

66 RESCUE SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

66 Air Rescue Squadron constituted, 17 Oct 1952
Activated, 14 Nov 1952
Inactivated, 18 Jan 1958
Activated, 1 Jan 1991
Redesignated 66 Rescue Squadron, 1 Feb 1993

STATIONS

RAF Manston, England, 14 Nov 1952–18 Jan 1958
Nellis AFB, NV, 1 Jan 1991

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Kuwait City, Kuwait, 25 Jan–5 Jul 1993

ASSIGNMENTS

9 Air Rescue Group, 14 Nov 1952–18 Jan 1958
Air Rescue Service, 1 Jan 1991
57 Operations Group, 1 Feb 1993

ATTACHMENTS

United States Air Forces in Europe, 14 Nov 1952
Third Air Force, 15 Nov 1953
United States Air Forces in Europe, 1 Aug 1954–18 Jan 1958

4404 Operations Group [Prov], 25 Jan 1993- [Prov] to 5 Jul 1993

WEAPON SYSTEMS

SA-16, 1952–1958

H-19 (SH-19), 1952–1958

C-82, 1952–1953

Unkn, 1953–1958

HH-60, 1991

COMMANDERS

Maj Frank G. Uhring, #1955

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



On a Red disc edged with a narrow Black border a Black smaller disc fimbriated Yellow a shield enhanced blazoned: barry wavy Argent and Azure a chief Vert an eagle displayed and enhanced proper except tail per fess Or and White charged with a fess engrailed Sable pendant from its feet an "Ankh" cross Gules on a chain Sable. (Approved, 21 Feb 1956)

MOTTO

HAEC AGO UT ALII VIVANT—These Things I Do So Others May Live

OPERATIONS

Search and rescue, air/med-evacuation, disaster relief 1952–1958 and 1991–. Deployed to Southwest Asia to ensure Iraq's compliance with United Nations treaty terms, Jan–Jul 1993.

The 66th Air Rescue Squadron, commanded by Major Frank G. Uhring, is located at Mansion RAF Station, Kent, and is one of four squadrons under the 9th Air Rescue Group located at Bushy Park, London. Such groups, with their attached squadrons, are strategically located throughout the world to perform the Rescue mission as effectively and efficiently as possible. The Rescue mission is to render rescue service upon request, whether for military or civilian emergencies, on land, sea or in the air.

Rescue service exists only to save lives. The probability of finding survivors diminishes with each minute passes after a disaster occurs. Therefore, in each and every incident it must be presumed that there are survivors, and every possible effort must be made to find, aid and return these survivors to safety and their families.

How does the 66th Air Rescue Squadron at Mansion carry out this mission ? They maintain two alert crews in operational readiness twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven days a week, Throughout every week in the year. One crew for the Albatross and one crew for the Helicopter. These crews work together, yes, live together, so when the time comes they can function as one well-coordinated team. These men are selected for their abilities and give freely of their time. Every man in Rescue knows that he may be called on at any time to come to the assistance of some unfortunate person in distress—therefore, he keeps himself in a constant state of readiness day or night.

The 66th Air Rescue Squadron averages Twelve rescue missions per month, including such missions as the successful rescue of Mr. Ronald Murton from The South Goodwin Lightship, the amphibious pick-up of P/O Cross, who had abandoned his aircraft over the English Channel, and credited with saving one hundred and fifty persons during The Holland floods. These things they do that others may live.

3 Feb 53 During floods in the Netherlands, 12 aircraft (SA-16s, H-19s, C-47s, and C-82s) of the 66th, 68th, 69th, 82d, and 83d AR Squadrons flew 198 sorties, evacuating 161 persons and delivering 32,900 pounds of relief supplies.

