

SHORT HISTORY OF UNITED STATES AIR FORCE PARARESCUE

1942 TO 1989

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1. **SCOPE OF PARARESCUE SURFACE OPERATIONS.** In order to better understand the following history, it is necessary to understand the scope of pararescue surface operations through the basic tactics pararescue forces use. Pararescue duties and operations emerge from the employment of two tactics—limited surface operations (LSO) and extended surface operations (ESO). Each tactic generally includes an aerial operations phase. Both tactics apply across the full spectrum of peacetime and wartime operations.

a. LSO Tactic. This tactic defines employment of integral pararescue aircrew elements. These elements provide guidance to the aircraft commander for on-scene operations; render on scene triage, emergency medical treatment, and continuing en route field medical care; conduct survivor handling; and provide survival, evasion, resistance, and escape (SERE) expertise. With special mission training, pararescue aircrew elements provide defensive system operations, scanning, and augmentation of other aircrew activities when needed. Surface employment may be preplanned or extemporaneous, is always for short duration, and is never beyond direct air access mission in which the aircrew is able to fly the aircraft directly to the objective and effect the recovery.

b. ESO Tactic. This tactic defines employment of pararescue teams. When threat, aircraft limitations, higher-priority missions, geographic conditions, or intelligence considerations preclude direct access to an objective by recovery aircraft, theater commanders in chief (CINC) and Joint Task Force (JTF) commanders can employ pararescue forces to conduct ESO. Pararescue Teams function to provide surface search, contact, on-scene authentication, security, survival assistance, on-scene triage, emergency and field medical care, evasion assistance, surface movement, aircraft reception, and a recovery capability. The pararescue team and the supporting operations and intelligence units always preplan surface employment. The planned surface activities are the primary mission with air operations supporting the delivery or recovery of the employing forces. Mission planners tailor these operations to meet the specific requirements of the theater CINC or JTF commander, but a single operation normally lasts less than 10 days. In certain situations, pararescue elements attach to other surface forces for conduct of extended surface operations.

2. **Origin.** July 1947 marks the official origin of Air Force pararescue forces; actually, US Army Air Forces Pararescue at that time. However, the Air Transport Command (the early forerunner to the Military Airlift Command) successfully employed a pararescue-type extended surface operations capability to render survival, medical, and evasion assistance during World War II. Parachute qualified medical personnel conducted operations as early as 1942 in the Philippines and 1943 in Thailand and Burma. The rescue of Eric Sevareid with other notables by Lieutenant Colonel Don Flickinger, Sergeant Harold Passey, and Corporal William MacKenzie was the most famous of these accounts. Even though it was January 1947 when Colonel Kight, Commander, Air Rescue Service (ARS), gave the go ahead to organize six five-man (one doctor,

two medics, and two survival specialists) pararescue teams, it was a mission in May 1947 that generated the interest to finalize the concept. Captain Pope B, “Doc” Holiday jumped from a OA-10 Catalina to an injured crew member who had bailed out of a crippled B-17 into the Nicaraguan jungle. Without Doc Holiday’s assistance, the crewmember would have surely perished before ground rescue teams could have reached him. As with the earlier forces, the pararescue forces of 1947 were designed to employ to the surface for the purpose of providing assistance to isolated personnel. Original pararescue forces were organized in teams ranging from five to eleven men. These early forces reached their apex in 1952 when ARS had a force of 45 seven-man teams to meet its worldwide requirements. Two early publications define the organization and function of these initial pararescue forces.

a. ARS Manual 50-1, Air Rescue Service Training Manual (1950/51). “The pararescue and land rescue teams should not be visualized as two separate rescue teams having comparable operating and training procedures; instead they should be viewed as a single rescue team composed of two officers and nine airmen with a common mission. This operational facility of an Air Rescue flight provides five individuals who are qualified as parachutists, with the balance of the team (six) as the spear heading land rescue and evacuation party.” The manual goes on to outline training that closely mirrors the training we require of our forces today.

b. The USAF Dictionary, Air University Press (1956). “Pararescue, n. Rescue by persons parachuted to the distressed person or persons; specif., an operational procedure of the Air Rescue Service: See note. Attrib., as in pararescue school, pararescue team. Note: Pararescue by the Air Rescue Service is designed esp. for areas inaccessible to other modes of rescue. It involves air survey of the rescue sites, accurate parachute landings, emergency medical care, use of survival procedures, and evacuation by either air or surface.”

3. KOREAN WAR. The first opportunity to employ the new pararescue force in combat was during the Korean War. We cannot determine whether pararescue teams actually employed by parachute behind enemy lines during this conflict; however, some jump missions were conducted in areas peripheral to the combat zone. American forces generally used amphibious aircraft (SA-16s) and helicopters (H-5s and H-19s) for combat search and rescue (CSAR) missions. Pararescuemen were on board at least some of these aircraft to serve as combat swimmers and provide medical assistance.

a. Tactics. Because of the nature of the hostilities, CSAR missions in Korea were conducted from numerous secret forward bases with at least one forward base on an outlying island that was behind the enemy’s front lines. Commitment of aerial assets was limited to objectives with positive identification. Tactics for the air rescue forces never evolved beyond direct air access recoveries by both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft alike. Even with these limited tactics, rescue forces tallied an impressive record by rescuing a total of 9,898 United Nations personnel including 996 combat saves.

b. Need for ESO Tactics. Many mission histories illustrate a need for a force to serve as a surface-to-air link to provide positive identification and control of downed aircrew members before committing the valuable air assets. The unfortunate outcome was that some downed American airmen underwent prolonged and undue hardship during extended evasion. Attempts to rescue them were held in abeyance because our forces could not ascertain whether they were

friendly or enemy through aerial observation alone. Tactical use of pararescue teams using ESO tactic could have solved this problem.

4. SPECIAL AIR WARFARE. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, a contingent of pararescue personnel was integrated into Air Commando units to conduct special air warfare surface operations in support of certain global taskings. Even though little can be said about these operations in this document, this employment of pararescue forces points to their use in a variety of surface roles.

5. CRITICAL SHORTFALL OF PARARESCUE FORCES. During the period 1952 to 1960, USAF Pararescue almost went out of business. Officers were depleted from the force structure except for one or two management positions and the total force was drawn down to about 60 active-duty personnel and a small contingent of reserve forces. As a result of this shortsightedness, the Air Force was faced with a crisis when new requirements arose for pararescue forces to conduct aerospace materiel recovery and CSAR in Southeast Asia (SEA). These new demands could only be met through a special project called **Operation Webfoot**. During this project, the Air Force cut every corner in recruiting and training to increase the pararescue forces by about seven-fold. Because the Air Force's primary concern was quantity, pararescue's leadership was confronted with the extremely difficult task of meeting the Air Force's demands, yet developing a quality force capable of the tasks that lay ahead. Just to place a semiskilled pararescue specialist in an operational unit requires more than a year of specialized training. The training includes Pararescue Indoctrination Training, Airborne Parachutist Course, Combat Diver Qualification Course, Combat Survival Course, Water Survival Training, USN Underwater Egress Training, Pararescue Specialist Course, and Arctic Survival Training (conditional).

6. AEROSPACE MATERIEL RECOVERY. Pararescue forces provide support to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Air Force space and missile programs for recovery of personnel and materiel. Development of the capability to perform these recoveries began in 1959 when pararescue forces assigned at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, perfected para-scuba techniques. This capability allows pararescuemen to parachute fully scuba equipped into the water to aid survivors or recover valuable materiel. Actual recoveries began in 1960 when pararescue teams parachuted into the Pacific Ocean near Hawaii to recover extremely important items of aerospace hardware. In October, a team recovered the film cassette, which photographed the first separation of a reentry vehicle from its rocket. In November, a team recovered Discoverer XIII, the first time anyone in the world had recovered an object from orbit (as opposed to trajectory). Pararescue forces provided either direct or backup recovery support for the Discoverer, Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, Apollo-Soyuz, Sky Lab, and Crested Rooster projects and are currently supporting the space shuttle program. Because of the sensitive nature of much of the materiel pararescue forces recovered, we can only mention a few recoveries here. Those were the Discoverers XIII, XIV, XV, XXIX, and XXXVI capsules and the Thor rocket/Echo balloon NASA data capsule during 1960-61, astronaut M. Scott Carpenter and the Aurora 7 Mercury capsule in May 1962, astronauts Virgil L. Grissom and John W. Young and the Gemini III capsule in March 1965, and astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and David R. Scott and the Gemini VIII capsule in March 1966. Pararescue forces' participation in aerospace materiel recovery paid tremendous dividends in that 88 percent of all satellites launched with recovery as a goal were saved.

