



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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Visit our web site at www.usafals.net

May 2013 Edition

Looking Forward

The 2013 reunion is just around the corner! This year's reunion is being held in Las Vegas, Nevada. All of the details and registration information is included in this edition of the newsletter. Hope to see you in Las Vegas in September!

A special "Thank You!" to those of you 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. Again, many thanks!

From The Field

Happy 5th Birthday AFE
(By CMSgt Mike Lightner-HQ USAF)

The past five years have been both exciting and challenging for AFE personnel. However, despite these challenges, hundreds of AFE professionals have mastered the skills of both the previous career fields; with many mastering the skills on multiple weapons systems. Achievements like this do not happen on their own...they take **leadership**, **teamwork**, **commitment**, and **sacrifice** at all levels. Thank you for your dedication to our profession and your service to our great nation.

As we enter our sixth year it's clear we still have much work to do. For example, many of our TSgts and MSgts are struggling to complete initial qualification training. And several MSgts and SMSgts are struggling and require additional training on how to properly lead/manage the programs in which they have been assigned to direct. Make no mistake, these challenges and the many others that were not mentioned are significant and as such will not fix themselves.

There are approximately 5,200 Active Duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and Civilians currently working in AFE. That's 5,200 individuals that are protecting Aircrew and their passengers each and every day! If, in this sixth year of our existence, we are going to make a significant dent in the leadership challenges we face, we must all commit ourselves to the task at hand. Our community must establish and cultivate an environment that promotes, encourages, and expects personal and professional development. We must focus our efforts on our founding principle of enhancing aircrew performance and preserving human life. In all, we must educate our leadership on the differences between whom we were and who we are today. Finally, we must establish policies that drive home our core competencies...**training, equipment, and quality assurance.**

To help cultivate and foster this, I am designating this year as "**A Year of Growth**". This year is the year you become 100% task qualified, this year is the year you complete your Course 14, this is the year you sign up for college, this year is the year you finish your degree, this year is the year you read 12 leadership books, and this year is the year...**"You fill in the blanks"**. Don't put it off any longer, do something this year to make **"YOU"** better and start it now!

In closing, I would like to offer one last thought. The following statement is from one of our AFE unit's mission statement and I think really drives home what this next year should be all about:

"We support the belief that excellent people produce excellent equipment and focus our professional and personal development on that belief, while building and maintaining a trusting relationship with our customers."

I couldn't agree more. I am very proud of you all and look forward to all the amazing things you will accomplish in 2013. Again, Happy Birthday!!!

LEAD BOLD -- LEAD STRONG -- LEAD WELL

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

Torunce Blackwell
Theodore Angel
Jennifer Cirricione
Sandra Endsley
Kevin Gallemore
Justus Hanks
Christopher Harvey
William D. Johnson
Michael Mooney
Christopher Randel
Gregory Wright

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

Retirement ceremonies for CMSgt Brian Clark, HQ AFGSC AFE Functional Manager, Barksdale AFB, LA, were held in March 2013. Other AFE leadership retirements planned for the near future include CMSgt Dwayne Roberts, HQ ACC, CMSgt Ted Poe, HQ PACAF, and CMSgt Keith Geltz, HQ AETC.

We offer our sincere best wishes to each of them and the several other AFE family members that have retired or will be retiring this year. Please accept our sincere thanks for the many years of dedicated service to this Great Nation and the United States Air Force.

Checking In

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

-Jim Ervin
-Lawrence Butterworth
-Bob Lee
-Phillip W. Thomas
-Paul Swindell

From Tom Harmer: It has been 20 years since I retired and until now I never gave it thought. My dear sweet wife of 32 years died last June and now I have far too much time on my hands. Wonderful memories really help me get through the daily routine. I have a 46 year old mentally handicapped step son that keeps me home, otherwise I would still be working. I've had 3 jobs in 20 years, all worker-bee type jobs. I always preferred hard work to management, keeps me young. For entertainment I fished a lot; did some catching also. That is changed now; this summer will be a learning process. I can fit my fishing needs into Bobby's life, but it will be way different than what I'm used to. It is always good to read what is going on in the life support world, really happy to have been part of it. There is some \$ on its way to you to help cover mail costs, one of several things I been going to do. No more paper newsletter for me. Thanks for all you do. Cheers!

