

PONY EXPRESS

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 4

SERVING THE 943RD RESCUE

OCTOBER 1, 2011

Rescue group pararesucemen train in the “bone yard”

Story and photographs by Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson
943rd Rescue Group Public Affairs

DAVIS MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. – The “bone yard” at the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group served as a back drop and training area for pararesucemen with the 306th Rescue Squadron as they practiced cutting through a C-130 Hercules to further hone their life saving skills.

The training was part of the squadron’s confined space collapsed structure and excretion training exercise in a tactical environment. Utilizing the C-130 was a rare opportunity for the pararesucemen, and they took full advantage of the training opportunity to learn the quickest extraction methods out of the aircraft.

“Today, the two hours that we spent out here made these guy’s the biggest subject matter experts on extraction on a C-130,” said Mr. Robert Craig, chief tactical instructor at ROCO rescue and a former PJ.

The training scenario involved taking portable tools into a crash scenario. The PJ’s then determined what the best entry points into the aircraft were.



“Getting out using the aircraft was very important to us because the skin of an aircraft is completely different than anything else,” said Master Sgt. Maurice Bedard, 306th RQS pararesuceman. “Going out and training on cars is great except for it’s got a completely different skin, completely different window and completely different hinges than an aircraft.”

Utilizing a C-130 is a once in a life time opportunity for the 306th RQS PJ’s, and the experiences gained by this type of training will be invaluable if they’re ever called up to perform this type rescue mission.

“This training was very important for both our seasoned guy’s and our new folks,” Sergeant Bedard said. “This is the first time in 15 years that I’ve gotten a change to do this type of training.”

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SECAF addresses state of the Air Force



By Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes
Defense Media Activity

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (AFNS) -- Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley addressed hundreds of Airmen, sister service members and industry leaders during the Air Force Association's 2011 Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition here, Sept. 19.

Donley spoke about the state of the Air Force in regards to budget concerns, current and future operations and what Air Force officials are doing to maintain the force's capabilities.

"We are in a season of important national debate...we have to move forward in a way that protects our national security and will provide our national leadership with the tools necessary to defend America's interests in the complex security environment in which we live," Donley said.

Spending reductions across the Defense Department to help reduce the national debt will affect Air Force planning at all levels.

"Though very tough, these reductions are considered achievable as DOD reviews its roles and missions and examines all areas of the budget for savings," Donley said. "To get these savings, we will need to accept greater risk in some areas, terminate some lower priority programs, streamline others, continue driving efficiency in our operations and make some tough choices about the core tenets of our national security strategy.

"It's safe to say that every single line of the budget is under scrutiny," he said.

Donley emphasized that DOD leaders are aware of how spending reductions could affect the services and are working to mitigate any setbacks in the mission.

"Secretary Panetta has made a commitment to ensure that our military has everything it needs to protect our national security at a time of considerable fiscal challenge in our country," he said. "And most importantly to our Airmen, he has promised to fight for service members and their families as we face these budget challenges. He understands the importance of keeping faith with military service members and their families."

Donley also explained how balancing the force and modernization of equipment will play a factor in the way the budget is expended. Each factor must be considered in conjunction with the others.

"As we look at the Air Force budget, balance has been our guiding principle," he said. "If our force structure - the size and composition of our Air Force - is too large given the resources available, then we risk not being able to sustain the costs of ownership, such as

providing for pay and benefits, training and materiel readiness. We need to avoid a hollow force."

Donley went on to say, if the force is too small, it could unintentionally drive some mission areas and career fields to unsustainably low levels, while losing the flexibility to accommodate new or evolving missions, or risk ability to sustain expeditionary operations.

Balancing the force also includes continuing to integrate total force Airmen and assets.

"As we consider the broad scope of changes ahead, we are committed to maintaining an Air Force presence in each state, to include at least one active-duty, Reserve, or Air National Guard unit," Donley said. "This reflects our commitment to the total force, our ongoing efforts to find the right balance between our active-duty and our Air Reserve Component forces, and recognition of airpower's important role in supporting governors and civil authorities in managing the consequences of natural disasters."

The secretary said that while it would benefit no one to down play the hard choices that confront the Air Force, neither should the picture be painted as so bleak that service members fear that the nation is turning its back "on those who have served with such devotion and on the institutions that have kept our nation secure for generations."

"I want to make clear that as the Department of Defense adapts to the evolving budget environment, your Air Force is committed to keeping faith with our Airmen and their families and to sustaining core Air Force missions," he said.