7. SOUTHEAST ASIA. Further combat application of pararescue forces came with the onset of hostilities in Southeast Asia (SEA). The demand for a different type of rescue capability evolved. Early on, HU-16 amphibious aircraft with pararescue teams and HH-43 light-lift helicopters covered the CSAR requirements; however, American forces soon recognized the need and advantage of the heavy-lift helicopter for CSAR building on the experience gained in Korea. Their ability to control the overhead airspace and to sanitize most of the land area surrounding a downed aircrew member amplified this advantage. However, to use the helicopter effectively, it had to be used with a search and rescue task force (SARTF).

a. SARTF. The composition of the SARTF included a forward air controller (observation aircraft) to search and mark enemy targets and the mission objective, a rescue combat air patrol (fighters) to protect against enemy aircraft, a rescue escort (attack aircraft) to interdict enemy ground forces, an airborne mission commander (transport/tanker) to provide command and control and aerial refueling, and a high and low recovery aircraft (helicopters). The SARTF concept used in SEA is impractical in most of today's threat environments.

b. Pararescue's Role. To complete the surface-to-air link with the SARTF, the helicopter either landed or hoisted (most common) a crewmember to the ground to assist the downed aircrew member. Originally medics were used to serve as the surface-to-air link. CSAR aircrews soon determined the average medic did not have the mettle for this job. The Air Force adapted pararescuemen to fill this role and, as enemy ground threats increased; they became defensive systems operators (scanning, gunnery, and to dispense flares) as well. As the pararescuemen's duties became more involved, additional members were added to the aircrews (mission by mission basis) in order to have a pararescueman available to employ to the surface while others defended the aircraft. On several occasions, pararescue personnel were purposely employed to the surface and left behind to conduct a limited surface search while the aircraft loitered elsewhere. There were even a number of occasions where one aircraft employed the pararescuemen and another aircraft returned a few hours or a day or so later for the recovery; that is, to recover the pararescuemen and their objective (either isolated personnel or priority equipment).

c. Night Recovery Methods. With an increase in the sophistication of enemy threat, some helicopters with night recovery systems (forerunner to Pave Low) were added to the CSAR fleet. This capability never saw maturity during the SEA conflict; however, the experiences incurred in night operations proved an absolute need for a surface-to-air link to contact and guide or move the objective to the recovery vehicle whether in a limited or extended role. Pararescuemen filled this role.

d. A Time for Valor. During the SEA conflict, Air Force rescue forces saved the lives of 4,120 personnel of which 2,780 were combat saves. The rescue forces included an in-theater pararescue force of approximately 150 personnel during the peak activities. Among the thousands of SAR and CSAR missions conducted, pararescue forces also participated in such prominent operations as Boxer 22, Bat 21, Cow Poke 22, the raid on the Son Tay Prison, the evacuation of Quang Tri, Eagle Pull (evacuation of US personnel from Phnom Penh, Cambodia), Frequent Wind (evacuation of US personnel from Saigon, Republic of Vietnam), and the Mayaguez incident with the associated assault on Koh Tang Island. These feats were not achieved without a price. Although pararescue forces comprised just .03 percent of all American

forces that fought in SEA, their killed-in-action (KIA) losses were approximately five percentage points higher than the average. Twenty-two were KIA while two others were taken prisoner-of-war. Airman First Class James E. Pleiman was the first KIA, which occurred during a rescue mission in the Gulf of Tonkin, 14 March 1966. The HU-16 Pleiman was on had landed in the water to pick up two downed pilots and was hit by shore batteries. Pleiman was one of two crewmembers lost. Among the many awards for their acts of heroism, 10 pararescuemen were decorated with the Air Force Cross, the Nation's second highest award for valor (see note). These acts of heroism convinced the Air Force early on (1 July 1966) to distinguish USAF Pararescue forces with the maroon beret, special badge, and bloused trousers with combat boots. Of the 10 accounts of pararescue valor that earned the Air Force Cross, this history includes three that best illustrate the surface role of pararescue forces in Southeast Asia. **NOTE:** During the SEA conflict, only 19 Air Force Crosses were awarded to Air Force enlisted personnel. Air Force rescue aircrew members (both officer and enlisted) garnered a total of 38 Air Force Crosses.

1) Airman First Class William H. Pitsenbarger. On 11 April 1966, near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam (a battle area 33 miles southeast of Bien Hoa), Airman Pitsenbarger gave his own life to save the lives of nine of his fellow countrymen while providing assistance to many others. Enemy forces in thick jungle surrounded C COMPANY, an element of the US Army's 1st Infantry Division. With the tree canopies reaching up to 150 feet, the only way to get the wounded out was with hoist-equipped helicopters. Two HH-43 helicopters scrambled on this hazardous mission. Pitsenbarger, a pararescueman on the lead helicopter, volunteered to go down the hoist to administer emergency treatment for the seriously wounded and to coordinate the hoist evacuations by two helicopters. The helicopters came in successfully five times to evacuate the nine soldiers. On the sixth attempt, Pitsenbarger's helicopter was hit hard by enemy ground fire and had to jettison the hoist cable and litter and egress to safety at a nearby plantation strip. C Company then called in artillery support making further rescue attempts by the remaining helicopter impossible. Pitsenbarger continued to care for and prepare improvised stretchers to move C Company's wounded. Then the company was attacked and mostly overrun by a large enemy formation. With complete disregard for his own life, Pitsenbarger scrambled around the remaining defended area collecting rifles and ammunition from the dead and redistributing them to the men still able to fight. He also returned fire to the enemy attackers. During this ordeal, Airman Pitsenbarger was wounded and later, during the night, was hit and mortally wounded. The next morning, after reinforcements reached the C Company survivors, a helicopter crew brought Pitsenbarger's body out of the jungle. Of the 180 men with whom he fought his last battle, only fourteen were uninjured. William H. Pitsenbarger is probably USAF Pararescue's most famous war hero and was the first airman to be awarded the Air Force Cross posthumously. There are several Air Force awards and structures named in his honor. An excerpt from his citation tells it best: "His bravery and determination in the face of overwhelming odds are in keeping with the highest standards and traditions of the American fighting man under attack."

2) Airman Second Class Duane D. Hackney. On 6 February 1967, Airman Hackney was inserted from an Hh-3 helicopter on two separate occasions in an attempt to rescue an American fighter pilot downed in a heavily defended, hostile jungle area near the Mu Gia Pass, Republic of Vietnam. Despite the presence of hostile forces firmly entrenched in the vicinity, Airman Hackney volunteered to be lowered into the jungle to search for the downed pilot. He

searched for two hours, dodging enemy patrols, until the mission was called off because of weather. The pilot had stopped his radio transmissions, a clue that enemy troops were on his tail. Later that afternoon, the downed pilot began to transmit again and Hackney's crew headed back to the rescue area; They had to get him out before dark, or the odds on success would drop drastically. Hackney was again lowered into the jungle to conduct a surface search. This time he located the downed pilot badly injured but alive and assisted him with the hoisting operation into the helicopter. As the HH-3 aircrew was flying their post-recovery egress route, enemy 37 mm antiaircraft fire tore into the helicopter's midship causing extensive damage and fire aboard the aircraft. Disregarding his own safety, Hackney provided the survivor with his already fitted parachute and then located another parachute for himself. As he was sizing it and had just slipped his arms through the harness, another 37 mm round struck the crippled aircraft careening it out of control. The force of the explosion blew Airman Hackney through the open cabin door. Although stunned, he managed to successfully deploy the partially attacked parachute about 200 feet above the ground and make a safe landing in a tree. The helicopter crashed killing all the other occupants. A companion helicopter later recovered him. For his selfless dedication, Duane D. Hackney was awarded the Air Force Cross and went on to be the most decorated enlisted airman during the SEA conflict.

3) Sergeant Michael E. Fish. During the period 18 through 19 February 1969, Sergeant Fish imperiled himself for 15 hours in an enemy infested area to render assistance to the victims of a crashed US Army UH-1 helicopter. The UH-1 had crashed in a mountainous, densely- jungle canyon 25 miles southwest of Tuy Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam. Five persons were reported trapped inside the aircraft wreckage. Fish and a fire fighter were lowered to the ground by hoist from a hh-43 aircraft. Despite sporadic enemy fire they quickly freed three of the trapped survivors and assisted with hoisting them aboard the overhead HH-43. And army UH-1 picked up another survivor and a deceased soldier from the crash. The pilot of the crashed aircraft remained trapped in the wreckage. As darkness overtook the operation, the rescue task force was forced to withdraw leaving Fish alone to care for and defend the survivor. Although completely surrounded by hostile forces, fish's presence kept the enemy at bay until the task force could return early on 19 February. With the aid of additional crash entry equipment, Fish was able to remove the pilot from the wreckage and assist his evacuation by hoist. For this extraordinary display of bravery to save a fellow countryman, Michael E. Fish was awarded the Air Force Cross.

