



## ***AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT AIRCREW FLIGHT EQUIPMENT RETIREE NEWSLETTER***

*News for the men and women who served (USAF or civilian, Government or Industry) in the Personal Equipment (PE), 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 PE, ALS, or AFE career fields.*

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December 2013 Edition

### **Looking Forward**

Here we are again...another year draws to an end and another reunion is in the books! This year's reunion was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The reunion wrap-up and additional information is included in this edition of the newsletter. Hope to see you in San Antonio September 8-12, 2014!

We want to again say "Thank You!" to those who have answered the recent calls for donations to help defray the cost of publishing and 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. Also, we want to emphasize how important it is to update your mailing address and/or email address with Bob McElwain. You

can't imagine how many "snail mail" returns we get with each newsletter mailing. So, please help us by keeping your contact information current.....Thanks!

### **From The Field**

We want to acknowledge and congratulate the following Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) SMSgt's recently selected for promotion to CMSgt:

Jonathan Mann, Eielson AFB, AK (PACAF)  
Timothy Miller, McConnell AFB, KS (AMC)  
Jonathan Redfern, Osan AB, ROK (PACAF)  
Michael Watson, Dover AFB, DE (AMC)  
Mark Wiley, Langley AFB, VA (ACC)

We congratulate all of the AFE uniformed and civilian professionals who have recently been selected for promotion.

### Checking In

From Ron Hartman: Hello Al Loving. I just received the May 2013 "Newsletter" and realized it is time I get something in the mail to you to help defray the newsletter costs. The hard copy is important to me in that I no longer have a computer. I last contacted "Tommy" (via Email) early in 2006 and now wish to file the following recap and update with you. It has been more than 2 years since I retired with 36 years federal service (20 active AF-SMSGt; 16 civil service-GM-13); eight of those years as a Life Support "Loggie" leaving WPAFB in 1993. I worked in an Ace Hardware through 1997 when I moved to Michigan. Don't know if there is anyone out there who cares to think back this far, but just in case and for info: from 1985 to 1993 I was the Life Support Systems Control Officer (SCO) at HQ AFLC / AFMC. Those duties were important to me, other than as a job, because I was a flight crew member/user of LSE beginning with my AF active duty career which began in 1955. In 1956 I found myself as a Crew Chief/Tow Reel Operator in the 1st Tow Target Squadron (TAC) at Biggs AFB, El Paso Texas (SAC). What a conglomerated outfit that was as we possessed and I got some time in B-26s, B-45s, KB-50, and T-33s. Those were interesting days for me to say the least, but they paled somewhat in the years that followed with tours in Germany, Turkey, and Southeast Asia (Korat) F-105 "Thud" out of McConnell and Kadena, during 1965-66. After Oki in 1966 I crewed F-4s at DM in Tucson. In 1967, I was one of two crew chiefs in TAC selected to attend Physiological Training at Williams AFB, AZ to qualify to ride in the back seat of the Phantom...for cross-country maintenance support to F-4's that may be down at a non F-4 capable location. Talk about exposure to Life Support; in the Physio course at Williams I remember "Explosive Decompression in the chamber", forced anoxia, Seat Ejection Indoctrination on the 110 ft tall "Boom Bucket," (yes, I'm a member of the OMIAS Club-Official Military Instantaneous Acceleration Society), and

also SPLAT (Survivor Parachute Landing and Techniques), etc., etc. Anyhow, not intending to provide a sip of water from a fire hose, I simply want to document the importance of LS in my life and make the point that I didn't work the AFLC Life Support SCO job just to fill a civil service slot. LS has played an important part in my life in more ways than one. In closing, I left Fairborn Ohio in 1998 for a house and 5 acres in the middle of a rural square near Battle Creek Michigan, where I lived, fished and hunted for eight years. My wife, of then 46 years, passed away in 2002. In 2005 I moved here (Ohio) southwest of Cleveland to be near my kids, grand and great. I don't work anymore. I think pushing 80 is work enough. Fortunately, as far as I know, I have good health, no meds, and (as I like to think) could do a HALO and a proper PLF (well, in my mind anyway). Hope I didn't take too much of your valuable time and will close by confirming my contact info below. I sincerely do appreciate the efforts of you and everyone involved with carrying on and continuing the connections to our Life Support Family. I remain respectfully: Ron Hartman

