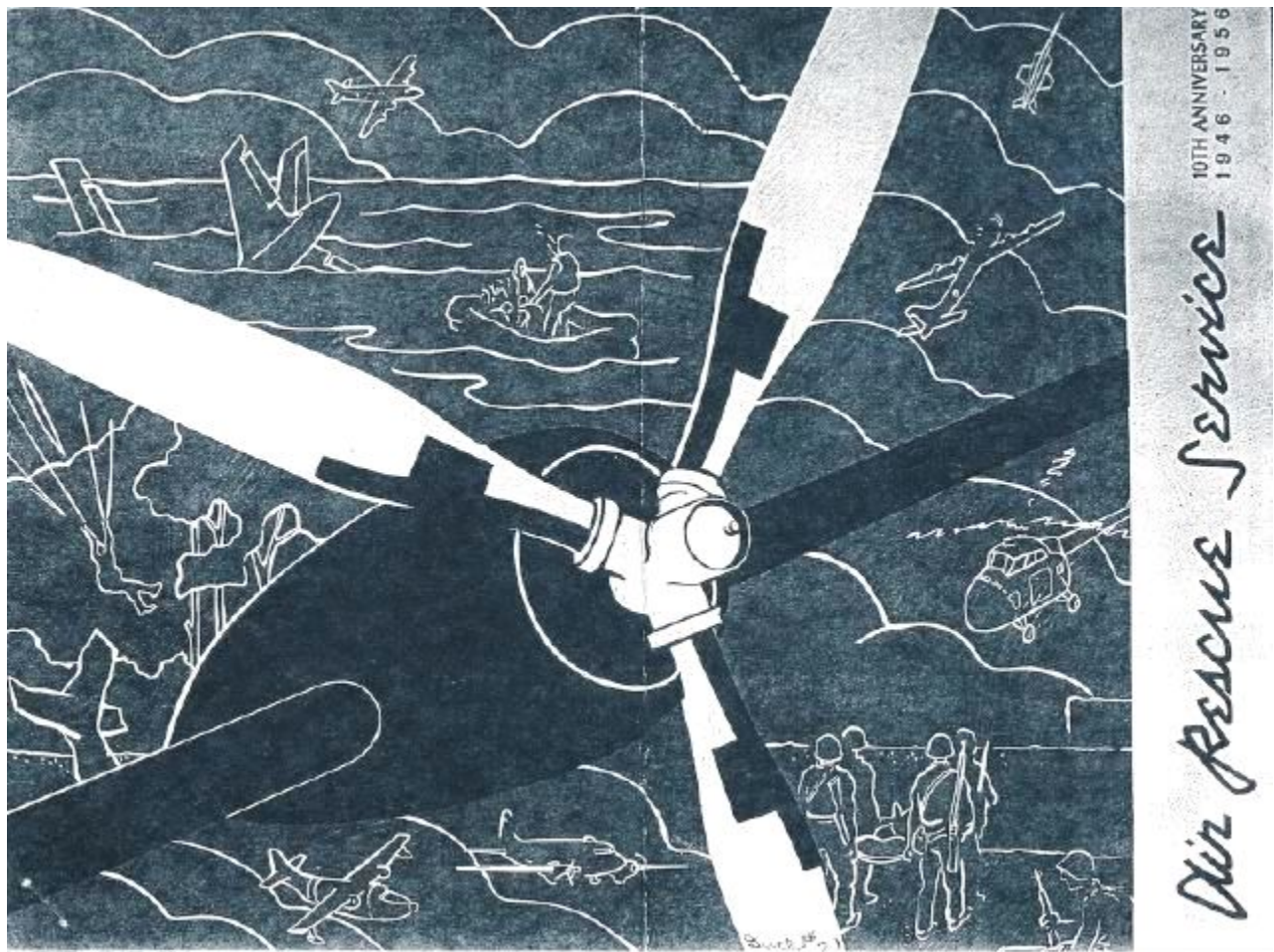


Air Rescue Service 10th Anniversary 1946 – 1956

Prepared by: Office of Information Services, Headquarters, Air Rescue Service (MATS) Orlando Air Force Base, Florida

*Note: This 5½"x8" black and white booklet was published in 1956 to commemorate the 10th history of ARS. Because of it's age and type being placed over pictures, it would not scan as a searchable .pdf So, Robert LaPointe, PJ Asso. Historian retyped the entire document, cut and pasted pictures from it and then made it into a searchable .pdf
The only changes made to the original was the addition of two pictures: SA-16 Albatross and H-21 helicopter.*



Our Cover Symbolism - Surrounding an SA-16 Wright engine and separated by the plane's prop and wing are scenes symbolic of the five major missions of the Air Rescue Service.

