

USAF Pararescue's Team Player History of Role and Mission Cross flow Utilization

The Forgotten War is a descriptive label often applied to the Korean War (1950-1953) as the result of its perceived insignificance compared to other conflicts. The Air Force forgetting about special operations is another characterization applied to the Korean War. While it is correct the Air Force, as did the Army and Navy, found it lacked the organizations and units specifically devoted and committed to conducting special operations, the Air Force did have considerable air assets available to utilize to support special operations roles and conduct special operations missions.

The after World War II war fighting demobilization and force structure reduction War may not have been lessened or weakened the availability and readiness of special operations air assets as many historians might suggest. Some military histories suggest the United States Air Force's focus on strategic airpower resulted in it having to develop a special operations capability during the Korean War. Some military histories suggest Air Force special operations as it exists today is the result of capabilities developed during the Korean War. However, troop carrier and airdrop capable aircraft existed in sufficient numbers and already existing technology was being improved or being replaced by new technology. Consequently, the Air Force while lacking a dedicated special operations service or agency did have sufficient air assets and experienced aircrew to perform special operations undertakings at the outbreak of the Korean War.

The most everything forgotten about the forgotten war is unfortunate. Not only did the first large scale use of aerial resupply, heavy drop (example, first ever airdrop of an M-2 treadway bridge, at Koto-Ri on 7 December 1950) happen during the Korean War, there were also substantial quantities of special operations missions carried out by Air Force's air assets. Relevant to this certain operational relationships developed during World War II aren't given proper weight in the development of special operations air assets during and after the Korean War. The same mixture pattern of various units, to lesser extent, appears in the development of special operations air assets capabilities during and after the Southeast Asia conflicts (1961-1975).

With the war in Korea, the ability to insert and extract agents into remote areas within and behind enemy lines by aircraft and helicopters became a critical war winning strategy. Focusing on the methods and air assets doing such activities will allow establishing origins of a utilization pattern. It will do so by examining the accumulated historical evidence of USAF Pararescue personnel's' secretive low profile utilization in accomplishing special operations activities during the Korean War and subsequent conflicts and crisis where special operations provided depended on contributions to winning the fight. This document provides some of the most forgotten, most overlooked and least emphasized history.

- THE SOME OTHER HISTORIES -

The techniques and tactics devised for special air operations, employed with so much success in the Balkans, Western Europe, and Asia, were largely forgotten after the war as the AAF-later, the United States Air Force-focused on strategic air power. During the Korean War, the Air Force once again had to develop a special operations expertise. At this time, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) became the real focus for covert air special operations. For reasons of high policy, contract aircrews of the CIA assumed this task, supporting anti-Communist

resistance groups throughout the world during the 1950s and 1960s. [Fueling the Fires of Resistance-Army Air Forces Special Operations in the Balkans during World War II, page 45]¹

Following World War II, United States Army special operations units virtually vanished in the rapid demobilization. The start of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 was the catalyst for the revival of the Army's special operations capability. The Army brought back the Rangers as company-sized units, stood up the 8240th Army Unit to train anti-Communist North Korean partisan forces and revived its nascent Psychological Warfare (Psywar) and Civil Affairs (CA) capability. [U.S. Army Psychological Warfare and Civil Affairs in the Korean War]²

The traumatic experience of the Korean conflict was a watershed in the evolution of Army intelligence. Within six months, the Army found itself facing two major intelligence disasters: ... In response, the Army hastily improvised a clandestine human intelligence (HUMINT) organization, building on a small existing intelligence unit, the Korean Liaison Office (KLO). By the end of the Korean War, the Far East Command (FECOM) had fielded a large Army-controlled clandestine collection apparatus, closely linked with similarly large operations in the fields of partisan and psychological warfare. ... One basic problem was that both agent insertion techniques used by the KLO—parachute drops and line-crossing—were intrinsically hazardous, and even parachute agents had to exfiltrate through enemy lines to bring back their reports. [The Evolution of US Army HUMINT: Intelligence Operations in the Korean War]³

Under the cover of unit identities such as Air Resupply and Communications Wings and as unique units and detachments of troop carrier squadrons, air commando and special air unit airmen flew behind the lines into North Korea and Manchuria dropping agents and leaflets. ... Another common trend for Air Force special operations units in Korea was their intimate involvement in assisting in combat search and rescue (CSAR) efforts. [Air Force Special Operations Command: Making a “REAL” Air Force Major Command]⁴

The 580th Air Resupply and Communications Wing began training in psychological and unconventional operations. The motto of the wing became “Libertas per Veritatem” -- Freedom through Truth. Prior to re-assignment, the wing developed a field training school that eventually became the predecessor of today’s Air Force survival training school. [480th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing]⁵

- TYING A FEW ORGANIZATIONS TOGETHER -

USAF Pararescue’s historical placement as put forth in this history is a minuscule speck on several other puzzle pieces emerging out of World WAR II as the military services, Department of Defense and other Governmental Agencies underwent significant organizational reengineering and snatching for and retaining roles and missions. Even the National Park Service was a player in clandestine and covert operations during World War II.⁶ The organizations involved in performing clandestine and covert Office of Strategic Services (OSS) air operations is extensive, but the largest air asset contributors were the troop carrier and theater airlift units.

The air asset organizations emerging out of World WAR II (WWII) having relevance to understanding this history is the Air Rescue Service, its parent organization the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) and another organization known as Civilian Air Transport (CAT).

The 1948 origin of the Military Air Transport Service is result of significant complications faced during WWII. Its post WWII snatching of troop carrier and theater airlift units has significant bearing on the development of special operations capabilities of the United States Air Force. The overreaching significance of MATS is it was a joint Air Force, Navy, and Army (by default of owning theater tactical airlift) war fighting command charged with maintaining wartime strengths and sufficient troop carrier and tactical airlift ready for immediate combat. It should be noted a role and mission snatch attempted was to have a Foreign Strategic Air Transport Division.⁷ MATS was result of the Unification Act which forced the merger of the Naval Air Transport Service and Air Transport Command. About 10% of MATs headquarter and transport operations personnel were Navy until it became the Military Airlift Command on 1 January 1996. One of MATS three Divisions, the Pacific was a Navy command. During 1952 the vice commander of MATS was Rear Admiral Hugh H. Goodwin. In regard to the Air Rescue Service and the USAF Pararescue specialty the follow the money has some significance. A Hoover Commission recommendation went into effect in 1957 changing how MATS offered its services.⁸ The offer of service for free from normally appropriated Air Force funds changed to airlift customers will pay for the services received. This opened the door of prioritizing among forces as well as among different weapon systems.⁹ However, the cause and effect of changes in funding operations pertinent to the development of air rescue and special operations air assets within MATS and the Air Force is beyond the purpose of this history.

Civilian Air Transport originated as a proprietary airline in 1946.¹⁰ Its most active clandestine and covert area of operations was in the former WWII CBI Theater. Since 1946 it has operated proprietary airlines known by names as Air America and many others. CAT's motto "First in, last out" certainly represents their presence in China (1946) and involvement in the Korean War, the Belgian Congo Crisis and the Southeast Asia conflicts. It has WWII OSS origins and in a perspective relevant to MATS can be considered as being the Foreign Strategic Air Transport Division of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The Air Rescue Service was constituted effective 0001 hours, December 5, 1945 as part of the Continental Air Forces.¹¹ This service was subsequently assigned, effective 13 March 1946 to the Air Transport Command (ATC).¹² ATC merged with Naval Air Transport Service to become MATS in 1948. "The Air Rescue service was brought about largely through the efforts of Colonel S. Ford and associated officers, whose wartime experience in rescue work throughout the theaters of war made them fully aware of the need for an organization for the post-war air Forces which could organize, supervise, direct and control the rescue activities of the Army Air Forces."¹³ The original fundamental concept of operations purposes for the Air Rescue Service included: "inform all components of the U.S. Army on plans and programs for rescue service operated by Government agencies other than the Army air Forces when such plans and programs involve changes in AAF requirements for rescue personnel; ... to provide trained rescue personnel and units as required; to coordinate rescue matters with other U.S. agencies; and where authorized, with the rescue services of other governments."¹⁴ Many of the "associated officers" wartime experiences included serving with the OSS in some way. Colonel Richard K. Kight who assumed command of the Air Rescue Service on December 1, 1946 flew B-24 resupply air drop mission out of Australia into Java and did one such drop just before the Japanese arrived at the drop zone. For this mission he received the Distinguished Flying Cross. He piloted Wendell Willkie (diplomat, Lend Lease FDR's representative in talks with USSR, China, England, and

etc) around the world. During this around the world trip he successfully avoided German and Japanese aircraft attempts to intercept and shoot down the aircraft he was piloting. For this around the world "Gulliver" trip, he was awarded a second Distinguished Flying Cross. Understanding the WWII combat and OSS experiences of the officers who were influential in the development of permanent Pararescue teams composed of personnel specifically trained to do parachute rescues has some bearing on understanding the historical utilization perspective this history focuses on.

