

PARARESCUE FACT SHEET

Pararescuemen of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) are among the most highly trained, dedicated professionals in the armed forces.

Pararescuemen, called PJs for short, are all volunteers. They are precision parachutists, skilled medical technicians and experts in survival. They are highly trained in SCUBA diving, mountain climbing and tree jumping. In short, they are well equipped with the techniques they need to do their jobs - save lives.

The history of pararescue began in August 1943 when 21 persons bailed out of a disabled C-46 over an uncharted jungle near the China-Burma border. So remote was the crash site that the only means of getting help to the survivors was by paradrop. Lieutenant Colonel Don Flickinger and two medical corpsmen volunteered for the assignment. For a month these men, aided by natives, cared for the injured until the party was brought to safety.

News commentator Eric Sevareid was one of the men to survive this ordeal. He later wrote of the men who risked their lives to save his: "Gallant is a precious word; they deserve it."

The formal training of a PJ is a never-ending program. They continually strive to perfect procedures while constantly searching for new techniques. The most recent major development in pararescue was the combination of parachuting with SCUBA techniques. When ready to jump, the SCUBA-equipped pararescueman carries as much as 170 pounds of equipment. Over his rubber wet suit he wears two breathing tanks, a hose and face mask, two parachutes, two life preservers, swim fins and surface snorkel and carries a life raft, diver's knife and medical kit.

ARRS pararescuemen have provided continued support of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Apollo and SKYLAB missions and are constantly training to remain responsive to NASA's needs.

Some of the most inspiring stories originating from the conflict in Southeast Asia involved heroic deeds performed by PJs. Daily, they risked their lives flying over hostile territory to find friendly forces needing aid. Daily PJs volunteered to ride a rescue hoist cable into a Vietnamese jungle to aid wounded infantrymen and injured pilots whose aircraft had been shot down. Daily, pararescuemen provided medical treatment for injured and wounded men picked up from the jungles.

Distinctive recognition came to the pararescuemen in early 1966. General John P. McConnell, then Air Force Chief of Staff, approved the wearing of the maroon beret. This badge of esteem symbolizes the blood sacrificed by pararescuemen and their devotion to duty in aiding others in distress. To pararescuemen, living up to the ARRS motto, "That Others May Live," is a daily reality.

The primary purpose of ARRS is to save lives. The work of the pararescuemen is an important phase of the Rescue concept. Airmen, soldiers and civilians the world over have come to know that whenever trouble strikes, the highly trained pararescuemen of ARRS are ready to come to their aid.

For example, in one two-week period PJs were called to aid two Russian transport merchant seamen in two different areas. The first mission involved a badly burned sailor on a Russian transport vessel in the Atlantic, 700 miles from nearest land. Two PJs, stationed in the Azores, were flown to the Russian ship. They parachuted near the ship, treated the sailor until the ship reached port days later and saved his life. Two weeks later another distress call from a Russian ship was relayed to ARRS. This time the ship was a fishing vessel in the Pacific off the Oregon coast. A team of three pararescuemen from Portland parachuted into the Pacific. They treated the Russian sailor for serious back and head injuries caused by a fall. When the ship was close enough, a Coast Guard vessel picked up the sailor and took him ashore to a hospital.

Missions like these make the small, 300-man corps of Air Force pararescuemen respected and relied upon by all men in trouble.

PREREQUISITES FOR ACCEPTANCE INTO PARARESCUE TRAINING

GENERAL

The applicant should have a history of outdoor adaptability and the ability to absorb military discipline. He should be willing to contribute to team effort and to appreciate the role played by the USAF aircrew member. He should understand and appreciate the moral and military obligation to provide maximum rescue effort in the event of an accident or with the advent of an aerospace recovery mission. He should understand and be dedicated to the overall humanitarian mission of ARRS.

SPECIFIC

1. United States citizen.
2. Enlist in the United States Air Force.
3. Eligible for overseas duty.
4. Thirty years of age or less.

5. Physically qualified for parachute jump status, diving and Class II flying status as outlined in APM 160-43 and Article 15-30, Manual of the Medical Department, United States Navy.
6. Volunteer for parachute duty.
7. Volunteer for diving duty.
8. Possess a minimum ACB or AQE general aptitude index of 6 or percentile score of 60.
9. Possess all 1's on physical profile.
10. HEIGHT AND WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS - None.
11. Physically able to perform:
 - a. 1600 yard swim using breast and side stroke.
 - b. One-mile run in 8-1/2 minutes.
 - c. Six chinups.
 - d. Twenty-two pushups.
 - e. Twenty situps.(Items "b" and "e" should be performed with only a two or three minute breathing period)

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. The primary selection of pararescue trainees is accomplished during Basic Military Training; however, personnel already serving on active duty should contact their CBPO for application procedures.
2. All ARRS pararescuemen are volunteers.

FORMAL SCHOOLS

1. PARARESCUE PRE-CONDITIONING SCHOOL - LACKLAND AFB, TX--EIGHT WEEKS. This school starts immediately after completion of BASIC MILITARY TRAINING.
2. Parachutist--Three weeks at the Army Airborne Parachutists School, Ft Benning, GA.
3. Survival--Two weeks at the USAF Advanced Survival School, Fairchild AFB, WA.
4. SCUBA--Four weeks at the Underwater Swimmers School, Key West, FL, or San Diego, CA.
5. Pararescue--Eighteen weeks at the Pararescue Technician School, Kirtland AFB, NM.

TRANSITION TRAINING

1. Transition parachute training includes open field, tree and SCUBA jumps. Twelve jumps of various types are required to qualify for operational status.

2. Training in ground communications, use of special equipment, mission procedures, map reading and mountain climbing, plus at Hill AFB, UT, the Pararescue Trainee will receive an extensive Pararescue Medical Course.

OPERATIONAL DUTIES

Upon completion of initial training, pararescuemen are assigned to units of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, a subcommand of the Military Airlift Command. Duties include operational flying on one or more of the following aircraft: HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant, HH-3 Jolly Green Giant, HH-1 Huey Helicopters and the HC-130 Hercules fixed-wing aircraft.