

A new squadron out West rides shotgun for the nation's missile force.

A New Kind of Rescue Squadron

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A mission quite unlike that of any other MAC flying unit is being pursued by a group of Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service personnel out West, many of whom are fresh out of the Strategic Air Command.

If this sounds to you like a joint-command effort, that's close to what it's all about in the 37th ARRS, headquartered at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming.

Many of the 370 personnel in this squadron, whose ten detachments are scattered throughout

the west, are former members of the Strategic Air Command which operated the missile support mission until last December.

That's when MAC (and the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service) took over the mission and reactivated the highly decorated 37th to provide helicopter support for the 1,054 SAC missile sites.

There are a number of reasons why the mission was switched from SAC to MAC, none of which is of great concern to the aircrews

flying the squadron's 50 UH-1F Huey helicopters. But one of the more unusual features of the changeover is that many MAC and SAC helicopter crewmen are now working together as part of MAC. There used to be an old joke as former SAC crews received assignments to MAC that MAC was becoming "Sacumsized." But the 37th is a good example of how part of SAC has now become officially "Macumsized."

Armed with their helicopters and a yen for getting the most

out of their mission, the 370 personnel of the 37th busy themselves flying to and from missile sites — many of which are located in remote areas — resupplying and providing airborne security for weapons convoys. A weapons convoy is often on the road for many hours enroute to a missile site, so the helicopter escort missions can be long and fatiguing. But it's all part of the job and the chopper jocks rack up more flying hours than those in many conventional ARRS detachments.

The rugged terrain out West makes the helicopter a real time saver in logistical support. When a missile site needs a vital part for one of its components, ground transportation simply takes too long. So a Huey is called into action and arrives at the site in short order.

Another part of the mission is the low level survey. This means checking electrical communications and control power cables between launch control facilities and sites, and reporting damage to maintenance personnel who usually are on the way to the area in another helicopter within minutes. This kind of mission provides a diversion from the more routine type of flying.

A helicopter stays cocked, and aircrew and security police on alert at each base are ready to launch at a moment's notice should difficulties arise at any of the sites. But then there's nothing new in that for either former

SAC fliers or the long time ARRS crews.

With this potpourri of non-rescue missions, anyone not entirely familiar with the mission might be tempted to think that these crews are simply in the "you call, we haul" and surveillance business. Not so, because rounding out the 37th mission, in true ARRS fashion, is the old familiar search and rescue and medical evacuation commitment. With its ten detachments scattered over a wide area — F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo; Davis Monthan AFB, Ariz; Ellsworth AFB, S.D.; Grand Forks AFB, N.D.; Vandenburg AFB, Calif; Little Rock AFB, Ark; Malstrom AFB, Mont; McConnell AFB, Kan; Minot AFB, N.D.; and Whiteman AFB, Mo — the 37th aircrews are ideally situated to conduct such missions. During one recent three month period, crews flew 14 special missions and were credited with two saves.

So in spite of their mission sup-

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port role, the 37th does retain the rescue flavor that it is known for. And with some 1,054 SAC missile sites to support, there's a great deal more for the crews to do than to gaze at the wide open sky and listen to the lonesome sound of the wind across the plains. ✪



A 37th ARRS "Huey" crew circling over a missile convoy departing for a remote site.