- WORLD WAR II AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS -

Using the simplistic concept of 'special operations' being all military operations within or behind enemy lines there is sufficient evidence to assert air assets of the Army Air Forces played an increasingly relied on special operations role during WWII. Prior to World War II, the military had very little interest in transport aircraft to move troops and war fighting materiel. As the war proceeded, the need to move enormous tonnage levels of war fighting materiel by air drove demand for transport aircraft able to fly further and further distances and having larger and larger cargo tonnage carrying capacity and troop movement capacity. These transport aircraft were quickly adopted to perform other roles such as delivering airborne forces by parachute within and behind enemy lines and to use airdrop methods to supply and resupply troops on the combat front lines, within enemy lines, and behind enemy lines. Consequently, it is reasonable to assert Office of Strategic Services' combat operations and numerous Army Air Forces units had mutual interdependent cooperative overlapping role and mission relationships. This was certainly true concerning 'search and rescue' and recovery evacuation of downed combat aircrew operations.

Much of the search and rescue air asset capability developed during WWII was consolidated functionally under a single organizational entity called the Air Rescue Service. Although the end of WWII had stagnated search and rescue air assets force structure growth, the constant demand to search for missing aircraft and rescue of crews and passengers of these aircraft kept a valid mission need a serious reality. When the Air Rescue Service began in May 1946 it was modeled after the rescue capability developed during WWII in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater with some contributing influence of aircrew evacuation activities of Aircrew Rescue Unit (ACRU) # 1 activated 24 July 1944 under 15th AF for purpose of rescuing downed aircrew from Yugoslavia. Unnoticed or perhaps unmentioned by many historians is little known fact that an initial purpose of the Air Rescue Service was to train mission ready search and rescue aircrews and give them away to theater commanders. When the newly established Air Rescue Service transferred to the newly established United States Air Force (September 18, 1947) it was given program management responsibility of providing survival training facilities and courses from the deactivated Air Force School of Applied Tactics. The Air Rescue Service retained its worldwide responsibility of providing aircrew survival training responsibilities until the Military Air Transport Service (MATs) transferred this responsibility to the Air Resupply and Communications Service (ARCS) shortly after its February 23, 1951 activation. This resulted in Air Rescue Service concentrating its survival training efforts on training its Pararescue personnel until budget constraints force closure of the original Pararescue School effective December 1952.

The initial concept of aircrew losses can and will be reduced with proper training in environmental and situational survival was developed and put into practice originally in the CBI

Theater. Lt Col Flickinger after accomplishing the first successful parachute rescue of aircrew and passengers from an area within enemy lines was reassigned in June 1944 as the Chief of the Air Force School of Applied Tactics, Orlando Florida. In this position, he was instrumental in establishing the first survival school giving aircrews training in environmental and situational environment. As Chief of the Air Force School of Applied Tactics he and commander of the Air Rescue Service advocated and for and convinced the Army Air Forces to approve and establish in 1946 the rescue and survival MOS. During the Air Force's process of converting Army MOSs to AFSCs the Rescue-and-Survival MOS was split into three separate Pararescue, Survival Training Instructor, and Survival Equipment (Life Support) AFSCs.

In July 1943, the Army Air Forces' need to rescue airmen from difficult terrain in the CBI Theater led to search and rescue fixed wing aircraft having availability to pick-up downed aircrew without landing. After WWII the aircraft modifications, devices, methods and procedures of the All American System were further engineered and developed. The All American System subsequently became the Skyhook system and finally the Fulton surface-to-air recovery system. During the Korean War, the CIA and special operations air assets used the Skyhook system to recover covert agents out of North Korea and Manchuria.

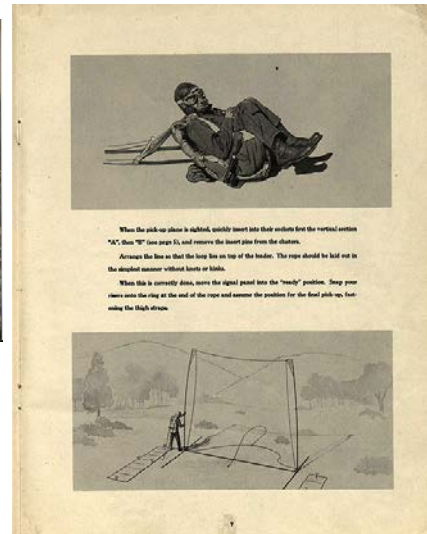
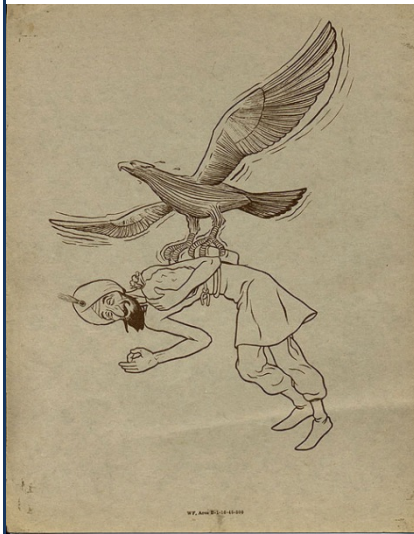
The Air Force continued to improve the system, even developing a package containing telescoping poles, transfer line, and harness that could be dropped by air. The first operational use of the system came in February 1944, when a C-47 snagged a glider in a remote location in Burma and returned it to India. Although the Air Force never used it to pick up individuals, the British apparently did use it to retrieve agents. ... On the evening of 29 November 1952, a CAT C-47 with CIA officers John T. Downey and Richard G. Fecteau departed Seoul for Kirin Province, intending to pick up members of a team that had been inserted the previous July. But a double agent had betrayed the team, and the Chinese shot down the C-47 as it came in for the pickup, killing the pilots and capturing the CIA officers. Fecteau was not released until December 1971; Downey was freed in March 1973. [Robert Fulton's Skyhook and Operation Coldfeet]¹⁵

WWII is the origin of troop carrier and aerial resupply aviation. These air assets made major contributions to the war effort in many different ways. Troop carrier forces were tactical forces listed as combat units having mission of delivery of airborne troops, air resupply of ground forces on the front lines and was an aerial logistics keeping dispersed ground units supplied. Some had a special quality that set them apart, but geography of the combat theater and the forces they supported had more influence than being assigned a mission role. Airplanes were simple flown to fulfill the immediate operational or tactical need. The troop transport crews were counted on to enter dangerous conditions, perform their missions admirably, and return the next day if necessary. The parachute insertion and airdrop supply missions called for flexibility with the best application of technology to accurate location of LZs and DZs.

In the CBI area of operations, air supply was the primary and often the only means of supplying Allied ground forces in action against the enemy. The vast remote wilderness of the region also drove need for parachute rescue teams to rescue survivors of plane crashes. This is what CBI tactical combat and special operations air assets contributed to the other WWII combat theaters.

The centralized controlling Air Rescue Service organization inherited this capability. Within the Air Rescue Service existed the centralized control agent that special operations air assets lacked until the Air Resupply and Communications service was established in 1951.

U.S. Army Air Forces Booklet "Man Pickup" [Technical Order No. 03-1-57] prepared by Miscellaneous Branch and Specifications Drawings Office, Equipment Laboratory, Headquarters Air Technical Service Command, Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio. Illustration by unidentified artist depicts an incident from "Tales of the Arabian Nights," in which Sinbad the Sailor, having found himself at the bottom of a sheer-walled valley, ties a chunk of meat to his back in hopes of being picked up by a hungry roc (giant eagle).



- END OF WORLD WAR II AND PRE-KOREAN WAR SPECIAL OPERATIONS -

The conclusion of World War II during August 1945 found the Army Air Forces with sixteen numbered Air Forces, 2.2 million men and women and 68,400 aircraft. The subsequent demobilization and force reduction between September 1945 and June 25, 1950 did consolidate and merge air assets having special operations capability. However, unprepared in training and having special units with specially designed aircraft conveniently based to do special operations may more appropriately describe circumstances than vanished or forgotten capability.

