



THE LIFE SUPPORT NEWSLETTER



News for the men and women who served in the USAF or civilians who work in Government or industry in the Aircrew Life Support business.

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New Chiefs

Congratulations to our new Chiefs since the last newsletter:

Chief Dean Miller, Tucson Guard
Chief Ron Melson, Little Rock Guard
Chief Aaron Vermeer, Hawaii Guard
Chief Dave Anderson, Sioux City
Chief William "Bill" Winn, Knoxville Guard
Chief Tracy Kopp, 10th AF Carswell Reserve

Chief (S) Dave Wilson, Shaw AFB SC
Chief (S) Harry Walker, Grand Forks

as a life supporter. Is there anybody else out there that served longer?

Other recent and planned retirees are:

Chief Rich Robichaud
Chief Chris Holt - February 07
Chief Mark Anderson - Feb 07
SMS Victor Benitez - Feb 07
MSgt Matt McMullen - Feb 07

Welcome aboard guys! Don't forget to do like Rich Robichaud and send us your retirement membership form. We need your contact and assignment history information for www.usafals.net

Another Life Support Officer Makes Good

Congratulations to General Tom Travis, ACC Command Surgeon General on his nomination for appointment to the grade of Major General. General Travis was Chief's Roger May and Timmy Morrow's Wing LSO at Seymour Johnson AFB. General Travis joins another former LSO, Major General Marc Rogers who is currently USAFE Vice and was Eddie Chewing's LSO at the 8th TFS at Holloman AFB.

Dan Chambers Retires!

After 36 years of service, CMSgt Dan Chambers, the fulltime Air Reserve Technician Life Support Manager for 10th AF at Carswell AFB is joining us retirees. Dan called it quits back in August and has got to be the leader for time in service

Farewell to a Friend

As of December 31, 2007, H. Koch and Sons that we all have known, loved and worked with for many years will cease operations as H. Koch. It is like seeing a real good friend walk out the door for the last time. My first experience with Koch was in the Sixties as the Koch Kit was being installed in new F-4's and being retrofitted in older F-4's replacing the "Bendix" Kit. My first personal contact was with Kenny Marks resolving an issue in person at Eglin AFB (and I might add, in a very professional manner). That is where I learned and came to appreciate the commitment to us fostered by Murray Koch and all of his troops. Although I never met Murray I was totally aware of the dedication of Koch in every aspect relating to great service to the services. The survival kits will be continued by Carlton New York and most of the other items such as the releases and reels will be carried on by Conax Florida Corporation. Change is inevitable. For the good of the pilots and crewmembers who depend on this equipment

good service will continue from Carlton and Conax!

I have some "old" photos in my possession of a Survival Kit Training session held in 1968 at Koch. Looking through the photo I see Ray Cherms, Narchment Thompson, R. Marsh, Stan Hammett, Wilfred McCollin, John Tucker, Frank Kriz, Charles Leichliter, Croft, Jim Heart, Hank Counts, Slater Mathews, Manny Gomez, J.S. Dick Fennessey, Herm Wardlow, Vernon Thompson, Johnny Vaughn, Bill Lynn, Jimmie Cartwright, Gladden "Pappy" Heath, Cecil Pixley, Dominic Compana, Bob Burris, Roger Davison, Enoch Robertson, D.E Uddman, Arlyn Rappe, and Jack Sheehan! What a list of Life Supporters! Some have gone on but several of the above regularly attend the annual reunions! Wouldn't you like to see and visit with them? Who in Life Support does not have a warm place in their heart for the Koch Suite where most of the "real" business was done during the World Wide Conferences? Kenny and Pearl Marks, John and Brenda Reed, Lou and George Braue, Joe and Roberta Muklevicz (Joe Mucky-muck), John and Judy Masterson, John and Laura McNaughton, Joe McPhilimy, Bill Raftery, Rolfe and Linda Swain and so many more over the years! What a tradition!

