

563 RESCUE GROUP



MISSION

The 563 Rescue Group directs flying operations for one of the USAF's only active duty rescue wings dedicated to CSAR. The group is responsible for training, readiness and maintenance of one HC-130J squadron and two HH-60 squadrons, two pararescue squadrons, two maintenance squadrons and an operations support squadron operating from two geographically separated operating locations.

LINEAGE

3 Emergency Rescue Squadron constituted, 14 Feb 1944

Activated, 15 Feb 1944

Redesignated 3 Rescue Squadron, 28 Jan 1948

Redesignated 3 Air Rescue Squadron, 10 Aug 1950

Redesignated 3 Air Rescue Group, 14 Nov 1952

Inactivated, 18 Jun 1957

Redesignated 3 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, and activated, 14 Dec 1965

Organized, 8 Jan 1966

Inactivated, 31 Jan 1976

Redesignated 563 Rescue Group, 29 Jul 2003

Activated, 1 Oct 2003

STATIONS

Gulfport AAFld, MS, 15 Feb 1944

Keesler Field, MS, 1 Apr 1944; (ground echelon left on 18 May 1944 and arrived at Oakland AAB, CA, 20 May 1944 Brisbane, Australia, 17 Jun 1944; Oro Bay, New Guinea, 20 Jun 1944; Biak, 2 Sep 1944) (air echelon left Keesler Field on 5 Jul 1944 and arrived at Sacramento Air Depot, CA, 6 Jul 1944; Fairfield Suisun AAF, CA, 15 Aug 1944. Brisbane,

Australia, 1 Sep 1944; and joined ground echelon at Biak, 29 Sep 1944) Dulag, Leyte, Nov 1944

Tacloban, Leyte, 1 Apr 1945

Floridablanca, Luzon, 21 May 1945

Ie Shima, Japan, 15 Sep 1945

Atsugi, Japan, 6 Oct 1945

Nagoya, Japan, 17 Jun 1946

Yokota AB, Japan, 15 Jul 1947

Johnson AB, Japan, 1 Apr 1950

Nagoya AB (later, Nagoya Air Station; Moriyama Air Station), 9 Dec 1953-18 Jun 1957

Tan Son Nhut AB, South Vietnam, 8 Jan 1966

Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand, 15 Feb 1973

U-Tapao RTAFB, Thailand, 15 Sep 1975-31 Jan 1976

Davis Monthan AFB, AZ, 1 Oct 2003

ASSIGNMENTS

Army Air Forces Training Command, 15 Feb 1944

AAF Eastern Technical Training Command, 4 Mar 1944

Thirteenth Air Force, 28 Jul 1944

Fifth Air Force, 17 Aug 1944 (under operational control of V Bomber Command, 26 Aug-2 Oct 1944)

5276 Rescue Composite Group (Provisional), 2 Oct 1944

5 Emergency Rescue Group, 16 Mar 1945

V Bomber Command, 21 Nov 1945

314 Composite Wing, 31 May 1946

Fifth Air Force, 6 Jun 1946

Air Rescue Service, 1 May 1949-18 Jun 1957

Pacific Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center (later, 41 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing; 41 Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing), 8 Jan 1966-31 Jan 1976

347 Rescue Wing, 1 Oct 2003

23 Wing, 1 Oct 2006

ATTACHMENTS

Fifth Air Force, 1 May 1949-18 May 1951

314 Air Division, 18 May 1951-14 Nov 1952

Japanese Air Defense Force 14 Nov 1952-1 Aug 1954

Far East Air Forces, 1 Aug 1954-18 Jun 1957

WEAPON SYSTEMS

OA-10, 1944-1947

B-17/SB-17, 1945-1957

C-47/SC-47, 1945-1957

L-5, 1947-1957

R-6/H-6, 1947-1949

H-5, 1948-1954
SB-29, 1949-1955
SA-16, 1950-1957
H-19/SH-19, 1951-1957
SC-54, 1956-1957
HH-43, 1966-1975
HH-3, 1966-1970
HH-53, 1967-1975
HU-16, 1966-1967
HC-130, 1966-1975
UH-1, 1975
B-17G
L-5B
L-5E
OA-10A

COMMANDERS

None (Not Manned), 15-28 Feb 1944
Capt Robert S. Register, 28 Feb 1944
Maj Edward F. Tyminski, 3 Mar 1944
Maj Hugh O'daniel, 19 Mar 1944
Maj Selden X. Bailey, 12 Jan 1945
Unkn, Jun-24 Oct 1945
1lt Robert D. Roth, 24 Oct 1945
Capt Cecil J. Hewlett, 10 Nov 1945
Capt Claude P. Spence, Nov 1946
Lt Col Cyrus W. Kitchens, 5 Dec 194
Capt William H. Nichols, 23 Jun 1947
Lt Col Wesely H. Vernon, 28 Jul 1947
Maj Everett A. Mcdonald, Jan 1948
Lt Col David J. Nolan, Mar 1948
Maj Harvey E. Beedy, 25 Jul 1950
Maj Theodore P. Tatum, 16 Aug 1950
Col Clair E. Back, 28 Aug 1950
Lt Col Robert B. Keck (Acting), 3 Jun 1953
Col Tracy J. Petersen, 15 Jul 1953
Col Gene L. Douglas, 1 May 1956
Col Collier H. Davidson, 18 May-18 Jun 1957
Col Arthur W. Beall, 8 Jan 1966
Col Albert P. Lovelady, 1 Nov 1966
Col Paul E. Leske, 6 Oct 1967
Col Hollon H. Bridges, 20 Sep 1968
Col Rayvon Burleson (Acting), 17 Jun 1969
Col Malcolm C. Frazee, 17 Aug 1969

Col Frederick V. Sohle Jr., 17 Jul 1970
Col George C. Pinyerd, 18 Oct 1970
Col Herbert Leong, Jul 1971
Col Warner A. Britton, By Nov 1971
Col Cecil N. Muirhead Jr., 13 Jan 1972
Col Herbert R. Zehnder, By Jan 1973
Col Richard F. Burdett, 17 Dec 1973
Lt Col Melvin D. Mueller (Acting), 11 Dec 1974
Lt Col Charles E. Trapp, 2 Jan 1975
Lt Col Cleveland E. Forrester, 3 Dec 1975-31 Jan 1976
Col Mark Noyes, 1 Oct 2003
Col Michael F. Korcheck, 22 Jun 2005
Col Lee K. Depalo, 1 Jun 2007
Col Billy D. Thompson, May 2009
Col Jason L. Hanover, 8 Jul 2011

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
New Guinea
Western Pacific
Leyte
Luzon
Southern Philippines
Ryukus
China Defensive
China Offensive

Korean War
UN Defensive
UN Offensive
CCF Intervention
First UN Counteroffensive
CCF Spring Offensive
UN Summer-Fall Offensive
Second Korean Winter
Korea, Summer-Fall 1952
Third Korean Winter
Korea, Summer 1953

Vietnam
Vietnam Defensive

Vietnam Air
Vietnam Air Offensive
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III
Vietnam Air/Ground
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV
TET 69/Counteroffensive
Vietnam Summer/Fall 1969
Vietnam, Winter/Spring
Sanctuary Counteroffensive
Southwest Monsoon
Commando Hunt V
Commando Hunt VI
Commando Hunt VII
Vietnam Ceasefire

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations (Korea)

25 Jun-25 Dec 1950

22 Apr-8 Jun 1951

1 May-27 Jul 1953

Presidential Unit Citations (SEA)

1 Aug 1965-30 Jun 1966

1 Jul 1967-31 Jan 1969

1 Feb 1969-30 Apr 1970

1 May 1970-31 Mar 1972

1 Apr 1972-27 Jan 1973

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award With Combat "V" Device

1 Jul-31 Dec 1966

Meritorious Unit Awards

1 Jun 2008-31 May 2010

1 Jun 2010-31 May 2012

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Oct 2003-31 Oct 2004

1 Nov 2004-31 Jul 2006

1 Jun 2006-31 May 2008

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII)

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations

25 Jun 1950-30 Jun 1951

1 Jul 1951-31 Mar 1953

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palm

8 Jan 1966-28 Jul 1969

1 Apr 1966-28 Jan 1973

EMBLEM



3 Emergency Rescue Squadron emblem



3 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group emblem; on a shield of the sky proper, a sphere azure, rimmed and gridded or, superimposed in the southwest area of the sphere a cross and three

lightning bolts gules, a lightning flash bendwise argent, pierced by an arrow, vert, all within a diminished bordure or. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem is symbolic of the group. The color blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations, and yellow to the excellence of Air Force personnel in assigned duties. The globe represents worldwide search, rescue, and recovery operations performed by the group. The cross depicts location of distressed personnel or required rescue operations. The lightning bolt denotes adversity (hostile forces or elements) which must be overcome to effect successful SAR operations and the arrow the response of the group's forces to all emergencies. (Approved, 18 Mar 1968)



MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Flew combat rescue and evacuation missions 1944-1945 at Biak Island and in the Philippines. Provided courier service, carried supplies and messages, evacuated allied prisoners and wounded personnel, and occasionally provided reconnaissance.

The Third Air Rescue Squadron was officially originated on 15 February 1944 at Gulfport Army Air Field, Mississippi and was then known as the Third Emergency Rescue Squadron.

After intensive training at Gulfport and at Keesler Field, the Third Emergency Rescue Squadron was directed to overseas shipment. Men and equipment started the long haul across the country and across the Pacific to the little island of Biak arriving there on 2 September 1944.

On 17 September 1944 15 days after they arrived in the combat zone the 3 was ready for business.

On 13 October 1944, scarcely more than one month after operations had begun; nine rescue personnel had failed to return from rescue missions.

During the following months of the war, the Squadron participated in the island hopping operations of the 5th Air Force and moved up through the islands of the Pacific to such places as Noemfoor, Morotai, and Leyte.