Shortly after WWII ended most, if not all, of the Army Air Forces' WWII special operations air assets transferred intact to the newly established United States Air Force (September 18, 1947). Furthermore the aftermath of the "roles and missions" battles during 1948 (Key West Agreement/ Function of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff drafted by James V. Forrestal) unquestioningly resulted in the Air Force gaining dominant control of most, if not all, of the Department of Defense's strategic and tactical special operations air assets. Although budget cuts and fiscal constraints didn't encourage growth of special operations air assets, capability the more accurate reality was no organizational entity responsible for developing the tactics, techniques and procedures for employing special operations aviation to replace the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was established.

The February 23, 1951 activation of the Air Resupply and Communications Service (ARCS) while hailed as the most ambitious commitment to Special Operations since World War II was actually an action to combine existing overt and covert intelligence and propaganda missions into a single organization. Its psychological warfare function included the capability of preparing psychological warfare material in printed form, propaganda, and jamming enemy frequencies. Its aerial resupply function included the capability of introducing and evacuating ranger-type personnel behind enemy lines and supplying them and guerrilla units.

It is the aerial resupply role and mission function that resulted in the overlapped use of aircraft, tactics, methods and procedures that differed very little from what the Air Rescue Service was doing for search and rescue purposes. Consequently, the after WWII origin of a still existing pattern of rescue and special operations unit cross flow utilization is traceable to 1951.

During the six month period, 186 Psychological Warfare Officers were processed through this headquarters. These officers were assigned to this headquarters following their selection for the Psychological Warfare Course which was conducted at Georgetown University, Washington DC. The 14 week course included the following subjects: Comparative World Cultures; Values at Stake in the Present conflict; Political Structures and Practices including Military Government; Sociological Aspects of U.S. Foreign Policy; Historical Aspects of Psychological Warfare; Psychological Warfare Technique and Practice; and economic Factors in the Contemporary World Situation. The initial class of this continuing program was begun on 1 February 1951. [Air Rescue Service]¹⁶

Although there certainly is specialized aircraft overlap, focus of the cross flow pattern will be limited to USAF Pararescue as the never-ending extensive debate on USAF Pararescue role and mission utilization originates during the Korean War. In addition, the 1953/4 deactivation of the Air Resupply and Communication units and finally the Air Resupply and Communication Service took the only Advanced Survival School in the Air Force into extinction with it.

The origin of Air Force survival schools is attributed to being at Marks AFB in 1947 is slightly misleading as historical evidence is the first officially designated Army Air Force School began operations during June 1944 under control of Aeromedical School at the Air Force School of Applied Tactics. The first students trained by the school were personnel equipment officers, who in turn were responsible for establishing unit level survival training throughout the AAF. After WWII the Air Rescue Service assumed the responsibility of continuing survival training facilities for the now separated United States Air Force. In order to meet worldwide Air Force requirements, the field training sites were expanded to include Florida, Texas and Labrador.

During the month of November 1947, five enlisted men (5) and two (2) medical officers and a representative from the A-3 section, Hq Air Rescue Service (Lt Elloit) ... these parachutists formed the nucleus of instructor personnel in the pararescue survival school conducted at MacDill AFB Florida. ... A survival school was opened under the supervision of the 5th Rescue Squadron which trained students, in conjunction with the para-jumpers training, in methods of survival in all climates and terrain conditions. [Air Rescue Service]¹⁷

The 2156th ARU (TTU) was established in December 1949, at MacDill AFB, Tampa, Florida, and functions as the official ARS training activity. ... This unit also conducts the Para and Land Rescue, Survival, and Escape and Evasion school. [Air Rescue Service]¹⁸

The 2156th Air Rescue Squadron activated on January 21, 1950. Its purpose included providing most of the training needed to get new pararescue personnel mission ready trained and qualified. The overall curriculum contained the following general courses of instruction: Precision spot parachuting techniques, land navigation, land rescue, native psychology, mountain climbing, advanced swimming techniques, evacuation of injured or distressed personnel, administration of advanced first aid and other medical procedures, special vehicles operations, communications, aerial delivery of equipment and supplies. The survival training was broken down into four phases; Tropical and Jungle, Desert, Arctic, and Mountain. [USAF Historical Study 95. Air Sea Rescue 1941-1952. USAF Historical Division Air University 1953. 155-156]

Since rescue operations necessitated team members performing their missions in wilderness areas without the facilities of civilization, a background in activities in comparable activities was desired for personnel interested in receiving rescue and survival training. It has been determined the training received at the 2156th Air Rescue Squadron (TTU) did not necessarily qualify an individual as a team member, therefore, other prerequisites were needed such as having service with the United States Forest Service or other comparable organizations provided such service was active operationally rather than administratively, avocations or vocations such as trapping, extensive hunting, professional guides, forest rangers, game wardens, and extensive farm experience of such nature that indicated inherent responsibility and sense of improvisation. These were some of the requirements which had to be met before applicants for rescue and survival team training would possibly be considered. [Air Rescue Service]¹⁹

The Air Rescue Service assisted in establishing a survival-training program at Chanute AFB and assisted in the establishment of the survival school for the Air Resupply and Communications Wing located at Mt Home Idaho. Historical records clearly and distinctly identify a 2156th Air Rescue Squadron, Technical Training, Mobile Training unit was attached to 1300 Training Squadron to conduct survival training of ARCS tactical wing personnel. Other documents identify Mt Home AFB was already being used as field training site by the 2156th Air Rescue Squadron to give survival training to student USAF Pararescue personnel.

In March 1952, responsibility for all of MATS' formal survival, escape and evasion training transferred from the Air Rescue Service to the Air Supply and Communications Service. Unfortunately, as the Korean War drew to a close the ARCS with no peacetime mission develop became expendable, as almost did the Air Rescue Service, during the post Korean War budget tightening and force reduction process. The turmoil of force reduction immediately following the Korean War certainly contributed to the shutting down of the original 2156th Air Rescue Squadron operated Rescue and Survival School on 24 December 1953.²⁰

Attempts to justify a formal survival training school prior to 1943 met with failure through disapproval of the commanding officer of the School of Applied Tactics. However, in late 1943 the War Department issued an order to the School of Applied Tactics to establish a survival training school. During 1944, this school began training students. This predates the August 1947 establishing of the aircrew survival school at Marks AFB near Nome Alaska by three years. The official Air Force Histories of the development of formal survival training courses unfortunately credit the Arctic Indoctrination School at Nome AFB as being the first.²¹ The Strategic Air Command opened its second survival school, a mountainous terrain orientation school, on 16 December 1949 at Camp Carson, Colorado. There is significant omission in “official” histories failing to mention the first students trained by the survival school operated by the School of Applied Tactics during 1944 and 1945 were mostly personnel equipment officers, who in turn were responsible for establishing unit level survival training programs throughout the Army Air Forces.

Under present planning the size of the team [pararescue] has been reduced to five members, and the number of teams reduced to 23 ... As a result of our decreased requirement for these technicians, HQ MATS could not justify retention of the Rescue and Survival School at PBIA. Consequently our trainees will receive this training at McCall Idaho. [Air Rescue Service]²²

On 14 December 1953 a message was received from Headquarters MATS advising that the MATS Advanced Survival school at McCall, Idaho was to be deactivated on 24 December. This message further stated that ARS quantitative requirements for pararescue technicians (rescue team personnel) did not justify continuation of this training on a MATS Command Course basis. In view of this information, Headquarters, Air Rescue Service was requested to re-evaluate qualitative requirements for this training and to advise MATS of any assistance required to provide this training within air Rescue Service. [Air Rescue Service]²³

As a result of intensive study and as interim measure, a small training unit was established at the 43rd Air Rescue Squadron, McChord AFB, Washington. Lieutenant Colonel John C. Shumate, former Commander of the MATS Advanced Survival Training School and five (5) of his best instructor personnel were assigned to the unit to train future pararescue personnel who have completed jump training at Ft. Benning, Georgia and medical training at Gunter AFB, Alabama. Only a minimum of survival training will be taught at McChord. Students will receive their “area specializations” training in their assigned units. [Air Rescue Service]²⁴

During this discussion we want to remember that there is no careerfield for pararescue personnel outside of this command. Therefore, the training problem will remain constant and heavy. [Air rescue Service]²⁵

In April 1953 the Air Staff directed ARCS to limit operations to Air Force only projects, thus ending support for such outside agencies as the CIA. Nine months later Department of the Air

Force Letter 322 and Military Air Transport Service General Order 174 deactivated ARCS, effective 1 January 1954.

