1994

HISTORY OF THE 20th SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON



1994

History of the 20 Special Operations Squadron

MAJCOM: AFSOC Location:Hurlburt Field, Fl

Wing: 14th Air Commando Wing Type Aircraft: MH-53J

Hours : UNK # Sorties: 40875

Passengers: UNK Cargo: UNK Expended 7.62:UNK .50 cal: UNK

Commander: Lt Col Donald L. Hoover

Senior Enlisted: CMSgt Gregory A. Kebil

Personnel Strength : 60 Officers 475 Enlisted

Commentary: 1994 was s busy year for the 20th with constant deployments and training. Numerous times throughout the year we were located in several places/ countries at the same time and pursued a vigorous OPS tempo for the whole of 1994

Significant Missions: In October we were tasked for a deployment to GuanTanamo Bay, Cuba to support Operation RESTORE DEMOCRACY. This required notification and launch of 14 aircraft and crews within 16 hours. Within 36 hours all aircraft were sitting on alert in Cuba; an outstnading display of professionalism and deication for ops and maintenance alike.

Significant Awards:

Air Force Cross:
Distinguished Flying Cross:
Purple Heart:
Silver Star:
Bronze Star:
Air Medals:

20th Special Operations Squadron History for
1 January 1994 to 31 December 1994

- MISSION -

(U) The mission of the 20th Special Operations Squadron (Green Hornets) is to employ the MH-53J Pave Low, in support of National Command Authorities and higher headquarters-directed operations. Our highly complex mission also includes unconventional warfare (UW) and psychological operations (PSYOPS). The squadron is tasked to conduct day or night adverse weather penetration into hostile or enemy controlled territory to accomplish covert infiltrations, exfiltrations, aerial gunnery support, and reinforcement and resupply of UW forces. Corollary missions include (1) personnel recovery, (2) shipboard operations, (3) medical evacuation, (4) humanitarian and civic actions, (5) photo reconnaissance, and (6) other missions as directed by higher headquarters.

- ORGANIZATION -

(U) The 20 SOS is located at Hurlburt Field, Florida (Eglin Auxiliary Field number nine) and supports numerous deployments worldwide. We have over 550 personnel assigned with over 350 in aircraft maintenance and support, 54 pilots, 64 flight engineers, and 57 aerial gunners. The organization of the squadron falls into seven functional areas; combat readiness, requirements and resources, operations and training, flightline operations, sortie generation, mission logistics, and technical administration.

- OTHER RESOURCES -

(U) Squadron equipment: 14 special operations forces configured MH-53J Pave Low IIIE helicopters outfitted with several specialized weapons, avionics, and alternate insertion and extraction equipment and 2 A- model aircraft for training/ restricted uses. The squadron is projected to possess 24 primary airframes and one more training/restricted use airframe. The aircraft weapons can be configured with the GAU-2A/B 7.62mm minigun and/ or the GAU-18 .50 caliber heavy machine gun in any of the three weapons stations. Avionics and sensor equipment includes : (1) AN/APQ-158 terrain following/terrain avoidance radar, (2) AN/AAQ-18 forward looking infrared sensor (FLIR), (3) CN-1656 ring laser gyro inertial navigation unit, (4) AN/ASN-99A projected map display, (5) RC-RPU-3A global positioning system, (6) AN/APN-221B doppler navigation set, (7) CP-1733/A mission computer, (8) dual 1553B data busses, (9) CV-4081 bus interface unit, (10) AN/ASN-151 symbol generator for both heads-up and heads-down display systems, (11) AN/ALE-40 flare and chaff dispensers, (12) ALR-69 radar warning receiver, (13) ALQ-162 electronics countermeasures system, (14) ALQ-157 infrared countermeasures system, (15) AN/AAR-47 Missile Warning System (16) securable voice and data communications via UHF, VHF, FM, SATCOM, HF, and UHF Have Quick II anti-jam radios, and (17) AN/ARS-6(V) Personnel Locator and Rescue System (LARS). Personal equipment and weapons include: (1) ANVIS-6 (3d generation) and ITT F4949 aviator's night vision imaging systems (night vision goggles), (2) M-9 9mm pistols, (3) GAU-5.56mm assault rifles, (4) M-203 40mm grenade launchers, (5) M-870 12-gauge shotguns, (6) M-79 40mm grenade launchers, (7) kevlar personal body armor, (8) MBU-19/P integrated aircrew/assault chemical defense eye/respiratory protection (AERPs) equipment, (9) helicopter emergency egress device system (HEEDS), (10) PRC-112 survival radio, and (11) SARVIP survival vests.

- ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT -

As of 31 December 1994
(UNCLASSIFIED)

63-3693 Received from KAFB 08 Jan
63-3694 Received from KAFB 14 Oct
67-4994 Received from NADEP 21 Dec
67-4995 Received from NADEP 05 Aug
68-0356 Sent to NADEP May
68-0364
68-0367 Received from NADEP 16 Aug
68-0369 Sent to NADEP 01 Nov
68-0923 Received from NADEP 16 Dec
68-0930 Sent to 21 SOS 07 Jun
68-8284 Sent to NADEP May
69-5785 Sent to NADEP 23 Jul
69-5789 Received from NADEP 15 Jul
69-5790 Sent for SLEP upgrade 12 Jul
69-5791 Received from NADEP 09 Dec
69-5793 Sent to NADEP 17 Feb
69-5794 Sent to 21 SOS 07 Jun
69-5796
70-1625 Received from NADEP 05 May
70-1626 Received from NADEP 27 Aug
70-1629 Received from NADEP 15 Dec
70-1630 Received from NADEP 14 Jan
70-1631 Received from NADEP 14 Oct
73-1649 Sent to 31 SOS 16 Dec
73-1652 Sent to NADEP 23 Jul

- KEY PERSONNEL -
As of 31 December 1994
(UNCLASSIFIED)

RANK/NAME	POSITION
Lt Col Donald L. Hoover	Squadron Commander
CMSgt Gregory A. Kebil	Chief Enlisted Manager
SMSgt Jerry D. Jones	Squadron First Sergeant
Lt Col Robert R. Maldonado	Operations Officer
Major Mark E. Lesage	Assistant Operations Officer
Major Mark A. Clark (USMC)	Assistant Operations Officer
Capt Darrel B. Bach	Squadron Section Commander
Major Larry W. Hudson	Maintenance Officer
Major Lin A. Mack	Chief, Operations Division
Major Mark A. Markwood	Chief, War Readiness Division
Capt David A. House	Chief, Support Division
MSgt Michael S. Sullivan	Flight Engineer Superintendent
MSgt Donald D. Miller	Aerial Gunner Superintendent
CMSgt Robert L. Middleton	Maintenance Superintendent
Capt Matthew J. Shozda	Chief, Standardization and Evaluation Branch
Major Michael W.. Taylor	Chief, Safety Branch
Capt Timothy K. Toomey	Intelligence Officer

- CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS -
(UNCLASSIFIED)

EVENT (DATES)	COMMENTS
Operation Provide Promise (27 Dec 93- 12 Oct 94)	Starting in December 1993 and continuing throughout the year this operation encompassed personnel and equipment usage from it's lowest point of 0 helicopters, 0 aircrews, and 18 maintenance personnel to it's highest point of 2 aircraft, 6 aircrews and 27 maintenance.
Bilateral Training (6-14 Jan)	4 Aircraft with 5 crews for bilateral training at Oceana NAS, Va.
Static Display (10 Jan)	1 Aircraft for Commando Look Program.
Static Display (14 Jan)	1 Aircraft for the visit of General Nishimoto- Chairman of the Joint Staff Counsel of Japan.
Flyover Demonstration (14 Jan)	Maxwell AFB, Al.
Mountain TF/TA Training (14 Jan - 20 Feb)	3 Aircraft with 4 crews at Asheville, N.C.
Flyover Demonstration (18 Jan)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews for the AFSOC Change of Command.
Static Display (21 Jan)	1 Aircraft for the USAF Special Operations School.
Static Display (27 Jan)	1 Aircraft for the USAF Special Operations School.
Joint Resources Training 94-1 (1-18 Feb)	7 Aircraft, 10 crews, and 58 maintenance personnel for training with other service operators at Hunter Army Air Field, Ga.
Static Display (9 Feb)	1 Aircraft for the J-5 Action Officer Visit.
Heavy Weight Test/ Desert (28 Feb- 6 Mar) Operations Training	4 Aircraft, 5 crews, and 35 maintenance personnel to 29 Palms, Ca.
Adaptive Joint Force Package (28 Feb- 21 Apr)	3 Aircraft, 3 crews, 28 maintenance personnel operating from Oceana NAS, with the USS George Washington.
Coronado (7-22 Mar)	2 Aircraft, 2 crews, 25 maintenance personnel to conduct training in Coronado NAS, Ca. with other service SOF personnel.
Joint Resources Training 94-2 (10 Mar-14 May)	Training with other service operators at Fort Bragg, N.C.
Static Display (17 Mar)	For Bell- Boeing CV-22 Team.
DLQ's (15-18 Mar)	2 Aircraft, 3 crews, and 27 maintenance personnel at Oceana NAS, Va.
Bilateral Training (21-24 Mar)	3 Aircraft, 3 crews, 32 maintenance personnel at Lawson Army Air Field, Ga.

training with other SOF personnel.

- CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS -
(continued)
(UNCLASSIFIED)

EVENT (DATES)	COMMENTS
Bilateral Training (22-31 Mar)	4 Aircraft, 4 crews, and 40 maintenance personnel at Pope AFB, N.C. training with other service SOF personnel.
SMOTEC Deployment (23 Mar- 9 Apr)	1 Aircraft and 1 maintenance person to Dahlgren NAS, Va. for SMOTEC testing.
Guppy Flight (30 Mar- 2 Apr)	1 Aircraft, 1 crew, and 15 maintenance personnel at Ft. Campbell Ky. for C-5 load training.
Bilateral Training (10-19 Apr)	3 Aircraft, 3 crews, and 28 maintenance personnel at Camp Gurnsey, Wy. training with other service SOF personnel.
Bilateral Training (4-14 Apr)	3 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. training with other service SOF personnel.
Static Display/ Orientation Flight (22 Apr)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews for 70 USAF Academy Cadets
Bilateral Training (25 Apr)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. training with Air Force SOF personnel.
Bilateral Training (25 Apr)	1 Aircraft with 1 crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for FARP training with 15 SOS.
Bilateral Training (26 Apr)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. training with SEAL Team 1.
Static Display (26-27 Apr)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the Brigadier Generals Orientation Course.
Static Display/ Aerial Demonstration (17 May)	2 Aircraft and 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the Honorable Walter B. Slocombe, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.
Bilateral Training (17 May)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. training with other service SOF.
Bilateral Training (23-26 May)	4 Aircraft with 4 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. supporting the Have Ace Program.
Mountain TF/TA Training (23 May- 17 Jul)	3 Aircraft, 3 crews, and 34 maintenance personnel training at Asheville, N.C.
Static Display (31 May)	1 Aircraft with 1 crew at Warner Robins AFB, Ga. for the MH-53J Branch at the Logistics Depot.

Intrepid Warrior (5-12 Jun)	3 Aircraft, 5 Crews, and 35 maintenance personnel at Ft. Campbell, Ky. training with other service SOF personnel.

- CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS -
(continued)
(UNCLASSIFIED)

EVENT (DATES)	COMMENTS
SMOTEC Support (1-3 Jun)	1 Aircraft and 1 crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. to support SMOTEC testing.
DLQ's (31 May- 4 Jun)	3 Aircraft, 4 crews, and 27 maintenance personnel at Oceana NAS, Va.
Major CAPEX 94 (11-18 Jun)	5 Aircraft, 6 crews, and 42 maintenance personnel at Ft. Bragg, N.C. training with other service SOF and demonstrating our capabilities.
20th Change of Command (10 Jun)	Lt. Col. Donald L. Hoover assumed command of the 20th from Lt. Col. Russell E. Rakip, Jr.
Bilateral Training (20-22 Jun)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. supporting the Have Ace program.
Eroded Mind (20-24 Jun)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. training with other service SOF.
Tricky Teen (24-27 Jun)	2 Aircraft with 3 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. training with other service SOF.
AFSOC Change of Command (23-24 Jun)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field.
DLQ's (21- 24 Jun)	3 Aircraft, 3 crews, and 18 maintenance personnel at Oceana NAS, Va.
Bilateral Training (27, 24 Jun)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. supporting the Have Ace Program.
Test Support (28-29 Jun)	1 Aircraft with crew to support AFSOC C2 testing at Hurlburt.
Static Display (7 Jul)	1 Aircraft and 1 crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the AFSOC JROTC cadets.
Aerial Demonstration (7-8 Jul)	2 Aircraft and 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the AFSOC Commander change of command ceremony.
Joint Resources Training (13-24 Jul)	8 Aircraft, 10 crews, and 57 maintenance personnel at Hunter Army Air Field, Ga. training with other service and Air Force SOF personnel.
Static Display (21 Jul)	1 Aircraft and 1 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the USAF Special Operations School.

Adaptive Joint Force Package (31 Jul- 17 Aug)	3 Aircraft, 4 crews, 32 maintenance personnel operating from New River NAS, N.C. with the USS Ponce.

- CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS -
(continued)
(UNCLASSIFIED)

EVENT (DATES)	COMMENTS
Bilateral Training (01-10 Aug)	2 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. supporting SEAL Team 4 with call for fire, FARP, and other training.
Test Flight (01-07 Aug)	Flights supporting tests for the new VOR/ILS installation at Hurlburt Field.
Test Flight (01-07 Aug)	Flights supporting tests of the band IV missile test evaluation of new expendables at Hurlburt Field.
Static Display (02 Aug)	1 Aircraft and 1 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for NAVSPECWAR.
Aerial Demonstration (08-10 Aug)	2 Aircraft and 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. DR. Sheila E. Widnall, the Secretary of the Air Force.
Static Display (09 Aug)	1 Aircraft and 1 crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the Air Force Office of Scientific Research.
Static Display (09 Aug)	1 Aircraft and 1 crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the Commando Look Program.
Orientation Flights (10-11 Aug)	2 Aircraft and 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. supporting the Commando Look Program.
Test Flight (16-18 Aug)	1 Aircraft and 1 crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. supporting the 18th Flight Test Squadron's SATCOM tests.
Orientation Flight (16 Aug)	1 Aircraft and 1 crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the Air Force Inspector General; Lt. Gen. Anderson.
Bilateral Training (23-25 Aug)	2 Aircraft and 4 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. supporting Have Ace.
Distinguished Visitor Flight (25 Aug)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for Maj. Gen. Davis; Army Special Forces commander.
Flight Test (22-25 Aug)	1 Aircraft and 3 crews at Hurlburt Field to support Heavyweight tests.
Static Display (25 Aug)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl.

	for Maj. Gen. Davis; Air Force Intelligence Chief for the Air National Guard and Reserve.
Static Display (25 Aug)	1 Aircraft and crew at Fort Benning, Ga. for the dedication ceremony at the Ranger Memorial.

- CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS -
(continued)
(UNCLASSIFIED)

EVENT (DATES)	COMMENTS
Bilateral Training (28-01 Sep)	5 Aircraft, 6 crews, and 32 maintenance personnel at Fort Campbell, Ky. training with other service SOF personnel on an FTX.
Bilateral Training (06-23 Sep)	3 Aircraft, 4 crews, and 25 maintenance personnel at Camp Lejeune, N.C. training with other service SOF personnel and supporting the Adaptive Joint Force Package.
Bilateral Training (08 Sep)	Hurlburt Field, Fl. training with other SOF personnel for call for fire training.
Cross Country Flight (7-8 Sep)	1 Aircraft, 1 crew, and 1 maintenance person to support USSOCOM visit.
Static Display/ Aerial Demonstration (9-12 Sep)	1 Aircraft, 1 crews and 2 maintenance people at Oceana NAS, Va. Open House/ Air Show.
Static Display (6 Sep)	1 Aircraft at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the 16 Operations Group change of command ceremony.
Bilateral Training (12-14 Sep)	1 Aircraft with 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, training other service SOF personnel in call for fire procedures.
Bilateral Training (12 Sep)	2 Aircraft and 2 crews at Hurlburt Field, providing infil/ exfil training for the Ranger school.
Bilateral Training (13-15 Sep)	2 Aircraft and 4 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. training with other Air Force SOF personnel in craft deployment.
Flight Test (13 Sep)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field supporting flight tests of the upgraded radar altimeter.
Safety Day (16 Sep)	Squadron no fly day to hold safety awareness day.

Restore Democracy (17 Sep- 28 Oct)	12 Aircraft, 16 crews, and 73 maintenance personnel deployed for contingency to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
Provide Promise (12 Oct- 30 Nov)	2 Crews and 18 maintenance to support shortages within the 21st SOS.
Static Display (26 Oct)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the Royal Air Force Squadron commanders.

- CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS -
(continued)
(UNCLASSIFIED)

EVENT (DATES)	COMMENTS
Static Display (27-28 Oct)	1 Aircraft at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for AFSOC life support training.
Static Display (28 Oct)	1 Aircraft and all available personnel at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the retirement ceremony of Chief Jon Knox.
Static Display (31 Oct)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for AFSOC media day.
Flight Test (2 Nov)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field supporting Avionics upgrade testing.
Mountain TF/TA Training (1 Nov- 14 Dec)	3 Aircraft, 3 crews, and 34 maintenance personnel at Asheville, N.C.
Static Display (09 Nov)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the USAF Special Operations School.
Static Display (15 Nov)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the Commando Look Program.
Static Display (15 Nov)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the House Appropriations Committee visit.
Copious Red (16 Nov)	5 Aircraft and 5 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. training with other service SOF personnel.
Static Display (29 Nov)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for the DOXJ capabilities brief.
Provide Promise (30 Nov)	18 Maintenance personnel to support 21st SOS operations.
Distinguished Visitor Flight (5-6 Dec)	4 Aircraft and crews for Dr. Sheila Widnall; Secretary of the Air Force.
Bilateral Training (08-09 Dec)	2 Aircraft and 4 crews from Hurlburt Field, Fl. to Lawson Army Air Field, Ga. training with other service SOF personnel (out and back).

Cross Country (8-11 Dec)	1 Aircraft and crew for instrument training.
Distinguished Visitor Flight (14 Dec)	3 Aircraft and crews for Gen. Rivera; 81 Medical Group CC from Keesler AFB, .
Static Display (19 Dec)	1 Aircraft and 1 crews at Hurlburt Field, Fl. for Congressman elect Scarborough.
Flight Test (20-21 Dec)	1 Aircraft and crew at Hurlburt Field and Eglin AFB testing NVG lighting and new navigation systems upgrades.

- COMMENTARY -

(U) The 20th started the year in support of our sister squadron the 21 SOS in theater operations from San Vito, Italy. As the year progressed this commitment rose and fell reflecting the requirements placed upon us by the 21st. At our highest commitment we had 2 aircraft, 6 aircrews, and 27 maintenance people in December 1993 through October 1994 timeframe, and between 12 October and 30 November we had all personnel available for other operations. On 30 November we were tasked to provide maintenance support again to the 21st.

(U) During April 1994 the Air Force announced that the 20 SOS maintenance branch had earned the 1993 Air Force Maintenance Effectiveness Award for "successful completion of critical support to Operations DESERT SHIELD, DESERT STORM, DESERT CALM, and SOUTHERN WATCH, " and " the unit again exhibited outstanding devotion to the Air Force mission as it provided integral support to Operation PROVIDE PROMISE". General Bailey presented us with the plaque in June..

(U) Our maintenance branch discovered in August that the jettison mechanism on the MH-53J auxiliary tank pylons was inoperative. They immediately established OTI criteria locally and suggested to all H-53 units worldwide as well as depot maintenance to make the necessary inspections as well to prevent catastrophic failure during a critical portion of emergency procedures.

(U) In September the 20th was called upon to support our beliefs in Operation Restore Democracy out of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Within 24 hours of notification we launched 12 aircraft with crews out of 15 available and two spares ready! This is another first for the 20th. While deployed the 20th flew 196 sorties for a total of 716.8 hours in support of this operation. Only the advanced capabilities and mission focus of all personnel involved can produce these types of results.

(U) Also in September the production section of maintenance identified problems with primary servo bolts on the aircraft main rotor head. The identified problems resulted in an Air Force wide OTI for these bolts and prevented numerous gear box problems.

(U) Captain Toomey and TSgt Walters (20 SOS Intelligence shop) deployed on 17 September with the rest of the 20th personnel to support 16 SOW operations in Cuba. Being the 16 SOW representatives they were responsible for all facets of intelligence support during the planning of operation Restore Democracy. Once on site they established coordination with the JSOTF-2 J-2 office and communicated specific information to 16 SOW to support combat operations and developed more pertinent facets of the

evasion and recovery plan for all JSOTF personnel.

(U) In December 1994 the 18th TFS made preparations to attend the 80% critical design review (Jan '95) for the IDAS/MATT system being designed and flight tested for use in the MH-53J. The earlier version of this system the COMANDO/MATT system was a test bed for the new system that is designed to give real time intelligence to the aircrew. IDAS (interactive defensive avionics system) correlates all EW receivers, jammers, and dispensers, and allows up to full automatic control of onboard EW systems using current RWR symbology. The system will have tailored threat parameters that will allow for preprogrammed threats to a given flight plan and real time updates to discovered threats enroute.

- COMMENTARY -
(continued)

(U) The maintenance section again improved in house by identifying numerous national stock numbers for parts that were no longer needed in the war readiness spares kits (WRSK) of the 20th. Action was taken to delete these items from the WRSK and thereby reduce weight, space, and make room available to install more commonly used parts in the WRSK.

(U) 20th Life support this year incorporated the new SARVIP survival vest as part of the repertoire of aircrew equipment. This vest is designed to improve survivability of aircrew members during high "G" crashes and incorporates a single point hook up point for extraction. All crewmembers were outfitted with the new vests early in the year. The new AERPS (Aircrew Eye and Respiratory Protection System) gear was received and inspected by mid year. Procurement and timely acceptance inspections by life support personnel of new Mustang anti-exposure suits this year brought squadron levels to 100%. Life support also obtained several sets of 4949 NVG's. These are designed to enhance aircrew night vision well above the standard for the ANVIS-6 goggles presently in use.

(U) The intelligence section of 20 SOS came into their own this year being a conduit between the 20th, AFSOC, and all the forces we worked with both in training and contingencies. They developed comprehensive challenging scenarios for all 16 SOW forces training throughout the year. Early in 1994 they developed a rapid deployment package that contains pertinent current intelligence to include maps of the affected areas and make establishment of operations in deployed locations smoother and faster. The intelligence personnel have also made a point to deploy to all JRT's this year to activate their packages and upgrade scenario development.

(U) The training section (operations) handled a full upgrade schedule and successfully managed 92 training events. The main focus of training went to AERPS and call for fire certification. Training section personnel managed a 60% increase in these events making the status of these items 80% certified. Training also instituted and managed the "Green Flight" program which was designed to orient new crewmembers to our mode of operations. This program now substantially reduces the training time required to make new crewmembers viable assets to the 20th. Training also managed the new physical training program and ensured 100% of squadron aircrew were tested and could manage the upcoming physical requirements. When training shop was notified that training slots were available at the new simulator in Kirtland AFB, NM they immediately began sending crews for simulator training. While deployed to operation Restore Democracy the training section personnel ensured all pilots were trained in new heavy weight operations

and emergency procedures; reducing risk factors for the operation greatly.

(U) 1994 saw the retirement of 2 Pave Low icons. Chief Master Sergeant Jon Knox and Senior Master Sergeant Richard Pinkowski retired during 1994. Both were engineers from the "initial cadre" (referring to the first group of Hurlburt personnel qualified to fly the modified H-53 after it's arrival in 1980) of Pave Low engineers and were an inexhaustible source of knowledge and experience in the Pave community. Both will be sorely missed.

- COMMENTARY -
(continued)

(U) 1994 Marked the year that TSgt Dale Robinson finished his unofficial history of the 20 SOS. Due to some of the sources used to compile this history and lack of augmented documentation it was necessary to make it unofficial. A copy of this history is included with support documents in this history. TSgt Robinson also co-authored a book for the Special Operations School this year entitled "Air Commando! 1950-1975; 25 Years at the Tip of the Spear.

(U) The 20 SOS had opportunity to host the visit of an MH-53E helicopter this year. This enhancement of the basic H-53 has a much greater gross weight, range, and speed to support customer requirements and leapfrog AFSOF into an entirely new category of heavy lift. Efforts continue to pursue procurement of this aircraft to complement the CV-22.

(U) Testing was conducted by the 18th Flight Test Squadron numerous times this year supported by the 20 SOS and supporting the MH-53J airframe and the SOF community. Enhancements include completion of heavy weight testing for the H-53, upgrading maximum gross weight from 42,000 lbs. to 46,000 lbs. Testing of the Kalman filter and other software upgrades were completed and installation began on 5 December. Testing of new NVG's that increase gain by 80k. and have a larger exit pupil lenses was completed by December and resulted in the 16 SOW ordering new goggles to replace existing sets.