The scenes in the cover illustrates the first of our live missions: To provide air rescue for USAF and other military activities. In this panel, an SC-54 *Rescuemaster* is circling a downed aircrew who have ditched their aircraft in the open sea. The survivors have climbed aboard one of the rafts in the Air Rescue Kit which the *Rescuemaster* dropped them and await ultimate rescue by chopper, *Albatross* or surface vessel.

In the lower right hand corner of the cover is a scene which was often reenacted during the Korean War. Here we see a Rescue SH-19 helicopter carrying out the second mission of ARS: To provide air rescue for combat operations in any area.

To provide air rescue for air crews and other personnel cut off in enemy territory is the third part of Rescue's pentamorous mission.

Left of center on the cover we see a Pararescue man jumping to aid injured combat crewmen down behind enemy lines. With a little bit of luck, they will soon be retrieved, just as 996 men were in Korea.

A familiar sight, not only to military air passengers but also to many civilians who travel by air, is the scene in the lower righthand corner of the cover. Here, an SA-16 *Albatross* is escorting a crippled DC-3 which is flying with a feathered prop. Many such escorts are flown each week by planes of Air Rescue.



SA-16 Albatross

Lost aircraft are also located and shepherded to safe landings. The number of lives and aircraft "saved" in this manner cannot be accurately estimated but missions of this sort typify Rescue's fourth responsibility: To provide air search and rescue upon request to US civil aviation and to civil and military aviation of other member countries of ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization).

Operation *High Flight* pertains to the ferrying of tactical aircraft across the North Atlantic to our military units overseas. Many of these planes were not originally designed for long overwater hops and Rescue was directed to support and monitor their flights. Navigational aid and help with communications are also provided. The picture in the upper right-hand corner illustrates operation *High Flight*, a part of the fifth of Rescue's missions: To provide air rescue and support missions as directed.

Air Rescue Service

1946 - 1956 THE TWENTY-NINTH OF MAY 1956 marked the tenth anniversary of the formal establishment of the Air, Rescue Service as an integral part of: the U. S. Air Force. The concepts behind this organization are much older. Many years before the Wright brother lifted the first heavier-than-air machine off the ground at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, man's mind had conceived of the air as an avenue of escape from death.

Greek mythology provides the story of Daedalus and Icarus, who imprisoned and facing death, devised wings of feathers and wax to flee to safety. Even the helicopter, a basic 20th Century Rescue aircraft, was visualized by the illustrious painter and "jack-of-all-trades," Leonardo da Vinci.

Paradoxically, the use of aircraft to perform rescue missions of mercy, the saving of human life, was a by-product of military operations. As far as available records disclose, the first instance of an actual aerial rescue occurred in 1870, 33-years before the airplane was to fly. While the guns of Bismark's Prussian Army pounded besieged Paris, the ingenious French utilized observation balloons to airlift 160 patients from the surrounded city. During World War I when German forces were again attempting to overrun France, although the airplane was then in its infancy, several attempts were made to utilize airplanes as ambulances. As early as 1915 the French Air Service used aircraft for patient evacuation in Serbia. Eleven years later, during the Riffian War in Morocco, the French again took the initiative by using improvised ambulance planes over the treacherous Atlas Mountains. However, it was not until World War II that the real impetus to aerial humanitarianism was given, once again a matter of military expediency.

Aerial rescue operations came of age during World War II. Its first application as a basic part of a military operation was performed not by the British or the Americans but by the Germans in their 1939 invasion of Norway. In their all out military preparation for world conquest, the Nazis saw the intrinsic value of the irreplaceable combat airman. England, facing the greatest aerial onslaught in history, was quick to learn. The Royal Air Force needed every pilot it could muster to defend England's shores. Within a short time an Air/Sea Rescue operation was organized, combining the efforts of both the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force in rescuing airmen of downed aircraft.

