

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

26-1 Distinctive Uniform for Pararescue Personnel

A. ACTION REQUESTED:

1. To authorize Pararescue Personnel to wear a maroon beret with the blue uniform.

2. Blouse trousers over combat boots with all uniforms when wearing the beret.

B. REQUESTING AGENCY:

Commander, Military Airlift Command

C. REASON FOR REQUEST:

To increase the attractiveness of a career in the Pararescue Service.

D. DISCUSSION:

1. The following letters are quoted, in part, as justification for the approval and nonconcurrence by the DCS/Personnel.

a. Extract from letter from MAC, dated 24 February 1966 signed by General Estes:

Attached request for authorization to permit ARRS Pararescue personnel to wear a maroon beret and bloused trousers in combat boots is forwarded with approval strongly recommended. Development of an "elite corps" concept is an integral and necessary part of our program to increase the attractiveness of a career in pararescue. If ARRS is to effectively accomplish its assigned missions, we must obtain these additional personnel.

b. Letter from Hq Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, dated 21 February 1966 is quoted:

"1. Request that authorization be granted under AFR 67-57, paragraph 5, Uniform Clothing Allowances for Airmen, for ARRS Pararescue Personnel to wear a maroon beret and bloused trousers in combat boots with all uniforms.

"2. This distinctive item of uniform clothing is needed to increase the attractiveness of a career in pararescue. The effectiveness of an 'elite corps' concept is evident

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

in the Army Special Forces. In the early days of this specialized Army unit, a need was seen for a banner or badge to improve the morale of those in a tough and dirty job. The esprit de corps which has been established in the Special Forces is such that the men have been known to take a demotion rather than lose the now famous green beret. We believe that the capabilities and specialized talents of our pararescuemen place them in the same category as these and other uniquely qualified personnel, i.e., forward air controllers, and SAC security control forces.

"3. This small, handpicked group of pararescuemen have been selected from thousands of aspiring airmen throughout the Air Force. Everyone is a volunteer. Each applicant is individually screened to determine his mental and physical capabilities. In January 1966, a pararescue team interviewed over 2500 basic trainees to obtain the students for a forthcoming class. A total of 16 were found qualified to enter training. With present attrition rates only 12 or less will become fully qualified pararescuemen. A pararescueman is a highly qualified parachutist. He is trained as a medical technician to be capable of advanced first aid and minor surgery. He is trained to an extremely high degree of proficiency in rescue and survival techniques for any terrain or climate in the world. He is qualified in all types of SCUBA equipment for underwater operations, and is skilled in mountaineering. He is qualified in NASA spacecraft recovery operations, and a recent new requirement will qualify him as a firefighter with local base rescue units. All of these qualifications create a man of unusual capabilities. He is available 24 hours a day to respond to any emergency, anywhere, at any time. He may parachute into the sea, without surface assistance, to aid the crew of a downed aircraft, sinking ship, or a spacecraft on recovery. If required, he will parachute or hike into the mountains to save survivors from an isolated aircraft. His services are available to non-military personnel, and the lives pararescuemen have saved during past years have contributed significantly to our cold war operations

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

around the world. In Southeast Asia they have been lowered into dense jungle growth, alone, to render aid to downed aircrews and return them to safety. On occasion they have been required to stand off hostile forces during the rescue mission, and have refused recovery until the mission was completed.

"4. These men, small in number and scattered throughout the world, perform a truly outstanding service. Because they are such a unique force, we feel they should be recognized as such. ARRS is presently authorized only 244 such highly trained men to cover the globe. Today, and even more in the future, the bulk of the input will be from basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas. These young, aggressive, dedicated volunteers deserve the distinction that goes with a tough, challenging and demanding job.

"5. The maroon beret was selected to indicate the medical duties and life saving qualifications of the pararescueman. Green is utilized by the Army Special Forces, and the bright blue is worn by PACAF and SAC Security Control Forces. The parachutists emblem would be worn on the beret until a silver replica of the ARRS emblem could be manufactured. A graphic reproduction of the desired emblem is attached.

