

57 RESCUE SQUADRON



MISSION

The 57th Rescue Squadron is a combat-ready search and rescue squadron composed of USAF Pararescue and Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape personnel, capable of executing all-weather search and rescue missions day or night in hostile environments in support of USAFE, USEUCOM, and NATO operations. It employs advanced search and rescue equipment. The squadron is capable of deploying to any theater of operations in the world

LINEAGE

57 Air Rescue Squadron constituted, 17 Oct 1952
Activated, 14 Nov 1952
Redesignated 57 Air Recovery Squadron, 1 Jul 1965
Redesignated 57 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 8 Jan 1966
Inactivated, 1 Dec 1972
Redesignated 57 Rescue Squadron
Activated, 18 Feb 2015

STATIONS

Lajes Field, Azores, Portugal, 14 Nov 1952–1 Dec 1972
RAF Lakenheath, England, 18 Feb 2015
Aviano AB, Italy, 1 Jul 2018

ASSIGNMENTS

7 Air Rescue Group, 14 Nov 1952
9 Air Rescue Group, 8 Dec 1956
Air Rescue Service, 24 Jun 1958
Atlantic Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center (later 40 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing), 8 Jan 1966–1 Jan 1972

48 Operations Group, 18 Feb 2015
31 Operations Group, 1 Jul 2018-

MISSION EQUIPMENT

SB-17
SC-54 (later HC-54D)
SH-19
HC-130

COMMANDERS

Maj Patrick Gruber

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Meritorious Unit Award
1 Mar 2015-29 Feb 2016

Navy Meritorious Unit Citation
1 Jul 1967-26 Jul 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jun 1959-31 Dec 1963
1 Jul 1965-30 Jun 1967
8 Feb 1969-30 Apr 1970
1 May 1971-30 Apr 1972
1 Jan 2014-31 Dec 2015
1 Jan 2020-31 Dec 2021

EMBLEM



Approved on 23 Dec 2015

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The squadron was first activated at Lajes Field in the Azores in November 1952 as the 57th Air Rescue Squadron in a reorganization of Air Rescue Service. The 7th Air Rescue Squadron at Wheelus Field, Libya was expanded into a group and each of its remotely stationed lettered flights was replaced by a new squadron. The 57th replaced Flight B of the 7th Squadron and assumed its personnel and equipment. The squadron mission was to intercept aircraft in distress while crossing the Atlantic and to escort them back to Lajes Field. The 57th also provided search and rescue for both downed aircraft and for ships.

9 May 57 The 57th ARS, using two SC-54s, searched for a KC-97 which had ditched at sea near Lajes Field, Azores. The downed crew of seven had cast off in rafts, and were located through SOS signals. One SC-54 dropped an MA-1 Kit, and a surface vessel, the Sanderfjord, picked up the seven aircrewmen.

An SH-19 crew from the 57th ARS saved 48 persons from the Portuguese ship Arnel, aground off Santa Maria Island, Azores. 19 Sep 1958

Jul 1960 The 57th ARS participated in a SAR mission over the Barents Sea after the USSR shot down an RB-47 transiting that area. No trace was found of the aircraft or crew.

23 Jul- Detachment 2, 57th ARS, provided rescue support for an airlift to the Congo area during a period of civil turmoil in that country. 23 Jul-30 Sep 1960

22 Dec-24 Dec 1963 HC-54 aircraft from the 57th ARS at Lajes Field, Azores, participated in rescuing survivors from the Greek liner, Lakonia, when it caught fire and burned approximately 170 miles north of Madeira Islands. Four HC-54s dropped a total of 42 rubber life rafts and 400

blankets to survivors in the water. One aircraft stayed on scene at all times to direct surface vessels to the site and to spot survivors for the surface vessels to pick up. The total effort resulted in the recovery of 896 survivors and 91 deceased persons. Four persons remained missing.

By the early 1960s the squadron had assumed the mission of providing support for Project Gemini and Project Apollo space missions. To reflect this mission, it was renamed the 57th Air Recovery Squadron in July 1965. The following January Air Rescue Service became Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service and all of its squadrons were renamed, no matter their mission.

22 Oct 1965 A HC-54 aircrew from the 57th ARS assisted in the rescue of survivors from the SS Tradeways. The aircrew dropped MA-1 kits and smoke markers and was credited with five saves.

22 Jan 1967 The 57th ARRS participated in a rescue operation about 120 miles southwest of Ferro in the Canary Islands, where a Dutch merchant vessel, Jacob Verolme, was sinking. An HC-130 arrived on scene and orbited over the lifeboats. Subsequently two pararescuemen were deployed to aid the injured. A Polish vessel, Batory, was directed to the area, and all 49 of the survivors were picked up.

2 Jun 1967 An HC-130 crew from the 57th ARRS was credited with saving 46 crewmen from the West German ship Essberger Chemist, which had been ripped apart by an explosion. Pararescuemen jumped to aid the crewmen, and the Norwegian ship Tomar was vectored to the scene.

The squadron was inactivated at Lajes in late 1972, when the Portuguese Air Force assumed the mid-Atlantic rescue mission.

