



April 22, 1969

Dear General Brooks:

This letter is written in response to a telephone request of Mr. Alford of your headquarters. Mr. Alford said effort was being made to determine the origin of the Code and Motto of Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service.

I wrote the Code of Air Rescue Service a short time after I had been assigned to Command. At that time, Air Rescue Service was composed of small Detachments and 1 Squadron covering the United States. In making my first Command visits to these units, I was so impressed with the dedication to duty and devotion to mission of the young officers and men, who were operating with limited guidance and left over World War II equipment, that I felt moved to put their attitude and performance to words. I had the code printed up in small pocket cards for each man to have and had scrolls made for the Commander's offices.

Some time later, while Col. Hammerle was Vice Commander and Col. John Belchak was Chief of Staff, work was begun on an emblem.

Primary effort on the emblem was carried out by Col. Belchak. The emblem was designed and we decided that the last line of the "Code of an Air Rescueman" would serve as a fitting motto and it was placed on the emblem.

Very truly yours,

Richard T. Kight
B/Gen. U.S.A.F. (Retired)

RTK/pw

HISTORY OF AIR RESCUE SERVICE

On 13 March 1946, more than 43 years ago, Headquarters Air Rescue Service (ARS) was established at Andrews Field, Maryland, assigned to the Air Transport Command, and had as its primary mission Search and Rescue (SAR) in the United States. By May, 1949, Rescue had units in Europe and the Pacific and was reporting to the Military Air Transport Service. At the height of the Korean War, the Air Rescue Service was reorganized and consisted of 11 groups and 41 squadrons. The various groups and squadrons outside the United States were attached to the Air Force commanding generals in the appropriate theaters for operational control. During the Korean War, the 3rd Air Rescue Squadron rescued a total of 9898 UN personnel including 996 combat saves. Following reductions after the Korean War, ARS dwindled to three squadrons and 1450 personnel.

In 1961, ARS was tasked with recovery operations for manned and unmanned space operations as well as planning for evacuation of military aircraft during hurricanes. Local base rescue detachments were assigned to ARS, and the command grew to 10 squadrons and 2700 people. As the war in Southeast Asia (SEA) escalated, Rescue continued to grow. On 8 January 1966, Air Rescue Service was redesignated the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS), and in 1968, HQ ARRS moved from Orlando AFB, Florida to Scott AFB. In 1969, the 40th Wing and the 41st Wing were designated at Ramstein and Hickam, respectively. In 1970, the 39th Wing was activated at Richards-Gebaur AFB, Mo. In 1971, 39ARRW moved to Eglin and ARRS gained a new training wing, the 1550th at Hill AFB. From 1 December 1964 to 31 December 1975 ARS/ARRS personnel in SEA saved the lives of 4120 personnel -- 2780 were combat saves.

Again the contractions. In 1973, 35 local base rescue dets were closed and the 40th Wing was deactivated. The 37th Squadron raised its flag with the mission of SAC missile security support. In 1974, the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) became fully operational. In 1975, the 41st Wing became the 41st Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing as the unit moved to McClellan and assumed responsibilities for airborne weather reconnaissance and air sampling. For several years, Rescue remained relatively stable with three wings (Eglin, McClellan, and Kirtland), squadrons from England to Korea, and a headquarters at Scott AFB. In 1983, Rescue merged with Special Operations to form the 23rd Air Force. The AFRCC was redesignated HQ ARRS to maintain the Rescue flag. For the next six years, reorganization and unit name changes continued culminating on 1 August 1989 with the deactivation of the 41st Wing and HQ ARRS and the reactivation of Air Rescue Service with worldwide responsibilities for rescue, weather reconnaissance, aerial sampling and SAC missile support. Headquarters ARS will be at McClellan AFB.

As Air Rescue Service enters a new phase of its history, the men and women who have been a part of its past have contributed to saving more than 24,000 lives--nearly 4000 of these were combat saves--since that day in 1946 when ARS was born. The Rescue motto continues: "These things we do that others may live".

COMMANDERS

AIR RESCUE SERVICE/AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE

ARS	Col Wallace S. Ford	29 May 46 - 30 Nov 46
ARS	Col Richard T. Kight	1 Dec 46 - 8 Jul 52
ARS	Col J. C. Bailey	9 Jul 52 - 18 Aug 52
ARS	BG Thomas J. DuBose	19 Aug 52 - 31 Jul 59
ARS	BG Joseph A. Cunningham	1 Aug 59 - 21 Jun 63
ARS	Col Theodore P. Tatum	22 Jun 63 - 1 Aug 63
ARS	BG Adriel N. Williams	1 Aug 63 - 7 Mar 65
ARS/ARRS	MG Allison C. Brooks	8 Mar 65 - 23 Apr 70
ARRS	BG Frank K. Everest, Jr	24 Apr 70 - 1 Mar 73
ARRS	BG Glenn R. Sullivan	1 Mar 73 - 31 Jul 74
ARRS	MG Ralph S. Saunders	1 Aug 74 - 28 Sep 79
ARRS	MG Cornelius Nugteren	29 Sep 79 - 20 Aug 81
ARRS	MG William J. Mall, Jr.	21 Aug 81 - 28 Feb 83
ARRS	BG Philip S. Prince	1 Mar 83 - 1 Oct 83
ARRS	Col Owen A. Heeter	1 Oct 83 - 1 Oct 85
ARRS	Col Robert S. Michelsen	1 Oct 85 - 26 Feb 88
ARRS	Col Charles R. Hagerhjelm	26 Feb 88 - 1 Aug 89
ARS	Col Eric E. Wheaton	1 Aug 89 -