



# ***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/Flight Equipment business.*

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Congratulations to Retired Chief Greg Copeland for his selection as being recognized as one of four winners of the prestigious Spirit of the Four Chaplains Award. This award is presented each year to members of the Chaplain Service community who best represent the selfless service and religious diversity embodied by the legendary World War II chaplains of the U.S. Army transport ship USAT Dorchester. The Air Force Chaplain Service Awards program is designed to recognize, reward and promote excellence throughout the Air Force Chaplain Service. Individual awards are presented based on leadership and job performance, community involvement and significant self-improvement and are judged by a board of representatives outside the Chaplain Service.

And from Chief Martin Austin: "*Cope, Congrats on a well deserved award. You are still making a difference and we are very proud of all you do!*"

Below you will find a memorial to Frank Dougherty. I remember Frank best at Bitburg when Spang was closed and opened again under project "Puddle Jump". Frank took the lead for Life Support transition and reopened Spang. Strange now Bitburg is closed and Spang is really a big unit. I also remember Helene and all her work for Little League and the annual Bazaars. I also had the opportunity to work with Frank while he was at TAWC. He will be missed!

*You are so correct Tommy. It's hard to believe we have lost another wonderful Life Support person from our time. Frank was a good friend. Thanks for letting me know, he will be missed by all. Paul Swindell*

*You are right Tommy. I was stationed with Frank at USAFTAWC (Gary, Bobby, Jerry & Greg Dean). What a nice guy. Rest in Peace, Chief Dougherty. Jim Rooney*

*Thanks Tommy! Echoing Jim Rooney's sentiments from our assignment at USAFTAWC, Frank was a really great guy. I can still remember the pig roast he had when he made Chief. We started about 9:00 on a Friday night, drank beer all night and all the families joined us and ate roast pig on Saturday afternoon about 3:00. A 165 lb pig feeds a lot of people. A true professional! Regards, Jerry Miknis*

*It was my wonderful experience to serve with CMS Frank Dougherty "DOC" at the "USAFTAWC" at Eglin AFB, FL. "DOC" was the BEST OF THE BEST & will be missed & remembered for a life time. My prayers & my heart go out to his family. Robert E. Weaver (JAMA)*

The known Retirements since the last Newsletter are Dave Chittwood and Tracy Donahoo. Chief Bingman and Ted Poe are in place at Air Staff and ACC! Now that Dave is retired the "oldest" Chief will be Les

Davy, followed by Jimmy Jean and Steve Wyatt.

I had the opportunity to visit with Retired Chief Jim Hurst recently. Jim is still working as the Life Support Lead at Lockheed. His current aircraft is the F-35 (JSF). I feel sure that he is the “oldest” still working actively in a Life Support Shop. Coming in second would be Lee Wise who I thought had retired from his position at UAE but found out that he is now in Oman. Will these Life Supporters ever retire?

Orland Wilcox one of the pioneers of Life Support in the commercial sector has retired from Gentex. Prior to Gentex Orland was the Vice President of R&D at Scott Aviation and Sierra Engineering. Orland will be remembered for his design and development of the MBU-12/P oxygen mask combination breathing valve. Orland was also instrumental in the design and development of the current MBU-20 Mask. Tony Van Haastert (also of Scott, Sierra and Gentex) attended the retirement lunch.

Our Leadership at Langley and a few “retirees” taken at Chief Mike Valpey’s Pin On! (Beetle, Chris, Tracy, Bill, Ted & Mike).



## CHILI SEZ



The 2008 Life Support Reunion will be held at the River Palms Hotel Resort/Casino in Laughlin, NV. This is the hotel that we had our first reunion banquet way back in 1996! It was next door to Harrah's, remember? The dates for the reunion will be 29 Sep - 2 Oct. This reunion is shaping up to be one of our best for activities. This time we'll have the opportunity to attend a show, bowl if you like and/or take a bus tour to Las Vegas to do some shopping. We will also have our usual pinochle and golf tournaments.

The schedule of events is as follows: Monday, 29 Sept and Friday, 3 Oct are travel days. The golf tournament will be held Wednesday, 1 Oct at the Chaparral Country Club in Bullhead City. The green fees will be \$50 with cart per player. Tee time is 0730 with a shotgun start. Our pinochle tournament will also be held on Wednesday, 1 Oct after the golf tournament. The bus trip and banquet are scheduled for Thursday, 2 Oct.

