately 30 feet causing a compound fracture of his leg. The officer was subsequently air evacuated to Korat AB, Thailand and later to Clark AB, PI for surgery and hospitalization. Officer was wearing an approved helmet, chin strap fastened, and leather boots which prevented further injury. He had not been drinking and in the opinion of the investigator was not at fault.

m. (U) During the period of this history, the aircraft assigned to the 3d ARRGp were operationally ready 85.4% of the time. The 14.6% of time not operationally ready were contributed to 6.8 NOR (M) and 7.8 NOR (S). The NOR (S) rate has been creeping upward due to a lack of spares in the system for our HH-3E aircraft, the extended pipeline and the time involved for depot maintenance of reparable items.

n. (U) Members of the 3d ARRGp have been awarded one Air Force Cross, two Purple Hearts, sixteen Silver Stars, forty Distinguished Flying Crosses, 1x Bronze Stars, fifty seven AF Commendation Medals and 246 Air Medals.

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Det 1-3-48-25 July

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(U) Two survivors of a crashed Marine H-34 helicopter were picked up by a rescue HH-43 and flown to Dong Ha. Enroute to the crash site (11 miles NE of Dong Hoi), rescue aircraft encountered ground fire but received no hits; one deceased crew member was also retrieved from the crashed H-34.

Det 1-3-50-27 July

(U) An F-105 pilot ejected in an area west of Dong Hoi. The pilot's wingman gave a distress call and two HH-3Es with RESCORT were dispatched for pickup. On reaching the scene, voice contact was established with the downed airman and the rescue helicopter told him to release a smoke grenade. The survivor was recovered uninjured by hoist/penetrator and returned to Quang Tri.

Det 1-3-52-28 July

(U) A single HH-43 helicopter with two A-1Es as RESCORT launched from Pleiku to the site of a crashed aircraft near Dak To. On reaching the scene, the rescue helicopter lowered the Pararescue Specialist to the ground and he recovered two survivors via the forest penetrator. Both were in considerable pain and were immediately evacuated to Dak To for medical attention. Search for other survivors was suspended due to weather and darkness. Two HH-43s returning at first light the next morning, located the site in heavy undergrowth when one of the injured airman fired a colored flare. One survivor paralyzed from the waist down was helped by the Pararescue Specialist into the litter and hoisted aboard but the other was pinned in the crashed aircraft and could not be immediately recovered. Members of the Army security force arrived in the area after a short time and assisted the two Pararescue men in getting the injured pilot out of the wreckage. He was hoisted up without incident and flown to the aid station at Dak To. After retrieving the Pararescue men, the two survivors were flown to Pleiku Army hospital. Though in critical condition both are expected to recover.

Det 2-3-91-31 July

(U) Two HH-3s and four A-1Es (RESCORT) scrambled from Nakhon Phanom to pickup the downed pilot of an A-1E southwest of Dong Hoi. Arriving in the area, the RESCORT dropped white phosphorous bombs between the pilot and the enemy to screen the rescue helicopter during the pickup. The low HH-3 hovered over the pilot for ten minutes, hampered by the fact that a 200 foot hover was necessary above the pilot, who had lashed himself to a branch of the tree he had landed in. The branch was threatening to break due to rotorwash and the helicopter could not come down without dislodging the pilot. He eventually untied himself and reached the lowered tree penetrator and was brought up to the helicopter. During the recovery the A-1E fighter placed ordnance on enemy concentrations and prevented them from interfering with the pickup.

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Det 9-38-23-13 August

(U) Two HH-43 helicopters from Pleiku were escorted by armed UH-1s to a mountainous area to evacuate wounded Army soldiers. Each helicopter picked up one injured soldier using the stokes/litter hoist and brought him to the hospital at Pleiku.

Det 12-38-5-13 August

(U) An Army O-1E crashed in the vicinity of Nha Trang. The search force consisted of 2 HH-43s, 2 F-4Gs, 3 Army O-1Es and 2 UH-1Ds. An Army O-1E located two survivors and was fired on during his identification pass. Despite sporadic enemy fire two successful hoist pickups were made by the primary rescue helicopter. The two survivors were returned to Nha Trang and appeared to be in excellent condition.

Det 9-38-25-14 August

✓(U) Two HH-43s were escorted to Chu Pong mountain by UH-1s to air evacuate seriously wounded soldiers. The pickups took place at night in conjunction with a flare ship in poor weather conditions. To pinpoint their location the ground personnel vectored the SAR forces in on FM radio by visual sighting and flashlights. Two wounded were hoisted aboard one helicopter and three were hoisted aboard the other for hospitalization at Pleiku.