During early 1946 Air Transport Command formed Air Rescue Service (ARS) which was the backbone of support for downed airmen both on land and in the sea. Europe was covered by the 7th Air Rescue Squadron based in Tripoli, Libya. Various changes resulted in the activation of 9th Air Rescue Squadron at Bushy Park on 27 February 1951 with three Flights; one at Mansion, Kent; one at Prestwick, Scotland and C Flight at Burtonwood formed on 1 July 1951 with B-17 Flying Fortress aircraft, supported by the odd SC-47 Dakota. The B-17 carried a lifeboat supported under the fuselage that could be dropped into the sea. 9th Air Rescue Squadron became HQ 9 Air Rescue Group on 14 November 1952 and the Flights renumbered:— 66 Air Rescue Squadron at Mansion, 67 Air Rescue Squadron at Prestwick and 68 Air Rescue Squadron at Burtonwood. 68 ARS shortly received Grumman SA-16 Albatross amphibious aircraft and Sikorsky H-19 Helicopters, both extending The capability of The Until considerably.

The two helicopters were named "Whirl-o-way and Hop-a-long" joining the Squadron in August 1952.

By 1954 the 9th Air Rescue Group and its squadrons covered the Iceland to UK area; The 7th stretched from the Azores to Saudi Arabia and the 12th Central Europe. Under a reorganization the 68th ARS at Burtonwood was absorbed into The 67th ARS at Prestwick on 18 November 1953. Much later, during 1958, The 66th ARS at Mansion was also absorbed into the Scottish Unit. This ended the basing of rescue units at Burtonwood, the longer range SB-29 and HC-97 taking over.

The 66th Air Rescue Squadron received its first HH-60G 25 Aug 1992

The 66th Rescue Squadron deployed to Southwestern Asia in support of Operation Southern Watch. 26 Jan 1993

The 66th Rescue Squadron returned from deployment to southern Kuwait, after supporting Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. 10 Jul 1993

BALAD AIR FORCE BASE, Iraq, June 27, 2006 — Their motto is "That others may live" and if you're on the ground in combat and in trouble, those four words mean that help is on the way. "We deployed a very-tailored package for this mission," McElhenney said. "We wanted to take everyone we could." Three crews, consisting of aircrew, pararescue and combat rescue officers were dispatched on a dive operation to comb the murky waters of the Euphrates River. The soldiers were reported as "duty status and whereabouts unknown" after the Rescue Unit at Balad Serves as '911' for Iraq Elite, unique and one-of-a-kind in Iraq, the U.S. Air Force airmen assigned to the 66th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron here are the only combat search and rescue unit in country.

They are part of a highly-specialized field, made up of an extremely small community of highly-trained professionals who save the people no one else can reach. "The airmen are totally committed to the mission. Each takes their responsibility seriously and wants to be on the crew that brings our guys back safely," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jim McElhenney, 66th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron commander.

"These airmen are the reason why we're the first ones tasked. We have the capabilities to respond immediately and effectively." Many of the saves the squadron has logged took place in Afghanistan, where coalition troops aren't as robust, McElhenney said. There, crews — consisting of aircrew, pararescue and combat rescue officers known as the "Guardian Angels" — respond to rescues that are outside their traditional "downed aviator" training. The 66th participated in recovery efforts during Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan, for which rescue crews were awarded the Silver Star. More recently, the 66th was called on to extract troops from a Humvee in an active minefield.

Crews were able to save two wounded people. Crews are ecstatic when they were pivotal in a successful mission, McElhenney said. Called in for only those facing extreme danger, the pararescuemen are the "911" unit for military troops in combat behind enemy lines. However,

a rescue is not always possible. Even though 22 airmen from the squadron were among the first responders in the search for two U.S. soldiers abducted June 16, no signs of them were discovered until three days later. checkpoint they were manning at a canal crossing near the Euphrates was attacked.