If you plan on participating in the golf tournament please contact Ed MacKenzie via email at [2macks@hughes.net](mailto:2macks@hughes.net) or by phone at 702-682-6485. Ed needs the golf fees before 31 August so he won't have to pay for them out of his pocket. As always, we are accepting prizes for our tournament from all

who wish to donate. We desperately need the MAJCOMs and vendors to help us out. Prizes should be sent to:

Ed MacKenzie,  
255 South 2nd West St,  
Bunkerville, NV 89007

All former, retired, active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel working in the Aircrew Life Support/Aircrew Flight Equipment business, and their families are invited to attend. To register you must send in the attached registration form to KB Kinchen by the date indicated. The following information is provided for all who are attending for the first time:

- Laughlin is located 90 miles south of Las Vegas and is easily accessible via car or RV.
- Air travelers can fly directly into the Laughlin/Bullhead City Airport on many major airlines, commuter flights or private charters.
- Reservation cannot be made with hotel personnel (unless you are attending on official military orders). They must be made with KB!
- Confirmation of your reservation from KB Kinchen will not be provided unless asked for.
- Rooms will not be available for check-in until 3 PM, 29 Sep 08. Early check-in is allowed if your room is ready.
- A special area will be set-up in the hotel lobby from 2PM - 5PM for attendees to sign-in for the reunion. Check in at the desk and look for us in the lobby.
- After checking in, don't forget to stop by our hospitality room after 5PM.

The River Palms has a 65,000-square-foot casino with a new 300 seat bingo parlor, poker room, keno lounge, main casino pit with all the popular table games and more than 1,100 slot machines on three levels.

There are six themed restaurants to meet every taste and budget and six bars and lounges including The Bermuda Club. Relax in the outdoor pool/spa and indoor health/fitness club, complete with exercise equipment and free weights (massages available by appointment). Other amenities include a 24-hour gift shop, River Treasures jewelry, a beauty salon, free valet parking, car wash, airport shuttle, high-tech video arcade and acres of free covered parking.

The River Palms features a distinctively designed outdoor pool and spa. The Yacht Club offers Wave Runner Rentals for your enjoyment. Many guests enjoy a leisurely walk on River Palm's quarter mile River Walk, located on the banks of the Colorado River.

#### **DIRECTIONS**

The River Palms is located in Laughlin, along the Colorado River near the southern tip of the Nevada-Arizona border. Laughlin is 90 miles from Las Vegas and just a few short hours from Southern California and Arizona's metro population centers.

#### **FROM PHOENIX**

- US 93 north to I-40 west through Kingman.
- Take the Bullhead City / Las Vegas exit and turn right at the signal at the end of the exit ramp.
- Continue west taking the Highway 68 ramp toward Bullhead City / Laughlin. Highway 68 merges into Arizona Highway 95.
- Turn right at the Laughlin Bridge.
- Approximately 225 miles from Phoenix; 4 hours.
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#### **FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:**

- Take I-15 north to Barstow
- Take I-40 east to Needles, CA. Exit on River Road cutoff.

- Turn north for 22 miles on Needles Highway to Casino Drive
- Turn right into hotel
- Approximately 283 miles from Los Angeles; 5 hours.
- Approximately 335 miles from San Diego; 6 hours.

### **TRAVEL COST**

The present price of gas makes travel by car more expensive. The major factors are how many passengers are involved and how much time you have. It might be cheaper to fly than drive. AAA has a fuel cost calculator at [www.fuelcostcalculator.com](http://www.fuelcostcalculator.com) that will help you decide. Sure, you could estimate the cost of driving. But AAA will give you precise results based on the make and model of your car. You can also see the daily average gas price in different regions of the country. For example a roundtrip from Orlando, FL to Las Vegas, NV by car with a new Honda Accord would take an average 162.34 gal of gas at a cost of \$600.88 at today's price to make the 4,708 mile roundtrip. Taking into consideration driving an average of 500 miles a day for 9.5 days and staying at moderate priced motels in route which average \$50 to \$55 a day you are looking at about \$1100 total cost for the trip by car for two people. On the internet, an e-ticket for roundtrip fare from Orlando, FL to Las Vegas, NV can be purchased for \$375.00 to \$400 each for a 7 to 9 hour flight. The \$300 to \$400 savings for two people would more than pay for a rental car while there and save wear and tear on your car. The travel time saved would allow a longer stay in the Vegas and Laughlin area. A little shopping on the internet could result in a more enjoyable vacation at a lower price.