*(If you would like Ron's contact info please let Al Loving or Bob McElwain know and they will get it to you.)*

From Bob Wiley: Joined Aug 62 and when told at Lackland I'd be going to Personal Equipment Tech School at Chanute AFB I said what is Personal Equipment all about? The personnel guy told me, gas masks, protective clothing and some other stuff! Others got cops, cooks, admin, jet engine mechanics etc. I figured oh well wait and see what it's really about. Lo and behold, one of the TI's had been a parachute rigger and when he told me about what PE was really about--I had a total attitude change! Got to Chanute in Sept 62--started tech school in late Oct--got pneumonia and spent 2 weeks in the hospital--so I had to re-start tech school. Then they said I had TB after returning from Christmas break. Spent over 2 months in the hospital at Scott AFB. TB negative--went back to Chanute and one of the instructors fought for me to resume where I'd left off after taking a test to ensure I was up-to speed. I finally graduated in March 63--Johnny Damron was in my class--and off to Duluth MAP I went.

Was assigned to the base shop--what a DUMP and no leadership. Had an A1C in charge--had over 18 years--talk about "retired on active duty (ROAD)--he was the poster boy. He left and we had 3 A2C's--Ron Chromulak was the senior and there was John Anderson and me. What an experience that was! We needed leadership and we got it in spades--big Jim Muldoon came over from the 11th FIS and talk about a transformation!! I learned about the REAL AF and life support from Jim! I made A1C in 2 years and he got me assigned to the 11th FIS--I was in HEAVEN--what a SUPERB outfit--life support was FUN FUN FUN!! If you never worked in a fighter interceptor squadron--a good one--you don't know what ya missed! Went to Takhli, Thailand in Jun 65--worked for TSgt Don Grady--knew Lyent Hogue--can't remember any other names. I was an A1C and in charge of my own life support shop--nothing better than that! Made SSgt under 4 years and went back to Duluth--hoping to get back to the 11th FIS--no luck----back to the base shop. SSgt Chuck Lewis was the NCOIC--only the 2 of us. Stayed there until I went to K.I. Sawyer and the 62nd FIS in Dec 67. Once again--back in an FIS!! TSgt John Swindell was the NCOIC until MSgt Don Van Riper arrived. Remember a SSgt Bob Warren--also TSgt Rembert Smith came just before I left for RAF Woodbridge in Jul 69. TSgt John Warner was the 78th TFS NCOIC--he left for the Wing Life Support shop and I was in charge until TSgt Dom Compana arrived. SSgt Bobbie Napier and A1C Walter Montford were also there. I made TSgt and was reassigned to the 91st TFS at RAF Bentwaters. I remember A1C Bennie Ompad, SSgt Glen White, SSgt Chuck Bailey, and there was a TSgt Clarence Cowan who'd been the NCOIC. Stayed at the 91st TFS until I cross-trained into club management in Dec 71. Loved club management--but--life support was ALWAYS in my blood! I hope this "triggers" some replies from other OLDTIMERS!! All the best Bob--I look at the site weekly!! *(Bob's email address is fishing9209@aol.com. For additional contact info for Bob, please contact Al or Bob.)*

The following individual also "Checked In" since the last newsletter:

- Paul Swindell
- Al Cricks
- Milt Yopp
- Howard "Sam" Spade
- Charles "Chuck" Parham

## **FIREFOX AND THE HOLLYWOOD GUARD**

*TSgt. Fredrick Gary Hareland, Ret, CANG*

I'll never forget the very first time I laid eyes on the "FIREFOX", although I knew that it was only a prop for a movie it was nonetheless quite impressive and looked oh so real. It was painted flat black and resembled a cross between an SR71 and an F117 Nighthawk Stealth Fighter, which was really amazing since this was 1982 and the F117 would remain under wraps for another six years until 1988. I suppose that to be perfectly accurate that the movie "Firefox" actually resembled a cross between an SR71 Blackbird and the popular artistic version of the highly touted and reported, but never seen super-secret "Aurora" stealth aircraft. The real point is that had I not known that this was for a movie and as long as I didn't get too close to discern intimate details, I would have expected it to actually fly!

