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Gen. DuBose, ARS Chief, Tells How Lives Are Saved

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FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE—

Air Rescue Service

BY BRIG. GEN. T. J. DuBOSE, USAF
Commander

CODE OF AN AIR RESCUE MAN

It is my duty, as a member of the Air Rescue Service, to save life and to aid the injured.

I will be prepared at all times to perform my assigned duties quickly and efficiently, placing these duties before personal desires and comforts.

Those things I do THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE.

THE concept of aerial rescue is not new but the present air search and rescue techniques developed, employed, and planned by the Air Force's Air Rescue Service are the successful achievements of an organization constantly devoted to its mission "that others may live."

It is not known from the accounts of recorded history whether our earliest aviators



Brig. Gen. DuBose

thought about using aerial machines as a means of rescue or not. It is known that aerial rescue was first practiced in the year 1870. During the siege of Paris in the Franco-Prussian War, 180 patients were rescued from the heart of the surrounded city of Paris in an observation balloon.

In World War I, several attempts were made to utilize the airplane as an aerial ambulance. Even as early as 1915 the French Air Service had used the airplane for patient evacuation in Serbia, and a year later from the Atlas mountains during the Rif War in Morocco. However it was not until World War II that the rescue by air began to develop in earnest.

Prior to the advent of large bomber and fighter fleets, little consideration was given to the search for, and the retrieving of, missing or crashed aircraft and airmen. Searches for the distressed aviator were conducted in a haphazard manner, utilizing the means available with little thought to organized protection.

The Battle of Britain first established the urgency for an organized rescue establishment when it was discovered that a large percentage of "downed" airmen could be recovered from the English Channel with boats and seaplanes. Success of these rescue attempts was soon obviously connected proportionately with the establishment of systematic communications search and survival procedures.

Morale of operational units increased manifold when it became known that the chances of being rescued after crashing had improved. The efficiency of the flyer increased. Considerable savings were made in the manpower replacement costs. The rescue of one highly trained aviator not only saved his life, but it also saved the time and expense of training his replacement.

The entry of the United States into

the war magnified the problem of aerial rescue, for we had large numbers of airmen flying over all the oceans and much of the land areas of the world. General H. H. Arnold personally recognized these problems and initiated the first formal USAF rescue program. Crews were trained, equipment was procured, and rescue squadrons were activated. These squadrons were dispatched to all parts of the globe to protect our airmen along the military supply routes as well as to escort our bombers and fighters to and from enemy strongholds. These units were placed under the operational control of theater commanders; the equipment and methods of employment of each unit were largely dictated by distances to and from enemy targets, geographical conditions, and the frequency of "distress" incidents.

Danger in Cold Waters

As examples of comparison, crashed airmen in the North Sea area were always within 100 or 200 miles of friendly shores, but the cold waters accentuated the necessity of fast, successful communications and speedy recovery. Communications were handled by fighter control nets who were responsible for control of all aerial traffic, while the actual search and rescue was performed by surface boats and aircraft of the Royal Navy, Royal AF, and USAF.

However, in the Pacific the great distances made differences in operations and communications. Submarines were utilized for orbiting near the targets or along the routes to the target. Aircraft were escorted by OA-10 amphibians and B-17 converted lifeboat carriers. Since communication difficulties made ground control impractical after take-off, airborne rescue controllers were used. All units participating in a strike therefore used a common distress frequency and in case of emergencies, advice, aid, and rescue were almost immediate.

During the war, eight rescue squadrons were utilized throughout the world. With cessation of hostilities, the workloads of the units were decreased, but the need of aerial rescue still existed.

A continental rescue organization was created on 23 Jan. 1946 with headquarters at Andrews AFB, Md. It was responsible for aerial rescue coverage for all of the ZI. It was numerically designated as the 62d AAF Base Unit.

Placed Under ATC

In April it was placed under the operational and administrative control of the Air Transport Command. Lt. Col. Joseph F. Westover was in command until 29 May 1946 when Col. Wallace S. Ford assumed command. On the same date the organization was officially redesignated Air Rescue Service. Col. Richard T. Knight became commander in December 1946 and was succeeded by Col. J. C. Bailey in July 1952. In August of that year I assumed command of the Air Rescue Service.

Since its creation ARS has constantly been striving to deploy its units both strategically and economically to support any anticipated war time or peace time call for rescue. Standardization of search and rescue procedures has been polished to a high degree of proficiency. Flying safety among ARS units has constantly been improved. The morale factors inherent in its mission "that others may live" created a devotion to duty and an esprit de corps which compensates for the severe hardships.

