

News

# Katrina remembered

On the one-year anniversary of one of America's worst tragedies, the 943rd Rescue Group remembers one of its greatest triumphs



SMSgt. Bob Branchfield



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**Hang in there**  
MSgt. Brett Konczal, a pararescue jumper with the 306th Rescue Squadron, hoists one more victim to safety. The 306th, a part of the 943rd Rescue Group, was one of the most active rescue units during Hurricane Katrina and Rita rescue operations.

**Gas n go**  
One of the 943rd's HH-60 PaveHawks takes on-the-fly fuel from a C-130 before returning to work.

*TSgt. Shawn David McCowan  
Pony Express*

## More than forty reservists

assigned to the 943rd Rescue Group recently received honors for their rescue efforts following last year's Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The reservists belong to 943rd RQG's 305th Rescue Squadron, 306th RQS, 943rd Maintenance Squadron and other group support units.

Tucson Mayor Robert Walkup was keynote speaker at the event. He spoke on his perspective of last year's events.

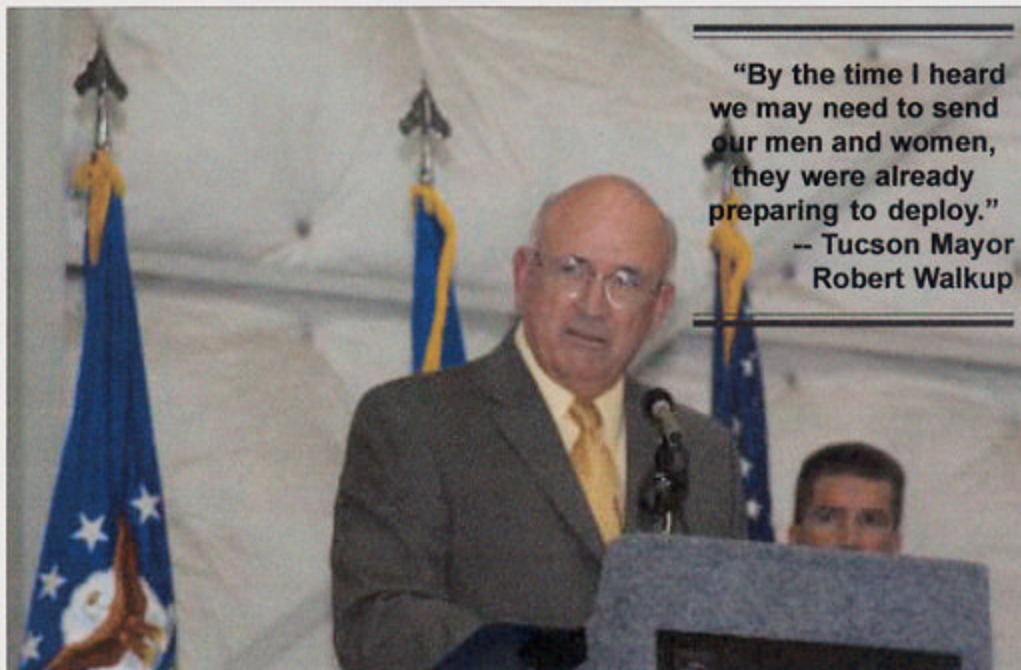
"I didn't have to make the call to this unit. By the time I heard we may need to send our men and women, they were already preparing to deploy.

"In the midst of this terrible tragedy were our brave Airmen, ready to help," said Mayor Walkup.

Col. Robert Dunn, 943rd RQG commander and co-presenter at the ceremony, spoke briefly to the assembled group about his personal perspective of last year's missions.

"I know how hard these men and women worked because I was there with them. Just returning from Afghanistan, they immediately prepared to leave for Louisiana and then Mississippi.

"I didn't hear any complaining. It's in our blood," said Colonel Dunn.



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-- Tucson Mayor Robert Walkup**

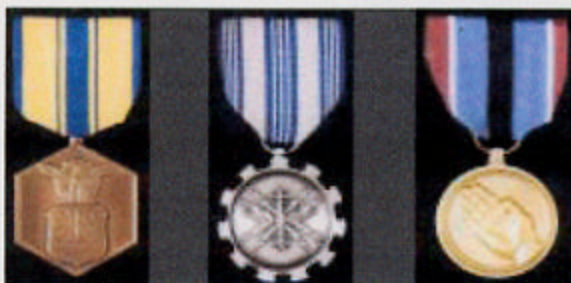
*TSgt. Shawn David McCowan*



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**(Left) Every member at the 943rd Rescue Group was on hand to help honor the award recipients.**

**(Below) Tucson Mayor Robert Walkup congratulates CMSgt. Craig Bergman after he received his three awards.**



Chief Master Sgt. Craig Bergman, chief of the 943rd MXS and one of the recipients of the Humanitarian Service Medal, said this was just another example of Reserve readiness.

"This is an Air Force Reserve of volunteers. We knew it would be long days and nights and we knew it wouldn't be easy. But we

had so many reservists wanting to help that we had to turn some away. Once we were there it was impossible to tell who was active, Guard or Reserve. We were one force," said Chief Bergman.

Chief Bergman also said he was touched to see those who served during last year's rescue efforts were being recognized.



*TSgt. Shawn David McCowan*

Other military leaders were present to honor the Airmen including Col. Kent Laughbaum, commander of the active force's 355th Wing, Davis-Monthan AFB, and Col. Joseph Trippy, vice commander of the Reserve's 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick AFB, Fla. Colonels Trippy and Dunn were both presenters at the ceremony.

# 943<sup>rd</sup> AIRCRAFT



