



## ***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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### **Reporters**

Tommy Tompkins, P.O. Box 372, Equality IL 62934 Email: [tombob@shawneelink.com](mailto:tombob@shawneelink.com)  
Allen "Al" Loving, 38 Crestwood Drive, Newport News VA 23601 Email: [aloving@cox.net](mailto:aloving@cox.net)  
Bob "Chili" McElwain, 12320 Roadrunner Lane Victorville CA 92392 Email: [bob.mcelwain@charter.net](mailto:bob.mcelwain@charter.net)  
Ed "Fast" Chewning, 301 Huntington Chase Circle, Warner Robins GA 31088 Email: [mamachew@cox.net](mailto:mamachew@cox.net)

Visit our web site at [www.usafals.net](http://www.usafals.net)

December 2012 Edition

### **Looking Forward**

2012 is almost in the books and I have to admit I have no idea where it went.

The 2012 reunion in Biloxi MS went off without a hitch despite Hurricane Isaac. If you were not able to attend you missed a great time with some great ALS/AFE "family" members and hope to see you in Las Vegas for the 2013 reunion. A reunion recap and the preliminary details of the 2013 annual reunion appear later in this edition of the newsletter.

While I have your attention...we have quite a few readers that still receive the newsletter via "snail-mail" versus

electronically. As a result, we are in need of donations to help defray the cost of mailing the newsletter. A monetary donation or a donation of stamps can be forwarded to Al Loving at the address above. Any help will be greatly appreciated.

Lastly, the newsletter crew wishes each of you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2013.

### **From The Field**

We want to acknowledge the following AFE SMSgt's recently selected for promotion to CMSgt:

Rufino Gonzalez (ACC)  
Shane Sandlin (USAFE)  
Larry Settle (AFMC)  
George Truini (ACC)  
Christopher Moore (AETC)

We congratulate all of the AFE uniformed and civilian professionals selected for promotion in 2012.

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Retirement ceremonies for CMSgt's Martin Austin, HQ ACC AFE Functional Manager, Langley AFB VA, and CMSgt Jeff Bingman, USAF AFE Functional Manager, were held in August 2012. Also, CMSgt Stewart Stangl, Hurlburt Field, is retiring and is currently on terminal leave.

We offer our best wishes to each of them and the several other AFE family members that have retired this year. Please accept our sincere thanks for the many years of dedicated service to this Great Nation and the USAF.

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We also want to take this opportunity to welcome CMSgt Mike Lightner as the new USAF AFE Career Field Manager. We wish you only continued success, Chief.

**Food for Thought**

*CMSgt Mike Lightner  
HQ USAF AFE Career Field Manager*

In a Jan 12, 2012 *Food for Thought* article I talked about the word "teleopathy". For those of you who haven't read the article, the word teleopathy is basically what can happen when we become so focused on a task or goal that we lose sight of our objective or values. The following paragraph from the Jan 12 article will further illustrate this meaning and how it applies to Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE).

"Over the past year we have had an increased emphasis on training, sometimes imposing seemingly impossible goals and high expectations. As leaders we must remain focused on the quality of training we are providing and not allow ourselves to become fixated on the overall training numbers. Yes, the training numbers and our ability to meet our goals are important but we must never sacrifice our Core Values in an effort to make the statistics look good. We must create an environment that encourages speedy growth and development yet allows the student to push back when they need a little extra time. We can offer incentives and rewards to those who show extraordinary progress but we must remain aware of the teleopathy affects these incentives could be having on our people's ethical decisions. Training is and must always remain our number one priority. But we cannot afford to send the message to our people that quantity is more important than quality. To do this we must clearly define and demonstrate our ethical principles. We must not only tell our people how training should be done, we must also model it. And when enough is enough and we just cannot meet our goals or expectations, we must have the courage to step back, reevaluate, and make the required adjustments."

Folks, we are all busy. It is easy to become bogged down or even buried under the seemingly endless stream of requirements and taskers. However, as leaders we cannot allow this to be used to justify unethical behavior and we must always consider the secondary and third order effects of our actions.

Additionally, we must remember that our people are always watching us and we owe it to them to model the behavior we expect to see in them.