• Det 9-38-26-16 August

(U) A hoist equipped helicopter was required to extract some wounded soldiers from the jungle. Two UH-1 gunships escorted two HH-43 helicopters to Chu Pong mountain to evacuate wounded soldiers the Army helicopters could not reach. On arrival in the area two litter patients and one killed in action were hoisted aboard the primary helicopter. The pararescueman was recovered by the secondary HH-43 and both helicopters recovered at the field hospital at Oasis.

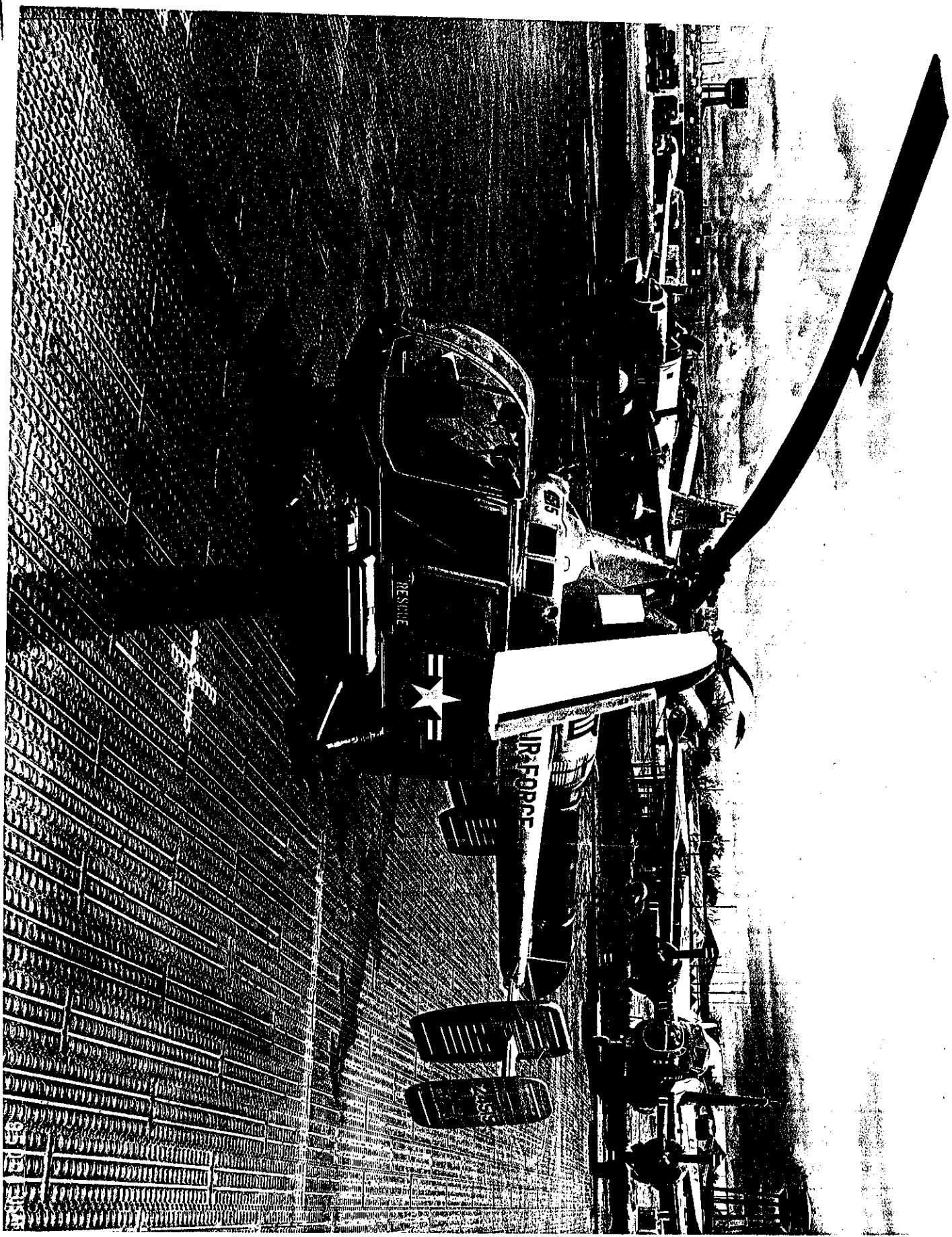
Det 9-38-27-17 August

(U) Two UH-1 gunships escorted two HH-43 helicopters to Chu Pong mountain. The rescue helicopters retrieved three men (one combat wounded and two others) from the jungle and evacuated them to Pleiku hospital. No hits were taken by the rescue force although there was much firing on the ground during the pickup.

