

## 129<sup>th</sup> RESCUE WING



### LINEAGE

129th Air Resupply Group, 3 Apr 1955

*Inactivated, 1 Nov 1958*

*Activated, 1962* 20 Jan 1962

Redesignated 129<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group, **1963**

Redesignated 129<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Group

Redesignated 129<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Group

Redesignated 129<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group

Redesignated 129<sup>th</sup> Air Rescue Group, Oct 1989

Redesignated 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Group, 15 Mar 1992

Redesignated 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, Jun 1992

### STATIONS

Hayward, CA

Moffett Federal Airfield, CA, 1984

### ASSIGNMENTS

#### WEAPON SYSTEMS

##### Mission Aircraft

C-46

CH-3E

HH-60G

##### Support Aircraft

#### TAIL CODES

HC-130: CA

HH-60: CA

#### COMMANDERS

LTC John R. Breeden, 1955

Col Charles W. Koenig, @1958 (1962)

Col A. Santos, 1974  
Col Grant S. Pyle, III, Jan 1977  
Col Edward R. Aguiar, Sep1977  
Col Harold R. Hall, Feb 1982  
Col Allen W. Boone, Feb 1983  
Col Edwin W. Lewis, Feb 1984  
Col G. Warren Hall, 1 Jan 1986  
Col Amos Bagdasarian  
Col Steven J. Butow 10 Sep 2011

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

### **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

## **MOTTO**

In Pace et Bello, Noctem et Diem - In Peace and War, During Night and Day

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Included within the group were the Air Resupply Squadron and Airborne Materials Assembly Squadron.

On 1 November 1958, the unit was reorganized from a Group to a single squadron structure and renamed the 129th Troop Carrier Squadron (Medium). All elements involved such as Operations, Aircraft Maintenance, Supply Administration, etc, were included in the Squadron,

Major Charles W. Koenig, World War II Ace and previously Group Operations Officer, was designated as the new commander. His tenure, which was to span over 15 years, saw numerous redesignations, reconfigurations, aircraft conversions and other momentous events while the unit retained essentially the same mission of unconventional warfare. In late 1956 the SA-16 had been added to the unit inventory joining forces with the C-46 and adding water landing capability, thus expanding the environment in which operations could be conducted.

It was LTC Breeden's task and challenge to mold his human and material assets into an operationally ready unit new to the Air Guard with an equally new mission, that of clandestine warfare. Initiating an effort which was to become a 129th tradition, the organization set about

making the C-46 capable of meeting its high standards of maintenance and air worthiness. Equally important, its pilots were obliged to transition into new aircraft and different techniques. All these formidable achievements were accomplished with virtually no outside assistance.

August of 1965 extensive rioting and civil Disturbances erupted in the Watts section of Los Angeles. The 129th provided airlift to State authorities to the area so that the situation could be evaluated and appropriate action determined.

Once it had been decided that the Guard should be summoned to State Active Duty, the Group airlifted over 600 personnel to the scene from various locations in Northern and Central California on an around-the-clock basis for several days. The unsettled times, when actual and threatened disturbances disrupted both active duty and Guard installations, dictated that the ANG be capable of coping with such potential problems. The 129th, in compliance with this necessity, trained to meet such contingencies by developing both a Riot Control Force and a SWAT Team, both unaccustomed roles for airmen.

In February of 1974, the unit received notice that it was one of several Air National Guard organizations scheduled for deactivation in mid-1975 as the result of an economy move by the Department of Defense. Lt Col Albert R. Santos, who had succeeded Col Koenig upon the latter's retirement due to illness, refused to accept this devastating blow without reaction. He set about mounting a campaign to secure a reversal of the decision. Members and friends of the unit were pressed into service to contact federal and state legislators to impress upon them the value of the trained and professional resources which the 129th represented. Visits, letters and telephone calls finally persuaded the appropriate authorities that the past significant accomplishments and contributions of the Group and its obvious potential to continue that record deserved more consideration than being disbanded. By May of 1974 the DOD relented and determined to continue the unit's existence but in a mission totally new to and unique for the Air Guard - that of Aerospace Rescue and Recovery.

