

# *THE LIFE SUPPORT NEWSLETTER*

*June 99 Edition Tommy Tompkins and Bob McElwain, Reporters*

Hope that everyone has had a good six months since our last newsletter. One thing for sure, there is a place for a lot of us old Life Supporters after retirement from the blue suit with employment with the government or industry. Chief Dave Van Meter retired AF, retired Civil Service and now working at the C-17 SPO, along with retired Chief Stan Smigiel. Al Foy, retired AF is now back in the F-16 SPO at his old job leading the Radar Team. Retired Chief Chuck Hunnefeld is currently working for the folks who make the Russian K-36 ejection seat in the US (more about Chuck later), IBP Aerospace Group Inc. Retired Chief Joe Lynch is working for Survival Inc and Scot. Retired Chief Joe Diamond is now at the Pentagon as a SES and the Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Weapons. Retired Chief Jim Brookhouser is running the ranges at Moody AFB GA and recently hired retired MSgt Dave Kilmer. Retired Chief Ellie Hanley is working for Scot and Retired Chief Tim Morrow is also working for Survival Incorporated. Retired Chief Bill Vincent and retired MSgt John Fair are working at Conax. Retired Chief Skip Clawson and retired MSgt Leo Unruh are at Gentex. Retired Chief Bill Wood is consulting for H. Koch and Sons and Gentex. Retired SMS John Damron is still at ILC Dover as is SMS(R) Skip Wilson. Retired Chiefs Bud Glass, Jim Ronney, James Calloway and retired MSgt Bob Utley are all working at Brooks AFB TX. Retired Col Cal Crochet is working for Normal Air Garret and helping ACR. Retired Col George Braue is working for H. Koch and Sons, and retired Col Terry Corrigan is still with Scott. Retired Col Kenny Troup is still active at the F-16 SPO. Also working Civil Service is SMSs(R) Bob Weaver at Eglin AFB, FL; Tom Phillips at Tyndall AFB, FL; and Bob McElwain and KB Kinchen are both working at Edwards AFB CA. KB is in the Test Life Support Shop and Bob is at NASA. CMSs(R) Art Wade, John Wesson and Ray Turbyfield are also in Civil Service. CMS(R) Dennis Struck is working Logistics Civilian Personnel at Randolph AFB TX. Dennis is working a Palace Acquire Program that is hiring folks. I am sure that there are others but just wanted every one to know that there is life after retirement if you still want to work. If I forgot you give me a call or email me at [tombob@shawneelink.com](mailto:tombob@shawneelink.com). I will add you in the next newsletter. I would really like to hear from you all. It surely helps to put this newsletter together.

Chief Rob Bentley provided the following:

**SUBJECT: SERVICEMEMBER'S GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (SGLI) AND VETERAN'S GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (VGLI)**

1. REQUEST THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION BE PUBLICIZED IN YOUR BASE NEWSPAPER. THIS INFORMATION IS QUOTED FROM THE FEBRUARY 1999 SUPPLEMENT TO THE BOOK, "WHAT EVERY VETERAN SHOULD KNOW".

2. "IMPROVED DEATH BENEFIT INSURANCE: CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAMS, RECENTLY SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT CLINTON, NOW ALLOW TERMINALLY ILL VETERANS TO RECEIVE ACCELERATED DEATH BENEFITS. THE VETERANS PROGRAMS ENHANCEMENT ACT ESTABLISHED AN OPTION FOR THE VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) TO PAY THESE BENEFITS UNDER THE SGLI AND VGLI PROGRAMS. THE OPTION ALLOWS TERMINALLY ILL SGLI AND VGLI POLICYHOLDERS TO RECEIVE AS MUCH AS HALF OF THEIR COVERAGE, UP TO \$100,000 DURING THEIR LIFETIME." THIS BENEFIT APPLIES TO RETIRED OR SEPARATED VETERANS WHO HOLD SGLI OR VGLI POLICIES. IT DOES NOT APPLY TO ACTIVE DUTY PERSONNEL. VETERANS WANTING TO CLAIM THIS BENEFIT SHOULD PROVIDE A LETTER TO THE OFFICE OF SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE FROM THEIR ATTENDING PHYSICIAN STATING THE VETERAN IS TERMINALLY ILL. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THIS OR OTHER VA BENEFITS CONTACT YOUR NEAREST VA OFFICE.

The following is from Dennis Struck if you are interested in working Civil Service and qualify:

## **PALACE ACQUIRE RECRUITING**

Civilian Careers for Outstanding Scholars

The AF Civilian Personnel Center at Randolph AFB TX is currently recruiting personnel under the Palace Acquire outstanding scholar program for civil Service intern positions at the five (5) Air Logistics Centers (Hill AFB; Tinker AFB; Robins AFB; Kelly AFB; and McClellan AFB). The positions start at GS-07 (one year), promote to GS-09 (one year), and finally to GS-11 through the 3-year intern program, after which they would continue service as GS-11.