On September 1, 1954, Air Training Command became the single manager Survival Training provider for the Strategic Air Command, Military Air Transport Service and Tactical Air Command. This concentrating all formal survival training schools and courses under a training only organization took emphasis away from the training personnel with the knowledge and skill proficiencies to perform the SERE activities needed to accomplish rescues of downed aircrew and other isolated personnel.



This consolidating put all Air Force survival schools into a training-and-educating organization lacking integration into Air Force operations. The training deficiencies impact, however, in reality resulted from an overall air forces organizational culture and majority student demographics having no stakes in survival-vocation skill development. The unintended impact consequences is as the Air Force operational activities become more aviation oriented with less participation in ground tactical activities the tactical echelons of command gained increasing numbers of staff officers and commanders risk averse to the SERE operational environment. Overtime the no stakes in survival-vocation skill development also contributes to loss of an assertive manner to fight for appropriate ground combat SERE training being available for those personnel needing such skill proficiencies. This resulted during the 1980s and 1990s U.S. Army SERE schools being used in-

lieu of Air Force Survival Schools as the preferred training source to become an entry level qualified to perform pararescue duties.

A loss of assertive manner to fight for sufficient Air Force provided SERE training prevailing until the next war is an Air Force organizational culture pattern. The next war combined with a peacetime military unfortunately is an influencing presence in many patterns.

The next war and the lack of time to build up the necessary experience and proficiencies to fill an immediate need are contributing causes to the role and mission cross flow pattern this history perspective reveals. Rescue personnel having considerable emergency medicine skills with the training to adapt to and perform in austere wilderness areas geographically separated from airbase support without the facilities of civilization is a unique operational capability that is both expensive and time consuming to duplicate.

- THE KOREAN WAR -

Military histories give competing perspectives of the cross role and mission utilizations of Air Rescue and Special Operations air assets.

[illegible]

The vagueness in this service responsibility went back to World War II, when the Army had been permitted to assign organic liaison aviation to its units, but the Army Air Forces had continued to provide the ground forces with supporting liaison aircraft. Army-Air Force agreements such as JAAAF paper of 21 August 1948 indicated the intent to maintain this same system. Consequently all frontline aeromedical evacuation, except with in the 1st Marine Division where organic helicopters were possessed, continued to be performed by USAF helicopters until January 1951. [United States Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict]²⁸

The Air Rescue helicopter crews were often required to land or recover intelligence agents along the mud flats of Korea's northwestern coast, an undertaking that did not contribute to the search and rescue mission. [The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953]²⁹

September 23, 1950: In the first recorded special operations mission of the war, SB-17 aircraft of the 3d ARS made a classified flight in Korea. [The USAF in Korea, a chronology, 1950-1953]³⁰

August 6, 1952: FEAF organized Detachment 3, 6004th Air Intelligence Service Squadron, to increase the effectiveness of evasion and escape techniques by downed airmen. The detachment continued ongoing experiments, such as "snatching" downed personnel by specially equipped C-47s. It also emphasized aircrew training in emergency procedures, the use of radios and survival equipment, and helicopter rescue procedures. [The USAF in Korea, a chronology, 1950-1953]³¹

The Air Rescue air assets flown in Korea were SA-16 Grumman Albatross Amphibian Aircraft, SB-17 Boeing Boat Carrier Aircraft, C-47 utility cargo aircraft, L-5 Stinson Sentinel Liaison Cargo aircraft, H-5 helicopters, and H-19 helicopters.

Unfortunately, any mention concerning pararescue personnel or pararescue team presence and activities in Korea during the war lack details and other particulars.

To help in southern Korea and the western end of the battleline, the 2nd Air Rescue Group in December of 1952 provided two SA-16's, two H-19 helicopters, and a paramedic team, and these planes and people were organized at Pohang Airfield as Detachment 2, 3rd Air Rescue Group. [The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953]³²

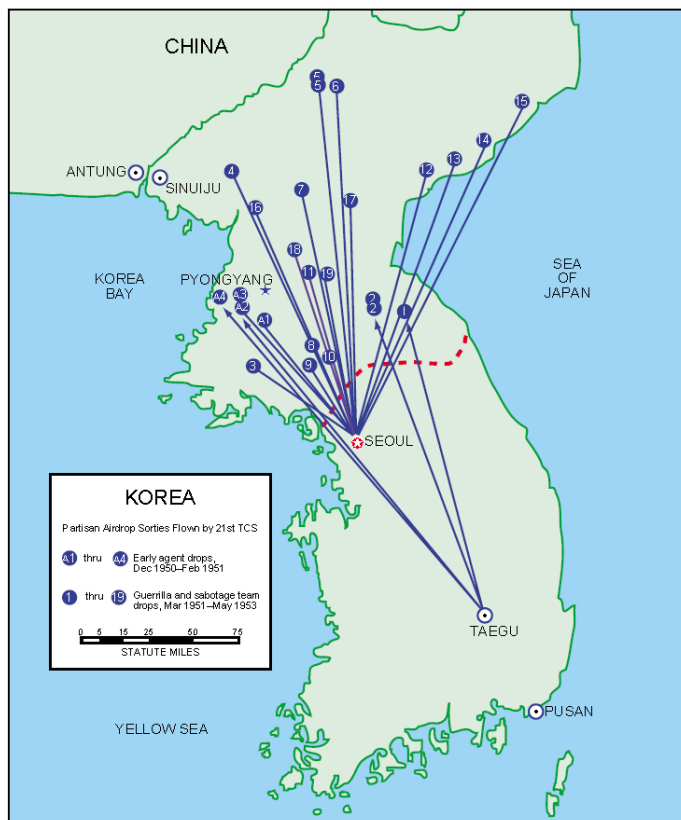
The most overreaching conclusion having correctness is both rescue and special operations air units in Korea had overlying utilization on behalf of all the strategic and tactical war-winning objectives during the Korea War. Pertinent to special operations there are published histories an absence of a Joint Special Operations Command hammered the efficiencies and effectiveness of special operations air assets, but actuality much of this resulted from service and CIA rivalries. Some were enmities still festering from 1948 roles and mission battles and others were result of blurred JAAAF agreements leading to presumption the other service had the responsibility to provide the assets and the capability. Others resulted from some of the special missions being in an intelligence gray area of not being a legitimate mission under military jurisdiction to conduct. This discussion and history however is beyond the scope of this history.

The Commander in Chief, Far East (CINCFE) on 28 November 1951 established an organization known as Covert, Clandestine and Related Activities in Korea (CCRAK) and charged it to function as a "single headquarters ... to direct all Army, Navy, and CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] operations of this nature in Korea. [United States Air Forces Operations in the Korean Conflict, 1 July 1952-27 July 1953]³³

Historical documents give sufficient accumulative evidence of pararescue personnel flying and performing duties on special operations air assets doing rescue missions. Unfortunately, historical primary source documents are lacking in specifics to determine if this resulted from conveniences of Air Rescue units and Air Resupply and Communications units having operations facilities right next to each other and aircraft parked in close proximity to each other on the airfield or if the cause was something else.

Special operations air assets primarily had mission psychological warfare and propaganda purposes. However, Air Force, primarily Air Resupply and Communications Service, and Civil Air Transport (CAT) aircraft were used to infiltrate and extract ethnic Korean and Chinese partisan agents into and out of within and behind enemy lines locations. However, “By August 1953, US policy formally prohibited the CIA from sending Americans on covert overflights.”³⁴

One of the missions of the 581st ACRW’s B-29s in addition to dropping propaganda leaflets was to drop ethnic Korean and Chinese partisan/paramilitary agents behind the lines in both Korea and China. The map to the right depicts an unclassified scope of the airdrop insertion distribution into areas of North Korea.



Typically, there were two American jumpmasters on these agent airdrop missions. The All-American system required two men in the rear of the aircraft to operate the winch, and to assist the agent into the aircraft.

Until the end of December 1950, the lack of radios for the agents forced necessity of the exfiltration of agents from within or behind enemy lines to allow the gathered human intelligence to be timely reported and analyzed.

Regardless, both the insertion and extraction operation had significant risks of flying into danger. Double agents could slip through the screening process or agents could be captured and interrogated. The information obtained by the enemy being used to lure an extraction aircraft and aircrew into a pickup location ambush.

