

**Can't live
without it:**

Survival equipment

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The Air Force defines the Survival Equipment (2A7X4) occupation as the knowledge on “Disassembling, assembling, inspecting, fabricating, cleaning, repairing, and packing of aerospace weapon system components such as protective clothing, upholstery, thermal radiation barriers, protective covers, flotation equipment, emergency evacuation systems, and parachutes.”

The men and women of Survival Equipment at 48 EMS, RAF Lakenheath, are dedicated to providing superior maintenance. During fiscal year 2006 Sur-

vival Equipment personnel flawlessly maintained 180 Advanced Concept Ejection System parachutes. This parachute system is more commonly referred to as the ACES II.

Maintaining the ACES II parachute is a meticulous procedure. A great amount of precision and tenacity is required to ensure the task is accomplished properly. The inspection and packing of the ACES II is a two-man process that incorporates frequent inspections by 7-level certified personnel. These are more commonly referred to as rigger checks. All inspection procedures

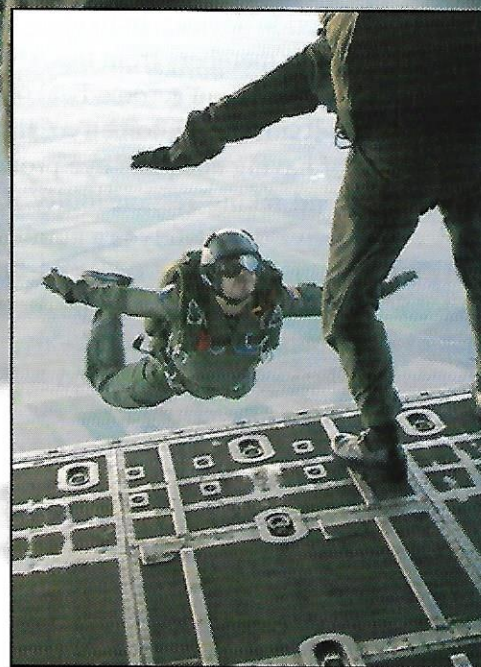


Photo Ann Kenny Holston

Pararescue troops go airborne from the back of a C-130 as apart of the Air Force Ravens jump training.

are accomplished using up-to-date Technical Orders. In conjunction with the 2-person concept and 7-level rigger checks, flyers can rest assured that this parachute system is undeniably reliable. The Survival Equipment workforce takes great pride in work methods at RAF Lakenheath. When all else fails and a pilot is forced to eject, there is one opportunity for a parachute to deploy properly. Without integrity and proper guideline maintenance of the parachute system, pilots lives are at stake.

According to Air Force instruction, Survival Equipment staff oversees the “plans and schedules of parachute and fabric activities. Establishes performance standards, improves work methods, and advises on inspection, repair, and repack of aircrew survival equipment. Checks repaired and repacked survival equipment and determine serviceability based on required specifications and technical publications. Evaluates problems and determines feasibility of repair or replacement related to inspecting and repairing fabric, rubber equipment, and parachutes.”

Along with maintaining the ACES II, Survival Equipment is directly responsible for servicing aircrew life preservers, anti-exposure suits, and anti-gravity garments. Survival Equipment ensures that personnel equipment is maintained in accordance with strict Air Force standards. The importance of each of these items is paramount. If they are not thoroughly inspected, tested, repaired, and maintained properly, military members suffer the consequence.

Another aspect of the Survival Equipment occupation is the ability to design and fabricate various protective covers. Airmen in this AFSC are well trained in utilizing sewing machines and sewing techniques. They are highly skilled craftsmen capable of creating covers to fit any need or purpose. This is sometimes accomplished

by the ability to read blueprints, as well as the ability to be creative. A majority of the fabricating at Survival Equipment is custom-made. Airmen work diligently to produce quality products for the sections they support.

A new challenge has been given to the Survival Equipment section at RAF Lakenheath. With the closing of the NAS Iceland base, Airmen have been introduced to four new parachutes and another variation of life preserver assembly. The new equipment supports the special operations unit acquired from NAS Iceland. While this may be uncharted territory for the Airman of Survival Equipment, their training and knowledge has equipped them with the skills to take on any challenge from the. Survival Equipment takes pride in its ability to meet challenges, as well as the ability to keep their customers safe.



Photo Ann Kenny Holston

A1C Ron Pancira, 86th Maintenance Squadron, inspects the proper packing procedures of a Back Automatic (BA) Parachute before delivering it to paratroopers



Photo Ann Kenny Holston

TSgt Michael Burke (Right) and MSgt Darius Monzon (Left) do a final safety check on their equipment before jumping out of a C-130 during Air Force Ravens jump training.