

## **Guard rescue mission named top 1998 U.S. Air Force flight**

Five members of the 210th Rescue Squadron received the Air Force's top honor for meritorious flying for their daring 1998 mountaintop rescue of six people trapped in a crashed airplane.

Gen. Michael Ryan, Air Force chief of staff, presented the 1999 MacKay Trophy to the five-member helicopter crew of Air Force Rescue 470 during a special luncheon in Arlington, Va., Sept. 21.

"This was truly an heroic rescue," Ryan said. "Six lives were saved because of the crew's dedication and professionalism."

The crew included Maj. John Jacobs, the pilot; 1st Lt. Thaddeus Stolar, the copilot; Master Sgt. Scott Hamilton, the flight engineer; and Master Sgt. Steve Daigle and Tech. Sgt. Greg Hopkins, the pararescuers.

The crew maneuvered their Pave Hawk helicopter through thick, swirling clouds and strong winds May 27, 1998, to rescue the six people trapped in the downed Cessna 207 at the 10,500-foot level of Mount Torbert, about 70 miles west of Anchorage.

The survivors, including two children, were lightly dressed and in danger of exposure from the wind chill atop the glacier

The rescue took nearly seven hours. The helicopter crew spent much of the time battling fierce winds while trying to find an opening in the clouds so it could land near the crash site.

Finally, at sunset, the helicopter was able to land on a knoll about 600 feet from the wreckage. Daigle and Hopkins made their way to the crash site, chopped snow away from the only operable door on the overturned Cessna and then guided the passengers over a snow-covered glacier