Arriving over the unmarked DZ, the C-46 slowed to drop speed and the first of two Chinese agents parachuted out into the night. Hesitating just before he jumped, the second agent lobbed a live grenade into the forward cabin section. The agent was safely out the door under an opening parachute when the grenade

exploded, instantly killing or disabling the four remaining Chinese agents and one of the two American jumpmasters. With the aircraft on fire and coming apart in midair, Capt Lawrence E. Burger, the instructor navigator, stayed at the controls to allow the surviving crew members to jump to safety. The crew members were captured shortly after landing. ... The full story of the treachery did not become known until the repatriation of the captured crew at the end of the war. [Apollo's Warriors, US Special Operations during the Cold War]³⁵

The risks certainly demanded presence of a crewmember in the cargo area providing some level of security protection. The parachute airdrop insertion of agents and potential skyhook extraction methods certainly required somebody to train the agent to parachute at minimum. The lack of a drop-zone reception party marking the DZ and being there to receive the agents certainly required a skilled and experienced jumpmaster. Few if any histories address these specifics.

In March 1951, the 442d set up a training school at Pusan that provided 20 agents at a time with a basic two-week course of instruction. (The facility moved to Taegu in June.) [The Evolution of US Army HUMINT: Intelligence Operations in the Korean War]³⁶

U.S. uniformed armed forces special operations during the Korean War were secretive low profile intelligence operations. Historical records frequently do not identify enlisted personnel utilized in specific roles unless an unusual event draws such attention. There is definitely an absolute lack of primary written source documents to give any certainty of the identity of jumpmasters and airborne trainers. Fortunately, two retired Pararescue NCOs³⁷ who were in Korea for the duration of the war during an interview gave testimonial evidence they and some other pararescue personnel were involved in such activities. Considering also their parachute, jumpmaster, and SERE qualifications and experience there is significant force of probability they were used to perform such duties. There is also strong force of probability pararescue personnel were flying rescue missions on Air Resupply and Communications Service helicopters too.

Although the deactivation of the 581st at Kadena AB in September 1956, closed the book on the long-range unconventional warfare mission around which the ARCS and its associated wings were based other Air Force flying units continued to be involved in the conducting and accomplishing of special missions.

- OTHER SPECIAL MISSIONS -

The Cold War (ca. 1947 to ca. 1994) found the highly specialized training and qualifications of USAF Pararescue personnel significantly suitable and available for roles and missions other than the rescue aiding and assisting of survivors of crashed aircraft. Published histories seldom document the specifics Air Rescue air assets and Pararescue personnel participation. Similar in utilization nature during the Korean War, Pararescue personnel utilization continued to be satisfying requirements having a nonstandard nature. Nonstandard meaning Pararescue personnel being assigned to an air rescue in nature having tasking to support requirements other than air rescue and/or Pararescue personnel becoming non-unit-related personnel assigned to one unit but accomplishing missions with other units.

The MATS Air Rescue Service also had a terrific load to carry. Air Rescue Service forces provided daily precautionary coverage in support of reconnaissance and fighter missions by Tactical Air Command, Navy and Strategic Air Command aircraft. They provided actual search activities in an attempt to locate a downed SAC reconnaissance aircraft. And Air Rescue Service helicopters provided fire suppression and local base rescue support at five of the buildup bases. [Cuba, India, and Regular Routine Six Weeks of World Crisis]³⁸

Around November 1954, the first three Air Force C-119 aircrews were qualified to perform in air recoveries for the Gentex/Weapon System 119L program.³⁹ The midair recovery involved snagging an equipment gondola descending by parachute after being released from an extreme high altitude balloon. The unit later known as the 6594th Test Group was activated on 1 November 1959 to catch film canisters descending by parachute after being jettisoned from orbiting Corona/Discovery project satellites. It was not until the Discoverer XIII capsule came down on 11 August 1960 that the Test Squadron actually had a chance to effect a recovery. The Test Squadron was not able to snag the capsule in mid-air, but it was able to locate it after it splashed down in the Pacific Ocean, and the capsule was recovered from the water by Navy personnel.⁴⁰ Just as recovery techniques evolved over time, the programs supported by these techniques changed as well. The Discoverer Program was succeeded by other programs.⁴¹

These included NASAs Biosatellite program, the Atomic Energy Commissions Project Ashcan, the Army's Designating Optical Tracker (DOT) program, and the Air Force's Advanced Ballistic Reentry Systems (ABRES) and Balloon Altitude Mosaic Measurements (BAMM) programs.

The pararescue utilization resulted from if the air recovery could not be effected, surface recovery was attempted.

However, when the Discoverer XV capsule-hit the water 1,000 miles south of the predicted impact point, naval vessels were unable to reach it before it sank. To prevent this from happening again, a new and faster surface recovery technique was devised and was employed in the next surface recovery--that of the Discoverer XXV capsule on 19 June 1961. An SC-54 Rescuemaster aircraft flew to the spot where the capsule had come down, and three para-rescuemen of the Air Rescue Service parachuted into the water, swam over to the capsule, inflated a raft, and secured the capsule to it. They remained in position until the next morning, when they and their cargo were picked up by the LSS Radford. Both methods of surface recovery--recovery by helicopters operating off ships, and recovery by pararescue people jumping out of aircraft--continued in use. The first method constituted the primary method of recovery and the second method constituted the secondary, back-up method. [Draft History of the Air Force Capsule Return Program]⁴²

Air Force Regulation 50-24, 23 May 1988, in prescribing the mission of the Air Rescue Service directs the "Air Rescue Service will also assist in retrieving and safeguarding hazardous cargoes (special weapons) in accordance with AFR 55-14." Fulfilling this mission required surface operations capabilities.

Expanding strategic reconnaissance demand to global regions other than the Soviet Union and China had created concerns hazardous cargos, balloon gondolas, satellite film capsules and military aircraft crashes would happen in remote high elevation locations of the Andes, Himalayas and other mountain ranges. These concerns resulted in the 71st ARRS Pararescue Team at Elmendorf AFB to train-up and maintain a permanent rapid global deployable High Altitude Rescue Team from 1977 to 1980. This was the first such expedition climbing capability existing in all of DOD.

Throughout the Cold War, the Air Force continued to fly reconnaissance and surveillance aircraft (U-2, SR-71, RB-50 RB-57, RB-47, DC-130, P2V and other MDS aircraft). During the period 1949-1960, there were 32 airborne reconnaissance missions flown which resulted in international incidents and the loss of 13 manned aircraft platforms.⁴³ Air Rescue aircraft and aircrews either prepositioned at a remote airfield or flew precautionary orbits at the entry and exit over fly points. Pararescue personnel were on these aircraft prepared to execute a rescue if necessary.

On 15 March 1960 after several days of searching, a C-47 (43-48899) crash location was found about 300 feet below a mountain summit in the central Apennine mountain range about 4.1 miles southeast of Amatrice Italy. All four souls onboard were clearly deceased. A pararescue team jumped to the crash site from a 58th ARS (Wheeler AB, Libya) SC-54 to secure the classified information known to be on the crashed C-47.⁴⁴

- THE BELGIAN CONGO CRISIS -

The Belgian Congo crisis/Congolese civil war (1960-1964) was a violent regional conflict with significant Cold War entanglements. The United States Air Force began routing MATS aircraft into the Congo to evacuate Americans on 8 July 1960. The airlift operations included airlifting in food during 1962 for Congo inhabitants suffering from famine.

