THE RESCUEGRAM

The Official Information Publication of the 129th Rescue Wing, California Air National Guard **Sept. 2008**

Lives Saved

564

These Things We Do...
That Others May Live...

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129th handcrews return from Yosemite fire

by Capt. Alyson Teeter, 129th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Hughan

Twenty-eight Airmen return to Moffett from firefighting training and fire suppression duty on the Telegraph Fire near Yosemite National Park August 5.

Twenty-eight Airmen from the 129th Rescue Wing and 561st Band returned to Moffett Federal Airfield August 5 after nearly two weeks of fighting the Telegraph Fire near Yosemite National Forest north of Fresno.

Part of the second wave of 2,000 Guard firefighters, more than 200 Air National Guardsmen from California were called up July 11 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to combat wildfires that have scorched more than a million acres across the state since late June.

"From ground firefighting to water bucket drops and search and rescue support, we are proud to have assisted with the firefighting efforts in our state," said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, 129th Rescue Wing Commander. "The ground firefighting was a new mission for the wing, but our Airmen were ready and motivated to help."

Using the training they received at the McClellan Wildland Training Center, the Airmen created fire breaks and containment lines behind type one firefighters.

The remote fire-fighting training and hard labor gave the Airmen a new appreciation for CAL FIRE firefighters.

"Whenever I think of firefighters, I think of city firefighters," said Staff Sgt. Jeff Norton, a tech

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The mission of the 129th Rescue Wing is to provide highly trained and well-equipped rescue resources, able to respond to and sustain the state mission of furnishing trained personnel for state emergencies, such as natural disasters, and to assist civil authorities in the enforcement of the law.

When called to active duty with the Air Force, we provide manpower, material and equipment resources to conduct and complete combat and search rescue operations world-wide. We provide manpower, material and equipment to conduct and complete peacetime search operations.

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Commentary: Feedback isn't a one way street

by Chief Master Sgt. Kristina Keck, 129th RQW Command Chief

Recently I stayed at a hotel and it was the most pleasant stay I've had at a hotel in quite some time. On my final day I was having lunch in the hotel restaurant and noticed two of the hotel's housekeeping staff (in uniform) getting ready to sit down to a very nice lunch. A few minutes later they were joined by a distinguished-looking man wearing a suit.

My curiosity was piqued and I had to find out the purpose of the special occasion. When the restaurant manager came by to check on my lunch, I asked if the hotel staff members were having some sort of appreciation lunch. He looked over at the table and said no.

Apparently this hotel was the WORST hotel in the chain just a few years ago. The man in the suit having lunch with the housekeepers was the hotel manager. Three years before he assumed responsibility for this poorly performing hotel and started regularly taking his staff members to lunch. The manager wanted the staff to share their ideas, regardless of their position, and utilize their feedback to determine what was or wasn't working.

"Giving just a few minutes of your valuable time during drill weekend to obtain input from your people will gain you the commitment we need to succeed."

The manager realized that if he wanted to change the culture of his organization, he had to have everyone's buy-in. He understood that unless all the members of his team had buy-in, he wouldn't turn his underperforming hotel around. The lunches took valuable time from his busy schedule, but he knew this investment was critical to making change.

So staff member by staff member, and lunch by lunch, he worked his way through the hotel's problems. Just two years after taking over, his hotel became one of the most profitable hotels and had the highest customer satisfaction scores in the country.

I share this with you because the Air Force's Performance Feedback program, if used properly, can give your unit similar results. What better way to get buy-in on the unit's needs then by asking each of your people how they think things are going, what is working, and what isn't working?

A good feedback session should include a performance assessment from each participant's perspective. In addition, take a few minutes to talk about the unit's strategic plans and how the subordinate can be an important part of it. Not only will you have the opportunity to gain fresh perspective, you are also providing validation to this individual.

The success of our wing will depend on each and every one of our people having buy-in. Giving just a few minutes of your valuable time each drill weekend to obtain input from your people will gain you the commitment we need to succeed.

If you have questions about performance feedback, contact your unit's First Sergeant. You can also contact me at 3-9202 or by e-mail.