8. OPERATIONAL AEROSPACE DOCTRINE. Operational aerospace doctrine for pararescue forces comes from AFM 2-36, Search, Rescue, and Recovery Operations, 3 January 1967. This manual provides the current operational aerospace doctrine and policies governing aerospace search, rescue, and recovery operations for personnel and materiel during both peace and war. The following paraphrases from AFM 2-36 define pararescue doctrine.

a. Operational Essentials. Search, rescue, and recovery doctrine identifies certain operational essentials, which provide the following basic premise for employing pararescue forces. Pararescue forces provide the capability to render on-scene assistance either by vertical lift aircraft methods or by parachuting to the scene to provide care and assistance until evacuation can be achieved. When an aircraft cannot retrieve the objective, pararescue forces provide the capability to assist (move) and/or secure the objective with subsequent pickup by surface vessel or land vehicle.

b. Pararescue. As well, AFM 2-36 provides the following synopsis of pararescue. Use of pararescue is a phase of aerial recovery, which is unique to air operations in that pararescue teams penetrate incident sites by parachute, provide emergency medical care, provide for survival, and assist in returning personnel and materiel to safety. Pararescue personnel are highly trained in precision parachuting during day or night operations, and parachuting into water areas when quipped with self-contained-underwater-breathing apparatus. When parachute penetration is not feasible, it may be necessary to reach the scene by surface means to provide survival assistance and recovery. Pararescue teams members are also highly qualified, physically and professionally, to organize and lead land search or recovery teams.

9. TACTICAL ENHANCEMENTS. Actual tactical enhancements of pararescue's ability to perform extended surface operations began in 1976. This was long overdue for the actual framework for this enhancement was established in operational aerospace doctrine in 1967 (still current). After the conclusion of America's involvement in SEA, the Air Force experienced a three-year lapse before regenerating interest in enhancing the Air Force's CSAR capabilities. As the executive agent for these matters, the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) convened a Pararescue Combat Readiness Conference in June 1976 to study the lessons learned from the SEA conflict and plot a future course of action. Certain significant conclusions, as quoted from the minutes, were drawn from this conference. Major General Saunders, ARRS Commander, approved these minutes and stated that these findings and recommendations would significantly contribute to the improved effectiveness of the ARRS combat mission.

a. Limitations. "Since current tactics and equipment do not provide our helicopters, regardless of type, armor, or fire power, sufficient protection against this threat, rescue by helicopter can only be provided where the enemy threat is known to be minimal. Obviously, this limits our helicopter rescue capability and requires us to modify the SEA rescue concept and develop other tactics more clandestine in nature."

b. Pararescue Combat Role. "The (current) pararescue combat role and the SEA type rescue scenario are not presently a viable concept due to the hand-held infra-red missile threat. In cases where the survivor is down in a hostile environment, he may have to evade to an appropriate area where rescue can be effected. If the survivor is injured or unaware of the pickup coordinates, it will be the pararescueman's responsibility to locate the survivor and provide escort or transport him to the desired location (for recovery). The pararescuemen will be deployed (employed) by any means available where he will move to the designated area and contact the survivor and shepherd him to a safe area for pickup."

c. Pararescue Training/Qualifications. "A highly trained/qualified pararescue force, capable of penetrating the high threat areas associated with our combat contingencies, is mandatory to allow ARRS to effect the combat mission.... Pararescuemen must receive training similar to that of other services for clandestine operations to allow ARRS to have an independent capability during CSAR operations. This is not to be interpreted that ARRS is infringing into areas where DOD has specialized units for clandestine operations."

10. Since 1976 Conference. Since 1976, pararescue forces have been working toward the goals of the Pararescue Combat Readiness Conference. Through a great deal of trial and error, the pararescue forces have developed tactics and operational procedures commensurate with

today's search, rescue, and recovery requirements. However, because of ever-changing enemy capabilities this process is an ongoing evolution. It should be noted that pararescue forces have always taken the lead over those providing like tactical policy for CSAR dedicated aircraft. The following chronology is presented in active voice and present tense to add emphasis to the dynamic nature of the principle activities and policy actions effecting pararescue forces since the 1976 conference. These events directly affect the Air Force pararescue situation, as it exists today. Of the numerous SAR missions since 1976, the chronology includes four histories (although not combat), which demonstrate the employment potential for pararescue forces from other than Air Force rescue-coded aircraft. The synergism of special operations with CSAR forces under the Military Airlift Command (MAC) provides the mindset that acknowledges this employment potential.

a. April 1977. Pararescue forces stage their first high altitude mountaineering operation on Mount McKinley in Alaska. This training operation establishes the framework for a rapid response capability to meet the Alaskan theater's high altitude mountain rescue and recovery requirements for isolated personnel and sensitive aerospace materiel. The six-man team lead by Staff Sergeant Robert L. LaPointe tests and determines the specific needs for cold weather clothing items, prophylactic medications, supplemental oxygen, and a high-altitude diet. During the course of the operation, three members of the team climb to the summit of the 20,320-foot mountain.

b. October 1977. HQ ARRS conducts a test, exercise "Red Foot" to determine the pararescue forces' capability to conduct extended surface operations for recovery of Strategic Air Command aircrews downed deep behind enemy lines. This test requires four pararescue teams to conduct several evader contacts over a distance of greater than 300 miles in the desert environment (Sand Pass, Utah to Lake Mead, Nevada). Resupply comes from tactical airdrops, cache, and partisan forces. As well as accomplishing the overland movement objectives, the teams test various articles of field equipment; conduct evasion assistance including medical care, and the use of night vision goggles to facilitate night movement.

c. June 1978. Pararescue forces stage their second mountaineering operation on Mount McKinley in response to the Alaskan theater's high altitude mountain rescue and recovery requirements. This training operation demonstrates and validates pararescue's high-altitude mountain rescue and recovery capability. On 9 June 1978, Staff Sergeant Robert L. LaPointe leads five members of the ten-man team to the summit of the mountain. The team's members come from both active-duty and Reserve-component forces. The Air Force's Aerospace Audio Visual Service documents the operation for an "Air Force Now" release.

d. July 1979. Rescue Mission, Alaskan Air Command (ACC) Mission #150, for a Japanese mountain climber, Mitsuyoshi Hamatawi, suffering from altitude sickness at the 16,600-foot level on Mount McKinley, 27 through 28 July 1979. This mission clearly demonstrates pararescue forces' ability to employ from any available aircraft and to respond to a high-altitude mountain rescue and recovery tasking. Hamatawi and his party are between the West Rim and the Cassine Ridge, an area not accessible for helicopter landings because of the severe slope. Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) officials note this mission for being the highest "hovering hoist" in history. Rotary-wing aircraft have landed at higher altitudes, but have not hovered to make a pickup. The rescue crew and a two-man pararescue element lead by Staff

Sergeant Gilbert E. Vaillancourt; an overhead HC-130 aircraft to provide weather information and a command, control, and communications link between the climbing party, the CH-47, and the RCC; and an Air Force HH-3 helicopter positioned at Talkeetna to provide a rapid transfer of the victim from the CH-47 to an Anchorage medical facility. The mission begins late on 27 July; however, because of foul weather and darkness, the task force postpones the rescue effort until the afternoon of 28 July. At 28/1300L, the CH-47 crew flies their aircraft to a point where the aircraft must position over the ill climber in a high (200 foot plus), out-of-ground-effect hover 6,000 feet above the valley floor. The aircraft carries only 10 minutes of reserve fuel to be light enough for the high-altitude hover. While in a hover, the helicopter lowers one of the oxygen-equipped pararescuemen and a stokes litter to the surface. As the hover continues, the aircraft develops two in-flight emergencies; the hoist operator's intercom fails and the aircraft life support oxygen fail. The onboard pararescueman relays communications by hand signals so the rescue effort can continue. The pararescueman on the surface quickly secures Hamatawi in the stokes litter and the helicopter hoist lifts both aboard. As the pararescuemen secure Hamatawi in the cabin and begin medical treatment, the oxygen system failure and flashing low-fuel indicators force the pilot to enter immediate autorotation toward the valley below. The CH-47 successfully recovers at Talkeetna. This massive effort results in *saving one life*.

e. January 1982:

1) The Air Force upgrades the pararescue specialty description in AFM 39-1, Airman Classification, I January 1982, to reflect inclusive peacetime and wartime duties and responsibilities outlined in the 1976 conference.

2) HQ MAC establishes MAC Programming Plan (PROP) 82-19, 24 January 1982, in response to the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, direction to consolidate Tactical Air Command's special operations forces with MAC's combat rescue forces under MAC to facilitate their efficient employment.

f. February 1983. HQ MAC, Special Order G-27, 14 February 1983, with amendment Special Order G-158, 10 May 1983, by order of the Secretary of the Air Force, constitutes, activates, and assigns Headquarters ARS to 23 AF effective 1 March 1983. HQ ARRS's post Southeast Asia employment policy dictates an overly conservative approach, hardly the forte for the pararescue forces who are recruited and indoctrinated to perform extremely difficult and, often, perilous acts to rescue personnel in distress or recover priority materiel. The special operations *can-do attitude* that comes with 23 AF is refreshing for these forces. As well, this attitude clearly exemplifies the 23 AF motto, "Courage to Succeed."

g. August 1983:

1) HQ 23 AF/CC letter to HQ ARRS/CC, High Glide Ratio Parachute (HGRP), 12 August 1983, authorizes development of a program to qualify pararescue forces in use of HGRP to improve the parachuting techniques for these forces.

