

THE RESCUEGRAM



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

March 2009

Lives Saved
599

These Things We Do...
That Others May Live



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Air Guardsmen, Coast Guardsmen train, save together

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

After wrapping up a day of training with Coast Guardsmen Jan. 29, the aircrew of Jolly 91, an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter, were ready to return to Moffett Airfield, home to the 129th Rescue Wing.

The Jolly 91 Airmen were dropping off their rescue brethren, members of the U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team 91105, at U.S. Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco. Using the Pave Hawk as a platform, Team 91105 had been conducting vertical insertion training, a fast-paced technique used to effectively deploy law enforcement teams to a high-risk situation, onto Coast Guard Island in nearby Alameda, and onto the Coast Guard cutter Tern in the San Francisco Bay.

Unbeknownst to the crews from the 129th RQW and Coast Guard, they also would be saving a life together that day.

“We got a call from cutter Tern right after we dropped the Coast Guard crew off at the Air Station San Francisco,” said. Capt. Nathan Nowaski, the Jolly 91 aircraft commander. “A Coast Guard C-130 (Hercules) received a mayday call from a pilot who crashed his plane in the ocean near Pillar Point.”

Crewmembers on the Tern, the boat Jolly 91 had recently hovered over during the training mission, requested the helicopter crew fly out to the crash scene. “On our way out to the crash, crews from the Tern said that the pilot was sitting on top of the airplane. I then assumed that the pilot would be alert, so we thought we could drop a rescue strop to the downed



U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Melissa Hauck

pilot,” Captain Nowaski said. A rescue strop is a strap used to hoist people during helicopter operations.

While Jolly 91 headed to Pillar Point, the Coast Guard C-130 aircrew dropped a life raft, survival suit and flares to the pilot. The pilot managed to swim 50 feet from his sinking aircraft and lift himself into the life raft.

“When we saw the pilot in the raft, we decided to send down the rescue strop,” Captain Nowaski said.

The pilot managed to put himself in the strop even with the frigid temperatures and was safely hoisted up into Jolly 91.

The crew headed back to Air Station San Francisco where the man was treated for hypothermia before being transported by ambulance to San Francisco General Hospital.

Approximately 30 minutes after being notified about the crash, Jolly 91 was heading back home to Moffett.

“It’s very rare to get a notification like this and have things fall into place so quickly,” Captain Nowaski said. “It was pretty cool to be in the right place at the right time and know that you have just saved a life.”

See **SAVE**, next page

THE RESCUEGRAM

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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.

Editorial Staff

Commander
Col. Amos Bagdasarian

Public Affairs Officer
Capt. Alyson M. Teeter

Staff Writer
Staff Sgt. Eric Hamilton

Multimedia Staff

Photo
Master Sgt. Dan Kacir
Staff Sgt. Kim Ramirez
Senior Airman Joshua Kauffman

Video
Master Sgt. Barbara Apkarian
Tech. Sgt. Ray Aquino
Staff Sgt. Kelly Hobby
Senior Airman Shane Burke

Contact Us:
129th RQW/PA
P.O. Box 103, Stop 20
Moffett FAF, CA 94035
Telephone: 650-603-9152
alyson.teeter@camoff.ang.af.mil

New Tricare availability

An option for traditional Guardsmen, not necessarily Technicians

The Tricare Reserve Select is a premium-based health plan available to Airmen at 28 percent of the premium cost.

TRS offers coverage similar to Tricare Standard (and Tricare Extra) with the active duty family member deductibles and cost shares applied to both the Selected Reserve member and family members under the TRS plan.

The plan offers all Selected Reserve Airmen the option of obtaining coverage for member only or member and family. To be eligible to purchase coverage, Airmen must be serving in the Selected Reserve on the first day of coverage and must remain in the Selected Reserve for the entire period covered. There is no limitation on how long you may obtain coverage as long as qualification requirements are met.