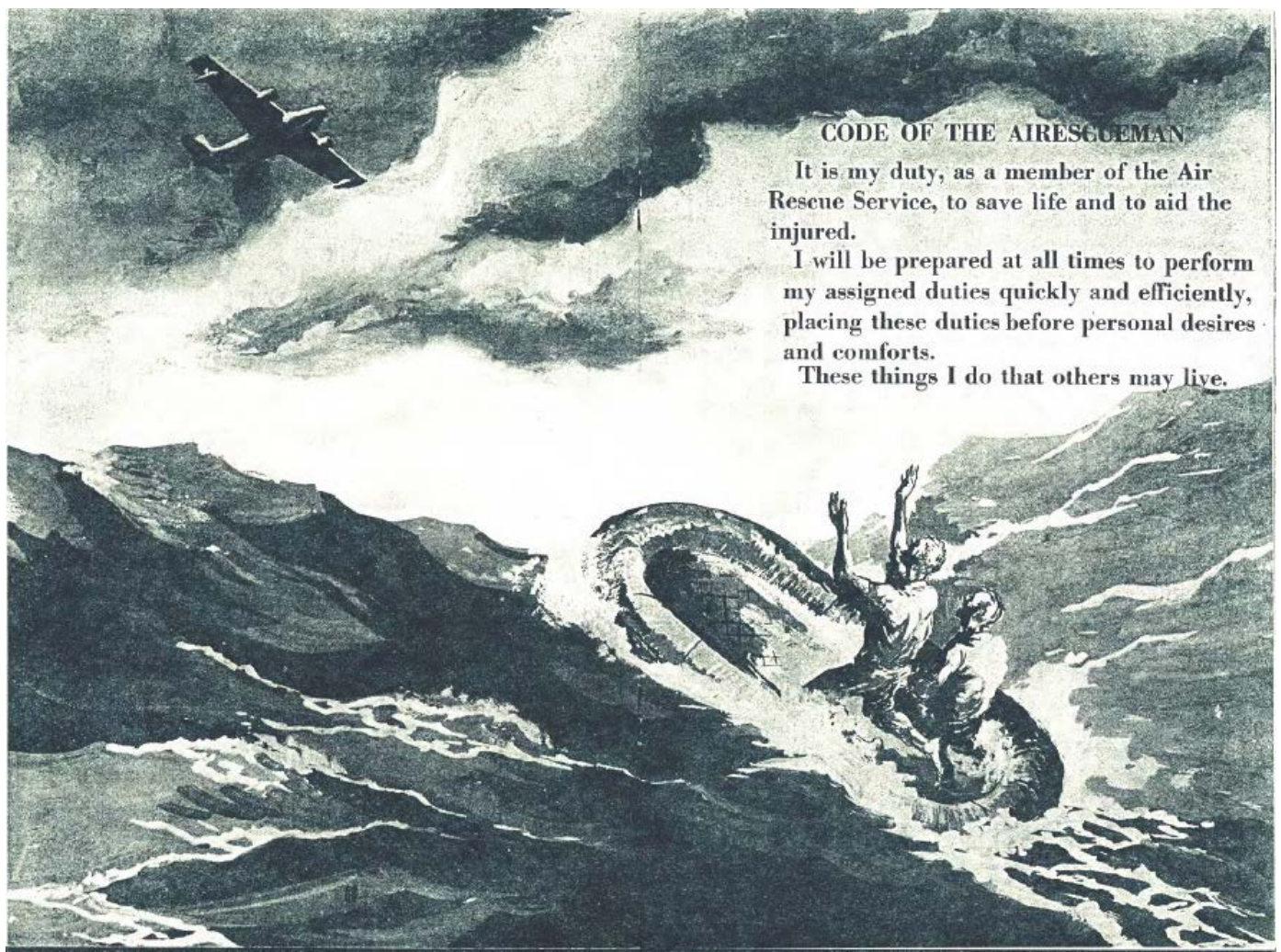
When the United States entered the war in 1941, the problem was greatly intensified. With more men, and more planes, the Allies were able to go on the offensive. In Europe and our air crews were soon flying deep into enemy territory. The value of a trained American "Air Sea Rescue" agency was recognized by the USAAF during the early stage of operations and with the insistence of General "Hap" Arnold as a stimulus, a Rescue organization began to take form in the European theater during the middle of 1943.