The 20 SOS is credited with the following awards:

DATE	AWARD
Mar 1944- Apr 1944	Distinguished Unit Citation (Burma and India)
Jul 1963- Jun 1965	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
Jan 1966- Mar 1966	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ Combat V Device
Mar 1966- Mar 1967	Presidential Unit Citation (Southeast Asia)
Nov 1966- Apr 1967	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ Combat V Device
Jun 1967- Apr 1972	Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross w/ Palm
Jul 1967- Jun 1968	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ Combat V Device
Jan 1968- Aug 1968	Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross w/ Palm
Jun 1968- Jun 1968	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ Combat V Device
Jun 1968- Jun 1969	Presidential Unit Citation (Southeast Asia)
1968- 1968	Vietnam Service Medal (Vietnam Air Offensive Phase III)
1968- 1969	Vietnam Service Medal (Vietnam Air Offensive Phase IV)
Jul 1969- Apr 1971	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (1 SOW)
1969- 1969	Vietnam Service Medal (Vietnam Summer- Fall)
1969- 1969	Vietnam Service Medal (TET 69/ Counteroffensive)
1969- 1970	Vietnam Service Medal (Vietnam Winter- Spring)
Jul 1970- Jun 1971	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ Combat V Device
1970- 1970	Vietnam Service Medal (Southwest Monsoon)
1970- 1970	Vietnam Service Medal (Sanctuary Counteroffensive)
1970- 1971	Vietnam Service Medal (Commando Hunt V)
Sep 1971- Dec 1971	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ Combat V Device
1971- 1971	Vietnam Service Medal (Commando Hunt IV)
1971- 1972	Vietnam Service Medal (Commando Hunt IV)
Jan 1976- Mar 1977	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (1 SOW)
Nov 1978- Mar 1979	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
Jul 1979- May 1980	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (1 SOW)
May 1980- Apr 1982	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (1 SOW)
May 1982- Apr 1984	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
May 1982- Apr 1984	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ Combat V Device (1 SOW)
May 1985- Apr 1987	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (1 SOW)
May 1988- Apr 1990	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (1 SOW)
Dec 1989- Jan 1990	Expeditionary (Panama)
Dec 1989- Jan 1990	Joint Meritorious Unit Award (1 SOW)
Jan 1991- Mar 1991	Joint Meritorious Unit Award (1 SOW)
Apr 1992- Apr 1994	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (16 SOW)

BIOGRAPHY

OF

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT RAFAEL MALDONADO

Lieutenant Colonel Maldonado was born in New York City on March 10, 1954 but soon moved to Bad Tolz, Germany where his father served with the U.S. Army, 10th Special Forces Group. Growing up, Lt Col Maldonado lived in Germany, Venezuela, Peru, and Mexico. He graduated from The Gunnery Preparatory School in 1971 and in 1975 earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from Villanova University, PA. He was commissioned (ROTC) in the United States Marine Corps in 1975.

After commissioning, Lt Col Maldonado attended the Basic School, Marine Corps Base, Quantico, VA graduating as an Honor Student. He completed Undergraduate Helicopter training at NAS Whiting Field, FL, receiving his wings as a Marine aviator in 1977. Following qualification in the CH-53A/D helicopter, he joined the Heavy Marine Helicopter Squadron 462 (HMH-462), Futenma, Okinawa. In 1978, Lt Col Maldonado was assigned to the Heavy Marine Helicopter Squadron 363 (HMH-363) and in 1979, to Helicopter Marine Training Squadron 301 (HMT-301), Tustin, CA. While in the Marine Corps, Lt Col Maldonado served as a CH-53A/D aircraft commander, instructor pilot, flight section leader, functional check pilot, nuclear-biological-chemical(NBC) officer, and flight line division officer.

Lt Col Maldonado left active duty in 1980 to work with Nalco Chemical Company in Corpus Christi, TX as a Chemical Sales Engineer. In 1982, he joined the Burnside-Ott Corporation as a T-34/TH-57 flight instructor for the U.S. Navy at Whiting Field, FL.

In 1983, Lt Col Maldonado joined the United States Air Force and, following qualification training at Kirtland AFB, was assigned to the 20th Special Operations Squadron, 1st Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, FL. He served as an MH-53J Aircraft Commander, Director of Plans and MH-53J planner with the 2nd Air Division Special Mission Plans Section. He was the squadron Executive Officer when he left Hurlburt in 1987 for his next assignment in the Pentagon.

At the Pentagon, Lt Col Maldonado was assigned to Headquarters United States Air Force, Directorate of Special Operations, Deputy

Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations as a Special Operations Staff Officer responsible for all USAF SOF vertical lift forces. In this role, he was instrumental in relocating MH-53J training aircraft to Kirtland and in acquiring USMC CH-53A aircraft for USAF SOF training. On special assignment to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)), Lt Col Maldonado prepared a comprehensive report on USAF SOF training requirements. In 1989, he joined the OASD(SO/LIC) staff as the the Military Assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (SO/LIC). He completed his Pentagon tour as the Director, Air Requirements for the ASD(SO/LIC).

In 1991, Lt Col Maldonado was assigned to the Peruvian Air Command and Staff College in Lima, Peru, as a Foreign Exchange Officer graduating in 1992. While a student, he authored the book Contrasubversion: Realidades y Alternativas, a study on counterinsurgency, in Spanish, for which he was awarded the Joint Service Achievement Medal.

In 1992, Lt Col Maldonado requalified in the MH-53J PAVELOW helicopter at Kirtland AFB and rejoined the 20th Special Operations Squadron as the Assistant Operations Officer and Operations Officer. In these positions he led the unit in over 20 joint exersises and contingency operations including Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, PROVIDE PROMISE/DENY FLIGHT, PROVIDE COMFORT II, SUPPORT DEMOCRACY, and UPHOLD DEMOCRACY.

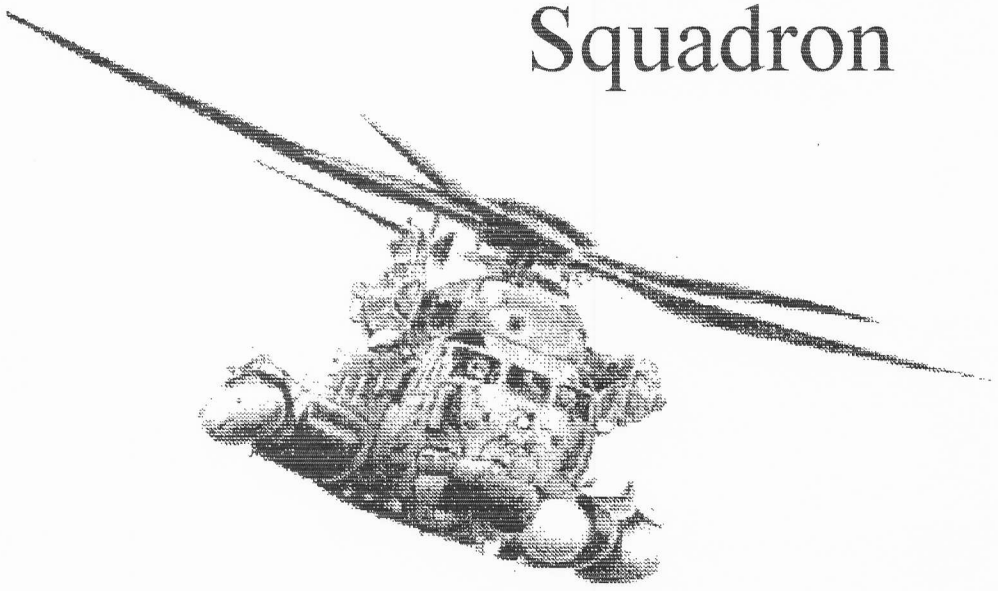
Lt Col Maldonado holds Masters degrees in Management (1979), Business Administration (1980), International Relations (1987) and Religion (1992). He earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Systems Analysis (1987) and Doctor of Jurisprudence in International Law (1992). Lt Col Maldonado completed Squadron Officer School (1985) and Air War College (1995).

Lt Col Maldonado is a Command pilot with over 3000 flying hours in T-34B, T-28B/C, TH-57, UH-1, CH-53A/D and MH-53H/J aircraft. His military decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal, Combat Readiness Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (1OLC), National Defense Service Medal and Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel 1 August 1993.

Lt Col Maldonado is married to the former Ellen Reynolds of Potomac, Maryland. They are delighted to be back in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Lt Col Maldonado's hobbies include running, soccer, painting and reading.

The 20th Special Operations Squadron



An Unofficial History of the Green Hornets

by

TSgt Dale K. Robinson

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20th Special Operations Squadron

16th Special Operations Wing

Air Force Special Operations Command

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January 1995

Pave Low Leads!

FOREWORD

The 20th Special Operations Squadron has served the nation proudly from its beginnings as a humble observation squadron in the 1940s, to combat in Burma against the Japanese, to support of Cold War America's first line of defense, the DEW Line, in Greenland in the '50s, to Southeast Asia in the '60s and early '70s where it acquired the name "Green Hornets", through the lean years of the late '70s and early '80s, to Panama and JUST CAUSE in 1989, to Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf in DESERT STORM and beyond in the 1990s. Since 1976, the 20th has contributed to the proud heritage of its parent unit, the 16th Special Operations Wing. Because of the unique nature of special operations, multiple deployments are common for the 20th; personnel and aircraft may be deployed to several different trouble spots around the world at the same time, leading many 20th personnel to believe that the 16th SOW motto, "Any Time, Any Place" was coined with them in mind.

As part of the Air Force's premier special operations unit, the 20th is often the first to deploy, in the forefront of combat, and often the last to come home. Because of this and the unique abilities of the unit's MH-53J Pave Low IIIE helicopters, the unit has adopted its own motto: "Pave Low Leads!" Nowhere was this more evident than in the Persian Gulf War when the 20th was the first Air Force special operations unit to deploy during Operation DESERT SHIELD and then lead the first attack on Iraq when DESERT STORM kicked off.

I would like to thank the people who have made this manuscript possible. First, former squadron commander Colonel Russ Rakip, who asked me to write this history more than a year ago and current squadron commander Lieutenant Colonel Donald Hoover. Also, I would like to thank squadron historian Staff Sergeant Dave Grossnickle, without whom I could not have done this, also author Wayne Mutza who loaned me his only copy of his article in *Air Enthusiast*, and MSgt Phil Rhodes of the AFSOC Public Affairs Office for his encouragement and help from "The Carpetbaggers" to *Air Commandos! 1950 - 1975: Twenty Five Years at the Tip of the Spear*. I also would like to thank the fine staff of the Simpson Historical Research Center at Maxwell AFB, who patiently located the documents I needed and who reviewed and declassified many Vietnam-era documents for me, and A1C Dale Trainer of the 20th SOS Crewchief Branch for his photographic support.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Katie for her toleration of my "mistress," the computer. Without her love and support, I could not have completed this work.

I began my Air Force career in association with the 20th in 1975 and I am ending it with the 20th some twenty years later. Half my career has been directly involved with the 20th Special Operations Squadron, from crew chief of UH-1N Huey 69-6653 to a multitude of different positions in the MH-53J maintenance force. Most of the other half of my career was spent at Luke AFB, Arizona working on UH-1F/P Hueys that had belonged to the 20th

during the Vietnam War. I have a special attachment to UH-1P 64-15493: I launched it from Luke AFB for its final flight to its resting place as a monument in the Hurlburt Airpark.

I am proud to have been part of the 20th Special Operations Squadron as I conclude my Air Force career and hope that I have left a positive impact upon the squadron and its personnel.

Once a Hornet, always a Hornet!

Dale K. Robinson
January 1995
Hurlburt Field, Florida

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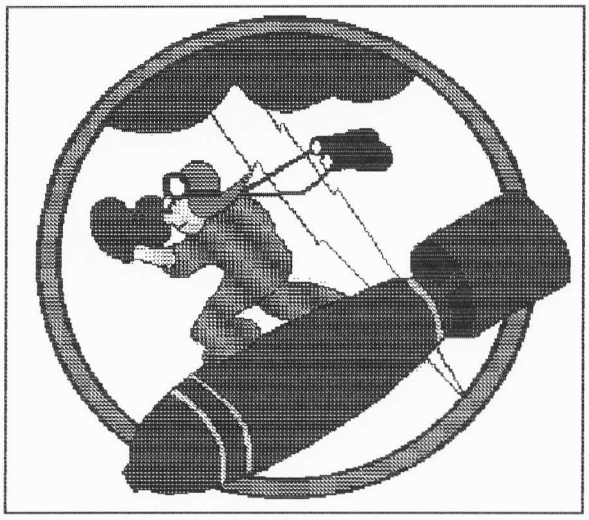
AUTHOR'S NOTE

I have tried to be as accurate and complete as possible, using the sources I could lay my hands upon as I wrote this history. Unfortunately, I could only be as accurate as my sources, which sometimes left out many details. Also, I ran into some walls in my research, walls of secrecy about combat operations in Southeast Asia. Most of the information from the Vietnam War is unclassified today, but because of the secrecy at the time, documentation of many operations was practically nonexistent. Likewise, I was unable to discuss current operations in any detail due to security considerations.

Any other omissions are purely mine.

I would welcome corrections and additions to this history.

THE 20th TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON
WORLD WAR II



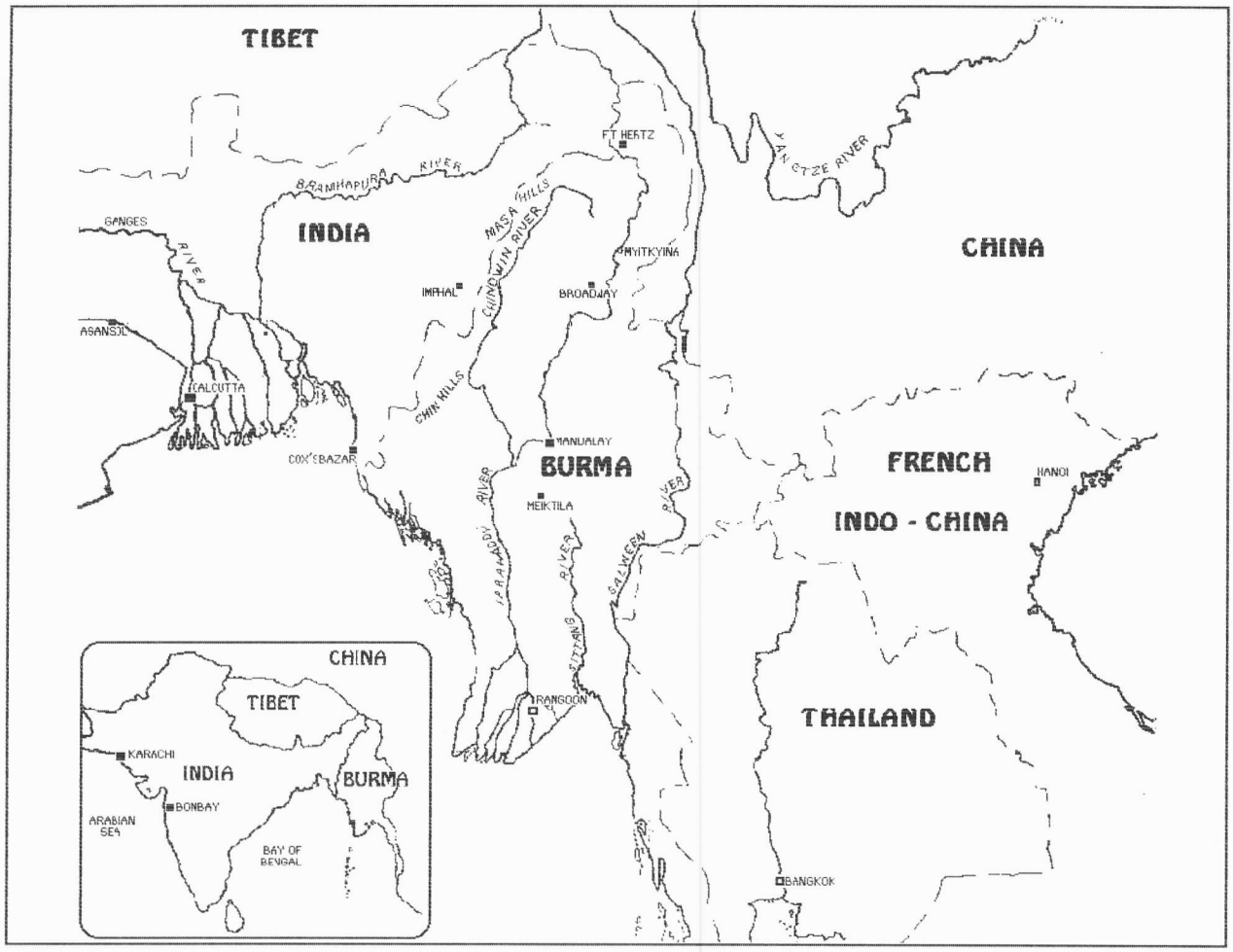
The 20th Observation Squadron (Light) was constituted on 5 February 1942 and activated on 2 March 1942 at Savannah Army Air Field, Georgia. Assigned to the 76th Observation Group on 12 March 1942, the 20th moved to Pope Field, North Carolina on 28 March and remained there until it moved again to Vichy, Missouri on 14 December 1942. On 2 April 1943, the squadron was redesignated as the 20th Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter) and on 08 May 1943, the 20th moved to Morris Field, North Carolina. On 11 August 1943, the squadron was again redesignated and the 20th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron moved to Key Field, Mississippi on 31 August in preparation for deploying over seas. In early November 1943, the squadron began to deploy to the China-Burma-India theater. On 26 December 1943, the 20th arrived in Bombay, India. The squadron relocated to Guskhara, India on 4 January 1944.[1] For the remainder of the war, elements of the 20th operated from various locations throughout India and Burma. From 26 December 1943 to 17 January 1944 the 20th was attached to the 5306th Photographic and Reconnaissance Group (Provisional) and then to 10th Air Force until 7 March 1944. Between March and May, the squadron was attached to the 5320th Air Defense Wing (Provisional), although the squadron was assigned to the 8th Photographic Group from 25 April 1944 until the squadron returned to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and was deactivated on 27 November 1945.

During World War II, the squadron flew the A-20, B-25, DB-7, L-1, L-4, L-5, P-40, P-51 and the F-6. Combat operations had the goal of reopening surface routes to China through Burma, which was held by the Japanese. In the course of the war, the 20th flew 21 missions in support of the 1st Air Commando Group.[2] The 20th's tasks included photographing possible landing sites for airborne glider assaults, including the airborne assault of Operation THURSDAY, the first major combat

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[1] 20th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron History, 1 January 1945.

[2] Ibid.



action undertaken by the 1st Air Commandos in support of British Major General Orde C. Wingate's 2nd Chindit Campaign.

In addition to reconnaissance, the 20th flew leaflet drops, patrols, and escort missions. They also flew bombing and strafing missions, supporting the Allied forces under command of General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell in the Hukwang Valley Campaign to reopen the infamous Burma Road.[3] In 1944 alone, the 20th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron flew 2179 missions, processing nearly a quarter of a million photos while logging 3,999 sorties and 10,040 flying hours.[4]

The 20th was awarded campaign streamers for the India-Burma Campaign, the Central Burma Campaign, and the China Defensive, and a service streamer for the American Theater of operations.[5]

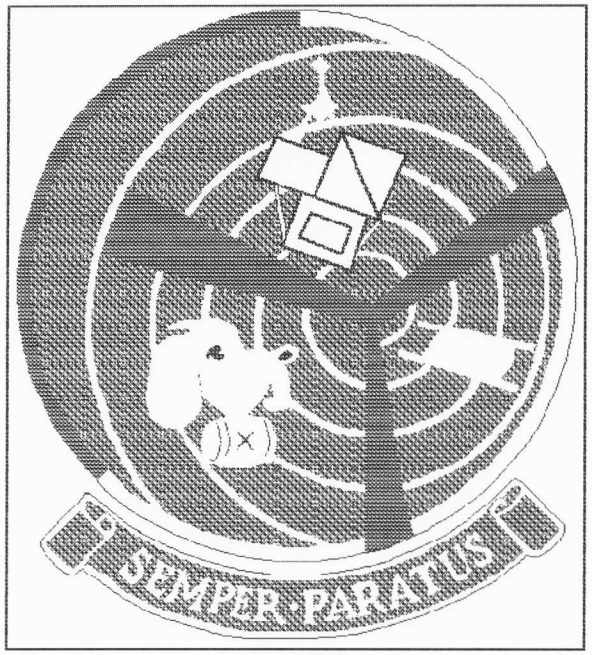
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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] 20th Special Operations Squadron Lineage and Honors, prepared 5 Nov 1985 by the USAF Historical Research Center. Hereafter cited as "Lineage."

THE 20th HELICOPTER SQUADRON
1956-1960



The 20th Helicopter Squadron was activated at Sewart AFB, Tennessee on 9 July 1956, assigned to the 18th Air Force and attached to the 314th Troop Carrier Wing.[6] The 20th was formed by absorbing the personnel, aircraft, and equipment of the 345th Troop Carrier Squadron (Assault, Rotary Wing). The activation of the 20th, as well as its sister squadrons, the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd Helicopter Squadrons, was the result of the inactivation of the 516th Troop Carrier Group (Assault, Rotary Wing).[7] The 516th had been a victim of an Air Force and Army dispute over control of assault helicopters.[8]

The 20th was reorganized several times in 1956, but by the end of the year, was authorized 16 H-21 helicopters, 41 officers and 124 enlisted personnel. The squadron concept called for a squadron headquarters with four flights, three of which could be dispersed or deployed. The 20th's mission was to conduct aeromedical evacuation from forward combat zones, air evacuation within the theater of operations, provide airlift support of assault or retrograde operations by airlanded delivery of units or equipment into or from forward combat zones, provide air evacuation and specialized airlifting in support of combat operations as directed by the commander in chief, Tactical Air Command.[9]

Although the 20th had recently been activated and was undergoing organizational changes, they were

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[6] History of the 20th Helicopter Squadron 9 Jul - 31 Dec 1956 (Unclassified).

[7] General Orders Number 39, 1 Jun 56, HQ 18th Air Force, (TAC), Donaldson AFB, SC.

[8] Ray L. Bowers, The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia:Tactical Airlift. Washington D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983, pg 233 - 235. Hereafter cited as "Bowers."

[9] History of the 20th Helicopter Squadron, 9 Jul - 31 Dec 1956 (Unclassified).

extremely busy in the last half of 1956. Between July and August, the 20th supported the gunnery range at Wendover AFB, Utah, where 20th crews conducted three rescue missions.[10] Two aircraft and crews were deployed to Ardmore AFB, Oklahoma for rescue support between July and November. Two aircraft were broken down for air transport aboard a C-124 Globemaster in July, with the first aircraft's teardown completed in only six hours.[11] The 20th also provided manning assists to sister squadrons in July. Eight aircraft and crews were committed to an exercise entitled Operation Pine Cone in August, while a 20th aircraft was cannibalized to provide parts for sister squadrons overseas.[12] In October, the squadron provided two crews and aircraft to support the Civil Air Patrol at Allentown, Pennsylvania in Operation Hi-Water.[13]

On 6 November 1956, one H-21B aircraft and crew deployed to Ream Naval Air Station, California for what was then a highly classified mission.[14] The mission involved a series of tests to determine the H-21's ability to take a vessel at sea under tow. Specialized equipment was installed and a number of vessels were taken under tow. The tests were successfully concluded when the H-21 took a Navy landing craft displacing 3000 tons under tow at a speed of four and a half knots. The 20th flew a total of 54 hours in support of this test.

In early 1957, the 20th was tasked with an unusual mission to sling load a 1957 Studebaker automobile weighing more than 2800 pounds. The mission was flown in support of the Chicago Land fair and involved moving the vehicle a distance of six miles from Meigs Field to the Navy pier. It was the 20th's heaviest sling load to date.[15]

In May 1957, the first two of four H-21s and crews deployed to Frobisher Bay in the Canadian Northwest Territory to support a joint Canadian - U.S. Navy Hydrographic Survey Team. The team's mission was to accurately chart the bay. the mission was successfully concluded in early September 1957.[16] The deployment was accomplished by teardown of the H-21s and shipment by C-124s.[17]

On 4 July 1958, the squadron again deployed to cold country. This time two aircraft and 13 personnel deployed to Sondrestrom Air Base, Greenland via C-124 to support construction of a site on the eastern end of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line chain of radar stations. In August, two more aircraft and additional personnel deployed to Sondrestrom. Because the squadron was not authorized Arctic gear, it was forced to borrow clothing and equipment from

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] California Tow Project Narrative Mission Report (Declassified).

[15] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report (Unclassified) 1 Jan - 30 Jun 1957.

[16] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report (Unclassified) 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1957.

