THE RESCUEGRAM

The Official Information Publication of the 129th Rescue Wing, California Air National Guard **July 2009**

Lives Saved

633

These Things We Do...
That Others May Live

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Wing reaches milestone, 600 lives saved

by Capt. Alyson M. Teeter, 129th RQW Public Affairs

Air National Guardsmen from the 129th Rescue Wing based here rescued two Afghan National Army soldiers in the Oruzgan Province of Afghanistan May 15, raising the number of lives saved by the unit from 599 to 601.

Two HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters were scrambled without delay to recover the Afghan soldiers who were critically injured with gunshot wounds during battle with Taliban forces. Suppression from U.S. Air Force fighter aircraft was required to permit the HH-60Gs, with pararescue forces onboard, to successfully perform the combat recovery.

While en route to the nearest medical facility, pararescuemen (better known as PJs) performed life-saving trauma care to stabilize the two Afghan nationals. The patients were successfully transferred to a field surgical team where they received advanced care for their injuries.

"It was a very challenging mission recovering two critically wounded soldiers from a highly contested area utilizing various tactical close air support assets," said Lt. Col. Daniel Lapostole, 129th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron commander.

As an Air National Guard unit, many of the 129th's 600 rescues involved supporting the Governor's office during state emergencies, which included earthquakes, fires and floods.

"On behalf of the citizens of California, I commend the men and women of the 129th Rescue Wing on their 600th and 601st saves, which demonstrates their continued dedication to saving lives," said California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. "From fires and hurricanes to combat operations, no challenge is too great for these Guardsmen."

More than 65 citizen-Airmen from all over the Bay Area deployed to Afghanistan in early May for two to four months to provide combat search and rescue support for Operation Enduring Freedom. All told, approximately 100 Guardsmen and three of the unit's Pave Hawk rescue helicopters, will deploy to Afghanistan over the course of their four-month tour.

"Our professional live-saving Airmen never cease to risk their lives for others, whether it is a fellow citizen here in California or a foreign national in Afghanistan," said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, commander of the 129th Rescue Wing. "Their brave combat actions typify our motto, 'These things we do, that others may live.'"

At this publication's deadline, the total number of lives saved by the 129th was 633.

