

# 1967

**Information published below is in most cases raw data excerpted from primary sources. In a few cases it has been refined into a draft story. It is presented here for critical review. Are the facts correct? Are names spelled correctly? Do you have information on missions missing from this rough outline? Do you have a photo or primary source material related to something provided in the outline. E-mail me with information to update this information. Rest assured that your inputs will be seriously considered. I am striving for accuracy above all else.**

**Email to  
[rlapointe@gci.net](mailto:rlapointe@gci.net)**

1967

By 1967 the air war in SEA consisted of operations in South Vietnam, Laos, and North Vietnam. In Laos, interdiction missions on the Ho Chi Minh Trail were a priority mission. If we could cut off resupply of enemy forces in the South, they would be easier to defeat. In North Vietnam operation "Rolling Thunder" was designed to cut off supplies, destroy bridges, degrade enemy air defenses, and demoralize enemy forces. U.S. strength in the South Vietnam war zone grew to 486,000 personnel in 1967. A new plan was instituted - South Vietnamese troops were to pacify the countryside, while U.S. and Allied forces were to battle Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops. The plan was very successful, because by the end of the year the enemy had not won a single major victory in all the engagements which were fought. North Vietnam then decided to build-up its forces in Cambodia and Laos for another try. Early in 1967, Washington approved "Rolling Thunder" targets even closer to Hanoi. North Vietnam reacted by throwing almost 100 MIG's into the air to turn back the USAF attacks. USAF and Navy aircraft losses began to mount and finally, in April, Washington approved attacked on four of the five MIG airfields. By the end of 1967, the year's score was 75 MIG's downed at a cost of 25 U.S. aircraft in air-to-air combat. As the war continued, the price we paid in downed aircraft and aircrews soared. U.S., Royal Laotian, and VNAF aircraft continued their attacks on traffic along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. During 1967, B-52s flew 1,718 sorties in this area, almost triple their 1966 record. The major targets were trucks which had to be hunted down and destroyed one-by-one. This seemed to be irrational thinking to many Americans flying these combat missions for these trucks could have been destroyed en masse before, during, or after their unloading from the ocean freighters that had hauled them to North Vietnam if bombing of Haiphong had been permitted.

1 Jan 67

Rescue AOB. P.81#7

16 Jan 67

Det 1, 37<sup>th</sup> ARRS (5 HC-130's at Udorn) redesignated 39<sup>th</sup> ARRS. At the same time, Det. 2, 37<sup>th</sup> ARRS was activated at Udorn to conduct rescue missions in North Vietnam and Laos.

6 February 67

On 6 February 1967, two HH-3 helicopters, Jolly Green 05 and Jolly Green 36, launch from the 37th ARRS at DaNang AB, RVN. They are attempting the recovery a downed O-1F pilot, Nail 65, northwest of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam. After Airman Hackney has made one unsuccessful trip to the ground in search of the pilot, both Jolly's returned to base due to foul weather. Later in the day, the helicopters launch again and are able to locate the survivor. Airman Hackney is lowered to the ground, and after securing the survivor into the Stokes litter, both are lifted out. No sooner do they reach Jolly 05's door when ground fire erupts. As they race to exit the area, the helicopter is hit with a 37mm anti-aircraft round and catches fire. With complete disregard for his own welfare, Airman Hackney removes his parachute and places it on the survivor. He lunges to grab another one from storage as the helicopter, a growing, blazing fireball, arches across the sky. In an instant, it explodes, just as Airman Hackney slips his arms through the harness. He is blown out of the Jolly 05 by the explosion. Dangling from the harness, he manages to pull the ripcord, and the chute opens just as he hits the trees. Jolly 36 immediately makes a run in to locate any survivors. When it arrives it finds only burning wreckage... and Duane Hackney waving his arms for pickup. He is the only survivor. Airman Hackney goes on to become one of the most decorated enlisted men in the Air Force. He retires as a Chief Master Sergeant and passes away of a heart attack in September 1993. *Source = 50 years*