2) HQ ARRS provides pararescue mission employment tactics and procedures in ARRSR 3-1, Combat Tactics, 31 August 1983, for conduct of CSAR operations. Participation in

numerous JCS, Theater, and Service sponsored exercises time-tests and improves these pararescue tactics and operational procedures.

h. September 1983:

1) HQ ARRS/DO letter to 1550th Aircrew Training and Test Wing (ATTW)/DO, Pararescue HGRP Program, 20 September 1983, explains Phase I of the program and designates 1550 ATTW as office of primary responsibility for completing this program. The program requires pararescue forces to develop full tactical qualifications in military free fall and use of the MT1-X Ram Air Parachute System (RAPS).

2) HQ MAC, Special Order G-353, 28 September 1983, relieves assignment of the 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing, Eglin AFB FL; the 41st Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing, McClellan AFB CA; and the 1550th Aircrew Training and Test Wing, Kirtland AFB NM, from HQ ARRS and assigns these units to HQ 23 AF effective 1 October 1983. This change allows 23 AF to streamline its command and control arrangements by assuming direct control of all operational and training rescue and weather reconnaissance forces. The change includes active-duty pararescue forces for they are assigned to each of these wings. The pararescue forces realize immediate benefits both through broader acceptance of their ESO capabilities and a willingness to employ these capabilities in exercises and real-world SAR missions. HQ ARRS remains assigned to 23 AF to manage the Air Force Coordination Center (AFRCC) and the United States Mission Control Center (MCC).

i. January 1984. HQ MAC adds pararescue forces to Detachment 4, Twenty-Third Air Force Combat Operations Staff (23 AFCOS), Pope AFB NC, as a synergist to existing combat control forces to provide a capability for augmenting aerial SAR operations, conducting surface SAR operations, managing medical triage situations, and coordinating aeromedical evacuation in support of special tactics activities.

j. March 1984:

1) HQ 23 AF hosts a Pararescue Management Working Group that identifies the following key issues. Major General Mall, the commander, 23 AF, endorses these findings.

a) JCS and Joint Publications must recognize and identify pararescue forces separate from aircraft assets.

b) Any update of operational aerospace doctrine must adequately address pararescue roles, missions, and capabilities.

c) HQ MAC must improve current tactical employment policy to adequately identify pararescue's capabilities, delete unrealistic restrictions, and provide definitive policy for surface-employed pararescue teams.

d) Pararescue forces need a separate organization to properly manage pararescue training, deployment, and employment requirements.

e) Planners require separate pararescue unit type codes (UTC) to support current taskings under the war plans.

f) HQ MAC must upgrade pararescue's operational procedures to facilitate combat requirements.

g) Pararescue forces need definitive, prioritized exercise objectives.

h) HQ MAC must detask pararescue forces from certain special-mission aircrew duties to allow more time for surface-employed skills.

k. April 1984. Pararescue forces successfully demonstrate the ESO tactic to USCENTAF in exercise Quick Force 84-3 through an extremely difficult scenario. The scenario involves an 1,800-mile infiltration by C-141 using special operations low level (SOLL) I tactics from Pope AFB to the Gila Bend Gunnery Range for a night parachute insertion; 110 km of night tactical overland movement over a nine-day period with two resupplies to establish contact with and provide survival, medical, evasion, and recovery assistance to evaders from two separated areas; and eventual exfiltration by a rescue SOLL capable HH-53 aircraft. The team accomplishes its exercise objectives without falling victim to the extremes of the desert environment, as did all other participating Army, Air Force, and Navy surface forces. Flawless planning and preparation serve as the keys to their success.

l. June 1984. HQ MAC upgrades the policy for pararescue recruiting and indoctrination training in MACR 33-1, Pararescue Recruiting and Training Guidelines at Operating Location (OL) J, 29 June 1984, to facilitate a tactically oriented force.

m. January 1985. HQ USCENTAF formally identifies pararescue ESO employment capabilities in COMUSCENTAF OPLAN 1000-85.

n. October 1985. The United States Air Forces, Atlantic Command (AFLANT), follows suit with USCENTAF and formally identifies pararescue ESO employment capabilities in CINCAFLANT OPLAN 2348.

o. December 1985. A HQ 23 AF Mobile Training Team completes the HGRP up-grade for active-duty and Reserve component pararescue forces using the accelerated free-fall method. The free-fall parachuting capability does not replace but supplements the existing static-line parachuting capability. It also allows pararescue forces to use high altitude high opening (HAHO) or high altitude low opening (HALO) parachuting techniques as a mission situation might dictate.

p. January 1986. HQ MAC assigns a nurse's position requiring medical education credentials to the HQ 23 AF Medical Advisor to enhance the pararescue medical training programs.

q. March 1986:

1) HQ 23 AF, 23 AF/DOX 031600Z Mar 86, Pararescue Employment in a Special Operations Environment, identifies the concept for use of pararescue forces, as part of combat

rescue and special operations capabilities, to conduct surface operations for recovery of isolated personnel in deep, hostile, or denied territory; and requests theater comments on this concept and its application.

2) HQ MAC upgrades the policy for pararescue medical care, MACR 160-34, Pararescue Emergency Medical Treatment, & March 1986, to accommodate extended surface operations in the tactical environment.

3) The United States Commander in Chief, European Command (USCINCEUR), USCINCEUR/ECJ3-SO 181425Z Mar 86, Pararescue Employment in Special Operations Environment, favorably endorses surface employment of pararescue forces for this concept.

r. April 1986:

1) The United States Commander in Chief, Central Command (USCINCCENT)/CCJ3 021521Z Apr 86, Pararescue Employment in Special Operations Environment, favorably endorses surface employment of pararescue forces for this concept.

2) The United States Commander in Chief, Pacific Command (USCINCPAC), USCINCPAC 250102Z Apr 86, Pararescue Employment in Special Operations Environment, favorably endorses surface employment of pararescue forces for this concept.

s. July 1986:

1) HQ MAC assigns a pararescue superintendent position to Det 3, 23 AFCOS (PACAF/DOS), on 1 July 1986 to function as the Pacific theater focal point for pararescue issues. Senior Master Sergeant Michael L. Wagner serves as the first superintendent to fill this position.

2) HQ MAC establishes MAC PROP 86-8, 31 July 1986, to redistribute MAC's H-53 and HC-130 aircraft. The plan calls for a transfer of all present and combat-coded rescue H-53 and most active-duty HC-130 to the Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF). The transfer includes the pararescue forces these aircraft earn.

t. August 1986:

1) The 23 AF/CC letter to CINCMAC, Air Force Combat Rescue Capability, 6 August 1986, states that: pararescue forces will be realigned to emphasize medical and survivor assistance skills; this realignment will allow pararescue to operate either on the aircraft or to get off the aircraft in an extended role to conduct ground search and recovery of isolated personnel; this concept will utilize pararescue more effectively and will act as a capability multiplier; and recommends further development of a special operations isolated personnel recovery and combat rescue capability using available pararescue forces.

2) On 25 August 1986, the Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) deactivates the 6594th Test Group, Hickam AFB HI. The test group includes a 21-man pararescue force that serves as the surface-to-air link for aerospace materiel recovery operations. The Air Force earns these pararescue forces against primary authorized aircraft (PAA). HQ AFSC transfers the aircraft to

HQ MAC as part of the program to enhance the capabilities of Air Force special operations forces (SOF). HQ MAC converts 10 of the pararescue manpower positions into aerial gunners for SOF helicopters. This action begins the downward spiral of the pararescue forces, an already extremely small force by most organizational standards. Before this first reduction, the pararescue forces consisted of a standing force of 356 active-duty authorizations with an additional 143 Reserve-component authorizations.

u) October 1986:

1) HQ MAC activates and assigns the Directorate for Combat Control and Pararescue Operations to the Military Airlift Combat Operations Staff (MACOS) effective 1 October 1986. This directorate serves as the functional manager for Air Force combat control and pararescue forces and as the single point manager for MAC parachuting operations. Lieutenant Colonel Donald A. Towner completes pararescue qualification and serves as the first division chief for the Pararescue Division under this new directorate.