Rich Robichaud reports that a former Life Support Program Element Manager (PEM) at the Pentagon, then Maj Duke Richardson, has been selected for promotion to Brigadier General. Congrats, General!

From Milt Yopp: Sherry and I would like to thank everyone in the ALS/AFE Community that called, emailed and prayed for a successful outcome and recovery. The doctors say that the freezing of the tumor was successful. The procedure only left five needle marks on her side. Sherry had to stay an extra day due to other medical issues. We are home and she is recovering.

From Dave Happel: I was reading the history of the Aircrew Life Support Management System (ALSMS) on the Life Support Retirees web site and thought I'd provide any additional info I may have. I don't know who initially developed it. I do know that Dave Cramer at ANG (Andrews AFB) played a key role in its

development and adoption for Life Support use.

First I'd like to provide a little background information. I first started tinkering with computers as a hobby back in 1983 while stationed at Laughlin AFB, TX. My first computer was a TI-99 with a cassette recorder used for storage (really old technology!!!). I upgraded a short time later to a Tandy Color Computer with an external floppy disc. I used these computers with a simple database to track time change items on the back style parachutes used in the T-38 pilot training program. I later expanded coverage to the spacer pack (fanny pack) survival kit components used by the pilots when they went cross country. Having this data readily available made it simple to track time change items, flare lot #s, etc. I also converted my card file of supply items we ordered to a database.

In Jun 86, I went PCS to HQ SAC to work with CMSgt Mike Hampton. Chief Hampton was a little apprehensive at first about automating Life Support records, but saw its usefulness and that it was the wave of the future. The two of us also envisioned at a computer system could be used to communicate quickly back and forth with our SAC units (This was before the internet really took off). We also could see that one day the Air Force would use computers to order supplies and possibly go that way for T.O.'s and regulations. Chief Hampton assigned the project to me to look into feasibility of automating SAC Life Support. I was sent TDY to confer with Chief Cramer about ALSMS and what we could do to get SAC online.

With much coordination at SAC HQ we got the authorization approved for each SAC Life Support shop to purchase a Zenith PC (can't remember whether it was a 286 or 386) and to start using ALSMS when it became available from the ANG. Much thanks to Chief Cramer and all the people involved for developing this program and sharing it with all the MAJCOMS.

“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 cover page of this newsletter.

Why Was It Done That Way?

(By Bob McElwain)

When I was a young troop it seemed every few years new life support guidance was published. Some of the guidance appeared to be just minor changes and then others were complete revisions causing me to wonder if management was reinventing the wheel?

To my surprise, I found out that a lot of the rationale for some of the changes was never documented! As a young life supporter, I found it frustrating trying to find someone who knew where I could find documentation on why some things were done a certain way, or what initiated the change in the first place. For example: Why did we use certain knots on some of the personal and survival equipment? What was the purpose of using waxed cord? What happened that cause management to require tying survival kit components inside the rucksack in SAC units? This was not a requirement in TAC until the early 80s when a downed crewmember in the Atlantic Ocean lost most of his survival gear. Why was the spare survival radio battery taped to the earphone case? Why was all that hardware issued with every new chin and nape strap assembly when every life support shop already had a ton of it? I eventually found the answers to all of my questions, but it was later on in my career. Exception: I was told about the purpose of the slip knot while working at the ADC Water Survival School, or I read about it in a published article by Chiefs Sid Perry and Tommy Tompkins in the TAC HQ magazine, “TAC Attack” in the late-70s. Could it have been that my trainers and co-workers didn’t

share my concern with why things were done a certain way so they themselves never asked?

Because of this failure to document the reason for change Lt Col (Ret) Al Schneider, CMSgt John Shields (deceased) and I (HQ TAC Life Support Staff members during the early 80’s) decided to include rationale with every major policy or technical order change that we issued or approved. Too bad all the other policy makers didn’t follow suit. Any concerned AFE troop today looking through the archives will find very few answers as to, why is it done that way? Most of the early decision makers are gone. The ones who are still with us are in their mid to late seventies or older and can remember very little, if anything about the life saving equipment policies and tech order procedures from their day. Sadly, not much has been documented over the years about what they do remember! This is one of the reasons why I collect information for our website. Preserving our history is important and you can help with information on, Why Was It Done That Way by helping me document some of the reasons for policy and technical order procedural changes during your career.