12 February 67

An HU-16 flown by Lt. Col. Alan R. Vette, 37<sup>th</sup> ARRS/CC, conducted a SAR that included a Navy E-2A patrol plane, two SH-3 helicopters, four F-4B Phantom jets, four A-1H's, and a destroyer to save the crew of a Navy RA-5 reconnaissance jet down in the water just off shore of North Vietnam. When enemy gunfire and mechanical difficulties prevented the helicopters from making a successful pickup, Col. Vette landed the Albatross in the rough water and quickly picked up the survivors. *Add additional #7p87*

16 February 67

HH-3 attempting SAR for pilot downed in NVN. A1C Duane D. Hackney lowered to the ground by hoist. After he the pilot recovered into the HH-3, the helicopter was shot down. The helicopter exploded throwing Hackney out the door. *Add story p88#7*

27 February 67

While DaNang is under rocket and mortar attack, Airman John Tobey aids 7 seriously wounded airmen.

13 March 67

HH-3 SAR just south of DMZ to rescue crews of downed Marine H-34 and H-46. Duane Hackney lowered to the ground with stokes litter He was awarded the AF Cross for this mission. *Add story p88#7*

Demilitarized Zone. Airman Duane D. Hackney is one of two PJ's aboard an HH-3E Jolly Green flying deep into Viet Cong territory just south of the DMZ, to rescue survivors of a downed USMC H-34. Survivors report enemy forces are closing in for the kill. A second USMC helicopter, a CII-46, overbears the radio transmission and also races to assist the beleaguered men. Hackney's Jolly Green arrives just in time to witness the horror of the H46 falling out of the sky onto the downed H34. On the ground the Marines gather their injured and establish a defensive perimeter against the closing enemy forces. At a distance, from the door of the H-3, Airman Hackney watches as A-1's dart in to blast Viet Cong units. With a white phosphorous smoke screen laid down by the Skyriders shielding it, the H-3 cautiously enters the pickup area and hovers over the battle scene. This draws ground fire. Hackney rides the Stokes litter to the ground and loads

as many injured men as he can onto it. Knowing the hoist operator will require his assistance at the door, he rides back up with the wounded. Just as he gets in the door, hydraulic warning lights begin to flash, indicating a system has been hit. Bullets smash into the fuselage as it departs the extraction area. Hackney, already treating the injured, suddenly slumps dead-weight to the floor. An enemy bullet has ricocheted off his helmet, the concussion knocking him out. He soon regains consciousness and continues to set fractures, tend head wounds, and apply tourniquets. Airman Duane Hackney receives the Air Force Cross for his combat rescue of a downed pilot on 6 February 1967, the Silver Star for saving six men in July 1967, the Airman's Medal after rescuing a sailor from the high seas. He also earned the Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal, as well as other honors. He became one of the most highly decorated pararescuemen to serve in Southeast Asia and is credited with a combat record which makes him legendary in the world of combat rescue. That in itself is quite an accomplishment, as pararescuemen earned more decorations than any other group of USAF men serving in Indochina. Sergeant Hackney once stated, "I don't think there is any such thing as a hero. I'm down on the word hero because my counterparts, my buddies in ARRS, did as much as I did, probably more. I didn't do it all myself. I think any pararescueman is going to try his damndest to rescue a person in need of help. It's his job, it's what he gets paid for." *Source = O'Beirne Diary*

15 March 67

HH-3E force landed in DaNang Bay due to mechanical problems. A second HH-3E in formation with the one that ditched, picked up the crew.