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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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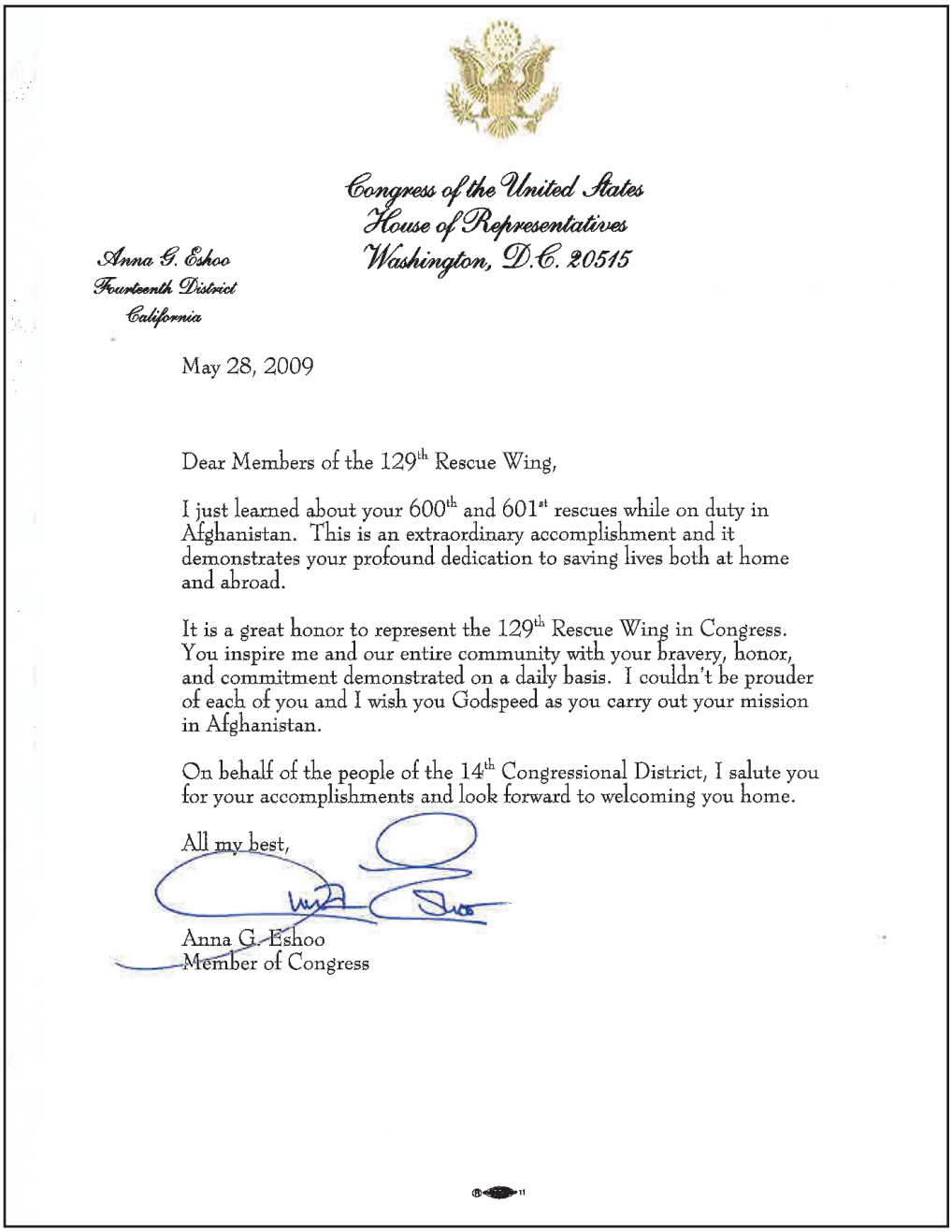
Rep. Eshoo commends wing for save 600



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Anna G. Eshoo
Fourteenth District
California

May 28, 2009

Dear Members of the 129th Rescue Wing,

I just learned about your 600th and 601st rescues while on duty in Afghanistan. This is an extraordinary accomplishment and it demonstrates your profound dedication to saving lives both at home and abroad.

It is a great honor to represent the 129th Rescue Wing in Congress. You inspire me and our entire community with your bravery, honor, and commitment demonstrated on a daily basis. I couldn't be prouder of each of you and I wish you Godspeed as you carry out your mission in Afghanistan.

On behalf of the people of the 14th Congressional District, I salute you for your accomplishments and look forward to welcoming you home.

All my best,

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Community Kudos -- locals say 'thanks'

From Lewis Braxton, III, NASA Ames Deputy Director

"I just saw a very interesting article about how Air National Guardsmen from the 129th Rescue Wing helped saved two Afghan Army soldiers. I understand that with this rescue, your unit has saved over 600 lives. On behalf of the Ames community...I would like to express our admiration for the personnel of the 129th Rescue Wing. We are proud to be your neighbors."

From Lt. Col. (retired) William Evans

"I wish to commend you and your professional staff for their efforts on the afternoon of Thursday, 28 May 2009. At the last moment I joined my grandson and Cub Pack 565 for a tour of your site. From arrival through departure your personnel were sharp, professional and knowledgable. As a former USAF navigator/bombadier I appreciated the condition of the MC-130P and HH-60G we were allowed to view. I recognize the difficult workload placed upon your Wing and see that your maintenance support appears to be outstanding. Thank you for an opportunity to see professional Airmen up close once again."