### **SAVE BIG MONEY AND HAVE A GREAT VACATION**

All DoD Affiliated personnel including active duty, Guard & Reserve and retirees

have the opportunity to take a great vacation with The Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC). The AFVC is a "Space Available" program offering the opportunity to take affordable condominium vacations at resorts around the world for only \$299 per unit per week. AFVC offers a variety of rental programs and options including condominium units that resort owners are not currently using, weekly resort condos in high-demand locations, nightly getaways, vacation homes, and special offers. For more information, visit the Armed Forces Vacation Club Web site, <http://www.afvclub.com>.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE FIELD**

*Hello, I am SMSgt Mike Lightner currently stationed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Operations Support Squadron, Elmendorf AFB, AK. In 2000, thanks to some prodding from Chief Holt, I took over as the PACAF lead on the ALSMS program. Within a few months I released the PACAF version of ALSMS. By the end of 2002 it was clear that I was the only person left working on the ALSMS program and I took over as the AF lead and the PACAF version was converted back over for AF use. Over the past 8 years there have been 6 more versions of ALSMS released. Thanks to the inputs I have received from the field and the integration of an automated e-mail based error reporting system the program has come along way. It now offers pop-up calendars and conditional formatting (turns dates red on forms and reports when overdue) in date blocks, integrated QA, overdue components reports, expanded tracking of aircrew equipment sizes and much more. Four or five years ago I was approached by the Army and even adapted a version of the program for their use. With the recent release of the new MS Vista operating system it looks like yet another version of ALSMS will be coming out soon.*

*This is significant only because it will most likely be the last one. Within the next few years ALSMS will be replaced by ALERTS and will no longer be required. Although the ALSMS program may no longer be in use it will go down in history as one of the longest lasting and cheapest database ever adopted for AF use. Now I'm not sure what Robert Reeves and his team was getting paid back in the late 80s to develop the program but I am guessing it was fairly close to nothing. On my end the total cost of over the past 8 years for tech support and program upgrades has been less then \$100. This is amazing when you consider program is currently used all over the world.*

*I agree with Gregg Mauel, none of us could have done what we have without help from the field. I have no idea how many broken lines of code my shops have helped me identify over the years and without shops all over the world stepping forward as Beta testers the program most certainly would not have made it this long. Finally, all the wonderful new ideas I have received from the field have truly made the program simpler to use and more powerful. My thanks go out to everyone for their help and support over the last 8 years. I will do my best not to let you down as we transition to ALERTS.*

*As we get ready to close the final chapter on the ALSMS program I do have one question, "why is it that no one reads the user manual before they call or e-mail asking for help?"*

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*Was just told about "our" site just this evening and, of course, spent a good portion of the evening checking it out. As I looked over the membership roster I saw 11 names of guys I spent assignments with over the years. The names, as I read them, all*

*brought a flood of memories rushing in, all of them good.*

*Names like "Blankenbaker" (Iceland), "Tom Frederick (Shaw), "Dave VanMeter" (Mt Home) etc, etc, etc. I would love to spend some time with each and every one of them. If the reunion is close to me this year I would do my best to attend. I see that others have been in places like Laughlin, Mesquite and Reno and as I live in Northern Utah I could do just that.*

*I think a lot of folks would confuse me with the late John Shields. I assure you I am not he as my name does not have the "S" on the end of it. I heard a lot about John when I was in the field but never had the pleasure of meeting him. I did however know and work with John Weir when stationed at Shaw AFB and he was at 9 AF, Great man and I agree that a good reference to him would be a "Gentle Giant". Most all of the folks I knew called me "Jack" instead of John.*

*I saw MSgt Larry Hixson's name on the list of folks you're trying to contact. Larry was assigned to the 388 TFW at Hill AFB and in fact retired from there. I haven't seen him in a couple of years but the last I knew he lives in Roy, Utah. I'll try to locate him and give him the website address.*

*The other name I came across were "Greg Dean" (LSO at Hill AFB), "John Crawford" (Luke AFB), Norm Crawford" (Luke and Hill AFBs), "Paul Cramer" (Hill AFB), "Chuck Goley" (Luke AFB), "John Nusbaum" (Mt Home AFB). Hey, any you guys see this gimme a shout at [jshield001@msn.com](mailto:jshield001@msn.com) John Shield*

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The following is an unofficial statement from Chief Chitwood's replacement, Jeff Bingman at HQ USAF:

*As of 31 Jan 08, Aircrew Life Support (1T1X1) and Survival Equipment (2A7X4) career fields merged to form the Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) (1P0X1) career field AFSC. The CSAF signed the Program Guidance Letter (PGL), dated 12 Mar 08, putting the "lid" on the merger implementation of AFE organized within the Operations Group. AFE personnel are authorized to wear the "Operations Support" occupational badge on their uniform. Full Operational Capability (FOC) of the merger for active duty will be declared no later than (NLT) 30 Sep 09. FOC timeline is currently estimated when personnel already in the field are qualified in AFE (1P0X1) duty positions. And, stand-up of a merged, and lengthened, technical training school is programmed for funding in FY10. Currently, AFE personnel graduate from one of two tracks at the 3-level technical training course both located at Sheppard AFB, TX either with a 1P031A suffix for the former Aircrew Life Support course or a 1P031B suffix for the former Survival Equipment course. Once they become a 5-level through OJT at their first duty station the suffix goes away, (i.e. 1P051). This merger was two years in the making, and well underway as planned.*

*Jeffrey Bingman, CMSgt, USAF  
USAF Aircrew Flight Equipment Career  
Field Manager  
HQ USAF/A3O-AT, Pentagon*

Jeff also stated that he is not aware of any AF Life Support slots converting to civilian slots as indicated in our last newsletter. He states, "I saw the website you sent around several months ago and it looks like whoever posted all those jobs got their "wires

*crossed". There may be one or two here and there, but not that mass listing that was posted. FYI, the merger did not generate any "extra" civilian slots."*

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I also heard from Nate Goolsby, former PACAF Life Support staff member who stated that he is currently doing JROTC at a high school in Lincoln, CA.

### **THANKS**

Thanks to TSgt Larry Gerberg at the school house and retired MSgt Randy Hill who is a Program Manager for the ACES Seat Enhancements Team at Brooks City-Base, TX for helping out with our historic list of Life Support Tech School instructors. We also thank retired Chief Mike Freebury who is working for Battelle as an Aircrew Flight Equipment Researcher for his help with the HQ Assignment History Project. Mike stated that he has about 100 e-mails and probably 300-400 pages of information that he has to put together in support of the project.

### **SCHOOL HOUSE VISIT**

I got to spend about 15 minutes at the school house with TSgt Gerberg on Friday, 9 May while TDY to Sheppard AFB for a day. Things have changed and I got to see first hand some of what's new at the school house. For example, it sure was strange to see a room full of sewing machine!

I think I have found a place for some of the historical documents that you all have donated to me over the years and it looks like the school house is the place for it. When TSgt Gerberg told me that they are setting up some space to display Life Support equipment and documents from the past I immediately asked if they would be

interested in some of the items that I have and of course he said yes. TSgt Gerberg also donated some additional class pictures which included photos of a Life Support and Survival Equipment merger ceremony that they had. Look for these photos to be on the web site soon.

### **IN MEMORY OF**

#### **Master Sergeant Paul M. Francis**



Paul M. Francis passed from this life as he knew it and went home to be with his Maker on May 9, 2008 Paul was born and raised in Sheboygan, WI, in 1932, attended St. Dominic's and North High School,

then joined the United States Air Force. He retired 23 years later in 1974 with the rank of Master Sergeant. He was a Life Support and Survival instructor for most of his AF career.

During his Air Force career and while stationed at Ramey AFB in Puerto Rico, Paul met and married one year later, the love of his life, Vicenta Miralles Ramos Torres on October. 3,1953. They have two sons, Richard and Gregory, both married and currently living in Northern and Southern CA respectively. Paul was talented in both photography and music as was his father. He is also survived by his brother Joseph N. (Eileen) of Sheboygan Falls, WI and sister Corrine Scherg, (Dewey) of Sheboygan, WI. He was preceded in death by his Mother, Genevieve and his Father, Joseph Jr. Francis As per his request, Paul will be cremated and laid to rest with full Military Honors in the Veterans Cemetery in Boulder City, Nevada

#### **Chief Master Sergeant Francis "Frank" Dougherty**

Chief Master Sergeant Frank Dougherty, US Air Force Retired passed away at his residence Tuesday 1 Jan 08. During his 28 year military career Frank was awarded numerous prestigious awards and decorations including the Bronze Star and two Meritorious Service Medals. Frank's assignments included Superintendent of the 52<sup>nd</sup> TFW Spangdahlem Germany, 33<sup>rd</sup> TFW at Eglin, USAFE Command Superintendent, and Command Inspector General, and Life Support Project manager at USAF Tactical Warfare Center at Eglin.

Survivors include his beloved wife of 50 years Helene, daughter Helene and sons Joseph and Mark, their families, children and grandchildren.

### **GET WELL**

Louise Braue is home from the hospital just in time for Mother's Day. After surgery and six weeks of therapy she will be ready to go! George says Lou has handled the situation well and is really a "Great Trooper" but we all know that. George is currently the Chief Cook and Bottle washer. Best Wishes to you both. Contact George at [gcbassoc@aol.com](mailto:gcbassoc@aol.com)