Although much work remains before the Air Force can expect strategic clarity regarding budget reductions, Donley said there are certain key capabilities service officials are working to protect. One such area is the Joint Strike Fighter program, which provides the Air Force with the F-35 Lightning II.

"There are certain capabilities we will protect," he said. "We will apply best military judgment to oppose reductions that would cause irreparable harm. (Chief of Staff of the Air Force) General Schwartz and I are determined to set the right course, to make the right investments so that the Air Force evolves in positive directions, even with limited resources.

"We remain committed to maintaining air superiority and the capability to hold any target at risk," he said. "With a fighter fleet now averaging 22 years old and with two decades of declining fighter force structure, modernizing our aging and smaller fighter force depends on the fifth generation capabilities of the joint strike fighter. Simply put, there is no alternative to the F-35 program. It must succeed."

Despite budget reductions, Donley said he is confident the Air Force will maintain its ability to flight, fight and win across the full spectrum of operations.

"The Air Force has always been a forward leaning military service, always at the forefront applying new technologies to strengthen U.S. national security," he said. "And throughout our history, we have demonstrated the flexibility to evolve according to changing needs and requirements. The Air Force must be prepared to keep evolving as we finish today's fight and continue our mission to protect America today and in the future."

The Pony Express

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FY 2012 UTA Schedule

1-2 Oct 2011
5-6 Nov 2011
3-4 Dec 2011
7-8 Jan 2012
11-12 Feb 2012
3-4 Mar 2012
14-15 Apr 2012
5-6 May 2012
2-3 Jun 2012
14-15 Jul 2012
4-5 Aug 2012
10-11 Sept 2012



News Briefs

FREE welcome home banners

The purpose of Operation Welcome Home is to recognize and thank individual military personnel for their service during a deployment. One FREE 2'h x 4'w banner may be requested. Please use the following link, then click on Operation Welcome Home. The sign typically takes 7-10 days. <http://www.westsidesigns.com>. This is a great way to show your support

943rd Education Office

The Education and Training Office is here to assist our members with any questions or concerns they have in regards to educational benefits, such as Post 9/11, Montgomery GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill Select Reserve, Reserve Educational Assistance, and Tuition Assistance.

D-M Airmen Against Drunk Driving

The hours are from Friday and Saturday 10pm - 3am and additional support provided for some holidays and special events. For a ride home call (520) 850-AADD (2233).

To volunteer with AADD contact one of the following AADD officers:

Staff Sgt. Kyle Beeson at 228-3512 or kyle.beeson@dm.af.mil

Senior Airman Mitchell Johnson at 228-2377 or mitchell.johnson@dm.af.mil

Senior Airman Tameshia Prentice at 228-4660 or tameshia.prentice@dm.af.mil

D-M Thrift Store accepts donations

The D-M Thrift Store accepts donations 24 hours-a-day at the drop-off at the store Thrift Store hours are Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m - 2 p.m. and the first Sunday of the month from 9 a.m. - noon. If you have any questions, contact the DM Thrift Store at 228-2120.

Tricare coverage prior to mobilization

Reserve Component members are eligible for Tricare coverage 180 day prior to mobilization. RC members on Title 10 orders for more than 30 days are entitled to Enhanced Health Care/Tricare, which also extends to eligible family members. For more details, visit www.triwest.com.

Heart of Tucson Equine Rescue

Volunteers needed for general horse care - cleaning stalls, grooming, turnout. Horse experience a plus!

Office work: secretarial, fundraising, volunteers to work at events, tack sales, horse clinics, and booths at various special events.

Grant writer desperately needed!

For more information visit www.heartoftucson.org or contact heartvolunteercoord@gmail.com, phone Judy Glore at 520-445-1510

Get 1 now program

Know anyone that is interested in joining the Air Force Reserve? The Get One Now program offers a selection of awards when a person you refer joins the Air Force Reserve. For more information on the program, visit www.get1now.us or call 877-786-2372.

Davis-Monthan Youth Detention Mentoring

Get involved in the community and change a life! Youth at the detention center have little to zero guidance in his or her life. Mentors try to direct them to a new path and set goals.

For more info For more info contact: Master Sgt. Harold Evans at 228-4987 or harold.evans@dm.af.mil, Airman 1st Class Armando Colorado at 228-5394 or armando.colorado@dm.af.mil, or Staff Sgt. Roxanne Tapia at 228-4188 or roxanne.tapia@dm.af.mil

Mobile Meals of Tucson

Mobile Meals of Tucson delivers special diet meals to homebound adults.