**LEAD BOLD -- LEAD STRONG -- LEAD WELL**

### **TAC Sea Survival School**

In August 1962 the TAC Sea Survival School was started by one Life Support Officer, Maj Wayne E. Williams, and six Life Support personnel (922X0): Jack V. Messina, Maurice Ouzts, James W. Stanford, Donald Parker, Paul Swindell and Warren G. Quade. By January 1964, the school had grown to two officers, nine 922X0's, five 921X0's, twelve boat operators and two Admin personnel. Not too many people knew that 922X0's helped start this school.

For those familiar with Langley, the training area included a boat dock next to the where the NCO Club once stood. The boat dock was on the right and the NCO Club was the next building on the right. Other over-water training was accomplished at Plum Tree Point. The first class room was located adjacent to the on-base housing area - a long building running East and West close to the Club. Some of the para-sail and parachute training was accomplished in this area as well. Water jumps were made about 1/2 to 1 mile off the dock area and in the water next to the Club.

The school moved from Langley to Homestead AFB FL, in November 1966.

A great article about the School by MSgt (Ret) Paul Swindell is available under the "History" tab on the retiree website at [www.usafals.net](http://www.usafals.net).

### **Checking In**

Don Windsor reports that Bill Baldwin had bypass surgery following a major heart attack this past June. Bill is the former ANG F-16 Life Support WSTC. He was a member of the F-16 unit at Niagara Falls, NY. Please keep Bill and his family in your prayers.

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In July, Paul Stapleton reported that Bill Plunk had his first scan following chemo and the results were great. The spot on the lung is gone. Also, the tumor is responding better than expected from the chemo. Please keep him in your prayers.

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Bob McElwain received a note from Jim Schriefer in October: I was surfing the net this afternoon at work during a slow moment and came across your narrative from your time in the service. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it, reminded me of my time, all those many years ago. I too was at Andersen, TDY in 1972. I also had the pleasure of knowing Frank Berkinseher. He was at Barksdale when I got there, fresh out of Chanute in 1969. He left the next year, along with Dave Cottle and I never crossed paths with either of them again. But as a young kid, they both made a good impression on me that I can still remember them. I spent 1968 to 72 on active duty, and then spent 73-79 in the Missouri Air National Guard. It's nice to see that the mainstays of Life Support have formed an association and have stayed in touch.

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A July note from Dave Cramer: Kathy and I will not be there (Reunion) this year as we are working for Amazon in Campbellsville, KY for the seasonal

camper force program. This distribution center has about 1200 full-time employees. They need the added force to handle the busy season which will start late next month. We have never work-camped before but we thought about it. We did purchase some property in Davenport FL, Deer Creek Golf and RV Resort, last winter and hope to build a small 600-700 square foot home with a 50-foot attached RV port. Amazon pays \$9.90 an hour and you work a 40-hour week, 4-ten hour days and may be asked to work an additional day from time to time. They also pay for our RV site which is \$525 per month and includes electric. They pay time and a half for over time and if you work the entire season, till December 23<sup>rd</sup> you get a dollar an hour bonus for the entire season. Not bad, you can put 12-17K in the bank. We will use the money to furnish our home.

We are "stowers". We put the stock on the shelf which is then ready for customers to order directly on line. Not hard works as you use a scanner and stand most of the day. The "pickers" who retrieve the orders walk anywhere from 10-15 miles a day so if anyone wants to lose some weight or is interested, tell them to give me a call.

So when you place your order think of us! Tell everyone we said "Hello"!

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An update on Don from Alberta Yager: Thanks for inquiring about Don. He remains at ENVH in the Service Neighborhood. Been there for two years now -- we all wonder how he has lasted this long, however, have decided it must be that strong German background. He receives excellent, compassionate care from the staff. Although he hasn't really

recognized me in several years, he recognizes me as "that nice lady." I certainly can't complain about that.

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Lt Gen Tom Travis reports that Roger and Mary Lou May attended his July promotion ceremony at Bolling AFB as he became Surgeon General of the Air Force. "It was a tremendous day made much more special by family and wonderful friends like the Mays being there with us." the General said.

