48 RESCUE SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE
48 Air Rescue Squadron constituted, 17 Oct 1952
Activated, 14 Nov 1952
Redesignated 48 Air Recovery Squadron, 1 Feb 1965
Redesignated 48 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 8 Jan 1966
Redesignated 48 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Training, 8 Jul 1967
Inactivated, 7 Feb 1969
Redesignated 48 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 14 Sep 1972
Activated, 15 Sep 1972
Inactivated, 1 Aug 1976
Activated, 1 Oct 1985
Inactivated, 31 Dec 1987
Redesignated 48 Rescue Squadron, 1 Apr 1993
Activated, 1 May 1993
Inactivated on 1 Feb 1999. Activated on or about 1 Apr 2004

Emblem. Approved on 19 May 1994.

STATIONS
Maxwell AFB, AL, 14 Nov 1952
Eglin AFB, FL, 10 Jan 1955-7 Feb 1969
Fairchild AFB, WA, 15 Sep 1972-1 Aug 1976
Homestead AFB, FL, 1 Oct 1985-31 Dec 1987
Holloman AFB, NM, 1 May 1993
Davis Monthan AFB, AZ

ASSIGNMENTS
5 Air Rescue Group, 14 Nov 1952
Air Rescue (later, Aerospace Rescue and Recovery) Service, 8 Dec 1956-7 Feb 1969
39 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing, 15 Sep 1972
41 Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Jan-1 Aug 1976
39 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing, 1 Oct 1985-31 Dec 1987
49 Operations Group, 1 May 1993-1 Feb 1999.

COMPONENTS
Detachments
1 Kindley AFB, Bermuda, 18 Jun 1960-18 Jun 1961
1 Homestead AFB, FL, 15 May 1974-1 Sep 1975
2 Goose AB, Labrador, 18 Jun 1960-18 Jun 1961
2 K.I. Sawyer AFB, MI, 15 May 1974-1 Sep 1975
5 Edwards AFB, CA, 15 May 1974-1 Aug 1976
6 Holloman AFB, NM, 15 May 1974-1 Aug 1976
14 MacDill AFB, FL, 15 May 1974-1 Sep 1975
15 Myrtle Beach AFB, SC, 15 May 1974-1 Sep 1975
18 Plattsburgh AFB, NY, 15 May 1974-1 Sep 1975
22 Mountain Home AFB, ID, 15 May 1974-1 Aug 1976

WEAPON SYSTEMS
SB-29, 1952-1954
C-82, 1952-1953
SA-16 (later, HU-16), 1954-1968
H/SH-19 (later, HH-19), 1954-1963
C/SC-54 (later, C/HC-54), 1956-1965
HH-43, 1963-1965, 1966-1968
HC-130, 1965-1969
HH/CH-3, 1966-1969
HH-53, 1966-1969
UH-1, 1972-1976
UH-1, 1985-1987

HH-60, 1993

COMMANDERS
Lt Col Edward C. Lass, 14 Nov 1952
Maj Monroe W. Graham, 1952
Lt Col Robert W. Soderbert, 8 Jan 1953
Maj Harold T. Cunningham, 1 Jun 1953
Lt Col Jay W. Stansbury, 7 Jul 1953
Lt Col William M. Mcdonald, 9 Jan 1957
Lt Col Malcolm C. Frazee, 13 Jul 1959
Lt Col Marshall V. Frederickson, 1 Jun 1962
Lt Col Thomas R. Aaron, 16 Aug 1963
Lt Col Maynard R. Rhoades, 3 Jun 1965
Lt Col William P. Adams, 23 Aug 1965
Lt Col Edward M. Ladou, 21 Jul 1966
Lt Col Karo F. Rybos, 27 Sep 1966
Col Charles W. Marshall, 6 Jun 1968-Feb 1969
Maj Hayden C. Moore, 15 Sep 1972
Lt Col Pasco Parker, 3 Oct 1972
Lt Col Bruce M. Purvine, Jun 1973
Lt Col Dale L. Patterson, Nov 1975-1 Aug 1976
Lt Col Charles T. Gelatka, 1 Oct 1985-31 Dec 1987
Lt Col Denver L. Pletcher, 1 Feb 1993
Lt Col N. Schoeneberg, 28 Sep 1994
Lt Col Timothy R. Morris, 31 May 1996
Lt Col Douglas L. Tracy, 18 Jul 1997-1 Feb 1999

HONORS
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
1 May-7 Jun 1967
[15 Sep] 1972-30 Jun 1974
1 Jun 1995-31 May 1997
1 Jun 1998-1 Feb 1999

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS
Search, rescue, and recovery, mostly over water, 1952-1969, 1972-1976, 1985-1987.

12 Apr 61 The 48 AR Squadron was operations in connection with the man in-space programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

48 ARS at Eglin AFB, Florida, conducted Albatross training from 1964 to 1968.

On February 27, 1964, an HU-16B (S/N 51-5279) of the 48 ARS departed its home base at Eglin AFB, Florida, on a mission in support of the space program. The Albatross made an open sea landing to recover a nose cone from a missile fired at Cape Canaveral. While on the water, sea conditions rapidly worsened and the aircraft was unable to take off. For two days the Albatross taxied in rough seas toward land, con¬suming nearly all of its fuel. When the heavy seas subsided, there was insufficient fuel for takeoff and the flight to land, still nearly 400 miles away. Since no vessels in the area had aviation gas, the Air Force asked the Coast Guard for help. Someone suggested a fuel truck, which was loaded with aviation gas and hoisted aboard the Coast Guard Cutter HOLLYHOCK, a 179 foot buoy tender. An Air Force Colonel was taken aboard before the ship left the docks. HOLLYHOCK reached the HU-16B two days later and took it in tow. With a helicopter covering the operation, a long fuel line was floated to the Albatross from the fuel truck chained to HOLLYHOCK'S foredeck. Though topped off with fuel, the Albatross and her weary crew were forced to spend another night on the water as the seas churned with eight to ten foot waves. The next day, the Air Force Colonel, plus supplies and JATO bottle igniters, were loaded aboard a raft and trailed astern, through wind-driven swells, to the aircraft. The pilot used the engines to close the distance and maneuver the Albatross. Even though primary swells reached six to eight feet, the Coast Guard cited the transfer as "uneventful," although this did not reflect the personal observations of the Air Force Colonel in the raft. An earlier attempt to float food and water to the Albatross crew had been unsuccessful.

The weather worsened and it was decided to attempt a takeoff as soon as possible. The Albatross taxied clear of the HOLLYHOCK while the fuel truck dumped oil over the side in a futile attempt to calm the seas. The first takeoff run was aborted when the starboard engine inadvertently feathered. A second attempt met with similar results, forcing a delay while the prop blade power panel was dried out. Meanwhile, the weather continued to deteriorate-tension mounted. The HOLLYHOCK cleverly took up a position on the aircraft's windward side, acting as a wind break, while following the takeoff run at full speed. It was now or never the Albatross crew applied power, fired the JATO bottles, bounced the airplane three times and was finally airborne, to everyone's relief.

In August 1965 an accelerated transition and rescue training program began at the 48 Air Rescue Squadron, Eglin AFB, Florida.

Beginning on November 7, 1966, rescue crews reported to the 48 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, to be trained in refueling techniques. It was there, on December 14, 1966, that the first inflight transfer of fuel between an HC-130P and an HH-3E occurred.

On November 28, 1966, Sikorsky delivered a CH-53 A to the 48 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. It was the first of two Marine CH-53As on temporary loan to the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service. The second helicopter reached Eglin in December, and crew training began shortly thereafter.

14 Mar 67 A new mission statement for ARRS included the task of operating a specialized

aircrew training school. This mission was to be conducted by the 48 ARR Squadron at Eglin AFB, Florida, for aircrews of HH-3, HU-16, and HC-130 aircraft and for pararescuemen.

31 May – 1 Jun 1967 First Nonstop Transatlantic Helicopter Flight. Two ARRS HH-3Es, assigned to the 48 ARR Squadron, flew nonstop from New York to Paris, with the aid of aerial refueling by HC-130Ps, only one assigned to the 48 ARR Squadron. The aerial route closely paralleled the flight path of Charles A. Lindbergh 40 years earlier. The HH-3s, piloted by Majors Herbert Zehnder and Donald B. Maurras, completed the 4,270-mile flight in 30 hours and 46 minutes.

Supported USAF Survival School, 1972-1976 and 1985-1987.

16 Jan- 19 Jan 1974 The 48 ARR Squadron evacuated 93 persons from flooded areas near Pinehurst, Idaho.

Squadron personnel performed interdiction missions in support of South Florida Drug Interdiction Task Force, 1985-1987.

1 Oct 85 Detachment 1, 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, was inactivated and the 48 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was concurrently activated at Homestead AFB, Florida.

Since Oct 1993, the squadron has flown helicopters for combat rescue, water survival training, and drug interdiction missions.

Airmen from the 48 Rescue Squadron responded to recovery operations for Hurricane Harvey, arriving at Easterwood Airfield, College Station, Texas, with approximately 20 members, Aug. 29, 2017. The mission is to provide boat-based rescue support in addition to current efforts in southeast Texas. “Our four, three-man boat teams are currently in Port Arthur and Beaumont, Texas, to provide their special skills of swiftwater and technical rescue,” said Maj. Scott Diehl, the 48 RQS director of operations. “When we forward deployed this morning we were some of the first rescue forces to arrive to what is currently ground zero for Hurricane Harvey flooding and rain.”

The Airmen are grid searching areas with swift water and providing confined space, extrication, and collapsed structure rescues. “In the first few hours our forces have been employed they have already been executing rescues,” Diehl said. In addition to combat rescue officers and pararescuemen, the 48 RQS also supplied a survival, evasion, resistance and escape specialist, an aircrew flight equipment specialist, an intelligence analyst, a squadron aviation resource manager, an independent duty medical technician and a communications Airman. “Our Guardian Angel and support personnel were eager and happy to support,” Diehl said. “The coordinated rescue effort from what I understand has been massive and hugely successful.” 2017

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES
Created: 25 Jan 2025
Updated:

Sources
Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.