Mobile Meals is looking for:

Volunteer Drivers -Deliver meals at noontime-Monday through Friday. Pick up meals and deliver to the homebound.

A route takes about an hour and a half to drive. Valid drivers license & car insurance is required.

For more information, call 622-1600.

ON THE COVER:

Top right photo: Staff Sgt. Ryan Gilbert, a pararescueman with the 306th Rescue Squadron, utilizes the Jaws of Life to cut into a C-130 Hercules as Capt. Ricardo Montana, 306th RQS combat rescue officer, observes during the unit's ROCO training exercise. Pararescuemen with the 306th RQS practiced extraction techniques on a C-130 inside the "bone yard" at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. (U.S. Air Force Photo/ Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson)

Bottom left photo: Staff Sgt. David Adams, a pararescueman with the 306th Rescue Squadron, cuts into the side of a C-130 Hercules during the squadron's ROCO training exercise. Pararescuemen with the 306th RQS recived the rare opportunity to practice extraction techniques on a C-130. (U.S. Air Force Photo/ Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson)

Rescue commander remembered

By Staff Sgt. Leslie Forshaw
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. -- The Air Force Reserve suffered a great loss this week with the death of Col. Glenn Schumacher.

He was the Chief of Operations, Plans and Readiness at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. and was set to assume command of the 920th Rescue Wing's Operations Group later this month.

He died as a result of a heart attack Sept. 10.

The colonel is survived by his wife and two children and was a vital part of the Rescue Family for many years.

"Col. Schumacher was absolutely the primary guy to go to for all rescue questions at the command - that's why he was chosen as the Operations Group Commander for the 920th RQW," said Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner, Jr., Commander, Air Force Reserve Command. "He will be remembered as a consummate aviator, a staff officer and family man. He knew how to

balance them all."

Schumacher flew HH-60G Pave Hawk combat-search-and-rescue helicopters at the 943rd Rescue Group, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base prior to departing for the staff position at AFRC Headquarters in late 2004.

Col. Schumacher had just returned to the U.S in July after a six-month deployment as the Deputy Group Commander at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

"Colonel Schumacher and I have worked together for about 25 years. Over those years our paths have crossed multiple times and we've been deployed together multiple times," said Col. Jeffrey L. Macrander, 920th RQW Commander.

"I was looking forward to continued work with him here. The Reserve family has suffered a great loss," said Colonel Macrander.

"Col. Schumacher was a true patriot, selfless servant, and a friend who will be greatly missed - the rescue community is devastated by the sudden loss of one of our combat warriors - but his legacy of service to our great nation will not be quickly forgotten," said Col. Harold Maxwell, 943rd Rescue Group Commander,



Recently deployed to Khandahar Airfield, Afghanistan February through July 2011, as the deputy group commander, Col. Glenn Schumacher died of a heart attack Sept. 10, 2011. He is survived by his wife and two children. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Around the Group



1. A member of the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base Honor Guard dresses the American flag during the 943rd Rescue Group's September 11th Remembrance Ceremony. The presiding officer of the ceremony, Lt. Col. John Beatty, 943rd RQG deputy commander, spoke of how the events of Sept. 11 united our nation and galvanized our armed force into action. (U.S. Air Force Photo/ Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson)

2. Mr. Greg Byrne, University of Arizona athletic director, receives the 305th Rescue Squadron guidon from Lt. Col. Brett Howard, 305th RQS commander during the honorary commander induction ceremony inside the 943rd Maintenance Squadron hangar. Mr. Byrne was inducted as the 305th RQS honorary commander during the September Unit Training Assembly weekend. The honorary commander program allows leadership in the Tucson community to understand the mission and importance of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, the Air Force and the Department of Defense global military mission. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Master Sgt. Gregory Gaunt)

3. A member of the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base Honor Guard dresses the American flag as Lt. Col. John Beatty, 943rd Rescue Group Commander deputy commander, stands at attention during the 943rd RQG September 11th Remembrance Ceremony. Colonel Beatty spoke of how the events of Sept. 11 united our nation and galvanized our armed force into action. He also spoke of how 943rd RQG Citizen Airmen answered the call to provide combat search and rescue capabilities to the fight and the uniqueness of each combat search and rescue deployment. (U.S. Air Force Photo/ Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson)