In its eight short years of development, Air Rescue Service (now administratively incorporated under MATS) has many times proved its value. In cooperation with civilian agencies, ARS has rescued many hundreds of people during national emergencies. We have also lent our facilities for other humanitarian emergency rescue incidents. Not all our missions have been for the search and rescue of "downed" airmen; many have been the emergency rescue of sick or lost from isolated areas. Many civilian transport (and military) plane disasters have been averted by routine intercepts and escort performed by ARS planes. Many survivors of aircraft accidents have been rescued from otherwise almost certain death by the speedy, efficient aid from ARS.

Saved 9,680 in Korea

In Korea the need and value of Air Rescue Service was even more emphatically proven each day. From the first day of the conflict to the day the truce was signed (June 1950-July 1953), ARS operated from the forward stations in Korea. We rescued a total of 9,680 United Nations personnel, of which 996 were rescued from behind enemy lines. Quick action by ARS drastically reduced the number of fatalities. Some doctors at the front line hospitals have stated they never before saw certain types of casualties because always before these types of wounds were fatal before aid could be given.

Here as in the battle of Britain, morale was increased among the combatants both aerial and ground. The will to go in and fight was greatly increased. The aviator knew that if he went down, an ARS plane would be "Johnny-on-the-spot." In case after case, amphibians have rescued "downed" airmen from the water almost before the pilot and crew got their pants wet. In case after case, helicopters have dared enemy fire to cheat the visible enemy of an otherwise certain capture. Ground troops trapped in inaccessible pockets have been rescued by ARS "whirly birds." Amateur odds makers at the front have been known to establish a 9-out-of-10-chances of rescue to the men flying fighter cover.

Like all of our farflung units, ARS in Korea utilized its specially adapted USAF aircraft like the Albatross SA-16 amphibian, the Boeing SB-17 and SB-29 lifeboat carriers, the Douglas SC-47 cargo ship, and the Sikorsky H-5 and H-19 helicopters. ARS specialists in medical first aid and parachute landings were also developed to the highest degree in Korea.

Around the World

These same types of aircraft, and the same high caliber individuals, are found throughout the world on duty with our farflung squadrons. A visitor would find them in Germany, in Hawaii, in North Africa, in Alaska. In Greenland and the Arctic areas, the SA-16 is adapted with a special keel which allows it to become a triphibian operating on ice, land, and water.

Outside of the United States, ARS squadrons are located in such other areas as Iceland, England, Azores, Bermuda, Panama, Puerto Rico, Japan, Arabia, Tripoli, Philippines, and Okinawa. Three of the total 12 ARS groups are located in the United States. Each ARS group normally is composed of four squadrons, but this varies with the operational needs. Squadrons of 22 groups are located at McChord AFB, Hamilton AFB, March AFB, Lowry AFB, Selfridge AFB, Elling-

ton AFB, Maxwell AFB, West Palm Beach AFB, and Westover AFB.

ZI Air Rescue Service units are aided in their aerial search work of rescue by the more than 80,000 members of Civil Air Patrol. With units in the 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Alaska this volunteer organization of private flyers and aviation-minded civilians can put more than 8,000 light planes into the air during an emergency. When called upon by ARS, the Civil Air Patrol almost literally can "find tooth comb" a suspected crash area.

Civilian Auxiliary

Created by presidential executive order and chartered by Congress, the CAP has no military status. By an act of Congress in 1948 it was designated as a civilian auxiliary of the USAF. Its national headquarters in Washington, D. C., is staffed by AF personnel, and each state wing has an AF officer on duty as liaison for administrative and operational purposes. Besides the operational assistance during search missions for ARS, the CAP provides an unlimited resource of air-minded enthusiasts for the air age of the future.

In addition to working under ARS control during actual and practice search missions, marking aircraft wreckage sites, and providing a nucleus of potential airmen, CAP also provides an inestimably valuable radio network. In times of disaster or mobilization, it has more than 11,000 fixed and mobile radio stations. This is the largest non-military radio network in the United States.

It is obvious that a successful rescue organization is made up of a great number of people, a great number of different types of equipment, a great number of hours of effort not only during but in preparing for an emergency. And it takes an elusive "something else" in the hearts and minds of all the personnel assigned or attached to Air Rescue Service—civilian or military, veteran aviator or youthful novice. This "extra something" is that element of humanitarianism that makes the ARS mission become a living symbol of the American way of helping those less fortunate.

I have seen it happen many times to even the most calloused. Duty with Air Rescue Service soon molds each man towards a devotion which would make any man a proud commander. Of many other things he can also take pride—the fact that ARS was first to use helicopters in combat behind enemy lines, the fact that ARS was first to administer blood plasma to the wounded in flight, the fact that ARS has received international trophies in recognition of its advancements in the field of flight, the fact that ARS was first to fly the helicopter across the Atlantic. But of all the firsts, I believe I am first proud that our Air Rescue Service efforts are for the one achievement "that others may live."

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