In June of 1945, the 3 moved its base of operations to the island of Okinawa, to furnish rescue coverage for the 5th Air Forces shipping sweeps between Japan and Korea and the China coast installations.

When peace came in September of 1945, the Squadron landed at Atsugi Air Strip, near Yokohama, Japan.

During World War II the Third Emergency Rescue Squadron successfully snatched from enemy hands 220 downed aircrew members.

The Squadron was reassigned to Air Rescue Service from the 5th Air Force in May 1949. While the operating locations of the different Flights in Japan remained the same upon reassignment, the supervision of the organization now became the responsibility of Headquarters, Air Rescue Service, Washington, D.C.

From 1946-1950 provided rescue capabilities in Japan.

Flew combat rescue and evacuation missions during the Korean War, 1950-1953. Credited with rescuing almost 10,000 United Nations personnel, including almost 1,000 combat saves behind enemy lines.

The 3d Rescue Squadron, following the North Korean invasion, deployed detachments to Korea to perform search and rescue. Initially the squadron's primary mission involved intercepting and escorting distressed aircraft over the land areas of Japan and its adjacent seas. Combat operations and a changing tactical situation expanded the mission to include the rescue of stranded personnel behind enemy lines and aeromedical helicopter evacuation. The 3d ARS was regularly augmented with personnel from the 2d ARS based in the Philippines. The aircraft available at the start of the Korean War forced the 3d ARS to confine air rescue flights to short-range rescue. These included the L-5, a highly maneuverable liaison aircraft used in helicopter escort, supply drops, and medical evacuation from small airfields; Sikorsky H-5 helicopters

capable of operating in mountainous and rice-paddy terrain; the SB-17, a search-and-rescue version of the Flying Fortress bomber; and the SC-47, which aided in searches and hauled critically needed supplies to outlying units. The squadron soon added, while phasing out the SB-17, the SB-29 and the SA-16. During the UN assault on Pyongyang in October 1950, it evacuated 47 injured paratroopers from drop zones at Suncheon and Sukchon. In March 1951, the squadron tested the new model H-19 helicopter, which proved invaluable in multiple evacuations and greatly extended the operational range for rotary-wing rescues. A significant innovation in the use of the helicopter was medical evacuation. For critically wounded soldiers at frontline aid stations, helicopter medical evacuations reduced a possibly fatal 10- to 14-hour road trip to a one-hour flight to a rear Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) unit. In December 1951, H-5s participated in a highly successful experiment by flying wounded soldiers directly from frontline aid stations to a hospital ship off the Korean coast. In November 1952, the 3d elevated to group level, and squadrons replaced the detachments. From June 1950 to the end of hostilities in July 1953, it rescued almost 10,000 UN personnel, almost 1,000 from behind enemy lines, and more than 200 from the water. For numerous commendable and heroic rescues, the 3d ARS/ARG earned three Distinguished Unit Citations.

At the outbreak of the Korean war on June 28, 1950, two SAR units served the Far East Air Forces (FEAF); the 2nd and 3 Air Rescue Squadrons (ARS). The 3, which bore the brunt of air rescue operations in Korea, was headquartered at Johnson Air Base in Japan (Flight A) with detachments at Misawa (Flight C), Yokota (Flight B), and Ashiya (Flight D). One month after the war began, three SA-16As were assigned to the 3 ARS to enhance the unit's rescue capability and test the Albatross' mettle. The anticipation was short lived with the rescue of a Navy Ensign by an Albatross one week later. By Fall, SA-16As were operating from bases in Korea including K-2Taegu, K-3 Pohang, K-16 Seoul, and K-24 Pyongyang.

On July 7, two L-5 liaison planes and an SC-47 deployed to K-I, the Pusan West Air Base (AB) in Korea, from Ashiya AB, Japan, but they proved unsuitable for operation in the rice-paddy terrain and returned to Japan on July 16. This initial, modest deployment totaling seven men was known as Mercy Mission #1. A second deployment took place a week later when the ARSvc chief, Col. (later, Brig. Gen.) Richard T. Right, piloted an SC-47 from Ashiya AB to Korea to escort the first H-5 helicopters into the country. This time, the 3d ARS was in Korea to stay. The H-5 outfit, soon known as Detachment F, set up operations at R-2 (Taegu #1), but on August 1 it moved to Pusan as the North Korean offensive threatened the Pusan Perimeter. Four days later, in the first recorded use of an H-5 for medical evacuation, an H-5 transported a wounded U.S. Army soldier, Pfc. Claude C. Crest, Jr., from the Sendang-ni area to an Army hospital. Thousands more evacuations would follow in the three years of fighting that lay ahead. In September, when U.S./UN ground forces broke through the perimeter, Detachment F, now equipped with six H-5s, returned to Taegu. Advanced elements, usually consisting of one L-5 and one or two H-5s, were collocated with Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) units, thereby providing H-5 crews the advantages of quick response and proximity to the areas of operation while minimizing any problems caused by communications breakdowns.

On 10 August 1950, the Squadron was again reorganized as the Third Air Rescue Squadron which authorized additional equipment and personnel to assist the Squadron in providing adequate rescue coverage and support to the armed forces engaged in the Korean War.

Another rescue craft is the SB-29. Carried neatly underneath the fuselage of the converted bomber is an A-3 life-boat that can be dropped by parachute to survivors in the water. The A-3 life-boat carries rations for 180 individual meals, clothing for fifteen men, and other items necessary for survival. In the event the seas are too rough for an amphibious landing and out of range for the helicopters, then this is the third method of the rescue chain. The A-3 life-boat has two engines and is capable of cruising over 550 miles with the fuel on board.

Other aircraft that are daily flying direct support for the Rescue Squadron is the SC-47 converted cargo aircraft, and the L-5, a tiny liaison aircraft which has participated in many behind-the-line pilot pick-ups.

3d Air Rescue also has a well-organized para-rescue team which stands ready at all times to parachute in areas of distress. Heading the para-rescue section is Capt. Forest B. Ernest of Fort Worth, Tex., himself a veteran and seasoned paratrooper. The team is trained in every conceivable type of regional survival, and through rigorous and strenuous training is able to land within a few feet of the scene. Also, all members are skilled in the field of medicine and capable of handling any type injury that might occur.

Personnel of the 3 Squadron have been presented over one thousand awards, medals and decorations. Among these are three DSC's and forty-three Silver Stars. The squadron was the first Air Force squadron to receive the Distinguished Unit citation for its participation in the present campaign.

The 3 was one of the first Rescue units to use the helicopter in Rescue operations. When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, Rescue helicopters were put into immediate use evacuating wounded United Nations personnel from front line positions to the rear area hospitals and snatching from enemy hands downed pilots who had crashed or bailed out in enemy territory.

Allied flyers, slogging foot soldiers, and Marine and Navy personnel are counted among those who owe their lives or their liberty to the deeds achieved by the 3 Air Rescue people in 23,264 hours of flying time.

By September 1950, the leadership of Lt. Col. Klair E. Back, the new commander of 3d ARS, began to pay dividends. Reassigned from ARSvc headquarters where he served as the Inspector General, Back took over in August 1950, was promoted to colonel one year later, and remained in command until June 1953 when he departed to command the air base group at Great Falls AFB, Montana.. He earned the respect of the men in his squadron by flying combat sorties in at least four of the seven aircraft types operated by the 3d ARS: the SB-17, SA-16, SB-29, and SC-47. Under his wartime guidance, the squadron grew significantly in numbers of personnel and

aircraft and successfully transitioned from the SB-17 to SA-16 between late 1950 and early 1951. It also added the YH-19 helicopter to its inventory, successfully field-testing the new helicopter under combat conditions in 1951 before bringing six more H-19s into its fleet in early 1952.

Meanwhile, Detachment F's helicopters began to prove their worth. In August, H-5s had transported 110 critically wounded soldiers, mostly from frontline aid stations to MASHs and other hospitals; frequently they also transported medical supplies and whole blood on flights to the front lines. On September 4, a new era in rotary-wing operations began when an H-5 piloted by Capt. (later, Maj.) Paul W. Van Boven picked up Capt. Robert E. Wayne of the 35th Fighter-Bomber Squadron who had abandoned his crippled F-51 after a strafing run behind enemy lines just north of Pohang. Despite the few dozen helicopter rescues performed during World War II, no one had yet developed doctrine for crossing a front line to pick up a downed pilot. Van Boven's commander was reluctant to direct a rescue attempt, leaving the decision to the pilot. On his own initiative, Captain Van Boven crossed enemy lines near the east coast of Korea and picked up Wayne, whose wingman assisted in the rescue by strafing the area and killing one North Korean soldier who was seen approaching the downed pilot. As Van Boven hovered just above the ground, his medic, Cpl. John Fuentes, grabbed Captain Wayne and pulled him inside the cabin. For this significant first, Van Boven earned the Silver Star.

The number of officers and airmen assigned to 3d ARS (later 3d Air Rescue Group) increased from 537 on September 1, 1950, to a wartime high of 1,028 on February 1, 1952, nearly a twofold increase.

As September turned to October, Detachment F moved numerous times to stay close to the rapidly advancing front lines. On October 13, all elements moved to K-14 (Kimp'o AB, west of Seoul), but crowded conditions forced movement to K-16 (Seoul AB) on October 19. In subsequent weeks, advance elements deployed from Seoul to Sariwon, Sinmak, Pyongyang, Anju, and Kunuri in North Korea. Rescue assets were available 100 miles north of the 38th parallel, close to the front. When Chinese forces later advanced south across the Yalu River, the elements at Kunuri and Anju returned first to Pyongyang and later, as U.S./UN ground forces withdrew, to Seoul.

