

54 HELICOPTER SQUADRON



MISSION

The 54 Helicopter Squadron's primary mission is to support the 91st Space Wing with highly skilled pilots and flight engineers with well-maintained UH-1N helicopters to respond as necessary to make sure missile complexes scattered through North Dakota are safe and secure. The 54 HS allows the Air Force to respond quickly and effectively to emergency situations in a timely manner.

LINEAGE

54 Air Rescue Squadron constituted, 17 Oct 1952
Activated, 14 Nov 1952
Discontinued and inactivated, 18 Jun 1960
Activated, 10 May 1961
Organized, 18 Jun 1961
Redesignated 54 Air Recovery Squadron, 1 Jul 1965
Redesignated 54 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 8 Jan 1966
Inactivated, 15 Jul 1974
Redesignated 54 Rescue Flight, 1 Apr 1993
Activated, 1 May 1999
Redesignated 54 Helicopter Flight, 1 May 1998
Redesignated 54 Helicopter Squadron, 21 Oct 2005

STATIONS

Goose Bay Aprt (later, Goose AB), Canada, 14 Nov 1952-18 Jun 1960
Goose AB, Canada, 18 Jun 1961
Pease AFB, NH, 1 Aug 1967-15 Jul 1974
Minot AFB, ND, 1 May 1993

ASSIGNMENTS

6 Air Rescue Group, 14 Nov 1952
Air Rescue Service, 18 Feb 1958-18 Jun 1960
Military Air Transport Service, 10 May 1961
Air Rescue (later, Aerospace Rescue and Recovery) Service, 18 Jun 1961
39 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing, 1 Jan 1970-15 Jul 1974
91 Operations Group, 1 May 1993
91 Missile Group, 1 Jul 1994
91 Operations Group, 1 Feb 1996

WEAPON SYSTEMS

SA-16, 1952-1957
SB-17, 1952-1953
SC-47, 1952-1955
H-5, 1952-1954
H-19, 1955-1956
SH-21, 1956-1960
SC-54, 1957-1960
SC/HC-54, 1961-1966
SH/HH-43, 1961-1967
SH/HH-19, 1961-1963
SA-16, 1961-1962
HU-16, 1961-1963
SH-21, 1961-1962
HC-130, 1966-1974
HH-3, 1972-1973
UH/HH-1, 1993

COMMANDERS

Lt Col William R. Grady, 14 Nov 1952
Maj Leslie H. Johnson, 14 Apr 1953
Maj Kermit A. Wagner, 30 Jun 1953
Lt Col Gene L. Douglas, 6 Jul 1953
Lt Col John D. Irvin, 3 Sep 1953
Lt Col George E. Bartling, 30 Sep 1953
Lt Col William J. Campbell, 17 Sep 1955
Lt Col Harold W. Burns, 1 Aug 1957
Lt Col Joe Walker, 17 Jan 1958
Lt Col Arthur M. Swap, 15 Mar 1958-1960
Unkn, 18 Jun-Dec 1961
Lt Col Parker B. Mudge, By Jan 1962
Lt Col Ernest L. Reid, 21 Jun 1963-Unkn
Unkn, 1965-May 1967

Lt Col Erskine Wigley, Jun 1967
Maj Jack C. Robertson, 1 Jul 1968
Lt Col William A. Bright Jr., 5 Aug 1968
Lt Col Robert T. Dobson, 31 Aug 1970
Lt Col Frederic M. Donohue, By Jul 1972
Lt Col Stanley G. Maratos, 6 Jul 1973
Lt Col Charles A. Bankston, 22 Mar-15 Jul 1974
Maj Daniel Briand, 1 May 1993
Maj Richard C. Lenz, 4 Apr 1994
Maj Russell E. Mccallister, 7 Jun 1996
Maj John R. Youngs, 19 Dec 1997
Maj Thomas J. Thibodeaux, 23 Jul 1999
Maj Douglas A. Robertson, 9 Feb 2001
Maj Ronald G. Owens, 19 Jul 2002
Maj Justin Speegle, 30 Apr 2004

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation
North Atlantic, 1968-1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Apr 1966-31 Mar 1968
1 Jun 1970-31 May 1971
1 Jul 1972-30 Jun 1974
1 Sep 1993-31 Aug 1995
1 Sep 1995-31 Aug 1997
1 Oct 1998-30 Sep 2000
1 Oct 2000-1 Oct 2001
1 Jan-31 Dec 2002

EMBLEM



Approved, 7 Jun 1956

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Search, rescue, and recovery services in Labrador, Greenland, New England and the waters between, Nov 1952-Jun 1960, and Jun 1961-Jul 1974.

12 Feb 52 B-36 with 17 men aboard crashed in the snow near Goose Air Base, Labrador. A two-man pararescue team parachuted from an SC-47 assigned to the 54 AR Squadron. They landed in eight feet of snow in temperatures dipping to 20 degrees below zero. Staying overnight, the pararescuemen found and cared for the 15 men still alive. A helicopter from the 54 AR Squadron picked up everyone the next day.

20 Oct-21 Nov 1961 ARS participated in the Cuban Crisis by deploying HH-43, HC-54, and HU-16 aircraft to various bases in Florida. During the one month period ARS forces flew 935 hours in support of United States contingency operations in the Caribbean area. These resources were from the Eastern, Central, and Western ARCs and the 54, 55th, 41st, and 48th AR Squadrons.

8 Dec 64 Twenty-five hundred pounds of clothing and Christmas gifts donated by Goose AB personnel were dropped to villages along the Labrador coast by HC-54 crews of the 54 AR Squadron during Operation Reindeer.

22 Jul 66 Captain Robert A. Delorenzo, 54 ARR Squadron, pilot of an HC-130, performed the first operational ground-to-air recovery.

Provided security for 91 Missile Wing missile complex; also, transported security forces and equipment throughout the missile fields; supported medical evacuations and rescue searches, 1993-.

A USAF HH-1H helicopter from the 54 Rescue Flight at Minot AFB, N. D., crashed in a remote area about ten miles southeast of Pine Bluffs, Wyo., July 1. 1st Lt. Shawn Adkins, aircraft commander, 1st Lt. Jonathan Kim, and civilian maintenance workers Frank Thompson and Rick Reisenauer

received only minor injuries and walked to a nearby farm for help. 1995

Mechanical error caused a UH-1N Huey helicopter to make an emergency landing outside Minot AFB, N.D., last February. The mishap was caused by a loss of tail rotor thrust, which was followed by a driveshaft coupling failure. "Approximately an hour into the flight, the crew from the 54 Helicopter Squadron heard a loud noise coming from the rear of the aircraft and felt an accompanying vibration." "The pilot chose to make a precautionary landing in a snow-covered field." After the tail rotor lost thrust about 100 feet off the ground, the pilot continued to autorotate—a procedure where the main rotor system uses air moving through the rotor instead of engine power to keep turning. When the helicopter was about 30 feet off the ground, the pilot applied control inputs to level the aircraft and cushion the landing, states the summary. However, the right rear skid hit the ground before the left skid, causing the main rotor blades to strike the ground when the aircraft rolled to the left and landed on its side. Three aircrew members were injured, but there were no civilian injuries or damage to civilian property. The helicopter was considered a total loss with more than \$2.3 million in damages. 2014

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.