While this reprieve was a most welcome announcement to the unit's personnel, there were immediate and pressing challenges which had to be faced. The most important event on the horizon was the Operational Readiness Inspection scheduled for later in the year. Since this would focus critical attention on the resolve of the Group to prove its value as an asset, the organization's members, permitting no letdown, even though the Special Operations mission was ending, prepared themselves even more earnestly than it had in the past. The confidence in them was fully justified when as a result of the inspection the 129th was rated as C-1, the highest readiness category then in existence.

Following the accomplishment of this noteworthy milestone, the 129th began the demanding task of conversion to new aircraft and new taskings. Now to be equipped with two types of aircraft entirely new to it, the HC-130P/N and the HH-3E, pilots were confronted with transitioning. In the case of the Jolly Green Giant, this transition would require almost total retraining. In addition, Aircraft Maintenance would be obliged to obtain schooling for its people in many systems which were equally new to them. To further complicate matters occasioned by the changeover, new crew positions such as Radio Operator had to be recruited and an occupation never before included in the Air Guard personnel inventory, that of Pararescue

Specialist. This highly complex vacation demanded expertise in such capabilities as medical, scuba diving, and mountain climbing as well as parachutist.

The assignment of this highly visible, uniquely humanitarian mission and the new aircraft spurred the 129th's Guardsmen to outstanding effort. Current members learned new skills and techniques and the infusion of rescue-experienced individuals from active duty Rescue units permitted all conversion activities to be completed well in advance of the established deadline. As a consequence of this superior performance, the 129th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group was extended Federal Recognition on 3 May 1975, becoming the first of its kind in the ANG. Thus began a new and exciting era which was to prove especially satisfying and gratifying.

In 1976 it had become obvious that the runway and unit facilities at Hayward were too restrictive to permit sustained operation of the HC-130 at its full potential. A decision was reached to relocate the Group from there to Naval Air Station Moffett Field.

All other items, such as furniture, communications gear, supplies, PJ paraphernalia, delicate test equipment and office machines were relocated solely by internal means. This monumental effort entailed accumulating over 100,000 miles in one of the most congested traffic areas in the State and was accomplished without incident or accident. All those Mobility exercises over the years really paid off.

Only partially settled into its new quarters and severely handicapped by very limited commercial communications, the unit was once again called upon to deliver the goods. Heavy rains and the flooding induced by them ravaged large areas of Southern California. Reacting to the call of the Governor, the Group provided aerial survey of the affected areas by the HC-130 and evacuated endangered individuals by use of the H-3. Once again, the 129th acquitted itself most professionally under the most adverse circumstances

The unit received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the Crescent City relief operation in 1964. In 1981 the 129th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, including the 129th Tactical Hospital, received the Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation Award for rescues made between May and October 1981 in support of the Coast Guard's maritime safety mission. The unit also received the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS) Outstanding Medical Unit Award for 1976, the first for an Air National Guard Medical Unit in the Western United States.

In 1976 it had become obvious that the runway and unit facilities at Hayward were too restrictive to permit sustained operation of the HC-130 at its full potential. A decision was reached to relocate the group from Hayward to NAS Moffett Field.

The Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor for its contributions in Operation SOUTHERN WATCH in 2001, the Air Force Association Outstanding Air National Guard Flying Unit Award for 2001, and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for 2002.

Air National Guard from the 129th Rescue Wing at Moffett Federal Airfield, California,

conducted a successful medical evacuation of a critically injured US citizen in La Paz, Mexico, on 24 October. The rescue team flew on an MC-130P Combat Shadow to provide assistance to the injured twenty-eight-year-old male who was involved in an automobile accident in Mexico. The aircrew had to fly around tropical storm Paul as the medical crew provided life-saving medical aid during the 2,000-mile flight to Moffett. After the aircraft landed, the patient was transferred by ambulance to a hospital in Sunnyvale, California. This rescue brings the total number of people saved by the 129th RQW to 558.