Becoming 'Joint Expeditionary Tasked' Airman

by Maj. Charles Pratt, 129th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

(Photo courtesy of Maj. Charles Pratt)

Major Charles Pratt from the 129th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron attends the Combat Life Saver Course at Fort Dix, NJ, April 2. The course was part of Combat Skills Training for Joint Expeditionary Tasked Airmen.

FORT DIX, NJ -- Just when you thought you would never go "outside the wire" in a combat zone, there you are, in a Joint Expeditionary Task unit line number mission, providing critical skills and expertise, under the Army's tactical control.

In a growing joint environment within Central Command, Air Force Airmen are in the mix with Army units fighting the war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Knowing that our Airmen (outside of a few jobs that are routinely outside the wire) are increasingly being tasked by the Army to perform missions requiring ground combat skills, 2nd Air Force contracted with the Army to provide Combat Skills Training to these Joint Expeditionary Tasked (JET) Airmen.

Not every deploying Airman will require this training, but if there is a chance your ULN requires it, then you will be required to attend CST. Don't fret! This joint-functional training was a good experience and if you go outside the wire it is imperative that you understand basic ground combat skills. There are a few CST courses throughout the Department of Defense, but they all cover the same basic skills.

Unlike typical Air Force training, CST at Fort Dix, New Jersey, is 34 days and there are no days off. Classes may begin early in the morning and may not resume until late at night. Therefore, these sporadic classes don't follow the same linear training model as technical school training, so it takes some adjustment.

Additionally, there is a large expectation that you will travel in high mobility multi-wheeled or other up-armored vehicles when in these specific ULN taskings so therefore, expect several days of Convoy Operations Training. COT takes you from soup to nuts on how to plan, protect and navigate a multi-vehicle convey through hostile territory, complete with live enemy actors shooting at you. While it's not likely you will have a roll-over in a High Mobility Military Vehicle, you will still attend HMMV Egress Assistance Training, simulating a HMMV roll-over.

If you thought that over a month of non-stop combat training was enough, you will also attend 40 hours of Combat Life Saving. After sticking intravenous needles in your buddy, you will take part in an invigorating exercise where you actually run in full "battle rattle" under fire threat, carry patients over obstacles and under barbed wire, call in a request for medical evacuation, and then call it a morning.

Additionally, be prepared to spend a few days on a Forward Operating Base in harsh conditions, spend a few sessions in Arabic languages, set up an Entry Control Point, do Counter-Insurgence Operations, land navigate through the woods in full gear with just a compass and grid map, all with your weapon the entire time.

I have to say the "Combatives" hand-to-hand combat training for three nights taught more ways to subdue an enemy than watching a mixed martial arts fight. We also received a large amount of Improvised Explosive Device training where numerous instruction and exercises exposed you to the latest Tactical Training Plans the enemy has for use of IEDs against coalition forces.

The bottom line is you will receive more realistic training than any other Air Force Specialty Codes outside of our security forces and PJ's.

CST was a great learning experience and I feel that when I go outside the wire, I will have basic knowledge on what to do, look for, and react to, while performing my skills in a joint combat environment. It was good training with the Army, as this is what they do. It makes sense to train in the joint environment of which we fight.

Djibouti Dispatch: An Airman's encounter with a cheetah

by Senior Airman Krystal Rannals, 129th Maintenance Group

Senior Airman Krystal Rannals from the 129th Maintenance Group had the opportunity to visit a cheetah refuge May 16 with a USO-sponsored group of celebrities during her deployment to Djibouti. Below is her story about the visit.

CAMP LEMONIER, Djibouti -- As soon as we arrived at the cheetah refuge, we were greeted by our French tour guides and the animal caretakers. The caretakers consisted of five women, one veterinarian, and the one animal advocate who started it all. The animal advocate was traveling through Djibouti and saw that cheetah skin was being sold in the downtown area. He wasn't even aware that cheetahs were indigenous to this particular part of Africa, but after he found out that they were being hunted and killed for their skins, he was motivated to create this refuge for the cheetahs.

