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HISTORY OF THE  
FORTIETH AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SQUADRON

1 OCTOBER 1971 - 31 DECEMBER 1971

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United States Air Force  
Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand

Approved By:

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PHILLIP R. GONZALES, Lt Col, USAF  
Commander

AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE

MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND

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VHFA215

## 40th ARRSq History, 1 October - 31 December 1971

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CHRONOLOGY

4 October 1971: MED-EVAC from Phu Bu Communications Site to Ubon

30 October 1971: MED-EVAC from Savannakhet to NKP

31 October 1971: MED-EVAC from NKP to Udorn

16 November 1971: MED-EVAC from NKP to Udorn

19-23 November 1971: ARRS Commander, B/G Frank Everest's First Visit  
to NKP

27 November 1971: MED-EVAC from NKP to Udorn

9 December 1971: MED-EVAC from NKP to Udorn

10-11 December 1971: Ashcan 01 - Bravo Pickup

18 December 1971: Gunfighter 82 - Alpha and Bravo Pickups

19 December 1971: Falcon 74 - Alpha and Bravo Pickups

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## CHAPTER I

### MISSION AND RESOURCES

#### Mission

The mission of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (40th ARRSq) as defined in PACARRM 23-2, 1 December 1969, and 3rd ARRGPR 23-1, 19 May 1969, is to search for, locate, and recover distressed personnel in combat operations in Southeast Asia. Located at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand, the 40th is assigned to and under the control of 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (3rd ARRGp), Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam.

#### Resources

During this quarter, the 40th ARRSq had it's sixth change of squadron commanders in less than 12 months. Colonel William E. Moore, Commander from 11 September 1971 to 20 December 1971, left for the 1550th ATTWg at Hill AFB, Utah, as DCS/Operations. In his place, Lt Col Phillip R. Gonzales, 40th Commander from 15 April 1971 to 25 June 1971, moved from Executive Officer back to Commander on 21 December 1971. Lt Col Clifford E. Brandon is due to report to the 40th the latter part of January and assume command from Lt Col Gonzales.

The following is a roster of other key personnel in the squadron:

Lt Col Charles N. McAllister

Lt Col Anthony E. Holland

Major Clyde E. Bennett

Major Frederick C. Hartstein

Major Robert R. McCutcheon

Operations Officer

Asst Operations Officer

Asst Operations Officer

Standardization Officer

Staff Maintenance Officer

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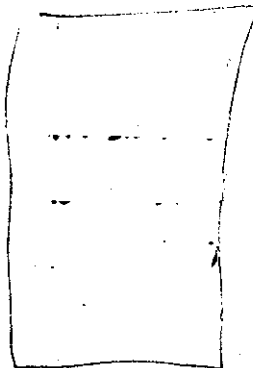
Major Donald L. Michiels

Major Donald L. Rosten

1Lt Percy Joubert, Jr.

Captain David V. Gustafson

MSgt Leon C. Fullwood



Executive Officer

Chief of Safety

Administration Officer

Maintenance Supply Liaison

First Sergeant

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## CHAPTER II

### OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

#### Operations

The 40th ARRSq home alert (North Alert) posture saw several minor changes during the quarter 1 October - 31 December 1971. Two HH-53C aircraft still maintain a sunrise to sunset 15 minute alert posture on a 3-day rotation basis. However, there are now two crews specifically designated as day backup and two more crews who backup our primary Night Recovery System (NRS) crews. At sunset, the primary North crews revert to primary NRS crews with a scramble response time of one hour and 15 minutes.

The scramble procedures for our Forward Operating Location (South Alert) at Ubon RTAFB, Thailand, remain unchanged from the last quarter and are the same as for the Primary North Alert.

The South Alert's area of responsibility almost tripled with the deactivation of the 37th Forward Operating Location (FOL) at Bien Hoa Airfield, Republic of Vietnam. The 40th ARRSq is now responsible for the southern half of South Vietnam, all of Cambodia, and Southern Laos.

Medical Evacuation (MED-EVAC) and Combat Search and Rescue (SAR) activity for the 40th ARRSq increased significantly during the past quarter. There were five combat saves, numbers 131 through 135, two non-combat saves, numbers 183 and 184, and four MED-EVACS, numbers 18 through 21. This acceleration can be attributed to the early onset of the annual dry season. With clearing weather and trace amounts of rain, combat sorties increased hand-in-hand with the step-up of troop and supply movements along the Ho

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Chi Minh Trail, Plaines Des Jarres (PDJ) in Central Laos, and the Bolovens Plateau in South Central Laos. In recent years, SAR activity for the 40th ARRSq peaked in January or even February. However, December developed into the busiest month in almost a year.