The total number of lives saved, the number of combat missions successfully accomplished because of "Rescue" availability, etc., is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy. A few examples, however indicate the extent of the success. From October 1942 to May 1943 only one aircrewman from the entire 8th Air Force (based in England) had been rescued after being forced down at sea. After the activation of a Rescue unit the results were dramatically improved. During a two-day period in September, 111 of 121 aircrewmen were retrieved. In the Pacific Theater, one Emergency Rescue Squadron saved 300 men from death or capture during the first six months of its operations.

The United States entered the war in 1941, almost totally unprepared to with the problem of retrieving downed combat aircrews., The first efforts were bungling and, marked with only small success. Old worn-out aircraft and equipment were used, personnel were assigned on a temporary duty status - in a sense, rescue of aircrews was on a catch-as-catch-can basis. But with

British experience as a guide supplemented by the foresight and direction of certain high ranking USAAF officers, "Air Rescue" developed rapidly. When the war ended, Emergency Rescue Squadrons were located throughout the world. These units were assigned properly trained personnel and equipped with the best available aircraft and equipment. Most important, the concept of aerial rescue was established.

In the months following the war, many of these Emergency Rescue Squadrons were deactivated but the belief in their necessity did not diminish. The accomplishments of these war tested units resulted in the 1946 establishment of the present Air Rescue Service.



... The organization

THE Air Rescue Service with its groups and squadrons protects the vast areas of the world over which Air Force planes fly. It is an integral part of the Military Air Transport Service. Recently cut back by the Air Force's austerity program, which lopped off four groups and nine squadrons—primarily from the Caribbean region. Rescue continues to operate its specialized search and rescue equipment from strategically located positions at home, in Europe, the Pacific, and the Far North.

Today ARS Squadrons of the 2nd and 3rd Groups patrol the air lanes over the vast reaches of the Pacific from Hawaii to Japan. The 10th Group maintains its watch dog vigil over the Arctic wastes in and around Alaska while the 6th Group acts as its counterpart over the frigid, land masses of the North Atlantic. Two groups cover Europe and the Mediterranean nations. The 9th Air Rescue Group with two of its units in the British Isles, one in Iceland, and one in the Azores, protects the approaches to these sections of the world. The 12th Group, with headquarters in Germany, and two squadrons, guards central Europe, while its two units in North Africa offer aid to people encountering difficulty throughout the Mediterranean.

STRICKEN Filipino woman is carried by native banca to the Rescue Albatross which will fly her from her primitive village to a modern hospital where she can obtain the treatment she needs to save her life.



Because of their highly specialized job, the 8th and 14th Groups are seldom mentioned in the usual news publications. It is sufficient to know that their operational readiness may be a decisive factor if and when the balloon goes up.

With one squadron on the East Coast, one on the West Coast, and one stationed in Florida, Rescue facilities are charged with the direct support of the Air Force "at home." These three units are responsible for monitoring and prosecuting all search and rescue efforts involving USAF aircraft

as well as insofar as their strength will allow - aiding other military and civilian organizations upon request.

Despite reorganizations curtailing the size and strength of the Air Rescue Service, this command remains a global organization integrated into the combat Air Force.



... The accomplishments

BRIGADIER GENERAL Thomas J. Du Bose, Commander, Air Rescue Service, commented on the ten years of achievements from his headquarters at Orlando AFB, Florida, "It seems singularly appropriate that this anniversary should occur during a year when the United States Air Force is observing "A Decade of Security Through Global Air Power." To me it has always been a source of wonder and pride that the most potent and destructive military force ever known should create a special service dedicated to saving life. Its concept is typically American. All over the world Air Rescue affords daily proof that, as Americans, we hold human life to be the most precious commodity on earth. To the people of foreign lands who see Rescue in action, it serves as a constant rebuttal to those who propagandize against us. As an instrument of international good will its value is incalculable."