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HH-43 rescue helicopter of Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam 1965
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8. (U) Personnel. Key Personnel.

3d ARRGp, Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN.

Colonel Arthur W. Beall

Lt Col Marlon D. Wasemiller

Lt Col William A. Ryan Jr.

Major William C. Opfer Jr.

Major Maurice E. Johnson

Captain Franklin A. Lamb

Captain George M. Chastain, III

Captain John F. Hagemeister

1st Lt Robert C. Stanford, Jr.

CMSgt Robert T. Hamilton

MSgt Roger F. Clark

TSgt Richard D. Smith

SSgt John W. Veney

38th ARRSq, Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN.

Lt Col John A. Price

Major Donald J. Passmann

Capt Richard H. Smith

1st Lt George Hodges, Jr.

1st Lt Charles W. Carey

1st Lt Jesse W. Jackson, Jr.

SMSgt Jerry Taylor

MSgt Horace E. Todd, Jr.

MSgt Truxton Deane

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Commander

Chief, JSARC

Group Operations Officer

Chief of Maintenance

Information Officer

Chief of Safety

Flight Surgeon

Chief, Admin Services

Chief of Supply

Maintenance Supervisor

NCOIC, Operations

NCOIC, JSARC

NCOIC, Supply

Commander

Operations Officer

OIC LBR Flight

Maintenance Officer

Supply Officer

Admin/Personnel Officer

NCOIC LBR

First Sergeant/NCOIC Personnel

Maintenance Supervisor

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| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| MSgt Robert E. Lockwood | 3rd ARRGp Hist, Jul-Sep 66 |
| TSgt Joseph L. Clethen | NGOIC Operations |
| <u>37th ARRSq, Danang AB, RVN.</u> | NCOIC Supply |
| Lt Col Alan R. Vette | Commander |
| <u>Det 1, 37th ARRSq, Udorn RTAB, Thailand.</u> | |
| Lt Col Manyard R. Rhoades | Commander |
| <u>Det 1, 3d ARRGp, Danang AB, RVN.</u> | |
| Major James K. Frank | Commander |
| <u>Det 2, 3d ARRGp, Udorn RTAB, Thailand.</u> | |
| Major Thomas F. Larson | Commander |
| <u>Det 1, 38th ARRSq, Phan Rang AB, RVN.</u> | |
| Capt Larry A. Nitz | Commander |
| <u>Det 2, 38th ARRSq, Takli RTAB, Thailand.</u> | |
| Capt Edwin J. Christy | Commander |
| <u>Det 3, 38th ARRSq, Ubon RTAB, Thailand.</u> | |
| Major John J. Hoyer | Commander |
| <u>Det 4, 38th ARRSq, Korat RTAB, Thailand.</u> | |
| Capt Donald J. Couture | Commander |
| <u>Det 5, 38th ARRSq, Udorn RTAB, Thailand.</u> | |
| Major Owen R. Fletcher | Commander |
| <u>Det 6, 38th ARRSq, Bien Hoa AB, RVN.</u> | |
| Major Maurice G. Kessler | Commander |
| <u>Det 7, 38th ARRSq, Danang AB, RVN.</u> | |
| Lt Col Victor Goudey | Commander |

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Det 8, 38th ARRSq, Cam Rahn Bay AB, RVN.

Capt Joe H. Watson

Commander

Det 9, 38th ARRSq, Pleiku AB, RVN.

Capt Dale R. Tyree

Commander

Det 10, 38th ARRSq, Binh Thuy AB, RVN.

Capt Robert D. Vespico

Commander

Det 12, 38th ARRSq, Nha Trang AB, RVN.

Major Ralph H. Bush

Commander

The 3d ARRGp including all the squadrons and detachments has a total manpower authorization of 1,012 personnel. Assigned officers and airmen total 689 which shows the 3d ARRGp to be 68% manned.

9. Equipment. Mission Aircraft.

Type, Model, Series

Quantity

HH-43B

17

HH-43F

11

HH-3E

11

HU-16

5

HC-130H

4

10. (U) Additional Remarks.

Colonel Allison C. Brooks, Commander, Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Service (MAC) arrived at the 3d ARRGp headquarters 24 August 66. Remaining in SEA until 4 Sept 66, Colonel Brooks visited each unit assigned to ARRS in Thailand and Vietnam. Colonel Donald T. Smith, Commander, PARRC visited 3d ARRGp 4 Sept 66.

11. (U) Appendixes. None

12. (U) Documentation.

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Awards and Decorations

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