Several noteworthy missions occurred in late 1950. On October 10 an H-5, while under fire, rescued a downed British pilot and administered blood plasma during the return flight. This marked the first time blood plasma had been administered during flight in a helicopter. The pilot, 1st Lt. David C. McDaniel, and the para-doctor, Capt. John C. Shumate, each earned a Silver Star for the mission. Captain Shumate pulled the downed pilot from his aircraft, carried the wounded man 200 yards to the helicopter, and then administered the transfusion. On October 21 and 22, after an airborne operation intended to capture retreating North Korean soldiers and government officials fleeing the capital, four H-5s and two L-5s evacuated at least thirty-five wounded paratroopers of the 187th Regimental Combat Team (187th RCT) from the drop zone near Sukchon, North Korea. An H-5 could carry one or two wounded men, but the L-5 could manage only one wounded GI at a time. This was probably the first helicopter support of

an airborne operation, and in appreciation of the effort, the paratroopers presented 3d ARS with a captured North Korean flag and a light machine gun. In yet another Silver Star mission early in the war, on November 24 Capt. Oscar N. Tibbetts and SSgt. James K. Bryson, a medic on temporary duty from the 2d ARS, made a daring H-5 rescue of a fighter pilot from deep within North Korea. The pilot had spent the night hiding from the enemy who were within a few yards of his position.

Early in the war, 3d ARS had suffered the destruction of several aircraft on operational missions, but without loss of life. Between July 26 and November 8, 1950, the squadron lost four H-5s, two L-5s, and two SB-17s to various causes. But on November 28, the unit suffered its first loss of life when an H-5 apparently crashed into a mountain under low visibility and darkness, low on fuel, while returning from a pilot pickup in North Korea.

The first operational A-1 boat drop by an SB-17 during the Korean War permitted the rescue of a B-26 crewmember. Late in the evening of December 6, 1950, a B-26 crew returning from a night sortie was forced to bail out over the Korea Strait, north of Susa, Japan. A snowstorm prevented the alert aircraft from taking off, so the 3d ARS dispatched a crash rescue boat from Fukuoka, Japan, to begin the search at daybreak. SA-16 and SB-17 aircraft were also briefed to begin searching for the crew at daybreak, weather permitting. Early in the morning of 7th, the aircraft took off as planned and, though hampered by snow showers and low visibility, searched until late afternoon, without success. A second crash boat arrived to relieve the first, which returned to Fukuoka to refuel. The next day, the 8th, bad weather precluded searching until noon. Revised information became available regarding the B-26's location at the time of bailout, so the SA-16 examined an area farther north than had previously been searched. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the Albatross reported seeing a survivor in a one-man life raft. The amphibian's pilot attempted to land but aborted due to the high swells. Instead, its crew dropped a five-man life raft and observed the survivor getting in. The SA-16 pilot requested that an SB-17 be dispatched to drop a lifeboat to the survivor. At 4:20 p.m., 1st Lt. Carl R Dimmitt of Flight D, 3d ARS, arrived on the scene in an SB-17 and, after performing several boat-drop patterns, made the first operational boat drop of the war. The A-1 lifeboat descended under its three-clustered parachute and plunged into the water within fifty feet of the survivor. A second SB-17 stood by should the first drop fail. It intended to remain in the area until a crash boat arrived, but snow showers and low visibility forced it to return to base. Meanwhile, the crash boat arrived in the area, but weather again prevented it from locating the survivor. By 7:30 the next morning, two SB-17s were airborne in search of the A-1 boat, still hampered by low visibility. Weather conditions worsened later in the day and, consequently, the crew planned to resume its search in the morning. By 7:18 a.m. on December 10, two search aircraft were airborne. Shortly thereafter, one of the SB-17s reported the A-1 lifeboat had been sighted at a beach northeast of Susa, where the survivor had landed. Later that day, an SC-47 aircraft picked up the sole survivor of the B-26 crew, a Captain Lewis, and flew him to Iwakuni, Japan.

The most heralded Sentinel rescue mission occurred on the afternoon of December 11, 1950, when 1st Lt. Donald R. Michaelis, flying an L-5 north of Seoul, picked up a mayday from the wingman of a bailed-out F-80 pilot. Learning the location of the downed pilot, Michaelis stated,

"I knew it was too late in the day for a rescue helicopter to come after him, so I went off on my own hook." Lieutenant Michaelis headed, with fighter escort, to a location several miles southeast of Pyongyang. Because the area had no landing strips, the JOC at Taegu did not direct Michaelis to continue but allowed him to proceed at his own discretion. Meanwhile, the escort fighters had pinpointed the downed pilot and relayed to Michaelis that a nearby road would make a suitable landing strip. Michaelis decided to proceed, but finding the road unsatisfactory, he selected a nearby frozen rice paddy. On his third attempt he executed the difficult landing on the paddy. The downed pilot, 1st Lt. Tracy B. Mathewson of the 8th FBS, made a dash for the L-5. Perhaps surprised at the daring rescue attempt, the enemy troops did not fire until Mathewson had nearly reached the rescue aircraft. Their gunfire quickly attracted the attention of the escort fighters, whose strafing enabled the L-5 to take off. For this rescue, Lieutenant Michaelis earned the Silver Star. At an awards ceremony the next month, Michaelis and three other 3d ARS members received their Silver Stars, indicative of the enviable record and reputation the squadron was already achieving at this early stage of the war.

Two days before Christmas 1950, was the rescue of thirty-five prisoners of war (POWs) from behind enemy lines. A T-6 Mosquito aircraft had spotted the letters PW spelled in the snow with pieces of straw, and a closer look revealed soldiers that the pilot believed to be Americans. The T-6 pilot radioed Mosquito operations which contacted rescue operations personnel. Within thirty minutes, Detachment F had prepared three H-5 helicopters based at K-16 for the mission. Piloted by 1st Lts. Russell G. Winegar and Charles H. Field, Jr., and 2d Lt. Clifford W. Brown, the three H-5s followed the T-6 from Seoul to the area where the pilot had seen the message. Four F-51s accompanied by four F-80s provided ResCAP for the vulnerable helicopters. Arriving at the snow-covered field eight miles behind enemy lines, the rescuers found a total of eleven American and twenty-four South Korean POWs. Setting up a shuttle, the crews transported the POWs, in twelve sorties, to an area on the friendly side of the lines. From there, they were picked up and brought to IX Corps headquarters.

During the winter of "50" Captain Donald Michaelis of Detroit, Michigan, flew an L-5 into enemy territory, landed in a frozen rice paddie, and picked up a downed fighter pilot as bullets ripped through the fabric of the tiny craft. A hasty take-off was made and the pilot was delivered to safety.

Spartan living conditions were typical for most detachment personnel serving in Korea at the time. One former member recalled the terrible living conditions and extremely cold weather as the two greatest deterrents to morale. Quarters, always temporary during the race up and down the peninsula, were generally large tents with dirt floors heated by oil-burning stoves. On cold nights, the helicopter crew chief would drain half of the oil from his aircraft's engine and bring it and the H-5's battery into the tent in an effort to keep them from freezing. On the coldest nights, , temperatures were so low that fuel leading to the stove would congeal by early morning and the water in canteens hung nearby would freeze. To combat this problem, another former unit member confessed to having used 100-octane aircraft fuel in his stove instead of the USAF-authorized diesel fuel. Standard fare for detachment personnel consisted of canned rations including such staples as Spam and powdered eggs. Fresh food of any kind

was rare, even fresh water was sometimes difficult to obtain (North Korean agents were known to attempt to contaminate water sources). Fortunately, SA-16 crews did their best to offset the water shortage by providing a steady supply of beer and Coca-Cola to the several detachment elements.

Most detachment members experienced little opportunity for recreation. An exception occurred in late 1950 when Bob Hope, accompanied by Les Brown and his Band of Renown, performed for the troops occupying Pyongyang in North Korea. Card playing, especially bridge, was a popular evening pastime. Helicopter personnel capitalized on the evening diversions because their H-5s lacked the instrumentation required to fly at night.

Detachment crews and maintenance personnel enjoyed few opportunities for rest and recreation (R&R) until the spring of 1951. Then, H-5 pilots and maintenance personnel began taking short R&R trips to Japan. Personnel were granted about a week's leave at Ashiya AB. Part of the trip entailed a visit to the flight surgeon at the base hospital who reported a high rate of combat fatigue among detachment pilots.

Organizationally, Detachment F operated in several small forward-based elements, while headquarters remained south of the front, first at K-37 (Taegu #2) and later at K-16. The limited number of H-5s necessitated that the element size be small, comprising two to four of these aircraft, with an occasional L-5 serving. In late 1950, Detachment F possessed between six and nine helicopters. Despite few aircraft, by the end of 1950 the 3d ARS had earned the first of three Distinguished Unit Citations for conducting "72 actual rescues resulting in the possible saving of life in each instance." The unit had evacuated 710 seriously wounded troops from front-line aid stations.

Captain Osburne E. McKenzie of Kansas City, Mo., received eleven Communist bullet holes in his helicopter while rescuing a downed fighter pilot, but nursed the damaged craft to friendly lines before making an emergency landing.

1st Lt. Charles DuPont of Amsterdam, N.Y., was shot out of the air after picking up another downed fighter pilot. With him at the time was his medic Cpl. Gerald L. Fryer of Woodlands, Calif., and the downed fighter pilot 1st Lt. Vernon L. Wright of Lubbock, Texas, who had the unhappy experience of being shot down twice in 30 minutes. The trio remained in enemy territory and hiked for six hours over rugged mountainous terrain before they were stopped by exhaustion. At daybreak the next day they were rescued by two other 3 Air Rescue helicopters flown by Maj. John J. Dean of Freeport, IL, and Capt. Robert Barnhill of Ashland, Ohio.

Another helicopter pilot, 1st Lt. Michael Angelo Mecca of Throop, Pa., crossed enemy lines 18 times in one day to rescue 35 men.

Another mass evacuation was completed when 94 Turkish soldiers, stranded in enemy territory by flood waters of the swollen Imjin River, were flown out by four helicopters. The helicopters alone have rescued over 6,200 U.N. personnel.

