



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet H-3 JOLLY GREEN

The CH-3E, one of the family of Sikorsky helicopters, served special operations at Hurlburt Field for more than seven years until replaced; by a large helicopter. Two 1,500-horse engines powered the CH-3E, which had a rotor diameter of 62 feet, a fuselage length of 57 feet 3 inches, and empty gross weights of 13,255 and 22,050 pounds respectively. Other operational statistics included maximum a speed of 162 mph; range, 465 miles; and accommodation for a crew of two or three and 30 troops or 15 stretchers or 5,000 pounds of payload.

The first of six CH-3Es authorized for the 317th Special Operations Squadron arrived at Hurlburt Field March 13, 1973. The sixth arrive May 8. However, additional transfers of CH-3Es into and out of Hurlburt brought the total assigned helicopter in the 317th SOS to five by the end of July 1973. Another series of transfers began March 30, 1974, when one CH-3E went to Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. The 20th SOS became the wing's helicopter squadron when it activated at Hurlburt Field Jan. 1, 1976, with an authorization of six UH-1Ns and four CH-3Es. By the end of March 1976, the squadron had none of its authorized CH-3Es and only three by the end of the year. Not until late 1978 did the unit receive all of its CH-3E helicopters. Within two years all of these helicopters left Hurlburt permanently when the 20th SOS received the larger, more capable HH-53H Pave Low IIIs in June 1980 and release all four CH-3Es in September.



In addition to normal military training and missions, the air commandos utilized their air assets in various ways. The wing used a CH-3E, July 23, 1973, to airlift a small research barge from Fort Pickens, across from Pensacola, Fla., into the Santa Rosa Sound. The National Park Service built and used the barge as a diving platform in the underwater search for shipwrecks in the sound. The 1st Special Operations Wing's 317th SOS used one of its CH-3Es to rescue a sailor who, with another 19-year-old, had set sail Sept. 17, 1973 for Central America in a small sloop. However, before they had even reach the Gulf of Mexico, a storm smashed their boat on the rocks of the East Pass at Destin, Fla. While one of the two swam to shore, the other only save himself from being swept away by clinging to a marker buoy. Among the exercises in which CH-3Es participated were BOLD EAGLE 1978 on Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.; SOLID SHIELD 1978 in the Carolinas; GALLANT EAGLE 1979 on the Eglin Reservation; and SOLID SHIELD 1980 in the southeast U.S. Locations varied depending to some extent on the objectives of the exercises.

HH-3E TAIL #65-12784 HISTORY

The HH-3E on display at the Air Park was manufactured by the Sikorsky Aircraft Division of United Aircraft Corporation at Stratford, Conn., and delivered to the Air Force on May 31, 1966. It was a much traveled aircraft with service at various locations in Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, the Philippines and the United States until it was retired and put on display in the Air Park in May 1992.