In the ten years since its founding an accurate count of the number of lives actually saved by ARS is impossible. Statistics are by no means complete. In many instances it is not possible to say positively that Rescue saved a survivor's life when the possibility exists that he might have been able to save himself. However, it can be definitely established that in the past ten years, over 4,078 people have been found and rescued from certain death by ARS personnel. This is a most conservative statistic and, in all probability, represents but a fraction of the true total.

Existing records do show that on search and rescue missions alone Air Rescuemen have flown over 173,351 hours. These hours do not include escort missions or orbit missions which Rescue flies every day of the year just to be on the scene in case trouble should develop. These 173,351 hours were flown for the sole purpose of seeking and saving downed military and civilian flyers, accident victims, and the survivors of natural disasters. They were flown not only to aid citizens of the United States but those of practically every country this side of the iron curtain.

As a result of these missions ARS has directly aided a *confirmed* total of 44,520 people during the past ten years. This impressive figure does not include the literally countless thousands of people aboard aircraft that ARS has intercepted and escorted to safety. It does not include the many aircraft to which Rescue has supplied communication and navigational aid enabling them to reach their destination without difficulty. Because no estimate is possible, no claim is made for the number of lives and aircraft saved by missions of this sort.

Late in 1954, four AF C-119 *Flying Boxcars* headed for one of our far northern bases in Greenland, which can only be approached by flying up a treacherous fiord. The fiord is 45 miles long, one to five miles wide and lined by mountains ranging up to a mile high. Even on a clear day, it's imposing. When the four big Boxcar's reached the coast of Greenland, past the point of no return, they encountered unexpected bad weather blocking their approach to the base. Disaster was imminent.

A Rescue alert crew "scrambled" and rendezvoused with the C-119's at the fiord. Navigating solely by radar, the Rescue aircraft made two runs to the base, escorting two *Boxcars* on each trip. Of the four crews aboard the C-119's, how many would have survived is anybody's guess but certainly – had it not been for the skilled assistance – all four of the aircraft would have been lost.

For heroic work in the face of natural disasters Rescue personnel have made headlines repeatedly during the past ten years. The majority of these disasters involved people of other countries and the exploits of Rescuemen have developed bond of friendship that will never be broken. In the English and Dutch flood disasters in 1953, Rescue is credited with saving thousands of people; but because the exact figure is impossible to confirm it is not mentioned in the earlier total.

In the Netherlands, Rescue flew Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard themselves over all the flood area. On occasion, the Queen actually ordered her people into the helicopters to be saved. Subsequently the Prince wrote a letter of appreciation for Rescue's work during the emergency, and decorated certain outstanding Rescue personnel.

In England A/3C Reis Leming personally saved 27 people at the risk of his own life and was awarded the George Cross, England's second highest medal for valor. He also won the undying gratitude of the British people.

In February 1947 Rescue participated in its first major flood action when the Mamore River flooded in Bolivia. Native villages were wiped out in an area of over 100 square miles. ARS established an airlift and, under most difficult conditions, carried hundreds to safety. One C-47, the Air Force version of the old commercial DC-3, staggered aloft from one primitive airstrip with over 90 survivors aboard. To be sure, most were children but this figure probably still stands as a record for this type aircraft.

The pages of the past ten years of ARS history are crowded with references to outstanding achievements in the face of large scale disasters. In recent months, Rescue directed all operations by units of the Department of Defense during the two great New England floods and the floods in

California. Rescue also has led the fight against floods in Japan, Italy, Mexico, Costa Rica, and at home in Kansas and Texas to mention but a few.

Rescue has been praised officially for flying in supplies and medical help and airlifting to safety critically injured survivors following earthquakes in Orleansville, Algeria and Greece, for example, and in a number of avalanche disasters in Austria, Italy and Switzerland. In 1951, ARS flew in serum and medical aid to help check the yellow fever epidemic in tiny Costa Rica. The Republic of Haiti dedicated a stamp to the Air Rescue Service for assistance rendered when that area was ravaged by Hurricane Hazel in October 1954.

Certain accomplishments of ARS personnel have bordered on the legendary and a list of such exploits for which recognition was forthcoming would be impressively long. To name but a few is to neglect many but any list would have to include the following:

July 1952. The rescue of 32 people from the stormy Mediterranean by Captain Kendrick U. Reeves. His actions won him the Cheney Award " . . . for an act of valor, fortitude, self-sacrifice, and humanitarian interest in connection with aircraft."

