

Pararescue

1111 No account of Rescue work would be complete without mention of the Pararescue teams. Pararescuemen are among the best trained men in the Armed Forces today. Precision parachutists, highly trained medics, experts on survival, then men will jump under almost any conditions if the possibility exists that there is a life to be save. Heroism is

their stock in trade. They reached the survivors. Despite the hard

going On 16 April 1954 two of these men, T/Sgt Elliott Holder and

S/Sgt Robert Christiansen, jumped to the crash site of a Navy patrol

bomber high on the Polar Ice Cap, far above the Arctic Circle. They

jumped in the faint hope that someone might have survived the crash.

High winds nearly dragged Holder to his death over a 1,900 foot

precipice. Landing about one and a half miles from the crash site,

tremendous effort was required to reach the crash site. At one point

the two men spent three hours traveling a quarter of a mile on the steep,

icy slopes. Upon reaching the wreckage the remains of nine crewmembers

were discovered. A howling Arctic storm with winds over 100 miles an

hour pinned the Pararescuemen down for 11 days. On the 12th day, when

the winds subsided, they were picked up by helicopter and returned to

their base. The story of the Air Rescue Service has been

A more successful mission occurred on the 13th of February 1953.

Shortly after midnight, T/Sgt Charles Abbott and S/Sgt John Bowers

jumped over the flaming crash of a B-36 near Goose Air Base. It was

20 below zero when they stepped out of their SC-47. After landing, it

took them four hours to crawl a mere 300 yards through the deep drifted

snow before they finally reached the survivors. Despite the hard

going, they were able to treat the injured and at dawn 14 survivors

and the Pararescuemen were taken by Rescue helicopter back to Goose

Air Base. ~~craft to furnish aid to a Japanese or a German laborer who~~

These are but two of the many jumps made by these ARS Pararescuemen. ~~craft~~

In Rescue work, minutes lost in reaching survivors can be the difference

between life and death. By jumping, Pararescuemen can sometimes cut

hours of the time that would be lost while ground parties make their

way to the scene of a disaster. ~~itely original and most~~

*add. copy
vincent*

~~grow~~ Being an arm of a mighty military force this Service presents a

striking paradox in its relation to such a destructive force, even

though that force is dedicated to the establishment of world peace.

For Rescue's Creed, "That Others May Live," applies to all mankind

even our former enemies. The story of the Air Rescue Service has been

filled with apparent paradoxical situations. It is paradoxical that

during a war the world's greatest destructive striking force developed

an organization with the sole purpose of saving life. True, the primary

mission was the retrieving of combat airmen that they might fight again,

but in the years which followed this mission, it expanded to include the

saving of people from all walks of life and of all races and creeds.

ARS To those on the other side of the Iron Curtain, it would appear

paradoxical for a nation to risk the lives of its airmen and the loss

of its aircraft to furnish aid to a Japanese or a German laborer—men who

a few years before were dedicated to our destruction. Yet, ARS aircraft

have spent thousands of hours in search and Rescue's Pararescue teams

have jumped frequently at risk of their lives for just that reason.

Another paradox revolves around the fact that many times when

weather conditions become definitely marginal and most aircraft are

grounded, Rescue will be called upon to put forth its maximum mission

effort. The guiding of aircraft through the fog-bound fiords of Green-

land or flying through storms to the aid of people perched on roofs

surrounded by raging flood waters are only two examples.

It was also paradoxical that the Air Rescue Service should be

severely cut by the austerity ^{axe} moves of USAF during the closing days of

May 1956. For almost ten years this command has been building an

organization, developing techniques, and locating its units in

strategic positions throughout its areas of responsibility. The ARS

organizational structure has been accomplished with the idea of

economy and efficiency of operation and was--in the view of all of Hq about a new concept of effective search and rescue service and a ARS personnel--the minimum Rescue force consistent with the assigned major organization in the USAF Rescue Service.

mission. Nevertheless, a few days before its tenth anniversary (29 May

and is being changed from one of general area and route search 1956) the command was informed of a scheduled reduction in the number employing large, self-sufficient units located at a relatively

of units attached to ARS. Four groups and nine squadrons--with their

Rescue detachments at bases throughout the world where they are now assigned personnel and equipment--were programmed for inactivation. readily available. Helicopters located at 53 bases throughout the

The Air Force during 1956 attempted to streamline its forces in order

supplant four ARS Group Headquarters and nine Squadrons. . . . to achieve a 137-wing structure--determined adequate by the Joint

Chiefs of Staff--without extending the existing manpower ceilings. To the,

accomplish this objective, USAF instituted an austerity program--

"Operation Wring Out"--designed to eliminate certain support functions

now being performed and to strip to the barest essentials those remaining.

The number of groups and squadrons within ARS has fluctuated from

time to time in keeping with the over-all strength (actual or proposed)

of USAF and the need for Rescue coverage in various parts of the globe.

~~As of 30 June 1956~~ *On its tenth anniversary, USAF* the Air Rescue Service was composed of 12 groups and

38 squadrons. survival equipment, and injuries to crewmembers have increased

great. A message received at this headquarters on 25 May quoted Air Force

Chief of Staff, Nathan F. Twining as saying: be accomplished as rapidly

as technological advances and years of experience have brought about a new concept of effective search and rescue service and a local base rescue utilizing lightweight utility helicopters. Fifty major organization in the USAF Rescue Service.

five The reorganization places greater emphasis upon helicopters and is being changed from one of general area and route search recipients of two helicopters each, employing large, self-sufficient units located at a relatively

few bases within the U.S. to one of assigning versatile Air Force to take

Rescue detachments at bases throughout the world where they are more action to inactivate the 1st, 4th, 5th and 7th Group Headquarters, and readily available. Helicopters located at 55 bases throughout the

U.S. and at designated overseas bases will implement the plan and

supplant four ARS Group Headquarters and nine Squadrons. . . . end of the second quarter of fiscal year 1957. This completely

eliminate Because of the greater distance involved and operational requirements,

the overseas ARS units will remain relatively unchanged. U.S. and overseas

the According to a communication received in May, Headquarters, USAF

conducted a study to determine whether Air Force rescue capability was

compatible with the current and projected requirements. This study con-

vinced USAF that more emphasis should be placed on local base coverage.

It was revealed that 70 percent of all accidents occurred within a 20-

mile radius of airbases. Furthermore, since jet aircrews carry a

minimum of survival equipment, and injuries to crewmembers have increased

greatly as a result of high speed bailout, if survivors are to be group

recovered instead of casualties, rescue must be accomplished as rapidly