129th Airmen rescue firefighters while on alert in Redding

by 129th Rescue Wing Public Affairs Staff

U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Brock Woodward

Staff Sgt. Darren Pon (right), pararescueman from the 131st Rescue Squadron, accompanies a Shasta, California-based firefighting crew carrying an injured firefighter to an awaiting HH-60G Pave Hawk northwest of Redding, Calif., July 31. While battling the Iron Complex Wildland Fire, the firefighter fell and suffered a concussion. The 129th Rescue Wing aircrew and pararescuemen landed in rugged terrain at approximately 6,000 feet to rescue the firefighter, and subsequently transported him to Mercy Medical Center in Redding.

U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Brock Woodward

Tech. Sgt. Michael Bendle (left) and Staff Seth Zweben (right), pararescuemen from the 131st Rescue Squadron, prepare to transfer a firefighter off of the 129th Rescue Wing-based HH-60G Pave Hawk to an awaiting ambulance at the Chico Municipal Airport, Calif., Aug. 4. The firefighter was working in the Feather River Complex near French Bear, Calif., when he suffered a heat stroke. The 129th Rescue Wing aircrew and pararescuemen hovered over steep terrain and hoisted the firefighter up in to the Pave Hawk.

S-61 helo crash rescue

Airmen from the 129th rescued two survivors of a civilian helicopter crash Aug. 5, near Junction City, Calif.

The Sikorsky S-61 firefighting helicopter was assigned to the Buckhorn Fire in the Iron Complex. Two other survivors were rescued from the crash scene. Nine people were killed in the accident.

An HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter aircrew and pararescue team responded to the call from the California Office of Emergency Services. The crews picked up the two patients at approximately 9:15 p.m. from a Weaverville airstrip and transported them to Mercy Medical Center in Redding.

129th RQW rescue teams were in Redding on search and rescue alert in support of Operation Lightening Strike through out July and August, performing multiple rescues and medevac missions.

McKinley: Airmen play key roles in joint NG

by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau

ST. LOUIS (AFPN) -- Airmen are an integral part of fulfilling an increasingly joint National Guard's domestic and overseas missions, the director of the Air National Guard said here July 23.

Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley told a record-breaking audience of 1,500 gathered for the National Guard Bureau Joint Family Program Volunteer Workshop and Youth Symposium that the Air National Guard is doing a better job of taking care of families than in the past.

"The Air National Guard was lagging in the fight," General McKinley said. "We weren't quite as far along in family support as the Army National Guard. We had not committed enough resources to it. We did not have the right staff in Washington to support the operation."

That has changed, General McKinley said. And, he said, it has not been necessary to reinvent the wheel -- the Air National Guard has improved family support in part by emulating successful programs used by other military services.

Airmen serve different lengths of deployments from Soldiers, and Airmen often serve as individuals or in small numbers. "We come home as individuals," General McKinley said. "We have to tailor our programs to make sure we don't disrespect the Airmen and their families just because a member or two from each unit has been gone."

Listing accomplishments by individual Air Guard units and outstanding Airmen, General McKinley said the Air Guard plays a key role in a more joint National Guard.

"Our Airmen fly, fight and win together, and our families support the home front together," General McKinley said, quoting from a statement developed by the family coordinator of the 153rd Airlift Wing that the director keeps near his Pentagon desk. "Service knows no boundaries. We are one team, and in the fight together."

He said adjutants general, the National Guard Bureau and the Army and Air Guards have increased the Guard's jointness.

"What I've seen in my 2½-years as the director of the Air National Guard is a far more connected National Guard," he said. "A Guard that the adjutants general have brought together so that the talents of both Soldiers and Airmen can be brought to a mission and operate seamlessly."

The Air National Guard has been flying missions in Iraq since 1991, he said, referring to the enforcement of no-fly zones that began after the first Gulf War. "We never really got home and stopped," he said. "We've been in a nonstop, steady state. ... The 'new norm' has been in existence for us for about 17 years."

Airmen have proven resilient and flexible in the face of constant rotations and multiple deployments. "It's a significant contribution to our nation's wartime effort," he said.

"That service doesn't just mean fighting overseas," General McKinley said, citing Air National Guard contributions to fighting wildfires in California and floods in the Midwest and Airmen's contributions to Operation Noble Eagle.