Tricare Reserve Select benefits include routine outpatient care (doctors' office visits); inpatient care (hospitalization); urgent and emergency care, including ambulance services; family health care, including preventive screenings and immunizations; maternity services; behavioral health care, including partial hospitalization and residential treatment; annual eye exams; laboratory and radiology services; durable medical equipment and supplies; and prescription drug coverage.

To participate in TRS, Airmen and their family members must be registered in Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). If not already registered, they should go to the nearest MPF - DEERS/RAPIDS location or call the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office at 800-538-9552 or go to the Web site www.tricare.osd.mil/deeraddress to update information or register.

TRS is available to all Airmen of the Selected Reserve regardless of any active duty served, with one exception: If Airmen are eligible for the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program (as defined in [Chapter 89 of Title 5 U.S.C](#)) or are currently covered under FEHB, either under their own eligibility or through a family member, they are excluded from purchasing the restructured TRS plan.

Once Airmen qualify, they may purchase the plan at any time throughout the year. Qualifying for and purchasing TRS is a 2-step process:



See TRICARE, page 7

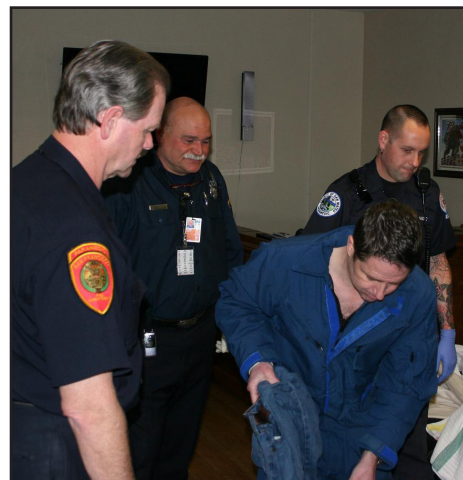
SAVE, continued from Page 1

The 129th Rescue Wing and Coast Guard District 11 have worked together in the past on over-water rescue missions, and the day's training mission, coupled with their ability to immediately respond and rescue the downed pilot, defined teamwork.

"The 129th Rescue Wing remains vigilant to serve when lives are on the line," said Lt. Col. Steve Butow, 129th Operations Group deputy commander. "This latest rescue illustrates our responsiveness and interoperability with other agencies."

This life saving mission brings the total number of people saved by the 129th RQW to 599. For more pictures of this rescue and training event on the web, see:

<http://www.129rqw.ang.af.mil/photos>



(U.S. Coast Guard photo by Lt. j.g. Ryan Hawn) U.S. Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco personnel, emergency medical technicians, and the San Francisco Police Department help the survivor of a plane crash into a survival suit Jan. 29. The survival suit helped to raise his body temperature after the onset of hypothermia.

CA ANG NCO of the Year: From 129th MXG

by Staff Sgt. Eric M. Hamilton
special to the 129th Rescue Wing Public
Affairs Office

Tech. Sgt. Fernando Wilkins was in Iraq when he got the word he was nominated as the 129 Maintenance Groups candidate for the California Air National Guard NCO of the Year competition. “I didn’t even ask to be nominated. I was just doing my job like anybody else,” when his supervisor nominated him, he said.

“My boss, Senior Master Sgt. Mike Hill—he’s a super boss,” Sergeant Wilkins said. And he should know—having spent five years in the active duty Air Force, another five years in the Air Force Reserve, and 11 years working for United as an aircraft mechanic, he’s had a few different bosses.

But his boss, Senior Master Sgt. Michael S. Hill, the 129th Quality Assurance Superintendent, said the recognition Sergeant Wilkins got was well-deserved.