Capt. John J. Najarian of Fresno, Calif., landing his SA-16 in the narrow, debris-filled Taedong River at night and under heavy enemy fire, rescued a downed fighter pilot, Capt. Kenneth Stewart of Lexington, Ky. Stewart was forced to bail out after his aircraft had been crippled by enemy ground fire. The rescue operation took place just two miles south of the enemy stronghold of Kyomipo, North Korea. For this action Captain Najarian was presented the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism beyond the call of duty.

Another pilot, Capt. Robert C. Mason of Las Vegas, Nev., beached his amphibian on the mudflats of an enemy river to rescue Sabre jet pilot 2nd Lt. Bill N. Garrett, of Bowling Green, Ky., after his plane had fallen victim to Communist MIG-15 fighters. Artillery shells, mortars, and small arms fire cracked all around the beached amphibian, and to add to the woes of the crew, the plane became stuck in the mud twice and one propeller stuck in reverse. Using full power and after toggling switches the sturdy aircraft again became airborne and airlifted the pilot to safety.

1st Lt. Ronald Russo of Staten Island, N.Y., flew formation with a crippled Marine "Skyraider" as the aircraft was ditching off the coast of Korea. The Marine pilot was in the water only three minutes.

The start of 1951 saw Detachment F evacuate K-16 and relocate to K-37, a small strip a mile south of the city of Taegu, as the Communist Chinese Forces pushed south during January. The U.S./UN forces stabilized the front at the 37th parallel, ending more than a month of withdrawals under extremely difficult conditions. Detachment elements remained at forward locations to facilitate the medical evacuation of wounded troops.

Rescue missions occasionally included room for fun, at least after completion of the mission. On January 28, 1951, an L-5 escorted and navigated for an H-5 helicopter en route to the location of a downed RAF pilot. The L-5 flew about a quarter of a mile in front of the helicopter, directing the H-5 away from enemy troop concentrations. , on three occasions both aircraft drew enemy rifle fire. Locating the pilot, the H-5 made the pickup while the L-5 buzzed nearby buildings from which the enemy was firing. While Capt. Harry J. Copsey piloted the L-5, 1st Lt. Elmer L. Barnes answered the enemy fire with his M-1 rifle from the rear of the cockpit. The rescued RAF pilot was from the British aircraft carrier HMS Theseus. After the dust had settled, the rescuers communicated to the Brits that they would release their "hostage" for a ransom payment of four bottles of Scotch, to which demand the carrier's Air Liaison Officer readily complied.

At this early date, daring helicopter missions were becoming commonplace. On January 24, two H-5s, piloted by 1st Lts. Lynden E. Thomason and Osburn E. McKinzie and accompanied, respectively, by medics Cpls. Homer Ramirez and Carl W. Poole, picked up a B-26 crew that had broadcast its intention to crash-land on enemy-held Suwon airstrip. While U.S. Marine Corsairs provided cover and kept the enemy's head down, the helicopters rescued three crewmembers twenty minutes after they had landed. In early February, Eighth U.S. Army Commander Lt. Gen.

Matthew B. Ridgway's Operation Thunderbolt pushed north to the Han River, regaining ground lost during the earlier U.S./UN retreat.

On the 15th, all available helicopters responded to a call to assist some 200 wounded soldiers in an area surrounded by the enemy. Six H-5s with fighter cover evacuated twenty-eight soldiers, and the next day, with visibility worsening, they lifted sixteen more to safety before friendly ground forces could establish contact with the encircled troops.

On February 19, Lieutenant Michaelis landed his L-5 in a riverbed to pick up an injured, downed F-80 pilot. The combination of sandy soil and the additional weight of the rescued pilot prevented the L-5 from taking off. An H-5 that had accompanied the L-5 landed, took on the grateful passenger, and delivered him to base operations at K-37 where an ambulance was waiting for him. With his aircraft's weight now reduced, Michaelis took off and returned home to K-37.

Two days later, Lieutenant Michaelis made another pilot pickup on the friendly side of the front. February 21 st dawned with both the ceiling and visibility low, and conditions worsened in intermittent rain showers throughout the day. In midmorning, the JOC reported three F-80s down, all in the vicinity of the Naktong River. Searching for the pilots, Michaelis located two of them standing beside their bellied-in F-80s in the riverbed north of Waegwan. He did not attempt a pickup because the condition of the third pilot was unknown. After locating the third pilot (who proved to be unhurt) near Sangju, Michaelis picked him up from the riverbed and headed for home. , his L-5 lost power, forcing him to land again on the riverbed. After checking the engine, he concluded it to be okay, so he took off, subsequently finding and guiding an F-51 lost in intermittent rain showers as it returned home. The F-51 touched down safely, depleting its fuel on its landing roll. The L-5 pilot concluded a busy day of rescue work by delivering the F-80 pilot to his home base at K-2 before returning to K-37 by himself. Meanwhile, an H-5 pilot searching for another downed pilot had made a forced landing along the same riverbed when his fuel ran out, leading the unit historian to quip, "what we'd do without that riverbed we don't know." The next day, a strange, cyclonic-like wind reaching at least 70 knots hit both Taegu airfields without warning, damaging the wings of all three L-5s based at K-37. Through the foresight of Detachment F's com-mander, Major John J. Dean, the aircraft had been tied down, thereby minimizing the damage. Nevertheless, the detachment never again had more than two L-5s operational in Korea.

On February 21, H-5 pilot 1st Lt. Ernest L. MacQuarrie delivered a wounded GI to a MASH facility, thereby marking the thousandth life saved by 3d ARS in the war. Between March 23 and 28, following Operation Tomahawk, the second airborne assault of the war, detachment helicopters evacuated 270 injured and wounded paratroopers of the 187th RCT from the Munsan-ni area twenty miles north of Seoul. Pilots and medics flew constantly during daylight, and maintenance crews worked around the clock in support of evacuations that often were conducted under heavy mortar artillery and small arms fire.

During the spring of 1951, L-5s continued to fly searches, front-line medical evacuations, and other sorties. In April, the L-5s flew a higher than normal number of missions due to the diversion of other detachment aircraft to classified sorties. On the 29th, two L-5s joined an H-5 searching for the crew of a lost C-46. The H-5 picked up one crewmember, and friendly ground parties rescued the remaining survivors. On May 28, Lieutenant Michaelis, recently arrived at the 8055th MASH element, was just unrolling his bedding when he was called upon to evacuate a critically wounded patient. Three days later, he evacuated several more front-line casualties.

In April 1951, Detachment F's SC-47 flew seventy-one sorties, an unusually high number due in part to the diversion of other detachment aircraft to classified sorties. That month, the SC-47's work included providing escort for a distressed fighter; overwater escort for liaison aircraft and for a helicopter deploying from Japan to Korea; an overwater search; a supply run for critically needed H-5 rotor blades; and transport for H-5 helicopter pilots ferrying from Korea to Japan.

On April 7, 1951, Lieutenant Dimmitt performed the second and final operational A-1 lifeboat drop of the Korean War to an actual survivor. (In at least one other case an SB-17 dropped a boat but it was later discovered that the pilot had perished.) Dimmitt was flying a combat orbit over the Yellow Sea covering B-29 strikes against airfields near Pyongyang when, at about 11:30 a.m., a B-29 put out an emergency call that another B-29 had just exploded in midair. The lieutenant headed his SB-17 toward the area of the disaster. Reaching the site, he found two empty life rafts; then, two miles farther, he located a one-man dinghy carrying a survivor. Dimmitt executed three boat-drop patterns: the first, for positive identification; the second, to determine wind direction and a drop pattern; and the third, to drop the boat. Within minutes of the drop, an SA-16 arrived on the scene, landed, and picked up the lone survivor. Because the now-empty A-1 lifeboat was drifting toward shore, friendly fighters were called in to destroy it, thereby preventing a valuable asset from falling into enemy hands. Lieutenant Dimmitt continued his search until, low on fuel, he headed back to K-2.

Flying the smaller H-5 on April 30, 1st Lt. Charles H. Field, Jr. rescued a South African Air Force pilot who had bailed out near Sinmak, North Korea. As Field took off, the enemy continued firing at his helicopter. For this mission, Lieutenant Field earned the Silver Star. His award citation described the mission: Arriving in the area Lieutenant Field located the pilot who was flashing a signal mirror near a hilltop. When he discovered that the man was wounded he let down immediately to prevent his capture by encircling enemy troops. As the helicopter landed, enemy forces who had remained concealed from the fighter cover, opened up with intense small arms fire. Although the aircraft was hit in the engine section, [Field] remained at the radio and directed fighters to neutralize enemy positions and to strafe enemy soldiers rushing his aircraft as the wounded pilot was assisted aboard. In 1999, retired Major Field reported on a recent trip to South Africa during which he had enjoyed a reunion with three of the four South African Air Force pilots he had rescued during the Korean War. "Needless to say," he wrote, their appreciation was such that "I could not spend my money at their club."

Not every rescue was an exercise in terror, and on some occasions the rescuers proved to be shrewd negotiators. Early in 1951 a detachment helicopter crew picked up a downed Marine

Corps F4U pilot and delivered him to an advanced dirt airstrip. Capt. Russell G. Patterson, Jr., recalled that following a "cordial welcome, my Air Force hosts told me that I was being held hostage unless the Navy agreed to their terms." The next day, a fellow Corsair pilot delivered the ransom—ten gallons of ice cream, fifty pounds of boneless steak, and a bottle of Scotch! But despite the occasional "hostage-taking," rescuers often received tokens of appreciation for their life-saving efforts. In January 1951, a T-6 Mosquito pilot who had been rescued by an H—5 helicopter while under enemy fire presented his rescuer, Capt. Paul L. Park, with a "sterling, gold inlaid cigarette case and lighter suitably inscribed."

On May 31, the SC-47 flew a supply run to Paengnyong-do; on its return flight it delivered four South Korean guerrillas and seven North Korean POWs to K-37. During August 1951, the SC-47 flew numerous supply runs to Ashiya AB for badly needed helicopter components, including rotor blades, rotor heads, and an engine.