"Over 50,000 sorties flown since Sept. 11, supporting our nation's intense desire to prevent another attack of our nation from the air," General McKinley noted. Every state and territory has contributed to the mission, he said.

"We secure the homefront, and we defend the nation," General McKinley said. "That's what the Air National Guard does in the joint fight."

On July 16, the secretary of defense nominated General McKinley to be the next chief of the National Guard Bureau and the Guard's first four-star general. Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, the current chief, was nominated to be the first National Guard general to be deputy commander of a combatant command, U.S. Northern Command. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff called the historic nominations, which are subject to Senate approval, significant events for the National Guard and the nation.

First Sergeant Information Lunch

If you've ever thought about being a First Sergeant – a great career broadening opportunity – plan to attend the First Sergeant Information Lunch Sept. 7 at 1130 in the Wing Conference Room. First Sergeants communicate with unit leadership, supervisors and members to ensure discipline is equitably maintained, and morale, welfare, and health needs for the enlisted force are met.

The First Sergeant program will be reviewed in depth, and the 129th's current cadre of First Sergeants will be available to answer questions. RSVP by Sept. 4 with your unit First Sergeant or Command Chief Master Sgt. Kristina Keck (RSVP required to attend).

Continued from Page 1

control specialist with the 129th Communications Flight. "But these guys go out into the wilderness and battle fires on a scale you've never seen before. And they keep going back."

The 129th Airmen arrived at the McClellan Wildfire Training Center July 23 where they received classroom and hands-on training from Bureau of Land Management instructors. They were taught the basics of fire behavior, safety and containment. Task Force Bucket also received cold line training at the Butte Lightning Complex located in Butte County east of Chico.

"The training was hard, but we were really glad to do it," added Norton.

In addition to ground support personnel, the 129th RQW had an HH-60G Pave Hawk crew and pararescue team on search and rescue alert in Redding, Calif. The 129th crews rescued four firefighters and medevaced four others.

Commentary: We all deserve a good chewing of the glutes

by Capt. Shawn Perceful, 129th Rescue Wing Antiterrorism Officer

Remember when the military wasn't so "touchy-feely"? I actually remember when Letters of Counseling were handed out with a quality chewing of the glutes. It's amazing how things have changed.

I feel like some of the passion has disappeared (or been forced) from the Air Force, and maybe a few deserving people need to be yelled at. Let's be honest, some people don't respond to coddling and they need someone up in their face, making it real. I'm a little offended if someone isn't in my face when I deserve it.

Growing up I naturally learned from my mistakes, but when my mom yelled at me I seemed to remember it a little better. Plus, I still accept the responsibilities that came with my decision to enlist in the Air Force and getting yelled at back then was just part of the equation.

You must be wondering why I'm on my "soap box." Here's why I'm so charged up: I'm tired of seeing the simplest mistakes ignored by Airmen.

I'm tired of reading headlines in the paper about military equipment being lost or stolen and most likely ending up in the hands of our adversaries (http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-afghan-smuggling-jun06,0,6512596.story). Do you realize the result of that could be your death or the death of a friend?

I'm tired of people not taking OPSEC and security more seriously. I see doors unsecured to controlled areas and DoD vehicle decals on cars at used sales lots. These are simple things, and we just ignore them because we are either lazy or just don't care.

Here is another example. Recently a Contra Costa Deputy Sheriff conducted a vehicle stop where the driver was wearing a U.S. Air Force uniform complete with stripes and other accouterments. The individual informed the deputy he was not in the Air Force and that he was a truck driver that delivers hazardous materials to military bases. He stated he was given the uniform by an unidentified person because it would make it easier for him to gain access to military installations.

Do you know how you're supposed to dispose of old uniform items? Do you realize how easy it is to remove the stripes, nametapes and rank? Do you own a razor blade for scrapping old DoD decals off your car? Oh, that's right, you need to be coddled and I need to come over and scrape it off for you.