[17] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report (Unclassified) 1 Jan - 30 Jun 1957.

other units.[18]

By the time the mission was completed and aircraft and crews returned to Sewart AFB, the 20th had flown 500 hours and airlifted more than 2,000 passengers and nearly 295,000 pounds of cargo.[19]

20th crews and aircraft supported radiological safety monitoring at Indian Springs Auxiliary Air Field, Nevada and the annual William Tell fighter competition at both Nellis AFB, Nevada and Tyndall AFB, Florida in the fall of 1958. The mission at Tyndall involved recovery of Firebee target drones from the Gulf of Mexico.[20]

As a result of its outstanding flying safety record, the 20th was awarded a plaque for Meritorious Achievement in Flight Safety on 31 December 1958. The squadron had logged 8,000 accident free flying hours between 1 January 1957 and 31 December 1958.[21]

The squadron activated Detachment 1 at Myrtle Beach AFB, South Carolina on 1 March 1959, in preparation for the movement of the entire squadron later that summer.[22]

On 21 June 1959, the squadron participated in the unveiling of an Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. The 20th crew hovered their H-21 at 100 feet above the erect missile shrouded in a huge parachute. On command, the helicopter lifted the parachute to unveil the museum's latest addition. For its efforts, the squadron received a letter of appreciation from the museum director.[23]

On 16 July 1959, the 20th moved to Myrtle Beach AFB, South Carolina and was attached to the 354th Tactical Fighter Wing. The 20th Helicopter Squadron was inactivated on 8 March 1960.[24]

From 1956 to 1960, the 20th continued to fly Vertol H-21 helicopters, performing airlift support of assault operations, air evacuation, and specialized airlift. Operations took the 20th on missions throughout most of North America and the Arctic in support of exercises and maneuvers.

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[18] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1958.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 1959.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Lineage.

SOUTHEAST ASIA 1965 - 1972

The Pony Express & Green Hornets



Southeast Asia 1965 - 1971

In June 1965, the 2nd Air Division in South Vietnam initiated a request for 25 Air Force CH-3C helicopters and aircrews. The helicopters would provide airlift support for forward locations like Army Special Forces camps. They also would be used for transporting combat control teams and airfield survey teams, for casualty evacuation, and for resupplying sites that were otherwise inaccessible.[25]

On 8 October 1965, the 20th Helicopter Squadron was reactivated at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, South Vietnam with fourteen CH-3Cs. The 20th's mission was to augment combat search and rescue forces, perform casualty evacuation, to support communications sites, airfield construction, and the tactical air control system, to transport air liaison officers, and to perform counterinsurgency operations. The squadron had a secondary mission to be responsive to the priority requirements of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

[25] Bowers.

(MACV).[26]

Later, the squadron would replace the CH-3Cs with the more powerful CH-3E and Bell UH-1 Hueys would join the unit. On 1 August 1968, the squadron would be redesignated as the 20th Special Operations Squadron.[27]

The 20th began combat operations in December 1965. By March 1966, the 20th was flying an average of nearly 1000 sorties per month with flights at Tan Son Nhut (A Flight with five aircraft), Da Nang (B Flight with three aircraft), and Nha Trang (C Flight with 6 aircraft). When the 14th Air Commando Wing was activated in March 1966, the 20th was assigned to the new wing.[28]

Between January and March, the 20th supported Operation DOUBLE EAGLE for the U.S. Marine Corps. DOUBLE EAGLE was the largest amphibious assault against hostile forces since the Korean War. The 20th committed eight aircraft and crews to the effort. The 20th's CH-3Cs were used to airlift 105 millimeter Howitzer cannon to forward locations, as well as personnel and supplies. Crews and aircraft often came under hostile fire.[29]

In other combat action, the 20th was called on to evacuate wounded troops from a Special Forces camp in the infamous A Shau Valley. On 9 March, a Marine CH-34 and a 20th CH-3C were dispatched. As the CH-34 made its approach into the camp, it was hit by enemy fire. The crew was able to land safely inside the camp, but the aircraft was unflyable. Braving heavy enemy fire, the 20th CH-3 crew managed to land their aircraft in the camp, recovering the crew of the first aircraft and carrying out 35 wounded troops.[30] During this same battle for A Shau, Major Bernie Fisher, earned the Air Force Medal of Honor for his daring rescue of fellow A-1E pilot Major "Jump" Meyers. Eventually, the camp was abandoned by its defenders. The cost - five American and 75 South Vietnamese killed, with 33 South Vietnamese wounded and fifteen missing. The toll for the North Vietnamese attackers was even higher. Out of a regiment sized force of 2000, at least 800 NVA soldiers were killed, with an unknown number wounded.[31]

Earlier, in February, two aircraft and crews were deployed to Nakhon Phanom Air Base, Thailand from Tan Son Nhut to form D Flight. In April the entire flight at Nha Trang was deployed to Udorn AB, Thailand. In May, operations at Da Nang halted and that flight moved to Udorn as well. The moves were the result of requests by the government of Thailand. The 20th's CH-3Cs were utilized to transport Thai military and police for counter-terrorist and counterinsurgency operations. The large helicopters enabled Thai forces to respond rapidly to

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Lineage.

[28] Bowers, pg 235-236.

[29] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 66.

[30] Letter of Appreciation, 2 Jun 66, from LTC Kenneth B. Facey, Commander, Detachment C-1, 5th Special Forces Group.

[31] Joel Nadel with J.R. Wright, Special Men and Special Missions: Inside American Special Operations Forces 1945 to the Present. London: Greenhill Books, 1994, pg 52 - 54. Hereafter cited as "Nadel."

communist activities. The 20th became known as the "Pony Express" and used the radio call sign "Pony".[32]



By June 1966, only a single flight remained in Vietnam, based at Tan Son Nhut. Although there were no aircraft based there, the squadron headquarters moved to Nha Trang. With the bulk of its assets in Thailand, the 20th began to concentrate on the unconventional warfare role. Missions into Laos soon took precedence for the Pony Express in Thailand as the 20th's crews were tasked to support the Laotian forces of Lieutenant General Vang Pao, and perform refugee and civic action missions. The CH-3Cs transported Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams and crash investigators, and provided logistics support for isolated mountain top radar and communications sites. They delivered rice and indigenious troops to San Nuia, a friendly outpost on top of a 5,000 foot mountain in Laos. They inserted indigenous "road watch" teams to points along the Ho Chi Minh Trail from Mu Guia Pass south to the Cambodian border. Several missions were flown in the vicinity of the heavily defended enemy stronghold of Tchepone in central Laos. In April 1966, a 47 man team was inserted between two branches of the trail under cover of darkness. A month later, the team was extracted from the same area, bringing back valuable intelligence.[33]

In two separate missions, "road-destruct" teams were dropped near the trail. They were left overnight to mine the trail and to destroy any vehicles caught there. The teams also raided Pathet Lao villages before being extracted. A total of 388 friendly troops were flown into or out of Laos in the first five months of operations in Thailand.[34]

In June 1966, the 20th's CH-3Cs, flying from South Vietnam, infiltrated a combat team into North Vietnam, just north of the DMZ. In 1966, the CH-3 crews flew a total of 315 infiltration sorties.[35]

Flying from Thailand in 1967, the Pony Express was able to penetrate farther north into enemy territory. Thirty seven penetration missions were scheduled and eight were successful. Most aborted missions were because the chopper crews failed to make contact with the deployed Special Forces teams. A successful recovery of a team in September 1967 boosted morale of the teams and the Pony

[32] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 1966.

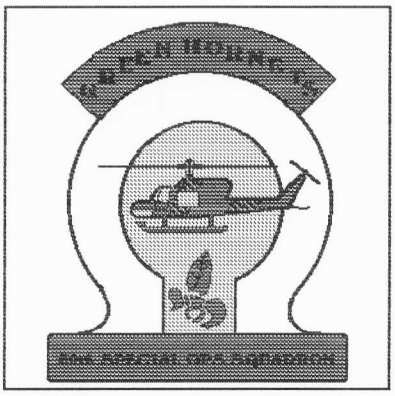
[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

Express crews.[36]

In June 1967, fifteen UH-1F/P Huey helicopters joined the 20th. The Hueys had originally been assigned to the 606th Air Commando Squadron at Nakhon Phanom Air Base, Thailand. As part of the 606th, the Huey section performed missions in Laos and Thailand in support of the Thai Army and Border Patrol Police. A 606th Huey with a three man crew lifted 34 flood victims from danger in Thailand, one of many civic action missions performed by the Huey section. They also flew missions for Air America, often in civilian clothing so U.S. military involvement could be denied. The 606th's Huey section was transferred to Vietnam and the 20th Helicopter Squadron after it was decided that their services were no longer needed by the Thai government. The 20th's Huey section was known as the "Green Hornets" and used the radio call sign "Hornet".[37]



The Bell UH-1F was originally chosen by the Air Force to perform support duties for missile sites. The F-model was based on the civilian Bell 204B, but equipped with the same powerful General Electric T-58 turboshaft engine used on the CH-3C. The T-58 produced more than 1200 shaft horsepower, driving a 48 foot main rotor. The Green Hornet UH-1Fs were known as "slicks" and used as troop carriers, delivering Special Forces teams both inside the borders of Vietnam and across the border into Cambodia. They were usually armed with "free 60s", infantry model M-60 machine guns suspended on "bungee" cords.[38]

The 20th's UH-1Ps were UH-1Fs modified to accept a pair of GAU-2B/A mini guns, one in each cargo door, and two LAU-59/A 2.75 inch rocket pods mounted to hard points. The mini guns were mounted on a pintle and could be locked to forward fire positions and fired by the pilot or could be aimed and fired by gunners in the cabin. The P-model Hueys were used as gunships, flying escort missions for the "slicks". As more of the 20th's F-models were modified to accept armament, the difference between the F- and P-models became blurred and the designations were used interchangeably.[39]

In 1967 and 1968, the Green Hornets lost four UH-1s to enemy fire. 20th aviators earned six Silver Stars, and eleven Purple Hearts in the last half of 1968. The Air Force Cross was awarded to six 20th crewmen in 1967-68.[40]

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[36] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1966.

[37] "Covertly Into Cambodia", an article by Wayne Mutza in Air Enthusiast #32, December 1986 - April 1987 issue, pg 22 - 31. Hereafter cited as "Mutza."

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

By the beginning of 1968, all the 20th CH-3Cs were located in Thailand. They were organized into three flights (A, B, and C), all located at Udorn Air Base. The mission at Udorn was support of a classified mission in northern Laos, support of MACVSOG (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam - Special Operations Group), logistical support of TACAN navigation facilities in Thailand and Laos and support of Special Forces training in Thailand.[41]

While returning from a successful road watch team infiltration in the spring of 1968, a Pony Express CH-3C flown by Lieutenant Colonel Shirrel G. Martin was called upon to rescue a downed A-1E pilot in central Laos. The A-1E had been escorting a pair of helicopters when hit by enemy fire. The pilot was able to escape the aircraft and parachuted into tall trees. Although a 37 millimeter anti-aircraft weapon was known to be in the area, Martin and his crew hovered over the downed pilot, encountering continuous small arms fire. Utilizing the rescue hoist equipped with a forest penetrator seat, the fighter pilot was rescued.[42]

Several insertion and extraction missions were flown from a forward operating location (FOL) in June. At the first landing zone (LZ), two teams were to be inserted and one extracted. The first CH-3C went into the LZ to drop the first team and load the team being extracted. The second aircraft orbited overhead, waiting its turn to land the remaining team. The high chopper drew small arms and automatic weapons fire. The aircraft took five hits, including one in a main rotor blade and two through the cockpit. Pilot Major Jay R. Oberg was injured by flying plexiglass. Both aircraft returned safely to the FOL and then to Udorn.[43]

By July 1968, the Pony Express was down to ten CH-3C aircraft. Maintenance problems reduced the actual number available to perform missions to no more than five or six at any given time. As a result, the CH-3s were augmented by a flight of four UH-1F Hueys. The Thailand-based Hueys also used the Pony Express nickname and the "Pony" call sign. The Hueys, however, did not have sufficient range to perform cross-border operations.[44]

On 3 April 1968, a reconnaissance team under attack by the enemy required assistance from the 20th's Green Hornets. Aircraft and crews launched from Ban Me Thuot and headed for the team's position some 15 miles southwest of Ban Me Thuot. Gunships provided fire suppression while a slick flown by Major Norman F. Eldridge searched for landing site to extract the team. No suitable site was found, but Major Eldridge found a hole in the tree canopy and hovered there, dropping a rope ladder. By now, darkness had settled on the battle. Major Eldridge, without regard for the safety of himself or his crew, held his aircraft in a hover with the aircraft lights on while the recon team scrambled up the rope ladder. The team

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[41] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jan - 31 Mar 1968.

[42] Ibid.

[43] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1968.

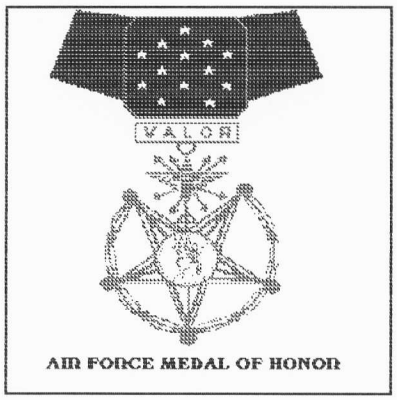
[44] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jul - 30 Sep 1968.

was successfully recovered.[45]

The Pony Express was called upon to perform rescue work again in July 1968 when an A-1E pilot bailed out over North Vietnam. Two CH-3Cs, accompanied by two A-1E escorts were performing a routine road watch infiltration/exfiltration (infil/exfil), recovering a twelve man team and deploying a nine man team. The target area was about 120 miles east of Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, near the North Vietnamese border. The infil/exfil went off without problems and the aircraft were enroute home when one of the A-1Es experienced a propeller malfunction. The A-1E was vectored to a "safe" area in North Vietnam, where the pilot bailed out. The pilot landed in the top of the tree canopy, uninjured. A CH-3C piloted by Captain Walter W. Martin hovered over the thick jungle. The rescue hoist with forest penetrator seat was lowered and the pilot recovered. The entire rescue operation took less than a minute![46]

Green Hornet pilot 1st Lieutenant James P. Fleming, flying a UH-1F Huey, was awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery under enemy fire when he rescued a six-man Special Forces team in November 1968.[47]

The team had only just been inserted by a Green Hornet flight of five Hueys, three UH-1F slicks and two UH-1P gunships, into a heavily forested area near Duc Co on 26 November when they came across a large enemy force. The team commander requested extraction. The Hueys, low on fuel and heading home, turned around.[48]



AIR FORCE MEDAL OF HONOR

They arrived to find the team trapped with their backs to a river and surrounded by the enemy. The gunships made a pass to lay down covering fire from their miniguns. One gunship was hit by enemy machine gun fire and was forced to autorotate into a small clearing. The lead slick followed the crippled aircraft down and rescued the crew only minutes before enemy troops arrived.[49]

The number two slick, low on fuel was forced to withdraw, leaving only the third slick and the remaining gunship on the scene. The Special Forces team was ordered to move 20 yards down the river bank to a small clearing. The gunship positioned itself between the enemy and the slick flown by Lieutenant Fleming. Fleming attempted to get into the

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[45] 20th Helicopter Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1968.

[46] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jul - 30 Sep 1968.

[47] Major Donald K. Schneider, USAF Southeast Asia Monograph Series Volume VII, Monograph 9: Air Force Heroes in Vietnam, Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1985, pg 38 - 42.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

clearing, holding his nose over the river bank and his tail over the river.[50]

Enemy fire had pinned the team down, keeping them from reaching the chopper. Fleming backed the chopper out as his door gunners kept the enemy at bay. Once in the clear, he nosed the Huey over and climbed out of there, circling to make another attempt. In spite of facing the heaviest enemy fire he had ever seen and being dangerously low on fuel, Fleming brought his aircraft back around and headed for the river bank clearing, skimming the water. He hoped that the river banks would provide some measure of safety from the enemy fire that was concentrating on the clearing.[51]

The Special Forces team had set up a series of Claymore mines around their position to cover their escape. As they raced for the chopper, the enemy forces tripped the Claymores, setting off a series of blasts. The Huey hugged the river's edge, again with the front of the skids on the shore and the tail boom extended out over the river. The team was helped aboard by the door gunners and Fleming backed the chopper out over the river once more. This time, as the UH-1 climbed away from the river, gunfire shattered the windshield, but missed Fleming, his crew, and the team. Lieutenant Fleming landed his shot up Huey safely at a friendly base a short time later.[52]

In January 1969, the Pony Express evacuated more than 5000 persons in 539 sorties from a village in northern Laos, where they had been cut off by communist forces. The effort required hauling fuel in drums to the site for refueling the helicopters at the pickup point. The evacuation was hampered by early morning fog and hazardous terrain. The pickup point was in the mountains at the 4700 foot elevation. The unarmed and unescorted choppers transported the villagers to a safe area fourteen miles away. Although carried out deep in an area controlled by the enemy, the six-day operation successfully concluded without loss of life or damage to aircraft.[53]

Unfortunately, a CH-3 was lost that same month while supporting a TACAN site in northern Laos on 17 January 1969. Three crew members and three passengers died in the crash. Two crew chiefs and one passenger survived and were transferred to Clark AB, Philippines for hospitalization.[54]

In February 1969, Sergeant Isidro Arroyo, Jr was a crew member on one of eight Green Hornet Hueys supporting a Special Forces unit in South Vietnam's Central Highlands when word came in that the Special Forces team was surrounded by the enemy and involved in a firefight. Two gunships and one slick made the approach to recover the team while the remaining five aircraft stayed out of range.[55]

As Arroyo's chopper dove into the battle, it was hit by small arms fire. The

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jan - 31 Mar 1969.

[54] Ibid.

[55] AFP 50-34, Volume 1, April 1990, Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE) Study Guide. Cited hereafter as "1990 PFE".

fuel tank began to burn. The crew attempted a distress call, but a bullet had disabled the radio as well. The chopper made a controlled landing, although heavily damaged. The crew destroyed equipment and data that the enemy might use and then made contact with the other helicopters via survival radio.[56]

Trees around their position made landing impossible for the attempted rescue of Arroyo and his comrades. While their saviors hovered over over the clearing with rope ladders dangling, gunships raked the trees with minigun fire.[57]

Sergeant Arroyo was the second man up the ladder to safety, but went back down when the copilot was unable to climb and fell. With the officer in his grip, he started back up the ladder. The copilot, in deep shock, struggled with the noncommissioned officer. Gunfire raged all around them. As Arroyo reached the halfway point up the ladder, he felt his grip slipping. The Huey lowered Sergeant Arroyo and the copilot into a tree where he was able to get a better grip on the officer. He was then able to complete his climb to safety.[58]

In early March, the Pony Express Hueys performed a rescue in Laos while supporting a communications site. An Army OV-1 Mohawk, one of a flight of two on a reconnaissance mission in southern Laos was hit by anti-aircraft fire. The Army crew tried to return to safety, but their crippled aircraft could not maintain altitude and the two-man crew was forced to eject. The remaining OV-1 circled overhead and vectored the two UH-1F Hueys into the area. The OV-1 provided close air support to halt advancing hostile forces. Under constant heavy fire from small arms and a .50 caliber automatic weapon, the Hueys went in for the pickup. The two Army pilots were successfully recovered from certain capture or death at the hands of the enemy.[59]

In late March, eighteen helicopters, including CH-3Es and UH-1Fs from the 20th, were utilized to insert a 230-man assault force into a landing zone. The infil was successfully accomplished, but the recovery was delayed for operational reasons. As the aircraft began their approach to the pickup point, they came under fire from hostile forces. Three Pony Express CH-3Es and one UH-1F received battle damage. One aircraft suffered fifteen bullet holes and lost an engine. Three 20th pilots were wounded in the action. The exfil was aborted and the aircraft returned to Thailand to recover.[60]

Almost a month later, another infiltration of a 215-man force from a forward operating location was scheduled. The team was to take a strategic position overlooking an enemy-controlled road. Five CH-3Es and three UH-1Fs were escorted by eight A-1 Skyraiders and a forward air controller (FAC) in an O-1. The A-1s utilized the call sign "Hobo", while the FAC utilized the call sign "Raven". As the helicopters approached, the FAC directed four of the Hobos to

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jan - 31 Mar 1969.

[60] Ibid.

suppress ground fire around the LZ. As the A-1s attacked a nearby hill, the first wave of helicopters touched down and unloaded. As the first two choppers took off from the LZ, they encountered ground fire. The next wave turned to the right as they took off and avoided further small arms fire. With the first half of the infil completed successfully, the helicopters returned to the FOL for the remaining troops. As they returned to the LZ with the rest of the assault force, Raven reported that the original LZ was under mortar attack. A site a short distance away was selected as an alternate LZ. The first two aircraft landed and deplaned their men and equipment. They took off without incident, but the next two CH-3Es were fired on as they made their approach to the new LZ. They aborted the attempt and the Hobo Skyraiders rolled in to suppress the enemy fire. The remaining members of the assault force were successfully inserted and the Pony Express crews and aircraft returned safely.[61]

In the early months of 1969, the 20th encountered some of its heaviest combat yet, losing five more Hueys, this time to ground fire. On 3 January, a UH-1F attempting to recover a beleaguered Special Forces team near Duc Lap was downed by enemy fire. Sergeant Ronald P. Zenga died in the crash.[62] On 13 April, while extracting a recon team, the Green Hornet flight was fired on after successfully making the pick up. A gunship flying escort for the extraction was hit by ground fire. The co-pilot was killed and the aircraft commander seriously wounded. Although on the verge of unconsciousness due to loss of blood and a wound in the left leg, the pilot managed to land in a nearby clearing.[63]

The aircraft came to rest with its tail boom broken and its skids ripped out from under it.[64]

Aboard as gunner was Sergeant Isidro Arroyo, who had been shot down two months earlier. This time, he too was wounded, in the back. The other Hueys in the flight turned back to pick up Arroyo's crew.[65]

Arroyo moved the dead co-pilot and pilot to the slick while the other gunner sterilized the aircraft. Unable to board the slick because there was no room, Arroyo waited on the ground for another chopper to come to his aid. He was soon picked up and carried to safety and medical care. [66]

The aircraft was left behind and destroyed to prevent it from falling into enemy hands.[67]

Sergeant Arroyo was awarded the 1969 Cheney Award for distinguishing "himself on two seperate occasions while participating in aerial flights as a UH-1P gunner in Southeast Asia."[68]

On 21 April, a reconnaissance team had stumbled into a large force near the

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[61] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1969.

[62] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jan - 31 Mar 1969.

[63] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1969.

[64] 1990 PFE.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1969.

[68] 1990 PFE.

enemy base camp. The team had been without fresh water for a day a half and was exhausted and dehydrated. Hornet gunships came in and laid down suppressive fire, making repeated passes. A slick went in for the extraction, but was shot down on the attempt. In a battle that lasted nearly seven and a half hours, Green Hornet crews fired some 200,000 rounds of minigun ammunition and 500 2.75 inch rockets. Army gunships provided additional support while the Hornet UH-1Ps returned to base to refuel and rearm. Finally, three Army light helicopters were able to extract the team and the crew members of the 20th's downed slick.[69]

Forays into Cambodian airspace all but ceased in the spring of 1969, but the 20th Green Hornets continued to fly gunship support for Vietnamese H-34 helicopters.[70]

In May, a Pony Express crew came to the aid of an Army UH-1 that suffered from engine failure some sixty miles southwest of Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. An airborne rescue control plane pinpointed the Huey's location and directed the CH-3E into the area. The CH-3 crew rescued nine of the twelve aboard the UH-1 The remaining crew members stayed behind to guard the aircraft and effect repairs.[71]

Infil/exfil missions and rescues continued to be the order of business for the Pony Express in June and July. On 1 August 1969, the CH-3s and the Pony Express mission were transferred to the 21st Special Operations Squadron.[72]

By mid summer, the 20th was left with only the UH-1 Hueys. The Pony Express UH-1Fs and crews based in Thailand returned to Vietnam and joined the Green Hornets. Three UH-1Fs were lost due to engine failures in July and August 1969. Crews received only minor injuries, although the aircraft were destroyed. The Huey fleet was grounded for approximately 30 days, while the incidents were studied.[73]

In September, the squadron moved from Nha Trang to Tuy Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam. Living quarters and squadron facilities were cramped at the new location. Enlisted quarters housed 72 men in a facility designed for 54. Latrine and shower facilities were more than a hundred yards from the quarters. Officers were billeted three to room at the location. Squadron offices were all located in a single room that had been the briefing room for the 308th Tactical Fighter Squadron.[74]

As 1970 rolled around, the Green Hornets continued to perform unconventional warfare, psychological warfare, and logistical support of Air Force units in SEA. They also provided gunship support for Army slick helicopters carrying long range reconnaissance patrols of the 5th Special

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Mutza.

[71] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1969.