**20053 Sep** One MC-130P from the 129th Rescue Wing transported unit pararescuemen personnel and swift water rescue equipment to NAS New Orleans. An additional C-130J from the 146th Airlift Wing based at NAS Point Mugu, California transported additional 129th Rescue Wing pararescuemen personnel and equipment. By this time, Air Guard rescue assets deployed to New Orleans included twelve zodiac boats and Air Guard Combat Controllers who operated three helicopter Landing Zones. Air Guard rescue personnel were expected to remain deployed for approximately fourteen days. Air Guard pararescuemen and combat controllers deployed to the hurricane stricken area came from the 123<sup>d</sup> Special Tactics Squadron, Kentucky ANG; 125<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Squadron, Oregon ANG; 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, California ANG, and the 212<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron, Alaska ANG. The 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, New York ANG, deployed to Jackson, Mississippi and Hurlburt Field, Florida.

**Twelve pararescuemen from the 129th Rescue Wing, California ANG, returned to their home station at Moffett Field.**

**5 Sep** Forty-eight Oregon ANG personnel assigned to the 272<sup>nd</sup> Combat Communications Squadron, 116<sup>th</sup> Air Control Squadron, 270<sup>th</sup> Air Traffic Control Squadron, and the 125<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Squadron deployed in SAD to NAS New Orleans to help provide a variety of communications capability for the city.

**5 Sep** Thirty-five ANG Special Operations personnel had deployed to the joint operations area to perform search and rescue operations. Eighteen pararescuemen, twelve combat controllers, and five mission support personnel assigned to the 123<sup>rd</sup> Special Tactics Squadron, Kentucky ANG; 125<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Squadron, Oregon ANG; 212<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron, Alaska ANG; 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, California ANG, and the 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, New York ANG.

**8 Sep** Four combat controllers assigned to the 125<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Squadron, Oregon ANG, returned to their home station at Portland Airport.

**24 Sep** The 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, California ANG, deployed one MC-130P and one HH-60G and crew to Texas to support Joint Task Force-Rita. The MC-130 flew to Austin, Texas and the HH-60G flew to Odessa, Texas. Both aircraft were prepositioned for possible search and rescue missions and mass care missions in response to Hurricane Rita.

The 129th Rescue Wing has been recognized with the 2008 Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, marking the seventh time the 129th has earned the award. "This is a great achievement and

directly reflects on the professionalism and dedication of all our members,” said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing commander. The award was granted for meritorious service from December 2006 through November 2008. During that period, the 129th was credited with saving 40 lives under extreme conditions. From the high desert mountains of Afghanistan to remote areas more than 500 miles off the Pacific Coast, the safe and successful conduct of each operation was a testament to the unit’s experience and leadership. “The competition was extremely keen, and each winner is commended for having been selected from an outstanding group of nominees,” said Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard. “The dedication and commitment of the members of these organizations enable the Air National Guard to fulfill its commitment to the missions of peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, domestic improvement and — most important of all — defense of America.” Examples of the unit’s outstanding performance between December 2006 and November 2008 include: | The wing received an overall “Excellent” rating during a Phase II operational readiness inspection in December 2006. With 14 areas rated “Outstanding” and 38 areas rated “Excellent,” the 129th received the highest point score ever awarded to a combat search-and-rescue unit. | More than 70 Airmen and three HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters deployed for 120 days to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, in April 2007 to perform combat search-and-rescue and joint personnel recovery operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. | In May 2007 more than 50 Airmen, along with two MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft, deployed to Djibouti to support Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa. | During Operation Lightning Strike, the 2008 northern California firefight, two HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters and aircrews were certified to perform water-bucket drops for the first time in unit history. Overall, the crews dropped more than 150,000 gallons of water on the fires. | Crews stationed in Redding, Calif., during Operation Lightning Strike landed in rugged northern California terrain to evacuate injured firefighters. | Pararescuemen assisted residents of the U.S. Gulf Coast region in 2008 during hurricanes Gustav and Ike, saving 34 people and 11 dogs. | Rescue crews performed two long range over-water missions in June and July 2008: In June, wing members rescued a critically ill crew member aboard a cargo vessel 550 miles off the coast of California. In July, while still involved in firefighting operations, crews saved a Canadian fisherman aboard a boat 600 miles off the California coast. Both patients were transported to the Regional Medical Center of San Jose. Equipped with MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft and HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters, the primary mission of the 129th Rescue Wing is to perform combat search and rescue anywhere in the world. In addition, the 129th performs a wide variety of civilian search-and-rescue missions. The 129th Rescue Wing previously won the Outstanding Unit Award in 1986, 1991, 1997, 2000, 2002 and 2008.

