



ANGEL'S WINGS

920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base Florida

VOLUME 5, NO. 1



JANUARY 2007

A Good night for NASA



Rescue Airmen end year with a blast

What's inside?

Page 4- 2007 Bosses' Day Form

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ON THE WEB AT WWW.920RQW.AFRC.AF.MIL



CSAR-X = HH-47

By Gen. T. Michael Mosley

Air Force Chief of Staff

To the Airmen of the United States Air Force

The Air Force has selected the CH/MH-47 built by The Boeing Company, Chicago, Illinois, as our newest Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) aircraft, culminating a competitive source selection process among three vendors. We'll call it the HH-47. We're confident our dedicated, professional CSAR Airmen and the HH-47 will carry on the rich Air Force CSAR heritage - stretching back to the Army Air Corps, through conflicts in Korea, Vietnam and most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan - toward a limitless horizon, where they continue to fly and fight "That Others May Live."

Our ability to return isolated personnel to safety is a moral and ethical imperative, so we've made procurement of this new CSAR aircraft one of our highest weapon system procurement priorities. American and coalition war fighters can rest assured we will come to get them, no matter where they are. Today's battlefields are non-linear and non-contiguous, changing shape and venue with speed that outpaces and out-reaches legacy aircraft. The Air Force must have a more capable next-generation CSAR aircraft to better support US and coalition personnel isolated from friendly forces by distance, threat, weather and enemy action. We are committed to leaving no one behind - a commitment that gives all members of the joint and coalition team the confidence to perform vital work in hostile and uncertain circumstances.

We plan to acquire 141 CSAR-X helicopters to replace our aging inventory of HH-60G PAVE HAWK helicopters, and we expect to achieve Initial Operational Capability by the end of 2012 with the most capable CSAR aircraft ever. Range and payload

remain the soul of an air force, and the HH-47 exceeds our requirements in both areas. It will be capable of flying faster over longer ranges and higher altitudes, day or night, during adverse weather conditions, while carrying more personnel and specialized equipment than our legacy platform. Its increased payload capability provides a dramatic improvement in the number of injured personnel that can be rescued per sortie. Additionally, the HH-47 will be net-ready and outfitted with advanced avionics giving crews vastly better battlespace awareness than ever before. HH-47 crews will employ the best force protection capabilities ever offered, including a suite of integrated defensive systems and onboard weapons that give them greater firepower, lethality, and standoff range than legacy systems.

The USAF has a long history of excellence conducting Search and Rescue operations in times of conflict and in times of humanitarian need. In World War II, Army Air Forces (AAF) elements partnered with the British to demonstrate the first US aviation rescue capability. After the war, the AAF consolidated Search and Rescue operations and training under an organization that in 1964 became the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS). During the Vietnam era, ARRS CSAR Task Forces saved 4120 personnel, 2780 of those in combat. "Jolly Green Giant" rescue crews were highly regarded by their fellow aviators and highly rewarded for their heroism. They earned two Medals of Honor, 39 Air Force Crosses, and countless Silver Stars. Since 1979, the Air Force has awarded seven Mackay Trophies - given annually for the year's most meritorious flight - for rescue mission flights. Air Force CSAR Airmen have rescued over 470 members of the joint and coalition team in the Central Command

(See CSAR-X, Page 10)

UTA Schedule

Next UTA: Jan. 6-7

Feb. 3-4

March 3-4

April 14-15



Col. Steven Kirkpatrick
Wing Commander

1st Lt. Cathleen Snow
Chief of Public Affairs

2nd Lt. Jaime Pinto
Assistant Chief of Public Affairs

Master Sgt.
Raymond Padgett
NCOIC

Master Sgt. Chance Babin
Tech. Sgt. Shane Smith
Staff Sgt. Heather Kelly
Staff Writers

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Simmons
Editor

This authorized Air Force Reserve newspaper is published for the members of the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. Contents of Angel's Wings are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office of the 920th Rescue Wing, 740 O'Malley Road, building 559, Patrick AFB, FL 32925. (321) 494-0535. The deadline for submission is the Friday after the UTA for the next month's issue. All photos are the property of the U.S. Air Force unless otherwise indicated.

On the Cover:



Pilots from the 920th Rescue Wing support the night landing of Shuttle Discovery. In 2007 the wing's Airmen will perform missions like this as well as Air Expeditionary Force missions. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Robert Grande).