[72] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jul - 30 Sep 1969.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

Forces Group.[75]

On 14 March, another Huey was lost near Duc Lap. Enemy ground fire was suspected. Killed in the crash was the pilot, Captain Dana A. Dilley, while the instructor pilot and both gunners were injured. Five days later, another Huey was shot down near Ban Me Thuot, this time killing both pilots, Captains Clyde W. Enderle and Carlos A Estrada, Jr., and gunner Technical Sergeant James W. Greenwood.[76]

In May, the 20th was presented with an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, and in May and June, the 20th provided gunship support to Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) H-34s during operations in Cambodia.[77]

Support of VNAF operations continued throughout the summer. The VNAF operations were conducted out of Duc Lap, while the squadron moved its operations at Tuy Hoa Air Base to Cam Ranh Bay.[78]

On 29 July, a Huey was lost due to ground fire while on a training mission near Tuy Hoa. The five man crew all received injuries, but there were no fatalities. Another Huey was lost when it crashed after avoiding a mid-air collision with a Vietnamese CH-34. Instructor pilot Captain Jackie P. Heil and gunner Master Sergeant Gerald A. Cooper were killed.[79]

In late November 1970, the first of the twin engine UH-1N Hueys began to arrive. The 20th continued to support VNAF operations with the 5th Special Forces Group, although Vietnamese tactics and the language barrier presented a great many problems. The VNAF pilots liked to come in high and spiral down into a landing zone marked with smoke. This tactic drew attention in the form of ground fire from enemy forces, negating the advantage of surprise.[80]

By the end of 1971, the 20th had replaced all its UH-1F/P Hueys with the twin engine UH-1N, still flying gunship and unconventional warfare missions. The UH-1N Twin Huey was fitted with two Pratt and Whitney PT6T-3 engines mated to a reduction gearbox and producing 1800 shaft horsepower. The N-model Huey had a larger cabin, allowing a passenger load of 13 plus a pilot and co-pilot. 20th N-model gunships were armed with GAU-2B/A mini guns and the LAU-59 rocket system. The N-models could mount XM-94 40 millimeter grenade launchers in place of the mini guns. Green Hornet N-model Hueys often sported a 40 mm grenade launcher in the right door and a mini gun in the left. Like the F- and P-models, 20th N-models were devoid of any markings other than the aircraft serial number and the hornet stencilled on the tail.[81]

The 20th's primary mission in 1971 continued to be support of VNAF H-34

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[75] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jan - 31 Mar 1970.

[76] Ibid.

[77] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1970.

[78] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jul - 30 Sep 1970.

[79] Ibid.

[80] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Oct - 31 Dec 1970.

[81] Mutza.

operations with the 5th Special Forces Group. The Green Hornets also flew search and rescue missions for downed aircrew members.[82]

In August of 1971, two major infiltrations were planned. The first, scheduled for early August, was cancelled due to poor weather in the area. The second mission involved inserting a platoon-sized force into an area of known enemy concentration. The mission was accomplished this time. 20th crews gained valuable experience in working with tactical air support and large scale infiltration operations.[83]

Following the deactivation of the 14th Special Operations Wing in 1971, the 20th was reassigned to the 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing. In March 1972, the 20th was inactivated as the U.S. involvement in Vietnam began to draw down. By the time the 20th was inactivated, some 19 Hueys had been lost in combat, 13 due to enemy fire.[84]

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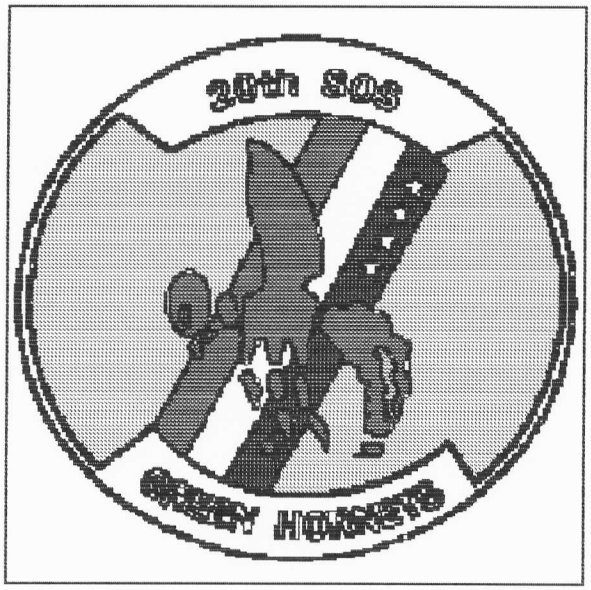
[82] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jan - 31 Mar 1971.

[83] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jul - 30 Sep 1971.

[84] Ibid.

THE 20TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

1976 - 1990



The 20th Special Operations Squadron was reactivated at Hurlburt Field, Florida on 1 January 1976 as a part of Tactical Air Command's 1st Special Operations Wing. The 20th's mission was to fly the UH-1N and CH-3E in the unconventional warfare role.[85] The next two years saw the unit grow to its full strength of six Bell UH-1N Hueys and four Sikorsky CH-3Es.

On 25 April 1977, a 20th UH-1N crew was diverted from a training mission over the Eglin Range to perform search and rescue duty for an F-4 crew. The Huey crew successfully located the downed crew and went in for the recovery as ordnance exploded from burning wreckage of the F-4 nearby. Staff Sergeant James T. Carter won the Cheney Award for his part in the rescue.[86]

In late August 1977, the 20th was called upon to perform search and rescue duty when a Marine F-4 went down over the Gulf of Mexico. An HH-3 from Tyndall AFB near Panama City, Florida was dispatched for a rescue. The H-3 experienced mechanical problems and was forced to ditch in the gulf. The H-3 sank, but its crew and the pilot from the F-4 were picked up by the Coast Guard. The 20th flew sorties over the next several days in an attempt to locate the F-4's backseater. Unfortunately, he was not recovered.[87]



In January 1978, the 20th became involved in a program called J-CATCH. J-CATCH, for "Joint Countering Attack

[85] "1st SOW Gains Hornets", article in SOF Hi-Lites, (Hurlburt Field base newspaper), January 9, 1976, pg 1.

[86] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1977.

[87] SOF Hi-Lites, September 2, 1977.

Helicopters", was to develop tactics to counter a growing threat from attack helicopters. Concern over the increased helicopter firepower and numbers in potential adversary nations led Tactical Air Command to outfit 20th UH-1Ns and CH-3Es as aggressors, creating a force that simulated Soviet attack helicopter capabilities and tactics. Scenarios included helicopter-to-helicopter tactics, and helicopter-to-fighter tactics.[88] The J-CATCH helicopters were painted with special camouflage schemes and configured with Mini-TAT chain guns mounted under the fuselage, which were aimed by the co-pilot's hand controlled sight. The weapon system was loaned to the Air Force by the Canadian government.[89] The 20th's aggressor force was known as "Red Force" and adopted a red scarf, which is still worn by the unit today. The red star on the unit patch today is a reminder of the J-CATCH mission, which successfully concluded in 1979.

In June 1978, the 20th CH-3 section successfully provided pathfinder services for a flight of 22 Army helicopters from Fort Benning, Georgia. Operation NIGHT HAWK marked the first time this type of joint service operation had been attempted.[90]

As 1979 began, however, U.S. Air Force special operations capability was nearing extinction. Special operations forces suffered from meager budgets and resources while Air Force priorities went into modernization of conventional forces. Events in the coming year would eventually bring major changes for special operations in general, and the 20th SOS in particular.[91]

The 20th remained busy with J-CATCH in 1979. They also experienced problems with the weapons system on the CH-3E. Spent brass from the guns was ejected overboard, where it entered the aircraft's slipstream. The slipstream carried the brass into the tail rotor, causing damage to tail blades. The 1st SOW developed a solution and implemented it, preventing damage to aircraft and possible loss of aircraft and lives.[92]

Summer of 1979 found the 20th testing new hardware. In July, an infrared searchlight filter was successfully tested. The system had been developed by the Army and it was modified for use on Air Force helicopters at Hurlburt Field. August began with tests of a long range navigation system built by Teledyne. The tests successfully proved the accuracy of the system.[93]

Later in August, a CH-3E successfully deployed a Zodiac boat and two man combat control team nearly 30 miles out

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[88] "J-CATCH", an article by Captain Joe Vallimont, in TAC ATTACK, March 1979, pg 24-29.

[89] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Oct - 31 Dec 1978.

[90] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1978.

[91] Lieutenant Colonel Jerry L. Thigpen, AFSOC: The Air Force's Newest Command. Carlisle Baracks, Pennsylvania: U.S. Army War College Studies Program Paper, 1981, pg 27. Hereafter referred to as "Thigpen."

[92] Chronology, pg 164 - 165.

[93] Ibid., pg 165.

into the Gulf of Mexico.[94] The Zodiac is a light weight craft which can be powered by either electric motor or gasoline engine. Later in August, another CH-3E deployed a boat and a seven-man Army scuba team simultaneously.[95]

On 13 August, a 20th CH-3E was forced to make an emergency landing in Choctawhatchee Bay near Eglin AFB after an engine failure and fire. The aircraft was recovered safely and towed back to Eglin for repairs. The tow operation took six hours.[96]

On 10 September, the 20th participated in a demonstration of special operations capabilities for base personnel and dependents. Two CH-3Es and three UH-1Ns were tasked for the demonstration. The first CH-3 landed, deploying two combat control personnel, a jeep, and a Fulton surface-to-air recovery kit. The second CH-3 deployed combat controllers in a HALO (high altitude, low opening) parachute jump, while other combat controllers rappelled from the Hueys. The rappellers were recovered by rope ladder aboard the Hueys, while the first combat control team demonstrated a Fulton recovery. With the Fulton kit deployed on the ground, a low flying MC-130E Combat Talon snares a cable suspended by a balloon. The cable trails along behind the fixed-wing aircraft and is then grappled and winched inside. Up to 500 pounds or two personnel can be snatched aboard the Combat Talon in this manner. The demonstration showed what teamwork among Air Force special operations forces could accomplish.[97]

On 24 September, the Air Force approved a Statement of Need for upgraded special operations helicopters to replace the UH-1Ns and aerial refueling probes for the CH-3Es. In October, a briefing to TAC lead to the CORONET CHOPPER test program to develop rapid deployment procedures for UH-1N helicopters.[98]

The U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran was overrun and seized by Iranian students on 4 November 1979. Many Embassy personnel were captured and held as hostages and the U.S. immediately set about planning a rescue. Most special operations air assets were owned by the 1st SOW at Hurlburt and the MC-130 Combat Talons and AC-130 Spectre gunships were tasked for the rescue attempt. Helicopters were required as well, but the 20th's Hueys and CH-3Es were not capable of the demands the rescue mission required. As a result, Navy and Marine RH-53D Sea Stallions with Marine crews were selected for the mission. Eight aircraft were assigned and at least six were required to complete the mission.[99]

The mission was set into operation in late April 1980. The fixed-wing aircraft, four MC-130 Combat Talons carrying troops and three EC-130s carrying fuel bladders to refuel the helicopters would stage from a base in Oman, while the choppers would stage from the aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz*. The aircraft would

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Nadel, pg 99.

[96] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Jul - 30 Sep 79.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid., pg 167.

[99] Nadel, pg 151 - 158.

rendezvous at a site known as Desert One. The RH-53s would refuel and take the troops on board. the helicopters would then take off for another site, while the fixed-wing aircraft would leave Iran.[100]

The helicopter assault force would drop off their troops and then the helicopter crews would move their aircraft to a hiding place some fifty miles outside Tehran. There they would remain overnight. The assault force would secure the Embassy, while additional forces would attack and secure an airfield outside Tehran, using MC-130 Combat Talons for the assault with AC-130 gunships for close air support. C-141 Starlifter transports would land at the airfield once it was secure and the choppers would airlift the hostages and assault force from the Embassy to the airfield. The freed hostages, the assault force and the chopper crews would board the C-141s for home. The abandoned choppers would be destroyed.[101]

Early on, the mission experienced problems. The Marine helicopter aircrews were not experienced in desert flying or flying while using night vision goggles. The RH-53 was prone to mechanical problems and the different components of the force had not practiced together.[102]

As the mission began on the evening of 24 April 1980, it began to unravel. Soon after the helicopters crossed the coast into Iran, one chopper experienced a malfunction indicating a possible main rotor blade failure. The aircraft was abandoned and its crew was picked up by another chopper. The helicopters available had decreased to seven. They were also fifteen minutes behind schedule now.[103]

A desert storm limiting visibilty forced two RH-53s to turn back and land when they lost sight of the other aircraft and the ground. The remaining five choppers pressed on. The pilots of the two choppers on the ground decided to make another attempt after a forty five minute wait. Shortly after entering the storm, the first helicopter experienced a failure of the second stage hydraulic system. The pilot elected to continue on. The second aircraft's compass and pitch and roll indicators both failed, along with a malfunction of the inertial navigation system. The second chopper turned around and headed back to the *Nimitz*. Now only six aircraft remained.[104]

Shortly after midnight on the 25th, the first two choppers landed at Desert One. The sixth and last chopper landed just before 0100. The choppers were nearly two hours behind schedule now, but began to refuel from the EC-130s.[105]

The chopper which had experienced the hydraulic failure was deemed unflyable by the senior Marine helicopter pilot. The mission now had only five choppers to do the job of six. The mission commander ordered the mission aborted and the ground forces began to re-board the C-130s. At 0225 on the morning of 25 April, tragedy struck in the Iranian desert. One of the choppers pulled into a hover to make room for another one to be refuelled. The crew experienced a "brown-

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

out" as the rotor wash kicked up dust and obscured visibilty. The RH-53 collided with the cockpit of an EC-130 and both aircraft burst into flames, killing crewmen aboard both the chopper and the EC-130.[106]

The survivors boarded the remaining planes, abandoned the choppers and aborted the mission.[107]

After the failure of the Iranian hostage rescue attempt, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force ordered the reassignment of nine HH-53H Pave Lows from the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service to the 1st SOW on 14 May 1980. By 17 May, eight of the aircraft had been transferred from Kirtland AFB, New Mexico to the 20th SOS at Hurlburt Field. The ninth aircraft was still undergoing modification at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida.[108]

The HH-53H Pave Lows, which had become operational only a few months earlier, were the result of a number of upgrades of the old HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopter. The modification program was code named "Pave Low" and the name stuck on the helicopter. The Pave Low program had actually begun in the late 1970s to augment combat rescue forces with an all weather, nighttime, low level capability.[109]

The transfer of the Kirtland Pave Lows, including Kirtland aircrews and maintenance personnel to special operations, began the 20th's transition out of the H-3. The sudden transfer of rescue aircraft and personnel to Tactical Air Command created a lot of hard feelings in the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service and its parent Military Airlift Command.[110]

Almost immediately, the Pave Lows and their crews, along with AC-130 gunships and MC-130 Combat Talons were deployed for what was billed as a RED FLAG exercise, but was in reality HONEY BADGER, a project to upgrade the capabilities of SOF aircraft. It was also a rehearsal for a possible second rescue attempt for the hostages in Iran. The new wrinkles in the problem: the Iranians had dispersed the hostages to hamper further rescue attempts and the Soviets had stepped up surveillance of U.S military movements in the U.S. and in the Middle East. Still, after nearly five months of training and the loss of an HH-53H in a tragic crash at Dugway, Utah, HONEY BADGER was ready to go. Plans to press with the rescue were put on hold because estimates put potential losses of rescuers and hostages at an unacceptable 30 percent. The force remained on standby, however, until the hostages were released in January 1981.[111]

While the Pave Low section awaited orders to deploy to Iran, the 20th's UH-1N flight was pressed into rescue duty while deployed to Nellis AFB, Nevada for

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[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Leo Anthony Gambone, That Others May Live: Pave Low III. Wright-Patterson AFB, OH: History Office, Aeronautical Systems Division, 1988, pg 228-231. Herafter cited as "Gambone."

[109] "So Others May Live", an article by Marge Sanders in Gosport, the NAS Pensacola newspaper, March 23, 1979, pg 3.

[110] Gambone, pg 230.

[111] Ibid.

a RED FLAG exercise. Early on the morning of 21 November 1980, fire broke out in the MGM Grand Hotel in downtown Las Vegas. Within the first thirty minutes after the fire was spotted, a Las Vegas police helicopter, augmented by three civilian helicopters, had rescued between 250 and 300 hotel patrons from the building's roof. Many more were still trapped in the building, perhaps thousands, when a call went out to the Nellis AFB command post for help. Nellis' 57th Tactical Fighter Wing maintained a detachment of UH-1Ns at Indian Springs Auxiliary Air Field, which soon joined the rescue effort. Nellis command post, realizing the dire need for helicopters, also notified the 20th's deployed crews and the 302nd SOS, an Air Force Reserve unit flying CH-3Es deployed to RED FLAG from Luke AFB, Arizona.[112]

Within forty minutes of the call, the 20th's three UH-1Ns were airborne. They joined the three CH-3Es from the 302nd and three UH-1Ns from the 57th's Detachment 1. They began to ferry fire, medical, and rescue personnel and supplies and equipment to the roof of the hotel, returning with exhausted rescue personnel and firemen. 20th crews transported around 150 emergency personnel to or from the roof, along with five survivors. The UH-1N crews from Det 1 pulled 57 survivors from the roof, while the CH-3E crews from the 302nd pulled 17 survivors from balconies with their rescue hoists and forest penetrators.[113]

When the blaze was finally brought under control and extinguished, 84 lives had been lost and nearly 700 persons had been injured in the second deadliest hotel fire in U.S. history. Undoubtedly, many more would have lost their lives if not for the actions of the crews from the 20th, their comrades in Det 1 and the 302nd, and their civilian counterparts. After the rescue, all three Air Force helicopter units were recognized on the national television program "That's Incredible". Co-host John Davidson honored all the Air Force members involved in the rescue, saying "They are truly American heroes."[114]

Following the tragic Iranian hostage rescue attempt, a Special Operations Review Group was commissioned and the Air Force began to take a look at its future needs with the Air Force 2000 Study. As a result of the studies, special operations gained new emphasis. Active duty Air Force special operations forces were still aligned under the Tactical Air Command and consisted of the single wing at Hurlburt Field, and two squadrons overseas.[115]

The Air Force 2000 Study recommended that special operations be placed under HQ USAF as a Special Operations Agency or in a major command as a numbered air force. Military Airlift Command, originally opposed to consolidation, was now a proponent of consolidating special operations and combat rescue forces.

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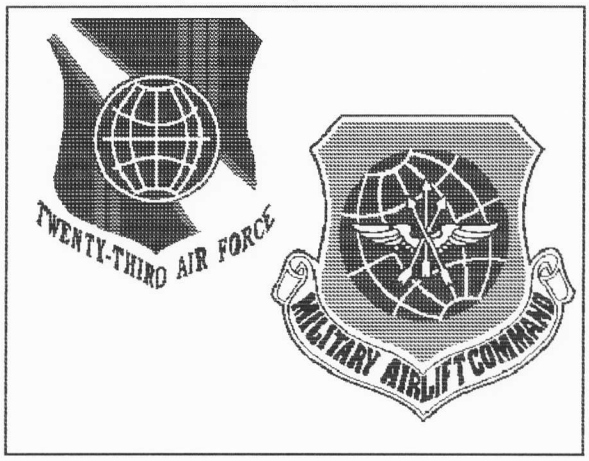
[112] "The Pony Rides In Vegas", an article by Robert K. Ruhl in Airman magazine, April 1981, pg 2 -10.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Anything, Anywhere, Anytime: An Illustrated History of the Military Airlift Command, 1941 - 1991. Scott AFB, Illinois: Military Airlift Command Office of History, 1991, pg 185 - 189. Hereafter cited as "Illustrated History of MAC."

MAC argued that placing these assets under MAC control would be the most efficient way to manage both special operations and rescue forces. Since MAC already controlled most C-130 and helicopter aircraft and personnel anyway, MAC argued that it was only logical that MAC should control the special operations assets. The logic of the argument finally convinced TAC commander General Wilbur Creech and in September 1982, TAC agreed that Military Airlift Command should be the sole manager of Air Force Special Operations Forces.[116]



In March 1983, MAC established the 23rd Air Force at Scott AFB, Illinois. Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service and the newly reactivated 2nd Air Division at Hurlburt Field fell under the new numbered air force. The 2nd Air Division was to manage all Air Force special operations forces, including the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt, the 1st Special Operations Squadron at Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines, the 7th SOS at Sembach, Germany, and a special operations detachment at Howard AB, Panama, along with all Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units with special operations missions. The 1st Special Operations Wing consisted of three flying squadrons, the 8th SOS, flying MC-130E Combat Talons, the 16th SOS, flying AC-130H Spectre gunships, and the 20th SOS, still flying UH-1Ns and HH-53Hs.[117]

In May 1983, the 20th SOS UH-1N flight was tasked for drug interdiction in a mission code named Operation BAT.[118] The purpose was to stem the flow of illegal drugs from the Bahamas, Antilles, and Turks Islands in co-operation with the Drug Enforcement Agency and the government of the Bahamas. The 20th's UH-1Ns continued to fly Operation BAT missions until October 1985, when the UH-1Ns and the BAT mission were transferred to Homestead AFB, Florida, and the 48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.[119]

On 4 July 1983, Operation BAT missions resulted in the capture of a Cessna 404 aircraft, its pilot, and 863 pounds of cocaine, plus the capture of a 70 foot motor vessel and more than 3,000 bales of marijuana, weighing more than 30 tons.[120]

In mid 1983, the 20th began to train Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service crews to perform the Operation BAT

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[116] Ibid.

[117] Herbert H. Kissling, An Air Commando and Special Operations Chronology, 1961-1991. Hurlburt Field, Florida: 1st Special Operations Wing History Office, 1991, pg 184. (Hereafter cited as Chronology.)

[118] 20th Special Operations Squadron Historical Report, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1983.

[119] Chronology, pg 211.

[120] Ibid., pg 193.

mission.[121]

In October 1983, President Reagan ordered U.S. troops to intervene in the Carribean island nation of Grenada where the Soviet Union and Cuba were establishing a disturbing presence. The resulting operation, URGENT FURY, did not involve 20th aircraft and crews. Problems encountered in the joint service operation lead to a Senate Armed Services Committee study. Identified were a number of inadequacies, such as lack of communications and coordination between Army and Navy forces. The study recommended reorganization of Department of Defense, including the creation of unified commands for transportation and special operations. The recommendations resulted in the eventual formation of the United States Special Operations Command and the Air Force Special Operations Command.[122]

A UH-1N crashed during an Operation BAT mission in January 1984, killing three of the four crewmen aboard. Dead were Captain Dyke H. Whitbeck, First Lieutenant Thomas L. Hamby, and Staff Sergeant Edgardo L. Acha. Staff Sergeant Paul B. Cartter was seriously injured.[123]

Despite the losses, the Green Hornets continued to perform the OpBAT mission. In September, a chase of a DC-6, the civilan version of the Air Force's C-54 cargo plane resulted in the capture of the aircraft and crew and the seizure of an estimated 13,000 pounds of marijuana.[124]

The Pave Low section was busy as well, participating in a number of exercises. In October 1984, Pave Low crews and aircraft deployed to the Republic of the Philippines for Exercise COPE THUNDER 85-1. The deployment ended tragically when a crash destroyed a Pave Low and killed its crew. Dead in the crash were Major James S. Prowell, Captain Michael W. Skeen, Technical Sergeants Thomas M. Ortiz, Jr. and Wayne A. Johnson, Staff Sergeant Robert G. Barker and Sergeant Max B. Lincks, Jr.[125]

Just a month later, another Pave Low was destroyed while deployed to Pope AFB, North Carolina. The aircraft suffered a tail rotor failure when the tail rotor and gearbox separated from the aircraft. Only the quick reaction of aircraft commander Lieutenant Colonel Horace "Bo" Johnson saved the lives of the 15 persons on board.[126]

A 20th SOS Operation BAT UH-1N worked with a U.S. Customs aircraft in December 1984, chasing a drug smuggler aircraft from the Bahamas to Seabring, Florida. Two smugglers were arrested and the aircraft and its load of marijuana was seized.[127]

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[121] Interview with MSgt J.D. Smith, 20th SOS aerial gunner.

[122] Illustrated History of MAC, pg 185 -189.

[123] Chronology, pg 199.

[124] Interviews with LTC Donald Hoover, 20th SOS commander and MSgt J.D. Smith, 20th SOS aerial gunner.

[125] Ibid., pg 204, 207.

[126] History of USAF H-53s, on file with the 20th SOS historian. Herbert Kissling's Chronology, pg 205, reports the accident as "catastrophic engine failure", apparently erroneously.

[127] Chronology, pg 206.

