



# FACT SHEET

USAF Fact Sheet

Air Warfare Center Public Affairs Division

Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada 89191-7078

Phone (702) 652-2750 DSN 682-2750 FAX (702) 652-9838

## 66<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron

### Mission

The primary mission of the 66th Rescue Squadron is world-wide combat rescue in support of combat air forces. The 66th RQS is one of six Air Force active-duty HH-60 combat rescue units and is geared for worldwide deployment. The 66RQS performs other vital functions in addition to worldwide combat rescue. The unit's secondary mission is to provide rescue support for air operations over the Nellis Range Complex and backup rescue for civilian agencies in the local area and the



greater Southwestern United States. Depending on the mission, a typical rescue crew may include a pilot, co-pilot, flight engineer, aerial gunner and two pararescuemen. These PJs are qualified in combat paramedics, scuba divers, parachutists, mountain climbers and survivalists.

The unit provides rapidly deployable combat search and rescue (CSAR) forces to theater CINCs worldwide and conducts peacetime search and rescue (SAR) in support of the National Search and Rescue Plan and the Air Warfare Center. The 66<sup>th</sup> RQS also directly supports HH-60G logistical and maintenance support requirements for the U.S. Air Force Weapons School and Air Combat Command-directed operational test missions.

## **Background**

The 66th Rescue Squadron first took to the air Nov. 14, 1952, at Royal Air Base Manston, England, flying C-119 *Flying Boxcar* transports, H-19 *Chickasaw* helicopters and SA-16 *Albatross* seaplanes. The unit deactivated Jan. 18, 1958, and remained inactive for 33 years.

The 66th was reborn March 1, 1991, to create the first in a new era of worldwide deployable combat rescue units flying the HH-60G *Pave Hawk* helicopter. The squadron's primary mission of combat search and rescue (CSAR) is markedly enhanced by the *Pave Hawk*'s ability to operate in adverse weather both day and night.

In 1993, the 66th became the first Air Force rescue unit to deploy to a combat zone since the Vietnam conflict when their CSAR expertise was needed in Operation Southern Watch over southern Iraq. The unit continues to provide critical CSAR coverage in Operations Northern and Southern Watch and anywhere vital U.S. interests are at risk.

The 66 RQS has participated in several exercises and operational contingencies since its reactivation. Exercises Desert Rescue at Fallon Naval Air Station, Nevada, Quick Force at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, as well as deployments to North Island, Calif., for open-ocean CSAR training, and high altitude, snow operations deployments to Hill AFB have provided realistic training for the unit as well. Red Flag exercises here at Nellis are also included in squadron operations. In addition, the 66 RQS has completed four full-unit deployments to Southwest Asia since January of 1993, to provide combat rescue coverage for Operations Northern and Southern Watch. This is scheduled to continue well into the foreseeable future.

**(Current as of January 2001)**