Apparently, in addition to “just doing his job,” Sergeant Wilkins found time to complete eight separate training schools along with a 75-day deployment to Iraq, where he worked as the sole military liaison for contractors there. Another plus was that Sergeant Wilkins had just graduated the previous year with a bachelor’s degree in professional aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

If that’s not enough, he also finds time to be a single father for his seven-year-old daughter and perform as a singer in a salsa band, as he’s done for nearly ten years. In May, one of the bands he sings with, “my main band, Orchesta Bakan,” will release a CD; over half of the songs it features are sung and authored by him. (The band’s website: www.orquestabakan.com)

Sergeant Wilkins, a technician who works as a Quality Assurance Inspector for the C-130s here, said that when he found out he was nominated, he called his parents in Panama to let them know. “They



(Photo courtesy of the CA Air National Guard)

Tech. Sgt. Fernando Wilkins receives the California ANG’s NCO of the Year award from Maj. Gen. Dennis G. Lucas, Commander of the California Air National Guard, and Chief Master Sgt. Deborah K. Lott, California Air National Guard Command Chief.

agreed to come, but until they got here, I don’t think they knew just how big a deal it was,” he said. After it sunk in, his father, who retired after 35 years in the California Air National Guard, was very impressed. “My mom told me it brought tears to his eyes,” he said.

Sergeant Wilkins said he’s following a family tradition in the service. In addition to his father, his brother and sister are also veterans.

However, after his initial stint on active duty, he said he tried the civilian sector for four years

**“The opportunity is there;
you just have to take it.
The Guard put me through
school and helped me get
my degree.”**

and found it just didn’t offer everything the National Guard had, like “the opportunities I get for being in this job—going on trips, promotion, job security. The opportunity is there; you just have to take it. The Guard put me through school and helped me get my degree.”

After winning the NCO of the Year competition, Sergeant Wilkins said, “I’m a lifer now. I’m really enjoying it.” He’s encouraging his cousin and another friend to join the Guard. He’s hoping to be a mentor not only to these two, but also the young mechanics he works with, and “taking them under (his) wing,” showing them what the Guard has to offer. Maybe this go-getter will start a tradition for keeping the CA ANG OAY awards here at the 129th.

Portrait of a Professional -- Staff Sgt. Dan Naylor, 130th RQS



A non-prior-service C-130 Radio Operator C-130 for the past four years, Staff Sgt. Dan Naylor shares his thoughts for this month's Portrait of a Professional.

Motivation to enlist: "I've always had a love of flying."

Favorite AF memory: "It's the best experience--performing rescues. Being able to go out and save someone's life is extremely special."

Lessons learned: "The level of excellence and professionalism needed to succeed in life, no room for error for things to function as they should. Pay attention to detail."

If you could deploy anywhere in the world, where would it be and why? - Asia or China, for the history and to see early civilization.

Any Air Force job: Always wanted to be an F-22 pilot.

Hometown: Fremont, California

Civilian job: Aerospace Engineering student at San Jose City College

What would people be surprised to learn about you?

Awarded Eagle Scout in 1998

Hobbies include: cycling, running

Favorite quote: Nelson Mandela-- "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, it is that we are powerful beyond measure."

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

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.

1st Women's Military History Week Honoring Women in the Military

Saturday, March 21st 2009

12:00 – 4:00 pm.

at **Twin Towers United Methodist Church,**

1411 Oak Street, Alameda CA 94501

(located at N.W. corner of Central Ave. & Oak Str. Parking garage opposite church on N.E. corner, entrance on Oak)

Keynote: Brigadier General Mary J. Kight,
Assistant Adjutant General, California National Guard
Resource Sharing/Professional Networking
Governor's proclamation of "Women's Military History Week"

10th District American Legion Color Guard
Musical tribute by Ruby Bridges School Choir

You are invited to this "Ladies Day" celebration

*Uniform of the day or appropriate civilian attire
Please bring a piece of memorabilia from your service years, as we will have a display table for these treasures.*

RSVP by March 13th, 2009

by phone: 510 285-7392, online: www.twintowersumc.org
or email: celebrate_military_women@twintowersumc.org

Chaplain's assistant pulls inauguration duty

by Staff Sgt.
Eric M. Hamilton
special to the
129th Rescue
Wing PA Office

For some people, deployments might be voluntary or involuntary, but for Staff Sgt. Rachel E. Cruz, a chaplain's assistant at the 129th Rescue Wing, timing was everything.