Wing pararescuemen assist in Mt. Hood search

By Maj. James Wilson

939th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

PORTLAND, Ore. -- Reservists from the 304th Rescue Squadron here team up again on Dec. 17 with Air National Guardsmen from Nevada in hopes of finding three missing hikers lost on Mt. Hood more than two weeks ago.

"This was our first opportunity to see the top of the mountain because of the poor weather and extreme conditions," said Capt. Ross Willson, a combat rescue officer assigned to the Air Force Reserve's 304th RQS. "Although we didn't find the hikers, we were able to get all of our assets out and actually see what was going on at various points on the mountain."

The 304th RQS had close to a dozen pararescue specialists on the mountain battling what they termed "extreme" conditions while assisting in the search.

A Combat Rescue Officer from the unit helped the airborne assets move to specific locations where officials in charge of the operation thought the hikers might be.

"My job was to relate specific information about the mountain [to the C-130 crew] to ensure we were looking in the right places," Captain Willson said. "Unfortunately, we

didn't see anything from the aircraft that could be described as new information." But they kept pressing on with the mission he said. "It's our job and what we do."

The climbers left Dec. 7 on what was to be a two-day trip on Mt. Hood.

Captain Willson was part of a very experienced C-130 crew that flew much of the morning and late into the afternoon looking for the climbers. The cargo plane, from the Nevada Air National Guard, is equipped with thermal imaging capability which could help find the hikers by detecting body heat. It flew just above Mt. Hood's summit, while a CH-47D and UH-60 helicopter from the Oregon Army National Guard searched at lower altitudes.

While the teams were disappointed not to have found the men, they remain focused on the task and their morale still appears strong.

Maj. Allan Renwick, a C-130 pilot involved in the rescue effort, said he held his hope after flying over the mountain for close to five hours. He remained hopeful to the end saying "We're encouraged by the fact that there's still a good chance of finding these guys alive. We're all hoping that happens."

Commentary by 1st Lt. Cathleen Snow
Rescue Wing Public Affairs

The men who trekked up the side of Mt. Hood must have had incredible thirst for living life to the fullest.

Said to be very experienced mountaineers; these men knew what they were doing. They had a goal and they set out to attain it. One should pause and appreciate the kind of tenacity to take on a mountain and the world. It's the type of attitude that makes George Washingtons and the Martin Luther Kings.

After discovering one fatality; it seems hard for those of us who don't share the same adventuresome spirit to digest their reasons for taking such risks. We may never know, but while some criticized these men for their decision, the 920th Rescue Wing set out to save them.

It was a monumental task, but they saw it as a part of their everyday jobs. The Air Force Reserve pararescuemen who serve in the 920th RQW share the same fearlessness as the hikers.

Taking on nature is an amazing feat; whether you are the climber or the rescuer.

For the pararescueman saving lives is at the heart of everything he does. It doesn't matter if it's a downed F-16 pilot in Iraq, an astronaut who bailed out from the space shuttle, a hurricane victim stranded on a rooftop or a fisherman trapped aboard a sinking boat in the Atlantic. If the 920th gets the call, they will go despite the danger.

For example, earlier this year, on another rescue effort you probably didn't know about, the pararescuemen from the Wing's 304th Rescue Squadron rescued an injured skier off a glacier on the longest hauling glacier rescue mission ever to be accomplished on Mt. Hood.

And during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Reserve aircrews and pararescuemen coming back home from two-year deployments in Southwest Asia, without missing a beat, went to sustain 24/7 operations in New Orleans for 21 days to do humanitarian relief work. One day alone, Sept. 1, they rescued 475 people. All together they were credited with saving 1,043 lives!

We must all be thankful for men and women who are fearless and we should be proud of the part we play in each rescue story whether or not the ending is happy.

After a six-day extended search mission in extreme-weather field conditions, Staff Sgt. Derrick Brooks, a pararescueman from the 304th Rescue Squadron, speaks to media about the Mt. Hood rescue effort, Dec. 18. Rescue crews held onto hope until the last possible moment.



Photo by Maj. James Wilson



2007 Bosses' Day is set for June 2

Today is your chance to...

Register now!

Rescue Wing members are encouraged to invite their civilian bosses to the 2007 annual Bosses' Day. This is a great opportunity to strengthen your civilian employer's commitment to your Reserve service and to help them understand that the reservists they employ are also American heroes. The event includes a flight and some face-to-face time with the Wing Commander, Col. Steve Kirkpatrick. The itinerary is being finalized.