In June, it relocated from K—37 to K-16, bringing it closer to the front, and was redesignated as Detachment 1, 3d ARS. The ARSvc's premier combat unit now possessed fifteen helicopters, attaining its authorized number for the first time. Additionally, Detachment 1 now expanded its operating locations to five. Most important, it established an element on Paengnyong-do, an island located in the Yellow Sea just below the 38th parallel. Here, two H-5s stood alert for rescues in northwest Korea, which was too far away for the helicopters stationed at K-16 to reach. In addition, four H-5 "eggbeaters" operated from the 8055th MASH forward location at Uijongbu. Each day, one of the four flew up to the 25th Division's command-post area near the center of the U.S./UN lines to stand by for pilot pickups. The remaining three H-5s stayed at the hospital, awaiting calls for medical evacuation. One helicopter operated from K-16, standing by for pilot pickups or to fly cover for the pilot pickup helicopter that was near the 25th's command post; another stayed with the rear element at K-37 to cover any accidents in south Korea. By late June 1951, after one full year of war, the unit had saved more than 2,000 lives. In its primary mission—aircrew rescue—Detachment 1 had picked up more than eighty pilots and other airmen, three-quarters of them from behind enemy lines.

Though the rescue of downed airmen remained the first priority of 3d ARS helicopters, medical evacuation of wounded soldiers accounted for about two-thirds of rotary-wing sorties in Korea. H-5 pilot Captain McVay recounted a medical evacuation in 1951 that highlighted the life-saving work of the often unsung but always-in-demand medics: Rescue personnel load an injured servicemember into the H-5 helicopter's outboard capsule before transferring him to a medical facility. The soldier we were to pick up was so critically wounded and in such a state of shock that the medic who accompanied me gave him little chance for survival. At any rate, we placed him in the H-5's outside capsule, and the medic started to give him plasma. Time meant everything for the wounded kid—and I might mention it was about 20 degrees below zero at the time. I had the engine going and was ready to take off. The medic ran his blood tube up through the top half of the capsule and knelt on the floor of the helicopter, holding the blood container outside of the ship, so the kid inside the capsule would get it en route. Just how that medical man stood the freezing flight I will never know. There he was, leaning out of the ship

and holding that blood in his hand. When we finally got back to the aid station his hands were frozen. But so far as I know he saved the wounded boy's life.

A secondary role for detachment helicopters, especially in the first half of the war, was special operations, at the time referred to as classified missions. Shortly after the YH-19's arrival in Korea, the unit used the new helicopter on a classified mission to bring eighteen UN personnel south, out of enemy territory. This March 31 mission most likely involved the recovery of Korean guerrillas operating under orders from the American intelligence genius, Maj. (also known as Mr.) Donald Nichols. On April 17 Nichols used the YH-19 in what was termed "Operation MiG" to recover components of a MiG-15 that had crashed south of Sinanju, North Korea. The recovery of a MiG, or its key components, was then a top priority for FAF intelligence. In June, Maj. John J. Dean, Commanding Officer of Detachment 1, flew an H-5 "deep into enemy territory in an attempt to bring out a United Nations undercover agent." The helicopter was escorted by a C-47 of Unit 4/Special Air Missions which was to establish contact with the ground party. Although no contact was made on the first night, two nights later another H-5 made the attempt: "This time radio contact was established, signal panels were sighted, and the pick-up was accomplished."

12 June 1951—A downed Fifth Air Force F-51 Mustang pilot was picked off a river near Pyongyang yesterday evening in one of the most daring and spectacular rescue efforts in air history. Landing his SA-16 on the filled Taedong river, one mile south of Kyomipo, just southwest of the North Korean capital city, 1st Lt. John J. Najarian, Fresno, Calif., veteran 3 Air Rescue Squadron pilot, completed the amazing rescue of the Mustang pilot under heavy Communist ground fire and in complete darkness. During the operation other Mustang fighter pilots circled overhead, diving to attack the thick concentration of enemy gun positions as they fired at the pilot and his rescuers. The downed officer, Capt. Kenneth Stewart, Louisville, Ky., pilot of the F-51, had just dropped his bomb load and was seeking a target for his rockets when his plane was caught in a sudden burst of heavy ground fire which knocked out his engine. He glided as far from the guns as possible then bailed out of his crippled aircraft at an altitude of 900 feet. As he floated to earth, he controlled the descent of his chute so that he would land in the water. Capt. Stewart touched the water shortly before 8:15 p.m. and by 8:30 the SA-16 was winging its way to the rescue. Darkness had fallen by the time the rescue plane reached the scene. One of the Mustangs flying protective cover for Capt. Stewart flew in low over him flashing his landing lights on the water to mark the downed pilot's location in the river. The fighters again turned their attention to the Communist guns on the shore with thousands of rounds of 50 caliber ammunition, more than 35 rockets and tanks of blazing napalm. The crew of the SA-16 later reported that the "Mustangs did the finest job of flak suppression we have ever seen." Lt. Najarian accomplished what is considered by airmen to be an almost "impossible" feat by flying the Albatross directly in under the anti-aircraft guns, along the river below its high banks and landing in pitch darkness with no point of reference. By the time the flying boat touched the water the entire area was enveloped in inky darkness so that crew was unable to find the pilot. Then a pinpoint of light flickered from a small flashlight on the water and the rescue crew taxied their aircraft over to it. They found Capt. Stewart floating uninjured in his May West life jacket. He had inflated his collapsible dinghy but had been afraid to use it

for fear he would make a better target for the soldiers firing from the bank. "I had to keep swimming all the time I was in the water," he said, "so that I would not float over to the shore." The skillful pilot climaxed the unusual rescue mission by flying out under the same "unflyable" conditions. Later reports indicated that the feat was even more amazing in view of the fact that the Taedong river is estimated to vary in depth at the point of the rescue from about six feet to 20 feet. The big Albatross displaces 5 1/2 feet of water. The rescue team was composed of Lt. Najarian; 2nd Lt. James F. Fall, co-pilot, Corpus Christi, Tex.; Capt. Morris Eliasof, navigator, New York City; S/Sgt. Howard K. Walsborn, radar operator, Prosser, Wash., and T/Sgt. Harry E. Fitzgibbon, Albany, N.Y., engineer.

A similar incident in 1951 demonstrated the amphibian's adaptability to "sea legs" when it remained bound to stormy seas for two days. The SA-16A (S/N 49-082) from Flight A, 3 Rescue Squadron, left Johnson Air Base, Japan, to rendezvous with the Navy supply ship WHITESIDE, some 400 miles out to sea. Aboard was a seriously ill sailor who would die within hours without a doctor and medical supplies. Faced with a decision that weighed the life of one man against that of his crew, the pilot opted for a dangerous landing in the rough seas. In a tense and dramatic landing sure to evoke admiration from any aviator, the pilot full-stalled his Albatross which impacted onto the heaving seas, bounced off three swells, dug a wing into the water and righted itself. No leaks were found but a flap was severely damaged, ruling out any takeoff attempt. After completing a hazardous raft transfer of a doctor, nurse, and medical supplies to the WHITESIDE, the ship took the Albatross in tow. For two days the aircraft endured a merciless beating from the stormy seas, being violently tossed completely out of the water only to be fully submerged by the next mountainous wave. Once safely inside Tokyo Bay, the pilot tried the engines and was astonished to hear them roar to life. He lowered the gear and taxied the battered Albatross onto land, almost 60 hours from the time the mission began. A few days later, number 9082 was back in service as though nothing had happened.

The squadron's first loss of personnel as a direct result of enemy fire occurred on September 13, 1951. On that day, a ResCAP consisting of four F-51s was escorting an H-5 whose crew had been alerted for the pickup of a T-6 Mosquito pilot and observer that the Rescue Coordination Center had reported down, and which the Mustangs had in sight. Entering the well-defended area where the men were located, the rescue aircraft was hit. Pilot 1st Lt. Eugene C. Kohfield, on only his second combat mission, attempted to fly back to friendly territory while calling for another helicopter to attempt the pickup. Kohfield's H-5 returned home safely, but on the approach prior to landing, a blade went out of track, cutting off the helicopter's tailcone. The aircraft fell 200 feet end-over-end, instantly killing the lieutenant and his medic, Pfc. Lawrence A. Reid. When the backup helicopter arrived for the pickup, the F-51s had lost sight of the survivors. The H-5 pilot, Capt. Osburn E. McKinzie, searched in vain until darkness forced him to return to base.

Only a month later, Detachment 1 lost another H-5 to hostile fire, but with no loss of life. On October 25, 1st Lt. Charles J. Dupont and Cpl. Gerald L. Fryer were alerted for a pilot pickup. Eight days earlier, Dupont had used his H-5's hoist to pick up a downed B-26 radar observer from a densely forested mountainside. That survivor had been evading the enemy for three

nights until he was spotted by a friendly aircraft. But this time, Lieutenant Dupont was to become the hunted. As he arrived for the pickup, heavy ground fire hit his aircraft. He returned for a second pass and managed to retrieve the pilot. Climbing aboard, the rescued pilot informed Dupont that his aircraft had been hit in the oil tank. A glance at his engine gauges confirmed this to be true, but the lieutenant took off and headed south, preparing for a forced landing. When the engine seized, Dupont put the helicopter down. The H-5 rolled on its side, but no one was hurt. Heavy rain and approaching darkness meant their comrades could not possibly attempt a rescue until the following morning, so the trio spent the night hidden from Communist troops on a thickly wooded mountain slope. The next morning two H-5s arrived on the scene, one piloted by Major Dean, the other by Capt. Robert W. Barnhill. Using their helicopters' hoists, Dean and Barnhill lifted the three men to safety. His tour in Korea completed, Major Dean had been relieved of the detachment's command the previous day and was scheduled for immediate departure, but he had volunteered to fly this final mission to bring his men home. In this pickup, , Lieutenant Dupont found himself at the opposite end of an H-5 hoist, compared with his usual role as rescuer.