25 March 67

HH-43 from Det 7 38 ARRS at DaNang hoists John Tobey into a minefield. A1C John Tobey saves a marine that had been injured by an exploding mine. Tobey awarded Airmen's Medal. *Source = Tobey folder*

8 May 67

HH-43F from Det 7 38 ARRS shot down attempting to rescue 4 marines who had been wounded on patrol. John Tobey lowered to assist in recovery. HH-43 downed because of small arms. John rushed to downed chopper to evacuate crew before its fuel explodes. Forced to spend night on ground. Treated injured. Awarded Silver Star. *Tobey award citation*

An HH-3E attempts to recover the downed HH-43 crew and marines. It is shot off scene. On board the HH-3E, PJ Ray Weddel is wounded by ground fire. The lower portion of his left leg is eventually amputated. *50 years. Validate is possible.*

10 May 67

On HH-3E that recovered downed Marine UH-1B crew. While under constant ground fire. See *news article in Tobey folder. Quite a shoot them up SAR.*

16 May 67

HH-3E SAR in DMZ to rescue two pilots downed by fire. Tobey's aircraft shot off but another HH-3 picks up pilots.

21 June 67

3<sup>rd</sup> ARRGp crews carried out the first operational test of aerial refueling between an HC-130P and an HH-3E. By September 1967, this technique had become routine throughout SEA. *Add additional #7p85*

Gulf of Tonkin. An HH-3E Jolly Green Giant helicopter initiates a new concept in rescuing downed pilots in SEA. A Jolly from the 37<sup>th</sup> ARS, DaNang AB, RVN utilizes air-to-air refueling on an operational mission. It flies an orbit mission that had been previously the assignment of HU-16's over the Gulf, refueling twice from an HC-130P tanker. Airman Walter White, pararescueman, is a member of the Jolly Green crew. *O'Beirne Diary*

28 July 1967

North Vietnam. First Lieutenant Karl W. Richter becomes the youngest U.S. pilot to score a kill in Vietnam when he shoots down a MiG 21 in September 1966. He completes one hundred missions and volunteers for a second tour. He becomes a legend of courage and commitment to the American goal in Southeast Asia. Just two missions short of two hundred, he is hit by enemy fire over North Vietnam and forced to eject over rugged mountainous terrain. Two hours later, an HH-3E Jolly Green penetrates heavy cloud cover to pick him up. However, the young lieutenant has landed on the side of a jagged mountain and sustains severe injuries when he falls or is dragged by his chute over a cliff. Pararescueman Charlie D. Smith is lowered one hundred and fifty feet to where he lies unconscious. He and Smith are hoisted into the helicopter, but Richter dies en route to a staging base. *O'Bernie Diary* The helicopter that recovered Lt. Richter was Jolly Green 55. It's crew was pilot Capt Evan Thompson, copilot Lt Edward Sichterman, flight engineer SSgt Floyd Watson and pararescueman TSgt Charlie Smith. TSgt was awarded the Silver Star for heroism as a result of his efforts on the ground recover the downed pilot.

17 August 1967

Lt. Col Albert Vollmer's F-105 is hit by anti-aircraft fire over North Vietnam. He stayed with his damaged aircraft until he was feet wet over the Gulf of Tonkin. During his ejection he sustained severe leg injuries. His wingman and two A-1's provided him cover while he was descending in his parachute. Within 15 minute, two HH-3E's from the 37<sup>th</sup> ARRS arrived. The low bird made the pickup. The crew who executed the rescue visited him in the hospital at DaNang. The crew signed one of their squadron business cards and gave it to Col Vollmer for a keepsake. The business card reads:

#### CONFUSED? FOLLOW THESE STEPS

1. Conserve flares and radio
2. Advise others of your position
3. Stay calm – others have been rescued under worse conditions than yours
4. The bearer of this card, upon being suitably rescued, agrees to provide free beer, at

The nearest bar, for those making said rescue possible.

37<sup>th</sup> ARRS, APO 96337

TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED? NEED A PICK-UP? CALL RESCUE 243.0.

Signed: CROWN, SANDY, JOLLY GREEN, PEDRO

14 September 67

Two HH-53B's arrive at Vung Tau, Vietnam aboard the USS Card, an old aircraft carrier that had been converted into an aircraft ferry. There they were serviced and flown to Det. 2, 37<sup>th</sup> ARRS at Udorn. *P90-91#7 Add description of H-53 v. H-3 p91-92#7*

30 September 67

HU-16 Albatross flies last SEA sortie. HH-3E replaces the HU-16 in the water-borne rescue role in the Gulf of Tonkin.