Annual Bosses' Day nomination form

April 14, 2007

(Please print or type information legibly)

Reservist's Information

Reservist's Name/Rank: _____ Home Phone: _____

Reservist's Mailing Address w/ Zip Code: _____

Reservist's Email Address: _____

Squadron: _____ Civilian Work Phone: _____

Employer's Information

Employer's Name: _____ Bus Phone: _____

Title: _____ Company Name: _____

Complete Business Mailing Address w/ Zip Code: _____

Employer's complete email address: _____

Guidelines:

1. You may nominate a civilian employer.
2. Return your nomination to the Public Affairs Office as soon as possible, but **no later than May 6**.
3. Fill out and mail this page to 920 RQW/PA, 740 O'Malley Rd., Suite 101, Patrick AFB, FL 32925.

Bosses will receive a letter of invitation, including the day's itinerary. More details will follow. For more information please contact Public Affairs at (321-494-0535). Or submit information electronically to Cathleen.snow@rescue920.patrick.af.mil.



Wing's combat recruiting goes above & beyond

By Staff Sgt. Jonathan Simmons

Rescue Wing Public Affairs

Without new recruits no Air Force unit would last very long. In 2006 there was no shortage of new recruits through the Team Patrick Reserve recruiters.

The Reserve recruiters of Team Patrick were recognized by Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service for their outstanding recruiting results for 2006.

Their dedication has resulted in 110 percent overall manning for the 920th Rescue Wing, **the only Air Force unit with 110 percent manning.**

920th RQW Airmen don't often get to rub shoulders with the Reserve recruiters who keep the unit strong. Each day, these recruiters, led by Senior Master Sgt. Hiram Ortiz, go to work at their satellite offices to try and find everyday people they can turn into American heroes. In 2006 they topped all other 10th Air Force units by recruiting 149 percent of their line goal.

Master Sgt. Robert Vazquez attributes this recruiting success to one

thing: "Teamwork." "When I reference team I include Team Patrick (AFRC recruiters), the Employment Office at each Reserve wing in which we place people, the ARTs at the unit level that update us with the needs of the units, the commanders and chiefs that provide us the resources to do our jobs and the Reservists themselves. Without people that have a desire to serve - we would be out of a job."

The Wing's recruiters have done well as a team, and also as individuals. Sergeant Vazquez ranked fifth among the command's

recruiters by recruiting a mind-blowing 179 percent of his individual goal. Master Sgt. Brenda Kartheiser, who became a recruiter in 1997 because of her good experience as a Reserve Airman, exceeded her recruiting goal with 137 percent.

"I wanted the opportunity to be a part of insuring the AF Reserve was bringing in quality people, the kind of people that I would trust working beside me," said Sergeant Kartheiser.

Sergeant Kartheiser attributes her recruiting success to the application of Air Force Core Values especially integrity when working with applicants and trying to "leave them with no unanswered questions."

For the first time Master Sgt. Kristi Galvin, who specializes in pararescueman recruiting, received the highest honor possible for a Reserve recruiter: the Century Club Gold award. Although this coveted award

is rare, Sergeant Vazquez received the Century Club Gold award for a second time last year.

"I'm very proud of my whole team," said Sergeant Ortiz. "Nobody finished the year at less than 110% of goal."

Sergeant Ortiz won Top Senior Recruiter, Sergeant Vazquez won Top Lead Recruiter and Team Patrick earned a Silver Medal for outstanding team achievement, demonstrating that not only is the wing superior at Combat Rescue, it's also very good at combat recruiting.



You can make an Air Force difference, here's how

By Staff Sgt. Dominique Hogan

Air Force Assoc. Advisory Council

Do you ever wish the Air Force Reserve would do things differently? Do you want to let senior Air Force Reserve leadership know what policies you think are good and which ones you think are bad? Now there's a way to do just that. You can make a difference!

I (Staff Sgt. Dominique Hogan, 920th Security Forces Element) was recently selected to the Air Force Association's Reserve Advisory Council. The AFA Reserve Advisory Council is a two-year program and its purpose is to develop Air Force policy

recommendations on quality of life and quality of service issues, which impact Air Force Reserve Airmen of any rank and station.