I challenge you to think back to some of the changes involving the way you did things back in your day and submit the reason for the change to me. Come on and write what you remember now! Don’t worry about whether the reason or rationale you provide is totally correct or not. Remember, there’s probably nobody around to challenge what you write anyway!

I know you can remember something so give it a try. I will compile everything and post it on our website. Anything you remember can be sent to me! The info of course will no way be official, but will serve as a historical document from the maintainers of Aircrew Life Support equipment on the way it was, and why it was that way, or is that way today! Who knows, maybe something you contribute will prevent the new generation of Flight Equipment personnel from reinventing the wheel!

2013 Reunion

The 2013 reunion will be held September 23-26 at the Tuscany Suites & Casino in Las Vegas, NV. All the details and the registration form appear later in this edition of the newsletter and are posted on the ALS/AFE Retiree website at 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.

Contributed by Charlie Brame Retired USAF Fighter Pilot

In 1969, Colonel Vermont Garrison (of World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War fame, and one neat dude) was the Commander of the 4780th Air Defense Wing at the former Perrin AFB outside of Sherman, TX. Perrin was an Air Defense Command (ADC) interceptor-training base at the time. It also hosted the ADC Water Survival Training Course at Lake Texoma.

One Sunday night, two Air National Guard (ANG) Captains, who were on temporary duty at Perrin to attend the Water Survival Course, succeeded in painting their unit insignia (an Indian head as I remember) on every airplane on the base. No small chore, as there were some 80+ F-102's, 50+ T-33's, 30+ T-37's, and assorted transient aircraft (including Chuck Yeager's F-104 from Edwards AFB, CA). The culprits were quickly apprehended as they used quite a bit of red paint and left a trail right to their Visiting Officer Quarter (VOQ) rooms.

The deed was the talk of the base on Monday morning.

About Noon on Monday, the word came down that all flying was suspended for the day, and that there was a mandatory meeting of all officers at the Officers Club at 1400. Arriving at the Club, we found it set up as a courtroom. Sure enough, Colonel Garrison had convened a court-martial Board with the two Captains as defendants. The two Captains, wearing their Class A's, looked sheepish and a bit hung over. Colonel Garrison was the Board President. After about an hour of testimony, the Board adjourned to consider a verdict. It was pretty cut and dried -- both guys still had dried paint on them. The Board was back in about five minutes and announced both parties "Guilty as Charged." Most of us had a sick feeling in our stomachs and you could hear a pin drop as Colonel Garrison rose to pass sentence. He proceeded to smile and say that the proceedings were a sham and that the Captains would have no official conviction placed in their records. However, they were obligated to "open the bar for the rest of the evening." There was an immediate race to the bar led by Garrison and his Board. A wild party ensued. The happiest (and drunkest) guys there were the two Captains with red paint on their hands.

Vermont Garrison ranks right up there with Robin Olds, "Chappie" James, and a few others. They hardly make 'em like that anymore!

Group Organization

As noted in the December 2012 edition of the newsletter, the ALS/AFE Group has started the process to formalize the Group. A proposed Constitution and Bylaws was drawn up and sent to several members of the group for review, comments and suggested changes. The review has been completed and comments received. This will be a topic of discussion during the business meeting at the upcoming reunion.

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:

- MSgt (Ret) George Tash passed away in Dec 12. George was on the staff at HQ MAC and

later retired at Kirtland AFB. After retirement he worked at the "Model Shop" on Kirtland.

- CMSgt (Ret) Robert Farrell passed away February 11, 2013. He spent 28 years in Aircrew Life Support and Hospital Supply.

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



2013 AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT/SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT/AIRCREW FLIGHT EQUIPMENT REUNION

This year we are headed to the Tuscany Suites & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. The reunion starts on Monday, 23 September, and runs through Thursday, 26 September. Monday, 23 Sep, and Friday, 27 Sep, are travel days. All former, retired, active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian members of the Personal Equipment, Survival Equipment, Aircrew Life Support or Aircrew Flight Equipment professions and their guests are invited to attend.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

Monday Evening, 23 Sep: Travel day, registration, and opening of the Hospitality Suite.

Tuesday, 24 Sep: Opening activities in the morning and a local bus tour in the afternoon.