We split into two groups in order to enter each area in a non-threatening manner. It just so happened that Joel Moore, Zach Levi, and Christian Slater were in my group.

At first, I thought, "How am I supposed to fully enjoy myself without having the pressure of saying or doing something humiliating around these people?"

But within a matter of minutes, all of the servicemembers found that they're normal people just like us.

(Photo courtesy of Senior Airman Krystal Rannals)

Senior Airman Krystal Rannals poses with actor Christian Slater and a cheetah during a USO trip to a Cheetah Refuge in Djibouti.

The caretakers set up the camp so that we were enclosed in a tiny space for viewing – not the other way around. The cheetahs have all the room in the world to roam and run around.

Now, when I said we're enclosed, I mean that the gate width was from one shoulder to the other, and there was no true barrier between us and the wild animals. (It's the same type of fence you would put in a front yard to keep the dog from running away.) The cheetahs could easily stick their claws through the gate and there would be no ability to run in any direction.

As soon as we were given the ok to touch the cheetah, the celebs and servicemembers were sticking their hands and arms right through the fence to pet it. This cheetah was so friendly! It would purr, (about the sound you would hear if 10 cats purred at the same time). I, on the other hand, observed and wondered how I was going to work myself up to pet the cheetah.

The corridor we were walking down led to a gated circle that housed what the caretakers considered the friendliest cheetah. She was sitting out in the open and people were really excited…to the point where they are hugging her and putting their faces right up to hers. So I thought to myself, "I can do this, I can do this."

You may say to yourself, "If I ever got a chance to pet a cheetah, I wouldn't hold back," but you never really know what you would do until that wild animal is laying inches away from you. I was able to gather the courage and approach her.

I could feel that feeling in the pit of my stomach that says, "something's wrong," but I ignored it and put my wrist right in front of her mouth, which she gently licked.

Other people in the group said, "Get closer, pet her, rub her head." So I took a breath, placed my face closer to hers, and reached out to pet her head. OK, mission accomplished. Just as I turned away and started walking out of the brush, I smiled at my group with a sense of pride, but all I saw were big eyes and dropped jaws. Before I knew it, there was a heavy paw on my thigh and jaws on my calf.

Apparently, as I turned away, the cheetah's eyes grew, she lifted herself off the floor, reached for my left leg first but missed, then got my right thigh and went in for my calf. Right when I realized what was happening I grabbed the first person in front of me, which just happened to be Christian Slater, and hid behind him. The tour guide reached out for the cheetah to pull her back and it became completely silent from everyone holding their breath.

Then the tour guide says, "She likes to play with legs." This would have been helpful information to know prior to entering the area and having a mini heart attack! After gathering my composure, I gained some perspective. In all fairness, I could see that she was just playing with me. She could have easily clawed me but her paw was just wrapped around my thigh to pull me closer just like a domestic cat, and she could have easily sunk her teeth into my calf.

The trip was more than I could have asked for. Don't get me wrong, the celebrities were cool too. Christian Slater was praised for being a true action hero because he guarded me from the cheetah. But with or without the celebrities, the cheetah refuge was an unbelievable experience.

Portrait of a Professional -- Staff Sgt. Dehua Li, 129th FSS

What is your favorite memory in the AF?
Not really an Air Force memory, but as an Army watercraft operator I would stand on the bow of the craft at night keeping watch and enjoyed the stars at night. I also enjoy being recognized for my professionalism.
What motivated you to enlist in the AF?
After six years in the Army Reserve I had heard about the camaraderie of the Air Force, and wanted to learn something new.
How has being an Airman changed your outlook on life?
It has made me more accountable for my actions.
What's the most important lesson you've learned in the military?
Mission first.
If you could choose any AF job, which would it be?
A pilot flying through the sky.
Where did you grow up?
Oahu, Hawaii
What is your job in the civilian world?
Full time student aspiring to become a physician.
What would people be surprised to know about you?
I am afraid of spiders.
What are your hobbies?
Drawing sculptures and other inanimate objects.
Do you have a favorite quotation or motto?
"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

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

Wing wins top ANG award, NGAUS Spaatz Trophy

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

The 129th Rescue Wing commander announced here on June 4th that the 129th Rescue Wing was selected as the recipient of the Spaatz Trophy, which is awarded annually to the top Air National Guard aviation unit.