The council identifies and prioritizes these issues, driven by legislative action, which impact Air Force Reserve members. It's members prepare input, including background information, and recommend action by the Air Force and Air Force Reserve. They also respond to Air Force Reserve requests for study, evaluation, and/or recommendation on issues affecting members of the Air Force Reserve.

This is a great opportunity to

represent the 920th Rescue Wing's reservists and be able to address our concerns.

I attended my first meeting 24-27 September 2006 in conjunction with The Air and Space Conference in Washington, D.C. In order to make an impact I will need input from all reservists regarding their policy issues, whether big or small.

Please call 494-0486 with your concerns or e-mail them to dominique.hogan@rescue920.patrick.af.mil; dmckibben@cfl.rr.com or stop by my office in Bldg 313, Room 224. Thanks for your support in making our Air Force Reserve better.



Shuttle don't launch or land w

By Staff Sgt. Jonathan Simmons

Rescue Wing Public Affairs

As the Shuttle Discovery crew prepared to illuminate the night sky, crews of blue, green, red and orange met at the 920th Rescue Wing to support the first night launch in four years.

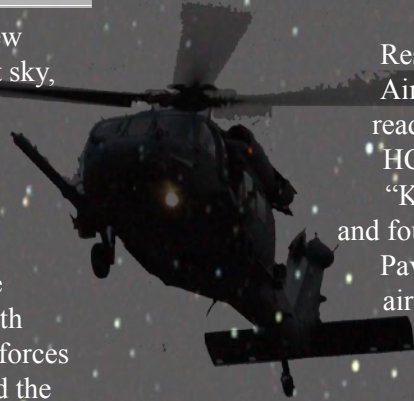
Rescue Wing crews from the 920th RQW worked together with the 45th Space Wing, the Joint forces of U.S. Northern Command and the Coast Guard hoping for a successful launch, but preparing to respond to disaster.

The launch happens in a matter of seconds, but the wing becomes part of the planning process up to one year in advance, according to Chief Master Sergeant Lazaro Ibarra, who's supported 30 shuttle launches with 301st Rescue Squadron.

"Things have been going well," said Air Force Maj.

Julia Black, Space Launch Operations officer, during a

NORTHCOM mission briefing. "but when things go wrong, it's really bad."



Rescue Wing Airmen stood ready with three HC-130 P/N "King" Hercules and four HH-60 Pavehawk aircraft (also called Jollies) and

the joint task force to quickly respond in case things did go wrong. Every contingency was discussed and the plans were made for each possible scenario.

All branches of the Department of Defense and the U.S. Coast Guard were

involved in this venture. Air Force aircraft cleared the range and positioned themselves for search, rescue and medical evacuation. Navy facilities prepared emergency landing zones. Coast Guard vessels patrolled the range the shuttle would fly over during launch. A Marine Corps refueling C-130 teamed up with the 39th Rescue Squadron to keep the helicopters supplied with fuel. The Army provided NORTHCOM oversight and coordination.

"The military has been involved in NASA launches since the first Mercury mission," said Army Col. Paul Smith, JTF commander. "The DoD and Department of Homeland Security are involved because NASA doesn't have all the assets that we do, and the ones they do have are shorter range and can't aerial refuel. It's better for the taxpayer if we don't duplicate equipment."

For the 920th Rescue Wing, launch preparations begin long before the 3-2-1 countdown.

Riggers prepare Rigging Alternate Method Zodiac boat packages, while maintainers make sure aircraft will be in good shape when the count down begins. Aircrew members plan their flight paths, reconfigure aircraft and plot the most efficient way to accomplish a possible rescue.



without military support

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Robert Grande & Courtesy photos
Photo illustration by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Simmons

Countdown to Launch

T minus 1 year: Wing receives scheduling message from NASA

T minus 5 days: Maintenance Group checks for availability of five flyable HH-60s

T minus 1 day: all aerial forces involved, attend a coordination briefing. Life Support spins up flight docs.

