

129th Rescue Wing

In April 1955, the 129th Rescue Wing, California Air National Guard, based at Hayward Airport, California, was activated as the 129th Air Resupply Group. The unit's mission was airlift of personnel and material using C-46 aircraft. Later that year, the Group was transferred from U.S. Continental Air Command to U.S. Tactical Air Command (TAC). Although the mission remained the same, the 129th underwent three name changes and several aircraft conversions between its initial activation and April 1975. The mission was unchanged even after the name was changed to Troop Carrier Group. Upon the arrival of the SA-16 Albatross seaplane, the Wing was re-designated the 129th Air Commando Group.



The 129th later acquired C-119 Flying Boxcars and its name changed to Special Operations Group. During this period, the Wing also utilized small observation planes (U-10s, U-6s and U-3s) as ancillary aircraft.



Changes in Mission, Aircraft and Location (1975-1991)

In April 1975, the 129th received a new mission, designation and Air Force Command. Shortly afterward, the Wing also changed aircraft and its operating base. The Wing's name became the 129th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (ARRG), operating under the Aeroportage of facilities and in 1984 the 129th ARRG completed its programmed move to NAS Moffett Field, California.



In October 1989, the 129th ARGG was designated as the 129th Air Rescue Group (ARG). Operations began to convert from HH-3E Jolly Green Giant helicopter to the HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter. The conversion was complete in 1991.

129th Rescue Wing at Moffett Field (1991-Present)

Though the mission of search and rescue has continued, the Group has continued to reflect reorganizations within the USAF. In March 1992, the name of the 129th Air Rescue Group was shortened to simply 129th Rescue Group and in June 1992, it became part of Rescue Wing. In April 1997 Air Combat Command evaluated the 129th Rescue Wing's war capability as an overall "Excellent" during its Operational Readiness

Inspection. Today, the 129th Rescue Wing continues its search and rescue operations on a global scale.

"That Others May Live" - Past Rescue Mission Highlights

The motto of the 129th Rescue Wing, *"That Others May Live"*, refers to the primary mission of the Wing - to save lives. The members of the 129th have performed rescues under a variety of conditions - from rough Pacific seas to the rugged Sierra Nevada using its combination of HC-130 tankers and HH-60 helicopters. Many high-risk lifesaving missions involved long-range, over-water flights, air refueling of helicopters by the HC-130 aircraft, and skilled maneuvering by ships and helicopters to recover patients from the decks of these vessels. On 3 September 1991, the 129th recovered a sailor from the merchant ship White Mana, the Group's 200th "save". Since its designation as a rescue unit in 1975, the 129th has directly saved the lives of over 300 people.



Past State Support Missions

As an Air National Guard unit, many of the 129th's missions involved supporting the Governor's office during times of State emergencies, including earthquakes, chemical spills, fires and floods. The 129th provided aid during floods along the Yuba River in 1959 and the Eel River in 1964-1965. During record flooding in Sonoma, Sutter and Yuba counties in Northern California, 33 lives were saved in 5 days, from 18-22 February 1986. In all, 44 lives were saved in 1986, a record rescue for the 129th. During the aftermath of the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, the 129th established Command Post operations and was chosen to coordinate all military aircraft activities within the Bay Area. The 129th provided air transportation for State and Federal government officials to survey damage from the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and the 1991 Oakland Hills fire. The unit has also been tasked with mutual aid to state law enforcement during the 1965 Watts (Los Angeles) riots and the 1992 civil disturbance in Los Angeles.

Other Missions and Activities

In 1990, the 129th began supporting U.S. Customs in the seizure of illegal drugs, as well as illegal animal and plant products, during cargo inspections. The unit has performed a number of humanitarian missions to foreign countries. From 1989 to 1991, the 129th deployed to sites in South America to assist in constructing hospital and school facilities.

During Desert Shield/Storm in 1990 and 1991, the 129th deployed personnel to both overseas and stateside locations. Three pararescuemen volunteered for combat operations and teams from the 129th Medical Squadron deployed to England, Saudi Arabia and Travis AFB. Individual members of the 129th volunteered to backfill for deployed active duty members. In July 1993, 129th members deployed to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as part of rescue force coverage for Southwest Asia.

11 September 2001 to the Present

Since September 11, 2001, Guard units across the country responded courageously and selflessly to our Nation's call to oppose the aggressions of terrorism both within our Country's borders and throughout the world. Meeting this task head-on and with utmost conviction was the 129th Rescue Wing, Moffett Federal Airfield, California. This highly qualified group of dedicated "Citizen Airmen," clearly embodies the Air Force's Core Values of "Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all we do." As a premier frontrunner in the Combat Search and Rescue arena, the 129th was prepared for worldwide deployment at all times, ready to move at a moments notice. Our integrity was evident in the manner we planned and executed our training, allowing us to perform our mission with precision, care, and with safety remaining paramount at all times. In the aftermath of this tragic and cowardly attack against our Nation, 129th troops have provided outstanding service to our local communities, the State of California, and the Country as a whole, sacrificing families, homes, and careers to join the fight against the War on Terrorism. At all times, we have demonstrated excellence in the manner in which we've carried out our mission, and the standards to which we hold ourselves. We have been honored to call ourselves "Guardsmen," "Patriots," and "Citizen-Soldiers," tackling every challenge handed to us decisively and with compassion, never forgetting the CSAR motto..."These Things We Do That Others May Live."