“We were looking on the eastern bank, looking for clues – just any sign of the soldiers,” said U.S. Army Maj. Matt Wenthe, who served as the mission flight leader. Two of the three crews, armed with hydrographic maps of the current, searched the river by air between a power plant near the attack site and a refinery. The third crew served as a liaison between ground forces and the dive team, feeding the dive team information as it became available. The pararescue team was tasked in the search for the missing soldiers because of their capabilities: a short response time and the manning to support the search. The squadron is on high-alert status and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Unfortunately, the aircrews and Guardian Angels had not turned up any clues when they were relieved by an Army dive team six hours later. “It was frustrating,” said U.S. Air Force Senior Airman John Hatzitakis, a personnel recovery specialist deployed from Moody Air Force Base, Ga. “We just wanted to find something – anything to give their families hope.” Crewmembers learned of the soldiers’ deaths shortly before being interviewed for this story and expressed their regret at not being able to do more. “Our prayers are with their families,” said U.S. Air Force Capt. Jeff Marler, a pilot of one of the three HH-60s carrying the pararescue teams. “We did our best to bring their boys home.”

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. (AFNS) -- In mid-afternoon Sept. 8, 2017, the 66th Rescue Squadron and 823rd Maintenance Squadron assigned to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, received a call from U.S. Northern Command to ready teams to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency search and rescue efforts in the Florida Keys following the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

Nellis AFB personnel loaded a C-5M Super Galaxy cargo aircraft assigned to the 60th Air Mobility Wing, Travis AFB, California, with three HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters, two personnel recovery task forces, 54 support personnel and approximately 60 short tons of supplies and departed the base Sept. 11. “One life is worth saving,” said Staff Sgt. Nicholas Borresen, 23rd Maintenance Group quality assurance inspector. “If we have the funds available, the people available to do it, why not?” Borresen is familiar with the preparation needed to perform a rescue mission. He was also a crew member for Operation Tomodachi, a search and rescue mission to help the victims of the tsunami that struck Japan in 2013. He is confident Nellis AFB will be just as effective in the Florida Keys.

“Everybody we have going right now is the best of the best,” said Borresen, who is responsible for inspecting the maintenance on the aircraft. “We should not have a problem having these aircraft perform for us. We provide safe aircraft for operators who can, in turn, go out and save lives.” As it takes a village to raise a child, it takes several units to get the aircraft in the task force on their way to Florida. Training was put to the test as the 823rd MXS fought forces out of their control – as the clock ticked, nature roared from above. Dodging a Las Vegas lightning storm, the unit pulled helicopters into the hangar, prepped and restaged them on the flight line before loading them onto the C-5 Galaxy cargo aircraft, said Senior Airman Makayla Best, 823rd MXS assistant dedicated crew chief.

While the 823rd MXS prepared the aircraft, Senior Airman Kayleigh Jones, Detachment 1, 563rd Operations Support Squadron aircrew flight equipment technician, prepared equipment for the four-man HH-60 aircrews, to include pilots and special missions aviators, who would be performing day and night rescue missions. For Jones, this was more than just an Air Force mission.

"I have a lot of friends down in Florida, a lot of family down in Florida still, so I'm glad to be part of this team," she said. "These things we do so that others may live." Finally, recovery teams prepared to work with local authorities and other military branches to maximize rescue efforts

"Once we get wheels on the ground, it's going to be our priority to coordinate with those guys as they will be our eyes and ears on the ground," said Capt. Keoki Kimzin, 55th Rescue Squadron combat rescue pilot at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, and leading one of the four-man teams assisting with civilian evacuations and possible medical treatment. "They will allow us to integrate with them to do our job more efficiently as they are the experts in the area." In less than 18 hours of the call, the C-5 was packed and ready to take flight.

"We always say, 'Practice like you play,'" said Best. "It's rough because it's somebody's worst day when they need us, but it's what we're here for – it's what we live for."

This is the second call Nellis AFB has received to support USNORTHCOM's mission to assist lead federal relief agencies in helping those affected by recent hurricanes, in an effort to minimize suffering while continuing its mission of defending the homeland. Thirty-one Nellis AFB members assigned to the 99th Air Base Wing, 58th Rescue Squadron and the 23rd Wing were requested to assist with Hurricane Harvey response efforts in Texas. These members were tasked with providing humanitarian relief as well as command and control to military forces assisting FEMA, state and local authorities with the relief efforts. Nellis AFB stands ready to provide additional support, should it be requested. 2017

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit history. *406th Fighter Interceptor Wing. Manston, England. 1955.*