(MIDDLE BASE: RELACE ALL VERBIAGE WITH THE IMAGE OF THE HELICOPTER)

(BOTTOM BASE VERBIAGE REVERSE SIDE)

THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT

THE U.S. MERCHANT SHIP SS MAYAGUEZ AND ITS CREW WERE CAPTURED ON MAY 12, 1975, BY KHMER ROUGE INSURGENTS IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS OFF OF THE COAST OF CAMBODIA. PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD ORDERED THE U.S. MILITARY TO RECOVER THE SHIP AND SAVE THE CREW. 75 SECURITY POLICEMEN FROM THE 56TH SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON AT NAKHON PHANOM ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE VOLUNTEERED FOR THE MISSION ON MAY 13, 1975 BASED UPON THEIR PRIOR TRAINING FOR EMBASSY EVACUATIONS DURING OPERATION EAGLE PULL.

HELICOPTERS FROM THE 21ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON TRANSPORTED THE SECURITY POLICEMEN FROM NAKHON PHANOM TO THE MAYAGUEZ RESCUE OPERATION STAGING AREA AT U-TAPAO ROYAL THAI NAVY BASE. HOWEVER, SHORTLY AFTER DEPARTING NAKHON PHANOM, THE CH-53C HELICOPTER WITH THE CALL SIGN “KNIFE-13” FELL OUT OF THE FLYING FORMATION, CRASHING IN DENSE JUNGLE DUE TO CATASTROPHIC MECHANICAL FAILURE. THE COMMAND HELICOPTER LANDED NEAR THE CRASH SITE IN AN EFFORT TO RESCUE THEIR FELLOW AIRMEN BUT DISCOVERED THAT ALL 18 SECURITY POLICEMEN AND FIVE AIRCREWMEN DIED DUE TO IMPACT AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE WITH EXPLODING AMMUNITION.

THE SS MAYAGUEZ AND HER CREW WERE RESCUED ON MAY 15, 1975.

WE SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER.

(DELETE ALL VERBIAGE BELOW. MOVE 56TH LOGO TO LEFT SIDE OF CENTERED PHOTO )