Ashcan 01: An F-105, Ashcan 01, was hit by a Surface to Air Missile (SAM) on 10 December 1971 near Mi Gia Pass in North Vietnam; and the ensuing two day SAR effort set the stage for the remainder of the month. Only one pilot was recovered on this mission.

Gunfighter 82 and Falcon 74: On 19 December 1971, Gunfighter 82, an F-4, went down within approximately three miles of the spot where Ashcan 01-Alpha was rescued. Both the Gunfighter pilots were recovered at first light. The same day, our North Alert crews were again scrambled for another F-4, Falcon 66, who had been shot down by a MIG near the Fish's Mouth in North Vietnam. A thorough electronic search for survivors proved fruitless and the Falcon 66 mission was abandoned in lieu of yet one more downed F-4, Falcon 74, also near the Fish's Mouth. Voice contact was immediately established and both survivors' locations were pinpointed. However, the SAR forces were unable to effect immediate pickup due to darkness and a low overcast. After two attempts the following day, the pilots were recovered and returned to Udorn RTAFB, Thailand.

The medical evacuation missions for the quarter included the following:

Mission Number 8-3-032: On 4 October 1971, the Primary NRS crews were launched at dusk from Nakhon Phanom to MED-EVAC an injured person from atop a communications site southwest of Nakhon Phanom. The Night crews

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made a litter pickup from a 100-foot hover as the site would not accommodate the helicopter. The injured person was then flown to Ubon RTAFB, Thailand.

Covey 273: On 30 October 1971, a Covey Forward Air Control (FAC) aircraft crashed while attempting a landing at Savannakhet in West Central Laos. The pilot was killed, but the observer survived with critical injuries. A 40th HH-53C was diverted to Savannakhet and MED-EVACED the survivor to Nakhon Phanom.

Mission Numbers B-3-038, B-3-040, B-3-043, and B-3-044 were all MED-EVACS involving the transportation of Nakhon Phanom personnel to Udorn RTAFB, Thailand.

During the final quarter of 1971, the 40th ARRSq began an extensive sling training and requalification program. By the end of November, all pilots, flight engineers, and pararescue personnel were fully qualified. Additionally, the 37th ARRSq, located at Da Nang Air Field, Republic of Vietnam, sent ten crew members TDY to the 40th for aid in initiating their own sling training.

In early November, ARRS determined that due to the heavy training load at the 1550th ATTWg, Hill AFB, Utah, the 40th would be required to provide NRS training for inbound pilots and helicopter mechanics. Our training schedule was increased by 50% to accomplish the checkout of assigned pilots and those arriving from CONUS.

During the month of December, several missions were flown in conjunction with AC-130 SPECTRE Gunships of the 16803, Ubon RTAFB, Thailand, and with

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the OV-10 PAVE NAIL FACS of Nakhon Phanom's 23rd TASS. These Night SAR evaluations will continue through the next quarter.

During the month of December, one HH-53C aircraft was transferred to the 67th ARRSq at Woodbridge, England, thus leaving the 40th ARRSq with ten HH-53C helicopters.

Operational data for the 4th quarter 1971 is as follows:

	<u>O-1</u>	<u>O-2</u>	<u>O-8</u>	<u>T-3</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
OCT	177.9	37.8	7.8	129.7	353.2
NOV	163.1	73.3	10.7	128.2	375.3
DEC	385.6	49.0	3.7	87.3	526.6

#### Mission Symbols

O-1 Tactical Mission Out of Country  
O-2 Tactical Mission  
O-8 Functional Check Flight  
T-3 Training Flight

#### Training

Qualification of NRS personnel has taken priority in our training endeavors. Other than required upgrades, check rides, and necessary proficiency missions, our efforts toward qualification of assigned pilots and helicopter mechanics kept our training and scheduling sections at peak productivity. In just 60 days, we were able to qualify 90% of the squadron, up from 50% in the NRS. Availability of adequate training sites had been a continuing problem and hampered our capability to turn out qualified personnel. However, through the efforts of the Commander of ARRS, 3 ARRGp,

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and the 40th, we obtained permission to use interim sites.

Aircrew sling qualification and training, initiated this quarter, progressed in an orderly fashion.