6 October 1967

A routine HH-43 flight turned into more excitement than anyone was expecting. The helicopter was stationed at the Nha Trang AB rescue unit and on its way back from Bien Hoa. The mission was simply picking up new personnel who had just arrived in country. The detachment commander, Major James Langston was the aircraft commander. He had just picked up his replacement, Major Maddox, who flew in the other pilot seat. The FE was Jim Ferguson and the PJ Jerry Pearson. In addition to Major Maddox, Craig Felker, pararescueman had also just arrived in Vietnam and was on his first in country helicopter ride.

About a three miles from Cam Rahn Bay, approximately one half mile out to sea and at an altitude of 750 feet they had a complete engine failure. Major Langston immediately headed towards the beach for an emergency landing. Major Maddox radioed out a mayday letting the world know that the Huskie was going down. The Huskie just made it to the shore when it's landing gear clipped the top of a sand dune. This resulted in the HH-43 rolling over several times on impact. The helicopter was totally destroyed, but miraculously no one was seriously injured. The flight engineer was trapped under Felker's footlocker (a PJ's progear is fairly heavy) and was unable to free himself from his safety harness. Jerry Pearson assisted freeing Jim Ferguson and then assisted him in egressing the helicopter.

On their way out of the helicopter they observed flaming fuel (JP-4) dribbling out of the broken off exhaust pipe. Airman Pearson returned to the helicopter and started throwing sand on to the fire to prevent it from spreading to the whole helicopter. While most would believe this method of fire fighting to be rather crude, it did the trick. The crew assembled on the beach and soon heard the unique rotor sounds that only an HH-43 makes. The alert HH-43 crew from Cam Rahn Bay had scrambled to the crash site They landed nearby and picked up the downed crewmembers. After loading everyone on board they headed back to their base. It was a little embarrassing to be rescued by your own squadron. The men who just been rescued heard repeatedly about how they were responsible for interrupting the dinner of their teammates. It was obvious that the downed crew was going to hear about their rescue for some time to come. Ambulances awaited the arriving Huskie. Everyone who was on the downed HH-43 were ordered to the hospital. Once there, eager vampires in white coats started taking blood samples for lab work. Airman Pearson commented later that he figured out that the hospital medics must have believed that anyone in a helicopter crash must lose a substantial amount of blood, either in the crash or in the hospital lab later. One injury went unreported. After the crash, the helicopter came to rest on its right side. The only way out for Major Maddox was climbing over Major Langston who was still in his seat and still gripping the collective. Unintentionally his boot slipped on the way out and cut Major Langston's hand. Our intrepid aircraft commander did not wish to bother the medics with this minor injury. More likely he probably believed that they would hold him over night and he wanted out of this hospital. He was already catching hell about interrupting the alert crews dinner and did not wish to give them added ammunition for some more good natured ribbing. Besides, it had been a long day and he owed his rescuer's a beer at the squadron hooch bar. A post crash investigation discovered that a rag had been left in the engine intake of the Huskie. After takeoff it

did not take it long to find its way into the engine and FOD if out. The pilots did a great job at getting the helicopter back over land before crashing. It was a first in country flight that the "newbies" would not forget. *Pearson folder*.

5 November 67

"Marlin Lead" an F-105 piloted by Bill Sparks was shot down about 16 miles south of Yen Bai airfield in NVN. The following was written by Bill.