The map to the right gives appreciation of the distances flown over the African continent. What the map fails to depict is the lack of airfields having parking ramp space even at major cities to accommodate more than three C-130 sized aircraft. These factors significantly limited the highest number of aircraft that can be put on the ground during a given span of time to put troops on the ground or to evacuate thousands of civilian noncombatants. The Air Rescue Service maintained a constant presence to cover airlift and evacuation air assets into and out of the Belgian Congo. The 58th ARS staged a SA-16 with Pararescue personnel on station at Accra,



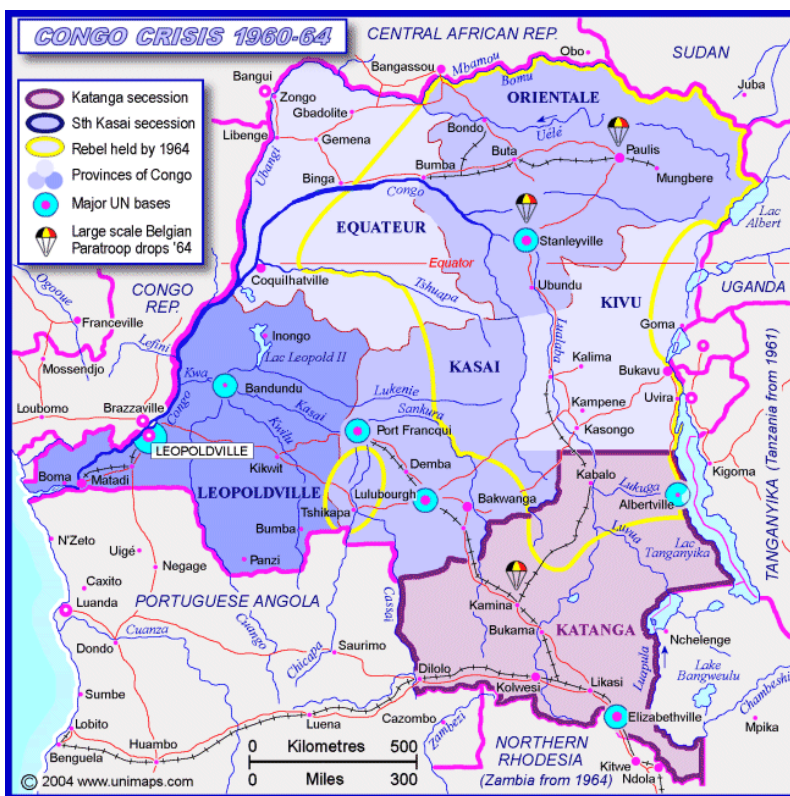
Ghana until 1961. This staging location then moved to Kano, Nigeria.

The Air Rescue Service positioned search and rescue aircraft at Ascension Island and other locations as needed to support operations. The Air Rescue Service H-21 helicopter brought into the Belgian Congo from Germany during July 1960 appears to have supported CIA operations.⁴⁵

There were search and rescue activities along the regions route system as for example a C-130A (56-0546) transporting support personnel and equipment for the recovery team of the Aurora 7, the second American manned orbital flight, crashed into a mountain in poor weather in the Ngong Mountain Region near Nairobi Kenya on 17 May 1962. The pararescue personnel were awarded the Airman's Medal for disregarding their safety for entering the still smoldering wreckage to search for and rescue any trapped survivors as it was teetering to drop over a 2,000-foot cliff drop.

The UN apparently lost a few aircraft in the region too. For example a UN operated Transair Sweden DC-3 was shot down by Congolese forces near the railway station at Kamonza in the Congo on 20 September 1962.

Several noncombant evacuation operations happened throughout this crisis with at least one evacuation operation becoming an actual mass hostage rescue operation from the rebel stronghold at Stanleyville during 1964. An SA-16 from the 58th Air Rescue Squadron with Pararescue personnel on board as medics was one of the last three aircraft (two C-130s) evacuating civilian noncombatants as the airport was becoming surrounded by rebels and subsequently overrun.



- POTENTIAL DIPLOMATIC/INTERNATIONAL BORDER INCIDENT AVERTED -

During the last few day of January 1967 the crew of an HC-54 (58th ARS, Wheelus AB, Libya) en route to Turkey is diverted to Tehran, Iran. Iranian and American Embassy officials meet the HC-54 after it lands and informs them a U.S. Army U-1A Otter aircraft with five souls onboard had cashed at the 15,000 foot elevation of a mountain on the Iran/Russian border in the Zargos mountain range (another designation is the Kurdish Mountains). These officials further explained that a high-level intelligence officer is on-board and the Russians would love to capture him, and probably already have a team headed to the crash site. Not only were five lives

at stake, but a potential International incident should the intelligence office be captured needed to be avoided. The HC-54 arrived over the crash location finding conditions on the mountain thirty below zero with forty-knot winds. Both Pararescuemen jump, even though the HC-54 pilots thought it crazy and suicidal to do so. Both Pararescuemen end up on ledges a few thousand yards apart. The terrain is so rugged they can't make radio contact with each other. After battling the elements and terrain for three days, an Iranian ground team arrives and the now combined rescue teams continue to the crash site. Three of the five survivors froze to death while attempting to move down the mountain. At the crash site, only the intelligence officer (Col Vann, Chief of Intelligence, Military Advisor Iran) and an Army Specialist 4 are found alive and successfully rescued.

Although these special missions were not within or behind enemy lines, they are representative of numerous other missions accomplished in International waters or crossing of international borders in nature. Once employed out of the aircraft to the water or land surface to effect a surface recovery of survivors or materiel, the pararescue personnel were potentially at risk of entering a SERE environment.

- HELICOPTER OPERATIONS IN AREA 51, SEPTEMBER 1962 - JUNE 1967 -

Det 1 1129th USAF Special Activities Squadron with four pararescue personnel assigned had a mission to support varied projects from high altitude facility construction to search and rescue, to teaching survival.⁴⁶ During this period Area-51 was where the Central Intelligence Agency's A-12 OXCART Reconnaissance Aircraft was being put through its operational flying testing and certifications. The A-12 subsequently became the Air Force's SR-71. The four Pararescuemen, Earl Casto, Gordon Bailey, Fred Schneider, and Coy Staggs provided SERE training to the pilots and flew SAR support for the area 51 aircraft. The SERE instruction and field training provided by the pararescue personnel at several training locations was specifically conducted to help prepare the new A-12 pilot cope with his mission. Some of the basic SERE training deemed necessary included coping with landing in water while wearing the pressure suit, parachute landing, survival off-the-land, jungle survival, seacoast and resistance to interrogation.

- SOUTHEAST ASIA CONFLICTS OF 1961-1975 - - THE UTILIZATION PATTERN CONTINUES -

Names and military occupation seldom appear in documents relatable to the Military Assistance Programs and other government agencies activities in Laos unless something significant is involved. It appears putting Pararescuemen in special operations was limited to eight pararescue personnel during 1964. Headquarters Air Rescue Service transferred these Pararescuemen to the Air Commando Wing, Hurlburt Field, Florida mid-1964. This transfer appears to have some connection to Secretary of Defense McNamara approving on March 5, 1964 the assignment of Detachment 6, 1st Commando Wing to Udorn (Waterpump).⁴⁷

Much uncertainty exists regarding the specific utilization and operational need purpose causing the transfer. The operational utility unquestionably involved either performing duties in an Agency outside the Department of Defense with the intent of returning to the Department of Defense upon completion of those duties, or to backfill with a capability Air Force special operations units had unavailable to deploy. Pictures in several proprietary archives and

numerous documents mention senior pararescue NCOs of the Air Rescue Service being involved with Project 404, PALACE DOG, air operations in Laos at five sites: Vientiane the Capital, Pakse, Savannakhet, in Southern or SteelTiger Region, Long Tieng, Luang Prabang, in the Northern or Barrel Roll Region. At least one pararescue NCO, TSgt Monnie, had Forward Air Guide training and controlled air strikes in Laos in addition to performing paramedic duties.⁴⁸ There is also mention of at least one the Air Rescue Service paramedics making significant excursions into Laos with the Royal Lao Army's Hmong guerrilla forces.

So, when the *Water Pump* detachment arrived at Udorn in 1964, they began to run a medical service for the Thai villages surrounding Udorn, transporting medical supplies to the villages and ill people to the Udorn hospital by a truck. The second *Water Pump* team, which arrived at Udorn in late 64, brought still more medical personnel to Udorn, and they even operated as medical doctors in Laos, for example at Savannakhet (L-39). [Air America in Laos III – in combat]⁴⁹

Dispensaries were usually staffed by a medic who was trained and paid by A.I.D., although occasionally a Government or military medic was available: Medicine was furnished by the A.I.D. Mission. [Air America in Laos I – humanitarian work]⁵⁰

As to the T-28s, they belonged to the USAF's Air Commando Detachment called *Water Pump* or to the USAF's Military Assistance Program for Thailand/Laos, but were flown by Air America pilots in the Tango Program. And since that time, Air America had a permanent new task: the rescue of US military pilots shot down over Laos and later even over North Vietnam, and so, in July 64, the Company received 4 more UH-34Ds for rescue work and the contract between Air America and US Air Force was changed to include military rescue work. [Air America in Laos I – humanitarian work]⁵¹

