

# 5<sup>th</sup> EMERGENCY RESCUE SQUADRON



## LINEAGE

5<sup>th</sup> Emergency Rescue Squadron activated, 26 Jan 1945

## STATIONS

Halesworth, England, 26 Jan 1945

## ASSIGNMENTS

### WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-47D, 1945  
OA-10A, 1945  
B-17G, 1945

### ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

OA-10A  
44-33991

#### P-47D

42-22472	42-74690	42-75855	42-8402	42-8693
42-22476	42-74705	42-76175	42-8410	43-25534
42-22547	42-74724	42-7899	42-8485	43-25565
42-22784	42-74744	42-7910	42-8496	42-7914
42-25711	42-75154	42-7922	42-8554	42-76143
42-74622	42-75228	42-8375	42-8586	42-8619
42-74664	42-75528	42-8401	42-8646	42-8490

### ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

## UNIT COLORS

### COMMANDERS

Maj E. L. Larson, 26 Jan 1945-May 1945

## HONORS

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**

### **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

### **CALL SIGN**

Teamwork

### **OPERATIONS**

During WW2, the Royal Air Force perfected a very good system of Air-Sea Rescue to pick up fighter and bomber crews from the English Channel. This operation relied on aircraft and shipping relaying the position of a crew in the drink back to control stations. Motor boats and Walrus seaplanes from various bases around the coast would then head to the reported position to pick up the men. When the US Army Air Corps came to England they had no such system and, when they started losing crews in the sea, decided to set about forming their own air-sea rescue operation.

With the coming of the invasion imminent, a conference was called on the 8th May 1944 at the Air Ministry between representatives of the RAF, the 8th Air Force, and the 65th Fighter Wing. It was decided that the 65th Fighter Wing would take responsibility for air-sea rescue.

Captain Bob Gerhart, was appointed CO of an independent ASR spotter squadron. The controllers based at Saffron Walden would have direct contact with the spotter planes and rescue launches. The aircraft, ground crews, pilots and all the equipment necessary had to be borrowed from other fighter groups. Because Hub Zemke was a very respected fighter leader he was asked to provide "war weary" aircraft and a piece of ground at his Boxted base for them to use. Bob Gerhart started with 90 enlisted men from 16 different stations, 25 pilots and ground officers "loaned", no hanger and virtually no tools. Fortunately Zemke and his executive officer, Dave Schilling, were fully behind the idea, and loaned and scrounged as much equipment as possible. So barely a week after the conference, detachment "B" of the 65th Fighter Wing had flown its first mission.

Whenever a bomber mission was launched, two P-47 of the ASR would take off from Boxted. The aircraft would track the bombers over the channel listening for any distress calls. When a call for help came, one P-47 would keep circling over the spot where the incident occurred. The aircraft would also drop flares or a small dinghy, then return to base to refuel and be replaced by another P-47. The other original Thunderbolt would keep listening in case there were any further incidents. So, all the time bomber formations were over the channel, there were two P-47's in the

air keeping watch. When a pilot or crewman came down in the sea, motor launches would be alerted to pick them up.

Initially the additional weight of the flare racks and dinghies caused major problems for the P-47's on take-off. They found that by splitting the dinghy packs and putting one under each wing, then using a single 150 gallon belly fuel tank and mounting the flares behind it, the capabilities of the P-47's was restored . The airplanes were identified by red, white and blue striped noses and yellow banded tails. The group's radio call sign was "teamwork". The pilots were given the nickname "seagulls". Later the group were given Catalina flying boats to help with rescues and, as these aircraft needed hard standings, detachment "B" moved to Halesworth. It was here that they received their official designation 5th Emergency Rescue Squadron.

440621	P-47D	42-7910	5ERS		150	TAC	Akard, Richard J	Halesworth/Sta 365
440629	P-47D	42-75528	5ERS	65FW	150	TAC	Akard, Richard R Jr	Boxted/Sta 150
440730	P-47D	42-22476	5ERS		150	LAC	Vandiver, Loy C	Boxted/Sta 150
440807	P-47D	42-74664	5ERS		150	LAC	Anderson, William C	Boxted/Sta 150
440807	P-47D	42-8402	5ERS		150	LAC	Brooks, Philip (NMI)	Boxted/Sta 150
440816	P-47D	42-8401	5ERS		150	CREF	Jones, Robert (NMI)	Tibenham/Sta 124
440828	P-47D	42- 75154W	5ERS		150	TAC	Murphy, Donald L	Boxted/Sta 150
441104	P-47D	42- 75228W	5ERS		150	LAC	Murphy, Donald J	Boxted/Sta 150
441215	P-47D	43- 25565W	5ERS		150	FLMF	Harris, Curtis S	Westleton/ 1mi NW
450220	P-47D	42- 75855W	5ERS		365	LAC	Trudeau, Paul J	Halesworth/Sta 365
450228	P-47D	42- 74705W	5ERS		365	TAC	Judd, Russell P	Halesworth/Sta 365
450313	P-47	42- 8496W	5ERS		365	KMAC	Barket, Thomas E	Seething/ 4mi NNE Sta 146

450408	P-47D	42-74705	5ERS	496FTG	365	KMAC	Judd, Russell P	Fritton Lake
450408	P-47D	42- 76175W	5ERS	496FTG	365	KMAC	Davis, Louis S III	Fritton Lake
460901	OA-10A	44-33995	5ERS	62AAFBU		LAC	Harrison, Robert B	Tangle Lake
460926	OA-10A	44-33913	5ERS	62AAFBU	Morrison Fld, FL	KCR	Pinkerton, Claude A	Lake Park/ 5mi NNW
470327	TB-17H	44-83793	5ERS	62AAFBU	Morrison Fld, FL	LAC	Marsden, William F	Morrison Fld
470627	TB-17H	44-83793	5ERS	62AAFBU	Morrison Fld, FL	LACMF	Davis, Nelson J	Robins Fld

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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.