The 57th was reactivated as the 57th Rescue Squadron at Lakenheath in February 2015. Personnel for the squadron came from the 56th Rescue Squadron, with no additional manpower or aircraft. Aircrews and the HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters remained in the 56th Rescue Squadron. The separation of pararescue airmen into a separate unit "align[ed] the personnel recovery function within United States Air Forces Europe to the standard Air Force structure," officials said. Creating two rescue squadrons at Lakenheath is intended to replicate combat conditions because pararescuemen frequently deploy separately from their rescue helicopters and planes.

2/19/2015 -They are trained to risk it all to save a life, going anywhere necessary to rescue a wounded service member. Whether it be in a turbulent environment or hostile territory, pararescuemen are willing to serve "that others may live." The 48th Fighter Wing activated a new squadron, the 57th Rescue Squadron, with a ceremony here, Feb. 18. The 57th RQS is comprised of about 30 pararescuemen and equipment personnel already stationed at RAF Lakenheath. The 56th RQS continues to operate and maintain the HH-60G Pave Hawks. According to Maj. Patrick Gruber, 57th RQS commander, in the early 2000s, Air Force rescue squadrons began to separate their weapons systems and activate Guardian Angel squadrons, populated by combat rescue officers, pararescuemen and survival, evasion, resistance, and

escape specialists. Due to their extensive training, these battlefield Airmen are considered weapons systems, along with the aircraft they use for transport. "As long as we are flying combat missions over hostile territory, there is a need for people like we have here today," said Col. Scottie Zamzow, 48th Operations Group commander. This activation aligns the U.S. Air Forces in Europe personnel recovery mission to the standard U.S. Air Force structure and will improve training opportunities and support new operational requirements in the U.S. European Command and U.S. African Command areas of responsibility. The Air Force began splitting Guardian Angels from their helicopter support units in 2001 due to the former's unique and demanding training requirements, according to officials. 2015

The Air Force is moving its European-based combat search and rescue capability from RAF Lakenheath, Britain, to Aviano AB, Italy, to more quickly respond to needs across Europe, Africa, and Southwest Asia. HH-60 Pave Hawks of the 56th Rescue Squadron and Guardian Angels of the 57th RQS, will relocate to Aviano in 2017, according to a US Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa release. "Moving to Italy, where we're better postured to provide rescue capabilities quickly and effectively, just makes sense," explained 57th RQS Commander Lt. Col. Jose Cabrera. The shift also gives the unit's greater access to training airspace and opportunities with regional partners and allies, according to the release. USAFE-AFRICA announced earlier this year that it is also moving CV-22s and HC-130s of the 352nd Special Operations Wing out of Britain to Spangdahlem AB, Germany, as part of an overall infrastructure review. During the same review, leaders identified Aviano as having excess capacity, making it the ideal site to absorb the five HH-60s and some 350 pilots, maintainers, Guardian Angels, and support personnel currently at Lakenheath. 2015

Pararescuemen assigned to the 57th Rescue Squadron at RAF Lakenheath, England, recently practiced urban rescue missions at the UK Fire Service College in Moreton-in-Marsh. The five-day training exercise included rescuing personnel from the rubble of destroyed buildings. Thirty participants took part in the exercise, which focused on urban tactics, high-angle rope work, collapsed structure, and confined spaces, mass casualty, and patient management," pararescueman SSGT. Ryan Onley said in a release. Volunteers played "red teams" during the exercise, using paintball guns to replicate firefights as PJs rescued and treated casualties, also played by volunteers. 2016

CAORLE, Italy (AFNS) --

Two boats idled together in the Adriatic Sea just off the coast of Northern Italy, battered mercilessly by the waves as eight pairs of eyes searched the sky. The silence stretched for long moments, a hint of anticipation on the cool sea breeze before a radio crackled to life.

There would be three jumpers in five minutes, transmitted the radio. The information was passed between the occupants of both boats as they caught first sight of the approaching aircraft. Members of the 57th Rescue Squadron participated in over-water parachute training. July 9, with a dozen pararescuemen aboard a C-130J Super Hercules from the 86th Airlift Wing at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, as eight more awaited their descent from below.

First out of the aircraft was a rigged alternate method zodiac, or RAMZ, an inflatable, motorized boat that the jumpers used once they made it to the water. As they worked on setting up their vehicle, the members in the support boats began pulling in the discarded parachutes to be repaired if necessary and reused in the future. The 57th RQS participates in jump training at least once a quarter, over both land and sea, to keep their skills and knowledge sharp in case they are ever needed in an emergency. The training not only benefits the pararescuemen, but requires harmonization with the squadron's support agencies and even other bases – in this case, the C-130 and its crew.

“Just for us to do this training, it requires so much coordination from our support shops,” said Capt. Jordan, a combat rescue officer with the 57th RQS. “Just on the water we have boat drivers, people pulling in chutes and medical personnel. We are super grateful to have an amazing combat mission support section.” Jumping on land is far different than jumping into the ocean, and carries different challenges – not only for the jumpers themselves but also for the support personnel down below.

“On land, all you really have to worry about is another aircraft coming into your airspace,” said Staff Sgt. Jared, a 57th RQS aircrew flight equipment technician and drop zone control officer. “On water, you have to worry about boats, airplanes and that you’re constantly moving. You have to go where the jumpers go, and then reset, come back to your position and get ready for the next jumpers.” Through successful support and coordination, the 57th RQS was able to carry out the required training needed in order to remain proficient in their job, providing day or night personnel recovery operations in any condition, during peace or war.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

Created: 19 Feb 2025

Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.