

# ANGEL'S WINGS ONLINE

920TH RESCUE WING

NOVEMBER 2019

## Legends & Heroes



In celebration of the HC-130 P/N Combat King and the heroes who fly, fight and win, the wing is preparing for a three day event. These events will provide an opportunity for past and present Air Force members associated with the fixed-wing rescue mission to take part in a meet-and-greet social, aircraft static display, retirement dinner and more. To the right is the schedule of events.



**2019 ALMANAC** 

### HC-130P/N RETIREMENT

#### NOV 1

CROWNE PLAZA:

Welcome Reception, packet pickup (1700-2000)

On site social being held on beachfront patio pavilion and ocean deck (1800-2200)

Hors d'oeuvres, live music, pay as you go bar.

#### NOV 2

CROWNE PLAZA:

Bus pickup at hotel for on base events - 0900 (for those who require it)

PATRICK AFB:

Aircraft Display & BBQ (0930-1500)

Location: Hangar 647 (Aircraft Fuel Cell)

Aircraft Static Display (0930-1230)

BBQ hosted by 920th Rescue Special Functions Committee (1000-1300)

Wing CC comments (1300-1320)

Aerial Training Display (1330-1415)

Military/Booster Club Displays/Tents

Live music provided by ROBIN BANX

Bus pickup at hangar back to Crowne Plaza (1500-1530)

CROWNE PLAZA:

Pre-dinner social - doors open at 1800

Retirement Dinner begins at 1930

Grand Ball Room

Dress Code: Business Casual

#### NOV 3

PATRICK AFB:

Golf game for those interested - Shotgun start (1300) - show by 1215 to facilitate payment collection

Muscle Car Museum Tour (1300-1430)

Both the golf game and Muscle Car Museum Tour begin at 1300.

There is no fee for the Museum tour. The golf fees will be collected at the golf course on the day of the event.

## News & Features Inside



### 304TH RQS FINDS MISSING WOMAN

A 75-year-old woman was lost in the Pacific Northwest for three days. Search and rescue teams had been methodically looking for her to no avail, until Rescue Airmen came on scene. See story on pages 2-3.



### RESCUE AIRMEN TAKE TACTICAL PAUSE

Airmen, along with their leadership, took time out to connect and talk about a very personal subject. See story on page 8.



### PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP - MAJ. CHRIS FERRARA

Maj. Chris Ferrara, HC-130N Combat King evaluator pilot, 39th Rescue Squadron, led the refueling efforts of a technical rescue. See story on page 7.

FOLLOW THE  
920TH RQW  
ONLINE 



# 304th Rescue Squadron Find Missing Woman lost in Pacific Northwest

A 75-year-old woman was lost in the Pacific Northwest for three days. Search and rescue teams had been methodically looking for her to no avail.

Skamania County Sheriff's office had been leading the search, along with volunteer teams, for three days before the Sheriff's office asked the 304th Rescue Squadron to support their efforts.

Jung C. VanAtta, 75, had returned from mushroom hunting with friends before she decided to go out one more time, alone. VanAtta had no cell phone and was unfamiliar with the area, Sherriff's office said.

The only clues the searchers had found was a bag of her freshly-picked mushrooms and a trash bag with a receipt in it, which was confirmed to belong to VanAtta.

Skamania County Sheriff's office organizes the search efforts and teamed up the 304th Rescue Squadron with the North Country EMS, Volcano Rescue Team.

A Technical Sergeant Pararescuemen, from the 304th Rescue Squadron was a team leader for one of the groups that found VanAtta on Oct. 15, he spoke of his experience.

The Tech. Sgt. said he likes to put himself in the missing person's shoes, "Why was the bag dropped there, where would she have gone if she was tired?"

One of the other teams had a potential sighting near the Tech. Sgt's position, a person was seen sitting down underneath high tension power lines.

"My team was only about 350 - 400 meters away," said the Tech. Sgt. "The terrain was a lot more difficult to pass through with elevation changes, creeks and heavy vegetation."

The other team radioed back to say the person seen underneath the power lines got into a vehicle and left. It was in this area that they shouted and blew their whistles and then, quietly, listened.

That's when the Tech. Sgt. and his teammate looked at each other, "Did you hear anything? I think I did."

They were standing next to a stream that was "pretty loud," said the Tech. Sgt. So they called out again.

"It was very faint," said the Tech. Sgt. "But it sounded like a woman." The team started running towards the sound and stopped every 30 - 40 meters to call out again.

The Tech. Sgt. radioed in to base camp to share their discovery.

"We kept hearing her yell and we told her to stay where she is at," said the Tech. Sgt. "Keep calling out!"

Another team was up on the ridgeline and the two convened upon VanAtta's location at the same time. The Tech. Sgt. was filled with disbelief.

"I can't believe this 75-year-old woman has been out here for three and a half days," he said. "We found her, she's alive and well and she's looking at me with disbelief."

They did a quick medical examination of VanAtta and her vital signs were good, "She was alert, oriented and very excited," said the team lead.