Crews from the 129th Rescue Wing, California Air National Guard, were certified to perform water bucket operations here July 2, becoming the only rescue unit in the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard qualified to fight fires. The certification is timely as it coincides with an early start to the fire season in Northern California, which is where the 129th RQW is based. The aircrews and Pave Hawks have been on temporary duty here in support of Operation Lightning Strike – the California National Guard’s firefighting support mission. While the equipment modifications and required training were being accomplished, the unit has maintained a continuous alert posture for search and rescue and high risk medical evacuations. The 129th Rescue Wing is the lead wing for HH-60G Pave Hawk water bucket certification efforts,

according to Lt. Col. Steve Butow, 129th Operations Group Director. The training, equipment modifications, and certification process will lay the groundwork for other combat search and rescue wings to obtain water bucket certification. "Joint firefighting operations are analogous to the joint combat search and rescue operating environment our crews will experience in the Global War on Terror," said Lt. Col. Daniel Lapostole, 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron Commander. "The training value is unmatched." The training the aircrews received is in accordance with the California Interagency Military Helicopter Firefighting Program and was provided by certified CAL FIRE instructors. "Operation of the water bucket can be quickly learned by operators with no prior experience," said Maj. Matt Thomas, 129th Rescue Squadron Director of Operations. The crew and aircraft are now certified to utilize the 660 gallon capacity water bucket. The bucket is rigged for use with the cargo hook, and water is released via a contact "pickle" switch. Once the crew receives their orders to perform fire duty, maintainers must remove the internal auxiliary tank, install a radio and release switches, and then paint the aircraft with required markings. The water bucket is attached once on scene. Simultaneously, the crews maintain airborne SAR alert. The HH-60Gs also have an aerial refueling capability that allows Airmen to perform longer rescue and firefighting support missions. The aerial refueling is accomplished by the 129th RQW's MC-130P. "Airmen from the 129th are motivated and ready to assist their neighbors in fighting the fires here in California," said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, 129th Rescue Wing Commander. "Our search and rescue mission, coupled with the fire bucket certification, adds to the state's broad range of fire fighting capabilities." The 129th Rescue Wing is located in the heart of the Silicon Valley, the 129th Rescue Wing's mission is to train and prepare to perform its wartime mission of combat search and rescue anywhere in the world. Equipped with MC-130P, HH-60G, and the Guardian Angel weapon system, the 129th has performed a wide variety of civilian search and rescue missions, including distressed persons aboard ships, lost or injured hikers, and medical evacuations. 2008

Air National Guardsmen from the 129th Rescue Wing departed for a one-month deployment to Djibouti. More than 30 Airmen deployed to provide combat search and rescue support for Operation Enduring Freedom's Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa. Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa works to prevent conflict, promote regional stability and protect coalition interests in east Africa and Yemen through humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and civic action programs to include medical and veterinary care, school and medical clinic construction and water development projects. "This is our second wave of deployments since April, and both deployments are in support of Operation Enduring Freedom," said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, commander of the 129th Rescue Wing. "We deployed to the Horn of Africa in 2005, and we are proud to support the mission once again."