I think we all deserve a good chewing of the glutes regarding our complacency because we are all guilty – some more than others. If you're the "touchy-feely" type, please don't take this personally because it's not necessarily directed at you. I wanted to take this opportunity to remind us all how one minor security failure can be the difference between life and death. This is serious business and despite what you think the smallest or obscure mistake in any career field could cost one of our comrades their life.

AHA donates case with 129th aircraft models

U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Dan Kacir

Members of the 129th Alumni and Heritage Association presented a display case and plaque Aug. 2 containing miniature replicas of all nine aircraft tasked and flown by the 129th Rescue Wing since its inception in 1955. Col. Amos Bagdasarian, 129th Rescue Wing Commander, asked the Alumni Association to assemble these historical replicas for wing members to view a collection of the wing's past and present.

The model airplanes and helicopters are arranged in order the wing flew them, beginning with the C-46 Commando and ending with the C-130 Hercules. The aircraft model case and plaque are on display inside the wing's headquarters building.

Portrait of a Professional -- Staff Sgt. Susan Avalos, 129th CES

What is your favorite memory in the military?
Security Forces Training - I learned a lot about myself during this training. I discovered that I can accomplish anything I set my mind to.

What motivated you to enlist in the military?
I was rebellious as a teenager and I wanted to prove to my parents and sisters that I could do everything they thought I couldn't. So I joined the Air Force.

If you could deploy anywhere in the world, where would you go?
To the desert, because that is where all my close friends have gone, and I always missed the rotation for one reason or another and I feel left out.

What are your hobbies?
I'm so busy with my kids on my days off that I really don't have time for "hobbies." I can say however that my favorite places to hang out are Fry's Electronics and Starbucks coffee shop. I collect books on military history and paraphernalia too.

How has being an Airman changed your outlook on life?
I've had the opportunity to work with so many different types of people from all different types of backgrounds. I see people for who they are, not what they are.

What would people be surprised to know about you?
I'm really a geek! I love taking things apart to see how they work and then trying to put them back together. You don't know how many things I've accidently broke around my house!

Portrait of a Professional is a monthly profile of an outstanding Staff Sgt. and below. Nominations will be routed through the squadron and group commanders.

Families and Airmen enjoy the annual Family Day Picnic

Photos by Senior Airman Joshua Kauffman and Mr. James Baker

Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Miller from the 561st Air Force Band performed a variety of songs at the annual Family Day Picnic.

Wing Commander Col. Bagdasarian has a wet smile after being sent into the dunk tank.

Maj. Roxanne Stern, MSF commander, spends time in "jail" after a her "arrest" by the 129th Security Forces.

Tech. Sgt. Maria Tubergen and Master Sgt. Jennifer Johnson, 129th Operations Group, played in and cheered on the Family Day Softball Tournament.

News & Notes

Welcome new 129th members!
1st Lt. Benjamin Copley
Master Sgt. Barney Engle
Tech. Sgt. Anja Oniel
Tech. Sgt. Joseph Winters
Staff. Sgt. Rigoberto Vasquez
Senior Airman Neil Martinez
Senior Airman Sonea Razvan
Senior Airman Leslie Zapata

The following members were recently promoted to their current rank. Congratulations!
Chief Master Sgt. Todd Hern
Senior Master Sgt. David Burkhalter
Senior Master Sgt. Steven Burt
Senior Master Sgt. Christopher Underwood
Tech. Sgt. David Dooley
Tech. Sgt. Sami Ersheid
Tech. Sgt. Joel Mattenson
Staff Sgt. Tiffany Garcia
Staff Sgt. Elias Leyva
Staff Sgt. Yee Vang

The following members have retired, separated, or transferred to another unit. We wish them well and thank them for their service.
Capt. Christopher Dillon
Chief Master Sgt. Dennis Pereira
Master Sgt. Christopher Dahl
Master Sgt. April Mosher
Tech. Sgt. Stanley Elias
Staff Sgt. John Ellasos
Senior Airman Vanesa Bombard
Senior Airman Jageet Dosanjh
Senior Airman James Sanderson
Airman 1st Class Kemberley Flores

Home Community Care Program

The Home Community Care Program is a free UTA child care service open to military members who participate in a UTA weekend. The program is open to children two weeks to 12 years old. Because the child care provider is full during the week, no care can be provided for RUTAs and AT.

