

PRESIDENT HONORS 3rd ARRGp FOR RESCUE ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAM



WHITE HOUSE CEREMONY— President Lyndon B. Johnson congratulates Col Arthur W. Beall after awarding the Presidential Unit Citation to the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group. At left are LtCol Baylor Haynes and A2c Malcolm Hassler. ARRS is credited with saving more than 600 persons in Southeast Asia. HH-43 HUSKIE crews rescued 347 of the 490 plucked from the jungle or sea last year.

The 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, Military Airlift Command, was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation recently for "extraordinary gallantry" while carrying out rescue operations in Vietnam from Aug 1, 1965 to June 30, 1966. Helicopters and amphibious aircraft in the Group, which is based at Tan Son Nhut, are credited with recovering 339 friendly troops during the period covered by the citation. The missions ranged from open water pickups in the Gulf of Tonkin, while under fire from Communist shore batteries, to jungle rescues deep within North Vietnam. The unit also rescued many downed airmen or evacuated injured military personnel in South Vietnam.

Of the 490 persons saved in 1966, 347 were rescued by HH-43 HUSKIE crews attached to the 38th ARRSq. In recognition of its rescue activities between August 1964 and July 1965, the squadron was honored last year with a Presidential Unit Citation. The 37th and 39th ARRS squadrons form the rest of the Group which also utilizes HH-3E helicopters and HC-130H and HU-16 fixed-wing planes in the rescue and recovery work.

In saluting the men of the 3rd ARRG during the White House ceremony, President Johnson said:

"The contributions of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group to the struggle for freedom are already legendary. By risking their lives so that others might live, the men of the 3rd have won the everlasting gratitude of their fellow countrymen—and the right to be honored among America's heroes.

"In all weathers, over the most difficult terrain, faced always with the peril of enemy fire, they have reached out and plucked to safety—from the jungles, from the mountains, from the sea—fliers downed in combat. In Southeast Asia alone, the group has been credited with 597 combat rescues.

"By their very existence, they have provided our downed fliers with the knowledge that they are not forgotten—that help is on the way. To a man bobbing in an empty sea or crawling through a dense jungle, that knowledge is a blessing without price.

"Their place of honor was not earned without sacrifice: seven members of the group have given their lives, fourteen are listed as missing, and two have been captured—all in devotion to the spirit of the 3rd's motto: 'That Others May Live.'

"We are proud to pay tribute, with this citation, to the gallant men of the 3rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group. Their courage and self-sacrifice have provided us with a glowing example of the best of American manhood. They are a credit to a grateful nation. We salute them all."

Several members of the 3rd Group, during the period of the citation, attended the ceremony. They were Col Arthur W. Beall, group commander; LtCol James L. Blackburn, operations officer; LtCol Baylor R. Haynes, rescue squadron commander; Captains James L. Butera, John F. Guilmartin, Jr., and William E. Cowell, rescue aircraft commanders; MSgt Charles T. Walther, and A2c Malcolm C. Hassler, pararescue technicians. Also attending were Air Force Secretary Harold Brown, who read the citation; Gen John McConnell, Air Force chief of staff; BrigGen George Boylan of the Military Airlift Command; and BrigGen Allison C. Brooks, commander of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service.

More than 1800 individual awards have been made to personnel in the 3rd ARRG. Three have been for the Air Force Cross, one of which was awarded posthumously to A1c William H. Pitsenbarger, an HH-43 crewman and the first airman to receive the award. Other awards and decoration won by the unit include 64 Silver Stars, 3 awards of the Legion of Merit; 251 Distinguished Flying Crosses; 18 Airman's Medals; 24 Bronze Stars; 1330 Air Medals; 25 Purple Hearts; and 117 Air Force Commendation Medals. The 3rd Group served with distinction in World War II and the Korean War, with 15 campaign streamers and six unit citations to its credit.

Meanwhile, rescue crews from the 3rd ARRG continue their rescue efforts in Vietnam. The following are a few of the missions carried out by HH-43 crews from the 38th ARRSq:

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