I was at the time a member of the "Hollywood Guard", which was the nickname for the Van Nuys Air National Guard. We were the 146<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Wing, 115th Tactical Airlift Squadron which owned and operated 16 Lockheed C-130 E Hercules transport aircraft out of our home base of Van Nuys Airport located in the central San Fernando Valley. Our moniker "Hollywood Guard" was due in part to the fact that the unit once hosted actor members such as Jerry Mathers --"The Beaver", Curt Russell and Sam Elliott, to name just a few of our movie types. The other reason was due to our close proximity to the major Hollywood studios which loved to film at our base, in fact we had the most filmed hangers in the world at the time. This brings us back to the movie "Firebox", and how I and scores of other guardsmen got to be Soviet Russian, AK47 toting soldiers for three 12 hour nights back in 1982. It was just another case of the perfect location, with the perfect infrastructure, the

perfect pool of extras' with GI haircuts, and lastly the perfect distance from the Warner Bros. studio. The location was the Van Nuys Air National Guard Base, the infrastructure was one of our oldest hangers known as the "Fuel Cell Hanger", the extras' were of course readily available "Air Guardsmen", and the distance from the studio was approximately 20 miles. It was announced that any Guardsmen who wanted to participate in a Clint Eastwood movie to be filmed on base to muster in front of the Fuel Cell hanger at exactly 5 PM on the given date. Probably 20 guys including myself made the muster and were used from 6 PM until 6 AM for three whole nights as we portrayed Russian Soldiers. We had to draw and don our uniforms which we did from the back of a semi-trailer. The wardrobe gentleman must have worked at a carnival in his past because he just looked us over, grabbed our shoulders and shook us a little and voila was able to give us perfectly fitted uniforms. We were also issued real Soviet AK-47 assault rifles that actually fired blanks. All this excitement plus pay and excellent chow to boot! The pivotal scene for the whole movie was being filmed in our hanger, which was when the American pilot Mitchell Gant, played by Clint Eastwood steals the Firefox aircraft right out of its hanger in front of the Soviets. We played the Russian guards and were supposed to protect the super-secret aircraft...but to no avail. I was the idiot who runs right in front of Firefox as she bolts from her supposedly safe stable. Second Assistant Director David Valdes was quite happy with my performance and told me so, although I told him due to the nearness of the Firefox almost running me down that I should perhaps deserve stuntman's pay. He only grinned back at me like he agreed with my assessment but wasn't about to change my pay. I was also one of the soldiers who ran after Firefox and started firing our AK-47's at it, which was really a lot of fun until my gun jammed. This movie business is a real kick but does have its downside, during the filming there were at least three cameras rolling, all from different angles which was a lot of film being pulled during those tree nights. Unfortunately most of it ended up on

the cutting room floor which was disappointing from an extra point of view. As an extra you put in long hours for the amount of pay and there are probably a lot better ways to earn a living but our time with Clint and the boys will always remain a highlight of my life. As for the Firefox full size prop, I got to meet and talk to John Dykstra who was sporting a big red beard and long hair at the time and looked like a Viking. He was cleaning the dust off of his pride and joy, being that he was "Producer of Special Visual Effects", for the movie and had constructed this fantastic looking fake stealth aircraft. He admitted that his creation consisted of a triangular radio antenna, lots of plywood and paint, two hot air balloon burners, and one VW bug engine. The only authentic aircraft parts on the whole thing were the landing gear and wheels which were from an F4 Phantom, the starboard main gear wheel being chain driven from the VW engine to provide forward traction. Not only was this Firefox permanently grounded but it took two technicians hidden inside to operate the burners and even steer the beast. The only thing Clint was in control of was to call out steering directions over an intercom to the hidden technicians. Sorry to burst anybody's bubble out there but movie magic is the name of the game. I know that many of you are wondering just what kind of a guy Clint Eastwood really is and what it is like working for him. I'll tell you that he is actually a very down to earth sort of a guy who drives himself to the filming location in an old but cherried-out pick-up truck. He arrived by himself dressed very conservatively and is very approachable. I must warn you however that when he is on set and engaged in movie making, he is very serious about his craft and not to be messed with. I made the mistake of asking him a non-essential, on movie making question and got the Eastwood stare-popping forehead and neck vessels included, along with a verbal exhortation, something about trying to make a movie. Well I finally got over my dress down and anyway not everyone can say that they Tee-D-Off Mr. Clint Eastwood and he did give my ex-wife an autograph. As for Mr. David Valdes the Second Assistant Director...you still Owe Me!