Reservations will be confirmed only when the Home Community Care Parent Statement and state registration forms are completed in their entirety and received by the Services Flight. The forms must be submitted during the UTA prior to be eligible for the next UTA.

For more information and access to the required forms, go to the Services CoP via the portal.

Recent changes made to performance feedback and report forms

There have been several changes made to the AF Form 910 (Enlisted Performance Report AB-TSGT), 911 (Enlisted Performance Report MSGT-CMSGT), 931 (Enlisted Performance Worksheet AB-TSGT) and 707 (Officer Performance Report LT-COL). These forms are now available on the AF Publishing Web site.

The revised forms have several areas of improvement that were previously identified. For example, the digital certificate programming allows the rater to better identify the proper certificate. Also, with this release all AF Form 911s submitted on the version must have the ratee acknowledgment block (Block XII) completed.

Air National Guard prepares for Windows Vista debut

The Air Force Enterprise Configuration Management Office (AFECMO) is spearheading the Federal Desktop Core Configuration (FDCC)—formerly known as the Standard Desktop Configuration—implementation for the entire Air Force. The upcoming Quarterly Enterprise Buy systems will come with FDCC 2.1 preloaded later this year.

What will Windows Vista do for you? Here are just a few of the benefits: Windows Vista now supports 77,000 printers, cameras, speakers and other devices. Over 2,700 software programs are now certified to work on Windows Vista, including 98 of the top 100 consumer applications. 62% of small business said Windows Vista saves them time, and 70% said that it makes them more productive, according to an independent survey.

Outward Bound excursions offer for OEF/OIF veterans

Outward Bound, an international non-profit outdoor education program, is offering fully funded outdoor adventure excursions to all OEF/OIF veterans. It doesn't matter what your current military status is (active, inactive, discharged, retired) - you're eligible to attend as long as you deployed in support of OEF/OIF combat operations while in the military.

These five-day excursions offer adventure activities such as backpacking, rock climbing, canyoneering, canoeing, and dog sledding in beautiful wilderness areas in Maine, Texas, Colorado, California, and Minnesota. All expedition costs for lodging, equipment, food, and instruction are completely funded by a multi-million dollar Sierra Club grant, including the participants' round-trip transportation between home and the wilderness site. The excursion is offered at no cost to the participant.

To learn more about the program visit www.outwardboundwilderness.org/veterans.html. Please contact Doug Hayward at 1-866-669-2362x8387 or obvets@outwardbound.org to sign up for an upcoming excursion.

Officials release facts about new GI Bill

The new education bill, commonly called the Post-9/11 G.I Bill, will govern payment and reimbursement plans for veterans and servicemembers who seek to further their education. The new plan will be open to most servicemembers who served on active duty after Sept. 11, 2001. This includes people who haven't been eligible for the Montgomery G.I. Bill, such as Air Force Academy or ROTC graduates, those who declined to participate in the program and those whose service started before it went into effect in 1985.

The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill becomes available Aug. 1, 2009. The implementation of particular benefits and how they will apply to former and current servicemembers have yet to be established.

For more information, visit the educational office on base, Air Force Portal virtual education center or the VA Website at http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/.

September UTA Menus
Saturday: Fried Chicken & Spaghetti
Sunday: Tacos, Tostadas & Enchiladas

Earn up to $2,000 for each new recruit who enlists and reports to Basic Training. For eligibility information please visit http://www.guardrecruitingassistant.com/.

129th Alumni and Heritage Association

Do you belong to the 129th Alumni and Heritage Association? You don't need to be an alumni to be a member, currently we have about 300 members, total! Our goal is to continue the ongoing heritage of the 129th through current and past members. We support the wing during deployments and homecoming and have an annual scholarship for wing personnel or their families attending college. Please see your Chief for details. Continue your legacy....please support the AHA.

2008 - 2009 UTAs

2008
6-7 September
4-5 October
1-2 November
6-7 December

2009
3-4 January
7-8 February
7-8 March
4-5 April
2-3 May
6-7 June
11-12 July
1-2 August
12-13 September
3-4 October
7-8 November
5-6 December

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