Two days later, another H-5 evacuated a U.S. Army officer who had suffered serious burns from an exploding hydrogen balloon used to mark the neutral zone of the Panmunjom negotiating area. He became the 3,000th individual to be airlifted to safety by 3d ARS.

In November 1951, an SA-16 crew found it necessary to rescue fellow ARS personnel. While flying from one island to another off the Korean coast, a 3d ARS helicopter, escorted by an SA-16, experienced a tail rotor failure, which sent the aircraft spiraling into the Yellow Sea. The escorting Dumbo pilot, Captain West, landed immediately and taxied to the three crewmembers floating in their life vests. Within five minutes, all three were aboard the amphibian. As the unit historian noted, "A longer period of time in the water may have proven fatal to one man who was near unconsciousness when fished out."

In November 1951, a hemorrhagic fever with a high mortality rate (known to the troops as Korean Fever) spread among front-line troops and kept Detachment 1's twelve H-5s, two H-19s, and two L-5s busy with evacuations. At the end of the year, two H-5s participated in a test of evacuating patients directly to the deck of a hospital ship, the USNS Consolation, stationed in the Yellow Sea above the 38th parallel. The success of the two-week experiment led the U.S. Navy to install helicopter decks on other hospital ships.

Early on November 9, 1951, Detachment 1's SC-47 picked up a B-29 crew forced to abandon its aircraft over the Yellow Sea. Ten crewmembers landed on Paengnyong-do, another landed in the bay. A rescue H-5 helicopter stationed on the island assisted in gathering up the survivors. Capt. Robert L. Sprague landed his SC-47 on the beach, loaded the eleven survivors aboard, and flew them to K-14.

Between April and June 1952, Flight A's SC-47 flew one search, one medical evacuation, and several pararescue supply drops in addition to serving as an airborne platform for parachute training.

Early in 1952, Detachment 1 conducted a study which revealed that of the forty pilot pickup attempts between August 1, 1951, and February 18, 1952, eighteen had succeeded. Eight of sixteen sorties flown from Paengnyong-do had succeeded, but only five of sixteen sorties flown from the pilot pickup point collocated close to the front with the 25th Division had succeeded—and only one of eight airmen had been returned by helicopters from that location since January 1. In contrast, three of four pilot pickup attempts by choppers from K—16 had succeeded during the six-month period. On twenty-two of the forty sorties, helicopters had been fired upon, resulting in two aircraft lost and two damaged. (Aircraft categorized as damaged were most likely those that required a time out of commission; lesser damage that allowed the aircraft to continue flying operationally was commonplace.) By the end of February 1952, two new H-19As had arrived, and four more came in March, boosting Detachment 1's H-19 strength to eight aircraft, the highest number of ARSvc H—19s available in Korea at any time during the war.

The Sikorsky S-55, designated H-19 by the USAF, had first flown in 1949. In January 1951, Far East Air Forces (FEAF) had recommended to the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, that H-19s be procured to replace the operationally limited H-5s. By the end of March, one YH-19 arrived in Korea to begin a tactical evaluation under combat conditions; a second YH-19 arrived in September. After a year of testing, H-19s began replacing the war-weary H-5s. Regardless, Detachment 1 continued to operate both helicopter types for the remainder of the war. The H-19 improved on the H-5 in terms of range, altitude, speed, and armor protection of vital components. With a crew of one or two pilots, the H-19 carried up to ten passengers, or a medic and eight litters. Unlike the H-5, the H-19 came equipped with the instrumentation needed for night flying. Due to the rugged Korean terrain and the difficulties of locating downed airmen at night, rescue helicopter operations remained daytime missions.

The first two days of 1952 witnessed the final recorded L-5 medical evacuation sorties in Korea. On January 1, 1st Lt. Hugh D. Bustetter transported a South African F-51 pilot suffering facial shrapnel wounds from a front-line position to K-16. The next day, Lieutenant Bustetter delivered a downed American F-51 pilot, also picked up at the front lines, to K-16. During February and March, the assignment of six new H-19A helicopters to Detachment 1 ended the requirement for L-5 rescue aircraft in Korea.

Although the increased number of H-19s was the main reason for Detachment 1's continued success, would-be rescuers sometimes knew the pain of being unable to retrieve fliers known to have survived after going down in enemy territory. In one case, on February 3, 1952, 1st Lt. Charles R. Spath, 335th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, was forced to abandon his jet over North Korea. A flight mate spotted him on the ground. Using his survival radio, Spath told his flight mate that he had a broken leg. A friendly guerrilla team located nearby, monitoring Lieutenant Spath's radio frequency, quickly intervened. Four of the guerrillas reached Spath sooner than the enemy soldiers in the vicinity, and moved him to a secure location. Later, the team contacted FAF intelligence, whose personnel began planning the rescue attempt. Capt. Gail W. Poulton, an H-19 pilot in Detachment 1, was offered the mission, which would be particularly

hazardous because of the mountainous terrain near Spath's expected location. After several weeks of meticulous planning, the mission was a "go." Some information coming from Spath and the guerrillas did not seem to fit. Years later, retired Lieutenant Colonel Poulton recalled his concern that the rescue attempt might already have been compromised. Unfortunately, he was right. Approaching the intended pickup area, Poulton contacted Spath by radio and asked him how many people were at the landing site with him. Spath replied, "I don't know." Alarmed, Poulton asked several more questions to which he received equally ambiguous responses. Finally, Poulton said, "We are here to pick you up, if everything down there is okay. You are giving me uncooperative and unclear answers....I have leveled off and discontinued my approach...and we'll abort this rescue attempt if you don't answer my questions fully...in the next 15 seconds." Spath responded quietly, "you can chalk me off for saying this, but get the hell out of here. It's a trap." Tragically, Spath died in captivity some weeks later.

In March 1952, the detachment transferred its two remaining L-5s from Korea, one to Flight A and the other to Flight C in Japan.

On April 14, 1952, a Marine Corps pilot ditched his Corsair after sustaining enemy anti-aircraft fire while over the target. Unable to reach Cho-do, the site of both radar and rescue subunits, the pilot ditched in open water just 200 yards off the North Korean mainland. A call for assistance from the downed pilot's wingman reached 1st Lt. Robert E. Sherman and his SA-16 crew. Heading toward the scene, Sherman directed a flight of friendly fighters to make firing runs on enemy shore positions to minimize enemy firing as he made his rescue attempt. In spite of receiving friendly fire support, the lieutenant's Dumbo remained under constant machine-gun and small arms fire for nearly fifteen minutes as it landed on the water and made the pickup.

A mission during May 1952 demonstrated the coordination that was sometimes required not only between SA-16s and friendly fighters but with helicopters as well. On the morning of May 18, an F-84 pilot in the 7th Fighter Bomber Squadron (FBS) parachuted from his aircraft after being hit by enemy flak. The pilot, 1st Lt. John C. Trobaugh, landed in a tidal mud flat, with injuries to his back, knees, and legs. His location complicated the rescue effort because the SA-16 heading toward the scene could not land on mud. Realizing the situation and anticipating that a rotary-wing aircraft might be better able to accomplish this recovery, amphibian pilot 1st Lt. Harry D. Seigler of Flight D escorted two 3d ARS helicopters toward the downed pilot. The situation changed rapidly, as wingmen from Trobaugh's flight directed their comrade via his emergency radio to proceed to the nearest tidal stream, where the SA-16 could land. Receiving this information from the F-84s, the amphibian "forged ahead of the slowly flying helicopters," landing in the stream. But the Dumbo's hull began to drag in the mud, requiring Seigler "to use almost full power to taxi up the stream" to within approximately eighty yards of Lieutenant Trobaugh's position. A retired lieutenant colonel in 1998, Trobaugh recalled that the SA-16 pilot had directed him via radio to walk out toward the amphibian on what both men expected was a gradually sloped decline. But Trobaugh's first step took him over a small drop-off and into the water where, weighed down by clothing and equipment, he feared he might drown, in spite of his Mae West. The SA-16 crew fired a lifeline and the pilot was dragged aboard, assisted by

Trobaugh's grasping a float handhold on the SA-16. In the seven long minutes from the SA-16's landing until the completed pickup, the Dumbo had been under ground fire from the enemy, about a half mile away. Other crewmembers participating in this rescue were copilot 1st Lt. Henry L. Ermatinger, navigator 1st Lt. Ronald T. Delaney, engineer TSgt. Alfred G. Smith, and radio operators A2Cs Ruben G. Acosta and Ross A. Sears. Three days later, an SA-16 picked up 1st Lt. Floyd F. Redderson from the water twenty miles north of Cho-do. Trobaugh and Redderson were the only F-84 pilots from the 7th FBS to be rescued that month; sadly, the five other squadron pilots downed in May 1952 were reported as missing or killed in action.

The unit's third and final loss of a helicopter crew to enemy fire happened on June 25, 1952. Capt. Leslie W. Lear and A1C Bob D. Holloway, both recently arrived in Korea, were to pick up a downed pilot. Approaching the pickup area in his H-5, Lear requested ResCAP fighters to make a pass and check for ground fire. The fighters did so and received no enemy fire. Well before this time, the enemy had learned to wait until the rescue helicopter arrived before opening fire. Captain Lear began his approach and was fired upon. Breaking off the approach, he called for the fighters to strafe the area. They did so. The H-5 made a run-in, picked up the downed pilot, and began to depart the area while receiving heavy machine-gun fire. About six miles from the pickup area, the fighter pilots reported seeing pieces falling from the helicopter, which was flying at an altitude of about 1,200 feet. Bailing out at approximately 800 feet, Holloway's parachute opened and he landed, but enemy soldiers surrounded him immediately. Airman Holloway was the only ARSvc member known to be captured during the war and later released; he returned stateside shortly after the armistice was signed. Lear and the rescued pilot also bailed out, but they exited at lower altitudes and were presumed to have died upon impact.