"I had just finished a class, and had a few days off when I got the call, asking if I could deploy in support of President Obama's inauguration," Sergeant Cruz said. "I was very excited—not only was it my first deployment as a chaplain's assistant, but I was honored to take part in such a historical moment for our country I felt like I was taking part in history. That's what I love about the Guard, missions like this."

The duty was a first for the chaplain she worked with, another California Air Guardsman by the name of Chaplain Beyer, who'd never worked with an Air Guard chaplain's assistant before, Sergeant Cruz said.

"It seemed like we were the only Californians there," she said, because



(Photo by Air Force Chaplain (Maj.) Michael Beyer)
This hallway was one of the locations the chaplaincy used to support the servicemembers supporting the Inauguration.

most of the members called to support the inauguration came from the area surrounding Washington, D.C., and almost all were from the National Guard.

The chaplain and his assistant were primarily on hand for a "ministry of presence," Sergeant Cruz said, "to be visible, available if needed." For her, this meant lending a hand to people she came across. In one instance, she said, she helped an overworked Army administrator trying to complete "a big pile of paperwork."

"It was a cool experience," Sergeant Cruz said. "I'd never worked with the Army before, so now I have a

better appreciation for what they do and how they operate. They were also surprisingly receptive (to the chaplaincy's mission) and welcoming."

Sergeant Cruz, who spent the first three years of her military career as an active duty Air Force firefighter, said that when she came into the California Air National Guard, she had to make a choice, because there were no firefighting slots available. "I had always wanted to be a chaplain's assistant, because you get to work with the chaplains, who are always so positive and level-headed."

After she'd spent six weeks training for the job at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, she learned one of the keys to being a successful chaplain's assistant: "you have to embrace change and be flexible." Because of that, every day is different, she said. For the chaplains, having an enlisted assistant on hand can help to bridge the hesitancy other enlisted members might have in reaching out for help from the chaplaincy.

While deployed, Sergeant Cruz said she found this to be true—"we had one member who had just found out his fiancé was cheating on him, and we were there to support him when he needed us." This is when her part in the ministry of presence paid off, she added.

Administration sets agenda for improving care for veterans

by Army Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- President Barack Obama has promised to deliver the care and benefits the nation's military veterans deserve while transforming the Department of Veterans Affairs into a 21st century organization, according to an administration agenda posted on the White House Web site.

"Keeping faith with those who serve must always be a core American value and a cornerstone of American patriotism," President Obama said during a April 2007 speech in Kansas City, Mo.

"Because America's commitment to its servicemen and women begins at enlistment, and it must never end," he said.

President Obama, who served on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, plans to reverse the 2003 ban on enrolling modest-income veterans into the VA system, allowing all veterans

the opportunity for care, according to the agenda on veterans. The administration also plans to continue the fight to end employment discrimination for guardsmen and reservists.

Additionally, the administration aims to improve the process of transitioning from active duty to civilian life for military members leaving the service or returning from deployment. To improve the benefit decision system, the administration will look at hiring additional claims workers with an improved accountability and training criteria, according to the agenda.

Also, the administration plans to launch new programs and expand proven programs to prevent homelessness among veterans, as well as to explore the possibility of a national "zero tolerance" policy to ensure no veterans end up on the streets.

As they works to make VA a national leader in health care reform, the agenda says, administration officials will explore ways to improve mental health studies, polytrauma care, prosthetics development, spinal cord injury treatment and women's health.

News & Notes

Welcome new 129th members!

Tech. Sgt. Donald Bishop
Tech. Sgt. Frank Oathout
Tech. Sgt. Michael Vargas
Staff Sgt. Juan Mendoza
Staff Sgt. Rodney Moore
Senior Airman Armand Camaioni
Senior Airman Daniel Hoskins
Senior Airman Nikolas Watson
Airman 1st Class Jaqueline Bonner
Airman 1st Class Avery Bustamante
Airman 1st Class David Crocker
Airman 1st Class Adrian Gomez

The following member were recently promoted to their current rank. Congratulations!