July 1954. The saving of the survivors of the British Cathay-Pacific airliner shot down by the Chinese Reds. The rescue was made by an aircraft piloted by Captain Jack Woodyard practically under the guns of Communist fighter aircraft. Captain Woodyard and his crew were also decorated for heroism.

February 1951. The courageous helicopter rescue by Captain Daniel J. Miller of six wounded and exposed enemy infantrymen trapped behind enemy lines in Korea. Captain Miller made three successive trips behind the lines, landing on a small ridge under deadly enemy fire to effect the rescue. He also received the Cheney Award for his valor.



June 1951. Rescue of UN fighter pilot at night from a river deep in North Korean territory. In almost total darkness 1st Lt. John J. Najarian made a night water landing on the Taedong River, hauled the water logged survivor aboard his Rescue amphibian and accomplished a hazardous night takeoff. He was unable to use any lights for fear of affording enemy gunners, who maintained

relentless fire during the entire operation, too good a target.

It was in Korea that ARS came into its own. Under combat conditions the magnificent accomplishments of this organization added a new dimension to the concept of aerial rescue. Prior to this time Air Rescue may be said to have been in its infancy - its formative period - and rescue techniques were largely experimental. In Korea, Rescue saved the lives of 9,680 fighting men and 996 of these were rescued from behind enemy lines.

To accomplish this meant the development and standardization of Rescue techniques and procedures and their refinement to a high degree of reliability. The helicopter established itself as an invaluable rescue vehicle. Many famous pilots, including triple jet ace Captain Joe McConnell, were picked up and lived to fly and fight again because of Air Rescue's battle "taxi" service. The high regard in which Rescue's contribution to the United Nations effort was held is evidenced by the fact that it was the most decorated unit in Korea.

ARS was responsible, to a large degree, for the remarkably low mortality rate among the wounded - almost half the World War II incidence. By helicopter, severely wounded men who could not have survived ground transportation were airborne from front-line aid stations to large hospitals in the rear within minutes after being hit. In less than half an hour, helicopters accomplished evacuations which often would have required a full day of tortuous overland travel by jeep.

... The equipment

THE PRODUCTION OF A PLANE designed specifically for rescue purposes is a relatively new concept in the history of military aircraft.

During the hectic days of World War II, when a quick rescue by air often meant the difference between life and death, the first available plane, be it bomber, fighter or transport, was usually the one pressed into rescue service.

Even after the ARS was organized as an operational entity, war planes, modified as best they could be, were used to carry out Rescue's mission. This unfavorable situation was due to several factors. Obsolete war planes were in abundance and the combat aircraft which were then in the planning stage assumed a higher priority on the engineers' drawing boards than Rescue vehicles. Furthermore, Rescue itself, though it long realized the need for a more suitable working tool, took many years to research and develop a tangible item which they felt would fill the bill. What they ultimately came up with, of course, were two basic aircraft types, a triphibian and a helicopter. Today, Rescue has several other planes to augment its mission but the goal being strived for is to have just two *perfected* aircraft types in the Air Rescue Service inventory: a triphibian which will be able to perform all the tasks of the SC-54, SC-47 and the SA-16 combined; and a rotary-winged aircraft which will have the attributes of the SH-19 and the SH-21 and then some.

Unique, little-known aircraft shown on these pages represent some of the 18 different aircraft types which were at one time part of the ARS inventory.



L-5 Liaison plane



Sikorsky H-6



Fairchild C-82 Packet



OA-10-Catalina



Curtiss C-46 towing a CG-15A Glider

But during the first decade of its existence, Rescue saw a wide variety of equipment and at least 18 different aircraft phased in and then out of its service.

In 1946, when ARS was just getting on its feet, America's mighty air armada was undergoing a drastic reduction following World War II. Consequently, the aircraft available for use by ARS were the surplus, war-weary aircraft that were no longer needed for their primary mission of destruction or combat support.

Rescue's problem was to take these former patrol boats, combat-cargo transports, liaison types and heavy bombers and convert them into machines that would be useful in the peacetime search and rescue mission.



Rescuemaster, highly-modified ARS version of the old reliable C-54 represents the latest word in long-range search and rescue aircraft.