Tommy

2006 brought about the dismantling of H. Koch & Sons Co. Although no one knows for sure, it appears that the Company will be officially closed sometime in late February, 2007. The last shipments of Koch produced hardware will probably occur in late January.

John McNaughton

What a shock...Koch hanging it up. This really saddens me as some of my fondest memories and some of my greatest lessons in the Life Support business (and golf: never accept an automatic press!) came from Murry Koch. I believe he was one of the cornerstones of our industry and, to me, represented a hard nose coupled with incredible integrity and dedication; one of a kind. Though he was long gone from the company, his aura was always there.

Dick Atkins

CHILI SEZ



It's Official! Life Support and Survival Equipment Will Merge!

As briefed at this year's Life Support World Wide Workshop and the reunion, Life Support and Survival Equipment will merge. For 20 plus years there has been talk and meetings that attempted to merge the Aircrew Life Support (ALS), Survival Equipment (SE), and Egress career fields. Now, at the direction of the Air Staff, the Survival Equipment career field (MSgt and below) will merge into the Aircrew Life Support career field under operations. Only SE MSgt's and below are to be merged into ALS for a number of reasons, but the basic reason is that there is no direct career path once you make Senior or Chief in SE. Also, SE Senior and Chief Master Sergeants are virtually non-existent in the SE field since they are typically tapped to supervise other maintenance operations.

The merger will be effective 1 Oct 07 and some of the changes are as follows:

ALS and SE Technical Training Courses will merge.

Most of the flight line work traditionally performed by ALS will be transferred to Egress. Specifically, integrated parachute and survival kit removal/installation, and monthly visual inspections on parachutes/survival kits.

Egress is not a player in the merger will remain under maintenance.

In the latest e-mail from CMSgt Dave Chitwood, Aircrew Life Support Career Field Manager, Dave states, "We decided to invite any E-8s or Chief-selects with a Survival Equipment background to cross over if they want. So far a couple E-8s and one Chief-select want to cross over. We did this because it's important for the survival equipment folks to see some of their own in leadership positions in the new career field. It'll help get over the "us and them"

mentality. We are working the combined tech school issue but in the meantime, we will be doing OJT - 1T1s learning how to sew and pack parachutes, and 2A7X4s learning helmets, NVGs, and Chem stuff. We're still on track for the Oct 07 implementation".

Can you believe a merger after all these years? By the way, the AF is leaning on calling the new career field Aircrew Flight Equipment. I'm sure the folks in our sister services that do similar work will be somewhat confused and wonder if AF Life Support leaders are losing it with this new name. For years the Army, Navy, and Marines called their similar career fields everything but Life Support. It wasn't too long ago though that these services decided to follow the AF's lead and changed the name of their career fields to either Aviation Life Support or Life Support. Even the Australians call their similar career field "Aircraft Life Support Fitter". We own the title "Life Support" and now it doesn't seem right that we're dumping it.

If they stick with the name Aircrew Flight Equipment, I'll have to come up with something for our "Guess the Name of the New Career Field" contest winner. What do you think we should give him, a prize or just recognition in this newsletter?

Sick and Shut-ins

Don Muir, Tim Howard, Cesar Bruno, Camille McDaniel, and John and Lou Weir have all been battling some health issues last year and we just wish them a better and healthier 2007. SMS Arlen Rappe is in a Hospice in Napa, CA. Arlen was the first NCO in the TAC Requirements Position.

Taps

For those of you who knew Lazarus George Ellis, I'm sorry to inform you that the "Old Soldier" passed away on 10 Sept 06. I met George back in the early '80s when he was the superintendent at the 552 AWACW at Tinker. I remember him as being one of the kindest senior NCOs I had ever

met. I'm sure he will be missed by all that knew him.

Ed Drumheller spent a career engineering systems to save the lives of others, passed away November 8, 2006. His work for Northrop, NASA, and Boeing was instrumental in developing canopy jettison systems, and advanced ejection and parachute systems for fighter and experimental aircraft. Many pilots have landed safely outside their destroyed aircraft due to Ed's work. Ed was loved, respected and will be missed by so many.