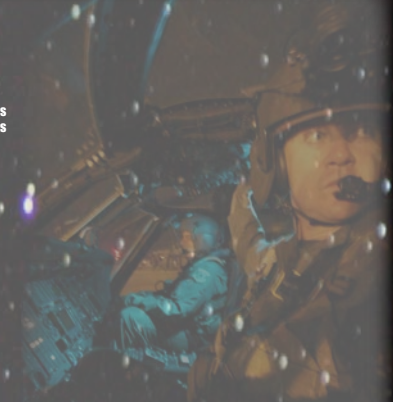
T minus 3 hrs: Jollies 1 & 2 take off toward the shuttle landing facility

T minus 2.75 hrs: Jolly 3 begins to clear the range

T minus 2.5 hrs: Jolly 4 begins to clear the range

T minus 1 hr: HC-130's take off

T minus 15 mins: Jollies 3 & 4 arrive at SLF, refuel and standby for emergency



The Challenge: a story of military coins

By Tech. Sgt. Shane Smith

Carrying a challenge coin is a rich tradition found in today's air Force. They are given as awards by commanders and as gifts to friends. The true origin of the coin is folklore and still debated between service members. Nonetheless, the challenge coin tradition continues to promote esprit' de corps.

One common story that many websites agree upon has its origins in World War I. According to an article posted on Global Security.org American volunteers eagerly filled positions in newly formed flying squadrons. Some were wealthy students who had been attending colleges such as Yale and Harvard when they quit in midterm to join the war. In one squadron, a wealthy lieutenant ordered medallions struck in solid bronze stamped with the unit's emblem for every member of his squadron. He carried the medallion around his neck in a small leather pouch.

Not long after acquiring the medallions, this lieutenant's aircraft was critically damaged by enemy ground fire and he was immediately captured by a German patrol. In order to discourage his escape, the Germans confiscated all of his possessions and identification except for the small leather pouch around his neck. He was taken to a small French town near the front lines. Overnight, during a bombardment he donned civilian clothes and escaped. However, he was without personal identification.

He successfully evaded German patrols and reached the front lines. Eventually, he came upon a French outpost. Unfortunately, the French in this area were plagued with saboteurs sometimes masquerading as civilians. Not recognizing the young pilot's American accent, the French thought him to be a saboteur and readied him for execution.

Just in time, he remembered his leather pouch containing the medallion. He showed the medallion to his would-be executioners. His captors recognized the medallion and delayed his execution

long enough to confirm his identity. Instead of shooting him, they gave him a bottle of wine.

When he finally returned to his squadron, it became tradition to ensure that all members carried their medallion at all times. This was accomplished in the following manner. A challenger would ask to see his coin. If the challenger could not produce his coin, he was required to purchase a drink of choice for the member who had challenged him. If the challenged member produced his coin, the challenging member was required to pay for the drink.

Regardless of how the tradition began, challenge coins continue to be a timeless device to foster camaraderie and unit pride.

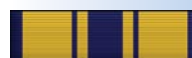
"Coin Check" Rules of Engagement

1. A "Coin Check" consists of a challenge and a response. A challenge is initiated by either holding your coin in the air or tapping it on the table or bar. Individual(s) challenged must respond by showing their coin with their own unit's logo to the challenger within 30 seconds. If the individual(s) challenged fails to produce the coin, they are obligated to buy a round of drinks for all challenged. The reward does not have to be an alcoholic beverage. It can be a soda or any other reward the individuals agree on.
2. If everyone being challenged produces their Coin, the challenger must buy a round of drinks for all challenged.
3. Coin Checks are permitted anywhere and anytime.
4. If one drops a Coin, it also constitutes an immediate Coin check for all those present.
5. Verbally using the word "Coin" constitutes an immediate Coin check for all those present. Alternative words such as "RMO" (Round Metal Object) can be used.
6. The Coin shall always be carried on one's person. Carried on one's person is defined by in one's pocket, sock, shoe or other garment that is on one's body. It shall not be carried in one's wallet or purse.
7. A Coin is a Coin. They are not belt buckles, key chains or necklaces. Coins worn in a holder around the neck are valid.
8. If the Coin is ever lost or misplaced, that person is still open to be checked at any time.
9. The Coin must never be defaced or purposely damaged in any way. (Cannot be drilled for a necklace, key chain, etc.)