Some of the planes, naturally, took less modification than others. The C-47 "Gooney Bird," for instance, needed only a coat of paint to change it. from a troop cargo carrier to one of Rescue's long range search planes.

The helicopter, which was taken over by Rescue, proved to be one of the most versatile aircraft in existence for timely and efficient and sometimes *impossible* pickups.

During the Korean War the tiny H-5 chopper, with the aid of a Rescue hoist and amphibious pontoons, pulled men from the sea almost before they had time to get wet, grabbed downed crewmembers practically out of the hands of the Communists and flew countless other missions that went down in Rescue history as "famous firsts."

Having proved its worth and durability, the helicopter was enlarged and improved. The Sikorsky SH-19 copter which can carry eight litter patients or ten seated survivors, plus a crew of two, succeeded the H-5's. It also proved itself in Korea as a useful, versatile Air Rescue vehicle.

Another more recent rotary-winged addition is the Vertol SH-21B which is capable of airlifting as many as 20 survivors at speeds up to 110 knots. When fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks, it can stay airborne for seven hours to search for airmen in distress and bring them aid.



It was in 1949 that Rescue received its first aircraft that from the drawing board to the end of the production line seemed specifically designed for the ARS mission. This was, and is, the now famous SA-16 Grumman *Albatross*—soon to be superseded by the vastly improved SA-16B.

Since then, this twin-engined amphibian has been the primary worldwide search and rescue workhorse -Built to land, and take off on the ground or in water, a skid was added to allow Rescuemen to land on snow or ice. In 1951, for the first time in history, a Rescue *Albatross* landed and took off from the Greenland Icecap.

With JATO units attached to the fuselage, the SA-16 is able to take off from short fields and other hazardous locations. Reversible pitch props also help the triphibian land with a minimum "run-out," whether the landing surface, ice, water, snow or turf.



The Grumman HU-16 Albatross is a twin-radial-engined, amphibious flying boat. Originally designated as the SA-16 it was redesignated as the HU-16 in 1962.

One of the most complete conversions of an aircraft to ARS use was the modification of the C-54 Douglas *Skymaster* combat cargo and troop carrier plane.

From the time the SC-54 project was initiated until the first new *Rescuemaster* rolled off Convair's assembly lines, two years of hard work, planning, testing, and development elapsed. The old cargo plane was "stripped to its skeleton and completely rebuilt to accept the 54 (coincidentally) major changes required for Rescue operations.

Of the many modifications and equipment changes, two stand out as "firsts" in Air Force aircraft. Of special importance are the new Goodyear anti-skid brakes which enhance the SC-54's landing capability. An electric hydraulic mechanism detects a skid at its onset, releasing and reapplying brake pressure as needed." This insures maximum brake efficiency on all surfaces.

The other "first" is an ingenious pneumatic flare launching chute which can be loaded in flight. A removable chute is mounted in the aircraft floor near the left rear scanner. Ports through which the flares are fired by compressed air or gas is open and close automatically.

In the past ten years, Rescue has taken great strides to keep up with the startling advances of American *aviation*. Though their progress has been logical it has not always been easily made. The record of the past decade gives every indication that continued progress will be as natural as America's undisputed belief in the value of the men who fly.



CONSTITUTING AN ELITE CORPS within the Air Rescue Service are the Paramedics. They are a breed apart and certainly among the best trained men in the armed forces today.

Precision parachutists, highly trained medics experts on survival under any earthly conditions, these men will jump anywhere, anytime a possibility exists that there is a life to be saved. They live to jump, they jump to save lives and the live the jump to save are not their own.

Though their backgrounds differ just as backgrounds do in any large group of military men, because of the homogeneous training or because of their common interest in jumping and medicine, Rescues Paramedics are a tightly knit and quietly proud clan.

They have a right to be. Any man who would aspire to become a Paramedic must first go through a highly selective screening both physical and mental. Once his application was accepted, he would then be sent to the Army's Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. here each trainee receives instruction in parachuting techniques and completes five "live" jumps to qualify as a rated parachutist. But this is just the beginning. A Paramedic's biggest job begins after he has landed safely at the side of the survivors he has jumped to save.