4. Airmen from the 943rd Rescue Group stand at parade rest during the group's September 11th Remembrance Ceremony. The presiding officer of the ceremony, Lt. Col. John Beatty, 943rd RQG deputy commander, spoke of how the events of Sept. 11 united our nation and galvanized our armed force into action. He also spoke about how 943rd RQG Citizen Airmen answered the call to provide combat search and rescue capabilities to the fight and the uniqueness of each combat search and rescue deployment.. (U.S. Air Force Photo/ Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson)



1. Maj. Gen. Frank Padilla, 10th Air Force commander, and Col. Harold Maxwell, 943rd Rescue Group commander taxi a HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter on the flight line at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. Both, General Padilla and Colonel Maxwell had just completed a flight from Texas to Arizona. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson)

2. Tech. Sgt. Kimberly Devin, 306th Rescue Squadron aircrew flight equipment maintainer, receives the Diamond Sharp Award from the First Sergeants Council at Davis Monthan Air Force Base. She received the award for her exceptional performance in both supporting the active duty and Reserve rescue mission. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson)

3. Ms. Jacqueline Pinkett-Smith, with the 920th Force Support Squadron Satellite Personnel Activity, sings the National Anthem during the 943rd Rescue Group Sept. 11 Remembrance Ceremony. The 943rd RQG held a Sept. 11 Remembrance Ceremony to honor those who died in the terrorist attacks and to pay tribute to those who are currently serving in the military. (U.S. Air Force Photo/ Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson)

4. Staff Sgt. Richard Dunn, a pararescueman with the 306th Rescue Squadron, prys open the side of a C-130 Hercules as a pararescueman with the California Air National Guard 129th Rescue Wing observes, during the squadron's ROCO training exercise. Pararescuemen with the 306th RQS and the 129th RQW had the rare opportunity to practice extraction techniques on a C-130. (U.S. Air Force Photo/ Tech. Sgt. Luke Johnson)

AFRC's only rescue wing changes command

By Staff Sgt Anna-Marie Wyant
920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. -- Airmen of the 920th Rescue Wing, Air Force Reserve Command's only combat search-and-rescue wing, and distinguished guests gathered to bid farewell to the 920th RQW commander, Col. Robert "BDU" Dunn, and welcome the wing's new commander, Col. Jeffrey "Skinny" Macrander at a ceremony here in Hangar 750 Sept. 11.

Maj. Gen. Frank Padilla, 10th Air Force commander, presided over the ceremony, which commenced at 9:20 a.m. In his remarks, he recognized the significance of the day, which marked the tenth anniversary of the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York Sept. 11, 2001.

"Who can forget where they were on that terrible day?" Padilla asked the crowd. "Every one of us knows where we were... and what we've experienced since then."

He thanked the Airmen in the crowd for staying vigilant and professional during this time of war.

"Here I am, standing before you, humbled to be in front of the greatest rescue wing I know," he said. "You people are amazing."

He also spoke highly of Dunn, recognizing the symbiotic relationship wing members have with their commander: each drives the other to be even better. Padilla said he knows Dunn has much pride in all his Airmen have accomplished since he took command in May 2010.

"We celebrate (Dunn) passing into retirement. He's going to walk out of here... with a smile on his face, quite a bit of spring in his step, very very proud of all his accomplishments that you all helped him do," Padilla said. "And I'd like to thank Colonel Dunn and his wife Ruth for all that they've done for us."

Although he emphasized the difficulty in replacing Dunn, Padilla said he has faith the unit will flourish under its new commander as well.

"Colonel Jeffrey 'Skinny' Macrander is no rookie," Padilla said. "He is the right guy for this job... He has my absolute, complete confidence. ...If you show Skinny Macrander excellence you've showed BDU Dunn, then this place is going to be absolutely awesome."

In his last time addressing the wing as their commander, Dunn thanked his Airmen for making his experience with the wing such a positive one.

"The opportunity I had here as a wing commander was just awesome--thank you for that," Dunn said. "It's a dream come true, and I loved every minute of it."

He challenged Macrander and the wing to stay vigilant because rescue is a vital military mission. He also acknowledged Macrander's leadership abilities and wished him well in his new position.

"I cannot think of a better man to take over the wing," Dunn said to Macrander. "I know you will take it to heights I couldn't even dream of. They will be a better wing for your presence... This is going to be the greatest experience of your life."