The 129th Rescue Squadron (RQS) recently took part in the Marine Corps-sponsored Mountain Warrior exercise. This three day segment of the larger Mountain Warrior program saw an Army Special Operations ground team cross-train with the squadron's Sikorsky HH-60G Pave Hawk crews at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center near Bridgeport, Calif. The 129th

RQS operates HH-60G and MC-130P. For this exercise, the unit sent two of its HH-60Gs, each with a four-person crew, plus mechanics. **DAY ONE: THE FOUNDATION** The first day of training at the Mountain Warfare Training Center consisted of fast-rope insertion and rope-ladder extraction. This exercise allowed the Special Operations team to become re-familiarized with alternate insertion and extraction operations. For safety, a pararescue jumper (PJ) “rope master” from the 131st RQS — also part of the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing — observed while the Special Operations team practiced fast-rope insertions into a grass meadow. After each Special Operations member performed three fast-rope insertions, training transitioned to rope-ladder extractions. Because of the heavy gear each Special Operations team member carried, climbing the ladder was a particularly challenging task. To help, the PJ shared some advanced climbing techniques that enabled them to make it up the ladder faster and with less effort. Following the rope-ladder training, the teams practiced hoisting operations with single- and two-person lifts. During these exercises, the Pave Hawk crews trained in approaches and high-altitude power management. Although the HH-60G is a powerful helicopter, it is also flown heavier than the Army’s UH-60L (from which the Pave Hawk is derived). This, as a 129<sup>th</sup> RQS pilot explained, means it requires careful management: “We carry an airrefueling probe, internal fuel tanks, plus [search and rescue] gear and equipment, not to mention the mounted weapons and ammunition. When the aircraft operate at higher altitudes, we need to be aware of the [limited] power available and plan our missions accordingly.” **DAY TWO: THE RESCUE** The second day saw the HH-60G crews on a 30-minute combat search and rescue (CSAR) alert. The scenario simulated a Navy pilot shot down in a high-threat, high-altitude location. The Special Operations team would rescue the pilot, giving them the opportunity to learn how a quick-reaction CSAR mission develops (normally, the Special Operations team only engages in pre-planned, assault-type missions). Once the CSAR mission was called, a quick intelligence and threat assessment was briefed. The Special Operations team boarded the HH-60Gs — call signs Jolly 91 and Jolly 92 — and the aircraft launched from Bridgeport, heading toward the general location of the downed pilot, thought to be in mountainous terrain at an altitude over 8,500 feet. Along the way, the helicopters used terrain-masking to remain concealed from enemy threats. Additional intelligence was gained en route to give a clearer understanding of the situation to the rescue crews; by the time they arrived on scene, they had much better situational awareness of both the enemy threats and the survivor’s location. Working in cooperation, Jolly 91, the lead aircraft, located the downed pilot and inserted the Special Operations rescue team, while Jolly 92 flew cover and provided surveillance and suppressive fire. The Special Operations team proceeded to find the pilot on the ground and perform an injury assessment. The pilot was then “packaged up” and escorted to Jolly 91. As the recovery was expected to be relatively rapid, Jolly 91 stayed on the ground with its door gunners at the ready to provide suppressive fire. After the pick-up, Jolly 91 performed a tactical departure and joined up with Jolly 92 for a terrain-hugging flight back to base. **DAY THREE: THE ASSAULT** The third day and night of training witnessed a joint 129<sup>th</sup> RQS, Army Special Operations team and Marine Corps convoy night assault, or “hit,” on a simulated enemy-held village in the Nevada desert. In the afternoon, the helicopters staged to a forward base for 129<sup>th</sup> RQS crews and Special Operations team members to start planning the mission with Marine Corps ground force commanders. The assault was scheduled for 8.45 p.m. and would have the two HH-60Gs pairing up to the target with Special Operations Soldiers on board. The plan was for the HH-60Gs to then simultaneously insert the Special Operations teams in order to maintain surprise and increase defensive firepower. The helicopter crews would use night vision goggles and utilize the aircraft’s forward-looking infrared turret for navigation