Wednesday, 25 Sep: Annual picnic on Nellis AFB, tour of the USAF Aerial Demonstration Squadron (Thunderbirds), and pinochle tournament in the evening.

Thursday, 26 Sep: Golf tournament (**NEW DAY**), shopping at Planet Hollywood Miracle Mile Shops, and the farewell banquet.

Friday, 27 Sep: No activities-Travel day.

HOTEL RATES AND RESERVATIONS: Hotel Rates: \$42.00 plus tax per night Sunday through Thursday single or double occupancy (\$105.00 per guest room per night Friday and Saturday; \$185.00 per guest room per night for a 2 bedroom suite up to quad occupancy). Reservations must be made NLT 24 Aug 2013 by dialing 877-887-2261 and asking for the AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT/AFE RETIREES group rates. Reservation requests received after the 24 Aug 2013 noon cutoff will be confirmed on a space available basis at the prevailing rate. Each individual is required to provide a major credit card for first night's room and tax deposit, which will be charged in order to guarantee accommodations. Cancellation of hotel room without penalty must occur at least 72 hours prior to scheduled arrival. Penalty charge in the amount equal to first night room and tax will apply to cancellations received inside seventy-two (72) hours.

HOTEL CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT: Check-in time is after 3 p.m. and checkout time is 11 a.m. **Any changes from this policy will be subjected to an early check-in fee of \$12.00 and checkout fee equal to one-half of the daily room rate.**

REUNION RESERVATION: To register for the reunion you must send your registration form NLT 15 Jul 2013. Confirmation of your reservation will not be acknowledged unless requested. Reunion cancellation must be received NLT 31 Aug 2013 or there will be a loss of banquet and bus tour fees.

REUNION CHECK-IN: Look for the reunion check-in location in the hotel lobby to get your reunion package. Hospitality Suite opens at 5 p.m.

GOLF TOURNAMENT (Thursday, 26 Sep 2013): **This year's tournament has been moved to Thursday to avoid a conflict with the annual picnic.** If you plan on participating in the golf tournament please contact Ed MacKenzie via email at 2macks@bajabb.com or by phone at (702) 682-6485. **Ed needs a \$50 golf fee from each participant NLT 1 Sep 2013.**

PINOCHLE TOURNAMENT (Wednesday, 25 Sep 2013): This year's tournament is tentatively scheduled to be held Wednesday in the hospitality room.

LAS VEGAS BUS TOUR (Tuesday, 24 Sep 2013, 1-7 P.M.): In 1844 explorer John C. Fremont stopped at the big spring known as Las Vegas (Spanish for "the meadows"). After he published a description of it, travelers to California used it as a watering stop and in 1855 Mormon colonists built a fort here to link California and Utah. In 1905 the new railroad auctioned off lots to the public and that was the birth of modern Las Vegas. There is much more to the story and a very knowledgeable guide will relate to you a very interesting tale. You will visit the very sites where Las Vegas was born plus visit Fremont Street where tourism began and the location of the first gaming license in Nevada. This will be followed by a tour of the Strip and the history of each of the resorts. **Cost is \$51.00 per person. Must have 30 paid passengers minimum or your fee will be refunded.**

SHOPPING-MIRACLE MILE (Thursday Afternoon, 26 Sep 2013): Miracle Mile Shops at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino is a 1.2 mile retail/entertainment complex at the heart of the famed Las Vegas Strip featuring 170 specialty stores, 15 restaurants and 3 live entertainment venues. The center is home to PBR Rock Bar & Grill, boasting a Strip-side location with excellent food, drinks and world class bull riding; the affordable fashions of H&M; Sugar Factory, the sweet shop adored by Hollywood's hottest celebrities; surfing lifestyle retailer Billabong; GUESS by Marciano; Urban Outfitters; True Religion Brand Jeans; 15,000-square-foot bar and restaurant Cabo Wabo Cantina; Las Vegas' very own Sin City Brewing Co. as well as a multi-million dollar fountain show.

RAFFLE: We are accepting gifts/prizes for our tournaments and to raffle off at our banquet. Please bring your donations to the reunion with you or put them in the mail **NET 17 Sep and NLT 19 Sep 2013**. Address golf donations to Ed Mackenzie and raffle donations to Bob McElwain as follows:

Tuscany Suites & Casino, Attn: Ed MacKenzie or Bob McElwain (as appropriate) ALS/SE/AFE Reunion, 255 E. Flamingo Road, Las Vegas, NV 89169.