The team radioed in their coordinates and gave VanAtta some food and water.

To overcome the terrain, the team needed to use a rope system to get VanAtta out.

"We put a rope harness on her and a helmet," said the Tech. Sgt. "Me and one of my other team members assisted her by getting under her arms and walking up a pretty steep 45-degree embankment."

The 304th Rescue Squadron's primary mission is to perform combat-search-and-rescue but supporting civilian search and rescue gives them a chance to hone their skills in the real world and help the community.

"I just really appreciate that we're given the opportunity to be able to go out on civilian rescue missions," said the Tech. Sgt. "Although we are a federal force, I think it's fantastic that we are able to go out and help the community."

The 304th RQS is part of the 943rd Rescue Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona and the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick AFB, Florida.

The 304th trains, equips, and deploys Combat Rescue Officers, Pararescue Jumpers, and support personnel worldwide in the interest of U.S. national security.



# Welcome Home! **Rescue Airmen** return from deployment



More than 50 Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 920th Rescue Wing returned to the U.S. from Afghanistan and Africa in October, where they provided personnel recovery support over the last four months.

The Airmen who deployed are combat rescue aviators, aircraft maintainers and support personnel. The unit uses Air Force HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters and HC-130P/N Combat King aircraft to perform life-saving missions. Rescue units pick up isolated and injured personnel and return them to safety.

Airmen from 920th RQW have rescued more than 3,000 individuals in the wing's 50-year history. In peacetime and war, they live by the motto, "These things we do that others may live." (Courtesy Photos)



# November is National Veterans and Military Family Appreciation Month

By A.T. Johnston, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy

Each year, November is designated as National Veterans and Military Families Month. It's appropriate that during this special month we give thanks for what we have and hold dear – the blessings of freedom secured for us by our service members and their families. The strength of our military stands upon a tradition of service that extends beyond those in uniform. Our country's collective strength also comes from those who once served and have now rejoined civilian life, as well as from those who serve on the homefront.

Veterans make our country stronger by applying their military experience in their post-service lives. They draw upon the leadership and training that were at the core of their military life as they transition to the civilian workforce, helping neighbors and communities in need, and serving wherever and whenever it is necessary. Our nation's veterans know what it takes to get the job done! As a nation, while we should give our thanks, recognition and support to our veterans and military families year-round – it is especially vital to do so during National Veterans and Military Families Month. You can join with Military Community and Family Policy on your preferred social media network as we show our support and appreciation for military families, or you can show appreciation in another way, be it in public or in private, online or in "real life." Our military families have made it their mission to serve our nation; now it is our turn to serve them, whenever and however we can.

Military families, too, have a special duty to kin and country. Military spouses, for example, stand in full support of their service members, often putting a career on hold to move to another installation or juggle life's complexities middeployment. From settling their children in a new school to helping their service member's parents navigate care when their loved one is far from home – military families do what needs to be done and never stop giving.

The Department of Defense will continue supporting and empowering our military community long after the end of November. Through Military OneSource and a vast network of support on local installations, military families can access services such as relocation and deployment support, transition planning, financial counseling, career coaching and non-medical counseling. It's important to note that eligibility for Military OneSource services has been extended to a full year following separation or retirement from the military for new veterans and their families, thus ensuring ongoing support during the transition from military to civilian life. It is also available to both active duty, National Guard and reserve members and their families.



# Amazing Men & Women of Rescue

## Mission Support Group Welcomes New Commander

Col. Kurt Matthews, 920th Rescue Wing commander, presents the 920th Mission Support Group guidon to Lt. Col. Matthew Heintzelman during an assumption of command ceremony at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, Oct. 5, 2019. Heintzelman's previous assignment was the Deputy Commander for the 482nd Mission Support Group at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Kelly Goonan)



## Maj. Chris Ferrara - first of five Profiles in Leadership



Maj. Chris Ferrara, HC-130N Combat King evaluator pilot, 39th Rescue Squadron, led the refueling efforts of a technical rescue from Patrick Air Force Base, Florida approximately 500 nautical miles off the east coast of Cape Canaveral, Florida. He and approximately 80 Reserve Citizen Airmen and four aircraft from the 920th Rescue Wing successfully rescued 2 German citizens whose vessel caught fire. The 920th RQW was alerted to fly a long-range search and rescue mission for the two men. One was reportedly burned from the waist down, and neither spoke fluent English. Ferrara and his team immediately went to work planning the mission ensuring they could deliver a team of Guardian Angel Airmen to conduct life-saving care in the middle of the ocean with little time to spare. After detailed planning ensuring they had working aircraft, enough fuel and crews, Ferrara and the teams arrived on scene and begin orbiting overhead to deploy a lifeboat, a team of five pararescuemen and several bundles containing medical equipment into the ocean. Simultaneously, a freighter on the scene below motored a small boat toward the victims which allowed the pararescuemen to hoist the survivors on board the freighter while several of the others zoomed over to pick up the bundles of medical equipment that splashed down just after them. Getting everything on target was only part of the challenge, Ferrara and the rest of the HC-130 crew would immediately turn-around to air-to-air refuel the helicopters with a slower air-speed and much smaller gas tanks, allowing them to make the trip. Four aerial refuelings later, two on the way out to sea and two on the way back to Patrick Air Force Base, logging 1,000-miles per aircraft, and executing an additional tanker as a backup, the mission was complete--the victims were treated and transported to Orlando Regional Medical Center. Without Ferrara's leadership, critical thinking skills and calm under pressure the mission would have been hampered. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jared Trimarchi)