and terrain avoidance. Lift-off time was 8 p.m.; during the wait for the insertion, the helicopters practiced formation flying. Once the call came in, the crews located the landing area and proceeded to set up the approach just as the Marine Corps task force rolled up on the building. Diversionary flares were launched and the ground units initiated suppressive gunfire. The Pave Hawks then landed within yards of the building and the Special Operations teams exited to begin the assault. After taking simulated ground fire, the lead helicopter called for the flight formation to lift off and depart the area. Once they had gained some altitude, the Pave Hawk gunners began providing surveillance and suppressive fire with their GAU-18/A .50-caliber guns. At any time, however, the aircraft were still available to extract wounded or injured team members from the assault. After the hit, the HH-60Gs were requested to extract the Special Operations teams. The aircraft landed together, loaded the personnel and flew back to the Mountain Warfare Training Center. THE WRAP-UP More than just an interesting three days, the joint training gave the teams the confidence to operate effectively together in the future. The Pave Hawk crews were able to operate in difficult hot and high conditions and refine their flying skills. They also demonstrated that training for CSAR is good preparation for many other mission sets. The Army Special Operations team, meanwhile, was able to train in a CSAR mission and become familiar with the Air National Guard's operational standards, tactics, techniques and procedures. All in all, it was a very productive three days.

California Air National Guardsmen from Moffett Federal Airfield's 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing deployed to Galveston, Texas, to search for stranded victims of Hurricane Ike in mid-September, only days after deploying in support of Hurricane Gustav search-and-rescue operations. While the threat of Gustav passed over Louisiana with minimal impact, Ike's presence was more devastating, demanding swift action on the part of 129th Guardsmen. Stationed at San Antonio's Kelly Field, four Joint Task Force 129 HH-60G, including two from the 129th Rescue Wing, departed at 10 a.m. on Sept. 13. One day earlier, California Air Guardsmen had helped rescue 16 people, including several stranded on a bridge nearly submerged in Ike's waters. The crews knew this day would be even busier. "We were told that more than two hundred 911 calls were made in the morning," said Maj. Rhys Hunt, 129th Rescue Wing pilot and co-pilot for Jolly 91. Hurricane Ike had passed through Galveston earlier in the day. "When we got to Galveston, it looked like a war zone," Hunt said. "There were four or five houses on fire, Galveston Airport was completely underwater, most of the city was flooded, and several piers were demolished." Instead of being tasked with picking up victims in specific locations, the helicopters trolled low and slow. The crews hoped the sound of the rotor blades would prompt survivors to come out of their homes and seek help in evacuating the area. It wasn't long before survivors did just that. Crews from Jolly 91 spotted a woman poking her head out from her porch. Two pararescuemen, also known as PJs, rappelled down to convince the woman to evacuate. Jolly 91 then landed in a baseball field near her house and discovered two elderly women and a middle-aged man stranded in the house. The survivors asked to be evacuated because one of the women was sick and needed treatment. The three people loaded on the Pave Hawk and crews promptly transported them to Texas City High School, a main collection point for survivors. Jolly 91 returned to the disaster area and proceeded to troll over the Bolivar Peninsula near Galveston. The crews were stunned by the destruction witnessed overhead. "Half of the houses appeared flattened in Crystal Beach," Hunt said. The crews continued their search for survivors and came across a man, woman and their dog wading through the water. Jolly 91 landed on a dry road near the trio and picked them up. Luckily, the crews spotted the group because they provided information about additional