Statistically, May 1952 was Detachment 1's most intense flying month to date in the war. The unit flew 113 medical evacuation sorties including 138 wounded soldiers delivered to MASHs from front-line aid stations and 87 sorties carrying 122 patients to rear-area hospitals. In 30 "pilot pick-up" attempts, the detachment saved 15 airmen. Helicopters flew 190 sorties to and from the talks at Panmunjom, carrying 385 delegates.

On 17 Aug 1952 Sgt Joseph Sousa, Thomsonville, Conn., charged up the slope of a Communist-held hill one morning recently, his mind on a number of things. Being a good squad leader, he was thinking of his men, for one thing. And he was also considering the enemy, just over the slope. In between were the thousand flashes that race through every soldier's mind during battle. But, as he led his squad upward, into the face of enemy fire, Sergeant Sousa most certainly was not thinking that he would soon lay claim to being the 5,000th man to be successfully picked up by the U.S. Air Force's 3 Air Rescue Squadron. But that is the way it happened. A mortar shell landed close by and Squad Leader Sousa became a casualty, in need of speedy transportation to a rear area hospital. Litter bearers carried him into the front-line aid station an hour later. Shortly afterward, an H-5 helicopter landed, and within 20 minutes after being gently placed in the "pod", he was landed at a rear area medical unit. During one of his conscious moments at the 8055th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, he said he expressed a desire to "give the medic who picked me up a million thanks. He worked like hell getting me patched up, and all the time under fire, too. I'd like to thank the helicopter medic too. But I

don't know his name." As Sergeant Sousa has since found out, the Aero Medic was A/2C Eugene J. Kennedy, Clinton, Iowa, who has been with the life-saving 3's Korea detachment for three months and has flown more than 20 helicopter missions. Pilot of the 5,000th milestone rescue mission was Capt Sherman B. Jennings, Jr., Doctor's Inlet, Fla., veteran helicopter pilot. Sergeant Sousa who has spent almost four of his seven months in Korea on the frontline, said, "When I saw that helicopter land it looked like a mechanical angel coming-it was an answer to a man's prayer." Asked about the 5,000th man to be picked up by the 3 ARS, he added "Well, you never know what's going to happen to you. I tried to enlist in the Army during the last war, but was turned down because of a punctured ear drum. I even tried to enlist in Canada but had the same trouble. I finally got in about two years ago. Now, look at me and everything that's happened since. Like I say, you never know."

On August 5, Detachment 1 added to its already illustrious record by picking up U.S. Marine Corps Col. Robert Galer, whose F4U was hit by flak, forcing him to bail out of his Corsair over North Korea. Colonel Galer, the Commanding Officer of Marine Air Group 12, had earned the Medal of Honor during World War II. With Galer aboard, enemy flak knocked out the helicopter's instrument panel. Piloted by 1st Lt. H. O. McEauchern, the rescue chopper arrived at its home base after dark, its fuel nearly exhausted, but with one more save to the unit's credit.

After two years, living conditions for Detachment 1's personnel had improved somewhat from tents, dirt floors, and canned rations. Now that the front had stabilized, the men enjoyed a few "luxuries" such as wooden floors and mess halls. Retired helicopter pilot Lieutenant Colonel Clark recalled the food as having been "pretty good for a combat situation," though his assessment varied with the element's location. Elements rotated approximately every two weeks to one of several locations. Generally, crews enjoyed R&R after one complete rotation. The relatively permanent and secure locations, such as 8055th MASH, had reasonable accommodations, but the less well-established island element at Cho-do (a location in use since early 1952) still had only primitive living conditions. Cho-do was forty miles north of the 38th parallel and almost four miles offshore, well behind enemy lines and far from secure. One F-86 pilot, 1st Lt. John E. Dews, Jr., was hit by a MiG and forced to leave his jet on April 1, 1952. He landed in a rocky area on Cho-do, sustained injuries, and was rescued near dusk the same day. In a 1999 interview, recalling his brief but tense stay on the island, Dews noted that the friendlies were said to own the island during the day, but the enemy was said to own it at night. During August 1952 the enemy twice lobbed artillery shells from the mainland onto Cho-do, and the threat of small-scale enemy guerrilla activity was always present. Crews on Cho-do still dined on canned rations, and it was March 1953 before a weatherproof shower, a toilet, and electricity became available. The unit histories use the term "pilot pick-up" to refer to airmen regardless of crew position. In any case, pilots comprised the majority of pickups.

By mid-1952, Detachment 1 made rope ladders part of a helicopter's standard rescue equipment, to be used as backup should their hoist fail. Why such a relatively simple, potentially life-saving backup measure was so long in coming is unclear. But this measure was not always effective. On one attempted pilot pickup off the Korean coast, the hoist broke while

the pilot was in the sling, and an attempt to rescue him by rope ladder failed. Because the mission occurred in December, the pilot's time of useful consciousness in the water was only a few minutes, and unfortunately he was lost.

One of the best-known fighter pilots to ride home on Dumbos was Maj. (later, Maj. Gen.) Frederick C. "Boots" Blesse, the top surviving F-86 ace of the war at the time of his rescue. On October 3, 1952, Major Blesse ejected from his fuel-depleted jet over the Yellow Sea after downing his ninth MiG, his tenth enemy aircraft, during aerial combat in MiG Alley. Lieutenant Seigler piloted the SA-16 that came to his rescue, making a water landing to complete the pickup. After this, his 123d mission, Major Blesse returned home.

Another occurred on January 13, 1953, as 1st Lt. Augusto D. Muzio and his SA-16 crew were flying a normal sortie supporting a strike by U.S./UN aircraft. Alerted that an RF-80 pilot had to ditch his jet in the Yellow Sea, Muzio landed at almost the same time as the ditching aircraft in preparation for a speedy rescue attempt. Unfortunately, the RF-80 pilot must have been trapped in his aircraft, for he never surfaced. While searching for the pilot, the Albatross picked up considerable ice from the sea spray. The combined effect of the ice and the rough seas made it impossible for Lieutenant Muzio to get airborne. He tried to taxi his aircraft toward the leeward side of a nearby island, but was unsuccessful. An H-19 from a classified helicopter detachment of the 581st Air Resupply and Communications Wing (ARCW) tried to drop a hoist to the SA-16 and recover the crew, but it failed because of the propeller wash from the SA-16's engines. In 2002, retired Maj. Robert F. Sullivan (a lieutenant in Korea), one of the H-19 pilots, recalled the incident: The "horsecollar" we used on the end of the hoist was very light, and designed to float. The horsecollar hung down vertically off the hoist, but the second it hit the propwash, it started to spin, and carry the hoist cable aft. There is a pretty solid weight built into the hoist hook.. .but even that was not enough. I kept creeping forward trying to get the end of the hoist to drop by the door, but it wouldn't work. One of the things we were uncomfortable with was the [SA-16] Navigator hanging out the door trying to grab it. We were talking about losing him over the side. I went so far as to suggest attaching the [crew chief's] tool box to the hoist, but we might have killed him with that. Meanwhile, calls for assistance had gone out to surface vessels in the area. Two naval vessels, one British and one American, responded. The first to arrive, HMS Opossum, managed to secure a towline to the endangered amphibian, only to have it break. In the darkness several hours later, while ever higher waves made the prospect of transferring the amphibian's crew to another vessel increasingly grim, the USS Safeguard devised a successful technique. Safeguard's crew secured a towline to the SA-16 and brought the craft as close as they dared to the stern of the vessel. Then, one at a time, each amphibian crew-member lashed a line around his chest and, at the apex of the aircraft's upward pitch from a wave, jumped toward the Safeguard, while her heftiest crewmembers pulled simultaneously, landing the airman on the ship's deck. Undoubtedly, a well-appreciated innovation was the ship's crew placing a mattresses on the deck to soften the airmen's landings. Only two minutes after the last SA-16 crewmember had reached the Safeguard, the doomed amphibian capsized and sank. As the Safeguard worked furiously to save the SA-16 crew, the Opossum stood by to assist and provide antiaircraft protection if needed. Only the

herculean efforts by the men of the HMS Opossum and USS Safeguard had saved the entire six-man SA-16 crew from perishing in the icy waters off the North Korean coast that night.

Exactly one month later, a third SA-16 was lost; this time, the crew perished with the airplane. A Dumbo, piloted by Capt. Harold R. McGahan, crashed into a mountain while on a medical evacuation mission. The accident investigation questioned whether the medical evacuation should have been flown in the first place. Subsequently, greater emphasis was placed upon launch/no-launch decisions.

Damping the potential benefit of increased numbers of H-19s in the unit since early 1952 was the shortage of experienced pilots and mechanics. Up to war's end, shortages of aircraft parts also posed a problem. During May 1953, for instance, four helicopters lacked main rotor blades. The nonavailability of other parts meant that damaged or war-weary aircraft needing new components were kept out of commission for extended periods. A frustrated historian reported, "Logistical support...for the past six months has been practically nonexistent and any success this section has gained is in spite of such support rather than because of it."

Before dawn on March 27, 1953, a 3d ARS SA-16 escorted the H-19 from Cho-do to the vicinity of Ch'olsan, North Korea. While the SA-16 orbited offshore at low altitude, the H-19 searched for a downed British exchange pilot. The amphibian then escorted the helicopter back to Cho-do. Unfortunately, the pilot was not found; likely it was RAF Sqdn. Ldr. Graham S. Hulse who had been downed two weeks earlier after he and another F-86 pilot shared the credit for destroying a MiG in aerial combat. FAF intelligence had probably made contact with Hulse or with friendly guerrillas in his vicinity. As retired Maj. Robert F. Sullivan, the H-19 copilot, recalled, if "things had gotten hairy, we could've gone down in the weeds and probably escaped, but the SA-16 would have been extremely vulnerable to any enemy aircraft looking for a kill." Indeed, things had gotten hairy; the H-19 crew had unknowingly flown into an area of enemy troop concentrations and received intense ground fire.

