



AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT AIRCREW FLIGHT EQUIPMENT RETIREE NEWSLETTER

News for the men and women who served (USAF or civilian, Government or Industry) in the Aircrew Life Support (ALS) or Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) professions. The views expressed herein are that of the individual mentioned and do not represent the views of the retired, active duty, ANG, Reserves, or veteran members of the ALS or AFE career fields.

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December 2011 Edition

Looking Forward

Wow! 2011 has absolutely flown by!

I have to say that the reunion and being able to spend time with the ALS/AFE family and our host, Essex Cryogenics, was the highlight of the year in my opinion. A recap of the reunion along with a "First Timers" perspective appears later in this edition of the newsletter.

Before we get on with the news, the newsletter crew wants to wish each and every reader a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. To the news...

From The Field

Our congratulations to the following AFE SMSgt's recently selected for promotion to Chief:

Darnell Burton
Jamie Guile
Bobby Hughes
Dale P. Lawrence
John Rozell

CMSgt Les Davy, 22nd Air Force AFE Functional Manager, Dobbins ARB GA, retires in December 2011 following more than 34 years of active, Guard and Reserve service.

(Editor's Note: We offer our best wishes to Chief Davy and our sincere thanks for the many years of dedicated service to this Great Nation and the USAF.)

Final Roll Call

Mark L. Daniels, MSgt USAF (Ret.), passed away on Nov 8, 2011. At the time of his passing, he was a Principal Analyst for Spiral Solutions and Technologies, Omaha NE.

One of the pioneers of our career field, SMSgt (Ret) MacDonald Nance, recently passed. Mac, as he was called, passed away on 2 Nov 11. Mac was in attendance at the 2009 reunion.

Received word from Tricia Self, daughter of John Wilson, that John passed away on 1 Dec 11. John was a long-time life support fixture at the San Antonio Air Logistics Center (SA-ALC), Kelly AFB TX. As Gary Winchester and George Braue put it, John always had the crewmembers best interest at heart.

(Editor's Note: As a young HQ ATC staff NCO in the 1983-87 timeframe, I had the pleasure of working with John on several equipment issues of the day. He was indeed a professional and a true guardian of aircrew safety and survival.)

Checking In

From CMSgt (Ret) Al Cricks: Hi Al. It is always a joy reading the newsletter. It brings back fond memories of the past...the places, people and mission.

I've been at Navy Federal for 2 1/2 years now. It's been a great experience so far. I've learned a few of the system applications and the basics regarding call center account transactions and credit cards transactions. Changes occur similar to what we experienced in the military.

Things such as updated policies and procedures and the introduction of new products/services.

Navy Federal was born in 1933 out of the depression. Auto loans were the bulk of the business upon inception. Then came mortgages. Navy Federal established a call center here in Pensacola in 2004. The original building has now grown to 4 buildings to include a parking garage on a large campus. Once fully staffed, the 4 buildings should house close to 3,000 employees. I think we have about 1,800 currently. I would equate Navy Federal culture to that of the military. It possesses excellent training programs, a sound quality assurance program, great mentorship, and outstanding leadership at all levels. Overall a great organization to work for.

Take a look at the homepage at www.navyfederal.org for a preview of the credit union.

From CMSgt (Ret) Dave Cramer: Hi Al. My wife and I are in Coarsegold CA, we have been visiting Yosemite National Park for the last two weeks. We are heading to Travis AFB tomorrow to spend a few days visiting the Bay area before heading to the Redwoods National Park in Northwest CA. We are trying to visit as many of the California parks and areas before we head back to Indiana late June or early July.

We spend a week at Edwards AFB on our way west. Still looks as though they are very busy. Had an excellent tour of the base from the RV Park host who worked at the base for over 30 years. He had an exceptional knowledge of past and present events at the base. Hope you are well.

DD-214's Online

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online at www.vetreca.archives.gov.

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents.

Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized.

The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.

Please pass this information on to former military personnel you may know and their dependents.

"Angel Flight" Video

If you've seen this, it is always good to watch it again. It is Radney Foster's "Tower Remix" version of "Angel Flight". The link is:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=70lkj1hZDnw

For the purists, Andrews doesn't have a Rwy 25, and the scripted "Carson Tower" toward the end is "Carswell Tower."

(Editor's Note: Thanks to Steve Wyatt for sharing.)

Air Force Museum Virtual Tour

This is a great link for the AF Museum: www.nmusafvirtualtour.com. Click on any dot on the map and get more info.