A 2,000 lb weight, made of concrete, was air transported to our remote training area at Camp Hunky, 38 miles Southwest of Nakhon Phanom, for use in qualification and currency requirements.

The following crew members were upgraded to the positions noted during this quarter:

Maj Hartstein	Flight Examiner
Capt Jones	Flight Examiner
Capt Paul	Flight Examiner
Maj Bennett	Instructor Pilot
Maj Rosten	Instructor Pilot
Maj Daus	Instructor Pilot
Maj Ernest	Instructor Pilot
Maj MacDonald	Instructor Pilot
Capt McIntyre	Instructor Pilot
Maj Rogers	Aircraft Commander
Maj Gamble	Aircraft Commander
Capt Robben	Aircraft Commander
Capt MacAulay	Aircraft Commander
Capt Demmons	Aircraft Commander
Capt Summers	Aircraft Commander
Sgt Burdett	Flight Examiner/Flight Mechanic

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Sgt Stagliano	Instructor Flight Mechanic
SSgt Dearman	Instructor Flight Mechanic
MSgt Schmidt	Flight Examiner Pararescue
TSgt Neal	Flight Examiner Pararescue
SSgt Mutschler	Instructor Pararescue
SSgt Bryant	Instructor Pararescue
Sgt Jenkins	Instructor Pararescue

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### CHAPTER III

#### FORWARD OPERATING LOCATION (FOL)

During the past quarter, the 40th ARRSq FOL operations and maintenance at Ubon RTAFB, Thailand, remained basically unchanged. We continued to maintain two aircraft on 15 minute day alert with four pilots, six enlisted crew members, and two maintenance personnel. The flight crews rotated every three days while the maintenance people rotated on a 60-day basis. The requirement for a separate FOL Officer-In-Charge was deleted in November. The senior ranking officer with the alert crews now assumes this responsibility.

The FOL's increased SAR area of responsibility discussed in Chapter II (Operations) has also increased the number of scrambles. There were 12 scrambles this quarter, resulting in one crew evacuation from Cambodia. In short, the alert posture at Ubon RTAFB, Thailand, has become a crucial part of our SAR efforts and the increased responsibility is being shared by all echelons in the Squadron.

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#### CHAPTER IV

##### MAINTENANCE AND SUPPLY

During this quarter, the Maintenance Branch's HH-53 aircraft flew 511 sorties, which required 1254.1 flying hours. This was approximately 64.3% of the flying hour program.

The HH-53 Operationally Ready (OR) rates for the three months were 81.6%, 82.2%, and 79.3% respectively, while cannibalizations totaled 57. There were 34970 direct manhours expended for HH-53 aircraft, which equates to 27.9 manhours per flying hour (MH/FH). This is considerably above the standard of 20MH/FH. These manhours appear excessive due to extensive maintenance required to maintain the aircraft and an arbitrary standard developed before experience was gained on the aircraft.

##### PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

	<u>CANNIBALIZATIONS</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>CANNIBALIZATION/SORTIES</u>
	HH-53C	HH-53C	HH-53C
OCT	13	140	10.8
NOV	15	176	11.7
DEC	29	195	6.7

##### MORS RATES

	HH-53C
OCT	3.0
NOV	0.7
DEC	1.5

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## CHAPTER V

### ADMINISTRATION

This quarter saw a great increase in efficiency and productivity for the Unit Administrative Section. This was largely due to the assignment of a Master Sergeant, AFSC 70270, in September, and an exceptionally well qualified Staff Sergeant, AFSC 70270, in October, and our first full-time Administrative Officer in November. This increased management capability has decreased the response time for routine typing from two or three days to two or three hours. Assignment of specific functions to assigned personnel has allowed greater emphasis on Publications, Forms, and Documentation Management, resulting in much more effective programs in these areas. During November, we assumed the added workload of typing recommendations for awards and decorations. This task was formerly accomplished by para-rescue personnel assigned additional duty in the Awards and Decorations Section. This change was made due to a shortage of pararescuemen and a high error return rate. A significant decrease in the error return rate has been evident and we have absorbed this additional requirement with no adverse effect on our other functions.

Accomplishment of OERs continues to be a problem. This is primarily due to the following factors:

1. The quality of AF Forms 77 available to this unit is far below acceptable standards. The margins of the top, bottom, and sides of the forms vary and this makes it extremely difficult to line the forms up. Consequently, the typing on the carbon copies oftentimes exceeds the space provided in the various blocks and the report must be reaccomplished.

