



Rescue wing sends replacements to Afghanistan

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(AFNS) -- A group of Air Force Reserve Command Airmen from the 920th Rescue Wing here departed on the last leg of a 14-month deployment to Afghanistan Dec. 27 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom

Approximately 40 helicopter aircrew members, maintenance specialists and logistics and support personnel gathered with their friends and families at the wing's helicopter squadron facility for tearful farewells.

The reservists will be replacing a similar-sized group of rescue-wing Airmen already in Afghanistan supporting the U.S. Army medical evacuation operation.

Rescue Airmen from the 920th, and from the wing's sister units in Arizona and Oregon, began the medevac deployment in February. Since then, they have saved more than 300 lives.

A "save" refers to a situation where, without immediate medical evacuation, a person would lose his or her life, limb or eyesight. In addition, wing Airmen also have recorded nearly 350 assists -- evacuations where life, limb or eyesight was not in immediate danger.

The wing's primary wartime job is combat search and rescue, which involves locating and rescuing servicemembers isolated in combat, such as pilots shot down behind enemy lines. The redevac deployment marks the first time the 920th has undertaken the role for the U.S. Army.

The reservists are due to return early this summer.

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Air Force Reserve Command Airmen from the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., who maintain and fly the HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter, are deploying to Afghanistan to support the U.S. Army medical evacuation operation there. Normally involved in combat search and rescue, this will be the first time the unit is involved with medevac missions. (U.S. Air Force Photo/Jim Massoni)