

303rd RESCUE SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

303rd Air Rescue Squadron constituted, 1 Aug 1956

Activated in the Reserve, 8 Oct 1956

Redesignated 303rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 18 Jan 1966

Redesignated 303rd Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 Apr 1985

Redesignated 303rd Airlift Squadron, 1 Feb 1992

Inactivated, 30 Jun 1993

Redesignated 303rd Rescue Squadron, 1 Apr 1997

Activated in the Reserve, 15 Apr 1997

Inactivated 1 Apr 2003

Redesignated 303rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, and converted to provisional status, 22 Jul 2011

STATIONS

Long Beach Muni Aprt, CA, 8 Oct 1956

March AFB, CA, 1 Nov 1960-30 Jun 1993

Portland Intl Aprt (later, ANGB), OR, 15 Apr 1997

ASSIGNMENTS

2347th Air Reserve Flying Center, 8 Oct 1956

2350th Air Reserve Flying Center, 1 Oct 1958

Fourth Air Force, 8 Apr 1960

Sixth Air Force Reserve Region, 1 Sep 1960

Western Air Force Reserve Region, 31 Dec 1969
403rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery (later, 403rd Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance) Wing,
15 Mar 1976
943rd Tactical Airlift (later, 943 Airlift) Group, 1 Apr 1985
943rd Operations Group, 1 Aug 1992-30 Jun 1993
939th Operations Group, 15 Apr 1997-1 Apr 2003
United States Air Forces in Europe to activate or inactivate at any time on or after 22 Jul 2011

WEAPON SYSTEMS

SA(later, HU)-16, 1956-1965
HC-97, 1965-1972
KC-97, 1965-1966
HC-130, 1972-1985
C-130, 1984-1993
HC-130, 1997-2003

COMMANDERS

LTC Walker M. Mahuren, 8 Oct 1956
LTC Reginald L. Anderson, by Jun 1957
Col Norman H. Happel, 3 Dec 1964
LTC Ray M. Foster, 27 Nov 1967
LTC William R. Stack Jr., by Sep 1969
LTC Raymond C. Hellman, 21 Jul 1970
LTC Bryce W. Jordan, 20 Aug 1970
LTC James E. McAdoo, 19 Oct 1970
LTC Bryce W. Jordan, 31 Jul 1971
LTC Stanley A. Ellis, 18 Oct 1971
Col James D. Compton, 31 Aug 1972
LTC Amos R. Dreessen, 16 Apr 1973
LTC Richard L. Hall, 17 Jun 1974
LTC Maurice L. Bandy, 12 Jun 1976
LTC Joseph S. Lowe, 10 Oct 1976
LTC Peter T. Pomonis, 25 Sep 1978
LTC Alfred P. Schoelen, 9 Sep 1979
LTC Robert G. McCoy, 7 Oct 1979
LTC Thomas G. Troyer, 21 Jul 1980
LTC Donald D. Martin, 12 Mar 1982
LTC Clayton H. Ford Jr., 18 Jul 1982
LTC Ivan Nash III, 1 Apr 1985
LTC Charles A. Hulse Jr., 4 Jun 1988
LTC Dennis D. Jones, 20 May 1991-30 Jun 1993
LTC Gregory H. Kuh, 15 Apr 1997
LTC Steven R. Franklin, 3 Mar 2001-1 Apr 2003

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

None

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1972-31 Dec 1973

1 Jul 1977-31 Dec 1978

1 Apr 1980-28 Feb 1982

1 Jan 1990-31 Dec 1991

1 Sep 1997-31 Aug 1999

1 Sep 1999-31 Aug 2001

Conferred Honors

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

[30 Apr]-10 Jun 1999

EMBLEM

Air Force crewmen nicknamed their Albatrosses "Dumbo" after Walt Disney's flying elephant. The popular character graced the 303rd ARRS emblem, which was designed in 1957 and applied to the unit's SA-16As. The Latin phrase, which means "Serving to Save," summarized the squadron's mission.





Approved, 4 Mar 1959; newest rendition approved 26 Aug 1996

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Performed search and rescue, as well as medical evacuation missions, in the southwestern United States and occasionally into Central America, 1956-1985. During this period, also performed escort missions for aircraft deploying to the Pacific. Mission changed to airlift in 1985; also provided fire-fighting support to the U. S. Forest Service in the western U.S., 1985-1993. Trained for combat search and rescue and performed search and rescue (SAR) and helicopter aerial refueling missions primarily in the northwestern United States, 1997.

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The 452d Air Refueling Wing assumed tanker alert duties, providing one alert crew and aircraft to the active force at March AFB on October 1, 1977, one year after its conversion. The wing's second unit, the 940th Air Refueling Second only to airlift, air rescue was the oldest of the Air Force Reserve's missions. In July 1972, the 303d and 305th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons converted from HC-97s to HC-130Hs at March AFB, California, and Selfridge Air National Guard Base (ANGB), Michigan. In June and July 1971 the 301st and 304th converted to the HH-34 helicopter, and in July 1974 the 301st added HH-3Es.