Thanks to Norman Lehner an iPad will be raffled off at the banquet. Tickets will sell for \$5 each or three for \$12.

IF YOU ATTENDED LAST YEAR'S REUNION, DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR NAME TAG. NEW NAME TAGS WILL ONLY BE ISSUED TO FIRST TIME ATTENDEES. GUEST NAME TAGS WILL BE ISSUED TO ANYONE WHO FORGETS TO BRING HIS/HERS.

Transportation To/From McCarran International Airport

Bell and Showtime are just a few of the companies that offer shuttle buses between the airport and the various Strip and downtown hotels. These buses usually cost around \$7 per person to Strip hotels and under \$10 per person to downtown hotels which makes them a lot cheaper than taxis. You can take care of your return trip to the airport by buying a round-trip shuttle bus ticket which offers some savings. They typically cost around \$13 for Strip hotels and \$17 for downtown hotels.

Whichever shuttle service you use, be sure to ask the driver for a telephone number to call for a pick-up when you have to return to the airport. Ask your driver how far ahead you should call for a pick-up. What you get in savings you give up in time. These buses will typically wait for the bus to fill before leaving which means it can take an up to an hour to get to your hotel. If you're more interested in saving time than saving money, take a taxi. Taxi rides generally average \$15 to Strip hotels and \$23 downtown plus tip.

Showtime-Open 24 hours <http://showtimetourslv.com>

To Strip hotels - \$7 one way; \$13 round trip
Downtown hotels - \$9 one way; \$17 round trip
(702) 895-9976

Bell Trans-Open 24 hours <http://bell-trans.com>

To Strip hotels - \$7 one way; \$13 round trip
To Downtown hotels - \$8.50 one way; \$16 round trip

Off-Strip hotels - \$8.50 one way; \$16 round trip
Walk-up limousine (6 passenger) - \$60+ per hr
Walk-up sedan (3 passenger) - \$50+ per hr
(800) 274-7433

**18th Annual USAF Aircrew Life Support/Survival Equipment/Aircrew Flight Equipment
Reunion**

September 23-26, 2013

Tuscany Suites & Casino

255 E. Flamingo Road, Las Vegas NV 89169

Registration Form

Registration includes one guest.

NAME (as you want it on your name tag): _____
PHONE NO: _____
E-MAIL: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____
NAME OF GUEST ATTENDEE: _____

HOTEL RESERVATIONS AND REUNION REGISTRATION

HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE DIRECTLY WITH THE HOTEL NLT August 24, 2013 BY CALLING 1-877-887-2261 AND ASKING FOR THE AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT/AFE RETIREE GROUP RATES.

ATTENTION DoD PERSONNEL: Individual DoD organizations are responsible for approving attendance to this event. If you are attending on official orders your reservations must also be made with the hotel. Registration and other fees must be pre-paid and sent to the address listed below.

REUNION REGISTRATION FEE (Covers name tags, picnic, and admin costs): **\$75.00**

LAS VEGAS BUS TOUR (30 people required) Number of People: _____ X \$51.00 = \$ _____

BANQUET: Number of People: _____ X \$55.00 = \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Reunion registration cancellations must be received by August 31, 2013 or there will be a loss of Banquet and Bus Tour fees. Hotel reservation cancellations must be made at least 72 hours prior to check-in to avoid a cancellation fee.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

The annual golf tournament will be held on Thursday, September 26, 2013.

Contact Ed MacKenzie to sign-up. Fee is \$50 per player.

Ed MacKenzie, P.O. Box 7025, Bunkerville, NV 89007

Phone: 702-346-4980 or 702-682-6485 E-Mail: 2macks@bajabb.com

Part of the reunion will be spent on documenting some of the history of the career field. If you have any historical information, equipment, or pictures that you would like to share with us please bring it with you.

Complete and mail this form along with a check or money order **not later than July 15, 2013** to:

**KEMPER KINCHEN
700 SOUTH RANGE ROAD
HAMMOND, LA 70403**

**CELL PHONE: 760-912-2806
HOME PHONE: 985-542-5205
EMAL: kbkinchen@gmail.com**