



HSC-12 The “World Famous Golden Falcons”



Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron TWELVE (HSC-12) was established on 7 March 1952 as Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron TWO (HS-2) in San Diego flying the HRS-2, making HSC-12 the oldest rotary wing squadron in the U.S. Navy. At this time, the squadron consisted of 258 enlisted and 39 officers to fly and maintain 17 aircraft. Since that time, the squadron has deployed on 11 different carriers. Today, HSC-12 deploys as a member of Carrier Air Wing FIVE (CVW-5) with 220 enlisted, 40 officers, and 10 Sikorsky MH-60S helicopters.

In addition to being the first HS squadron on the West Coast, the squadron boasts a long list of first and unique achievements. HS-2 was the first ASW (Anti-Submarine Warfare) helicopter squadron to deploy with the Sikorsky SH-3A Sea King and the first SH-3 squadron to operationally employ Helicopter In-flight Refueling (HIFR) at night. In November 1965, an HS-2 helicopter recorded the longest operational flight at the time. The aircraft remained airborne for 11 hours and 18 minutes on a search and rescue mission in the Gulf of Tonkin. Other technical innovations by "Golden Falcons" include the pioneering of submarine detection capabilities with the introduction of the SH-3D in 1974.

HSC-12's multi-mission capability has been put to the test in many ways through its history. This includes the 1964 flood rescue operations in Northern California, and the 1966 recovery of the Apollo Saturn 202 Command and Service Module. HS-2 then shifted gears to be the first Navy helicopter squadron to execute a night Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) mission in North Vietnam in 1965. The squadron was responsible for ten overland and five coastal rescues of pilots in North Vietnam during 1967. Also in 1967, HS-2 was called upon to provide relief support to snowbound Native Americans in Arizona.

In 1970, HS-2 conducted operations in Amman, Jordan for the evacuation of U.S. citizens and to provide a CSAR asset for the Battle Group. It was during 1970 that HS-2's signature American flag appeared on the aircraft. The flags were painted overnight so the helicopters could be distinguished from the Israeli H-3s. To commemorate the event, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) authorized the flags to become a permanent part of HS 2's paint scheme.

HS-2 led the way in modern Carrier Airborne Anti-Submarine Warfare by transitioning to the SH-60F Seahawk and accepting the HH-60HH in 1990. The Golden Falcons deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. In 2003, the squadron conducted combat operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and supported critical Naval Special Warfare (NSW) missions during the opening days of the conflict.

In 2004, HS-2 moved to the USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN-72). During its time on the Lincoln, the Golden Falcons were again called on to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the victims of the December 26, 2004 tsunami in the Aceh province of Sumatra, Indonesia as a part of Operation Unified Assistance, being awarded the Humanitarian Service Medal.

In May of 2009, the Golden Falcons transitioned to the new MH-60S airframe. In the process, HS-2 became HSC-12. Soon after, on September 11th of 2010, HSC-12 got underway on the USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN and the USNS RAINIER in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The VERTREP detachment onboard the Rainier was the first Combat Logistics Fleet (CLF) detachment ever deployed from a carrier based squadron.

In late 2012 through early 2013, HSC-12 became the first MH-60S squadron to be forward deployed, conducting a historic move from San Diego, CA, to NAF Atsugi, Japan, where it is currently supports Carrier Air Wing FIVE (CVW-5) on the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN-73). HSC-12 also stood up its first Executive Transport Detachment (DET ONE) on the USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC-19) in support of Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet. In November 2013, HSC-12 provided humanitarian relief as an integral part of Operation Damayan, after the Philippines were devastated by Super Typhoon Haiyan.

As part of an ever-changing tactical, political and humanitarian scenario, the World Famous Golden Falcons remain the United States Navy's premier lifesaving, rotary wing Anti-Surface Warfare, Personal Recovery, and Naval Special Warfare Squadron.