(Editor's Note: Thanks to Jim Rooney for sharing.)

ALS/AFE Plaques

The wooden ALS/AFE plaques that were presented at the last two reunions were made by a friend of a former Life Support Officer. If you would like to see what the plaques look like, stop by and see or contact CMSgt Martin Austin at HQ ACC, CMSgt Keith Geltz at HQ AETC or Mr. William Ricketts of the 375 OSS/OSL, Scott AFB, IL. A plaque was given to each of these individuals for their support of the annual reunions.

The name of the gentleman that made the plaques is Al Brown. He charges \$25 to \$35 plus shipping. There are two different plaques available. One is the old ALS logo "Your Life is Our Business" and the other is the new AFE logo. You can contact Al via email (a-abrown@cox.net).

"Snail Mail" and E-Mail Updates

We continue to receive several returned newsletters via the USPS and undeliverable notices via email. Please provide Al Loving and Bob McElwain with any mailing and email updates.

Al and Bob's email and mailing addresses are on the title page of this newsletter.

16th Annual ALS/AFE Retiree Reunion Recap

The 16th Annual Aircrew Life Support & Aircrew Flight Equipment (ALS/AFE) Retirees Reunion was held (under beautiful weather) September 26-30, 2011 at the Drury Inn and Suites Hotel located near Forest Park and the St Louis Zoo. CMSgt (Ret) Steve Wyatt was the Moderator and Master of Ceremonies for this year's event. For those of you who were unable to attend, you missed a truly spectacular family get-together with colleagues and friends. Ask anyone who attended this year, and you'll understand what we mean.

Essex Cryogenics of Missouri, Inc. was our corporate host for the event and pulled out all stops to ensure each attendee was properly registered, comfortable and cared for so they could enjoy the reunion festivities. Essex personnel "staffed" the hospitality room each night to ensure light h'orderves and beverages were available for every guest. Numerous individual and industry partners provided financial support to off-set the cost of the nightly refreshments.

Before going any further, please make sure to mark your calendars now for the 17th annual ALS/AFE reunion being held September 24-28, 2012 at the Imperial Palace (IP) Hotel and Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi. The IP's proximity to Keesler AFB and the Naval Construction Battalion Center – Gulfport (Home of the Atlantic Fleet Seabees) make it an ideal spot for golfing, outdoor activities and of course visiting on-base facilities. MSgt (Ret) Paul Stapleton and SMSgt (Ret) Kemper "KB" Kinchen have already begun preparing for what is sure to be another great reunion in 2012.

This year's reunion totaled about 90 attendees. We have set a community goal and challenge for at least **200 attendees** at our 17th annual reunion in 2012. We encourage your support in attaining this goal and respectfully solicit more participation from the AFRC, ANG, and active duty members. This is your career field, and with over 1,000 friends on the various ALS and AFE Facebook pages, we should certainly be able to increase reunion awareness and attendance. Highlight your calendar today!

The 16th reunion opened with the Posting of the Colors by the Scott AFB Honor Guard and the playing of our National Anthem. CMSgt (Ret) Tim Morrow then followed with the opening invocation. Mr. Keith Guller, the Chief Executive Officer of Essex Industries welcomed all attendees and provided his perspective and remarks on the importance of the Aircrew Flight Equipment Career Field. He also read a personal note he received from the USAF Chief of Staff, General Norton Schwartz, welcoming each reunion attendee.

For the most part, the first day of the reunion (Tuesday) was a business meeting. This forum allowed participating industry partners, (many of which were ALS/AFE retirees) to present information to our family which members found enlightening. This also gave attendees up-to-date information on the latest program developments and equipment issues currently affecting the field.

Presenters included CMSgt Martin Austin, ACC AFE Functional Manager, who provided an exceptional "State of the Career Field" briefing, SMSgt (Ret) John Patti from ARINC, SMSgt (Ret) Rick Murray from Wel-Fab Inc, CMSgt (Ret) Al Loving representing East/West Industries

and Stratus Systems, Mr. Tim Bannister from Essex Cryogenics of Missouri Inc., CMSgt (Ret) Tim Morrow from Covenant Contract Management, the St Louis Veterans Affairs Administration, Jefferson Barracks Retirees Activities Office and equipment demonstrations by AFE personnel assigned to the 375th AMW at Scott AFB and a fighter equipment demonstration provided by MSgt (Ret) Andy Baker from Alamogordo, NM.