Two spectacular operations occurred in 1980. Situated in the wilderness of Washington State, but near recreation and logging interests, the Mount Saint Helens volcano had lain dormant for

125 years. When it erupted on May 18, 1980, the 304th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Portland, Oregon, was in the midst of a monthly training session. Unbidden, the unit responded to the emergency, and within minutes its helicopters were en route to the mountain. On that first day, the 304th rescued 51 persons on 32 sorties. In all, at the end of ten days, the 304th had flown 111 sorties and saved 61 lives. Also participating in the rescue operations were the 304th's sister rescue squadrons, the 303d from March AFB and the 305th from Selfridge; maintenance men from all over the Air Force Reserve; and the 129th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group of the California Air National Guard.

21 Jan 80 A United Airlines DC-8, flying from San Diego, California, to Honolulu, Hawaii, received a bomb threat and was diverted to Colorado Springs, Colorado. Resources from the 303d ARR Squadron and the 1550th ATT Wing provided escort. Fortunately the aircraft landed safely and a "dummy bomb" was discovered.

The First Fighter Wing moved in July, 1950, and the installation again became purely a bomber base. In addition to the 22nd, the 330th Bomb Wing was assigned 1949-1951, and the 44th Bomb Wing, the forepart of 1951. To cope with the problems of a multi-wing base, the 12th Air Division was assigned 1951-1961. During that decade, the 106th Bomb Wing - which became the 320th Bomb Wing in October, 1952 - was the 22nd's sister unit. Since 1961, March has been a single-wing base under the intermediate supervision of the 47th Air Division at Castle Air Force Base, California. After October, 1960, the base's extra facilities have been used by two reserve units which transferred from the Long Beach Municipal Airport. These are the 452nd Military Airlift Wing and the 303rd Air Rescue Squadron.

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Albatrosses served with five U.S. Air Force Reserve units which were dispersed throughout the country. Those Air Rescue Squadrons (redesignated Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons in the mid 1960s) operated SA-16As and HU-16Bs from their inception. They were the 301st at Homestead AFB Florida; 302nd at Long Beach Municipal Airport California (relocated to Luke AFB, Arizona); 303rd at March AFB, California; 304th at Portland International Airport Oregon; and the 305th at Selfridge ANG Base Michigan.

When the Dominican Republic crisis flared up in 1965, Albatrosses of the 301st ARRS flew nearly 130 hours evacuating Americans from the beleaguered island. The unit converted to a

composite squadron in 1971 when it added HH-34 helicopters to its inventory. By 1973 all the 301st HU-16s had been replaced by the HH-34. In Fall 1966 the 302nd received the last three HU-16Bs to serve in the Pacific from the 33rd ARRS at Okinawa. The 302nd, 303rd, and 304th retired their Albatrosses in 1971. The 303rd and 305th replaced theirs with HC-97s in 1966 which, though incapable of water landings, were faster, able to carry more equipment, and stay on station longer. For its finale as an Air Force Reserve rescue aircraft, an HU-16B of the 304th ARRS was instrumental in saving the life of an injured seaman aboard a vessel 600 miles off the Oregon coast. Three PJs jumped from the Albatross into the ocean and were taken aboard the PECHENGA. This was the first paradrop ever made in Pacific Northwest waters. The last Air Force Albatross (S/N 51-5282), a Reserve aircraft, was retired to the Air Force Museum, but not before it completed a world record altitude flight on July 4, 1973, in the hands of a 301 st ARRS crew.

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1 Apr 85 The 303d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (AFRES) was designated 303d Tactical Airlift Squadron (TAS) and reassigned as a gained unit of the Twenty-Second Air Force. The 303d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron had augmented Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service since 1956, and later the Twenty-Third Air Force since 1983.

Air Force HH-60G Pave Hawks deployed to Djibouti exercised with French aircraft from the carrier Charles de Gaulle during a stop-over en route to the Persian Gulf to join operations against ISIS. "This is the first significant stop that we've made, conducting a live firing exercise in coordination with the US, preparing the French [Aeronavale] pilots for upcoming operations," said British exchange pilot Lt. Cmdr. Ian Sloan in a Feb. 23 release. The Pave Hawks coordinated with French Rafale fighter aircraft and French and US Marine Corps joint terminal attack controllers during the five-day work-up, Jan. 31 to Feb. 4. Air Force Reserve Command airmen of the 303rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron are currently deployed to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, providing personnel recovery to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, according to a release. France is additionally contributing AWACS, aerial refueling, maritime patrol, and land-based strike aircraft to operations over Iraq, making it a leading international contributor to the allied campaign. 2015

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 19 Nov 2010

Updated:

Sources

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

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.