The other strong probability is in the early years of the military, the downed aircrews were picked up by Air America helicopters and later also by USAF SAR teams.⁵² Much of the SAR responsibility for downed U.S. Armed Forces aircrews in Laos transferred to or rather was passed to Air Rescue Service assets beginning in 1965. At this time Air America rescue operations began working together with the Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) at Udorn (call-sign "Compress"). The Air Force RCC having primary primarily responsible for the recovery of military aircrews in Laos and North Vietnam would then direct Detachment 2, 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS), flying H-3 "Jolly Green Giants" out of Nakhon Phanom and/or the 40th Aerospace Rescue Squadron flying (depending on year H-3/H-53) Jolly Green Giants out of Udorn.⁵³

There were two legal links between the "Ravens", who were USAF men assigned to a secret USAF program, and Air America: One of them was rescue – Air America helicopters also picked up Raven pilots who had been downed – and the other one was maintenance. [Air America in Laos III – in combat]⁵⁴

"We agree with your assessment of importance SAR operations, that Air America pilots can play critically important role, and that SAR efforts should not

discriminate between rescuing Americans, Thais of Lao. You are hereby granted as requested discretionary authority to use AA pilots in T-28s for SAR operations when you consider this indispensable to success of operation and with understanding that you will seek advance Washington authorization wherever situation permits". [Document 127: Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos]⁵⁵ and [Air America in Laos III – in combat]⁵⁶

Na Khang (LS-36). Located in the north, 150 nautical miles west of Hanoi, it had always been of strategic importance to the United States, as it served as a forward staging area for US Search and Rescue operations which tried to reach downed aircrews before they were captured. USAF "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters waited at Na Khang to pick up US aircrews downed over North Vietnam or Laos. [Air America in Laos II – military aid]⁵⁷

Late 1965, USAF HH-3E "Jolly Green Giants" were being based at Na Khang (LS-36) for Search and Rescue duties. [Air America in Laos I – humanitarian work]⁵⁸

Assigning personnel to Water Pump units in Laos was done originally on a 6-month temporary duty basis.⁵⁹ After 1966, permanent personnel from Nakhon Phanom were used in Laos.⁶⁰ Organizationally Water Pump by 1966 had become part of the 56th Air Commando Wing at Nakhon Phanom, and on 4 August 1968, the 56th ACW changed its name to become the 56th Special Operations Wing at Nakhon Phanom.⁶¹

It is difficult, if not impossible; to determine the names of the pararescue personnel the Air Rescue Service transferred to special operations during 1964. The only certainty is such utilization was limited to a small group of experienced NCOs. No information has surfaced to establish transfer of pararescue personnel from the Air Rescue Service to special operations happening for such purposes after 1964. Only the names of four of the eight are known. They are Sergeants James H. "Rip" Collins, Frank Dean, Stan Monnie and Rick Chapman. Of the eight, only two are found mentioned in any document or history.



MSgt Francis C. Dean (Frank/Big Dean) served as a pararescueman 1947-1964. He is a WWII and a Korean War combat veteran. Considering he lacks an Air Rescue unit assignment after 1964. The picture on the right appears with a caption.

It reads, "Air Commando medic MSgt Frank Dean, in civilian clothes for his tour in Laos, assists in off-loading wounded Laotian



Forces Army Royale (FAR) soldier following battle in Paske, Laos, in 1969. (Jerome Klingaman). The performing his duties in civilian clothing is a telltale sign he is working for an entity other than the United States Air Force.⁶² Either MSgt Dean was performing duties in an Agency outside the Department of Defense with the intent of returning to the Department of Defense upon completion of those duties; or, he had reclassified into a medical AFSC and had become an Air Commando medic attached to the civic action program of the 56th ACW.

Stanley M. Monnie (Stan/Monty) served as a pararescueman 1953-1964. He lacks an Air Rescue unit assignment after 1964. There are proprietary copyrighted photographs of him in Laos that identify him as an Air Force paramedic performing paramedic duties with an agency outside the Department of Defense.

We had a para-medic that was in Air Rescue Service for years and years and was working in that capacity with the Air Commando Wing. [Special Operations Weatherman, An Oral Autobiography Part 1]⁶³

And on several occasions TSgt Stan Monnie-our para-rescue man who also had FAG training—would control strikes. [Special Operations Weatherman, An Oral Autobiography Part 1]⁶⁴

Well there was Frank Drew, Glenn Duke, Grant McNaughton, Stan Monnie, Jack Teague, and myself [Grimes]. Those were the Water Pump personnel in Laos at the time. [Special Operations Weatherman, An Oral Autobiography Part 1]⁶⁵

A Commando Capt. Teague and a medic named Stan Monnie had made significant excursions into Laos with Vang Pao's guys, and "the Agency." [Email from 'BTRFLYFAC' to 'aircommando1' - re: FACNET, Digest Number 152 - September 29, 2000]⁶⁶

The accounts gathering dust in various historical archives reveal insufficient information to suggest specifically how and the USAF Pararescue specialty specifically married up to a posture response to special operations needs in Laos or any place else in Southeast Asia. What is certain is the 1965 buildup of U.S. combat air forces air assets in the region and the expansion of using U.S. military aircraft to do missions in Laotian airspace resulted in a concurrent buildup of Air Rescue Service (subsequently Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service) units in the region. This combined with lacking need to replace the original eight most likely eliminated the mission need to assign additional pararescue personnel to Air Force special operations units.

Air Rescue HH-43B helicopters arrived at Nakhon Phanom AB Thailand the last week of June 1964. Although the arriving rescue service pilots were trained by Air America pilots who flew over Laos to support their mission. Unfortunately, due to the limited range of the HH-43 the Nakhon Phanom based helicopters were not able to provide search and rescue services for the Plain of Jars or areas southeast of Pakse in the Laotian panhandle. Air America planes and helicopters continued to provide primary search and rescue support in these areas until the July 6, 1965 arrival of two CH-3C helicopters at Nakhon Phanom.

Much similar to the overlap utilization that happened during the Korean War, air rescue and special operations units had overlaying utilization on behalf of all the strategic and tactical war-winning objectives during the Southeast Asia conflicts (1961-1975). This utilization overlap included many more missions than Son Tay prisoners rescue attempt (November 20, 1970), the evacuation of Saigon (April 29- 30, 1975) and the Mayaguez incident (May 15, 1975).⁶⁷

- HIGH ALTITUDE RESCUE TEAM -

Pararescue personnel were trained and qualified to parachute to high elevation mountainous terrain since the feasibility of such operations were tested high in the Italian Alps near Solda, Italy during the last week of June 1952.⁶⁸ However during the late 1970s as strategic reconnaissance air and space assets and strategic airlift was expanding frequent flight paths and airway paths over high altitude mountain ranges (Andes Range, Himalayan Range, Tien Shan Range, Karakorum Range, Atlas Range) caused concern potential aircraft crash beyond the range and capabilities of helicopters was highly probable. Putting a High Altitude Rescue Team (HART) in each theater or region however was both extremely expensive and utilization frequency inefficient. The solution was the Pararescue Team at Elmendorf AFB as the access to high altitude mountains were present in Alaska to train on and more importantly, the Elmendorf AFB crossroad location to both Asia and Europe provided the most effective deploy HART from to incident location.

The operational capability desired and developed was to have a globally deployable six to eight man expedition mountaineering rescue response team. Members of this team were expected to have the qualifications and capability to conduct operations on snow, ice, and rock at elevations up to 22,000 feet above sea level for a self-sufficient period of no less than 20 days.

The mountaineering High Altitude Rescue Team's mission ready certification May-June 1978 ascent of the 20,320 foot summit of Mt McKinley Alaska resulted in the first and only mission ready high altitude mountaineering rescue team in the Air Force and in the Department of Defense.

This operational readiness evaluation resulted in the June 15, 1978 change 1 to the December 1, 1977 ARRSR 55-11 Pararescue Operational Regulation stating "The 41st RWRW has the primary responsibility of maintaining by name, one eight-man high altitude team capable of recovering sensitive equipment.

Authorization for a second HART happened during 1989. The 1 August 1989 MACR 23-13, 1730th Pararescue Squadron identified Detachment 4 1730th PRS RAF Woodbridge United Kingdom and Detachment 5 1730th PRS Elmendorf AFB AK are designated to conduct high altitude mountain rescue and recovery in support of US Air Force and theater requirements.