# Rescue Airmen Take Tactical Pause

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Florida -- Reserve Citizen Airmen, along with their leadership, took part of their drill weekend to connect and talk about suicide during a Resilience Tactical Pause Oct. 6th, 2019 at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida.

Following a commander's call, the Airmen assigned to the 920th Rescue Wing returned to their units to connect with one another and to the resources available to those who may need them.

Airmen were encouraged to share their stories of resilience.

"As a younger Airmen I was going through a hard time when my great-grandmother and my dad were facing health issues," said Tech. Sgt. Ernest Clayton III. "My attitude changed, but thanks to the closeness of my shop, it didn't go unnoticed."

Thanks to the support of his supervisor, Master Sgt. Theodore Rodriguez, Clayton was able to bounce back.

"Immediately I was provided with the support and resources I needed," Clayton added.

Although his great-grandmother passed away, his father was able to recover. Today Clayton remembers the rough patch he went through and encourages Airmen of all ranks by reminding them everyone goes through hard times.

"To be a resilient person, it is important to take care of your physical, mental and spiritual wellness," Clayton added. "It is equally important to take care of your wingman, especially if you notice their attitude changing."

The Air Force is committed to fostering a culture that values and encourages help-seeking behavior and has launched a service-wide effort to change the culture around how the ranks view mental health.

The 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron mental health staff plans to start relaxation recreational therapy for people who are interested in spending time outdoors.

"Outdoor activities, such as fishing, give people time to unwind and gives their mind a chance to recharge while enjoying the beauty of nature," said Tech. Sgt. Dawn Terrell, 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron mental health service specialist.

According to the 920th Rescue Wing commander, Col. Kurt Matthews, the Air Force is committed to building a strong community and will continue to build healthy, empowered and resilient Airmen.

"This past year we have faced many challenges to include some tragedies," Matthews said. "We have learned to absorb these tragedies, honor them and grow from these experiences."

The Air Force recommends the following tips to be a good wingman: Ask, Care, Escort

If you have identified an Airman that may be considering suicide, it's important to Ask your Wingman directly about what's going on. This will help you determine what needs to be done next. Ask about issues early rather than waiting for things to escalate to the point of crisis. Take all comments about suicide seriously. Be an active listener and let your Wingman tell you about their challenges. Although it can be awkward, it's important to ask the tough questions about whether or not your Wingman is thinking about harming or killing himself. If the answer is yes, or if you even suspect that the answer is yes, don't leave the person alone.

Care for your Wingman by calmly listening and expressing concern. Don't be judgmental or promise secrecy. If your Wingman is having thoughts of suicide, you need to act. Remove anything he could use to hurt himself and immediately seek help.

The final step is to Escort your Wingman immediately to the nearest emergency room, Mental Health Clinic, chaplain, or primary care clinic, and contact the supervisor or chain of command. If a distressed Airman refuses help or you're not sure what to do, call your supervisor or 911 for help. Never leave an Airman who is having thoughts of suicide alone, even to go to the bathroom.

If you or someone you know is going through a hard time, please contact the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, then press 1, or access online chat by texting 838255

# Upcoming Yellow Ribbon Events

**Orlando, FL -- Dec 20 - 22**

**Costa Mesa, CA -- Jan 24 - 26**

**Orlando, FL -- Mar 20 - 22**

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Helping maintain resiliency during all stages of deployment is paramount to the morale and welfare of our Airmen and families. The Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Program is a series of events designed to provide members and families with essential resources prior to departure (pre-deployment), a level of stability and support while deployed (during deployment), and successful re-integration techniques after the deployment cycle ends (post deployment).

# Air Force Chief Scientist Visit

The Chief Scientist of the U.S. Air Force, Dr. Richard Joseph, is a three-star equivalent civilian member of Headquarters Air Force and in this role is the most senior Science & Technology representative in the Air Force. Dr. Joseph visited the men and women of Patrick Air Force Base and was flown by the 301st Rescue Squadron for an aerial tour of Cape Canaveral Air Force Station aboard an HH-60G Pave Hawk. (U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. Kelly Goonan)



# Col. Nelson Retires After 39 Years

The men and women of the 920th Rescue Wing congratulated Col. Charlene Nelson for her 39 years of dedicated service to our nation. We wish her and her family the best and we are forever grateful for her commitment to the rescue community. (U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Airman Brandon Kalloo-Sanes)