For this training, the student would proceed to the School of Aviation Medicine at Gunter AFB, Alabama to go through the Air Rescue Specialist School. During this four week stint he would be given the latest training in types of advanced first aid. He would learn how to determine the nature and extent of all but the most serious and complex injuries. To deal with those cases he cannot handle himself, he would learn to describe exactly a survivor's condition over the radio so as to receive and execute a physician's recommended measures.

There was a time when completion of this school qualified the Pararescue student for additional training in what was probably the most colorful of all the Air Force's schools. This was the Pararescue and Survival School which held its classes in some of the least hospitable places on the North American continent. Coastal survival instruction was conducted at Boca Grande Key, southwest of Key West, Florida. The Mojave Desert of California was the location for desert survival training. In the Rocky Mountains near McCall, Idaho, the students were taught how to survive and travel under simulated arctic conditions.

This school was deactivated in December, 1953 but most of Rescue's present Paramedics had gone through the course before the school closed its doors.

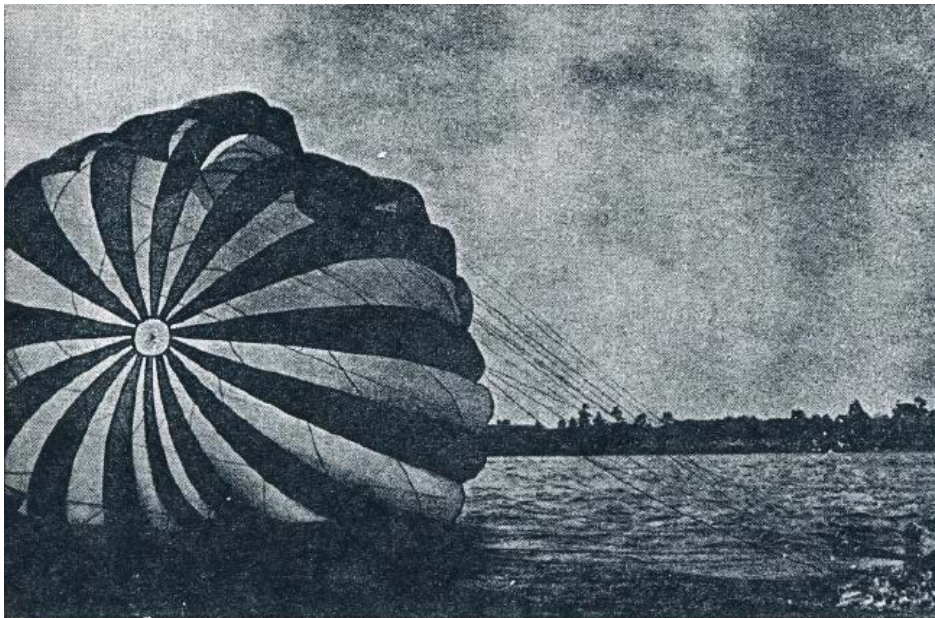
Among them heroism is not uncommon. Guts are stock in trade. Every time they step out of an aircraft, in training or when it's the real thing, they take their life in their hands.

One Paramedic was compelled by circumstances to jump alone on a high mountain to aid a man suffering from a broken leg. He treated the man's injury and got him down the mountain to where he could be picked up and taken to a hospital. The only aspect of the mission considered noteworthy is that the jumper himself had broken a leg in landing on the treacherous terrain.

It takes some of the best of the species *homo sapiens* to qualify as Pararescue men. In any other branch of the service the deeds they perform as daily routine would be considered worthy of special commendation. To them it's the life they love and few would have it any other way.

The sole purpose of the Air Rescue Service is to save lives. Pararescue work is but one phase of this aerial rescue concept. The world over, flyers can be confident that, should trouble strike, this highly trained, very proficient group of men, Rescue's Paramedics, are available to jump to their aid. Famed radio commentator Eric Sevareid was in a group of survivors saved by jumpers during World War II. Of the men who risked their lives to save his, he later wrote, "*Gallant is a precious word; they deserve it.*"

The deeds they perform as daily routine would be considered worthy of special commendation in any other branch of the service. . . . *"Gallant is a precious word; they deserve it."*



They jump that others may live. Around the world Rescue's paramedics stand by to jump anytime, anywhere to the aid of people in distress.