2) Rescue Mission, Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) Mission #8-2229A, for stricken Italian merchant seaman aboard Liberian ship M/S Reunion, period 9 through 10 October 1986. This mission again clearly demonstrates pararescue forces' ability to employ from any available aircraft. The M/S Reunion's crewmember is overcome by acute appendicitis on late 8 or early 9 October; the ship's radioman contacts Mexican authorities who in turn contact AFRCC. The AFRCC's staff contacts numerous Air Force and US Coast Guard units to organize the fastest possible response. The best solution uses Coast Guard HC-130 aircraft to transport a three-man Air Force pararescue team lead by Master Sergeant William J. Thompson (both aircraft and team from McClellan AFB CA) 2,230 miles nonstop to the ship for open sea parachute employment on 9 October. The ship is at 16 degrees 45 minutes north, 90 degrees 45 minutes west approximately 520 miles west southwest of Acapulco, Mexico. The team provides emergency and continuing field medical care, which stabilizes the ill seaman. The same day, the California Air National Guard, in concert with an Air Force HC-130 tanker, prepositions an HH-3E helicopter from Moffett NAS CA some 1,040 miles closer to the ship at La Paz, Baja, Mexico for the recovery effort. On 10 October, the tanker and helicopter launch from La Paz using aerial refueling to allow the helicopter to fly approximately 600 miles to the ship to recover the pararescue team and seaman, then flying on to Acapulco to turn the survivor over to higher echelon medical care with the result of *saving one life*.

3) HQ MAC establishes MAC PROP 86-18, 24 October 1986, in response to HQ USAF direction to inactivate all combat-coded UH-1N rescue units as a budget reduction measure. Again, because the Air Force earns its pararescue manpower authorizations against PAA, this reduction of UH-1N aircraft depletes 43 pararescue manpower authorizations adding to the already downward spiral of the pararescue forces.

v. December 1986. HQ 23 AF develops a Space Shuttle Contingency Support Strawman, which outlines pararescue, medical, aircraft, and equipment support concepts for astronaut rescue, and medical evacuation support. The strawman concept draws almost entirely on pararescue ESO tactics for open-water operations. It requires pararescue forces on both C-130 and HH-3E aircraft. Whereas, the H-3 employment method uses standard operating procedures, the C-130 employment method projects innovative use of the pararescue tactical concept which

employs three-man teams with three motorized, inflatable watercraft by parachute. For this method, each watercraft must be packaged deflated with its motor mounted in operating configuration on the transom, a method never before perfected for parachute employment.

w. March 1987. HQ MAC/DOY letter to HQ MAC/DOT, Pararescue Team Leader Course, undated, identifies the requirement for specialized pararescue team leader training for conduct of ESO tactic and requests initiation of a formal course by the USAF Pararescue School at the 1550 Technical Training Squadron (TCHTS) on a trail and test basis to provide this training.

x. April 1987:

1) HQ MAC Special Order GA-84, 3 April 1987, deactivates Det 4, 23 AFCOS, Pope AFB NC, and designates, activates, and assigns the 1724th Combat Control Squadron (CCS) to Twenty-Third Air Force (23 AF) in its stead. Pararescue forces remain assigned to unit.

2) HQ MAC establishes a Pararescue Concept of Operations, 9 April 1987, outlining the mission, operational objectives, organization, deployment, employment, tactical application, command and control, and communications for pararescue forces.

3) HQ MAC establishes MAC PROP 86-20, 10 April 1987, in response to HQ USAF direction to inactivate certain combat-coded H-3 rescue units as a budget reduction measure. Again, because the Air Force earns its pararescue forces against PAA, this reduction of H-3 aircraft depletes 10 pararescue manpower authorizations adding to the ever-increasing downward spiral of the pararescue forces.

4) HQ MAC establishes MAC PROP 87-14, 15 April 1987. The PROP incorporates the Pararescue Concept of Operations and realigns Air Force active-duty pararescue forces, other than those assigned to the 1724 CCS, under a separate pararescue organization, the 1730th Pararescue Squadron (PRS), Eglin AFB FL, with six detachments and three operating locations. It presents a funding plan to retain the active-duty pararescue forces near their current levels at approximately 350 funded authorizations (see note). The PROP also establishes Operating Location (OL) A and OL B, 1550 TCHTS. OL A and OL B responsibilities include supporting the USAF Pararescue School and the 1550th Combat Crew Training Wing academic and practical training programs for pararescue forces. OL A conducts the Pararescue Advanced Tactical Operations Course and the Pararescue Weapons Course. OL B conducts evaluation of fully qualified pararescue personnel using advanced tactical scenarios in conjunction with the US Army Joint Readiness Training Center exercises. **NOTE:** A force this size represents about .059 percent of the Air Force's total active-duty officer and enlisted force structure (594,660). When considering the tangible and intangible benefits pararescue forces provide to the Air Force and the Nation, this is indeed an extremely small price to pay; not a lot to ask for to be able to field this tremendous capability.

y. July 1987:

1. HQ MAC Special Order GA-133, 24 July 1987, designates, activates, and assigns the 1730 Pararescue Squadron (PRS), Eglin AFB FL; Det 2, 1730 PRS, McClellan AFB CA; Det 3, 1730 PRS, Patrick AFB FL; Det 4, 1730 PRS, Woodbridge RAF, United Kingdom; Det 5,

1730 PRS, Elmendorf AFB AK, Det 6, 1730 PRS, Kirtland AFB NM; and OL A, Det 4, 1730 PRS, Keflavick NAS, Iceland to 23 AF; and OL A, 1550 TCHTS, Nellis AFB NV and OL B, 1550 TCHTS, Little Rock AFB AR to the 1550 TCHTS effective 1 August 1987. Colonel Edward A. Behling (see note) completes pararescue requalification and serves as the first commander of this new squadron. Pararescue chief enlisted managers and superintendents, in lieu of officers, operate all the units subordinate to the squadron. **NOTE:** During the early 1970s, as a major, Colonel Behling served as the USAF Pararescue School commandant for a four-year period and completed initial pararescue qualification at that time.

2. HQ MAC Special Order GA-135, 24 July 1987, deactivates OL J 1550th Combat Crew Training Wing (CCTW), and designates, activates, and assigns OL H, MACOS to MACOS in its stead, effective 1 August 1987. The change combines recruiting and indoctrination training for combat control and pararescue forces under one organization and allows MACOS's Directorate of Combat Control and Pararescue Operations to have direct control of these functions.

z. August 1987. The Commander in Chief, Military Airlift Command (CINCMAC), Analysis Group completes analysis of pararescue extended surface operations which shows this tactic can provide a significant improvement for recovery of downed aircrews in offensive counter air/air interdiction operations. Analysis estimates a need for 24 eight-man teams based on Defense Guidance Scenario attrition data.

aa. September 1987:

1) CINCMAC/CV letter to HQ SAF/XO, Change to AFR 173-13, US Air Force Cost and Planning Factors, 1 September 1987, states that rescue capability is being lost and further degradation could seriously affect future capability; suggest that assigning pararescue personnel against combat-coded aircraft capable of several missions can partially stem this loss; and proposes a change to AFR 173-13 which would assign pararescue personnel against multimission-capable MH-53Js which would capitalize on this concept and provide a rescue capability from both rescue and multi-mission aircraft (letter never answered).

2) HQ MAC Special Order GA-170, 28 September 1987, with amendment Special Order GA-1, 1 October 1987, designates, activates, and assigns Headquarters, 1720th Special Tactics Group (STGP), Hurlburt Fld FL, to 23 AF; redesignates the 1724 CCS as the 1724th Special Tactics Squadron (STSQ) (pararescue forces remain assigned to unit); and assigns the 1723 CCS, 1724 STSQ, and 1730 PRS to the 1720 STGP effective 1 October 1987. The 1720 STGP provides the necessary level of operational representation for combat control and pararescue forces to the 23 AF/CC on such issues as doctrine, tactics, procedures, training requirements, equipment acquisition, budget, and facilities. The 1720 STGP also serves as a deployable augmenting staff for the Air Force Special Operations Command.

bb. November 1987. HQ MAC assigns a pararescue superintendent position to Det 1, 23 AFCOS (USAFE/DOS), on 12 November 1987 to function as the European theater focal point for pararescue issues. Master Sergeant Michael A. Brown serves as the first superintendent to fill this position.

cc. December 1987. HQ MAC Special Order GA-19, 1 December 1987, designates and activates Det 1, 1730 PRS, Clark AB RP; OL A, Det 1, 1730 PRS, Kadena AB JA; and OL B, Det 1, 1730 PRS, Osan AB KOR. This completes activation of the 1730 PRS under MAC PROP 87-14.

dd. February 1988. MACOS/XONP letter to HQ USAF/XOOTA and XOXFC, Proposed Unit Type Codes (UTC) for Pararescue Forces, 12 February 1988, requests pararescue UTCs to facilitate tasking pararescue forces separate from associated aircraft to support current regional plans that task pararescue forces but no dedicated Air Force rescue-coded aircraft. XONP further identifies two proposed UTCs, XRPRM and XRPRT, to augment existing pararescue UTC 9AAPJ. The XRPRM UTC represents a pararescue management element capable of providing management, supervision, and liaison for deployed pararescue forces. The XRPRT UTC represents an eight-man pararescue team, the team size required for ESO. The 9AAPJ (future 9AAPR) UTC represents a deployable augmenting staff for a Provisional Group (Rescue) or Air Force Special Operation Control Center to plan and manage pararescue missions.

ee. March 1988:

1) HQ MAC includes (exact date unknown) the US Army Military Free-Fall Parachutist Course as follow on training for semiskilled pararescuemen after their completion of the Pararescue Specialist Course. This action represents the final stage of the High Glide Ratio Parachute Program initiated 12 August 1983.