PS...Other Movies Filmed At the Hollywood Guard

- Fighter Squadron
- Stripes
- Outbreak
- True Lies
- Executive Decision
- Clear and Present Danger
- Patriot Games
- Presidio
- The Body Guard
- The Last Action Hero
- Enola Gay
- Mac & Me
- Raid On Entebbe
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Check out the photos that Gary provided and are posted on the website ([www.usafals.net](http://www.usafals.net)) under the "Interesting Stuff" tab.

### **2013 Reunion Recap**

Reunion, reunion, reunion! It seem like we are always talking about our annual reunions. If it's not the planning of the reunion then it's the recapping of all the wonderful things that went on at each of them. What if we just stopped talking about the latter? Those of you who have not attended a reunion would not know about the four days of laughs, surprises and sentimental moments that we enjoy every year. Being there to experience it yourself is the only way to truly enjoy reconnecting with old friends; will we see you in San Antonio in September 2014?

There was nothing but praises for the hotel we picked for this year's reunion. The Tuscany Hotel and Suites turned out to be the best deal we've had in a long time. I think Las Vegas and the Tuscany will see us again and again.

Due to unpredictable weather, there was no golf tournament this year, but we did get our butts whipped in the pinochle tournament by Henry Abraham. Second place went to Ed Mackenzie. Congratulations to both Henry and Ed...hope Ed is enjoying the golf ball bag he won!

This year's raffle was a huge success! It was by far the most successful raffle we ever had in terms of the gifts donated. Thank you to all who surprised us with donations especially Ms. Deborah Battibulli, Mrs. Shirley Farkas, Mrs. Susie Rooney, Mrs. Mary Provenzano, Tommy Tompkins, Essex Industries, Bill Parham and family for the six boxes of gifts and Norman Lerner for the iPad. Forgive me if I failed to include someone who should be on this list.

To the attendees of reunion 2013 we say "thank you" for another successful reunion and for the kind words of gratitude for the reunion organizers. It takes the combined efforts of several members of our group to put these reunions together every year, but without the assistance of another group of supporters, this year's reunion would not have been the success it was. Thank you:

Bottom Line Military Sales

Bob Weaver

East West Industries

Jim Rooney

Essex Industry

John Patti

Gentex East

Ray Blanchette

Bill Wood

Tommy Tompkins

### **Retirees Can Manage their DEERS Records/ID Cards Online**

Retirees can now access their Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) records online through DS Logon.

DS Logon is the new, secure Department of Defense logon ID that allows service members, retirees and family members to access the DEERS Self Service Application. Retirees can use this application to update their addresses or beneficiary's enrollment information; to request an ID card; or to complete other actions. The ability to request a dependent ID card online is especially helpful for retirees with children in college or away from home. The retiree does not have to be present when the

child goes to the closest ID Card facility to obtain the new ID card. To obtain a DS Logon account you can visit their website ([www.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement)) and follow the prompts to create an account or you can register in person at an ID card facility, VA Regional Office or Tricare Service Center.