Master Sgt. Sean McCambridge
Tech. Sgt. Kiara Jones
Tech. Sgt. Lether Jones
Staff Sgt. Rocio Arevalo
Staff Sgt. Dennis Cachuela
Staff Sgt. Marissa Hubbard
Staff Sgt. Curtis Jurgens

The following members have retired, separated, or transferred to another unit. We wish them well and thank them for their service.

Capt. Donovan Ayers
Tech. Sgt. Ruben Cortez
Tech. Sgt. Ridgley Haslam
Tech. Sgt. Felipe Robledo
Tech. Sgt. John Zito
Staff Sgt. Miguel Masso
Senior Airman Cynthia Chen

AHA and MOAA Scholarship Recipients Announced

The 129th Alumni Heritage Association and Silicon Valley Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America are proud to announce their 2009 scholarship recipients. Each recipient will receive \$1,000 from the 129th AHA, Military Officer's Association of America, or the Chief's Council.

This year's scholarship recipients:

Staff Sgt. Rachel Cruz, 129th RQW/HC (129th AHA)
Senior Airman Earl Prevozank, 131st RQS (129th AHA)
Master Sgt. Barbara Apkarian, 129th RQW/PA (Chief's Council)
Staff Sgt. Lance Bain, 129th MDG (MOAA)
Staff Sgt. Jeannie Lam, 129th OSF (MOAA)

The scholarships will be presented at the annual AHA Old

Timer's Luncheon on Wednesday, Mar. 24, 11:30 a.m. at the Loyal Order of Moose Hall, 20835 Rutledge Rd., Castro Valley.

In addition, the MOAA scholarship recipients were honored at the MOAA luncheon on Thursday, Feb. 19, at the Biltmore Hotel in Santa Clara.

2009 ANG Western Golf Invitational hosted by the 161st ARW Wigwam Golf Resort, Litchfield, AZ (near Luke AFB)

The 161st Air Refueling Wing, AZ ANG and the Copperhead Golf Club would like to welcome you to this year's 44th 2009 ANG Western Golf Invitational at the beautiful Wigwam Golf Resort & Spa.

As this year's official hosts, we will make sure this year's competition is one of the finest and ensure your experience here in Arizona is fun and memorable. Please direct questions to the committee members or volunteers.

Reserve your rooms as soon as possible by calling (623) 935-3811.



Moffett Field Museum free for military and dependents

If you'd ever like to learn more about the history of Moffett Field, pay a visit to the Moffett Field Museum. The museum has a Lighter-Than-Air display that includes photographs, models and memorabilia of balloons, blimps and dirigibles. Aircraft models, artifacts, photos and newspaper clippings are also on display.

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.

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: 11:00-11:30

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, please go to the 129th Services CoP on the Air Force Portal or by calling the Services Flight at 650-603-9291.

Travel to certain areas of Mexico should be avoided

Based on recent intelligence and news reports, certain border areas of Texas, Arizona, California and Mexico should be avoided until further notice.

Mexican cities to avoid include, but are not limited to Juarez, Tijuana, Nogales, Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, and Las Palomas.

Drug cartels have also been increasingly active against Mexican authorities in the Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua triangle. Some of these activities have been directed towards U.S. citizens and military personnel.

Although the 129th Rescue Wing cannot officially restrict personal travel, it is strongly recommended to avoid these areas. If you still intend to travel to Mexico, please advise your military supervisor and provide them with a detailed itinerary and contact numbers.

For further information on travel restrictions please visit the official Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov/travel/>

News & Notes cont.

Disney, Army resort offer affordable vacations for troops

With the "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" offer, active and retired military personnel, including active members of the Coast Guard and activated members of the National Guard or Reserve, can enjoy complimentary, multi-day admission into Disney's U.S. theme parks, and special ticket offers for family and friends.