Early 1985 found the 20th's Pave Low crews on the road, training to fly in mountainous terrain. Training was conducted at Dobbins AFB, Georgia and Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.[128]

On 1 October 1985, the 20th officially transferred Operation BAT and its UH-1Ns to the 48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Homestead AFB, Florida. During Operation BAT, the 20th had flown more than 3,000 sorties which lead to the capture or destruction of more than $1.5 billion in drugs, and the aircraft, vessels, vehicles and equipment used to smuggle them.[129]

In January 1986, the Air Staff directed that ten H-53s be upgraded to the Pave Low III Enhanced or MH-53J configuration. The MH-53J enhancements included an integrated inertial navigation system, doppler radar, global positioning system, improved terrain following radar and forward looking infrared systems, a night vision goggle compatible heads up display, range extension provisions for an internal auxiliary fuel tank, improved weapons and defensive systems, and an improved secure communications system. The program was funded with $59.6

qualification where 20th crews trained to perform shipboard operations.[135]

In January 1987, testing of the titanium spar main rotor blade on the HH-53H began at Robins AFB, Georgia. A single aircraft deployed for the test. The test was to determine the feasibility of using the titanium spar blades on the Air Force version of the H-53. The blade had been in use on Navy and Marine H-53s, but never tested with the different rotor head used by the Air Force. Tests resulted in the approval of titanium spar blades on the Pave Low. The advantages to the new blade included lighter weight and greater lift.[136]

1987 was a busy year for the 20th. In March, three aircraft deployed to Pope AFB for U.S. Army Ranger sustainment training.[137] In July and August, 20th crews and aircraft deployed to Knoxville, Tennessee for mountain training and to NAS Norfolk for water training. They also deployed to MacDill AFB, Florida for weapons and tactics training and Lawson Army Air Field, Georgia for Ranger sustainment training.[138] November 1987 found the 20th with six aircraft deployed to Martinsburg, West Virginia for Exercise CASINO GAMBIT. The long range capability of the Pave Low was amply demonstrated when a mission scenario included a short-notice tasking to recover Special Forces teams near the Canadian border. The teams were successfully recovered following an 800 nautical mile flight to their pick up point.[139]

January 1988 began with six aircraft deployed for a joint readiness training exercise, followed by a three aircraft deployment to Colorado and Washington for mountain training in February and March. Six aircraft were deployed for mountain training again in July. September and October saw four aircraft deployed for Exercise ALASKAN HUSKY, while another four deployed to Panama for Exercise PAVE JUNGLE.[140]

During a deployment to Fort Pickett, Virginia in October, a Pave Low crash resulted in damage to the aircraft, but no fatalities. Cost of repair was estimated to exceed $6.7 million.[141]

The next year opened with a major exercise. JAGUAR BITE was the 1st Special Operations Wing operational readiness inspection and designed to test the wing's ability to perform a variety of missions from a variety of locations. The 20th was heavily involved. Operations in extreme cold and snow and ice conditions taxed both the personnel and machines. The exercise earned an overall rating of "Excellent".[142]

Following JAGUAR BITE, operations returned to normal for the 20th. In March, three Pave Lows deployed to the USS Charleston for deck landing qualifications. April saw the 20th deploy four aircraft for capabilities exercise and

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[135] Ibid., pg 217.

[136] Ibid., pg 219.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid., pg 221.

[139] Interview with LTC Donald Hoover, 20 SOS commander.

[140] Chronology, pg 223-224.

[141] Ibid., pg 224.

[142] Ibid., pg 225.

June saw the return of four Pave Lows to the USS Charleston, again for deck landing qualification training.[143]

In October, the 20th deployed for joint special operations exercise KNIFE BLADE, which heavily taxed airframes, aircrews, and maintainers. The exercise involved redeploying to several different locations and included teardown of the Pave Lows, transport aboard C-5 Galaxy cargo planes, and reassembly and flight testing at the new operating location, followed by heavy mission taskings.[144]

November was no less hectic with heavy committments for a joint readiness exercise at Pope AFB, North Carolina and Hurlburt Field.[145]

As Christmas 1989 approached, the 20th SOS had just completed a major training exercise when they were tasked for a real world mission: Operation JUST CAUSE.[146]

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[143] Ibid., pg 226-227.

[144] 834th Aircraft Generation Squadron Nomination for the Maintenance Effectiveness Award, 1990.

[145] Ibid.

[146] 834 Aircraft Generation Squadron Nomination for the Maintenance Effectiveness Award, 1990.

NORIEGA'S NIGHTMARE

The beginnings of JUST CAUSE go back to February 1988, when Panamanian strongman General Manuel Noriega was indicted on drug trafficking charges by a U.S. court. Political and economic sanctions against Panama were tried in an effort to force Noriega from power. Americans living and working in Panama became victims of threats and violence. By May 1989, the discord between the U.S. and Panama reached a new height when Noriega's hand-picked presidential candidate was defeated by a landslide vote. General Noriega declared the election null and void. Panamanians rioted in protest, but the Dignity Battalion, Noriega's personal army, put down the riots with force.[147]

In October 1989, General Noriega survived a coup attempt and began to consolidate his power through more aggressive elimination of his opponents. Relations between the U.S. and Panama rapidly worsened.[148]

On 15 December 1989, the Panamanian National Assembly rubber stamped Noriega's declaration of war against the United States. The next night, the Panamanian Defense Force killed a U.S. Marine Corps officer and arrested and beat a U.S. Navy officer and his wife. The Navy officer and his wife had witnessed the killing.[149]

On 20 December, in the early hours of the morning, paratroopers and equipment from the 75th Ranger Regiment were airdropped on the airport near Panama City by Military Airlift Command C-141s and C-130s. 20th SOS Pave Lows, after a 1500 mile flight over water and sporting a stencilled hornet and the words "Noriega's Nightmare" on their noses, positioned special forces in and around Panama City. Joining the 20th helicopters were the 55th SOS MH-60G Pave Hawks.

Captain Thomas O'Boyle was selected as Military Airlift Command Pilot of the Year for leading a flight of four MH-53Js in a nighttime urban assault in Panama City, for his efforts in a night assault on Noriega's beach front home, and for leading an eight-ship assault to secure a Panamanian prison camp.[150]

Major Jeffery Walls earned the Lance P. Sijan Award for his coolness under fire. Major Walls flew his Pave Low into harm's way to rescue a U.S. Army Ranger team which was pinned down by enemy fire in the opening hours of Operation JUST CAUSE.[151]

The 23rd Air Force had committed 26 aircraft to Operation JUST CAUSE. AC-130H gunships from the 16th SOS and AC-130A gunships from the 919th

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147 Illustrated History of MAC, pg 195.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 "Captain Thomas R. O'Boyle Selected Air Commando MAC Pilot of the Year," an article in the Air Commando Association Newsletter, June 1991.

151 "Special Operator Earns Sijan Award," Air Commando Association Newsletter, June 1991.

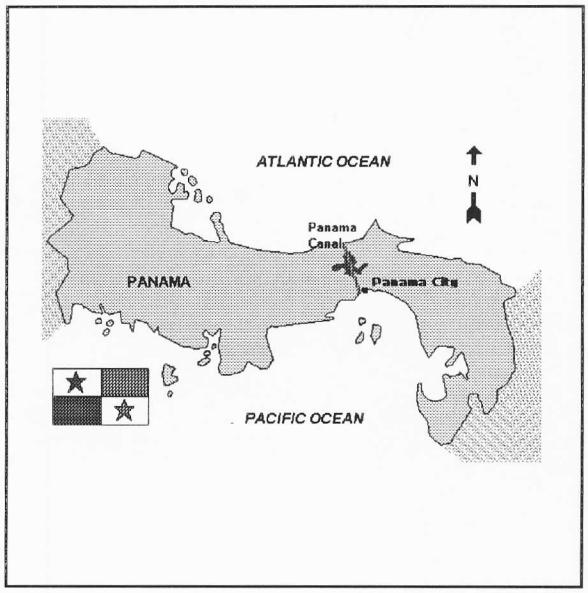
Special Operations Group (AFRES) from Duke Field, Florida, provided tactical support for the Rangers and attacked PDF positions. Air Force special operations forces were crucial in neutralizing pockets of resistance in the country over the next few days.[152]

Noriega, having sought asylum from the Vatican representative in Panama City, found himself trapped in the residence of the Papal Nuncio. U.S. forces ringed the compound and blocked all avenues of escape. Noriega surrendered on 3 January 1990 after failing to negotiate safe passage to a neutral country. An Army helicopter transported Noriega to Howard Air Base, where agents from the Drug Enforcement Agency arrested him. An MC-130E Combat Talon then flew Noriega to Homestead AFB, Florida. From there, he was taken to Miami where he was booked and charged. He was eventually tried and convicted for his crimes.[153]

In Panama, the duly elected president took power, ending years of dictatorship and tyranny.

Between 17 December 1989 and 14 February 1990, Air Force special operations aircraft flew 796 missions in direct support of Operation JUST CAUSE. It was the largest U.S. military operation since Vietnam and the airdrops on the morning of 20 December constituted the largest nighttime parachute assault in history.[154]

The 20th Special Operations Squadron had earned its place in JUST CAUSE,



flying 343.1 hours and logging 142 combat sorties.[155]

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[152] Illustrated History of MAC, pg 197.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid, pg 198.

[155] "20th Special Operations Squadron Nomination for Outstanding Special Operations Unit of the Year Award - 1989."

PAVE LOW LEADS!

1990 - PRESENT



On 22 May 1990, the 23rd Air Force was replaced by the Air Force Special Operations Command as Air Force special operations gained major command status. AFSOC became the Air Force component of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), controlling the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt, the 39th SOW at Rhein Mein AB, West Germany, the 353rd SOW at Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines, the 1720th Special Tactics Group, the Special Missions Operational Test and Evaluation Center (now the 18th Flight Test Squadron), and the USAF Special Operations School, all at Hurlburt, plus the 193rd Special Operations Group (ANG), the 919th SOG and the 71st Special Operations Squadron (AFRES).[156]

Hurlburt Field came under control of the 834th Air Base Wing, which still belonged to Military Airlift Command. AFSOC headquarters, the 1st SOW, and all other AFSOC organizations at Hurlburt became tenants of the 834th ABW.[157]

Although the Air Force special operations transitioned from a numbered air force to a major command, the mission did not change. The mission was still to infiltrate special forces teams, resupply them, and then extricate them once their mission was complete, all clandestinely, and in all weather conditions. AFSOC was not just a fighting force in USSOCOM, but the focal point for all Air Force assets to do the job, whatever that asset might be and regardless of what organization controlled it.[158]

As America's specialized air power, AFSOC trained for unconventional warfare, direct action, special reconnaissance, counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance, psychological operations, personnel recovery, and counter-narcotics missions.[159]

The fledgling command was just a few short months from its first major challenge when it was established in May. Less than three months later, U.S. armed forces would mobilize for the largest troop deployment since the Vietnam War. AFSOC units would be among the first to deploy, the first to fight, and the last to come home.

In early August 1990, Iraqi troops

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[156] Illustrated History of MAC, pg 189.

[157] Thigpen, pg 79.

[158] Ibid., pg 80 - 85.

[159] AFP 50-34, Volume 1, 1 Nov 1992, Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE) Study Guide, pg 42. Hereafter cited as "1992 PFE".

crossed the border into the tiny nation of Kuwait on the Persian Gulf. The Iraqi forces seized the nation, brutalizing its citizens and plundering its wealth. Fearing it might be the next victim of Iraqi aggression, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia asked for assistance from the United States. In short order, MH-53J Pave Lows, aircrews and maintenance personnel and equipment were loaded aboard C-5 transport planes, bound for the Saudi desert in Operation DESERT SHIELD. Over the next four months, the 20th trained for desert warfare, developing tactics and practicing possible scenarios.[160]

While U.S. and allied forces built up in Saudi Arabia, diplomatic efforts to secure the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait were stalemated. Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was given an ultimatum and a deadline: withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991 or face the combined military might of more than 30 allied nations. The deadline came and went and Iraqi forces remained in Kuwait.[161]

At 0220 on the morning of 17 January, four 20th Special Operations Squadron MH-53J Pave Low helicopters crossed the Iraqi border, leading two formations of U.S. Army AH-64 Apache attack helicopters. Operation DESERT STORM had begun.[162]

With the Pave Lows' state of the art navigation systems to guide the way, the Apaches' targets were two Iraqi early warning radar sites. Taking out the early warning radar sites was crucial. U.S. and allied warplanes were twenty minutes behind them; their target was the city of Baghdad, the heavily defended Iraqi capital. If "Task Force Normandy" failed to destroy the radar sites before they could warn Baghdad, the Allied warplanes would fly into a wall of waiting anti-aircraft artillery.[163]

Zigzagging around Bedouin camps and hugging the ground in the desert wadis, the Pave Lows relied entirely on their computers and sensors to weave unseen and unheard around Iraqi observation posts. The 20th Special Operations Squadron Pave Low crews and their Army Apache counterparts had practiced in secret for such a mission since arriving in Saudi Arabia in August 1990.[164]

Timing and the element of surprise was crucial as the Pave Lows and Apaches slipped under the Iraqi radar net. The sites were electronically linked and had to knocked out at exactly the same time. If the Iraqi defenders at either radar site managed to get a warning off to Baghdad, the attack on the Iraqi capital would be in jeopardy. Anti-aircraft artillery and surface- to-air missile batteries would take a heavy toll on the coalition fighter bombers.[165]

The helicopter attack force arrived on the Iraqi doorsteps undetected. Painting their targets with laser target designators,

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[160] "Secret Warriors", an article by Douglas Waller in Newsweek, June 17, 1991. Hereafter cited as "Waller."

[161] Ibid.

[162] "USAF MH-53J Pave Lows led Army Apaches...", an article in Armed Forces Journal International, July 1991, pg 34.

[163] Waller.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid.

the Apaches' Hellfire missiles knocked out the radar sites before they could warn Baghdad. The attack force suffered no losses.[166]

The code word "CALIFORNIA" was beamed back to U.S. Central Command Headquarters at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The first battle of DESERT STORM had been a complete success. Coalition fighter bombers swept in through the hole in the radar net and on to Baghdad in the first of many nights of devastating air raids on the Iraqi capital.[167]

The Pave Low's job was far from being over, however. With DESERT STORM under way, the huge choppers were assigned to combat search and rescue operations. It certainly wasn't a new job for the giant Sikorskys since the MH-53J Pave Lows were high-tech modifications of the Vietnam-era HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopters. Many of the choppers were combat veterans of Southeast Asia.

In a dramatic daylight mission on 21 January 1991, a Pave Low dashed 180 miles deep into Iraq to rescue a downed U.S. Navy F-14 pilot. It was the second attempt to locate and rescue the Navy flier. Earlier that morning, the crew had searched unsuccessfully until forced to turn back to the Saudi Arabian border to refuel. As the Pave Low was being refueled at the Saudi airfield at Arar, two A-10A Thunderbolts assigned to the search had established radio contact with the F-14 pilot. The A-10s were to provide close air support if Iraqi ground forces tried to prevent the rescue.[168]

The Navy pilot's position was pinpointed, but near the far end of the Pave Low's range and across a heavily travelled four-lane highway. After refueling, the Pave Low crew took off, hugging the ground to avoid being detected by Iraqi radar. The huge chopper was being tracked by the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) E-3A Sentry, which was orbiting out of danger.[169]

At 160 miles per hour and less than ten feet off the ground, the huge Pave Low raced across the four-lane highway between Iraqi convoys, startling the Iraqi drivers and passengers.

The E-3A called a warning to the Pave Low. A Soviet-built SA-8 missile radar was tracking the chopper. The helicopter turned east as the AWACS controller ordered to avoid the threat. Turning south, the chopper waited for the A-10s to join up with the chopper. Running low on fuel, the ground attack fighters had left the area to rendezvous with a tanker. Finally, with the fighters refueled and back for fire support, the Pave Low crew established radio contact with the downed pilot and began to close in on him. So were the Iraqis.[170]

A canvas topped truck was racing across the desert, was headed straight for the pilot's position. The Pave Low crew ordered the A-10s in. They opened up on

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[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] "Rescue in Iraq!", an article by Malcolm McConnell in Reader's Digest, June 1991, pg 75 - 82. Hereafter cited as "McConnell."

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

the truck with their cannons and the truck exploded into flames.[171]

Using the burning truck as a visual reference, the Pave Low crew still did not have the survivor in sight. Suddenly, less than 150 yards from the smoking enemy truck, the flier popped up from a hole he had dug in the sand. Half a minute later, the chopper was climbing away with a tired and dirty but grateful Navy pilot aboard.[172] Captain Tom Trask and his crew were awarded the MacKay Trophy for the Most Meritorius Flight of the Year for their rescue of Navy pilot Devon Jones. Captain Trask won the Silver Star for his part in the rescue.

The 20th's primary mission, of course, was special operations. On 19 February, Pave Lows from the 20th, accompanied by MH-3Es of the 71st SOS (AFRES),were tasked to infiltrate 13 members of a U.S. Navy SEAL Team on to Kubbar Island in the Persian Gulf, about 17 miles east of Kuwait City. The area was heavily patrolled by Iraqi gunboats, but the insertion was made by the four choppers without detection. Poor weather forced the crews to rely on the Pave Low's terrain following radar to stay low and avoid detection by Iraqi radar.[173]

The SEALS were to use the island as a base for a reconnaissance of the Kuwaiti coast. While the SEALS secured the island and performed their recon, the helicopter crews stood by for possible emergency extraction or for gun support. The island was secured at 1800 hours and the SEALS began their reconnaissance at 1900 hours, slipping undetected from the island to the Kuwait City coast. After probing the Iraqi defenses, the team began their return, encountering an Iraqi patrol boat a few miles from the island. The SEAL team, certain they had been spotted, called for close air support against the boat, but the strike aircraft could not locate the patrol boat. The Iraqis failed to fire on the SEALS and they made their way back to the island and the waiting choppers. It was now 0530 on the 20th of February. The helicopters extracted the SEAL team at 0620 and returned to the safety of Saudi Arabian airspace without being detected. The intelligence gained from the reconnaissance by the SEAL team was invaluable in planning the tactics and strategies used when the ground war against the Iraqis kicked off a few days later.[174]

In support of other intelligence gathering efforts, 20th aircraft and crews were tasked to insert teams from the U.S. Army's 3rd Special Forces Group into Iraq and Iraqi-held territory to observe enemy troop movements prior to the beginning of the ground war. On 23 February, flying in low visibility due to smoke and rain, relying heavily on the terrain following radar and night vision goggles, the MH-53Js delivered their "customers" on time and on target. The targets were surrounded by Iraqi Republican Guard forces and anti-aircraft and surface-to-air missile batteries. The real-time intelligence provided by the 3rd SFG teams was crucial to the ground war planners.[175]

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[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Mission Narrative.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Mission Narrative.

On 27 February, five Pave Lows, accompanied by 55th SOS MH-60G Pave Hawks as gunship escorts, launched into Kuwait to secure the U.S. embassy there. They were carrying U.S. special forces troops and Kuwaiti soldiers.[176]

The special forces troops rappelled from the hovering Pave Lows onto the roof of the embassy, entering from above to search for booby traps. Other U.S. forces, in fast attack vehicles, raced around Kuwait City in search of Iraqi hold outs.[177]

When the aircraft returned to King Fahd IAP, they were nearly black, covered with a film of soot and oil droplets from the oil well fires started by the retreating Iraqis.[178]

That same day Iraqi troops moved 26 Scud missile launchers close to Iraq's western border in a futile attempt to draw Israel into the war. Special operations teams dropped into Iraq by the Pave Lows weeks earlier scrambled and the A-10s launched. Hidden in the dunes, the commandos "painted" the targets with laser illuminators for the A-10s. The A-10s' laser guided weapons successfully wiped out all 26 launchers before they could launch.[179]

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[176] "The Secret History of the War," an article in Newsweek, March 18, 1991, pg 28. Hereafter cited as "Newsweek."

[177] Ibid.

[178] Personal experience. I deployed to King Fahd airport in January 1991 and was the MH-53J maintenance expediter. I directed launch and recovery efforts and supervised maintenance performed by the crewchiefs and specialists on my shift.

[179] Newsweek.

On 28 February, after 42 days of pounding the Iraqi war machine, President Bush declared a cease fire. Operation DESERT STORM was over and Kuwait had been liberated. 20th SOS crews had logged more than 2,800 landings in zero visibility, dust-out conditions.[180]

20th Special Operations Squadron personnel and aircraft, along with other AFSOC forces, remained in the Persian Gulf area until early 1993, providing support for Operations PROVIDE COMFORT and SOUTHERN WATCH.[181]

While the 20th was deployed to Middle East, in other parts of the world, events were shaping the 20th's future.

In June 1991, the Mount Pinatubo volcano in the Philippine Islands forced the evacuation of Clark Air Base and the relocation of the Air Force assets there. The 353rd SOW and the 31st Special Operations Squadron relocated to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. 20th maintainers were tasked to provide a manning assist to their sister Pave Low squadron in the Pacific over the next two years.[182]

In Europe, the Soviet block was crumbling. The Berlin Wall was coming down, the Communists were out of power in the Soviet Union and the United States was emerging as the world's only

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[180] "History of DESERT SHIELD / DESERT STORM - 20 SOS," an unpublished monograph by Lieutenant Colonel Richard Comer, 20th SOS commander during the Gulf War.

[181] 20th Special Operations Squadron Nomination for the Air Force Maintenance Effectiveness Award, 1993.

[182] Ibid.

remaining superpower.

The downsizing of the Air Force and reorganization of Air Force units under the objective wing concept resulted in a number of changes through out AFSOC.

Under the "objective wing concept", the 1st SOW reorganized. The 1st Special Operations Group was created to control all the 1st SOW flying squadrons, replacing the Deputy Commander for Operations function. The aircraft maintenance personnel of the 834th Aircraft Generation Squadron were transferred to the flying squadrons, putting the people who fly the squadron aircraft and the people who maintain them under the same commander. The MH-53J maintenance personnel were transferred to the 20th SOS in June 1992, bonding the flyers and maintainers into one organization.[183]

In October 1993, the 1st Special Operations Wing was redesignated as the 16th Special Operations Wing as the result of an Air Force effort to eliminate duplicate numbered units and preserve



the history of older units.[184]

20th SOS aircraft and personnel, flyers and maintainers alike, finally home after more than two years in the Persian Gulf, deployed to Italy in 1993 in support of the 21st Special Operations Squadron tasking to provide combat search and rescue (CSAR) capability for Operation PROVIDE PROMISE.[185]

PROVIDE PROMISE was the humanitarian effort to ease suffering in the war-torn region that was once Yugoslavia. More personnel and aircraft deployed to Europe to support the new tasking in early 1994 when the 20th assumed responsibility for the CSAR mission. The 20th mission included support of U.S. and NATO forces supporting Operation DENY FLIGHT. DENY FLIGHT was the name for the United Nations operation to enforce no-fly zones and safe-havens for refugees in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The 20th was awarded the prestigious

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[183] 20th Special OperationsSquadron Nomination for the Air Force maintenance Effectiveness Award, 1992.

[184] Hurlburt Field 1943-1993 (Newcomers' Welcome Guide). San Diego, CA: Marcoa Publishing Inc, 1993, pg 5.

[185] 20th Special Operations Squadron Nomination for the Air Force Maintenance Effectiveness Award, 1993.

Air Force Maintenance Effectiveness Award (Rotary Wing Division) for 1993. The citation read, in part, for

"...outstanding devotion to the Air Force mission as it provided integral support to Operation PROVIDE PROMISE. Personnel also demonstrated superior management of resources by supporting a demanding schedule, including three Joint Readiness Training exercises and various Special Mission Operational Test and Evaluation Center programs. The outstanding overall rating received for the Operational Readiness Inspection was indicative of the consistent technical expertise displayed during every operation. Long overdue improvements to existing facilities further raised morale and work area standards, as over $40,000 and countless man-hours were utilized for self-help projects. The professionalism and commitment to excellence demonstrated by the men and women of the 20th Special Operations Squadron reflect great credit upon themselves, the Air Force Special operations Command, and the United States Air Force."

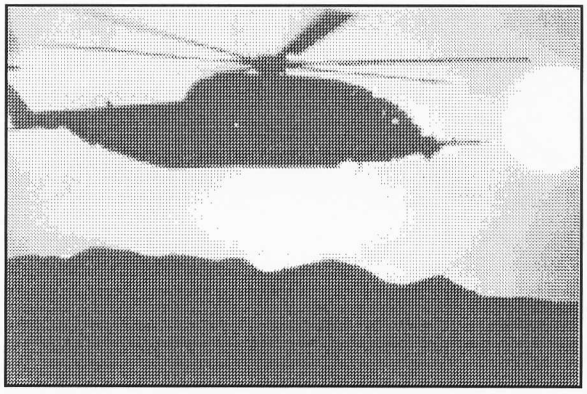
September 1994 found the 20th deploying to Guantanamo Bay Naval Air Station for Operation RESTORE DEMOCRACY, the U.S. intervention into Haiti. The goal of RESTORE DEMOCRACY and follow-on Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY was to restore the rightfully elected president of Haiti Jean-Claude Aristide to power and remove military leader Raul Cedras. Cedras had ceased power in 1991. Last minute negotiations with Cedras resulted in U.S. forces occupying the island nation without a fight, minimizing the loss of life on either side. The 20th SOS deployed more than 170 aircrew and maintenance personnel with 14 MH-53J Pave Low IIIE helicopters in support of operations in Haiti. The 20th logged more than 716 hours while flying 196 sorties with a 100% launch rate.

As personnel and equipment returned from UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in October, the 20th planned to resume something like "normal" operations. In early November, mountain training resumed at Asheville, North Carolina. The on-going training, which had been discontinued in July due to heavy commitments elsewhere, was conducted to qualify aircrews for combat operations in mountainous terrain. It also provided for periodic re-qualification of crews, as well.