"6. The beret would be awarded to each graduate of the Pararescue Technician Training School. The rise in morale that could be gained by such a simple and inexpensive expedient could well have a positive effect on the reenlistment problem that is becoming apparent within the pararescue field. Due to a lack of recognition in terms of such factors as Dual Hazard Pay, Proficiency Pay, and Variable Reenlistment Bonus, information available to us indicates that a significant number of pararescuemen will probably not reenlist at the conclusion of their first term. Loss of such a highly trained and skilled resource is a cause of deep concern.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

"7. In the interest of recognition, retention, and morale, it is requested that authorization for this distinctive item of uniform clothing be favorably considered."

- c. See Attachment 1 - copy of Memorandum from General Woodrow P. Swancutt, Deputy Director for Forces, Directorate of Operations, and copy of Memorandum from General Hewitt T. Wheless, Assistant Vice Chief of Staff.
- d. Letter from General W. S. Stone, Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel dated 31 March 1966 is quoted:

"1. We do not concur with the MAC request of 24 February 1966 to permit ARRS pararescue personnel to wear a maroon beret and combat boots with all uniforms.

"2. The short-term beneficial effects such approval might foster are acknowledged. However, our experience with special concessions to elite groups is that they lead to further concessions for other select or specialized groups. Authorizing distinctive uniforms for certain segments of the Air Force is not consistent with the long-standing Air Force one team, one force policy, although exceptions have been made. Further exceptions would soon dilute whatever desirable effects distinctive uniforms have by making such uniforms common-place and confusing or meaningless to the general public without constant publicity.

"3. If the Uniform Board believes some concessions should be made for pararescue personnel we recommend that consideration be given to limiting the wear of the maroon beret and combat boots to utility uniforms only. This would conform to the wear restrictions which govern the 'Aussie' hat worn by Air Commando personnel. It would also retain the integrity of our plain, yet distinctive, service uniform policy."

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
OFFICE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Date 25 February 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR GEN WHELESS

431-3470
EXT 544

This photograph of Captain Peter A. Rundquist, Chief of the Pararescue Operations, Headquarters Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, illustrates the distinctive headgear proposed for adoption by Pararescue personnel.

This elite force of 178 men commanded by Captain Rundquist performs a highly distinctive, essential, and hazardous duty for the Air Force. Recognition of their superior state of training and challenging mission by a distinctive headgear is recommended.



WOODROW P. SWANCUTT
Brig Gen, USAF
Dep Dir for Forces
Directorate of Operations

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE ASST. VICE CHIEF OF STAFF

DATE 25 Feb 66

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL RAMME

General McConnell has given tentative approval to this recommendation. Request you staff according to normal procedures to work out the details.

HEWITT T. WHELESS
Lieutenant General, U.S. Air Force
Assistant Vice Chief of Staff

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.



FROM: AFCCS

SUBJECT: Uniform Changes

1 June 1966

TO: AFCVC AFXDC
AFCAV AFODC
AFAAC AFRDC
AFIGO AFSDC
AFPDC

CHIEF OF STAFF DECISION

1. On 26 May 1966, the Chief of Staff approved the pararescue uniform and the Shade 1549 shirt and trouser uniform.

2. The Chief of Staff noted:

a. Pararescue personnel are highly trained specialists who perform extremely hazardous duties demanding the very highest of mental and physical discipline and thus deserve to wear the distinctive attire consisting of maroon beret, bloused trousers with combat boots, and special badge, both on and off base (ACTION: AFSDC).

b. The shirt and trouser combination, Shade 1549, provides the Air Force with a light weight, blue, wool/polyester long-sleeve shirt and trouser uniform. For off-base wear, the tie will be worn (ACTION: AFSDC).

3. It is requested that appropriate action be taken.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Hewitt T. Wheless", is written over the typed name and title.