The Rev. John Steer provided patriotic remarks and musical entertainment during our sit-down buffet lunch provided by Bartolino's Osteria. This moving presentation by John set the tone for the remainder of our reunion. What a patriot and what a blessing it was to have him join us! Rev. Steer was severely injured during the Vietnam War and is the recipient of two Purple Hearts, and both the Bronze and Silver Stars. We owe Shirley Farkas a huge thank you for everything she did in helping arrange for Rev. Steer and his family's participation. We loved hearing memories of his use of parachutes during the war and some of his *almost comical* PLFs as a paratrooper.

Finally, rounding out the weeks activities were a trip to Scott AFB for our annual picnic at Scott Lake and Golf Tournament at Cardinal Creek, and AFE Shop/Flightline tours of the 375th AMW and 932nd AW.

While on the flight line, attendees were given tours of the C-21 and C-40 VIP Aircraft. Essex Cryogenics also provided a guided tour of their facility where Liquid Oxygen Converters are made for numerous DoD Fighter, Cargo and Bomber Aircraft. Transportation was also provided for fun-filled trips to local area Casinos, the Gateway Arch, and the Anheuser-Busch/Budweiser Brewery.

We conclude the reunion with the Farewell Banquet on Thursday evening. Lt Colonel Stephen "Crow" Stillwell provided the keynote/farewell address by sharing with us what our profession meant to him personally as a fighter pilot. Colonel Stillwell experienced a violent ejection from an F-15 which broke apart in flight and he took time from his busy schedule to visit with us and brief us on what he encountered during his mishap flight.

The hotel and restaurant staffs did a remarkable job during our banquet and, for that matter, the entire week to ensure even the smallest of details was attended to.

The 2011 ALS/AFE Retiree Reunion Planning Committee wishes to thank our host, the industry and individual sponsors for their support, and everyone who attended and had a part in orchestrating the 2011 reunion. We look forward to another excellent event currently being planned for September 24-28, 2012 in Biloxi MS.

Again, mark your calendars now and plan on visiting dear friends and colleagues on the Gulf Coast in 2012. You'll be glad you came to Biloxi!

First Time Attendee at the 16th Annual ALS/AFE Retiree Reunion

(SMSgt (Ret) Ed Chewing's Perspective)

Bob "Chili Mac" McElwain and Al Loving asked if I'd mind taking a few minutes to write a brief of my view of this year's ALS/AFE Retiree Reunion held in Saint Louis, Mo back in September as being a first time attendee. To be quite brief and to the point, my wife Elizabeth, daughter Keli and I thought it was outstanding. No, let me rephrase that, it was OUTSTANDING!!!

I had missed all the reunions since 2000 due to my current position down here at the C-5 SPO. I told myself that I was going to make the 2011 reunion no matter when and where it was.

From a first time attendee, Bob McElwain and Kemper Kitchen pulled off a spectacular reunion. The location was just right. There was plenty to do and see in St. Louis. As my last duty station was HQ AMC at Scott AFB, we knew the area and got to go back and see a lot of familiar places.

Chief (Ret) Steve Wyatt and his Essex Team, Mr. Keith Guller, CEO of Essex Industries, and Mr. Tim Bannister, VP of Operations, along with the other Team Essex members proved to be great and valuable team members and I think really aided in the success of the reunion.

Bill Ricketts and his troops; MSgt Tim Kelso, SSgt Ken Leitch, SSgt T.J. Northcutt, SrA Andrew Nelle, and A1C Leader Chang provided us with a superb barbecue on Thursday. Thanks guys. You all are the future of Aircrew

Flight Equipment. A tip of the hat to Bill and his troops!

It was heartwarming to see CMSgt (Ret) Cesare Bruno who had been my 36th TFW Life Support Superintendent back at Bitburg in '76-'78. We rehashed a lot of old, but good, memories.

I had the opportunity to sit down and talk to CMSgt (Ret) Leaster Williamson. Man!!! What a lot of stories he had to tell about the early days of Life Support. It's great seeing retired CMSgt Tommy Tompkins and his wife Polly as well as retired CMSgt's Al Loving, Joe Lynch, and Tim Morrow, and a lot of others whose names escape me. And, as I said, "Chili" and KB and all....you done good! With that said, the Chewing family is making plans for next year's reunion in Biloxi.

In Closing

That's it for this edition, friends. Block those calendars for the last week of September 2012 and we'll see you in Biloxi, MS. HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

“BILOXI OR BUST IN 2012!!”