2) HQ USAF/XOOTA letter to MACOS/XONP, Proposed UTCs for Pararescue Forces, 30 March 1988, states that a request for pararescue UTCs is premature and that they can reevaluate the request when theater CINCs establish, validate, and subsequently fund an operational requirement for pararescue forces to perform taskings separate from associated aircraft.

3) The United States Air Forces, European Command (USAFE), HQ USAFE/DOS 311600Z Mar 88, Draft Concept of Ops for SOF/SAR in European Theater, identifies pararescue forces as the only employable DOD resource with a primary mission to provide emergency treatment and survivor/evader assistance in remote or restricted areas; that pararescue forces are a significant asset for the conduct of search and rescue (SAR), combat search and rescue (CSAR), and combat recovery (CR) and represents an established mission success multiplier which warrants manning against the SAR and CSAR requirements; that pararescue forces enhance CR mission success through providing surface employable teams which can infil or exfil enemy areas by air, land, and water modes; and that other capable forces are task saturated with priority missions unique to their specialties.

ff. April 1988:

1) The HQ MAC Special Mission Operational Test and Evaluation Center (SMOTEC), SMOTEC/CV 291300Z Apr 88, MAC Test 11-17-77-4 Quick Look Report, Tactics Development and Evaluation, Airdrop of the Military Amphibious Reconnaissance System (MARS), announces completion of MARS concept test. The test result indicates the concept is a success and can be used by pararescue teams supporting Space Shuttle astronaut rescue and

recovery requirements. This concept represents a method for airdropping by parachute a three-man pararescue team and a deflated, motorized, inflatable watercraft to an open-water area. The watercraft package includes motor, fuel, inflation bottles, and other accessories attached in operating configuration. The standard military concept (Rubber Duck) for airdropping motorized, inflatable watercraft by parachute requires the boat to be inflated and packaged on a large pallet with motor removed and stored inside the boat. The Rubber Duck method compels the team to mount the motor once on the surface. Because of major, but necessary, equipment changes during the test, SMOTEC recommends replacement of the MARS watercraft with the Zodiac F470 inflatable boat system; however, retaining the MARS motor (total system now referred to as Rigging Alternate Method Zodiac (RAMZ)). During the test, the test teams average an elapsed time of 12 minutes from departing the aircraft until boat is fully operational and the team is underway to the objective.

2) The Alaskan Air Command (AAC), HQ ACC/DOO 291900Z Apr 88, AAC Pararescue Requirements, summarizes ACC estimates for 22 pararescue manpower positions to meet theater requirements. The summary identifies a need for 15 manpower positions to meet helicopter and long-range alert requirements, an additional five manpower authorizations to meet the high altitude (mountain) SAR team requirement, and two manpower authorizations to handle management responsibilities.

gg. May 1988. HQ USAFE, HQ USAFE/DOS 021600Z May 88, Proposed USAFE OPLAN 4102-90 Beddown for SOF/SAR, identifies a need to develop UTCs, sourcing, and proposed beddown for eight-man pararescue teams and pararescue staff elements to meet theater requirements.

hh. June 1988. CINCMAC/CV letter to HQ USAF/XO, Pararescue Force Structure, 10 June 1988: reiterates concern expressed in September 1987 about widening gap in Air Force CSAR capability; suggests issue can be resolved by adding pararescue forces to MH-53 aircrew and funding separate pararescue teams for surface operations; identifies that a MAC study indicates an overland CSAR can double recoveries (over air operations alone) in offensive counter air/air interdiction areas with a minimum of 24 eight-man teams; relates that joint community expresses interest in this concept; includes proposed pararescue force manpower requirements and a revised pararescue concept of operations; and states that these initiatives maintain an Air Force CSAR capability with minimum cost, provide theater commanders with greater flexibility, and retain options to employ rescue forces.

ii. September 1988:

1) MACOS/XONP letter to HQ USAF/XOOTA and XOXFC, UTCs for Deployment of Pararescue Capability; requests reconsideration for approval of pararescue UTCs; cites reasons as decrease in availability and capability of dedicated Air Force CSAR aircraft and corresponding changes in alternatives available for theater CINCs to develop an effective CSAR system; states MACOS will continue to task and deploy an effective CSAR system; states MACOS will continue to task and deploy pararescue capability as part of traditional dedicated rescue UTCs when appropriate; and identifies real-world and exercise situations continue to arise that require tasking pararescue capability separate from dedicated rescue-coded aircraft in order to meet the desired CSAR objectives of the supported CINCs.

2) Rescue Mission, WESTPAC Mission #065, Honolulu Mission #065A, US Coast Guard Case #781, for crew of Taiwanese ship Lung Fong #1, period 9 through 14 September 1988. Once again, this mission clearly demonstrates pararescue forces' ability to employ from any available aircraft. Lung Fong #1 suffers a catastrophic boiler explosion sometime on late 9 or early 10 September. Long Fong #1 sinks but another Taiwanese ship, the Kaung Yang, picks up the 16-man crew and sends out an emergency radio distress call, which a Coast Guard radio station intercepts. Five of the seaman are seriously burned and require immediate medical attention. The Coast Guard requests help from the Air Force. A six-man pararescue team led by Technical Sergeant Mark Crawford from OL A, Det 1, 1730 PRS, scrambles from Kadena AB JA via Air Force HC-130 at 11/2329Z. The aircraft transports the team via refueling stop at Yokota AB JA 3,100 miles to Midway Island. The team transfers to a Coast Guard HC-130 at 12/1645Z and flies to the Kaung Yang at 32 degrees 41 minutes north, 177 degrees 24 minutes west for open sea parachute employment to render field medical care to survivors. The Kaung Yang is approximately 270 miles north of Midway and 1,240 miles northwest of Honolulu. One survivor dies while the team is en route. The team successfully treats the remaining seaman, of which four have serious burn injuries. The Kaung Yang makes port call at Midway on 14 September and team, with survivors, transfers to a Coast Guard HC-130 for transport to Honolulu where team transfers survivors to higher echelon medical care at Straub Hospital. Honolulu Joint Rescue Coordination Center credits the team with *four saves* and *eleven assists*.

3) HQ MAC/IG conducts initial operations capability unit effectiveness inspection of 1730 PRS during period 19 through 23 September 1988. The 1730 PRS receives an overall rating of *SATISFACTORY*.

jj. October 1988:

1) The Seventh Air Force (7 AF), 7 AF/DO 130650Z Oct 88, Theater Requirements for Pararescue Forces: identifies that continued draw down of theater assigned rescue forces significantly impacts their ability to recover critical resources; states it is imperative they retain existing capability provided by pararescue teams and how coupling pararescue teams capable of ESO tactics with any available airlift significantly improves their SAR/CSAR capability; identifies a requirement to earn pararescue forces against a mission manpower standard (not as aircrew); and states that pararescue ESO tactic is a theater exercise-proven capability that should be retained in order to field the capability to rescue downed aircrews in the event of conflict.

2) HQ USAF/XO letter to CINCMAC/CV, Pararescue Force Structure, 13 October 1988: concurs with the assessment that pararescue forces are vital air-ground link in Air Force rescue operations; supports efforts to maintain a viable pararescue force, sized to meet current and programmed requirements; believes most viable and defensible position is to maintain pararescue personnel as integral crew members on MAC aircraft; and states a requirement must first be established, validated by the theater CINCs, and funded through the POM process to obtain Air Staff support for the MAC proposal to use pararescue forces in the ESO role.

3) CINCPACAF letter to Chief of Staff, United States Air Force (CSAF), 14 October 1988, expresses need for dedicated rescue forces separate from special operations forces, recognizes that the rescue mission may be an unintended casualty of special operations enhancements, states that theater air component should have OPCON of search and rescue

capability, and suggests reconstituting the Air Rescue Service or equivalent with direct reporting to HQ MAC.

4) HQ USAF/XOOTA letter to MACOS/XONP, UTCs for Deployment of Pararescue Capability, 21 October 1988: denies request to establish pararescue UTCs; states XOOTA believes pararescue personnel should be used as integral aircrew members or as a limited extension of the aircraft; and acknowledges that, at some time in the future, pararescue forces may be employed in an ESO role, but only after the theater CINCs establish and validate a requirement and fund it through the POM process.

5) The Commander in Chief, Pacific Command Air Forces (CINCPACAF), CINCPACAF/CV 260100Z Oct 88, Pacific Theater Pararescue Issues, endorses the use of pararescue ESO tactic and recommends ESO be considered for inclusion in the HQ USAF Rescue Master Plan.

kk. November 1988:

1) HQ USAFE/DOS sponsors a European Pararescue Manning Working Group to formalize the USAFE and Special Operations Command, European Command (SOCEUR), position on the manning and employment of pararescue forces in Europe based on CINCUSAFE CONPLAN 4285, USCINCEUR OPLAN 4102, and additional theater requirements.