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2. The quality of typewriter maintenance, and time required for repair, caused us at times to have only one typewriter that could be used to accomplish OERs. There seems to be no cure for this because the contract work is done by Thai nationals on a bid basis for each required work request.

3. Personnel responsible for processing the OERs at higher headquarters are too critical and reject too many reports for minute errors or debatable wordage. Consideration should be given to the fact that we are in a war zone and our materials and equipment are not up to state-side standards.

#### PERSONNEL

Total manning for this quarter was the lowest recorded so far this year. The enlisted ranks were authorized 197 slots, at the end of this quarter 176 slots were filled. Officer manning was down to 82% due to the incredibly large losses of early December. However, MAC and all higher echelons are doing their best to bring unit manning to the 100% level we have been accustomed to.

At the end of December, maintenance AFSC's were completely manned with projected gains. These people should be arriving about the middle of January. The only real problem has been in AFSC 462X0 where we are authorized five people and have only one assigned. The projection of two gains in January and the help of manning assistance from our sister squadron at Da Nang will bring the manning to 80% by late that month.

Aircrew manning for this quarter has been steadily falling. This was due to normal losses in pararescue manning with no appreciable gains to cover

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those losses. Headquarters MAC assured us that we will receive those necessary gains by late January. Pilot manning dropped to 90% since early December. Projected gains beginning in February will bring us to the 100% mark once again. Flight Engineers, AFSC M43150C, are experiencing a "fat" period. Present assigned manning has them overmanned by one position.

The following is a breakdown of the squadron manning by AFSC at the end of this quarter:

<u>AFSC</u>	<u>AUTHORIZED</u>	<u>ASSIGNED</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
1025F	32	25	78
1025C	6	7	100
40XX	2	2	100
6424A	1	1	100
7034	1	1	100
10090	1	0	0
271X0	4	4	100
293X0	3	3	100
301X0	7	8	100
301X1	6	8	100
301X4	7	6	85
301X5A	2	2	100
325X0	6	5	83
39150A	2	2	100
421X2	4	5	100

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<u>AFSC</u>	<u>AUTHORIZED</u>	<u>ASSIGNED</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
421X3	4	3	75
423X0	5	5	100
43191	5	4	80
X431X0B	9	7	77
43150C	49	46	93
A431X0C	15	16	100
432X0	12	11	91
462X0	5	1	20
534X0	2	2	100
535X0	2	2	100
645X0	2	2	100
702X0	9	8	88
732X0	1	1	100
75172	1	1	100
A923X0	34	23	67

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CHAPTER VI

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

During this quarter the following decorations were submitted for approval:

Air Force Cross	2
Silver Star	5
Distinguished Flying Cross	37
Air Medal	63
Bronze Star Medal	6
Air Force Commendation Medal	16

During this quarter the following decorations were awarded:

Distinguished Flying Cross	6
Air Medal	13
Bronze Star Medal	1
Air Force Commendation Medal	2

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## CHAPTER VII

### SAFETY

The 40th ARRSq had one aircraft incident this quarter in 1254.1 flying hours. There was no reportable ground safety injuries during the period. There was one explosives incident.

On 11 October 1971, a 40th ARRSq aircraft hit a bird. The bird strike caused a five inch diameter, one and one-half inch dent on the leading edge of the sponson. The damage was found the morning after the flight. Due to the unknown location, altitude, airspeed, and time of the bird strike, no action was required.

On 20 October 1971, a 40th ARRSq aircraft #3 mini gun experienced a cook-off. On the first pass over the gunnery range, the PJ had fired about 100 rounds from #3 gun when the link in the ammo chute broke. This problem was corrected during the next pass over the gunnery range. The #3 gun was again fired at a 45° angle to the right when the gun jammed. During the firing, the spent brass and link collection hopper filled with brass. The right hopper chute was on the aircraft ramp preventing the expended brass and links from expelling through the chute. In addition, the gun link chute exit was partially blocked by the hopper lip which extends up to it. This blockage caused the expended links to back up in the chute, jamming the gun. The PJ turned off the arming switch and informed the pilot of the jammed gun. About 30 seconds after the gun jammed, a round "cooked" off. After 7 to 9 minutes the PJ removed the safing sector to clear the gun. There was one round halfway in the barrel. He removed the feeder

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delinker to attempt extraction of the round. While he turned to ask the flight engineer for a screwdriver, this round "cooked" off also. Ten minutes thereafter, the weapon was placed in the stowed position. Upon return to base, it was noted that the bolt, which secures the hopper to the gun, was not placed properly to secure the hopper to the gun.