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A website guest book post from Eric Brown: Just ran across this site. Have been looking for years to find someplace where I might be able to connect with former life support personnel that I may have served with. I was assigned to the 4550th sea survival school (TAC) at Homestead AFB (actual physical duty was the training site at what was called Turkey Point next to the nuclear power plant). I was assigned there from May 1968 to April 1970. My CO was Major John T. Clark until his accidental death in September 1969. My rank was SSgt when I was discharged in April 1970 having completed my 4 year enlistment. I was a 922X0 and also instructed aircrew members after they completed classroom training. Apart from inspecting and loading training gear for the daily operations, I also instructed students in parachute release from the "tower", drop and drag from the "M" boat (a converted LCM), parasail demos, life raft deployment use and repair, helicopter pickup, signaling devices, etc. For anyone interested, I filmed some of the above training and had it transferred to a CD. If anyone is interested and if I can learn how, I would be happy to make a copy for anyone. Just email me at [eb7205@aol.com](mailto:eb7205@aol.com) or write to me at the below address with

your name and address. Must be a member of this site as I will use this site as a method of validation. (If anyone can tell me how to make copies it would be appreciated). Would love to hear from anyone who served in the above cited time frame. (that includes any "boat people".)

317 Kingswood Dr., El Paso TX 79933

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From 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.

### **2013 Part B Premiums** **Announced**

*Source: MOAA News*

Medicare officials have announced the new Part B premium rates for 2013 and they were slightly lower across the board than what many had predicted. The basic monthly premium for Part B will jump 5% in 2013. The increase, which previously had been projected at 9%, translates to a \$5 monthly increase for single Medicare-eligible with incomes below \$85,000 (\$170,000 for married couples).

For those with higher incomes, the monthly Part B increase will range from \$7 to \$16. By law, the premium must cover 25 percent of Medicare's expenses for the basic category, and cover 35% to 80% of expenses for higher-income groups.

In addition, the Part B deductible will be \$147 for 2013 - a \$7 increase over last year. The Part A inpatient deductible will rise \$28 to \$1,184. Part A premiums, however, will actually drop to \$441 a month - a \$10 monthly reduction. The bottom line: Most Medicare patients will actually see a slight reduction in their total Medicare premiums for 2013.

### **TRICARE Retail Pharmacy** **Vaccination Program**

*Source: TRICARE News Release*  
*Nov 13, 2012*

The TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Vaccination Program celebrated the fall flu season with an ounce of prevention – serving up its one millionth vaccine on October 28, 2012. TRICARE expanded its pharmacy coverage in August 2011 to include a full spectrum of preventive vaccines. Up until that time, administration of most vaccines to beneficiaries was limited to physicians' offices and military treatment facilities. "The response has been phenomenal and we are excited to hit this milestone in such a short period of time," said Rear Adm. Thomas McGinnis, director of the TRICARE Management Activity Pharmaceutical Operations Directorate. "Vaccines are available at participating TRICARE network pharmacies at no cost. And with more network pharmacies than McDonald's and Starbucks combined, there is really no excuse not to get vaccinated." Vaccines

are among the most cost-effective way to prevent disease. TRICARE covers all Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-recommended vaccinations at no cost if they're administered by a pharmacist at a participating TRICARE pharmacy. [www.tricare.mil/vaccines](http://www.tricare.mil/vaccines) has all the details.

Since availability of some vaccines varies, and all states do not have the same regulations, beneficiaries should call ahead before going to their local pharmacy. The effort to increase the number of beneficiaries with convenient access to vaccines won special recognition from the American Pharmacists Association at its 2012 annual meeting. The TRICARE Pharmacy program is responsible for more than just vaccines. TRICARE patients can fill prescriptions at no cost through military pharmacies; at low or no cost through the Home Delivery program; or through a network of more than 57,000 retail pharmacies. To learn more about the TRICARE Pharmacy program visit [www.tricare.mil/pharmacy](http://www.tricare.mil/pharmacy).

### **Hearing Aids**

*Source: Semper Fidelis Aug 2012*

The DoD sponsored Retiree-At-Cost Hearing Aid Program [RACHAP] is designed to help retirees purchase hearing aids through an Audiology Clinic at a special government negotiated cost. The hearing aids available through this program are the same state-of-the art technologies available to active duty service members. The program is open to all military retirees who have hearing loss or tinnitus (ringing in the ears). Dependents of military retirees are not eligible for this program. Retirees can buy hearing aids at a significant savings

by using the program. For example, a set of hearing aids (one of the best available) that retails for about \$5,000 costs a retiree as little as \$755 or about 15% of the retail costs. Services for the hearing evaluation, hearing aid fitting and follow up hearing aid checks are part of retiree benefits and are available at no cost. Not every DoD medical facility is able to provide the RACHAP program.