Following his speech, Dunn stood in the center of the stage facing his Airmen in formation. Traditionally, at this time in the ceremony, the wing would render a final salute to their



PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - Col. Jeffrey L. Macrander accepts the 920th Rescue Wing flag from Brig. Gen. Frank Padilla, 10th Air Force Commander, Naval Station Joint Reserve Base, Texas, at a change-of-command ceremony in an aircraft hangar here Sept. 11, 2011. Colonel Macrander replaced Robert L. Dunn as the Air Force Reserve combat-search-and-rescue wing's new commander. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Anna-Marie Wyant)

outgoing commander. On this occasion, however, Dunn wanted to be the one to render a final salute to his wing to show his respect and appreciation for every member. After saluting his Airmen for the last time, Dunn passed the 920th RQW flag to Padilla with the words, "I relinquish command." Padilla then passed the flag to Macrander, who accepted the flag, symbolizing his acceptance of command.

After officially taking command, Macrander addressed his wing for the first time as their leader. He told them he wants them to keep up the great work and continue working hard, and he will work hard for them as well. He told the wing, which represents 20 percent of the U.S. combat rescue capability, the operational tempo will be high, but they must all diligently work together to face any upcoming challenges.

"We have to be prepared to go anywhere, anytime, and I know you are," Macrander said. "What I ask of you, all of you, is to stay focused on the mission, keep each other safe... because we need each and every one of you to be part of this mission."

In conclusion, he wished Dunn the best in retirement and told the wing how honored he is to work with them.

"BDU, it's been an honor and a privilege to serve with you everywhere that I've been all these years. Enjoy your retirement; you've certainly earned it," he told Dunn. "To the men and women of the 920th, I'm honored to be your new wing commander and look forward to meeting each and every one of you and continue to do what we do best, and that's save lives."

Macrander earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of Florida and a Master of Science in human relations from the University of Oklahoma. He earned his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1985 and served on active duty for 11 years before joining the Air Force

Reserve. He is a command pilot with more than 4,500 flying hours in five different aircraft, including the wing's HH-60 Pave Hawk and HC-130 King. Macrander has flown missions in support of Operations Allied Force, Northern Watch, Noble Eagle, Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom. He was also the first Air Force Reservist to complete the HH-60G Weapons Instructor Qualification Course.

Dunn earned a Bachelor of Science in aerospace engineering technology from Kent State University, Ohio, and his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1978. He served on active duty for 10 years before joining the Air Force Reserve in 1990. Dunn is a command pilot with more than 6,000 flying hours altogether in seven different aircraft, including the HH-60 and HC-130. His duties have included tours with Air Force Systems Command, Pacific Air Forces, Tactical Air Command, Air Combat Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, and 10th Air Force Headquarters.



Col. Robert Dunn, former 920th Rescue Wing Commander, renders his final salute to the Airmen of the 920th Rescue Wing here during a change-of-command ceremony in an aircraft hangar here Sept. 11, 2011. (U.S. Air Force Photo/ Staff Sgt. Anna Marie Wyant)

943rd RQG 1st Sergeant's Diamond Tips

The following are some important updates to Air Force Instruction 29-2903. Remember it is your responsibility to be aware of all the changes to the AFI's.

Page 97 of AFI 36-2903

6.4.3.3. Tan Boots. May be worn with the Airman battle uniform through October 31, 2011; effective November 1, 2011, tan boots will not be worn with the Airman Battle Uniform unless authorized by the Theater commander for wear only in theater. The tan boot may be worn with the desert flight duty uniform indefinitely. Boots will be made of tan suede material with plain rounded toe or rounded capped toe, with or without a safety toe, with or without a perforated seam, and lace up. A zipper or elastic inserts may be worn; however, if worn, they will be without design.

The updated AFI 36-2903 "Dress and Appearance" is finally here. This will now clarify the "tuck in" rule for the PT Uniform.

This is from page 100:

7.1.4. T-shirt.

7.1.4.1. Short-sleeved PTU/IPTU shirt. The short-sleeve shirt will be tucked into shorts or running pants at all times. Do not remove or cut sleeves.

Short and long-sleeved white or light gray form fitting undershirts, (i.e. spandex, lycra or elastic material) may be worn and visible under the short-sleeved PTU/IPTU shirt. Undershirt must be tucked in.

Notice: the change to the change for talking on cellular telephone in uniform. From page 92:

6.3.3.1. Wear/use of an earpiece, any blue tooth technology



or headphones, while in uniform, indoors or outdoors, is prohibited, unless specifically authorized for the execution of official duties. (Exception: Headphones and earphones (iPods, MP3 type players, etc.) are authorized during air travel and/or while wearing the physical training uniform (PTU) during individual or personal PT in the fitness center or on designated running areas unless prohibited by the installation commander). Use of a hands-free device is authorized while in uniform operating a motor vehicle if local policy permits.