### **TRICARE and the New Health Care Law**

The new health care law is the Affordable Care Act. Simply speaking, the Affordable Care Act will have very little impact on TRICARE beneficiaries. Beneficiaries who receive TRICARE benefits, whether at no cost, by electing to pay an enrollment fee, or by paying monthly premiums, have minimum essential coverage required under the Affordable Care Act. The biggest change they will notice may be an extra letter in their mailbox every January, and an extra box to check on their tax forms every April. Beginning with the 2014 tax season, and every tax year after that, the Department of Defense will send every TRICARE beneficiary the same information it sends the Internal Revenue Service. Because the information sent to the IRS is generated using beneficiaries' Social Security numbers, it is essential for sponsors to make sure their family's Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS, information is correct and up-to-date. The VA has begun to work on a new type of card, which will not contain a social security number. Meanwhile, veterans should treat their current ID card as just a careful as they do their Social Security card to prevent Identity theft. (Military.Com)

### **Free LinkedIn Upgrade for Veterans**

Do you use LinkedIn as part of your job search process? Did you know that as a current or former member of the armed services you are eligible to a free 1 year upgraded LinkedIn service? (See the instructions below.) Additionally, you can get a refund if you have already paid for jobseeker upgraded service. Make sure that you have your military service

somewhere in your LinkedIn profile as they verify the service.

This membership gives you the full unrestricted view of profiles as well as a full list of who has viewed yours. LinkedIn asks that if you desire this, in my words; generous and supportive offer, all that the Military member/ Veteran must do is join their "Veteran Mentor Network". Type the following in the browser address bar: [http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5131140&trk=groups\\_management\\_participants-h-dsc](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5131140&trk=groups_management_participants-h-dsc) Upon joining this specific group, the Military member/Veteran will AUTOMATICALLY be enrolled for 12 months in the "Job Seekers" level of membership. I understand this to mean; that no longer will a credit card be required to activate membership. Yet, LinkedIn still asks to have your Military service clearly denoted in your LinkedIn profile. Simply join the "LI JOB SEEKER SUBSCRIPTION", a subgroup of, Veteran Mentor Network and you will receive a year of FREE LinkedIn membership!

### **VA Issues Fraud Alert**

*(Reference: 2 Dec 13, This Week's Military Report)*

Veterans should be aware of a marketing scam targeting callers trying to reach the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Call Center or GI Bill Call Center. A marketing company has established two fraudulent numbers that differ from the two official VA call center numbers by one digit. If the fraudulent number is dialed by mistake, the answering party will offer a gift card and try to obtain personal and financial information, including credit card information, from the caller. The answering party may even transfer the caller to the VA after the caller's information is obtained. The numbers to be avoided are: 800-872-1000 (the VA National Call Center number is 800-827-1000) and 888-442-4511 (the VA GI Bill Call Center number is 888-442-4551). The VA has notified law enforcement authorities to address this situation. For more guides and tips on personal finance and avoiding scams, visit the Military.com Money Center

## Group Organization

The decision was made to combine all approved inputs into our draft Constitution and Bylaws and make it available for all who are interested to provide comments or suggestions. The document can be found on our website under the, "Formalizing our Group" tab. Check it out and let us know what you think. Email your thoughts to me at bob.mcelwain@charter.net NLT 1 July 2014.

## Final Roll Call

We have been advised that the following family members have made their Final Roll Call. We offer our sincere condolences to family and friends:

- Tom Bowen passed away on Thursday, 3 Oct 13, in Yuba City, CA. Tom was a fixture in a singularly unique operation which currently supports U-2 "Dragon Lady" aircrews...the Physiological Support Division (PSD), Beale AFB, CA. Tom was an integral part of the U-2/SR-71 programs dating back to its early "black" days.

- It is with profound sadness that we share the news of the passing of MSgt (Ret) Tim Howard, on 12 Jul 13. Tim was a 1964 graduate of the Tech School at Chanute retiring in 1985 at George AFB, CA. Tim was a longtime and dedicated attendee at the annual reunion.

- By way of Howard (Sam) Spade, we've learned of the recent passing of Gary Meek. Gary proudly served in the USAF from 1968 to 1991. Gary started his military career in Aircrew Life Support; ensuring the maintenance of critical aircraft components and in 1986 dedicated his service to maintaining the morale and discipline of the enlisted corps as a First Sergeant until his retirement as a Master Sergeant in 1991 from Offutt AFB, NE.

