

## 55<sup>th</sup> RESCUE SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

55<sup>th</sup> 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 55<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 8 Jan 1966

Redesignated 55<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, 1 Mar 1988

Inactivated, 11 Nov 1999

Redesignated 55<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron, 23 Jan 2003

Activated, 14 Mar 2003

#### STATIONS

Thule AB, Greenland, 14 Nov 1952

Kindley AFB, Bermuda, 17 Mar-18 Jun 1960

Kindley AFB, Bermuda, 18 Jun 1961

McCoy AFB, FL, 27 Feb 1970

Eglin AFB, FL, 25 Jun 1971

Hurlburt Field, FL, 25 Feb 1993-11 Nov 1999

Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 14 Mar 2003

#### ASSIGNMENTS

6<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery (later, 39<sup>th</sup> Special Operations) Wing, 1 Jan 1970  
1<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Wing, 18 Apr 1989  
1<sup>st</sup> Special Operations (later, 16<sup>th</sup> Operations) Group, 22 Sep 1992-11 Nov 1999  
355<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 14 Mar 2003

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

SB-17, 1952-1955  
SC-47, 1952-1954  
H-19, 1953-1957  
SA-16, 1953-1959  
YH-21, 1953-1955  
SC-54, 1956-1957, 1959-1960  
SH-21, 1956-1960  
HC-54, 1961-1964  
SH-19 (later, HH-19), 1961-1963  
HH-43, 1963-1964  
HC-97, 1964-1966  
HC-130, 1966-1988  
HC-130H  
HC-130N  
HC-130P  
HH-53, 1973-1980  
H-3, 1980-1982  
UH/MH-60, 1982-1999  
SA-16B  
HC-130  
HH-53C

## **COMMANDERS**

Maj Melvin E. Bunch, 14 Nov 1952  
Maj Bernard L. Bailey, 5 Oct 1953  
Maj Michael V. Pedulla, 19 Feb 1954  
Maj Henry M. O'Conner, 31 Aug 1954  
LTC Robert H. Johnson, 26 Sep 1954  
LTC Eugene Ecklund, 24 Sep 1955  
Maj William W. Poteet, 8 Jun 1956  
LTC Webster W. Plourd, 23 Jul 1956  
Maj Kenneth J. Mask, 10 Jul 1957  
LTC Leon H. Golinsky, 8 Jun 1958  
LTC F. V. Sohle Jr., 1959  
Maj Burkhead M. Herndon, 28 Jul 1959  
LTC Alden G. Glauch, 6 Aug 1959  
LTC Joe Walker, 18 Mar-18 Jun 1960

LTC Norman V. Rudrud, 18 Jun 1961  
LTC Edgar H. Albers Jr., 28 Jul 1963  
LTC Marion L. Costello, 1966  
LTC Reed C. Mulkey, 9 Mar 1967  
LTC Paul W. Rudloff, 1968  
LTC Coy W. Farrar Jr., 11 Feb 1971  
LTC James F. Harmon, 28 Apr 1973  
LTC John R. Moulton, by 31 Dec 1973  
LTC Jerry A. Crupper, c. Jul 1974  
Col Lewis E. James, 18 Jan 1976  
LTC Richard E. Porter, 2 Jul 1976  
LTC John H. Denham, by 30 Jun 1977  
LTC John C. Fournoy, Jan 1979  
LTC Franklin W. Watkins, 3 Nov 1980  
LTC Benjamin J. Pearson II, 30 Oct 1981  
LTC Paul B. Bowen, 23 Jul 1982  
LTC Bennie D. Orrell, 2 Jul 1984  
LTC Kenneth R. Pribyla, 14 Nov 1986  
LTC John G. Taylor III, 1 Mar 1988  
LTC Jerry L. Garlington, 18 May 1990  
LTC Roderick D. Reay, 30 Oct 1992  
LTC John W. Zahrt, 2 Jun 1994  
LTC Charles S. Shaw, 9 Jun 1995  
LTC Richard B. McNabb, 25 Apr 1997  
LTC Stephan J. Laushine, 9 Jul 1998-16 Sep 1999  
Unkn, 17 Sep-11 Nov 1999  
LTC Michael T. Healy, 14 Mar 2003  
LTC Bradley K. Grambo, 9 Jul 2004  
LTC Griffith S. Massey, 16 Jun 2006  
LTC James J. McElhenney, 27 Sep 2007

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

Panama, 1989-1990

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device  
1 Jun 1997-31 May 1999

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award  
1 Jul 1972-30 Jun 1974  
1 Jul 1976- 30 Jun 1978  
20-29 Nov 1978  
1 May 1988-30 Apr 1990  
16 Apr 1992-15 Apr 1994  
1 Jun 1995-31 May 1997  
1 Oct 2003-31 Oct 2004  
1 Nov 2004-31 Jul 2006

Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation  
1 Jul 1967-26 Jul 1969

Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation  
5-6 Feb 1986

#### EMBLEM



55<sup>th</sup> Air Rescue Squadron emblem



55<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron



## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Trained and performed rescue and recovery missions, 1952-1960.

The Norwegian vessel Jopeter was caught in a North Atlantic ice pack. A large-scale rescue effort was directed by the 55th AR Squadron, and 26 passengers and crewmen were evacuated to the safety of another ship. Sep 1955

Supported manned spacecraft recovery operations, Jun 1961-Jan 1966.

The Lebanese cargo ship Alheli, with 26 crewmen aboard, radioed that they were sinking in rough seas about 900 miles east of Bermuda. An HC-130 from the 55th ARR Squadron, Kindley AFB, Bermuda, orbited the sinking ship, vectored a British ship, the Megantic to the scene then dropped flares to aid the loading of the survivors aboard Megantic. 22 Apr 1968

HH-53C 67-14996 Oct 1969, 55 ARRS, Eglin AFB, FL, all killed; Aircraft went out of control during aerial refueling over the Gulf of Mexico and crashed into water.

An HH-53 aircrew from the 55th ARRS and an H-3 aircrew from Detachment 5, 39th ARR Wing, saved 32 United States Army Rangers who were unexpectedly caught in cold rainy swamps during an exercise near Eglin AFB, Florida. 14 Jun 77

Special operations missions, Mar 1988-Sep 1999.

Record flight of two MH-60G aircraft, 55th Special Operations Squadron, from Antigua to Eglin AFB, FL, a distance of 1,640 nautical miles, in 11.1 hours with six aerial refuelings in transit. 20 Aug 1988

Combat search and rescue in Panama, 20 Dec 1989-14 Jan 1990, Southwest Asia, Jan-Mar 1991,

and again in Southwest Asia and Kosovo, 1998-1999.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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#### Sources

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

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