

News Release

United States Air Force Reserve

Office of Public Affairs, 920th Rescue Wing
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Air commando to assume command of 920th Rescue Wing

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – Col. Kurt Matthews will assume command of the 920th Rescue Wing here Saturday, Dec. 3 at 12:30 p.m. in a change of command ceremony attended by approximately 400 hundred servicemembers and civilian guests.

Colonel Matthews will replace Col. Jeffrey L. Macrander who served as the 920th RQW commander from August 2011- December 2016. Colonel Macrander will be taking an overseas assignment as the Air Reserve Component Liaison to the U.S. Air Forces Central Command, the Air Force Service Component of U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), a joint DoD combatant command responsible for U.S. security interests in 27 nations that stretch from the Horn of Africa through the Persian Gulf region, into Central Asia. His follow on assignment is to be determined.

Colonel Matthews has served as the 920th RQW Operations Group Commander in charge of flying operations for the wing since May. Previously, having served as the 920th RQW's pararescue commander of the 308th Rescue Squadron from June 2010 – November 2012, Rescue Wing Warriors welcome Colonel Matthews and his family back as their new wing commander.

Colonel Matthews is a 1990 graduate of the University of Miami, Florida, where he earned his commission through the Air Force ROTC program. His assignments include flying duties as an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter instructor/evaluator pilot performing combat rescue, and duties as a space operations officer conducting counter weapons of mass destruction support. He is a 2001 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Weapons School and recently completed Air Force Special Operations Command Air Commando training. He has served on active duty for 3 years, the Air National Guard for 2 years, and the Air Force Reserve for 18 years. He has flown in Operations Provide Comfort II, Southern Watch, Northern Watch, Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, as well as during hurricanes Floyd, Katrina and Rita.

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“These things we do, that others may live.”

In a more notable mission, Colonel Matthews served as the aircraft commander of the personnel recovery operation for the fallen comrades of Operation Red Wings documented by former Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell, the lone U.S. survivor of an ambush deep in northeastern Afghanistan in June 2005. Luttrell penned the New York Times best-seller 'Lone Survivor' subsequently made into a movie which captured everything leading up to his rescue by Colonel Macrander. Colonel Matthews and his crew recovered the final Red Wings team member from the battlefield.

As the 920th RQW commander, Colonel Matthews will provide leadership, management and supervision and will be responsible for the organization, training and equipping of the wing.

The 920th RQW is the only combat-search-and-rescue wing in the Air Force Reserve Command which makes up more than 18 percent of the Air Force's total rescue force. The wing is equipped with five HC-130P/N tanker aircraft and 15 HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters to support worldwide combat rescue operations as well as providing support to the 45th Space Wing, NASA and civilian space agencies providing safety and security of the Eastern Range during all Space Coast launches.

The wing is comprised of 2,000 dedicated Citizen Airmen assigned to four groups, 17 squadrons, four flights, a headquarters section and three geographically separated units in Arizona, Oregon and Virginia.

The 920 RQW is the most called upon unit in the Air Force Reserve. Approximately 80 Rescue Wing Reservists from the unit are currently deployed globally performing rescue operations.

For more information and photos on the 920th RQW, log onto their web site www.920rqw.afrc.af.mil and follow them on social media: @920th Rescue Wing on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and You Tube.

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MEDIA ADVISORY – The ceremony will be officiated by Maj. Gen. Richard Scobee, commander of 10th Air Force, Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, and will take place inside an **aircraft hangar at 12:30 p.m.** with approximately 120 servicemembers standing in formation. Media who wish to cover the change-of-command ceremony are asked to email their **RSVP by 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 02 by emailing cathleen.snow.1@patrick.af.mil.**

Media should plan on arriving at the Main Gate of Patrick Air Force Base located on Highway A1A by **11:30 a.m. with proper ID, media credentials, vehicle registration and proof of insurance.**

**Please call or email if you need directors or further information.*

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