victims requiring evacuation. Based on their tip, Jolly 91 took off and found the home – as suspected, an elderly man, two of his family members and a dog were stranded. The PJs rappelled down to the house and used the hoist to pluck the family from danger. After dropping off the group of survivors, Jolly 91's crew searched for people in Gilchrist on the Bolivar Peninsula. They came across small groups of people sitting on porches and balconies. Surprisingly for the crews, when asked to evacuate, the people opted to stay put. At the end of the day, searching for survivors and performing rescues was a grueling but gratifying mission for the JTF 129 Airmen. "All the crew members were glad to be there and help when people needed it most," Hunt said. As of Sept. 15, JTF 129 personnel had saved 48 people and 13 dogs in response to Hurricane Ike. "The task force members did an incredible job over the past 48 hours flying in extremely violent conditions," said Col. Mark Sheehy, 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing Operations Group Commander and JTF 129 Commander. "They epitomize the Air Force Rescue motto of 'These things we do that others may live.'" Joint Task Force 129 is a self-contained search and rescue unit comprised of more than 100 people, including highly trained pararescuemen, four HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters, and two MC-130P Combat Shadow tankers. Air National Guardsmen from the 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, Gabreski Airport, N.Y., and 176<sup>th</sup> Wing, Kulis Air National Guard Base, Ala., are also part of the rescue task force. As an Air National Guard unit, many of the 129<sup>th</sup>'s past missions involved supporting state emergencies that included earthquakes, chemical spills, fires and floods. Equipped with MC-130P Combat Shadow tankers and HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters, the 129<sup>th</sup> has performed a wide variety of civilian search-and-rescue missions, including distressed persons aboard ships, lost or injured hikers, and medical evacuations.

2010 Continuing its tradition of excellence, members of the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing saved lives at home and around the globe in 2010. As one of three Air National Guard rescue wings nationwide, the military and the state of California depend on the unique capabilities of the HH-60G, MC-130P and highly trained pararescuemen. From the high seas of the Pacific to the mountains of Afghanistan, 129<sup>th</sup> rescuers demonstrated their creed, "That Others May Live." In April and June, about 30 pararescuemen and support personnel deployed to Afghanistan, where they helped provide critical lifesaving medical attention to military personnel and Afghan citizens. In addition to deployments abroad, the unit remains capable of saving lives in California. In April, 129<sup>th</sup> personnel successfully completed an intense four-day rescue mission about 650 miles off the coast of Baja, Mexico. The 129<sup>th</sup> sent two HH-60G and an MC-130P, accompanied by a KC-130J from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, to pick up a 56-year-old sailor who had suffered life-threatening head and neck injuries aboard his sailing vessel. Four pararescuemen provided lifesaving medical aid while awaiting the arrival of 129<sup>th</sup> recovery aircraft. In February, in the midst of a major unit inspection, the 129<sup>th</sup> assisted the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office in a search for a missing snowshoer near Camp Connell, Calif. In spite of foggy, low-visibility conditions, the 129<sup>th</sup> Airmen, in conjunction with a ground search party, eventually spotted and picked up the stranded hiker in mountainous terrain. "Even while our Airmen were busy with a higher headquarters Unit Compliance Inspection, rescue crews were able to quickly launch a mission," said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing commander. "This is a testament to our outstanding training and our dedication to saving lives." During the course of the inspection, 55 Air Combat Command inspection team members met with unit personnel to discuss how their areas operate. The inspectors also evaluated the effectiveness of critical processes and identified areas for improvement. The wing continued to honor the

dedicated service of its Airmen and their families through the rigor of deployments, inspections and training. More than 100 Airmen and their families were honored at a Hometown Heroes Salute award ceremony at Moffett Federal Airfield in Santa Clara County, Calif., in August. Recognized in this ceremony were Guard members who deployed in support of operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Noble Eagle as well as peacekeeping operations across the globe since Sept. 11, 2001. "Without the support from families, the mission at home and abroad would be impossible to accomplish, and I wholeheartedly thank them for their support and sacrifice," Bagdasarian said. Looking ahead, the future of the 129th Rescue Wing is bright. The hard-charging efforts of the wing's recruiting office created astonishing results this year: The 129th had the most accessions of all Air National Guard units in the nation for fiscal year 2010, increasing the unit strength from 88 to 93 percent. This strength increase is vital for the wing, the state and the nation, because it enhances the wing's ability to adapt, respond and save lives when called upon.