Meritorious Service Medal

Maj. Allyn Taylor, 301st RQS
MSgt. William Feller, 301st RQS
MSgt. Randolph Wells, 301st RQS
TSgt. Jonathan Grant, 39th RQS
TSgt. Ryan Renuart, 301st RQS



AF Commendation Medal

Lt. Col. David Baysinger, 301st RQS
Maj. Michael Bolling, 301st RQS
Maj. Bruce Schuman, 301st RQS
Capt. John Tatton, 301st RQS
CMSgt. Laz Ibarra, 301st RQS
SMSgt. Carla Chatman, 301st RQS
SMSgt. Randolph Wells, 301st RQS
MSgt. Chad Evans, 308th RQS
MSgt. Carlos Gonzalez-Ortega, 301st RQS
TSgt. Gregory Goetz, 301st RQS
TSgt. William Allen, 301st RQS
TSgt. Paul Schultz, 308th RQS
SSgt. Joel Corbett, 308th RQS
SSgt. Patrick Dunne, 308th RQS
SSgt. Nicole Hanson, MSS



AF Achievement Medal

SMSgt. Donna Wenzel, ASTS
MSgt. Frederick Maffeo, ASTS
MSgt. Randy McCandless, ASTS
MSgt. Nicole Ralph-Conway, ASTS
MSgt. David Sanford, ASTS
TSgt. Marco Delemere, ASTS
TSgt. Francis Smith, ASTS
TSgt. Brenda Stephens, ASTS
SSgt. Brando Ayllon, ASTS
SSgt. Garry Ortiz, ASTS
SrA Garren Anderson, LRF
SrA Nicole Blankenship, ASTS
SrA Ida Marrero, ASTS
SrA De Erica Robinson, ASTS
SrA Kristine Waite, ASTS



The buzz: Wavelength of rescue radio operation

By 2nd Lt. Jaime Pinto

Rescue Wing Public Affairs

Imagine you are giving a presentation to a team of people, only the information you need to present is coming from five or six people simultaneously as you are giving the presentation. It would be a difficult presentation to give; however, this is what the communications systems operators of the 39th Rescue Squadron handle during every mission.

The rescue mission is a time-critical, dangerous operation with many players, aircraft, and commands working toward a common goal: the rescue. Acting as an airborne command post, it is the responsibility of the radio operators on board the HC-130's to coordinate the players and efforts that go into a rescue mission.

"The job of the radio operator is to provide a picture of the outside world to the crew by listening to different inputs to get a sense of what all of the players are doing," said Tech. Sgt. Robert Grande, a radio operator for the 39th RQS.

In a seat next to the navigator, the radio operator listens to the squeaks and squawks of ten or eleven different inputs at a time. During a rescue mission, the radio operator may be coordinating the refueling activity with a Pavehawk, talking to headquarters, or talking with a number of aircraft as a part of the Combat Search and Rescue Task Force.

With such a time sensitive mission, communication among the CSARTF is crucial. As the communication system expert, the radio operator must not only communicate with the crew of the "King" Hercules, but must also be able to get a hold of aircraft or headquarters at a moment's notice to support the mission. At times, this can mean

developing new technologies during flight to perform communication functions.

"To really be effective you have to know a lot about what other people do so you can anticipate what they may need in a given situation," said Sergeant Grande.

With rescue, not only is communication important before and during the rescue, but also on the way home with the rescued patient on board. The radio operator relays patient status and patient need information back to headquarters allowing the appropriate care team time to prepare for the patient's arrival.

"You only have a small amount of time to provide patient care and distributing the information back to headquarters can make a difference in the patient care received," said Sergeant Grande.

Unlike other aircraft, the HC-130

employs only one radio operator, which means increased responsibility. Keeping the communication lines open with the outside world as well as inside the aircraft, the job of an HC-130 radio operator is never dull.

Sergeant Grande recalled a mission affectionately known as the "Battle of Baghdad mission," when in the midst of a large scale rescue effort, he picked up an "ominous call" from an HH-60 pilot: "We have 15 min. fuel remaining. That's not enough to..." "That's all we heard before we started running the numbers," he said. "Everyone had 'what if the helos couldn't get gas' in the back of their minds. But we got the job done."

The 920th Rescue Wing employs the only Combat Search and Rescue radio operators section in the Air Force Reserve. A small group of less than ten individuals, these Airmen serve a critical role in the 920th rescue mission.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Simmons

Tech. Sgt. Robert Grande, 39th Rescue Squadron communication systems operator, begins a preflight check of the system on one of the squadron's five HC-130 aircraft.



BRIEF

and to the point...

CHRONIC CANDY ILLEGAL FOR AIRMEN

"Chronic Candy," a new candy popular with the 21 and older crowd, contains hemp oil and is illegal for Air Force members to ingest. Another such product is called "Dave." Airmen should be aware of what they are eating and drinking. For restrictions, read AFI 44-121.