HEWITT T. WHELESS, Lt General, USAF
Assistant Vice Chief of Staff

AFC 5/50

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.



8 MAR 1967

USAFMPC (AFIT:SAU)
RANDOLPH AFB TEXAS 78148

SUBJECT: Criteria for Wear of the Pararescue Distinctive Uniform (ARRS (ARODC) Ltr, 5 Jan 67)

TO: MAC (HAPPSF)

1. We have determined that the CSAF Decision Paper 5/50 which authorized pararescue personnel to wear a maroon beret, distinctive emblem, and bloused trousers in combat boots applies only to those pararescue/recovery personnel assigned to ARRS.
2. It is our understanding that the current Air Force Classification System does not provide distinct identification for pararescue/recovery personnel. However, for airmen, the specialty that most closely approximates those highly trained specialists referred to by the Chief of Staff is AFSC A921X08, Rescue and Survival Specialist/Technician. The July 1967 change to AFM 39-1 will completely revise the Airmen Aircrew Protection Career Field (92) and will provide separate, distinct identification for airmen pararescue/recovery personnel. Your headquarters will then determine on an individual basis, those personnel qualified for conversion to the new pararescue/recovery AFSC. Those individuals qualified for conversion to the new AFSC should be those authorized to wear the distinctive uniform items. Officers to be authorized should be determined on an individual basis by your command.
3. We believe the eligibility criteria for wear of these uniform items should be determined by your headquarters, and no attempt should be made to include this criteria in the uniform manual. The next formal change to AFM 35-10 will indicate that the maroon beret, distinctive emblem, and bloused trousers in combat boots are authorized for wear by pararescue/recovery personnel specifically designated by MAC.

FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

SIGNED

JOHN W. ROBINSON, MAJ GEN, USAF
Commanding General
Directorate of Personnel Services

1 Atch
ARRS Ltr, 5 Jan 67

Copy to: ARRS (ARODC)

Ch, AROAS	
Ch, AROASA	1000
HU-16	PIR FM
HC-97	PIR FET
HC-130	PIR FM IM
HELI	
NO	
NAV	
PABA?	

(OBoz) Jenkins

PARARESCUE

22 Feb 66

Distinctive Headgear for Pararescue Personnel

Commander
76th ARRSq

1. The following request is submitted in accordance with para 3,6,11 of ARODC Pararescue Letter #1. Pararescue personnel are seeking a distinctive headgear and insignia.

2. Considerations and Recommendation:

a. A sample of the desired headgear and a photograph of an individual wearing the headgear is forwarded for evaluation. The headgear will be worn under the following restrictions:

(1) The beret will be worn only with two piece fatigue uniform with bloused boots; only during working hours.

(2) It will not be worn with 1505's or AF Blues.

b. Procurement and Supply Source: The maroon beret and insignia can be procured easily and the cost is minimal. Pararescue personnel are willing to support the initial cost.

c. Justification: Pararescue personnel are assigned to Air Rescue Service for, and serve in a career capacity. Pararescue plays a vital role in the Air Rescue mission which warrants much individual effort on the part of every pararescueman. Their mission denotes some distinction which corresponds with other active units in the armed services today. The beret has had a definite effect in creating high morale and dedication which is required in any specialist field. The wearing of the maroon beret with two piece fatigue uniform will not lower the Air Force uniform standards. Other units such as the Forward Air Controllers use distinctive headgear. Pararescue performance in the combat areas and in the support of the space program warrants some note of distinction. The beret will become a symbol and will have a definite effect in retaining younger airman in the service and attracting a high calibre individual required for the pararescue field.

d. Conclusion: The adoption of the beret as a distinctive headgear for pararescue will promote the much desired "Esprit De Corp" and induce incentive which pararescue badly needs. The cost of a beret and insignia is very little compared with the effect it will have in retention of younger airman who are receiving costly specialized training.