6.3.3.2. While walking in uniform use of personal electronic media devices, including ear pieces, speaker phones or text messaging is limited to emergencies or when official notifications are necessary. Military customs and courtesies take precedence.

SPA Update: Post 9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 educational benefit is phenomenal addition to the GI Bill because it provides financial support for education which is paid directly to the school as well as housing and book allowances that are paid to the member. It has come to the SPAs attention there exists some misunderstanding regarding the acquisition of Post-9/11 benefits for reservist. The official verbiage, per VA, states that reservist with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days are eligible to receive the benefit.

Some our members were under the impression that the 90 days had to be served simultaneously or in 30 day increments to qualify them for the benefit. Aggregate simply means, a whole formed by combining several elements. This means that days will continue to add up until they reach 90, at which point the service member will be able to transfer to the Post-9/11 benefit.

Others members were told that Active Duty for Training (ADT) status on a set of orders does not convert to active duty points on the Point Credit and Summary Report (PCARS). This is not true. Regardless of the order states: Active Duty for Special Work (ADSW), Active Duty in Support of Contingency (AD-ISO), or Active Duty Training (ADT) the member will receive active duty credit as long as the words "Active Duty" appear somewhere on the orders.

Please visit the SPA, if you need assistance completing your DD214. We are here to help you receive all the military benefits available to you.



Rescue Wing Airmen depart for Afghanistan

From 920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla -- Approximately a dozen Rescue Wing Reservists from the Air Force Reserve's 920th Rescue Wing here departed for duty in Afghanistan September 1 where they will perform life-saving missions.

"I'm proud of them and their ability to perform at the level they do," said Lt. Col. Kurt Matthews, commander of the pararescue squadron.

The wing's primary wartime job is combat search and rescue, which involves locating and rescuing service members isolated or injured in combat - such as pilots shot down behind enemy lines or soldiers injured on the battlefield.

"While over there they will on average, conduct half a dozen rescues a day and save anywhere from 200-300 people a month," Said Colonel Mathews.

A 'save' refers to a situation where, without immediate intervention, a person would lose their life, a limb or eyesight.

During their last deployment to Afghanistan in 2010, they are credited with saving 450 lives. One particular event took them high up in the mountains of the Helmand Province, more specifically, the Salang Pass, at an elevation of approximately 11,500 feet.

The Guardian Angel Airmen used their diverse rescue skills to treat and evacuate survivors of multiple avalanches that occurred in this major mountain pass which connects northern Afghanistan to the Kabul province, with further connections to southern Afghanistan and Pakistan.



PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.- A C-17 Globemaster III cargo aircraft takes off from the runway here for Afghanistan carrying a dozen pararescuemen and their gear. The Air Force Reservists are from the 920th Rescue Wing. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Natasha Dowridge)

More than 1,500 Afghans were stranded in frigid weather with raging winds and minus-40 degree air. After 12 flights in a seven-hour period, the Guardian Angel Airmen were able to assist more than 300 people.

Currently, 920th Airmen are celebrating a 50-year history serving as guardians of the astronauts during NASA space shuttle missions. The space transportation ended in July 2011, but 920th Airmen work closely with the 45th Space Wing and NASA providing safety and security of the Eastern Range supporting all rocket launches.

The unit's other peacetime missions include providing local search-and-rescue support for civilians who are lost at sea or in distress. The wing also provides worldwide humanitarian relief, supporting rescue efforts in the aftermath of disasters such as hurricanes, floods and earthquakes.

The logo features a large red number '1' with a globe in the center. The globe has the text 'MILITARY ONESOURCE' and '24/7' on it. Below the '1' is a red bar with the phone number '1-800-342-9647' in white.

The logo is circular with a globe in the center. Text around the globe reads 'AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS CENTER' and 'The Total Force Resource'. Inside the circle, it says 'Airman and Family Readiness Center', 'Bldg. 2441 Room 202', '5355 E. Granite St.', 'Hours of Operation Mon - Fri, 0730 - 1630', 'Contact Info DSN: 228-5690 Comm: (520) 228-5690', and 'Command Post Emergency After-Hours Number Comm: (520) 228-7400'.

A vertical collage of historical military scenes. At the top, it says '1948 1968' and 'READY NOW'. Below that is a large military aircraft in flight. Further down, there are scenes of soldiers in uniform, a sign that says 'WET NAM GIFT LIFE', and a scene labeled 'Cuban Missile Crisis' showing a group of men in military uniforms.