2) The Commander, Special Operations Command, European Command (COMSOCEUR), COMSOCEUR/CC 081007Z Nov 88, Rescue as a SOF mission in Europe, expresses concern that the pararescue force may be lost unless doctrine and wartime requirement are changed to demonstrate a compelling need for these forces.

3) HQ MAC/IG conducts an operational readiness inspection (ORI) and unit effectiveness inspection (UEI) of Detachment (Det) 1, 1730 PRS, Clark AB, RP, and its two operating locations, OL A, Det 1, 1730 PRS, Kadena AB JA, and OL B, Det 1, 1730 PRS, Osan AB KOR, during the period 23 October to 17 November 1988. Det 1 and OL A receives an overall rating of *EXCELLENT* and OL B receives overall rating of *SATISFACTORY*.

4) Rescue Mission, WESTPAC Mission #094, for the two-man crew of the 37-foot sloop (sailboat), the DX, period 19 November through 23 November 1988. The WESTPAC Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) receives a distress radio call from The DX whose crew, an American and a German, is suffering from acute food poisoning and the vessel is adrift. At 19/0058Z, the WESTPAC RCC dispatches a five-man pararescue team led by Chief Master Sergeant Joseph M. Duffy from Det 1, 1730 PRS, Clark AB RP. The RCC uses an available 374th Tactical Airlift Wing C-130 to transport the team approximately 2,010 miles for an open sea parachute employment to the distressed vessel. The DX is at 06 degrees 30 minutes north, 87 degrees 35 minutes east, a point approximately 990 miles west northwest of Singapore and 490 miles east of Sri Lanka. The aircraft, with the pararescue team, arrives on the scene at 19/1030Z. For most open sea parachute employments to aid distressed seaman, the vessel either maneuvers or dispatches a small boat to recover the team. Because this vessel is adrift and Det 1 is not yet equipped with RAMZ, the team must use special "moving target release point procedures" (developed for space capsule recovery) to position two swimmers using precision

parachuting down drift of the vessel. They then swim to The DX, attach one of their reserve parachutes as a sea anchor to slow the boat's drift, assess the victims' conditions, and await the remaining team members. By the time the team arrives at the vessel, the American is dead and the German is unconscious. The team successfully resuscitates the survivor through massive infusion of fluids and use of medications. The Golar Freeze, a Liberian merchant ship, diverts from its course, picks up the team and survivor, takes The DX in tow, and continues en-route to Singapore. The team turns the survivor over to higher echelon medical care at 23/1730Z with the result of *saving one life*.

II. December 1988:

1) HQ USAFE, HQ USAFE/XP 021521Z Dec 88, Air Force Rescue Force Structure Plan, provides USAFE recommended changes to the Force Structure Plan which includes concepts for both pararescue limited and extended surface operations and a requirement for 18 pararescue personnel to fulfill NASA's SAR contingency requirements for two space shuttle transoceanic abort landing sites.

2) HQ AAC, HQ ACC/DOO 062000Z Dec 88, Alaska Pararescue Manning: expresses concern with trends that will deplete theater pararescue manning; identifies that assigned strength below 16 will adversely impact theater SAR alert requirements; states a requirement to keep Det 5, 1730 PRS, strength at current authorizations until the theater can ascertain that the new in-theater Air National Guard unit (the 210 ARRS) can meet theater requirements; identifies the need for pararescue mission (block) manning in lieu of aircrew manning to meet Alaska unique SAR requirements; outlines the requirement for inaccessible, or high altitude environments; identifies a broad cross section of aircraft from the military, state, and private sector that can support pararescue operations; and reaffirm a requirement for 22 pararescue manpower authorizations to fulfill current theater alert and training requirements while providing a worldwide-deployable, high-altitude mountain SAR team.

3) CINCMAC and Commander, Tactical Air Command, letter to CSAF, 14 December 1988, relays concerns about CSAR capabilities arising from a forum called the Joint Projects Review. It identifies how the synergistic relationship between special operations and CSAR as well understood with intended benefits for both. However, USSOCOM's concept of operations does not include CSAR outside the special operations mission leaving the theater CINCs with minimal dedicated SAR capability. The letter reiterates CINCPACAF's concerns and solicits procurement of MH-60G helicopters to establish a credible Air Force rescue force to meet both combat goals and the tactical air forces peacetime needs.

4) HQ PACAF, HQ PACAF/DO 221720Z Dec 88, Combat Search and Rescue Doctrine, requests retention of in-theater pararescue forces for conduct of ESO tactic.

5) The United States Commander in Chief, Special Operations Command (USCINSOC), USCINCSOC/SOCS 231610Z December 88, USSOCOM Position on Combat Search and Rescue, states that USSOCOM requires a dedicated pararescue force to support special operations recovery missions for recovery of personnel from hostile, denied, or politically sensitive territory and that this force should be block assigned (mission manning, not aircrew) to the special operations forces (SOF) air component for employment as specific missions dictate.

mm. January 1989:

1) The Commander in Chief, United States Air Forces, European Command (CINCUSAFE), CINCUSAFE/CC 121203Z Jan 89, USAFE Position on Pararescue Employment and Manning: states a requirement for pararescue ESO tactic, identifies pararescue forces as an essential component in maintaining a rescue capability in Europe; and quantifies an 11-team (eight-man teams) EUCOM requirement for conduct of ESO tactic.

2) USCINCEUR, USCINCEUR/ECDC 271509Z Jan 89, EUCOM Position on Pararescue Employment and Manning: states a requirement for pararescue ESO capability; identifies day-to-day pararescue requirements to react to short notice emergency requirements such as NASA's space shuttle emergency recovery plan; and strongly supports retaining in-theater pararescue personnel as an asset that can employ for SAR from any available theater aircraft/vehicle.

nn. February 1989:

1) USCENTAF, HQ USCENTAF/CC 142000Z Feb 89, Pararescue Employment and manning, states that pararescue ESO tactic can be used in their AOR and that pararescue forces should be made available for all theaters to task for their rescue requirements.

2) HQ MAC/XP 15 Feb 89 CINCMAC/CV approved letter, subject: Air-Rescue Force Structure Plan, to HQ USAF/XOX provides MAC's proposed changes to the Force Structure Plan which includes a revised Pararescue Concept of Operations that outlines both LSO and ESO tactics.

3) HQ MAC/IG conducts an ORI of 1730 PRS, to include Det 2, 1730 PRS, McClellan AFB CA, and Det 6, 1730 PRS, Kirtland AFB NM, during period 18 January to 21 February 1989. The 1730 PRS, including detachments, receives an overall rating of *EXCELLENT* which includes four laudatory findings.

4) USCINCSOC, USCINCSOC/SOCS 231803Z Feb 89, Programmatic Action in Support of USSOCOM Position on CSAR, assigns the Air Forces Special Operations Command (AFSOC) the responsibility in respect to use of pararescue personnel in support of SOF personnel recovery missions, to refine a concept of operations, determine a manpower requirement based on theater requirements, develop a conceptual organizational structure, and develop supporting UTCs for incorporation into appropriate OPLANS.

oo. March 1989:

1) The Joint Staff, Joint Staff/DJS 091246Z Mar 89, Air Force Pararescue Employment and Manning: provides an interim response to USCINCEUR 271509Z Jan 89; expresses understanding and support for USEUCOM concerns; and advises that the Joint Staff is actively working the issue with HQ USAF but requires further coordination.

2) The Air Force Engineering and Services Center (AFESC), HQ AFESC/DEHM 141600Z Mar 89, Disposition of Repatriated Remains—Airman First Class James E. Pleiman,

announces the return of USAF Pararescue's first KIA in SEA, 23 years to the day. Thirteen of pararescue's KIA remain unrecovered.

3) CINCMAC, CINCMAC/CC 211549Z Mar 89, Separate Air Rescue Service (ARS), announces CINCMAC's four-part plan to develop an organizational structure dedicated to rescue and capable of supporting an increased force structure. Step one consolidates the present rescue helicopter squadrons under a rescue wing, the 41st RWRW, which will remain under the command of 23 AF. Step two establishes an Air Rescue Service with direct reporting to HQ MAC and totally separates it from AFSOF (target 1 August 1989). Step three establishes a rescue organization to perform theater planning and command functions in PACOM (target July 1990). Step four establishes a rescue organization to perform theater planning and command functions in EUCOM (target to be determined). The total impact—good or bad—on pararescue forces is unclear. However, one point is apparent; instead of the 1720 STGP continuing as the single-point manager for operational pararescue forces, these forces now serve two separate command lines—the AFSOC and the ARS.