NEW RESERVE HEALTHCARE

Beginning Oct. 1, 2007, drilling reservists can enroll in the new TRICARE Standard for Selected Reserve health plan. The plan replaces the current three-tier TRICARE Reserve Select system.

Another new benefit of the fiscal 2007 National Defense Authorization Act helps reservists without dependents who were mobilized for 139 or more days in support of a contingency operation. It permits a second housing allowance in lieu of per diem if reservists are ordered to serve at a location too far from home to commute.

The authorization act also extended the maximum number of days reservists can be called to active duty from 270 days to 365 days. For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123031028>

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS PROCESSING MADE EASIER

Reserve Airmen can now submit awards and decorations requests online through the virtual Personnel Center Guard and Reserve rather than visiting their servicing Military Personnel Flights.

When Airmen return from an air and space expeditionary force deployment, they can log onto the vPC-GR and attach their paid travel voucher to update their awards.

With the new process, Air Force Reserve Command units can also electronically nominate and approve personnel for a variety of medals using the vPC-GR. To access the system, log on at <https://arpc.afrc.af.mil/vPC-GR>.

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

Airmen can still expect high-caliber quality of life programs that will take care of them and their families despite the changes being made within the force.

Like many other career fields and Air Force programs, the services organization faces cuts in personnel and funding.

Fitness centers may no longer provide 'perks' such as 24-hour gym access, big screen televisions and towel service.

Quality of life means quality of life as an Expeditionary Airman, which includes better training, better equipment, better uniforms that are suited to the environment we operate in, and better skills that combined will yield a better chance of victory when put in harm's way

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at

<http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123032530>

AUTHORIZATION BILL:

In addition to a 2.2 percent across-the-board pay raise, Air Force reservists can look forward to better health care options in 2007. Starting Oct. 1, 2007, drilling reservists can enroll in the new Tricare Standard for Selected Reserve health plan. They pay 28 percent of the premiums. The federal government picks up the rest of the tab. People covered by the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program are not eligible for the new plan. The plan replaces the current three-tier Tricare Reserve Select system.

CSAR-X... continued from page 2

AOR alone since 9/11. Finally, in the aftermath of the 2005 hurricanes, Air Force personnel rescued 4544 Americans from the flood-ravaged Gulf Coast.

Thanks to decades of successful Combat Search and Rescue missions, America's enemies understand our commitment to recovering isolated friendly forces. Unfortunately, our enemies have also repeatedly demonstrated they intend to exploit captured personnel to undermine American strategic objectives. Effective CSAR denies the enemy the ability to exploit our courageous war fighters by returning them to safety. While other services do personnel recovery, the Air Force is the only service with forces dedicated entirely to CSAR. Whether stranded by downed aircraft, surrounded by a hostile enemy, or abducted by terrorists, isolated personnel know they can rely on our Air Force CSAR professionals to do their job.

Every day our CSAR assets conduct operations across the spectrum of conflict. These dangerous missions are inherently high risk. But now, with the advent of the HH-47, those risks will be dramatically reduced. Our CSAR crews will have the increased combat radius, lift performance, and payload capability they need to operate effectively worldwide in the 21st century.

America's service men and women deserve the best. After careful consideration and a fair and open competition among multiple proposals, we've concluded that the Boeing CH/MH-47 is the best aircraft for the job. By purchasing 141 HH-47s, the Air Force will be able to provide the required force structure to sustain worldwide taskings for the nation's Combatant Commanders. We're pleased about the opportunity to partner once again with Boeing, and are convinced our Airmen - and all those in need around the world - are in good hands.

Check out www.920rqw.afrc.af.mil



ALL IN A DAY'S WORK



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Simmons

GLOBAL REACH -- Maj. Joseph Alcorn, 301th Rescue Squadron pilot, reaches for his helmet at the start of a training mission at the wing's 943rd Rescue Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. Like all wing Airmen, Major Alcorn is preparing for the AEF cycle.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Simmons

WHAT'S THIS? -- Airman Basic Rudy Pannaccci, 39th Rescue Squadron aircrew life support technician, learns the ropes as he inspects LM4 life support packages.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Simmons

EXCELLENCE BY THE SEA -- Tech. Sgt. Matt Roche, para-rescuer and the wing's NCO of the fourth quarter, emerges from the Banana River after a training exercise here.

YEAR IN REVIEW....

THE LAST WORD

REMEMBER WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED IN 2006



THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE