

## 31 RESCUE SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

31 Air Rescue Squadron constituted, 17 Oct 1952  
Activated, 14 Nov 1952  
Discontinued, 18 Sep 1960  
Organized, 8 Jul 1963  
Redesignated 31 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, 8 Jan 1966  
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1975  
Activated, 8 Jan 1981  
Redesignated 31 Special Operations Squadron, 6 Apr 1989  
Inactivated, 31 Aug 2001  
Redesignated 31 Rescue Squadron, 16 May 2003  
Activated, 31 Jul 2003

#### STATIONS

Clark AB, Philippines, 14 Nov 1952  
Naha AB, Okinawa, 12-18 Sep 1960  
Clark AB, Philippines, 8 Jul 1963-1 Jul 1975  
Clark AB, Philippines, 8 Jan 1981  
Marine Corps Air Station, Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, 29 Jun 1991  
Osan AB, South Korea, Jul 1992-31 Aug 2001  
Kadena AB, Japan, 31 Jul 2003

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

2<sup>nd</sup> Air Rescue Group, 14 Nov 1952

Air Rescue Service, 24 Jun 1958-18 Sep 1960

Air Rescue (later, Aerospace Rescue and Recovery) Service, 8 Jul 1963

Pacific Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Center (later, 41<sup>st</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing), 1

Apr 1967-1 Jul 1975

41<sup>st</sup> Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing, 8 Jan 1981

353<sup>rd</sup> Special Operations Wing (later, 353<sup>rd</sup> Special Operations Group) 6 Apr 1989-31 Aug 2001

18<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 31 Jul 2003

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Pacific Air Rescue [later, Pacific Aerospace Rescue and Recovery] Center, 8 Jul 1963-31 Mar 1967

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

SA-16, 1952-1960

H-19, 1952-1955

SH-19, 1955-1960

HH-19, 1963-1964

HC-54, 1964-1965

HH-43, 1964-1970, 1971-1972

HC-97, 1965-1966

HC-130, 1966-1975

HH-3, 1968-1975

HH-3, 1981-1990

CH-3, 1981-1990

MH-53, 1990-2001

CH-53C

HH-53C

MH-47, 2001

## **COMMANDERS**

Maj Sherwin G. Desens, 14 Nov 1952

LTC Edward P. Langebartel, Jun 1955

LTC Frank M. Allen, 21 Jun 1955

Maj Reuben J. Brown Jr., 1 Jul 1956

Maj Frederick E. Weigand, 26 Jul 1956

LTC George P. Bahler, 6 Sep 1956

LTC Felix G. Brenner, 1 Apr 1958

Maj Alexander S. Sherry, c. Jun 1960

Maj Willard D. Welch, by Jul 1960

LTC Ernest M. Magee, 27 Jul-18 Sep 1960

None (not manned) 18 Sep 1960-7 Jul 1963  
Maj Cortez C. Brown, 8 Jul 1963  
LTC Gardner W. Kendall, 25 Aug 1963  
LTC Karol F. Rybos, 29 May 1965  
LTC Melbourne J. Nibe, 2 Aug 1966  
LTC George C. Pinyerd, 2 Jun 1968  
LTC Robert Galt Jr., 6 Jun 1970  
LTC James J. Krajicek Jr., 30 Jun 1970  
LTC Carl W. Olsson, c. Jul 1972  
LTC Herbert D. Kalen, 1 Jan 1975  
LTC Richard H. Smith, 24 Jan-1 Jul 1975  
LTC Doyle W. Krauss, 8 Jan 1981  
LTC Robert P. Starnes, 19 Jun 1981  
LTC Robert M. Stankovich, 12 Jun 1984  
LTC Thomas C. Marsh, 12 May 1986  
LTC Dale J. Cook, 18 May 1988  
LTC Lee T. Massey, 14 Aug 1990  
LTC Eugene A. Correll, 18 Dec 1991  
LTC Craig R. Jensen, 20 Dec 1993  
LTC Bob L. Hunt, 13 Dec 1994  
LTC Lyle M. Koenig Jr., 7 Jul 1995  
LTC Clayton P. Spriet, 26 Jul 1996  
LTC Steven F. Dreyer, 4 Aug 1997  
LTC T. Tracey Goetz, 3 Aug 1998  
LTC Steven R. Otto, 16 Jul 1999  
LTC Brendan G. Clare, 30 Jun 2000-30 Jun 2001  
Unkn, Jul-31 Aug 2001  
Maj Coy Speer, 31 Jul 2003  
Maj Charles E. Metrolis Jr., 24 Jun 2005

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

None

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device  
12 Feb-17 May 1975

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1964-30 Jun 1966  
1 Jul 1966-31 May 1968  
1 Jun 1969-31 May 1971  
1 Jun 1971-31 May 1973  
1 Jun 1973-31 May 1975  
[8 Jan]-15 Jun 1981  
1 Apr 1984-31 Mar 1986  
1 Apr 1986-31 Mar 1988  
6 Apr 1989-5 Apr 1991  
1 Jun 1993-31 May 1995  
1 Sep 1995-31 Aug 1997  
16 Oct 1998-31 May 2000  
13 Oct 2000-[31 Aug 2001]  
31 Jul 2003-30 Sep 2004

Meritorious Unit Citation (Navy)

1 Jul 1967-26 Jul 1969

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Apr 1966-17 Jan 1967

Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation

21 Jul-15 Aug 1972

**EMBLEM**



31 Air Rescue Squadron emblem



31 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron



31 Special Operations Squadron emblem



31 Special Operations Squadron approved, 15 Sep 1993



31 Rescue Squadron emblem

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

23 Jul 54 A British Cathay-Pacific DC-4 airliner was shot down by Chinese Communist aircraft near Hainan Island. An SA-16 crew of the 31 AR Squadron picked up nine of the survivors, one of whom died on the flight to Hong Kong.

17 Mar 57 In the Philippines a plane carrying President Ramon Magsaysay and a party of 26 persons crashed near Cebu City. The 31 AR Squadron participated in the ensuing SAR mission. Only one person survived.

14 Jul 60 A civilian DC-7 with 58 aboard ditched off the coast of Island, Republic of the Philippines. Three SA-16s from the 31 AR Squadron rescued 27 survivors.

10 Apr 1968 Two Philippine fishing boats capsized in rough seas about 400 miles north of Clark AB, dumping 31 fishermen overboard five miles from shore. The 31 ARR Squadron sent an HC-130 to the scene, and two pararescuemen parachuted into the ocean to aid the victims. The pararescuemen rescued about 17 fishermen and put them in life rafts dropped from the HC-130.

28 Oct 70 HH-3 aircrew from the 31 ARR Squadron saved 39 persons from the disabled Chinese tanker Tong Lam, aground on the Scarborough Reef, 150 miles west of Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines.

7 Oct 1971 Responding to an SOS during Typhoon Elaine, two helicopters from the 31 ARR Squadron at Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines, rescued 25 Hong Kong Chinese from their sinking ship, the Kee Lang.

Three HC-130s and two HH-3s from the 31 APR Squadron hoisted 29 Philippine sailors and one

pet orangutan from lifeboats after their logging ship, the San Mort-in, sank about 500 miles east northeast from the Island of Luzon. Twenty-nine plus saves. 2-3 Dec 1972

In June 1965, an HU-16 from the 31 APRS landed in 14 foot swells to pull four survivors from the Pacific Ocean after two B-52s collided and crashed enroute to Southeast Asia. The survivors and two PJs were transferred to a passing Norwegian freighter, while the HU-16 crew stayed with their aircraft, which had been damaged during the rescue. Immediately after the crew was taken aboard a Navy ship, the Albafross sank.

Combat rescue in Southeast Asia, 1965-1966. Operated Joint Rescue Coordination Center for Thirteenth Air Force, Apr 1967-Jul 1975.

Supported evacuation of Saigon, South Vietnam, flying 108 hours in combat search and rescue, Feb-May 1975.

Provided rotary wing search and rescue capabilities in Southwest Pacific area, 1981-1989, and rotary wing unconventional warfare and special operations resources in the Far East, 1990-2001.

25 Feb 86 Following a disputed election in the Republic of the Philippines, the 31 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron flew five H-3s to the presidential palace in Manila and evacuated President Ferdinand Marcos and 51 other persons from the palace to Clark Air Base (AB). In addition, 15 other persons were evacuated from the US Embassy in Manila to Clark AB. Subsequently, President Marcos and his family were flown to Guam in a C-9, then to Hickam AFB, Hawaii, in a C-141.

The 31 Special Operations Squadron Black Knights are no more — almost. The 50-year-old unit held an inactivation ceremony last week, but Lt. Col. Brendan G. Clare, squadron commander since last June, said the Black Knights will still fly their MH-53 Pave Low helicopters from Osan through June. Squadron members will gradually rotate to units outside Korea. As they do, the unit will be augmented by airmen from helicopter units at Hurlburt Field, Fla., he said. "We wanted to hold the inactivation ceremony while most of the unit members are still here," Clare said. "This is the first step in preparation for the arrival of the CV-22 tilt-rotor aircraft," said Master Sgt. Michael Farris, spokesman for the 353rd Special Operations Group, the squadron's parent unit at Kadena Air Base, Japan. "The new aircraft will increase the command's long-range mission, (even) sending teams into politically denied or hostile territory." But last week's ceremony doesn't mean the Black Knights will fade into Air Force history. When a squadron of the CV-22s joins the Air Force inventory in the Pacific, it will carry the 31's banner, Farris said. During its nine years at Osan, the squadron has used its MH-53J Pave Low III helicopters for humanitarian flights and classified night missions. When the squadron leaves Korea in June, its helicopters will be reassigned to Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., Farris said.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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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.