4) HQ MAC/DOY hosts a working group with United States Coast Guard (USCG) representatives, 22 through 23 March 1989, to determine USCG requirements for Air Force pararescue forces. The working group develops a strawman concept for pararescue forces to provide rescue swimmer augmentation at 26 USCG rotary-wing units and for two 15-man pararescue detachments to augment USCG fixed-wing operations at Barbers Point USCG Air Station HI and Sacramento USCG Air Station CA.

5) COMSOCEUR, COMSOCEUR/CG 291107Z Mar 89, SOCEUR Position on Combat Search and Rescue, reiterates position stated in USCINCSOC/SOCS position, and recommends this position as guidance for SOCEUR subordinates pending full implementation of CINCMAC/CC 211549Z Mar 89 in USEUCOM. This message also quotes a large portion of the USCINCSOC message including the requirement for a dedicated pararescue force to support special operations recovery missions.

pp. April 1989:

1) AFSOC, AFSOC/CV 041632Z Apr 89, Harmonization of Rescue Revitalization and 23 AF Non-SOF Divesture Plans, outlines USSOCOM position based on discussions at AFSOC hosted 29 through 30 March 1989 meeting between HQ MAC and HQ USSOCOM representatives (see note). The message outlines a variety of issues including the following recommendations. Continue the assignment of the 1550 CCTW and the 1606th Special Operations Training Wing (SOTW) to recognize its new mission requirements and change in training orientation. Negotiate a USSOCOM/Service memorandum of agreement (MOA) which provides definitive guidance for programming, funding, and operational control of formal school training. Determine target dates for transfer of the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing (AAW) and Scott Medical Center from 23 AF. Implement in conjunction with MAC PROP 89-18 creation of HQ ARS on 1 August 89. Conduct further staffing on pararescue issues which include theater strength limits and overseas imbalance issues, provisions for aircrew scanner functions, and pararescue training issues. The message includes a discussion on pararescue issues, which recognizes a need for dedicated pararescue forces to support SOF mission requirements and programmatic actions to support this need. The discussion identifies a concept of operations and

organizational structure which proposes mission (block) manned pararescue forces assigned to special tactics squadrons (STSs). Command and control arrangements would provide command through HQ MAC, 23 AF, and the 1720 STGP and operational command and control through the supported theater CINC and in-theater special operations wing. The discussion further concludes that HQ MAC will continue to act as the overall pararescue functional manager; that the 1720 STGP will support operational, standardization and evaluation, exercise, logistics, and training aspects of SOF unique matters; and that pararescue spaces currently funded by Major Force Plan (MPF) 11 should remain to support SOF pararescue requirements. **NOTE:** The baseline position for all discussions at this meeting recognized that 23 AF would remain service oriented through MAC while remaining the air component command for USSOCM.

2) HQ AAC/CC letter to CINCMAC/CV, Alaska-Pacific Pararescue Team, 10 April 1989, requests that the MAC staff evaluate establishing a permanent active-duty pararescue detachment in Alaska to support worldwide Air Force rescue requirements. The letter proposes earning manpower against a mission manpower statement. It provides the thesis that an active-duty detachment trained in Alaska, with a mobility commitment to other theaters, would provide some important augmentation capability for both rescue and special operations forces, to include a high-altitude recovery capability. The letter includes a detailed concept of operations for the detachment and a unit-manning breakdown.

3) Department of the Air Force, Office of the Inspector General letter to CINCMAC/CV, 12 April 1989, expresses a need to review some of the Air Force's rescue procedures and identifies the Air Force's responsibility to rescue USAF people and others. The letter also addresses four areas of concern. First, there is a need for clear direction that will allow commanders with rescue resources to have unilateral authority to move their assets closer to an active area of operations as long as those assets restrain from penetrating the on-scene area until after thorough coordination with the on-scene commander. Second, the proposed beddown of revitalized rescue forces require close coordination with the Coast Guard to ensure compatibility of equipment, the ability to provide maximum coverage, and the consideration to maintain an round-the-clock response capability. Third, because the Coast Guard lacks rescue swimmers, the Air Force may be able to satisfy this shortage by providing Air Force pararescue assets to the Coast Guard on a loan basis. Fourth, the Coast Guard requests assistance from the Air Force for obtaining use of night vision goggles for both rotary-wing and fixed-wing aircrews.

qq) May 1989:

1) CINCMAC/CV letter to AAC/CC, Alaska-Pacific Pararescue Team, 1 May 1989, supports the proposal to retain an active-duty pararescue detachment in Alaska; however, identifies that pararescue manpower authorizations have decreased significantly and that HQ MAC is working with USSOCOM and the Air Staff to retain the forces necessary to meet all operational needs. The letter agrees with the logic of retaining a deployable, active-duty, high-altitude, pararescue capability in Alaska to meet a worldwide mobility requirement including PACOM's wartime commitments. It states MAC will work with the AAC staff to refine the Alaska-Pacific Pararescue Concept of Operations and unit manning proposals as MAC works the overall pararescue manpower problem.

2) Joint Staff, Joint Staff/DJS 022350Z May 89, Pararescue Employment and Manning in USEUCOM, states the Air Force currently structures rescue forces to meet only downed aircrew member (DCM) recovery requirements and that the Air Force Rescue Force Structure Plan identifies the rescue resources required to meet EUCOM's previously identified theater DCM recovery requirements. The message further outlines the plans for wartime and peacetime rescue and pararescue requirements. As well, the message identifies that the Air Force expresses willingness to work with the EUCOM staff should they determine theater pararescue requirements exceeding those programmed in the Air Force Rescue Force Structure Plan; however, any requirements beyond support for DCM recovery will require command funding.

11. PENDING INITIATIVES. Pending initiatives include revising policy for pararescue mission employment tactics (MACR 3-4, in final coordination), establishing new policy for the organization and mission—field for the pararescue squadron, detachments, and operating locations (MACR 23-13, in final coordination), establishing new policy for pararescue training (MACR 51-111, in final coordination), revising the policy for pararescue tactical operations (MACR 64-1, nearing completion), establishing new policy for pararescue communications and electronics operating instructions (MACR 102-2, first draft), and completing courseware for the Pararescue Team Leader Course (four trial courses conducted to date with another scheduled for March 1989).

12. SUMMARY. Performing surface operations, whether limited or extended, is a primary mission of the Air Force's pararescue forces and should continue to be so. Operational aerospace doctrine clearly defines surface responsibilities for these forces. As history bears out, pararescue forces have always been oriented toward and trained for surface employment to rescue personnel and recover materiel. They provide the positive control, that is the surface-to-air link, necessary in terminal operations for aerial search, rescue, and recovery operations. Most importantly, the theaters indicate they still have a requirement for the pararescue surface operations capability. The destiny of Air Force pararescue forces rests squarely on the acknowledgement of existing doctrine and a willingness to support stated theater requirements. Problems clearly associated with this decision of destiny are as follows:

a. Funding Strategies. HQ MAC and USSOCOM are exploring two funding strategies. Based on several rebuttals by the Air Staff to agree to a mission (block) manpower standard, MAC's funding strategy for active-duty and Reserve gained forces (NOTE) would earn pararescue personnel strictly against primary authorized aircraft; however, USSOCOM's funding strategy expects to earn the forces for their requirements against the mission-manning standard. The mission-manning standard has numerous endorsements from the theaters. It better serves the ESO tactic because the individual pararescueman can concentrate on the tactic instead of aircrew duties. Early pararescue forces and current combat control forces provide proven examples of this approach. As of March 1989, all funding strategies are still tentative and the active-duty pararescue forces continue to dwindle. Now, the target for funded authorizations has slipped to 262, which is approximately 90 less than the original target in MAC PROP 87-14. Pararescue forces are now confronted with the possibility of forced retraining for six to ten percent of the existing force in the near term. **NOTE:** Since 1956, the Reserve-component forces have augmented the standing active-duty force. Currently, they provide 140 additional funded positions; however, it is very difficult for these forces to meet the active-duty training

standards and provide forces for standing alerts or contingency operations such as Space Shuttle support.

b. Shortfalls in Deliberate/Crisis-Action Planning. A question that immediately comes to mind is: “Why didn’t pararescue forces participate in Desert One and Urgent Fury?” The principle answer to this question is that pararescue forces were simply not invited as part of a larger task force or independently. Would these forces have made worthwhile contributions? Every indication is yes. Was this a deliberate oversight? There is no evidence to support this thesis. A possible contributing factor as to why they weren’t invited comes from a shortfall in the deliberate planning processes. Pararescue forces are just not adequately identified in OPLANS, nor do they have adequate mechanism (UTCs, etc.) to deploy their forces. As well, crisis-action planners probably don’t have sufficient information about pararescue capabilities.

c. Requirement for Two-Tier Force. The task-intensive nature of the duties and responsibilities associated with pararescue special-mission aircrew tasks creates a need for a two-tier force. The first tier should develop expertise in scanning, gunnery, medical, SERE, and LSO. The second tier should develop expertise in ESO, of which LSO is an inherent capability.

“First There—That Others May Live”

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