Awarded by the National Guard Association of the United States, or NGAUS, the Spaatz Trophy is named in honor of former Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, and is presented to the overall outstanding flying unit in the Air National Guard.

"Winning the Spaatz trophy is a highly commendable achievement, and our Airmen should be proud," said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, the 129th Rescue Wing commander. "It's been an incredible year for the 129th and our hard work has paid dividends, since this is the second prestigious honor we've been awarded recently."

In April, the wing was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

According to the NGAUS Web site, selection of the Spaatz Trophy is based on overall combat readiness during the reporting year and the unit's performance with respect to all other Air Guard flying units. Factors included in the evaluation are: flying safety; aircraft operation readiness; weapons firing; unit alerts; unit manning; skill level qualifications; retention; drill attendance; operational readiness inspections; outstanding accomplishments and special missions and exercises.

This is the second Spaatz Trophy awarded to the 129th; the first was in 1998. The wing will formally receive the award in a September NGAUS ceremony.

News & Notes

Welcome new 129th members!
Maj. Sean Haugh
Maj. Steven B. Silver
Tech. Sgt. Alden Agustin
Staff Sgt. Carmen Cuellar
Staff Sgt. Lamberto Tabaranza
Staff Sgt. Matthew P. Cosgrove
Senior Airman Adrian Sebron
Senior Airman Christina Bueno
Senior Airman Jennifer Schultz
Senior Airman Christopher Carlson
Senior Airman Steven Buccat
Airman 1st Class Rose E. Austin
Airman 1st Class Hai Huynh
Airman 1st Class Jason Fallows
Airman 1st Class Adam Borgeson

The following members were recently promoted to their current rank. Congratulations!
Master Sgt. Michael Vargas
Tech. Sgt. Theresa Hunn

The following members have retired, separated, or transferred to another unit. We wish them well and thank them for their service.
Master Sgt. John Funderburg
Master Sgt. Gary Hendrickson
Master Sgt. Danny Molina
Tech. Sgt. Michael Lamb
Tech. Sgt. Durell Simmons
Staff Sgt. James Kunsman

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. For more information and access to the required forms, please go to the 129th Services CoP on the Air Force Portal or call Services at 603-9291.

Religious Services Schedule
Services take place every Sunday morning of UTA drill weekend in Building 650.
Schedule of services
Catholic: 10:15-10:45
Non-denominational: 11 -11:30

Event Calendar

Oct. 3: Family Picnic

Nov. 7: Wing awards ceremony in service dress

Jan. 16: OAY Banquet in Sacramento

2009 Moffett Field Commissary Sidewalk and Case Lot Sales
July 17-19 - Sidewalk
Aug. 14-16 - Sidewalk
Sept. 4-6 - Case Lot
Oct. 2-4 - Sidewalk & Seafood
Nov. 6-8 - Sidewalk & Seafood
Dec. 4-6 - Sidewalk

The 129th is on the Web!
YouTube: www.youtube.com/129th Rescue Wing
Twitter: www.twitter.com/129RQW
Delicious: www.delicious.com/129RQWPA

Moffett Field Museum free for military and dependents
The museum is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and is located in Building 126 next to Hangar One. Admission is free for military and accompanied dependents. For more information, go to www.moffettfieldmuseum.org or call 650-964-4024.