The squadron redeployed to Hurlburt for the Thanksgiving holiday, but returned to Asheville in December for further training. The returned to home station for the Christmas holidays. 1994 drew to a close with all but a few personnel home for the holidays.

The new year was expected to bring more deployments for the 20th. Personnel were still deployed for Operations PROVIDE PROMISE and DENY FLIGHT and it was a certainty that other hot spots around the world would flare up, requiring the specialized capabilities of the 20th Special Operations Squadron. The Green Hornets were ready to meet that challenge.

PAVE LOW LEADS...



ANY TIME, ANY PLACE!

APPENDIX 1

AIRCRAFT

Designation	Name	Manufacturer	Remarks
A-20	Havoc	Douglas	World War II
B-25	Mitchell	North American	World War II
DB-7			World War II
F-6	Mustang	North American	World War II. Photo-recon version of the P-51.
H-1	Huey	Bell Helicopter	1967-1972, 1976-1985 (UH-1F, UH-1P 1967-1970), (UH-1N 1970-1972, 1976-1985)
H-3	Sea King	Sikorsky	1965-1969 (CH-3C, CH-3E) 1976-1980 (CH-3E, HH-3E) H-3s were given the nickname *Jolly Green Giant* during the Vietnam War.
H-21	Shawnee	Piasecki-Vertol	1956 - 1960
H-53	Super Jolly	Sikorsky	1980-Present (At various times flew CH-53C, HH-53H, MH-53H, and MH-53J until all aircraft where modified to the MH-53J version. H-53s modified to the -H and -J versions are known as *Pave Lows*.)
L-1	Vigilant	Stinson	World War II. Light planes used for courier and liaison duty, also for photo-recon and air-evac of casualties.
L-4	Grasshopper	Piper	
L-5	Sentinel	Stinson	
P-40	Warhawk	Curtiss	World War II
P-51	Mustang	North American	World War II

APPENDIX 2

ASSIGNMENTS

LOCATION	DATES
Savannah AAF, GA	02 Mar 42 - 28 Mar 42
Pope Field, NC	28 Mar 42 - 14 Dec 42
Vichy, MO	14 Dec 42 - 08 May 43
Morris Field, NC	08 May 43 - 31 Aug 43
Key Field, MS	31 Aug 43 - 26 Dec 43
Bombay, India	26 Dec 43 - 04 Jan 44
Guskhara, India*	04 Jan 44 - 27 Nov 45
Camp Kilmer, NJ	27 Nov 45
Sewart AFB, TN	09 Jul 56 - 16 Jul 59
Myrtle Beach AFB, SC	16 Jul 59 - 08 Mar 60
Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN**	08 Oct 65 - Jun 66
Nha Trang AB, RVN	Jun 66 - Sep 69
Tuy Hoa AB, RVN	Sep 69 - Mar 72
Hurlburt Field, FL	01 Jan 76 - Present

*** Operated from various forward locations throughout Burma until deactivated.**

**** Operated detachments from various locations in South Vietnam and Thailand.**

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Technical Sergeant Dale K. Robinson is a native of Blacksburg, Virginia, where he was a Civil Air Patrol cadet. He enlisted in the USAF in 1975 and was promptly assigned to Hurlburt Field as a UH-1N Huey helicopter mechanic for the 20th SOS Green Hornets. He also worked UH-1P Hueys at Luke AFB, Arizona and UH-1Ns at Zaragoza AB, Spain. In 1986, he returned to Hurlburt and the Green Hornets. He served in Saudi Arabia during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM and more recently in Italy in support of Operations DENY FLIGHT and PROVIDE PROMISE. He holds associate degrees from Embry - Riddle Aeronautical University in Professional Aeronautics and from the Community College of the Air Force in Aviation Maintenance Management. Air Force history and writing are of special interest to him. He has had several articles published in *Behind The Lines*, *Nightflyer*, and *The Commando*. He co-authored the book *AIR COMMANDO! 1950 - 1975: Twenty Five Years at the Tip of the Spear* with Colonel Mike Haas of the USAF Special Operations School. Dale and his wife Katie live in Crestview, Florida with their five children.

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Bach D, Capt			I	+
Bailey L, SSgt			)	+
Balsaceda L, SSgt			I	+
Banning M, SSgt			?	+
Barker P, Capt			' GROUP LEADER	+
Barton C, TSgt			'	+
Baumgardner C,			I	+
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@Bellman M, TSgt			C	+
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Bergschneider, Sgt			J	+
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Bettison A, Sra			J	+
*Blackwood, MSgt			(	+
Bodine L, Capt			H GROUP LEADER	+
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Booker M, Sra			E	+
Borton, Sgt			I	+
Bradby S, SSgt			E	+
Bratcher, P TSgt			F	+
Brooks K, Capt			D	+
Brown C, Sgt			I	+
Brown S, TSgt			C	+
Brown W, SSgt			G	+
Brumble B, TSgt			E	+
Buice T, Sra			G	+
Cameron L, SSgt			I	+
Caporicci L, Capt			P GROUP LEADER	+
Carroll P, Sgt			C	+
Carter A, Capt			I	+
*Carter D, LtCol			A	+
Castro M, TSgt			E	+
Chambless D, MSgt			E	+
*Clare, Maj			A	+
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Franco J, SSgt			F	+
Freese J, SSgt			C	+
Frizzell M, Sra			C	+
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*Harmon C, Capt			A	+
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Hemrick T, SSgt			E	+
Henrie J, Capt			C	+
Herman J, Sgt			F	+
Herr R, Capt			F	+
Hill T, SSgt			D	+
*Hils M, LTC			A	+
Hock E, Sgt			D	+
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Hopkins M, SSgt			E	+
House D, Capt			E	+
*Howell A, TSgt			A	+
*Howell S, Capt			A BEEPER#18009996710	+
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*Kianka, Maj			A	+
*Knox J, CMSgt			A	+
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*Leahy T, Capt			G	+
Lemmon S, Sgt			M	+
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LeSage M, Maj			ADO	+
Levkulich G, SSgt			I	+
Linnbaum M, SSgt			I	+
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*Livelsberger, MSgt			A	+
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Markwood M, Maj			D GROUP LEADER	+
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*Maubach J, Capt			A	+
Maus S, Capt			D	+
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@McCormick T, SSgt			C	+
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McLaughlin L, Capt			I	+
Meek G, Capt			F	+
@Middleton , CMSgt			MCOIC MAINT	+
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Moen M, MSgt			G	+
Molina R, Sgt			C	+
Moncrief C, Capt			P	+
*Morrison J, TSgt			A	+
Mulkey O, Sgt			F	+
Music M, SSgt			F	+
Nicholson M, Sgt			I	+
Nolan S, SSgt			E	+
Nussman C, Capt			I	+
O'brien T J, Capt			C	+
O'Neal G, TSgt			E	+
Orr J, TSgt			D	+
Orrie L, SSgt			G	+
Owens J, Capt			D	+
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Petersen S, Sra			F	+
Phillips A, SSgt			M	+
@Phillips, Capt			OIC FLIGHTLINE	+
Powell M, TSgt			C	+
*Prokosch A, Maj			A	+
Pyles J, Capt			F	+
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Riley J, SSgt			I	+
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Sewall, Ann			B	+
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Stokes J, Sra			M	+
Stone M, SSgt			I	+
Strong R, Sra			E	+
Stumpf B, Sgt			E	+
@Sullivan D, MSgt			D	+
Sullivan M, MSgt			B GROUP LEADER	+
Tate E, Sgt			E	+
Taylor M, Maj			E	+
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Taylor W, SSgt			E	+
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@Wacker D, Sra			D	+
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*Webb M, Capt			A	+
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*Whitmer L, CMSgt			A	+
Williams K, SSgt			G	+
*Williams R, Capt			A	+
Williamson J, SRA			I	+
Wright J, MSgt			E	+
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Balmaceda L, SSgt			I	+
Banning M, SSgt			C	+
Barker P, Capt			P GROUP LEADER	+
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Baumgardner C,			H	+
Bean P, MSgt			F	+
Bergeron C, Sra			C	+
Bertrand S, MSgt			E	+
*Blackwood, MSgt			A	+
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Boelter, TSgt			C	+
Booker M, Sra			B	+
Borton, Sgt			I	+
Bradby S, SSgt			B	+
Bratcher, P TSgt			D	+
Brooks K, Capt			D	+
Brown C, Sgt			I	+
Brown S, TSgt			H	+
Brown W, SSgt			G	+
Brumble B, TSgt			E	+
Buice T, Sra			G	+
Cameron L, SSgt			I	+
Caporicci L, Capt			A	+
Carroll P, Sgt			C	+
Carter A, Capt			I	+
*Carter D, LtCol			A	+
Castro M, TSgt			H	+
*Clare, Maj			A	+
Clark, Maj			ADO	+
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#Cole C, TSgt			I	+
Collotzi S, SSgt			E	+
Comeau R, TSgt			E	+
Conley J, Capt			I	+
Cook PJ, SMSgt			B	+
Crocker B, TSgt			F	+
Crowley, SSgt			F	+
Crozier D, SSgt			E	+
Dahl, Sgt			B	+
Dawson R, SSgt			D	+
Dean C, MSgt			B	+
*Diaz G, SSgt			A	+
*Doeppner, LtCol			A	+
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*Engle C, TSgt			A	+
Ericson J, Sgt			E	+
Fiedler D, Sgt			G	+
*Finnegan T, Capt			A	+
Forslund B, SSgt			D	+
Franco J, SSgt			F	+
Freese J, SSgt			C	+
Frizzell M, Sra			C	+
Gatewood R, AlC			D	+
Goodnough T, Capt			I	+
Gordon S, MSgt			G	+
Graham S, Capt			G	+
Greeley T, Capt			C	+
Gressett D, SSgt	[redacted]			+
Grossnickle, SSgt			C	+
Hammel W, Sgt			F	+
Hansen J, Sgt			D	+
*Harden G, Maj			A	+
Harkins M, SSgt			I	+
*Harmon C, Capt			A	+
Harris K, Capt			E	+
Hauenstein B, Capt			H	+
Heil D, AlC			H	+
Hemrick T, SSgt			E	+
Henrie J, Capt			C	+
Herman J, Sgt			P	+
Herr R, Capt			F	+
Hock E, Sgt			D	+
Hoover D, LtCol			CC	+
Hopkins M, SSgt			E	+
House D, Capt			E	+
*Howell A, TSgt			A	+
*Howell S, Capt			A..BEEPER#18009996710	+
Hudson L, Maj			OIC MAINT	+
Hunt T, SSgt			P	+
Jackson J, SSgt			H	+
James K, SSgt			E	+
Jenson W, TSgt			E	+
Johns J, SSgt			C	+
Jones A, SSgt			D	+
Jones J, SMSgt			FIRST SERGEANT	+
Joyner R, SSgt			P	+
Kearney D, SSgt			G	+
Kebil G, CMSgt			I	+
Kelly S, Capt			E	+
*Kercheval M, TSgt			A	+
*Kianka, Maj			A	+
@Kull T, Capt			OIC GEN DIV	+
Lackey J, Sgt			P	+
Lael M, MSgt			C	+
*Leahy T, Capt			G	+
Lemmon S, Sgt			H	+
Lengyel G, Capt			I	+
LeSage M, Maj			ADO	+
Levkulich G, SSgt			I	+
Linnbaum M, SSgt			I	+
Lirette D, SSgt			D	+
*Livelsberger, MSgt			A	+
Lovin T, SSgt			H	+
Mack L, Maj			D GROUP LEADER	+
Maldonado R, LTC			DO	+
Markwood M, Maj			D GROUP LEADER	+
Marquis D, Sra			C	+
*Maubach J, Capt			A	+
Maus S, Capt			D	+
McCarter M, SSgt			E	+
#McCormick T, SSgt			C	+
McKinney M, Capt				+
McLaughlin L, Capt			I	+
Meek G, Capt			P	+
@Middleton , CMSgt			NCOIC MAINT	+
Miller D, MSgt			I	+
Miller P, MSgt			E	+
Molina R, Sgt			C	+
Moncrief C, Capt			P	+
*Morrison J, TSgt			A	+
@Mulheron T, TSgt				+
Mulkey O, Sgt			P	+
Music M, SSgt			F	+
Nelson W, TSgt			E	+
Nicholson M, Sgt			I	+
Nolan S, SSgt			E	+
Nussman C, Capt			I	+
O'brien T J, Capt	[redacted]		C	+
O'Hara M, Sgt			E	+
O'Neal G, TSgt			E	+
Orr J, TSgt			D	+
Orrie L, SSgt			G	+
Owens J, Capt			D	+
Owings J, Sgt			I	+
Panuelos R, AlC			E	+
Parris L, TSgt			E	+
Pearce M, SSgt			B	+
Pereira, Capt			F	+
Peters G, Capt			D	+
Petersen M, Capt			G GROUP LEADER	+
Petersen S, Sra			P	+
Phillips A, SSgt			H	+
Phillips P, SSgt			D	+
@Phillips, Capt			OIC FLIGHTLINE	+
Porter A, TSgt			D	+
Post R, Capt			D	+
*Pyles J, Capt			A	+
Reed A, Sra			G	+
Reilly R, TSgt			I	+
Rice R, SSgt			G	+
Riley J, SSgt			I	+
Rippert W, SSgt			D	+
Robison D, Sgt			B	+
Roman S, SSgt			B	+
Ruel D, SSgt			B	+
Rutledge R, SSgt			P	+
Saric W, Capt			P	+
Sauvageau E, Capt			G	+
Scaramouche M, TSgt			I	+
Schaeffler S, Capt			D	+
Schroeder M, Sra			D	+
Sewall, Amn			B	+
Shindle D, SSgt			D	+
Shozda M, Capt			G	+
Slife J, Capt			I	+
Slojkowski M, Capt			D	+
Smith B, SSgt			B	+
*Smith D, MSgt			A	+
Smith K, SSgt			G	+
Sorensen J, Sra			I	+
*Sprouse J, TSgt			A	+
Stanton C, AB			H	+
Stokes J, Sra			H	+
Stone M, TSgt			C	+
Strong R, Sra			E	+
Stumpf B, Sgt			E	+
@Sullivan D, MSgt			B	+
Sullivan M, MSgt			B GROUP LEADER	+
Tate E, Sgt			E	+
Taylor M, Maj			E GROUP LEADER	+
Taylor P, TSgt			D	+
Taylor W, SSgt			E	+
Tillman P, TSgt			I	+
*Tingley J, Sgt			A	+
Toomey T, Capt			I	+
Trumble E, Capt			D	+
Tyus D, SSgt				+
Vaughn G, SSgt			G	+
Wall P, SSgt			C	+
Walters L, TSgt			C	+
Waltner A, AB			H	+
Welk T, SSgt			I	+
West G, SSgt			P	+
White A, Capt			I	+
White J, SSgt			E	+
Williams K, SSgt			G	+
*Williams R, Capt			A	+
Williamson J, SRA			I	+
Wright J, MSgt			E	+
Wright L, Sra			P	+
Zak J, Capt			F	+

= MEDICAL @ = MAINTENANCE * = ATTACHED + = VERIFIED INFO



Arriving: Army special operations troops from Fort Bragg, N.C., arrive at Port-au-Prince International Airport in Haiti after being transported by Air Force special operations helicopters.

Haiti missions win praise

By William Matthews
Times staff writer

WASHINGTON

With an almost audible sigh of relief, and, no doubt, some knocking on wood, top Pentagon officials declared the 2½-week-old operation in Haiti a success.

It is "an exceptionally well-executed operation," Defense Secretary William Perry told reporters during a special press conference at the Pentagon Oct. 5.

Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, delivered a similar message a day earlier, saying U.S. troops were achieving their mission of creating a secure and stable environment in Haiti so that democracy can be restored.

The top U.S. military officer ticked off a list of accomplishments:

- U.S. troops had deployed throughout Haiti, and in most locations were encountering cooperation from the population.
- Efforts to disarm the Haitians had netted more than 4,000 guns, 300 machine guns and 1,100 grenades.
- The Haitian parliament was back in session, and the mayor of Port-au-Prince was back in his office.
- The abusive chief of Haiti's ruthless police force had fled the country.

But perhaps the most important achievement for the Clinton administration: U.S. forces had accomplished all of that with just "two Americans hurt. No one killed, thank God," Shalikashvili said.

Frustrated by news reports

The early — and possibly premature — pronouncements of success came as military officials grew increasingly frustrated that news reports of Operation Uphold Democracy focused heavily on the potential pitfalls of the operation and brushed off its successes. Early in the mission, the news was dominated by reports that U.S. troops were standing by while Haitian police roughed up and sometimes killed Haitian citizens who were celebrating the Americans' arrival.

By the second week, reports resounded with warnings of "mission creep."

"The same [people] who were complaining a week ago that we were not doing enough are complaining now that we might start doing too much," a Pentagon official grumbled.

Pentagon leaders say they will not let the mission expand.

Speaking bluntly, Shalikashvili said, "I want to dispel the notion that we have mission creep."

The mission — to help establish a secure and stable environment — has not changed, he said. "What has happened is that we have changed our capabilities and adjusted our procedures slightly, consistent with the changed circumstances on the ground, and I don't think you would want us to do any different."

'A huge logistics operation'

Perry described the Haiti mission as "a huge logistics operation" that the military organized and got under way in just nine days.

Once begun, it took less than a week to deploy 20,000 troops, open Haiti's airport and seaport and get supplies flowing into the country.

The degree of violence so far in Haiti is minimal compared to the violence that would have occurred had U.S. forces invaded, or compared to most other military operations, said Stephen Hess, media expert at the Brookings Institution.

But it may not stay that way, said Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman. He predicted that the Haiti mission "will be increasingly more difficult" until food and other supplies are available to the population. While the United States is willing to lift the trade embargo against Haiti, the United Nations doesn't want to lift the sanctions until the elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, returns in mid-October.

Army officers are being told that the threat is expected to increase daily until Oct. 15, when Aristide is expected to return to Haiti.

"We are at a level of just under 20,000 today. We expect that to go down to about 15,000 by the end of the month," Perry said. The number of U.S. troops in Haiti will fall to 6,000 when the operation is turned over to the United Nations, he said.

One largely unreported measure of the Haiti operation's success is the rate at which Haitians are leaving the refugee camp at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station and returning to Haiti, a Pentagon official said. About 500 Haitian refugees a day are going home. By Oct. 6, defense officials reported that 2,000 Haitians had been returned.

Congress: Talk, no action

But the glowing reports from the Pentagon did not stop attacks from Congress and attempts to force the mission to a close.

Lawmakers have serious reservations about the Haitian mission but were not willing to force the withdrawal of troops as long as Operation Uphold Democracy appeared to be working.

In the Senate, a bipartisan resolution neither approves nor disapproves of the mission. It asks for detailed reports from President Clinton on how long the deployment is expected to last, the cost of the operation and a list of armed incidents or use of military force.

Debate in the House of Representatives was more heated. One camp wanted to force an immediate withdrawal of all troops; another group wanted to authorize the mission only through March 1; and a third group wanted no deadline.

Staff writers Rick Maze in Washington and Soraya S. Nelson in Haiti contributed to this story.

MCO Is "mission creep" a problem in Haiti? Why or why not? Debate the matter on the Military City Online's Open Forum bulletin board.









Air Commando Quiet Professionals

16th
Special Operations Group



Retirement Ceremony
Honoring
Chief Master Sergeant
Jon A. Knox
28 October

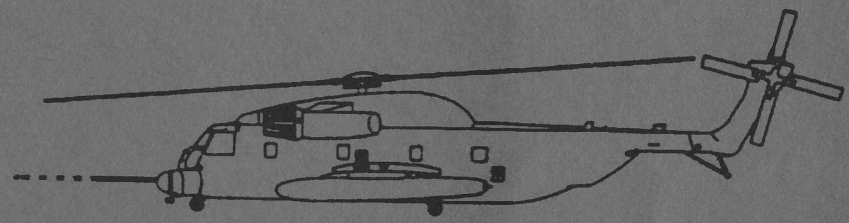
Sequence of Events

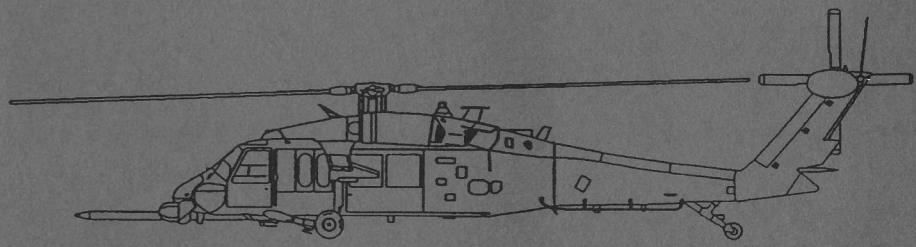
Audience Invited to Seats
Welcoming Remarks
***Arrival of the Official Party**
***Advancement of the Colors**
***National Anthem**
Remarks by Col Takacs (Ret)
***Award Ceremony**
***Certificate of Appreciation**
Presented to Mrs. L. Ann Knox
Remarks by
Chief Master Sergeant Knox
***Air Force Song**
***Departure of Official Party**

CMSgt and Mrs Knox Cordially invite you to a reception they are having in honor of you who have been their friends throughout their career. All are invited to the Commando Hanger

*** Please Stand**

Chief Master Sergeant Jon A. Knox





United States Air Force
16th Special Operations Wing

The 16th Special Operations Wing (16 SOW) traces its heritage from Panama in 1932 to Burma in World War II to constant world-wide operations since 1961. The 16th Pursuit Group devoted itself to the protection of the Panama Canal prior to and during World War II. The 1st Air Commando Group executed the first all-aerial invasion when it inserted British Troops behind enemy lines in Burma in 1944 to harass Japanese troops and cut their supply lines. The air commandos resupplied them and evacuated their wounded and thus established the foundation for subsequent special operations activities.

Pioneering efforts by Colonels Philip Cochran and John Alison of the 1 ACG were recalled in 1961 when the air commandos reactivated. Located at Hurlburt Field, they were among the first to go to Vietnam where initially they trained South Vietnamese forces. After hostilities ceased, the air commandos concentrated on military training, social actions, and humanitarian relief in Africa, Asia, Central and South America.

When called upon, the 1st Special Operations Wing (1 SOW) took direct military action in support of National Command Authority directives. The attempt to rescue Americans held hostage in Teheran had to be aborted when there were not enough operational helicopters for the attack phase. Tragically, five 1 SOW airmen and one aircraft were lost in an accident at the Desert One site in Iran. Like the Son Tay prisoner of war camp raid in North Vietnam, the prime objective was not realized. Both efforts demonstrated the courage and skill to perform such complex and high risk missions. In 1983, wing aircraft participated in the successful rescue of Americans from the Island of Grenada. In 1989, the 1 SOW led the attack on Panama which restored democracy to the country. Less than a year later, the wing like many Air Force units, deployed to Saudi Arabia to free Kuwait after Iraq invaded and conquered this small country. Since then the wing has participated in humanitarian and security efforts in that area of the world.

Chief Master Sergeant
Jon A. Knox



Biography

Chief Master Sergeant Jon A. Knox is the Superintendent of the 16th Operations Group Standardization/Evaluation Division and Chief Rotary Wing Flight Engineer for the Group, Hurlburt Field, Florida.

Chief Knox was born June 11, 1943 on U.S. Army Calvary post, Fort R.A. Russell, Presidio County, Texas. He graduated from Bellevue High School, Bellevue, Nebraska in 1961 and started his Air Force career October 19, 1964, as a helicopter mechanic.

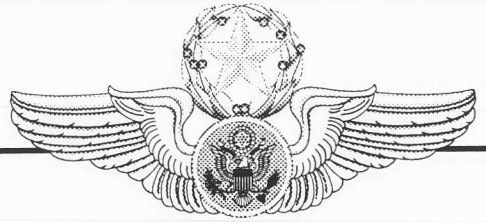
His first duty assignment was to El Centro, NAF, California detached from Edwards AFB, where he worked primarily with the H-21 Work Horse helicopter. While there, he became qualified to work on U6A, T-28s, as well as engine run qualified on other aircraft including the C-130A aircraft.

In May of 1965, he started flying as a flight mechanic on the H-21 and soon after became the Stan/Eval Examiner for El Centro and Edwards.

In 1967, he was assigned to the 38 ARRS, Det 8 Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam on HH-43B helicopters. This was the first of three assignments to South East Asia, the last was November 1971 back to Cam Rahn Bay with the 20th Special Operations Squadron, UH-1N helicopter gunships.

In August 1973, he was assigned to the 20 SOS at Hurlburt Field once again to fly the Huey gunship. He transitioned to the HH-3E, then the HH-53H, beginning his career in Pave Low aircraft in May of 1980. During his assignment to the 20 SOS, he has filled nearly every position available including Operations Superintendent .

Chief Knox has flown over 3000 hours on the MH53H and J models and is currently assigned to 16th Operations Group, Standardization/Evaluation Division, as the Chief Flight Engineer for MH-53J.