All operators were briefed on the importance of the bolt's function of securing the brass disposal chute to the gun properly. The brass disposal chute must be monitored periodically to prevent excessive brass buildup. The possibility of deleting the use of the brass disposal chute should be considered by higher headquarters. They were also counselled that the cooling time for number 3 gun be increased to 15 minutes prior to attempting to clear a gun jam.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### FACILITIES

#### Squadron Buildings

This quarter, two of our three squadron buildings received major maintenance and repair. The operations facility had new walls installed along the north side of the Training, Standardization, Scheduling, and Executive offices. Also, the main flight crew briefing room and lounge was completely repainted along with replacement of its south wall. Additionally, cement drainage ditches were built around the building's perimeter in hopes of reducing the flooding during the rainy season.

The Pararescue offices and storage rooms had new door locks and barred windows installed as a security improvement measure.

The Maintenance facility had a general interior face lifting with the construction of five new offices. They included rooms for aircrew - maintenance debriefing, supply/material, maintenance analysis, maintenance training, and a new armament shop.

#### Enlisted Barracks

The enlisted living quarters also had several major additions and repairs completed this quarter. Perhaps the most appreciated new addition was the "VALLEY LOUNGE." The entire job was accomplished with 40th personnel acting as plumbers, electricians, carpenters and material procurement specialists or "scavengers." At the same time, the "VALLEY" picnic area, located within the confines of the barracks, received several new tables and a horseshoe pit.

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The latrines in the "VALLEY" received new fixtures, and the shower rooms were painted.

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## CHAPTER IX

### PEDRO

#### Local Base Rescue (LBR) Mission

The mission of the Pedro Section of the 40th ARRSq, Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand, is to operate and maintain search and rescue equipment to accomplish aircrew recovery, local base rescue, and evacuation missions as directed. The geographical area of responsibility for aircrew recovery is an action radius of 75 miles. The radius of action of local base rescue response with the Fire Suppression Kit, which is the primary mission, is 15 miles.

#### Facilities

Several improvements were made to the LBR Flight alert facility and to the lounge of building T-2291. All projects completed during this period were self-help projects except for the construction of new alert "aircraft cocked" signs, which were completed by Civil Engineering. Our alert facility offices were all painted and our patio roof fiberglass skylights were removed and replaced with new galvanized metal. The skylights had leaked badly during rainstorms. The tool crib in hanger T-17 was completed and new shelves were constructed. All alert area tow lines and caution circles were repainted on the alert ramp. A new wind sock was constructed and installed on the peak of the hanger roof. Our paint, grease, and oil bulk storage area was rebuilt and painted. The lounge of building T-2291 was repainted and panelled and various new entertainment equipment installed.

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Among the list of future projects, will be completion of our new cement apron around the alert pads, removal of the old parachute tower, and reseeding of the lawn areas. More painting and general repairs will be made on a continuing basis.

#### Operations

The following table reflects the unit flying time for the quarter:

<u>MISSION</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>FLYING TIME</u>
Intercepts	133	33.3
SAR Recovery & MED-EVAC	0	0.0
Base Support	15	11.6
Training	110	134.7
Maintenance	14	9.6

#### Maintenance and Supply

This past quarter the 40th's two HH-43 aircraft flew 272 sorties totaling 189.2 hours or 105.1% of their flying hour program. There were 4069 direct maintenance manhours expended (21.5MH/FH). Cannibalizations for the quarter totaled 6.

#### Performance Statistics

	<u>CANNIBALIZATIONS</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>CANNIBALIZATION/SORTIES</u>
OCT	3	87	29.0
NOV	0	70	0.0
DEC	3	95	31.7

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## NORS Rates

OCT	4.6
NOV	8.3
DEC	8.5

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CHAPTER XI

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- SD #1 SAVES
- SD #2 MAP OF RESCUE LOCATIONS
- SD #3 SQUADRON ROSTER
- SD #4 MISSION NARRATIVES

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MAP OF RESCUE LOCATIONS

1. Ashcan 01 - Bravo Mission
2. Gunfighter 82 - Alpha and Bravo Mission
3. Falcon 74 - Alpha and Bravo Mission
4. MuGla Pass
5. Fish's Mouth

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SQUADRON ROSTER