Nov 5, 1967, is a date that I must celebrate every year, since this was the day that my worthless butt was pulled from the jungle in RP5 about 16 miles south of Yen Bai and about 1 mile south of the Red River. For any of you that were there, my call sign was Marlin lead and we were tail end Charlie on a strike at Phuc Yen. We put all but 5 750s into the last hanger standing on the field and pulled off left and went north of the airfield to egress. 3 SAM's were launched at 6-o'clock and since we were not in pod formation yet, I elected to take us on the deck and haul ass. I saw 1 hit the ground and 2 more go ballistic above us and started to pull up when I was hit by 3 57mm rounds, 1 in directly below the cockpit, 1 just in front of the cockpit right side, and 1 in front afterburner area. I was at 690 CAS and at 100', pretty damned good shooting. The cockpit filled with smoke and I blew the canopy to see out and shortly there after had a complete electrical failure along with a loss of all instruments including the pitot gauges. I got out 3 radio calls and luckily for my reputation, could not be heard whimpering on the radio. The Thud burned for slightly more than 7 minutes and finally went out of control over the Red river 12 miles downstream from Yen Bai. The right front quarter panel had melted, the fight rudder pedal burned off and fell to the floor, the bomb bay tank blew off the bomb bay doors, the aft tank blew several feet off of the top of the fuselage, and the fire burned into the fight wheel well and the tire blew down and ripped off My wingmen looked like the Thunderbirds all this time. After I finally lost control, stayed with it for about 1 more minute and blew out somewhere around 24000 over the river. After at least a week of subjective time, the 'chute opened and I slipped across the river and was going to land in a town. I managed to get my heels into the front risers and slipped using alternative fronts about 4 miles down stream. With typical fighter pilot logic I picked what I thought was elephant grass and landed in 75'tall bamboo. I fell about 40-50 feet and landed on the family jewels in an excellent heels, ass, and elbow PLF. My wingmen had already called in that I was in an "excellent area" for pickup. My #3 stayed until he had less than 3000lbs. And was back from refueling in under 25 minutes. Guess where the tankers were. Either they were way north or he had a mach 4 thud. I had 17 birds in my cap by the time the Harry Walker showed up in the most beautiful CH3 Jolly in the universe. When he went into a hover chopping the top out of a 200' teak tree, 4 MIG- 1 7s made an appearance. The low Sandy told him to get out of the area and his reply was F ... You, keep them off my back, I've got more important things to do!! I got hauled out after less than 2+30 on the ground. When the PJ pulled me in the door and gave me a hug, Harry said, "tell that SOB not to die, we need a live one for a change"! They had picked up Richter and John Bishoff, both dead before me and need to change their luck. I was loaded on a gooney bird and flown to Takhli for one hell of a party. I was the first pickup in NVN in 6+ months since Spade Cooly in April. I made it out due to the FACT that Republic built one hell of a tough bird, 3 wingmen did every thing right, Tanker pilots have enormous cojones, 7th AF wanted one back, and most of all because Harry Walker is a Warrior and a had a crew that had to have wheelbarrows to carry their Cojones to the bird. I need to thank all of the troops involved and to especially thank Russ O'Neal, flight engineer, for keeping in touch for 31 years. The drinks are on me and Jolly Greens never pay.

Bill Sparks, Marlin Lead, Sparky

NKP, Thailand. Sergeant Charley Smith, Detachment 1, 37th ARRS, Pararescue Flight Examiner, is giving Sergeant Clarence "C.R. Terror" Boles, a new guy flight evaluation check ride. An F-105 Thunderchief is hit and its pilot forced to bail out. The area is hot, so A-1E Sandy CAS fire is laid down enabling the HH-3E crew to fly in for the rescue. The survivor is battered and bruised from his experience, but otherwise all right. It is one of Boles' most memorable check rides: his first combat rescue, it is Smith's fifth. *O'Bernie diary is this Marlin Lead SAR?*

9 November 67

Jolly 26, an H-3 was shot down near Khe Sanh while attempting to rescue the crew of an U.S. Army helicopter gunship. Only minutes before, another H-3 had taken severe battle damage attempting the same recovery. Because the ground fire was so intense, rescue coordinators in Saigon authorized the aircraft commander, Capt. Gerald O. Young to abort the mission if he felt it was too dangerous. The Captain queried his crew, and the decision was unanimous. He radioed back to the JRCC, "Hell, we're airborne and hot to trot."