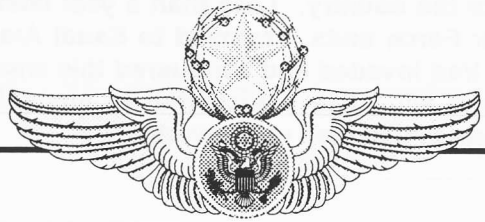
Chief Master Sergeant Jon A. Knox

CMSgt Knox has accumulated over 7000 hours on helicopters such as the H-21, H-19, HH-43, HH-3, HH-53 with nearly 400 hours combat time.

Military decorations include Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Air Force Outstanding Unit, Air Force Good Conduct, National Defense, Vietnam Service, Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, and Marksmanship Award.

Chief Knox is a graduate of the Air Force Systems Command NCO Academy and Air Force Senior NCO Academy, Gunter AFB, Alabama. He has completed 50 semester hours towards an associates degree in Aerospace technology through the Community College of the Air Force.

He is married to the former Lottie Ann Snow of Leesburg, Florida.











20th Special Operations Squadron
Change of Command



10 June 1994
Hurlburt Field, Florida

20TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

The 20th Special Operations Squadron (20 SOS), located at Hurlburt Field FL. Also known as the "Green Hornets," the 20 SOS flies the MH-53H/J Pave Low helicopters, the Air Force's most sophisticated helicopter.

The 20 SOS's primary mission is to conduct day or night low level penetration into hostile or enemy territory to accomplish clandestine infiltration/exfiltration, aerial gunnery support, and reenforcement throughout the world. These operations include tactical low-level navigation, night vision goggle operations, airland/airdrop techniques and over water operations.

The unique capabilities of the MH-53 Pave Low allow the 20 SOS to operate from unprepared landing zones in any type of terrain and in otherwise inaccessible areas.

The 20 SOS was formed as the 20th Observation Squadron (Light) at Savannah Air Base GA on 2 March 1942 flying A-20, B-25, DB-7, L-1, L-5, P-40, and P-43 aircraft. The 20 SOS was redesignated the 20th Reconnaissance Squadron on 2 April 1943, at Vichy MO. The 20 SOS first saw combat on 31 January 1944, flying out of Gushkara, India, having trained in Pope Field NC, Morris Field NC, and Key Field MS. While in Gushkara the 20 SOS supported 21 special missions with the 1st Air Commando Group. On 27 November 1945, the 20 SOS was deactivated in Camp Kilmer NJ.

The squadron was reactivated as the 20th Helicopter Squadron in 1956 to perform traditional helicopter missions with H-21s for the Tactical Air Command. In 1965, the unit's CH-3 helicopters were transferred to Southeast Asia and the squadron began unconventional warfare/special operations as the "Pony Express." In 1967, they were joined by the UH-1F/P helicopters formerly assigned to Project Lucky Tiger. The Green Hornets continued to perform unconventional warfare missions until deactivation in 1972.

Reactivated in 1976 at Hurlburt Field, the mission remained unconvential warfare and special operations using UH-1N gunships and CH-3s. During this period, the 20 SOS supported operations including J-CATCH and the MGM Grand Hotel fire rescue. The HH-53H Pave Low replaced the CH-3 in 1980 to provide a long-range, heavier lift helicopter capability.

The Pave Low arrives over target, on time, and undetected where they perform terminal operations wearing night vision goggles. In 1983, the UH-1Ns began two years of outstanding support as part of then Vice President George Bush's South Florida Drug Enforcement Task Force, participating in Operation Bahamas, Antilles, and Turks (OP BAT). The OP BAT Hueys flew hundreds of missions from the Bahamas before being transferred to Homestead AFB FL, in 1985.

In 1986, the Green Hornets flew the specially equipped and highly capable redesignated MH-53H Pave Low and have been flying the new MH-53J Pave Low III since 1988. The New Pave Low "J model" features new integrated avionics, enhanced cockpit controls and displays, and improved weapons systems. In December 1989, members of the 20 SOS were mobilized as part of a joint task force for Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama.

The 20 SOS crewmembers and aircraft were among the first to deploy to Operation DESERT SHIELD in August 1990. Pave Lows led U.S. Army AH-64 Apaches in the airstrike that opened the airwar in Operation DESERT STORM. Captain Tom Trask and crew rescued Navy Lt. Devon Jones to log the first successful rescue of a downed aircrew member since the Vietnam war. Captain Trask and crew were awarded the MacKay Trophy for their accomplishment.

The 20 SOS has also had primary involvement in Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, PROVIDE COMFORT, PROVIDE PROMISE, PROVIDE COMFORT II, and SUPPORT DEMOCRACY.

The highly trained and motivated crews of the 20th SOS stand ready, willing, and able to deploy worldwide to support any theater commander's special operations force helicopter requirements, "Any Time, Any Place."

"PAVE LOW LEADS"

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

OPENING REMARKS

ARRIVAL / FANFARE

POSTING OF THE COLORS

NATIONAL ANTHEM

INVOCATION

REMARKS (MG GARRISON)

AWARD PRESENTATION

CHANGE OF COMMAND

REMARKS (COL HOLBEIN)

REMARKS (LT COL RAKIP)

REMARKS (LT COL HOOVER)

RETIRE THE COLORS

AIR FORCE SONG

DEPARTURE

RECEPTION

BIOGRAPHY

OF

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RUSSELL E. RAKIP, JR.

Lieutenant Colonel Rakip was born in Nashua, New Hampshire. He is a 1973 graduate of Lowell Technological Institute, Lowell Massachusetts, and attended undergraduate helicopter training until March 1975.

He transitioned to the CH-53 at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, and while enroute to the 21st Special Operations Squadron at Nakhom Phanom Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, was diverted to the 701st Tactical Air Support Squadron, 602d Tactical Air Control Wing, Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas. In 1978, Lieutenant Colonel Rakip was reassigned to the 602d Wing as the wing evaluator pilot until May 1980. Lieutenant Colonel Rakip served as the sole Air Force helicopter pilot on the ill-fated Iran hostage rescue attempt in April 1980. In June 1980, he was assigned to the 20th Special Operations Squadron and remained until May 1983 where upon he was reassigned as helicopter planner to Det 2, 23d Air Force, Ft Bragg, North Carolina. He served as the Chief of Helicopter Assignments, Headquarters Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, from June 1985 to March 1989.

Lieutenant Colonel Rakip requalified in the H-53 at Kirtland Air Force Base and was assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron in March 1989 as assistant director of operations and subsequently as director of operations. He was reassigned to the 20th Special Operations Squadron in October 1991 as the director of operations and assumed duties as the commander in June 1992.

He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in September 1989.

Lieutenant Colonel Rakip is a command pilot with over 2,800 flying hours in the H-53 and over 3,000 hours total. His decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Aerial Achievement Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Force Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with two devices, the National Defense Service Medal with one device, and the Humanitarian Service Medal.

BIOGRAPHY

OF

LT COL DONALD L. HOOVER

Lt Col Hoover was born in Belleville, Kansas, on 2 January 1947. He graduated from Pius X High School in 1965 and began studies at the University of Nebraska before enlisting in the United States Army in June 1967. While in basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, he was selected for the Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Aviation Course .

Graduating from WORWAC in July 1968, Lt Col Hoover was assigned to the 114th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC), Vinh Long, South Vietnam. He accumulated 1,500 combat flying hours in the UH-1D and H Huey helicopter and returned to Fort Rucker, Alabama, in August 1969. He transitioned into the CH-47 Chinook helicopter and was assigned to the 271st Aviation Support Company, Can Tho, South Vietnam until June 1971 and accumulated 1,600 combat flying hours in the CH-47A, B, and C model Chinooks.

Returning to the United States in June 1971, Lt Col Hoover was assigned to Fort Hood, Texas, where he remained until he separated from the Army in March 1972. He returned to Lincoln, Nebraska, and joined the Nebraska Army National Guard Medevac Helicopter Company until he entered the Air Force.

Graduating from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, in December 1975, Lt Col Hoover was assigned to Zaragoza Air Base, Spain, in March 1977. In Spain, he qualified as a UH-1N Combat Search and Rescue Instructor Pilot. Lt Col Hoover earned a Master's Degree from Troy State University in 1978. He was promoted to captain and attended Squadron Officers School (SOS) in-residence in 1980. Upon graduating from SOS, he was assigned to Detachment 2, 67th ARRS, Ramstein AB, Germany. He completed both the Air Force Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) by seminar and the Marine Corps ACSC by correspondence while at Ramstein. Lt Col Hoover was the Chief of Standardization and Evaluation when assigned to the 20th Special Operations Squadron.

During his first assignment in the 20 SOS, Lt Col Hoover qualified as a MH-53H Pave Low III Flight Examiner Aircraft Commander and was the Chief of Standardization and Evaluation. He was promoted to major in August 1987 and assigned to the Armed Forces Staff College in July 1988. Lt Col Hoover completed AFSC in January 1989 and assigned to the United States Special Operations Command, MacDill AFB. He was selected for below-the-zone promotion in June 1991, assigned to the 20 SOS as operations officer in January 1992, promoted to Lt Col in April 1992, and completed Air War College by seminar in April 1993.

Lt Col Hoover has over 8,000 hours of helicopter flying time, of which 3,100 hours were in combat. He has received one Distinguished Flying Cross, one Bronze Star, one Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal with seventy-seven devices , one Air Force Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the AF Outstanding Unit Award with one Oak Leaf Clusters, the National Defense Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Vietnam Service Medal with eight devices, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with sixty devices.

His wife, Carolyn, is employed by Santa Rosa County Schools as an itinerant teacher for English Students of Other Languages (ESOL). She is a Master Teacher in ESOL for the Florida Department of Education. She has an educational certificate in Early Childhood, Elementary Education, English 7th through 12th grade, and English as a Second Language. Carolyn graduated from the University of South Florida in 1981. She is pursuing her Master's Degree in English at the University of West Florida. Lt Col Hoover has four children; daughter Regan, 18, and sons, Todd, 24, Erick, 20, and Brian, 17.

1994 HAITIAN VACATION





Congratulations

Commando
August 12, 1994

new staff sergeants!

20th SOS

BAHLS, CHRISTOPHER
BEDNAR, RICHARD L., JR.
BETTISON, AARON C.
BREYFOGLE, MICHAEL
BROWN, CLINTON A.
BURKE, DONALD S.
CARROLL, PHILIP M., JR.
HERMAN, JONATHAN P.
KINCAID, REGINA A.
KORNELY, CRAIG R.
LACKEY, JAMES B.
LEMMON, STEVEN J.
LIVINGSTON, WILLIAM
OHARA, MICHAEL W.
RIVERAORTIZ ,LUIS J.
SHARP, LANCE A.
STOKES, JEFFREY R.
STRONG, ROBERT E.
TATE, ERIC M.
TINGLEY, JEFFREY W.
WHITE, LESA M.
WILLIAMS, JOHN D.
WRIGHT, LESTER D., JR.



Photograph by SrA. Simon Herrera

Checking out the machinery

Congressman-elect Joe Scarborough, of Florida's District 1, received an introduction to Air Force Special Operations Command missions and weapons here Monday. The visit included a tour of the AC-130U Spectre gunship, MC-130H Combat Talon II and MH-53 Pavelow on the base flight line. The freshman congressman was briefed on operations activities, special tactics, and budgeting.

Promoted for exceptional performance

by A1C Karl W. Leach
staff writer

Five airmen here were promoted Monday under the Air Force's Stripes for Exceptional Performance program.

The recipients and their new ranks are: MSgt. Stuart Prigge, 15th Special Operations Squadron; TSgt. Craig Howell, Airman Leadership School; TSgt. Randy Marshall, 20th Special Operations Squadron; TSgt. Stephen Ganzel, 16th Component Repair Squadron; and TSgt. Danny Moore, 8th Special Operations Squadron.

The promotion program gives commanders the opportunity to promote airmen whose performances exceed the expectations based on their present grades. The weighted airmen promotion system bases promotion on testing, decorations and service time.

"The philosophy is to (STEP) promote individuals who always volunteer for the tough tasks and missions; who get the job done right the first time, every time," said CMSgt. Wayne Norrad, Air Force Special Operations Command's senior enlisted advisor.

Doing the job right the first time is normal for flight engineer Prigge, according to MSgt. Lawrence Sisk, 15th SOS flight engineer superintendent.

During the Combat Talon II Improved Capabilities Exercise in May 1993, Prigge's efforts assured 100 percent mission effectiveness. The flight evaluator repeated the performance during the same exercise in June for senior members of Congress and the Senate Armed Service Committee.

His development of tactics and procedures proved that the squadron could successfully infiltrate a battalion-sized force, while his technical expertise contributed to successful mission during joint readiness training exercises.

"He is the guy we go to when we have tough technical questions," said Sisk. "That ability and his good people relation skills have put us further ahead in accomplishing our missions than we would be without him."

Howell is another airman who is moving the Air Force forward. According to TSgt. Cindra Smith, program manager for the Airman Leadership School, Howell brings innovation into the classroom.

One specific change to the school's curriculum is how he teaches the quality module. In a classroom, several stations are set up on a table. Airman must work together to solve the problem of moving ping-pong balls from one side of the room to the other. "This gets students involved, which enhances learning," said Smith. Students read about continuous improvement, then discussed it under the old method.

The exercise attempts to slow and prevent the job, but emphasizes the value of the Air Force's continuous improvement process. The service encourages other schools to adopt Howell's method.

Another Howell innovation was including field trips to places like the Enlisted Heritage Hall at Gunter AFB, Ala. and the aviation museum at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla. The trips' purposes are to instill pride and enhance military knowledge in airmen.

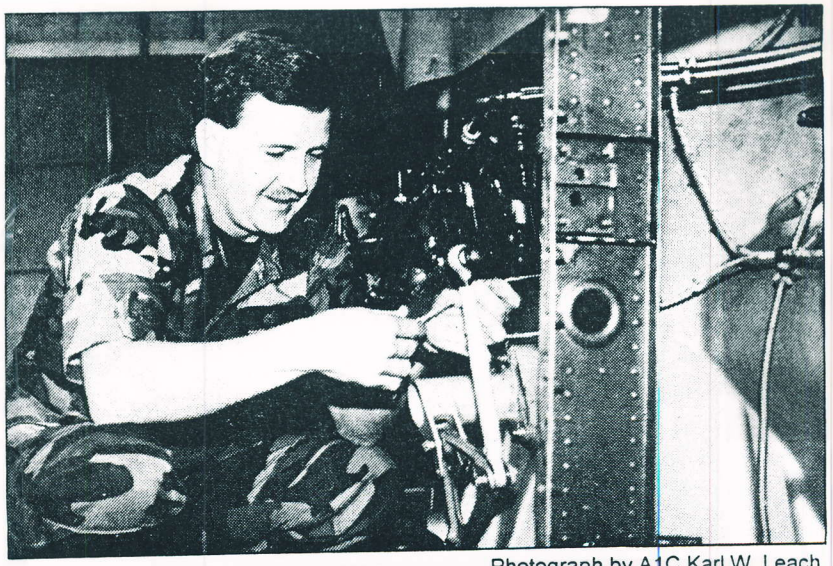
"The energy and enthusiasm he puts into teaching has had a positive and far-reaching effect on hundreds of airmen and junior NCOs," said Smith.

Marshall, an MH-53J helicopter crew chief, is another creative airman. His work with the 18th Flight Test Squadron produced what is now called the elastomeric rotor head. With the modification, MH-53J Pave Lows can be stored inside Navy aircraft carriers.

Also, Marshall designed the checklists and training programs necessary for operating, troubleshooting and maintaining the modification.

For the entire Department of Defense fleet of MH-53s, Marshall discovered that the primary servocylinder mount bolts were too long, allowing the servocylinder to lift off their mounts while in flight.

His report resulted in a one-time inspection within the nation's MH-53 fleet to replace the long bolts with shorter bolts. "This inspection averted a potential future mishap," said SMSgt. Michael Wheeler, crew chief division chief for the 20th SOS.



Photograph by A1C Karl W. Leach

TSgt. Randy Marshall tightens the safety wire to secure the aft primary servo mount bolt on an MH-53J Pave Low helicopter.



Cooking for their troops, from left to right, are: SMSgt. Jerry Jones, 20th Special Operations Squadron first sergeant, CMSgt. Jerry Hendershot, 9th SOS maintenance chief, and MSgt. Dave Proch, 9th SOS first sergeant.

Commando August 19, 1994

Hurlburt Field, Fla. May 13, 1994



Photograph by A1C Karl W. Leach

McDonald, Young, Fournier, Wall, Buller, Crowley, Petersen, Dunwoody, VanLorynen, Strayer, Falla and Jarvas dropped jobs to get a helicopter flying to the rescue of a fighter pilot.

Rescue on moment's notice

Special operators save Tyndall AFB fighter pilot

by A1C Karl W. Leach
staff writer

Two Hurlburt Field squadrons and other emergency response teams rescued an Air Force pilot May 5 in the Gulf of Mexico.

The 20th Special Operations Squadron and 23rd Special Tactics Squadron are credited with pulling Capt. Jon E. Counsell from the water after he ejected from his plane. Counsell is an F-15 pilot in the 1st Fighter Squadron at Tyndall AFB, Fla.

Nine other aircraft from the Air Force, Coast Guard and Navy were in the area soon after the crash, but since the special operations team in the MH-53J had medically trained swimmers, they made the rescue.

The swimmers consisted of 1st Lt. Kurt W. Buller and SSgt. Edward C. McDonald, 23rd Special Tactics Squadron, and SrA. Kenneth L. Fournier, a pararescue specialist from the squadron. Buller was in civilian clothes, organizing paperwork on his day off while the airmen checked equipment used in combat.

"It was a no-notice rescue alert," said Buller, stating that swimmers are not on alert for rescues, but must be prepared at all times.

The request for search and rescue support came to the 20th SOS from the base's command post at approximately 11:20 a.m.

Within 34 minutes, the squadron's maintainers, MSgt. Bob Van Lorynen, TSgt. Ricky H. Jarvas, Sgt. Angela Dunwoody, A1C Jeremy J. Strayer and Amn. Brian R. Falla launched COWBOY 21, the helicopter's call sign, with its special tactics rescue team. The airmen stopped their tasks of changing helicopter tires, fuel probes and completing mission debriefings to get tail number 364's fuel tanks filled and maintenance completed for the mission.

Aircraft commander, Capt. Jason L. Young, accepted the aircraft since he had flown it earlier that day and knew he could get it airborne sooner than had he picked another mission-ready aircraft. Aircrew must inspect, warm up engines, check electrical systems and flight instruments, plus hover check a helicopter before departing on a mission.

Capt. Robert T. McCreadie, Staff Sergeants Ryon L. Crowley and Patrick E. Wall and Senior Airmen Scott A. Petersen and Michael B. Frizzel filled out the search and rescue aircrew.

COWBOY 21 launched with no more information than coordinates of the ap-

See Rescue on Page 12

Rescue continued from page 1

proximate location of Counsell and his status, which was that he was conscious and in his raft.

"We heard the Coast Guard helo check in and began to think that we wouldn't get the pick-up," said Young, relying on the information about the pilot's status. However, COWBOY 21 was designated the primary pick-up aircraft by the AC-130 from Duke Field that was coordinating the rescue.

A UH-1 Bell Huey helicopter from Eglin AFB dropped smoke markers about one quarter mile down wind of the pilot, pin-pointing him for COWBOY 21.

Approximately one hour after receiving the initial call, the crew reached Counsell, who was on his back in the water and appeared unconscious. Fournier and McDonald jumped into the water with a rescue kit and swam to the pilot.

The pilot had a broken left leg, dislocated right knee, left arm and left shoulder, his eyes were swollen shut and he was in shock.

"He seemed to relax when we got to him and began talking to him," said McDonald about the six-foot-plus pilot, who responded more with groans than words.

The two rescuers put a neck brace on Counsell, leveled his body on a flotation board, slipped a litter under the board and secured the injured man. Within 25 minutes, Counsell was inside COWBOY 21, headed for Eglin AFB's hospital.

"We got Counsell on pure oxygen and we took his vital signs," said Buller. "They were below normal — his heart rate was 67 beats per minute and his breathing was a shallow 19 breaths per minute."

Fournier began intravenous treatment. After two bags of fluid, Counsell's color returned and Buller said seemed less distressed. Th kept up the IV treatment a kept the pilot warm until th touched down at Eglin A about 2:15 p.m.

Counsell was moved Keesler AFB May 7. He derwent surgery and is lis in stable condition.

Text information compiled by Diane C. Howard, public affair volunteer.

THE CUTTING EDGE-COMPANY GRADE OFFICERS

(LEADERSHIP IN THE AIR FORCE)

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on an article in the 'Commando' concerning company grade officers in the Air Force. The article highlights some issues concerning company grade leadership in the Air Force but I feel some of the areas covered need to be expanded upon. First of all I would like to dispell any belief that the Air Force could function without its company grade officers. Without the Lieutenants and the Captains teamed together with our enlisted personnel, the Air Force would come to a screaching halt; and if we were in the midst of battle, the enemy would defeat us. Why? Because the company grade officers are the cutting edge. They deliver the weapons and inflict pain and discontent upon the enemy. If any officer has doubts about this fact, then they should consider a career at 7-11.

What I think some officers suffer from is not realizing that he/she can be an 'uncrowned leader' even if their position of authority does not explicity state it. Every military unit relies on organizational leadership at every level and in every job responsibility, even though we never come out and specifically say it; especially with the job description. In between the lines, it states that you will take charge of the situation and the people around you regardless of whether you are the OIC or not. Its part of being a military officer. The military is based on an umbrella of different ranks, jobs and the leadership responsibilities that are critical at each level. With each layer of rank lies a different realm and role of leadership. While the field grade ranks focus more on the big picture type stuff, the company grade are the ones who take the big picture guidance and give the marching orders to the NCO's. The combination of the two make it happen. Company Grade Officers and the NCO's are the first layer of leadership available to take care of the troops and keep them informed. The most important role as a leader! Without the middle layer here, the system/unit would fall apart. Even if you have influence on only one of your unit's airman, then you have the opportunity to be a great leader. Leadership doesn't deal with numbers.

Leadership is not a job position or assumed with rank, it is something that is taken on by an individual regardless of where they fit into the food chain. A basic rifleman can be a leader heading the charge up a hill during battle. It's a matter of deciding that you are going to set the example for others to follow, seeking responsibility, being responsible for your actions, keeping others informed, being disciplined, helping others around you, and finally, just taking charge. No one is going to come up to you when you report aboard a unit and say "welcome aboard, you will be the schedules officer and Oh- by the way, that is a leadership position so be prepared to act like a leader." If you are sitting back and waiting for someone to tell you, "Alright Capt, take charge!", then you're wrong.

Units, regardless of their mission, rely on their company grade officers and enlisted to successfully carry out the mission; for they are the pointy end of the spear that reaches out and touches the enemy. These are the guys slugging it out in the trenches. They are the ones who unfurl the flag on top of the newly taken hilltop.

The article also states frustration with being a middleman in the chain of command. Well this is a fact that you better get used to, because unless you are the Commander in Chief, you will always be a middleman or woman somewhere in the chain. There's nothing wrong with that. You will always be in charge of someone or something and you will always have someone that you will report to. Its the way our system works. And in battle, it works quite well. Someone is always prepared to take command if the upper echelon is taken out of the loop for whatever reason. You should also ensure that your subordinates are able to assume your responsibilities should you take a hit. As a leader, allow the people under your charge to seek leadership responsibilities too. This will broaden their abilities and help foster the umbrella of the layered command structure.

We are all leaders in the military. Its merely a matter of seeking out and seizing every opportunity available. If LT's and Capts' look hard enough there are numerous opportunities to be an 'uncrowned leader'. Don't wait for rank or a job position to start becoming a leader. Your leadership role may vary from helping Sgt Jones with a pay matter, to leading the troops in Friday physical fitness training, helping an airman with his promotion, or assisting your fellow officers. The potential is unlimited. It's up to you to find these opportunities and to take charge of the situation...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

MAJ MARK A. CLARK IS A MARINE CORPS EXCHANGE OFFICER WITH THE 20TH SOS.

Training mission brings Christmas to children

story and photographs
by A1C Karl W. Leach
staff writer

The 16th Special Operations Wing flew Saint Nicholas to La Ceiba, Honduras Dec. 16 where he delivered toys to children of the dusty town, situated between tropical mountains and beaches. Wing members distributed donated medical supplies, clothes, vegetable seeds and food to an orphanage and a local hospital.

The Air Commando Association, Salvation Army and commercial businesses, along with the US Navy's Operation HAND CLASP donated the gifts from Saint Nick and the Wing.

Lt. Col. Ken Poole, 8th Special Operations Squadron operations officer, said the Christmas effort evolved from a 20th SOS routine over-water navigation training, theater orientation mission that is often coordinated with the Honduran air force at Goloson Air Base. The base supplies fuel and electrical power carts to the Wing's airplanes when they visit.

"Christmas is the time of giving and this is what it's all about," said Poole before the mission, adding that part of the special operations mission in foreign countries is to promote a positive view of the United States.

The base commander, Honduran air force Col. Jorge Tosta and his project officer, Lt. Carlos Urvizo escorted Saint Nick, alias MSgt. Jose P. Baldonado, 8th SOS crew chiefs' flight chief, and the 16th SOW to the impoverished children waiting at the Club De Oficiales, the base's officers' club.