At Disney's U.S. theme parks from Jan. 4 to Dec. 23, 2009, an active or retired member of the U.S. military may obtain one free five-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" ticket with "Park Hopper" and water park options. Active or retired military personnel also may make a one-time purchase of up to five Disney's salute companion tickets -- good for five days -- for \$99 each, plus tax, for family members or friends.

2009 Moffett Field Commissary Sidewalk and Case Lot Sales

March 6-8 - Sidewalk
April 3-5 - Sidewalk
May 1-3 - Case Lot
June 5-7 - Sidewalk & Seafood
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

Removable metal clips no longer authorized on restricted area badges

In an effort to comply with 129th Wing FOD Prevention Program Policy, AFI 21-101 ANG SUP 1; restricted area badges will be secured with a subdued nylon or cotton cord, plastic armband or breakaway neck strap with or without holder. Removable metal clips are not authorized. If you still have a metal clip, see your orderly room for a replacement lanyard.



AIR NATIONAL GUARD
Recruiting
Assistant
Application

Earn up to \$2,000 for each new recruit.
<http://www.guardrecruitingassistant.com/>

ANG Bowling Tournament

The 132nd Fighter Wing, Iowa Air National Guard, invites you to "Come and have a good time in 2009" at the 46th Annual ANG Bowling Tournament, May 6-9 in Des Moines, Iowa. The host hotel is the Renaissance Savery Hotel, and the room rate is \$89.00 + tax. The hotel is downtown on the skywalk system, only three blocks from the Court Ave. entertainment district. Reserve your room now by calling 515-244-2151. For questions, contact John Turner at jrturner1@msn.com or 515-229-3789.

Safety on the Road

Supervisors do yourself and your personnel a favor by taking time to ensure your folks are properly trained and certified before allowing them to drive GOVs of any type on base and on the flightline.

For example, do your drivers have a current AF Form 2293 (Military Drivers License) and are the vehicles being driven listed on the reverse of the MDL? Do flightline drivers have the MDL and the Certificate of Competency (AF Form 483) and is it updated to reflect annual refresher training? Lastly, are all of your drivers who drive only once or twice a year really comfortable with their skill level? Only you can know for sure.

For the latest 129th RQW news:

www.129rqw.ang.af.mil

Annual Civilian Employment Information access on vPC-GR

All ANG and Reserve Airmen, with the exception of AGR members and retirees, are required to complete this annual requirement. See the OSD Guard-Reserve Portal at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/>. The portal is also located on the vPC-GR page to help Airmen update their CEI.

TRICARE, continued from Page 2

Step 1: Qualify

1. Log on to the [Guard and Reserve Web Portal](#).
2. Click on the "RC member" and log in. Select the type of coverage that you want to purchase: TRS Member-Only or TRS Member-and-Family. Certify they are not eligible for or enrolled in the FEHB program. Select coverage start date.
3. Print and sign the *TRS Request Form* (DD Form 2896-1) and send it in.

Step 2: Purchase

Mail or fax completed *TRS Request Form* along with the first month's premium payment to regional contractor as soon as possible.

Monthly premium rate is determined by the type of coverage purchased: TRS Member-Only or TRS Member-and-Family.

NEW PREMIUMS EFFECTIVE 1 JANUARY 2009:

- Member only \$47.51 per month
- Member & family \$180.17 per month

Premiums can be paid by check, money order or cashier's check (payable to regional contractor), or by Visa®/MasterCard®. After the initial premium payment, the regional contractor will bill by the 10th of each month. Payments are due no later than the 30th of each month, and payments are applied to the following month of coverage. Do not miss payment; failure to pay overdue amounts by the deadline will result in termination of coverage and debt collection. For more information, go to <http://www.tricare.mil>



2009 UTAs

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

Save the Date

2009 California Military Ball

Date: Saturday, 18 April 2009

*Location: Marriott San Francisco Airport
Burlingame, California*



RSVP at https://www.ca.ang.af.mil/Symposium_Ball/

129th RQW/PA
MOFFETT FAF, CA 94035

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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