



Paul Hooper ▶ VietnamWarHistoryOrg



9 hrs · 🌐

My first assignment out of USAF Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT) was as a C-130E Co-Pilot assigned to the 345th Tactical Airlift Squadron at Kadena AB, Okinawa. Forty five years ago on the evening of 29 April 1975 I was with the rest of the crew having dinner at the Thai O'Club at Utapao AB in Thailand. We were the alert crew but had not been called out to fly. LtCol Larry Duval came into the club, said that the 7th Airborne Command and Control Squadron (7th ACCS) needed a Co-Pilot and Flight Engineer to fill out a crew to go fly, and asked if my Flight Engineer (MSgt Joe Kotai) and I would volunteer. We said we would. Around 2200 we took off in C-130E-II 62-1863 as Cricket 01. We flew into Vietnamese airspace and orbited over Vung Tau as the airborne representative of the Commander United States Activities Group, Seventh Air Force, during the evacuation of Saigon, OPLAN 5060V codenamed "Frequent Wind". This mission was directly responsible for the evacuation of the last American diplomats from Saigon. Since the mission of Cricket 01 was as the Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center it is very likely that we remained on station until the last US military aircraft/helicopter had landed and thus were, arguably, the last US Military aircraft to leave Vietnamese airspace in the Vietnam War.