



Is the concept and use of the helicopter really new? See what Brig Gen Brooks, Commander, Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service has to say.

ERA OF THE HELICOPTER

IN 1483, Leonardo da Vinci made a drawing of a primitive rotating-wing vehicle, and over 350 years later, in 1843, we can see Coley's concept of a helicopter. Cornus proposed a belt-driven helicopter in 1907, and just about everyone who has any association with aviation is familiar with Igor Sikorsky's contributions in the early part of this century. Those who are old enough may remember Cierva's autogiro of the 1920's. So, the modern jet powered heavy lift helicopters of our time did not come about from concepts or developments of only the last few years.

However, in the last two decades, the helicopter has made a lasting imprint and there is pretty strong evidence it will be around for a long time to come.

In the present conflict in Southeast Asia, many aircraft have been involved. The B-52, A-1EA, F-100, F-105, KC-135, EC-121, C-141, C-130, and several others have played their vital and diversified roles on the Air Force team.

When we turn to helicopters, most Air Force personnel are familiar with the HH-43 "PEDRO" used worldwide for local base rescue (LBR), fire suppression missions, and for combat aircrew recovery in Southeast Asia. The fame of the "Jolly Green Giant," HH-3E, has reached far and wide due to its outstanding performance in combat rescue operations. The follow-on helicopter, the HH-53B/C, more familiarly referred to as "Buff" (Big Ugly Friendly Fellow) is now well on the way to establishing its own fine rescue record.

In ARRS, the overall effectiveness of the rescue effort is measured by a single statistic — the number of lives saved. What does the score sheet show?

For the period 1 December 1964 through 31 July 1969, ARRS helicopters have been used to rescue 3527 persons. The HH-43 Huskie, in service longer than any other rescue helicopter, is credited with 2364 saves. The "Jolly Green Giant" is next with 912 saves. The HH-53, which was introduced to SEA in 1966 and is now making quite a name for itself, is

credited with 251 saves. Just to play on statistics a little further, 1008 of these saves were air crewmen and 1527 saves were actually made in Southeast Asia. Most significantly, the number of tactical aircrew members included in the total figure are sufficient to man over eleven single-engine fighter wings.

The record number of saves scored by ARRS helicopters is substantial proof of mission accomplishment. However, rescues can be made only when other vital factors are fitted into the pattern.

Without top flight maintenance, crew proficiency, a responsive training program, a knowledge of rescue procedures by survivors, air superiority, and the outstanding support of other tactical organizations, there would be very little rescue.

In addition to developments undertaken by ARRS, we should recognize fully the role played by the Army, Navy, and a number of civilian agencies in advancing the helicopter to a position of prominence. In SEA the helicopter is used as a first line weapons system, rescue vehicle, troop transport, cargo hauler, and ambulance. Civilian agencies are using the helicopter for law enforcement, traffic control, forestry, and other requirements. In short, the use of the helicopter in the world today is extensive, and its missions are wide in scope and diversity.

The "Era of the Helicopter"? Who can refute this claim? As one distinguished candidate for the Office of President of the United States once said, "Let's look at the record."*

*Governor Alfred E. Smith, Presidential Campaign 1928

ALLISON C. BROOKS, Brig Gen, USAF
Commander, ARRS