John Reid who spent over twenty years with H Koch and Sons after retiring as a Warrant Officer in the US Coast Guard passed away 14 January 2007. While at Koch John was instrumental in guiding the Helicopter Lighting Systems and the MA-16 Inertia Reel through development, test and production. The MA-16 Reel is in service in virtually every non ejection seat aircraft in service throughout the world! John was a special person and special friend to Life Supporters in all services! He and Brenda were the light of many a Koch Suite over many years and their "Photo Album" will, I am sure, be memorialized. John will be missed by me personally, by his family and by our Life Support Community!

Tommy

Retirees Web Site

People are still sending in their assignment history and failing to include their rank. As mentioned in the last newsletter, if you served in the military as a life supporter, send us your retired rank or the rank you held when you separated, otherwise your assignment history won't get posted on the web site.

Photos Wanted

If you can find a copy of your old Life Support Tech School class picture we would like to have a copy. I'm about to embark on a new project involving gathering and posting as much

information on our tech school as I can. To begin, I will post class pictures on our web site and a list of the school's staff. Start digging through your old military stuff and find those pictures for this important project.

The man with a lot of pictures was Carl Jennings, former tech school instructor from back in the day. Carl unfortunately passed way back in Jan 05 so I have no way of getting my hands on any of those pictures. If you live in the Goldsboro, NC area and know Carl's bride Ruby, pay her a visit and see if she would be willing to donate some or all of those pictures to us.

Reunion

Last year's reunion went well in spite of a few hitches. Several of the attendees got to see some of their old friends and co-workers as they mingled with the folks from SAFE. For me it was a pleasure seeing Frank O'Loughlin for the first time in more than 25 years. Start preparing for this year's reunion now. It will be held in Laughlin, NV from 17 - 20 Sept. at the Aquarius Hotel. There will be more on this in our May/June newsletter.

John Shields Lives On!

In closing I'd like to share an e-mail that I received from Chief John Shields' widow, Anita. The e-mail is from her son John who received it from his deployed commander in Iraq. As you read the e-mail keep in mind that the e-mail was originally addressed to John's home station commander.

The e-mail reads, "I wanted to send you a quick note to thank you for sending MSgt John Shields. Wow, a really great troop!"

MSgt Shields is doing an outstanding job running the Base Acquisition Flight. He and his LT are really in lockstep with regard to how they want to accomplish the mission and it shows in the attitude of the entire flight. They are motivated and are doing quality work. The most amazing part is they have found the time to go back and clean-up many of the errors of the past and are tracking down a tremendous number of last fiscal year's undelivered POs. It is very apparent to

me that John has a deep desire to do things correctly and ensure the US taxpayer is being looked out for. He also clearly understands the mission and routinely sacrifices sleep and personal time to ensure the job is done. Although that spirit is present in the majority of CCOs, John undisputedly takes it to the next level of dedication. I couldn't be happier with his performance.

Balad AB is a particularly difficult environment to operate in and we have already sustained over 58 mortar and rocket attacks. As you might imagine, many of our contractors face great personal risk traveling to the base. Even in this environment, MSgt Shields has led his flight to award 585 contract actions valued at \$7.6M in only 60 days! He tackled many tricky issues with supply and TMO and has tremendously improved the efficiency and accountability of those processes.

Attached is a copy of the 1206 for his SNCO of the Month nomination. He was the ECON winners for Nov 2006. Additionally, John has also received accolades from the 64th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron for Outstanding Support, hard work, and dedication to Combat Search and Rescue.

Thank you for sending such a fine Airmen."

John is certainly making his Mom proud. If only his dad could see what a fine young man he turned out to be. I'd say we've got another CMSgt John Shields coming. Too bad he's not in Life Support. OOPS! I mean Aircrew Flight Equipment.