If traveling from out of town, compare travel costs of purchasing hearing aids privately in the local community. Generally, at least two visits are required to get hearing aids, one for the hearing evaluation and one for the hearing aid fitting. Also, retirees may be eligible for hearing aids from the Department of Veterans Affairs and receiving hearing aids from the VA free of charge, in most cases there is no costs to the patient. The Audiology Department can provide with more information about VA services or contact the VA directly a 1-877-222-8387 or 1-800-827-1000. Dependents of retirees are not eligible for hearing aid services from military treatment facilities (including RACHAP) or from TRICARE. The family member is eligible for TRICARE hearing evaluations and the audiologist can provide them with more information about hearing aids or local providers.

### **"Snail Mail" and Email 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.

## **2012 Reunion Recap**

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Aircrew Life Support and Aircrew Flight Equipment (ALS/AFE) Retirees Reunion was held at the Imperial Palace (IP) Hotel & Casino, Biloxi MS, September 24-27, 2012.

For those of you who were unable to attend, you missed a truly great get-together with several first time attendees and many old friends

The IP's proximity to Keesler AFB, New Orleans, and the Gulf Coast made it a great site for our golf tournament, the picnic, the tours, outdoor activities, and access to on-base facilities.

Day One: Lt. Col John Fox, 403<sup>rd</sup> OSS, Keesler AFB MS, and a former LSO, provided the welcoming remarks along with a local area orientation. During our opening ceremony we were honored to have Ms. Brenda Emery, the 2010 Ms. Senior Alabama and top finalists at the 2010 Ms. Senior America pageant bless us with a wonderful rendition of patriotic songs including "*God Bless America*". Thank you Brenda for joining us and for the fantastic support to the reunion!

First time attendees Al Cricks, Bob and Mary Matthews, Joe and Kellie Vest, Charles and Betty Johnson, Truman Pittman, and Joe O'Brien were recognized.

Two informative briefings were provided by Tim Bannister of Essex Industries and Al Loving of East/West.

Day Two: The annual golf tournament was held followed by a great picnic hosted by the men and women of the 403<sup>rd</sup> OSS AFE Flight, Keesler AFB MS. A very special thanks to MSgt Vidall Miller, TSgt Leatrice Vassel, TSgt Marlon Prevost, and SSgt

Johnny Woodland for organizing and catered the picnic.

Several attendees took advantage of a planned boat ride along the Gulf Coast and were treated to views of the beachfront, coastline, and islands.

Day Three: Several attendees participated in the planned trip to the historic New Orleans French Quarter. Afterwards, everyone settled in for our farewell banquet. Tim Morrow introduced our guest speaker and his former 435<sup>TH</sup> TFS LSO, retired Colonel William Bryns and his wife Joanne.

On May 23, 1972, Colonel Bryns' F-4 was shot down while flying a mission over North Vietnam and spent the next 309 days in captivity before his release on March 28, 1973. Mrs. Bryns spoke about what it was like to be the waiting spouse of a Prisoner of War. We thank the Colonel and Mrs. Bryns for sharing their experiences. May God forever bless them and all those who served while in captivity.

We were also pleased to have in attendance Lt Col (Ret) Dave Whitley. Dave is a former HQ MAC LSO and a former USAF ALS Program Manager.

The annual golf tournament winners were announced and Ray Blanchette was recognized as the pinochle tournament winner.

Hand crafted quilts donated by Joan Shepherd were presented to our guest speaker and to East/West (Al Loving) for the continued support over the years.

Attendees selected Las Vegas as the 2013 reunion site. San Antonio came in second.

We'd like to extend a special thanks to everyone for their donations towards the hospitality suite, Dave Chitwood for hosting

this year, Ed MacKenzie for organizing the golf tournament, Paul Stapleton for his help in organizing and coordinating several of the activities and photo support, and for convincing Ms. Emery to entertain us. We also thank Tim and Dawn Morrow for their efforts and support in getting Colonel and Mrs. Bryns to address the attendees, and last but not least, a special thanks to Joan Shepherd for the labor and love she put into making those beautiful quilts.