The last SA-16 rescues of the war occurred in June 1953, a month before the armistice was signed. Dumbos saved seven airmen, four from the crew of a 2157th ARS H-19 helicopter that had ditched into the Yellow Sea. In 1995, Retired Maj. Anthony Keffales, pilot of the SA-16, wrote of the mission: My crew and I just finished our orbiting awaiting any downed airmen to be rescued. We were on our way back to our base K-16 in Korea. It was getting dark and we were approaching a low cloud deck when I heard someone on the radio say "we are going down."

Receiving confirmation that a helicopter was down, Keffales made a risky landing into the cloud bank. Upon landing, he shut down his aircraft's engines so he could hear voices if any were present. After a while he was rewarded when he heard the H-19 crewmembers' voices. As in an earlier SA-16 pickup in November 1951, the would-be rescuers themselves soon became the rescued.

Despite such difficulties, the spring of 1953 proved highly successful for H-19 operations. On April 30, an H-19 picked up a future double ace, Capt. Lonnie R. Moore, 335th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, from the Yellow Sea, twenty miles north of Cho-do. Captain Moore's F-86 had engine failure. In May the big helicopters experienced their best month of the war; they picked up ten airmen, six between May 16 and 18. On the 16th, an H-19 stationed at Cho-do rescued an F-84 pilot who had ejected after being hit by flak. The pilot was in the water only thirty seconds. Late that afternoon, fifty miles north of Cho-do (ninety miles behind enemy lines), an H-19 picked up an F-86 pilot whose engine had failed. This pilot was in the water only two minutes. The next day, two more Sabre pilots were rescued within three miles of Cho-do by H-19s operating from the island, one of five days in the war on which air rescue helicopters and/or SA-16s saved two F-86 pilots.

On May 18, an H-19 operating from K-16 rescued two of four crewmembers from a B-26 downed in enemy territory. This mission foreshadowed how rescues would be performed a decade later in Southeast Asia. Alerted that the bomber was down, the rescue helicopter—piloted by Capt. LeRoy P. Kohl and Jones Seigler and with medic SSgt. Doyle P. Neasbitt—proceeded to a small island just off the Haeju peninsula. There the H-19 waited for ResCAP fighters to locate the survivors and clear a path for it. When the ResCAP aircraft spotted the survivors and directed the helicopter inland, the H-19 crew spotted mirror flashes from the survivors at about three miles from the intended pickup point. At one mile out, the survivors set off a flare to demonstrate the wind's direction, always a critical factor in helicopter approaches. The H-19 landed and picked up the two survivors without enemy interference. It remained on the ground for only about thirty seconds.

Although evacuation of front-line wounded soldiers was not their primary mission, 3d ARS helicopters flew many more medical evacuations than aircrew rescues, evacuating 8,373 personnel from U.S./UN-controlled areas for the duration of the war. Most of these evacuees were seriously wounded soldiers at front-line aid stations. This figure compares with an estimated 25,000 U.S./UN casualties evacuated from front-line aid stations to MASHs or rear-area hospitals by helicopters of all U.S. military services from early 1951 until the armistice in July 1953.

25 Jun 50 On the day the Korean War began, at 1330 Korean time, the 3d Rescue Squadron dispatched an SB-17 to Kimpo Airfield, Seoul, for a possible rescue evacuation mission; an enemy attack prevented the SB-17 from landing.

Jun 50- Jul 53 During the Korean War, the 3d Rescue Squadron (later 3d Air Rescue (AR) Group) rescued a total of 9,899 United Nations personnel, including 996 combat saves. In recognition of this service, the 3d AR Group received three Distinguished Unit Citations (DUCs), two Republic of Korea (ROK) Presidential Unit Citations (PUCs), and ten campaign streamers.

Aug-Sep 50 All "Rescue Squadrons" were redesignated "Air Rescue Squadrons."

11 Dec 50 First Lieutenant Donald D. Michaelis, flying an L-5 assigned to the 3d AR Squadron, landed on a frozen rice paddy five miles eueh of Pyongyang, Korea, and rescued a downed F-80 pilot.

7 Feb 51 Captain Daniel J. Miller, piloting an H-5 assigned to the 3d ARS, landed in deep snow and, under enemy fire behind United Nations lines in Korea and picked up two wounded soldiers during each of three separate trips. Another H-5 pilot, First Lieutenant Ernest L. MacQuarrie, picked up two more, bringing the total saves to eight.

15 Feb 1951 In two days H-5s and crews from Detachment 1, 3d AR Squadron, evacuated 52 critically wounded American soldiers completely surrounded by the enemy in Chipyeong-Ni, 20 miles east of Seoul, Korea.

23 Dec 51- The 3d AR Squadron began the evacuation of 218 front-line wounded to the hospital ship Consolation, one of the first hospital ships to have a helipad. A total of 134 sorties were completed by the squadron during this period.

The 3 Emergency Rescue Squadron recorded its first combat rescue on 17 Sep 1944, when an OA-10 recovered two Navy fliers during the invasion of the Philippines.

Returned to providing rescue capability in Japan, 1953-1957.

Performed combat search, rescue, and recovery missions in Southeast Asia, 1966-1975. Credited with 3,681 saves, including 2,632 combat saves. Operated a Joint Service Rescue Center at Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam, for Commander, Seventh Air Force, 1966-1973.

A different war and world greeted the reactivated and newly designated 3 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, 8 January 1966, at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of South Vietnam. Supported by the old rescue stalwart, the HU-16, the HH-43 and the HH-3E made their first rescue appearance, recording eight "saves" in their first month of activity. The HC-130P was also an early 3 resource, and in December 1967, the first HH-53 appeared, accounting for more than 110 recoveries in less than two years, with these resources and able assistance from sister services, the 3 served as Seventh Air Force's rescue arm in Southeast Asia. It was a period of unmatched valor for rescue forces as combat rescue became a daily occurrence. During the conflict in Southeast Asia, 3,900 "saves" were credited, of which 2,679 occurred during combat situations.

U.S. Air Force Air Rescue strength in Southeast Asia peaked during the summer of 1969 with four squadrons operating under the 3 ARRG. The 37th ARRS at DaNang AB and the 40th at Udorn RTAFB were responsible for search and rescue in Laos and North and South Vietnam. The largest number of HH-43s belonged to the 38th ARRS, which was headquartered at Tan Son Nhut AB and responsible for local base rescue, with aircrew recovery as a secondary mission. The 38th had detachments at 14 bases in South Vietnam and Thailand. HH-43 Pedro

detachments remained in Thailand until January 1976, when the 3 ARRG was inactivated and the last USAF Air Rescue elements were withdrawn.

With the termination of American military involvement in Vietnam, the 3 moved to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, 15 February 1973. With the Spring of 1975, final withdrawal rumors appeared to be coming true, and the 3 continued a step by step phase down of its resources.

With the collapse of the government and the Khmer Rouge takeover in Cambodia imminent, HH-53s and HC-130s combined to rescue 285 personnel from the Cambodian capital. Within weeks after the successful completion of this effort, 3 forces became involved in what was to become one of the largest air evacuations in history; the removal of over 7,000 refugees from Saigon. HH-53s were deployed to a US aircraft carrier off the coast of Vietnam, and for two days they shuttled back and forth carrying refugees. Then on 15 May, shortly after the SS Mayaguez had been seized by the Cambodians, the 3 forces deployed and retrieved US Marines through fierce, hostile fire in the same dedicated manner which had won them the respect of three generations of US fighting men. During this operation, 156 "saves" were recorded to bring the number of "saves" credited during the Vietnam era to over 4,000.

Accompanying the closure of Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, the 3 transferred operations to U-Tapao Royal Thai Naval Base, Thailand, where final phase down of rescue forces in Southeast Asia was completed.

On 31 January 1976, Lt Colonel Cleveland E. Forrester, the last 3 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group Commander, cased the unit flag.

Guardian Angels of the 563 Rescue Group at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., parachuted into the Pacific Ocean and treated two critically injured Chinese fishermen after their fishing boat caught fire and sank. A Venezuelan boat picked up the Chinese fishermen and radioed for help, which prompted the 563 RQG to respond. "We were preparing for the [Angel Thunder] training exercise when we were notified of what was going on," said 1st Lt. Ben Schmidt, 48th Rescue Squadron combat rescue officer, in a May 7 release. "As a Guardian Angel, this is what we are trained and equipped to do, so there is no better way to show our capabilities." The Guardian Angels, consisting of combat rescue officers and pararescuemen, flew nearly 11 hours in an HC-130J, parachuted over the Pacific, and boarded the Venezuelan boat, where they assessed and stabilized the injured fishermen, according to a May 4 release. Once they reached Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, the Guardian Angels airlifted the fishermen to a burn facility in La Jolla, Calif. Angel Thunder, the world's largest combat search and rescue exercise, kicked off May 4 and will go through May 17, 2014

Combat Components

Flight A (Johnson AB, Japan): 14 Nov 1952

Flight B (Yokota/Misawa/Yokota/Komaki, Japan): 14 Nov 1952

Flight C (Misawa AB, Japan): 14 Nov 1952

Flight D (Ashiya AB, Japan): 14 Nov 1952

Det F/Det 1 (Seoul/Taegu/Yongdong-po/Seoul, South Korea): 24 Sep 1950-1 Mar 1953

Det 1 Phan Rang, 7-1-1971-1-31-1972

Det 3 Ubon, 7-1-1971-8-20-1972

Det 4 Korat, 7-1-1971-7-8-1972

Det 5 Udorn, 7-1-1971-8-20-1972

Det 6 Bien Hoa, 7-1-1971

Det 7 DaNang, 7-1-1971-11-30-1972

Det 9 Nakhon Phanom, 7-1-1971

Det 12 Utao, 7-1-1971-8-20-1972

Det 13 PhuCat, 7-1-1971-Nov 1971

Det 14 Tan Son Nhut, 7-1-1971-9-15-1972

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