RODNEY E HOUGHTON, Major, USAF
Pararescue Officer

2 Atchs
1. Front view of beret
2. Side view of beret

of these qualifications create a man of unusual capabilities. He is available 24 hours a day to respond to any emergency, anywhere, at any time. He may parachute into the sea, without surface assistance, to aid the crew of a downed aircraft, sinking ship, or a spacecraft on recovery. If required, he will parachute or hike into the mountains to save survivors from an isolated aircraft. His services are available to non-military personnel, and the lives pararescuemen have saved during past years have contributed significantly to our cold war operations around the world. In Southeast Asia they have been lowered into dense jungle growth, alone, to render aid to downed aircrews and return them to safety. On occasion they have been required to stand off hostile forces during the rescue mission, and have refused recovery until the mission was completed.

4. These men, small in number and scattered throughout the world, perform a truly outstanding service. Because they are such a unique force, we feel they should be recognized as such. ARRS is presently authorized only 244 such highly trained men to cover the globe. Today, and even more in the future, the bulk of the input will be from basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas. These young, aggressive, dedicated volunteers deserve the distinction that goes with a tough, challenging and demanding job.

5. The maroon beret was selected to indicate the medical duties and life saving qualifications of the pararescueman. Green is utilized by the Army Special Forces, and the bright blue is worn by PACAF and SAC Security Control Forces. The parachutists emblem would be worn on the beret until a silver replica of the ARRS emblem could be manufactured. A graphic reproduction of the desired emblem is attached.

6. The beret would be awarded to each graduate of the Pararescue Technician Training School. The rise in morale that could be gained by such a simple and inexpensive expedient could well have a positive effect on the reenlistment problem that is becoming apparent within the pararescue field. Due to a lack of recognition in terms of such factors as Dual Hazard Pay, Proficiency Pay, and Variable Reenlistment Bonus, information available to us indicates that a significant number of pararescuemen will probably not reenlist at the conclusion of their first term. Loss of such a highly trained and skilled resource is a cause of deep concern.

7. In the interest of recognition, retention, and morale, it is requested that authorization for this distinctive item of uniform clothing be favorably considered.

ALLISON C. BROOKS, Colonel, USAF
Commander

1 Atch
Emblem

Distinctive Headgear for Pararescue Personnel

Commander
76th ARRSq

1. The following request is submitted in accordance with para 3,6,11 of ABODC Pararescue Letter #1. Pararescue personnel are seeking a distinctive headgear and insignia.

2. Considerations and Recommendation:

a. A sample of the desired headgear and a photograph of an individual wearing the headgear is forwarded for evaluation. The headgear will be worn under the following restrictions:

(1) The beret will be worn only with two piece fatigue uniform with bloused boots; only during working hours.

(2) It will not be worn with 1505's or AF Blues.

b. Procurement and Supply Source: The maroon beret and insignia can be procured easily and the cost is minimal. Pararescue personnel are willing to support the initial cost.

c. Justification: Pararescue personnel are assigned to Air Rescue Service for, and serve in a career capacity. Pararescue plays a vital role in the Air Rescue mission which warrants much individual effort on the part of every pararescueman. Their mission denotes some distinction which corresponds with other active units in the armed services today. The beret has had a definite effect in creating high morale and dedication which is required in any specialist field. The wearing of the maroon beret with two piece fatigue uniform will not lower the Air Force uniform standards. Other units such as the Forward Air Controllers use distinctive headgear. Pararescue performance in the combat areas and in the support of the space program warrants some note of distinction. The beret will become a symbol and will have a definite effect in retaining younger airman in the service and attracting a high calibre individual required for the pararescue field.

d. Conclusion: The adoption of the beret as a distinctive headgear for pararescue will promote the much desired "Esprit De Corp" and induce incentive which pararescue badly needs. The cost of a beret and insignia is very little compared with the effect it will have in retention of younger airman who are receiving costly specialized training.

RODNEY E HOUGHTON, Major, USAF
Pararescue Officer

2 Atchs
1. Front view of beret
2. Side view of beret