As always, we were thrilled and pleased to have several supporting industry partners and individuals make contributions to this year's reunion activities that included the hospitality suite and golf tournament - - our sincere thanks and gratitude!

Check out the website for photos taken at the reunion. You'll find them under the "Reunion" tab.

### **Check It Out**

Visit the link below and then click on "Back to Thumbnails" at the bottom right and take a look around at the vintage aviation and ALS oriented clips and videos. Be prepared to stay a while...

**[www.imageevent.com/okbueno/mopic](http://www.imageevent.com/okbueno/mopic)**

### **2013 Reunion**

The 2013 ALS/AFE Reunion will be held 23-26 September at the Tuscany Suites & Casino in Las Vegas, NV. Lodging is \$42.00 a night for a large suite with one or two beds. The hotel is not located on the Strip, but is a mere two blocks away.

Monday, 23 September, and Friday, 27 September, are the travel days. The details and schedule of activities will be included in the May 2013 edition of the

newsletter and on our website **[www.usafals.net](http://www.usafals.net)**.

The Reunion Planning Committee advises that we are in desperate need of gifts/prizes/donations for our annual reunion raffle. The funds from the raffles help with the costs of the newsletter and the annual fee for our website. Last year's donations were essentially nonexistent. If you are able, please help us by donating whatever you can to this year's raffle.

Industry partner donations for our golf tournament have never been a problem. If we could just get them and some of you to help with gifts for our raffle we would be most appreciative.

### **ALS/AFE Retiree Group Organization**

As discussed and agreed upon at the 2012 reunion, the ALS/AFE Group will soon start the process of formalizing into a legitimate organization. However, before we can start the process of identifying key members of our group we need to establish a Constitution and Bylaws. A draft version of the Constitution and Bylaws (modeled after other successful organizations) has been drawn up and will be sent out to several members of our group for review, comments and suggested changes.

If you receive a copy of the draft please review it and send your comments to Bob McElwain and Tommy Tompkins with an info copy to Kemper Kinchen and Al Loving NLT 1 Feb 2013. If you are interested in receiving a copy let Bob McElwain know.

### **Final Roll Call**

We have been advised that the following ALS/AFE family members have made their Final Roll Call. We offer our



sincere condolences to family and friends:

- Deloris Biggs, wife of Bob Biggs
- Peggy Davis and the Robert Davis family. (*Robert attended our 2007 reunion with his wife Peggy and is the son-in-law of long time retired life supporter Bill Parham. Anyone present at that reunion will remember Robert as the ex-Army troop who lost one of his hands in Vietnam. Robert passed away on November 8.*)
- CMSgt Donald Brackin
- CMSgt (Ret) Kenneth "Mike" Hampton
- CMSgt (Ret) Bob O'Bryan
- MSgt (Ret) Danny Wagner
- MSgt (Ret) James "Mac" McQuillen
- MSgt (Ret) Maurice "Jim" Ouzts
- TSgt (Ret) Jesus Sena
- Mr. David Kasehagen

### **Just for Fun**

#### *General Orders for Sentries*

*(Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard)*

*(\*No. 12...that's a Ed "Fast" Chewning add)*

- 1. To take charge of this post and all government property in view.*
- 2. To walk my post in a military manner, keeping always on the alert, and observing everything that takes place within sight or hearing.*

*3. To report all violations of orders I am instructed to enforce.*

*4. To repeat all calls from posts more distant from the guard house than my own.*

*5. To quit my post only when properly relieved.*

*6. To receive, obey and pass on to the sentry who relieves me, all orders from the Commanding Officer, Command Duty Officer, Officer of the Deck, and Officers and Petty Officers of the Watch only.*

*7. To talk to no one except in the line of duty.*

*8. To give the alarm in case of fire or disorder.*

*9. To call the Officer of the Deck in any case not covered by instructions.*

*10. To salute all officers and all colors and standards not cased.*

*11. To be especially watchful at night, and, during the time for challenging, to challenge all persons on or near my post and to allow no one to pass without proper authority.*

*\*12. And shoot anybody that I don't recognize.*

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That's it for this edition, friends. Block those calendars for the September 2013 reunion.