- RESCUE SPECIAL OPERATIONS LOW LEVEL -

During the 1980s events again result in certain circles of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (formerly Air Rescue Service) changes in the turmoil in the geopolitical environments around the world was building new potential threats that were likely to be low-intensity conflicts having unconventional warfare nature. Simply, mainstream military leadership seriously began

to contemplate and develop capabilities to fight on asymmetrical battlefields after the tragic DESERT ONE-OPERATION EAGLE CLAW failure (April 24-25, 1980). It needs to be noted the deployment of six 67th ARRS HH-53 helicopters, five 67th ARRS HC-130s and 67th ARRS pararescue personnel from RAF Woodbridge UK to Incirlik AB, Turkey on February 11, 1980 to provide additional U.S. military support for evacuation operations in Iran often gets overlooked in special operations oriented histories.⁶⁹

Rescue Special Operations Low Level (R-SOLL) is a Combat Rescue Tactic/Technique developed to enhance the ability of ARRS forces to complete an assigned mission while increasing the survivability of aircraft and crews.⁷⁰

The concepts of RSOLL operations included much attention to regain focus on obtain and sustaining pararescue surface operations capabilities. Aircraft alternate insertion and extraction tactics and methods expanded to include Sky Genie/STABO, FAST rope, helicopter repelling, rope ladder and low level single pass Calculated Air Release Point (CARP) parachute insertion tactics. Weapon upgrades included 40mm grenade launcher to M-16s/GAU-5 and night sighting capabilities such Aim Point and other emerging laser sighting technology. PJs were involve with hot refueling in either setting up the landed tanker at an austere landing strip or convenient road to fuel aircraft and vehicles or to establish with US Army Rangers a secure an forward hot refueling point from landed tanker perimeter immediately on landing (result of DESERT One failure). The hi-tech communications and navigation avionics upgrades to the helicopter also resulted in training pararescue personnel to use and given thermite grenades and other demolition munitions to ensure the classified avionics devices were destroyed should one of the aircraft go down within or behind enemy lines.

It was however, the breakthrough of finally convincing Air Force leadership to allow utilization of rated officers and intelligence officers as survivors during extended ground movement over adverse terrain during daylight and nighttime hours. This resulted in Red Flag 82-4 being the first time a fighter pilot and an intelligence officer were moved 50 plus miles under simulated behind enemy lines over adverse terrain at night for several nights.⁷¹ Several U.S. Army infantry and mechanized infantry companies were hunting for the survivors and the rescue team during the time the rescue team was locating and linking up with the survivors and moving the survivors overland to the helicopter extraction point. The aggressor forces did not capture the rescue team and survivors. The mission ended with a successful as planned during mission planning helicopter landing extraction at the primary designated extraction point.

Concurrent with development of RSOLL was the 1983 origins of 41st ARRS Pararescue personnel participating in various phases of RIDGE RUNNER escape and evasion exercises. It was the result of participating in these escape and evasion exercises that it became apparent Air Force survival school curriculums had become lacking in preparing pararescue students to perform SERE activities in the operational tactical ground environment. At this time, it was also recognized U.S. Army SERE schools and courses had the more comprehensive curriculums. The Army SERE curriculums and field exerciser are oriented towards instructing members of those small tactical teams that most often work behind enemy lines.

RSOLL and strategic special operations low level (SOLL) airlift (C-141/C-5) also resulted in pararescue personnel training to do combat missions out of Mission Design Series aircraft that were not designated search and rescue aircraft. Exercise Quick Force 84-3, April 1984, provides a combat search and rescue scenario example. The scenario involves an 1,800-mile infiltration by C-141 from Pope AFB using SOLL 1 tactics from Pope AFB to the Gila Bend Gunnery Range for a night parachute insertion. Once on the ground a 110km of night tactical movement over a nine-day period with two airdrop resupplies to establish contact with and provide survival, medical, evasion, and recovery assistance to evaders from two separate areas was accomplished. RSOLL capable HH-53 aircraft executed exfiltration of the pararescue team and the evaders. The team accomplishes its exercise objective without succumbing to the extremes of the desert and mountainous terrains or being captured by the aggressor forces.⁷²

RSOLL concept of operations were instrumental in the strike force rescue package supporting Freedom of the Seas/Eldorado Canyon (Attacks against forces in Libya) 12 Apr 86 - 17 Apr 86. This resulted in eight pararescue personnel and 18 other crewmembers onboard two HH-53J Pave helicopters and one HC-130 tanker qualifying for and being presented the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.⁷³ Eligibility required being on the strike support rescue aircraft flying low level (below 500 feet AGL/MSL) patterns over the Libyan coast line before, during and after the strike force bombed designated targets in and around Tripoli. This part of the April 14, 1986 missing or downed 48th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) F-111 is a seldom-mentioned account of what happened.

- Special Tactics Squadrons -

Situations and circumstance encountered during Operation URGENT FURY (Grenada) made it apparent Pararescuemen were needed to work with Air Force combat control teams.⁷⁴ The mission need was to care for rescued hostages and wounded warriors.⁷⁵ This and other mission need causes reoriented the Southeast Asia conflict gained focus on downed fighter pilots back towards the rescue and recovery of isolated personnel. The isolated personnel focus on all who find themselves in a situation where they must survive, evade, resist, or escape encompasses the complete range of wartime and peacetime military operations pararescue personnel are trained and equipped to be available to be tasked to accomplish. The reoriented to focus on isolated personnel also prevents mission purpose wandering too far into a peacetime flavor of being nothing but a too expensive medevac service or a public health medical operation running semi-permanent many months' in place field medical clinics.

— 1730TH PARARESCUE SQUADRON (PRS) — 1 AUGUST 1987-31 OCTOBER 1990

Activated at Eglin AFB and deactivated at McClellan AFB has an extraordinary history as a line flying unit having no aircraft assigned to it and a concurrent lack of commissioned officers other than its commander and an executive officer assigned to it. Its first commander was Colonel Edward A. Behling, a Biomedical Services Corps (BSC) who had previously served as the Pararescue School Commandant and had completed pararescue training while in this assignment. Colonel Behling was followed by Lieutenant Colonel Mike Haas, a “rated” air force “officer of the line” as commander on 27 July 1989. Lt Col Haas brought with him significant

qualifications and experience. He fought in the Republic of South Vietnam as an Army assault helicopter pilot, completing 968 combat flying hours and receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, 41 Air Medals, and two Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry. After separating from the Army, he returned to active duty in the Air Force serving in various special operations and defense intelligence positions. He holds U.S. Army Special Forces and Ranger tabs, U.S. Air Force command pilot and master parachutist wings, Expert Infantry, and Military Free-Fall qualifications, and U.S. Navy open- and closed-circuit Scuba ratings.

The majority of the Air Force's active duty personnel were assigned to this "flying" squadron having six detachments and three operating locations dispersed around the world. All the staff positions in this squadron normally filled by commissioned officers to include the detachment commander positions were manned by pararescue noncommissioned officers. During the years this squadron was active, its members not only participated in numerous humanitarian missions, but also participated in Just Cause (Panama) and other contingencies. The Squadron and its detachments consistently received "satisfactory" to "excellent" ratings on their Unit Effectiveness Inspections (UEI) and Operational Readiness Inspections (ORI). The 1730th Squadron and each of its detachments and operating locations received the Air Force Outstanding Unit award for the period 1 August 1987 to 31 July 1989 (AFOUA GB-030/89).

As each 1730th PRS unit location lacked aircraft integral to the unit, each unit location was attached to flying units having aircraft assigned. However, actual missions and training missions were occasionally flown on available aircraft such as Coast Guard HC-130s and helicopters, Air Force C-130, C-141, and C-5 airlift aircraft and Army, Navy and Marine helicopters.

RSOLL, 1730th PRS and STS are perhaps the greatest forces of operational mission accomplishments to shape views of what pararescue personnel can and do contribute to search and rescue missions and special operations missions.

- SUMMARY -

This history does little more than present a mission-capability utilization pattern to contemplate. The exhibited historical events and activities provide no answers and are not joined to any recommendations for consideration.

The exhibited historical events and activities do reveal availability of an operational capability did result in role and mission cross flow utilization. An operational capability conceived and designed to execute dangerous rescue operations demonstrated interoperability it could enhance the executing and accomplishing of high-risk special operations.

The contribution to both rescue survival and special operations roles and missions also demonstrates the type of warfare being conducted doesn't create a deceive difference in the level of training and qualifications pararescue personnel must obtain and sustain to have readiness and availability to rescue isolated personnel from within or behind enemy lines. This results in an existence of a versatile team player having the training and qualifications necessary for one role and mission that is the exact similar training and qualifications necessary for another role and mission. The utilization pattern revealed in this history demonstrates this has been an unavoidable reality since 1946.

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