- By way of James Craft, we report that Tony Magnall passed away on 14 May 13 in San

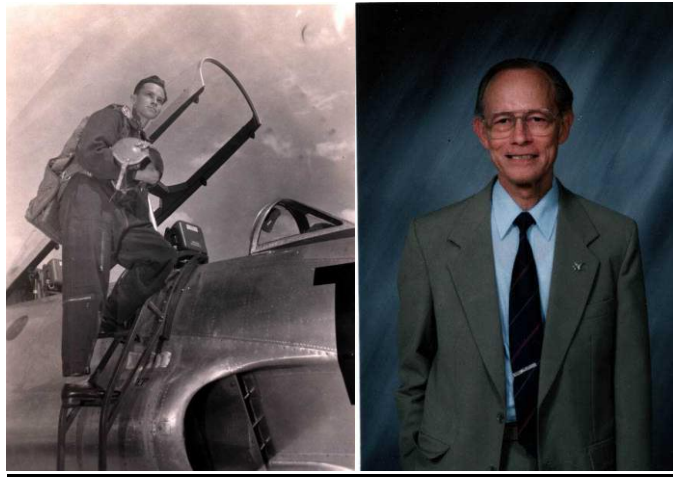
Angelo, TX. Those that knew Tony can appreciate it when we say, "What a character!"

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That's it for this edition, friends. The newsletter staff wishes all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



**MAKE A NOTE NOW ON  
THOSE CALENDARS FOR THE  
8-12 SEPTEMBER 2014  
REUNION IN SAN ANTONIO  
TEXAS!**



## **Tribute to “Tony” van Haastert** *(By Tommy Tompkins and Linda Percival)*

A. V. “Tony” van Haastert is a special friend and special person. I have known, worked with and respected Tony since we first met and actually worked with him for a few years at GENTEX before his retirement. Tony has devoted his entire life and career to Aircrew Flight Equipment and Safety.

Tony’s early life was very hard, as he was separated from his family and interred by the Japanese in a West Indies POW Camp during WW II. Returning to Europe after the war, Tony’s career covered quite a span of time and a multitude of technological areas. Tony has been involved in some form of flight safety all of his adult life. For over forty-eight (48) years, beginning in 1951, Tony served as an Air Force Fighter Pilot, flying Tactical Fighters and Reconnaissance A/C for USAF, RCAF and NATO. He was assigned to the 2nd ATAF in Germany during the Hungary/USSR Crisis. From 1959 to 1961 he was a commercial pilot flying in the Middle East and the North Coast of Africa. This meant that many times he was his own safety and maintenance officer.

From 1962 until 1999 Tony was actively employed in the Aircrew Life Support Industry. His employers of the past included Sierra Engineering Company, Scott Aviation, Synergetics Company, ILC Dover and GENTEX Western Operations in Rancho Cucamonga, California.

Highlights of Tony’s Management/Engineering experience includes General Manager of R & D Programs developing aircrew chemical defense masks (XM-29, XM-40, MCU-2P, M-43) and General Manager of Program Development and Production of the COMBAT EDGE (MBU-20/P) Anti-G Oxygen Breathing Mask. Tony also designed and patented specific items such as a “Low Lift Helmet” and “Valve Adapter for the Folding, Hanging, and Quick Don Mask.”

The past years have seen one product in particular, which has consumed his interest and efforts, and that is chemical defense masks for the flying community.

Tony has also served faithfully on the SAFE Board of Directors and as SAFE National President. In 1999 Tony was awarded the very Prestigious SAFE Award for Career Achievement. He is also a Life Member of SAFE!

Tony’s career exemplifies that he’s an individual dedicated to safety/survival and flight equipment.

After his retirement Tony and his bride Sissy have remained in Sunny Southern California where Tony has served as a Deputy Sheriff in the city of San Dimas, California. Tony and Sissy also attended the Aircrew Life Support Reunion held in Mesquite NV September 2004.