The helicopter started taking small arms fire as soon as it pulled into a hover. An enemy rifle grenade exploded near the starboard engine, causing a blast that flipped the Jolly Green on its back and sent it rolling down a ravine. Captain Young fell free of the burning, tumbling wreckage and slid to the bottom of the ravine. In spite of burns covering one quarter of his body, Young climbed back up to the mangled chopper. There he found a badly injured member of his crew. Knowing that the enemy was in the area, Captain Young dragged this airman into the jungle and hid him in some bushes and gave him first aid. Five other survivors of the downed Jolly were hiding near the wreckage. Because of the close proximity of the enemy, Young could not move his injured teammate to where the others were hiding. When the SAR commenced the rescue helicopter recovered the men who were hiding near the wreckage. They did not know that only a few hundred feet away Captain Young and the injured rescuer were hiding. Captain Young attempted to call the rescue chopper on his survival radio but it was not working. *Rest of tale p1&2#7 Work out the two different explanations of this SAR. This version has everyone rescued. We know that Maysey was on this aircraft and he was never recovered.*

9 November 1967 - SERGEANT LARRY W. MAYSEY. On 8 November 1967 two HH-3E Jolly Green Giants are launched on a night mission to extract five survivors of a Special Forces reconnaissance team. The site is known to be hot, surrounded by a well-disciplined, crack North Vietnamese Army (NVA) battalion. A Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) and a U.S. ARMY helicopter have already been shot down and destroyed. Illuminated by a C-130 flare ship dropping LUU-2 parachute flares, Jolly 29 makes a pickup of three survivors before being driven off by intense enemy fire. Jolly 29, with heavy battle damage, lands at the USMC outpost of Khe Sanh. Jolly 26 attempts to pick up the remaining two survivors, both now wounded. Fighting, both in the air and on the ground, is intense. Larry jumps from the safety of Jolly 26, and runs down a steep slope rescuing the two remaining men. Jolly 26 is being slammed with small arms fire. Just after Larry helps both survivors safely onboard, an RPG (rocket propelled grenade) strikes the number one engine, fatally crippling the bird. The engine explodes, inverting the aircraft wherein it rolls and skids down a deep ravine and bursts into flames within one hundred yards of the other two crashed choppers. Only the pilot and one other man survive the fiery crash. Sergeant Maysey receives the Air Force Cross posthumously. The pilot, Captain Gerald Young, is rescued later that day and subsequently receives the Medal of Honor. *Source = 50 years.*

HEADQUARTERS 3RD AEROSPACE RESCUE & RECOVERY GROUP (MAC)  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96307



REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: 3C

15 Jan 68

SUBJECT: Commander's Letter for January 1968

TO: All Squadrons & Detachments, 3ARRGp

1. The year 1967 was a big one for the Group. Some of the things you've done this year will go down in the annals of the Air Force as some of the most outstanding accomplishments of the Southeast Asia conflict. Among other things, you flew 31,726 hours while making 648 saves, of which 414 were made under combat conditions (see atch #1 for breakout of saves). You were awarded 2 Air Force Crosses, 20 Silver Stars, 220 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 50 Bronze Stars and more than 1400 Air Medals. These accomplishments are the result of not only the individuals who received the awards but the combined team efforts of all personnel. Some paid dearly for their part in this record. Four of our men were killed in action and 14 were wounded trying to help others in distress. How-

Source = 3<sup>rd</sup> ARRGp monthly CC letter written 15 Jan 68 and summarizes 1967

[\[BACK TO CHRONOLOGY HOME\]](#)

[\[1965\]](#) [\[1966\]](#) [\[1967\]](#) [\[1968\]](#) [\[1969\]](#) [\[1970\]](#) [\[1971\]](#) [\[1972\]](#) [\[Glossary\]](#)