Victim Advocate Program needs volunteers
Victim Advocates provide essential support, liaison services and care to a sexual assault victim. They are military personnel selected by the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator and who have completed a 40-hour training course. Victim Advocates are volunteers who must possess the maturity and experience to assist in very sensitive situations.
Responsibilities include:
- Providing crisis intervention, referral and ongoing non-clinical support
- Providing information on available options and resources to assist the victim in making informed decisions about the case
- Services will continue until the victim states support is no longer needed
- Does NOT provide counseling or other professional services to a victim
- May accompany the victim, at the victim's request, during investigative interviews and medical examinations

For more information on becoming a Victim Advocate, please contact Capt. Alyson Teeter at (650) 603-9152.

1st annual Central Calif. Aviation Adventure Teen Camp
Where: 144th FW ANG Base and Camp Gaines at Lake Sequoia
When: July 23-26, 2009
Activities will include: Paintball, Rock climbing, High Ropes, Kayaking, Flight Simulators, Rifle Range, and many more!
To sign up or for more info please contact Senior Airman David Oakley at 559-454-5258, david.oakley@cafres.ang.af.mil or Barbara Draughn at 559-454-5383, barbara.draughn@cafres.ang.af.mil. Slots are limited so sign up now!

Marriage Enrichment Seminar openings available
When: July 18-19
Where: San Diego
Who: National Guard couples who have previously not attended the Marriage Enrichment Seminar
How: Register at http://www.prestoregister.com/cgi-bin/order.pl?ref=Readyfamilies&fm=2

FOR THE LATEST NEWS:

WWW.129RQW.ANG.AF.MIL

AF officials announce new discrimination hotline number

The Air Force Discrimination Hotline has a new toll free number that will serve the total force, active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian members. The hotline number will ensure all unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment concerns are quickly identified and addressed.

The numbers are 888-231-4058, 210-565-5214 or DSN 665-5214. The staff at equal opportunity operations is reminding all units to update their policy letters and official postings to reflect the new numbers.

New uniforms: Comfortable, functional are goals

Officials from the Uniform Program Office continue to work for Airmen, researching and purchasing uniforms that provide more function, protection and comfort. Current and near-term uniform needs will take precedence over introducing long-range new initiatives.

Upcoming changes include a lighter weight fabric for the ABU coat; increased production of APEC parkas; a new policy allowing commanders to authorize wear of black boots in specific industrial work areas; fielding fire-resistant equipment to protect Airmen from burns caused by explosive devises or fire experienced during ground combat (for Airmen on specific missions); and a new PT uniforms.

VA welcomes veterans home with new Web site, blog

The Veterans Affairs Department has launched a new "Returning Veterans" Web site to welcome home veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts with a social, veteran-centric site.

www.oefoif.va.gov focuses on the needs and questions of returning veterans, featuring information on benefits, videos, veterans' stories and a blog where veterans are encouraged to post feedback.

Review your need for renter's insurance

If living in base housing or renting a place in town, it's a good idea to review your need for renter's insurance, which can protect personal belongings in case a landlord won't cover items lost from natural causes or theft.

One national insurance company estimates the average renter owns more than $20,000 worth of personal belongings. Renter's insurance will cover items ranging from furniture and appliances to military uniforms and some jewelry. It's important to check your policy and talk to an agent.

2009 UTA Calendar

July 11-12
Aug. 1-2
Sept. 12-13
Oct. 3-4
Nov. 7-8
Dec. 5-6

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 only 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 AHA.

Djibouti deployers return home

More than 50 Airmen returned here June 13 and 18 from a 40-day deployment to Djibouti. More coverage to appear in next newsletter.

(U.S. Air Force photos by Chief Master Sgt. Chris Hartman, Master Sgts. Daniel Kacir and Gary Ginestra)

129th RQW/PA
MOFFETT FAF, CA 94035

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

"These Things We Do…That Others May Live"
Download the newsletter at **www.129rqw.ang.af.mil**