There Saint Nick passed out gifts ranging from dolls to bicycles -- items the children asked for in letters submitted to him earlier in the month. "I felt a lot of satisfaction seeing their happiness," said Baldonado after gifts were given to the children.

The scent of ripened pineapples greeted the travellers while they drove to the orphanage outside town. Along the way, people leaned against the walls of houses whose openings had no doors or glass, and women waded in the knee-deep river washing clothes against the boulders.

Two cowboys herded six thin horses while the USAF truck bearing Saint Nick crossed a temporary wood bridge. At the orphanage, 16th SOW volunteers unloaded clothes, food and beds from a rusting yellow dumptruck while Siant Nick handed candycanes and other sweets to the children.

The orphanage director, Andre Serrano, speaking through an interpreter in the pavillion, expressed his thanks and the children's to everybody connected with the effort saying that this was the best Christmas they ever had. Teenagers sang songs for Saint Nick and the 16th SOW team to show their appreciation.

After the passing of gifts, Air Force members joined in throwing plastic discs, blowing up balloons and playing volleyball with a team of skilled teenage girls who by the way, beat the combined 8th and 20th SOSs team again -- just like they did during a similar visit last summer. "Next time we're playing on our turf," said a laughing crewman while the troops walked toward the truck, silhouetted against the mountain sunset. The children said, "bye" and the special operators returned with, "adios", and headed back to the plane for home.

September 1994

THE AIRMEN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION'S

"20TH SOS" FUND

The Airmen Memorial Foundation (AMF) is a non-profit, charitable and educational institution, founded in 1983 by the Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) to provide special services to all Air Force personnel, active duty and retired, Guard and Reserve. Among these programs are Air Force unit special educational funds established to assist the Air Force community. Currently, there are three such funds:

- The Special Operations Helicopter Association's "20th SOS Educational Fund" memorializing the 20th SOS squadron members lost in January 1984 near the Bahamas; October 1984 in the Republic of the Philippines; and in May 1986 near _____.

- The "JOCKEY 14" Educational Fund memorializing the 16th SOS squadron members lost on March 14, 1994 off the coast of Kenya;

- The "MERIT 84" Educational Fund memorializing the 55th SOS squadron members lost on October 29, 1992 during a joint training accident in Utah;

- The "SPIRIT 03" Educational Fund memorializing the 16th SOS squadron members lost on January 31, 1991 during the Gulf War.

The fund is managed on behalf of the 20TH Special Operations Helicopter Association, Hurlburt AFB, Florida. The purpose of the fund is to provide scholarships to the dependents of members of the 20th Special Operations Squadron who have died in the line of duty.

Fund assets are maintained in an AMF, independently managed, interest-bearing donor account. Expenditures from the fund are restricted solely to the amounts awarded to the dependents of members of the 20th SOS for educational purposes. The responsibility for awarding scholarship grants to the designated recipients of the fund rests with the Special Operations Helicopter Association Trustees.

The fund was originally established in _____, 1984 upon the loss of a UH-1N Iroquois Helicopter assigned to the 20th Special

Operations Squadron near the Bahamas. Three of the eight 20th SOS members lost their lives in this tragic accident while one survived. In October 1984 the squadron lost six crewmembers aboard an MH-53J Pave Low helicopter in an accident in the Republic of the Philippines. Later, in May 1986 the squadron suffered the loss of another crewmember aboard another MH-53J as the result of an accident near _____.

The fund honors the memories of the following squadron members lost as a result of these three aircraft accidents:

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All of whom are eligible to receive educational assistance from the fund.

Donations to the fund are tax-deductible in accordance with IRS rules and may be forwarded to the AMF/20 SOS Fund, c/o Airmen Mememorial Foundation, 5211 Auth Road, Suitland, MD 20746. Contributions through the Combined Federal Campaign must be designated for code 2102 (the AMF) and donors must forward a copy of the CFC donor form to the Foundation designating the AMF (#2102) and indicating their intent to support the "20 SOS" Fund. All contributions are acknowledged by the AMF.

- AMF -

The AMF develops solutions to contemporary problems within the Air Force enlisted community. A nationally recognized charity (Nr. 2102) in the annual Combined Federal Campaign, the AMF is a member of the Military Veterans & Patriotic Public Service Organizations of America Federation and, in addition, receives contributions from AFSA field organizations, individuals and corporate donors.

The Foundation is an affiliate of the Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA), a non-profit organization representing the professional and personal interests of more than 167,000 active duty and retired enlisted members of the U.S. Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. AFSA also provides all family members the opportunity to join and support the association as a member of AFSA or its Auxiliary.

20th SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON OPERATIONAL LOSSES

JANUARY 1984
H-1 LOSS
BAHAMAS

CAPT DYKE H. WHITBECK
1LT THOMAS L. HAMBY
SSGT EDGARDO L. ACHA

OCTOBER 1984
H-53 LOSS
PHILLIPINE ISLANDS NEAR CLARK A.B.

MAJOR JAMES S. PROWELL
CAPT MICHAEL W. SKEEN
TSGT THOMAS M. ORTIZ, JR.
TSGT WAYNE A. JOHNSON
SSGT ROBERT G. BARKER
SSGT MAX B. LINCKS, JR.

MAY 1986
H-53 LOSS
NELLIS AFB, NV

MAJOR RICHARD C. BRIMS

20SOS STANDARDS & TACTICS NEWSLETTER

(FORMERLY THE COMBAT READINESS NEWSLETTER AND OGOV NEWSLETTER)

JUN 94

"GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS IN WAR AND PEACE CAN ONLY RESULT IF OFFICERS AND MEN FORM AN INDISSOLUBLE BAND OF BROTHERS."

- FIELD MARSHALL PAUL VON HINDENBURG, 1934

FROM THE COCKPIT:

Greetings crewdogs! As if we didn't have enough to read and do, along comes another newsletter. Hopefully, this will appear somewhat familiar and if anything make your overtasked lives a little easier. This newsletter will consolidate the efforts of the old Combat Readiness and OGOV newsletters. There is a couple of reasons for this. First, as already mentioned, it will cut down the wanton destruction of rain forests. Second, there is no longer a Combat Readiness Division. Third, since I assembled the Combat Readiness Newsletter and am now responsible for the OGOV letter, it is easier to carry them together. And finally, but most importantly, standardization and tactics are natural allies and should and will remain inseperable. As before, this newsletter represents the current experience and insights of the squadron at large and without your vigorous inputs will be of little value. Better to willingly discuss issues of standards and tactics informally than to have this knowledge forcefully extracted during a checkride. Nuff said.

- CAPO

STAN EVAL:

- On rotor shutdown, move the blade to the 12 to 1 O'Clock position, even with APP diffusers. Blades are getting cooked during extended APP ops, such as laagering.

- Pubs reviews are very important. Ensure that your pubs are complete and in good repair. They will be checked on evals.

- Enlisted aircrew- Have your tests complete by the second month of your phase period. No excuses will be entertained.

- During aircraft runup at home station ensure that there is no equipment inside the white safety circle.

- FEs- ensure that you sign off the AFTO FORM 46 Record of Life Support Euipment prior to each flight.

- FEs- double check the Chart C weight and moment with the Form F.

- HEELs on aircraft are operational. Ensure that they are armed and self tested prior to conducting NWO/Hoist. Continue using chemlites as a good backup.

- GUNNERS- in the aircraft forms, gun shop has provided a gun malfunction sheet to document weapon problems. Fill it out completely and include the name of the gunner that operated the weapon.

- EVERYONE- open and closed book test scores are starting to look unacceptably low- our standard is 90% minimum. Also, on checkrides, tactical, aircraft/defensive system knowledge is slipping.

- Upgrades are not the result of seniority, rank, grade, promotion potential, or "paying dues." You will be selected based on your potential to perform as a combat ready crewmember at the next highest qual. When in an upgrade, you will be expected to be vigorous, enthusiastic and thoroughly prepared for every ride.

- If you are in an upgrade, be prepared to teach a systems/tactics class during the Friday training day.

- PILOTs- overall instrument procedures are weak. Always plan an IFR option for deployments and fly them from time to time. ICAO and initial entry procedures are weak. Whiting Field (South) has a PAR, use it. Check rides will be given there.

- IPs- if you can't do EP training locally due to range activity, go to Choctaw OLF, they have crash resce and fire fighting capability.

"THE MAN WHO DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO SET PLACES ON FIRE, TO ROB CHURCHES AND TO USURP THEIR RIGHTS AND TO IMPRISON PRIESTS, IS NOT FIT TO CARRY ON WAR."

- HONORE BORET, c.1380

TACTICS:

- We are still in the midst of modifying the aircrew gun boxes. The M-79 is being replaced by an M-16 w/M-203. This will displace one GAU-5. Crew commanders schedule ground shoots with the squadron armory guys.

- Prior to going to Italy check your ISOPREP, powers of attorney, wills, review the Laws of Armed Conflict, study the Code of Conduct, have TSgt Tom Phillips check your survival equipment, and get an intel brief from Capt Toomey.

- Continue working with the W&T and Intel guys to put togrther your CAT Msns.

- PILOTs- your upgrade and annual mission evals will require that you brief the 5 paragraph OPORD format.

- Continue training on the COMANDO/MATT. It is not going to just go away. AFSOC has funded all 41 Pavelows to receive the IDAS/MATT.

- We are an integral part of the community's CSAR capability. In fact we are the primary asset. Be hungry for knowledge. There are alot of old rescue guys around, pick their brains. Also, our intel guys have access to CSAR, E&E, and other related data.

- We may be going to MAWTS sometime in the late Fall. The types of things we hope to learn are: evcasive tactics, rescue techniques, defensive systems and procedures and JTF operations.

- It is becoming evident that our experience level across the board is somewhat reduced. This is not a slam; it's the painful truth. We are getting in over our head on alot of these recent exercises. For example, pilots are confused about the command and control wiring diagram for JTFs and JSOTFs. Also, pilots are unfamiliar or altogether unaware of some of the most basic doctrinal truths concerning any number of joint issues. We need to start educating our men in house. You old heads are obliged to do this. Hopefully, the new COMMANDO EDGE program will help. In the mean time, you new guys should sign up for some of the courses at the Special Ops School if you have the opportunity. The bottom line is that we are accepting our roles and missions on certain exercises at face value even when they are doctrinally faulted and our pilots don't know what questions to ask.

I hope that this newsletter has provided some useful insight and has gotten you to thinking about things. It's time to get back to some fundamentals. Unfortunately, in this business the basics consist of an incredible amount of information. The task at hand is daunting but not not insurmountable. We are equipped with the tools and people to tackle this challenge. All that we need is 100% individual effort, teamwork, and leadership. We have these in surplus. ***PAVELOW LEADS!***

"THERE IS A SOUL TO AN ARMY AS WELL AS TO THE INDIVIDUAL MAN AND NO GENERAL CAN ACCOMPLISH THE FULL WORK OF HIS ARMY UNLESS HE COMMANDS THE SOUL OF HIS MEN AS WELL AS THEIR BODIES AND LEGS"

- GENERAL WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

20 SOS STANDARDS & TACTICS NEWSLETTER

JUL 94

"LET YOUR CHARACTER BE ABOVE REPROACH, FOR THAT IS THE WAY TO EARN MEN'S OBEDIENCE."

- FIELD MARSHALL JOHANN VON SCHULENBURG, 1709

FROM THE COCKPIT:

This newsletter comes to you in mid-month, perhaps a little early, but I am getting ready to head for Italy and most of you are about to embark upon another JRT. Just a few personal notes. Lately, it would appear that public repentance has come into vogue. I can't say that I am altogether pleased with this attitude. One should be held accountable for his acts and if he has erred in some way, then an opportunity to make good be afforded so that he can learn from the experience and still maintain his dignity. Of course, if the incident displays malice or wanton disregard for safety or directives then our superiors need to make a call. In any case, an atmosphere of anxiety is being fostered, for fear of making a mistake. I believe that this "zero-defect" mentality is mostly misunderstanding, lack of communication, and perhaps this environment of constant stress that we live in. With this in mind, allow me to 'fess up about something that occurred to me recently that I hope you all can learn from. In a nut shell; while at Asheville, on an AC upgrade ride we went IMC in a pass and I took control of the aircraft from the pilot on the system and did a 180 in the soup and eventually returned to VMC conditions. To dispense with all the details, some of the crew stated that the pass looked obscured by fog, but I could see the horizon clearly so I told the pilot to continue. In retrospect not a great decision and one that resulted in several seconds of elevated excitement. To the crew's credit I was roundly pummelled in debrief and although I took offense to some comments I accepted the beating. It's the continuing comments that have me concerned. I have been Pave Low qualified for 6 years and this is the first time that I encountered this situation while TFing. I like to believe that it is because I plan carefully and think ahead. On this route we made an impromptu leg due to poor wx on our planned course and I was attempting to complete an upgrade. Certainly a recipe for a potentially hazardous situation. I did not say that "I could feel the mountain," as some would believe. I was not real happy about the situation either and certainly do not entertain feelings of invincibility. I do not hope for this to happen to me again and have new insights into how to deal with such a circumstance. Continue to thoroughly plan and brief your missions and have a good backup plan. Debrief should also be thorough and nothing left unsaid.

Telling post-mission tales in the squadron is sometimes funny but often divisive. If we are constantly checking our six for what others are saying then how are we ever going to develop the trust and confidence in one another to go to war and maybe die for squadron mates? This isn't about me; believe me I'm used to it. It's about all of you. We all hear the bad-mouthing but I don't see alot of counselling and helping going on. If we can't pull together to help our brother and start showing some respect for one another then you can imagine the consequences. Many of us have new jobs and crew quals and the overall experience level is fairly low. There isn't a man of you out there that isn't screwing up that can't use some good advice. I have asked for your help and inputs time and again to make the Fighting Two-zero a more effective unit. In addition to being aircrew and military personnel, you are also a band of brothers. OK?

- CAPO

STAN EVAL:

- PILOTS- ensure that you are logging your currency, double check AFORMs from time to time. Remind the schedulers when you are within 2 months of an eval.

- ALL- cockpit and cabin light discipline is slipping. The aircraft interior is much too bright to include unshielded use of chemlites, lip-lites, and flashlights. This applies to the FLIR screen especially.

- INSTRUCTORS- you guys need to get together once in awhile. I'll try to get the IPs together but FEs and Gunners need to do the same. Of import is instruction technique, trends, better ways to do things, and future upgrade candidates.

- Since HEELs are operational, chemlites on the exits are strictly technique and not mandatory.

- ENLISTED AIRCREW- this comes from your enlisted leadership and will be supported by the Os. If you do not complete your tests within your first two months of eligibility then you will get a Letter of Counselling to be signed by your Flight Commander. Only he can pull it. Don't be the first.

- Es- you should be able to work your weapon malfunctions while looking under your goggles. Also, if you are below 500', then you are low-level and scanners should be posted.

- EVERYONE- the new -1 and the USSOCOM Directive are right arouind the corner. There will be systems, tactics, and directives classes taught on Fridays. You will be teaching these classes.

- INSTRUCTORS- don't take short cuts on groung training for guys in upgrade. Be thorough on what you discuss and make it a two way street. Checkrides will give greater emphasis on ground evals. If guys appear ill-prepared for their checkrides, we will come to their instructors for explanations.

- INSTRUCTORS- our 672s for upgrades need to be reviewed. They were based on MACR 51-2 overprints which no longer apply to us and AFSOCR 51-2(not released yet) does not have overprints. It's a good time to reassess our training program. Instructors, volunteer to review/repair an upgrade program. Don't wait to be assigned one.

- PILOTS- you will prepare for your composite checks as you would for your Tac eval. Plan on filing IFR and flying airways to other airfields to shoot approaches, including PARs. Get with your examiner in advance. If you do not have a plan, it will reflect.

"WE HAVE GOOD CORPORALS AND SERGEANTS AND SOME GOOD LIEUTENANTS AND CAPTAINS, AND THOSE ARE FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOOD GENERALS."

- GENERAL OF THE ARMY WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

TACTICS:

- There was a ground shoot scheduled for 8 Jul and only 4 guys showed up. If you are available, then you need to go to these. Also, crew commanders need to continue requesting crew ground shoots.

- FEs and pilots especially, start hitting those 3-1 and other classified tactics material. Your knowledge of this material is no longer taken for granted. This info is a high interest eval item.

- This DNA testing is not optional. There are lots of classified reasons why we are doing it but what it boils down to is that you had better get it done.

- We still need good ideas for the configuration and design of the aircrew gun boxes. The armory guys are working hard on this, please help with your suggestions.

- The Plans shop is always shorthanded. Volunteer to be an augmentee. Even if you help with logistic and admin items, that gives the additional duty planners quite a break.

- We have been getting a lot of medals lately and a lot of folks have been getting promoted. Not to belittle these facts, but no one has been shooting at us lately so don't let this go to your head. Get back to basics and keep earning the right to be recognized.

SAFETY:

- Ensure that you have the wx to shoot your approaches at your destination and/or have good alternates. Do not plan on having to shoot an ILS backed up by the system. This is still considered an emergency action. I talked w/ 16OG/OGOV Maj Hererra about our problems with approaches and hopefully with Capt Sipperly's assistance, we can get the Instrument Flight Center to take a look at some of our unique system capabilities and allow us to fly some directed self-contained approaches. In the meantime, if you see a "GPS" approach in an approach plate such as, "GPS or VOR 19," you cannot shoot it with GPS only, although civilians can because of the FAA certified equipment that they can buy.

- We give alot of incentive rides, fly DVs regularly, and travel with maintenance aboard quite a bit. Please ensure that these individuals are properly briefed and attired for the flight, ensure all predeparture documentation is complete (i.e. pax manifests), and that you are flying the appropriate profile IAW directives based on their status.

The newsletter has been expanded to include safety. It makes sense considering our furious ops tempo, our increased risk missions, and the fact that we can't get together often enough as a squadron to discuss this important consideration. It may seem that we are taking a hard line as of late and we are. It's not a matter of the new guys in charge rattling cages, but one of survival. Surviving our peacetime garrison routine with its attendant administrative obligations, as well as survival in combat. DOV has a SAV starting 6 Sept, our ASET is around Jul 95 and the 16SOW QAFA (ORI) is scheduled for Feb/Mar 96. We need to prepare for these now as well as stay sharp for the unannounced contingency. Hang in there guys; we have to pick up the pace so let's pull together. ***PAVELOW LEADS!***

"TAKE CALCULATED RISKS. THAT IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM BEING RASH."

- GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON, JR.

STAFF SUMMARY SHEET

	TO	ACTION	SIGNATURE (Surname), GRADE AND DATE		TO	ACTION	SIGNATURE (Surname), GRADE AND DATE
1	20 SOS/ OGOO	Coord		6			
2	20 SOS/ CC	Sig		7			
3	16 OSS/ OGOXS	Coord		8			
4				9			
5				10			

SURNAME OF ACTION OFFICER AND GRADE	SYMBOL	PHONE	TYPIST'S INITIALS	SUSPENSE DATE
Capt Bodine	20 SOS/ OGOOXP	4-6574	lb	28 Oct 94

SUBJECT: Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY After Action Report (External)

DATE: 27 Oct 94

SUMMARY

1. The attached report contains the external after action report inputs for Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. The report is a compilation of inputs received from several offices throughout the 16th SOW.

LANCE E. BODINE, Capt, USAF
Chief, Plans and Exercises

1 Tab
After Action Report

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 16th SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING (AFSOC)

27 Oct 94

MEMORANDUM FOR 16 OSS/OGOXS

FROM: 20 SOS/CC (Lt Col Hoover)
210 Bennett Ave.
Hurlburt, Florida 32544-5730

SUBJECT: Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY After Action (External)

1. The 20 SOS submits the following after action items for Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY.

a. Title: Late SPIN's.

(1) Discussion: The SPINS reached the H-53 planner only 2 hours before the Target 27 update brief. We cannot effectively engage in combat missions if we don't know how to operate in the AO.

(2) Recommendation: The SPIN's must reach the planning cell in a timely manner in order to conduct effective combat operations. Ensure this happens on the next contingency operation.

b. Title: COMM Plan Changes.

(1) Discussion: Originally, changes to the COMM Plan were passed out in a timely manner. It goes without saying that executing a joint air operation is difficult enough without having the current communications data.

(2) Recommendation: Same as above.

c. Title: Late ATO.

(1) Discussion: The ATO was extremely late. It wasn't until we were 2 - 3 days into the operation that we received the ATO.

(2) Recommendation: Same as above.

d. Title: Rules Of Engagement.

(1) Discussion: Rules of Engagement cards were always late. We had to continually scramble to get them in time for the brief in order to pass out to the crews. How can you effectively

engage in combat operations if you don't know the ROE's. Remember, there could be serious legal ramifications by not knowing and understanding the ROE's.

(2) Recommendation: Same as above

e. Title: Suspect Mission Taskings.

(1) Discussion: On the surface, it would appear that the 20 SOS was not being tasked through the correct channels. It would appear that the JSOTF conducted independent ops that were not necessarily in support of JTF 190. All of our flying operations were being generated at the Ranger Batallion level not at the JSOTF or JSOACC staff as would be appropriate.

(2) Recommendation: Ensure mission taskings are generated and disseminated at the appropriate level.

f. Title: Chain Of Command.

(1) Discussion: The whole chain of command was not identified nor understood.

(2) Recommendation: Off the shelf plans should include a clear chain of command (to include tasking authority) in the plan itself.

g. Title: SAR

(1) Discussion: Helicopters, in general, have an inherent SAR capability. Some are more capable than others, but if it can hover and if it has a hoist, it is SAR capable. However, not all helicopters are the same size and not all helicopters have the same performance. For instance, at high gross weights, the H-53 doesn't have the speed to keep up with a flight of lightly loaded H-60s. Additionally, the load of an H-60, were it to crash, would not fill up an H-53. This is excess capability. When endurance and AR capability are factored in, the differences between the aircraft are magnified. It seems that the best platform to SAR a flight of H-60s is another H-60. Similarly, an H-47's ACL is typically 10-20 personnel higher than an H-53 can handle and even more than that for an H-60. Therefore, in addition to the speed, endurance, and AR differences, an H-53 or an H-60 is incapable of providing adequate SAR coverage for an H-47 because of the cabin and weight limitations. It seems as though the H-47 is the most logical choice for SAR coverage for a flight of H-47s. The only unit that has expressed an interest in taking responsibility for the SOF SAR mission is the 55th SOS. Other than this, there isn't, as far as I know, anything that says that SOF SAR is an Air Force mission. Additionally, as long as we have to deal with the restriction on dissimilar formation, having Air Force helos SAR a formation of Army helos takes on added levels of unneeded complexity. For instance, when we were tasked to SAR an ARMY

formation during UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, we had to make a concerted effort to find out where the OPORD briefs were being held, what flight lead's intentions concerning the SAR birds were, and even what frequencies we were expected to monitor. Not being part of the "formation" tends to keep us in the dark about many of the important mission details.

(2) Recommendation: Push for each aircraft type in SOF helo formations to provide their own internal SAR coverage. A formation of H-53s should have an H-53 SAR platform, and H-47 formation should have an H-47 SAR platform, and an H-60 formation should have an H-60 SAR platform. Obviously, this shuld be tempered with some common sense. A mixed formation could be adequately covered by the largest aircraft's SAR platform. For instance, when we are escorted by helicopter gunships, our SAR helo can cover them, too. Also, a mixed formation of little birds and H-60s could be covered by the H-60 SAR helo. This is a fundamental change in the way we (the SOF aviation community) views organic SAR, and will have to be implemented by ACCE. Although the Army shies away from the SAR mission, they are equipped as well as we are for the mission.

h. Title: Mission Tasking.

(1) Discussion: Nearly all of the tasking for the PAVE LOW's was short notice and not planned out. In order to ensure that assets and aircrew were available for these no notice taskings, aircrew were kept on a near constant alert for the deployment. The taskings that were actually executed were ones that were planned for by the ground side but were late in actual tasking for by the air side. None of the missions were "in-extremis" or immediate response required. The end result was the helicopters and crews being on the end of the yo-yo string.

(2) Recommendation: The tasking chain of communication between the JOC and the ground assets needs to be significantly improved. Putting aircraft on constant alert is not the answer to improper planning.

i. Title: Family Readiness.

(1) Discussion: AFSOC does not have a formal family readiness program. The end result is improper handling and readiness of the dependent families when AFSOC deploys.

(2) Recommendation: The USMC has successfully instituted a key wives/family readiness program for several years. AFSOC should take this program or a similar one and institute it immediately.

j. Title: Mission Routing/Timing Deconfliction

(1) Discussion: A comparison of mission routing and timing for all squadrons was not thoroughly completed or readily

available in the AIR TOC resulting in, on one occasion, a flight of PAVE LOW's flying through an AC-130 gunship tweak area.

(2) Recommendation: Ensure routing/timing deconfliction procedures are reviewed and completed by COMAFSOF staff.

DONALD L. HOOVER, Lt Col, USAF
Commander