California Rescue Wing Makes 1,000th Save The California Air National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing completed the 1,000th "save" in its four-decade-long history. Aircrews and pararescuemen deployed to Afghanistan reached the milestone on May 18 after rescuing an Afghan national policeman who had suffered a gunshot wound, according to a May 20 wing release. "The wing is credited with more than 400 combat saves and nearly 600 civilian saves. In addition, the wing has assisted in over 600 other saves," states the release. A mission is considered a "save" if the rescued individual was in danger of losing his/her life, a limb, or eyesight. The 129th RQW is based at Moffett Federal Airfield northwest of San Jose. 2013

The 129th Rescue Wing experienced an epic year in 2008. The wing seamlessly transitioned from its normal rescue mission over land and sea to airborne and ground firefighting duty within the state. This flexibility clearly demonstrated the wing's ability to respond, adapt and save lives.

The wing began the summer with Operation Lightning Strike, an emergency response to the state's nearly 2,100 wildfires. Shortly after deploying key personnel to support operations at the Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento, two HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters and aircrews were certified to perform water bucket drops on wildfires for the first time in unit history.

During this major state emergency, crews dropped more than 150,000 gallons of water. The wing also mobilized personnel for Type II firefighting training, providing direct ground support to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection on the fire lines. Meanwhile, personnel remained on search and rescue alert throughout the

operation. Helicopter crews stationed at Redding Airport landed in rugged terrain to medevac injured firefighters, and crews saved two civilians involved in a firefighting helicopter crash.

Along with responding to state emergencies, rescue crews performed two long-range over-water missions. In June, nearly 550 miles off the coast of California, a critically ill crewmember aboard a cargo vessel was successfully extracted and flown to a hospital for critical medical treatment. A month later, while still immersed in firefighting operations, aircrews saved a Canadian fisherman aboard a fishing boat 600 miles off the coast. Both patients were transported to the Regional Medical Center of San Jose. The medical center's heliport, which was completed in June, was the first in the Bay Area to be certified for use by the wing's HH-60G helicopter.

Soon after Operation Lightning Strike was completed, the wing was asked to assist Louisiana and Texas in response to hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Over Labor Day weekend, the unit deployed more than 80 personnel, aircraft and equipment to the Gulf Coast region. Wing members quickly set up operations at Ellington Field in Houston forming Joint Task Force 129.

The JTF remained in Ellington for Hurricane Gustav and then relocated to Kelly Field in San Antonio for Hurricane Ike. Despite the rising flood waters and high wind, the JTF rescued a total of 16 civilians. After Hurricane Ike passed through the area, JTF 129 helicopters launched immediately into the disaster area and crews rescued another 18 survivors. This professional and highly skilled team of Citizen Airmen demonstrated the wing's life-saving capability to respond anytime, anywhere.

To hone the wing's rescue capabilities to respond to natural and manmade disasters, 129th Airmen participated in multiagency exercises, including BAYEX 2008, a full-scale exercise designed to test the ability of Oakland and federal agencies to conduct a coordinated response to a major emergency. The unit also participated with NASA Ames in the Great Worden Quake II, an exercise designed to train and sharpen the skills of Moffett

Field's emergency and disaster-assistance responders.

The 129th Rescue Wing's Counterdrug Task Force detachment, Team Hawk, utilized the HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter, aircrew, pararescuemen and maintainers to support local law enforcement agencies in the eradication of illegal narcotics and the restoration of forest lands that were environmentally damaged by marijuana production. During Operation LOCUST, Team Hawk airlifted more than 520,000 marijuana plants and \$2.2 billion in drug production equipment during a massive statewide drug eradication operation - the largest in California history.

Members from the 129th Security Forces Squadron returned in May from a six-month deployment in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In addition, 2008 saw the 129th Security Forces Squadron named the National Guard Bureau's Outstanding Security Forces Squadron of the Year for 2007. This achievement was unprecedented, as it was the third consecutive award received by the unit for excellence.

These impressive achievements made for another successful year and highlight exactly why the 129th Rescue Wing is regularly called upon to perform rescue operations in natural disasters such as fires, floods, earthquakes and hurricanes.



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Sources

Unit History. 129<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group. NAS Moffett Field, CA. 1956-1986.