The job series currently being recruited are for GS-343 Logistics Management; and GS-2010 Inventory Management. Minimum qualification requirements are a four-year Bachelors degree with an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.45 or higher. GPA cannot include any ungraded hours. Also being considered for this program are military veterans with a 30% or greater disability verified by the Veterans Administration. Interested applicants can call 1-800-558-1404 and ask for application packet LG99-01.

## **MOVING ON**

Both Chief Gary Winchester and Al Loving are retiring this year and Chief Tommy Marshall has relocated from Brooks AFB TX to Randolph AFB TX as the CEM for AETC replacing Chief Hunnefeld. I had the opportunity to attend Chief Hunnefeld's retirement earlier this year. What a show! Each retirement that I attend out does the previous one. The staff at AETC Life Support did a bang up job. The retirement party was well attended and I got to see and visit with many old friends. Steve Ulosevich, James Calloway, Al King, Cal Crochet, John Fair, Joe Lynch, Jim Rooney, Dennis Struck, Skip Clawson, Bill Wood, Bill Vincent, all of the Active MAJCOM Chiefs and several of the Chief selectees. Chief Tommy Marshall was the Master of Ceremonies and did an outstanding job. Presentations to Chuck and family were well thought out and the final presentation of a full Chief Head was exceptional! The Official retirement ceremony was as professional as any that I have ever witnessed, this sentiment was expressed by all who attended. To see over twenty Life Support Chief's and Chief Selectees, in dress uniform paying respect to Chief Chuck was to say the least, eye watering. Good Luck Chuck.

Cheers and Keep in Touch Tommy

## **CHILI SEZ**

Well it's that time again. Time to put together another reunion and newsletter. I want to start by thanking everyone who sent in stamps (Bob Weaver, Jim Jennings, and Jim Llewellyn) or money for stamps (Cesare Bruno, Leo Gomez, Don Bock, Ed Gagliardi, Maynard Fielding, Jim Rooney, and Dick Traufeld).

When I volunteered to help out with the newsletter I had no idea the address list would grow to be as large as it is. To get a letter out twice a year takes up a lot of my time and sometime my money (we don't always have enough of it to pay for stamps, envelopes and the cost to publish the newsletter). If we have to mail you a copy of the

newsletter then please help us out by donating a book of stamps. One book of stamps from everyone who has not contributed will go a long way.

## CMSGT JOHN SHIELDS' BUST

Contributions for the bust of John Shields have not been what we had expected. So far we only have \$400. If we don't get the money needed by this December we will cancel the project and return the contributions.

## NEW MEMBERS/RETIREEES

Welcome **Al Wenzelburger**, and **Bob Utley** to the LS Retirees Group. These guys sent in their Life Support History form and are now added to our address list. Some of you out there have not sent in your history form and I'm glad you waited. It's been a problem finding time to re-type all the information gathered so far. Any volunteers out there?

If you have not sent in your history form please do so by e-mailing it to me in the format suggested on our web page. If you don't have e-mail then put the info (name, address, rank, and a chronological listing of all your life support assignments) in an envelope and mail it to me. My address is Bob McElwain, 17149 Forest Hills Drive, Victorville, CA 92392. The intent is to put all the info in a file and add it to our web page. The file will be password protected so only members can access it. I'm also considering password protecting the address list that's currently on our web page. What do you think? Should I do it? If I do the file will be in Microsoft Excel. Do you have Excel on your computer?

Active duty life supporters are welcome to join us however, your life support history will not be added to the file until you are officially separated or retired. This is to keep from making changes every time you PCS or get promoted.

Timmy Morrow was in Kadena last month and found another old life supporter, **Dave Maguire**. Way to go Tim, can you find some more? Thanks TSgt Bechen of the 63<sup>rd</sup> FS for sending in the names and phone numbers of three retirees, **Bill Baker**, **Steve Hall**, and **Eddie Green**. All of these new members have been added to our address list, however they need to send in their history form. Do any of you other active duty troops out there know the whereabouts of any retired life supporters?

## CHIEF'S REUNION

If you are one of or know any of the original people promoted to CMSgt back in 1959 then be advised that there will be a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration held at Barksdale AFB on 1 Dec 99. If interested contact CMSgt Higging at DSN 781-4447.

## **COLD WAR RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE**

You all have played a part in the Cold War victory and deserve this certificate. If you apply, you will receive a certificate suitable for framing from the Department of Defense thanking you for your service and sacrifices to the country during the Cold War. For more call (703) 275-6279.

## **AWARD WINNERS**

Congratulations to the following MAJCOM Life Support Civilian of the year winners:

- \* HQ AFSOC: **John J. Lewis**, 24 STS, Ft Bragg, NC
- \* HQ AFMC: Our own, **Kemper B. Kinchen**, 412<sup>th</sup> OSS, Edwards AFB, CA

## **NEW SMGTs**

Congratulations to the following new SMS selectees:

Mike Freebury (AMC)

Jeff Bingman (AFMC)

Linda Bloomer (AETC)

Nate Goolsby (USAFE)

Bill Nisbet (AETC)

Steve Wyatt (ACC)

## **MAIL CALL**

As always, we welcome your letters and e-mail and will print a selection in each issue of the newsletter. The following mail was received and selected:

Hi Tommy, this is **Ed MacKenzie**. My wife Wilma and I have been on the road for the last two years in a motor home. While we enjoyed it very much it is good to finally settle down. We have bought a home in Bunkerville NV. You say where the hell is Bunkerville; well it is just three miles south of Mesquite NV on the Arizona border just off I-15. If you can't find it on a map with my description you are in trouble. Anyway we just wanted you to know where we were and that we are still hanging around. Please keep us in mind when you or someone sends out the invitations to the next reunion. We sure would like to make the next one. You can put my address and phone # as well as e-mail address in the newsletter. Tell every one we said hello and hope to see them all at the reunion. Our mailing address is:

Ed & Wilma MacKenzie

4012 S.Rainbow K 731

Las Vegas NV. 89103

Tel (702) 346-4980

Cell # (702) 682-6485

E-mail: 2macks@sisna.com

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Let me introduce myself to you. I'm now 65 years old and am proud to say that. I was in the second class of the Rescue & Survival School at Chanute AFB in the fall of 1953. We went there to be aircraft mechanics but they came around recruiting guys for the new school that was starting up. After graduation and leave, we were loaded into a C-46 and taken to Stead AFB, NV for 15 days of E&E field survival training. We had two and a half days of rations (anything else that was needed was taken from land). The snow in the mountains was waist deep. After graduation we were transported back to Stead AFB in a convoy. I returned to Chanute AFB in a C-46, then I received orders for O'Hare Field. Other assignments include Tyndall AFB, Greenland, McCoy AFB, Griffis AFB, and Udorn Royal AFB, Thailand. I retired 31 July 1973 and since then have been a Teamster for over 20 years. I enjoy the newsletter very much and was glad to see that John Wesson moved up in the ranks. He and I worked together at McCoy. I am proud of my time in the Air Force and in Life Support. I saw many changes take place and I know that many more have been

made since I left. I would love to go to a Life support shop today and see how they operate. However, since there are none close by I will just have to remember. The history of life support is great! I think you all are on the right track by trying to get as much past info as possible. I know there are a lot of great stories out there. **James Jennings**

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Oscar E. Norberg and myself started as Parachute Rigger Course Instructors in 1949 and then went through the 594 MOS / 922xx conversion. I also assisted with the development of the initial and follow on P.E. Survival Training Officer Course (S510420 / 0ZR1515A) and was the initial instructor for those courses. I left the arena of instructing in the officer course in June 1958 and served as the civilian instructor supervisor for the 3ABR92230 P.E. Specialist course (Jun '58 - Aug '67). **Don Bock**

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I was playing around on the internet and ran across the Life Support site. Couldn't believe my eyes. I looked down the address list and saw a few names that brought back long ago memories. Those days as a 922X0 were some of the best I had in the Air Force. The work was hard on the trash haulers but it was rewarding. I have always thought it prepared me for what came later. After my back got screwed up so that lifting was out of the question I had to figure out what to do with the rest of my life. That's when I retrained in to Management Engineering. I went back to school. Completed a Masters and ...well as they say the rest is history. When I looked down your list and saw names like Mike Saint (he and I worked together at Charleston), Paul Swindell from USAFE and Jack Parkhurst, I knew I had to get back to my roots. So, please add me to your membership. **Al Wenzelburger**

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I'm 100% retired and enjoying life in Spain. I retired after 26 years in the AF, then taught school and worked in the office of a DoDDS school in Madrid for 13 years. When they closed the base I got a job with DLA in Getafe, Spain. When they offered some of us old folks an early retirement I took it. We have a 52' fishing boat that I have crewed out, not much money in this but all the fish I can eat. We enjoy sailing, and touring lighthouses, or just sitting on the terrace with a good glass of white wine looking at the sea. **Brad Fielding**

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As you might know I came down with Parkinson's and MS a few years ago and missed last year's reunion due to health problems. However, I recently had a brain operation called a palidotomy where they go in with a small probe and burn out a tiny piece of your brain. This controlled the shaking and joint stiffness. The operation was a 100% unqualified success! I am almost as good as new. I still have the diseases of course, but the side effects such as shaking have gone. In fact, my golf game has come back and as always the fish are still hitting. **Mike Hampton**

*Note from Tommy: Send Mike an e-mail at kh12252@navix.net. I know that he will appreciate hearing from you.*

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I've had the honor to work with some legends in our career field such as Otis Jackson, Wendell Sanders, Tom Prezelski, and John Wesson just to name a few. I look forward to future correspondence from both retired and active life support members I have served with. Last but not least, thank you for everything you have done and are continuing to do for our wonderful career field and people. **SMSgt(s) Stephen Wyatt, HQ ACC/IG**

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Another letter came from **Andy Graves** who is on his way to Vilnius, Lithuania working for the Department of State as a General Services Officer. Andy sends a big thank you to all for the support, letters, phone calls, prayers, flowers, "survival kits" and e-mails sent in support of his wife's 6 months of chemotherapy treatments.

**Jeff Worsham** e-mailed me and stated that he retired four years ago, returned to college and got his BS in Criminal Justice. He is currently working for State Farm Insurance as a claim's representative.

## REUNION

As usual the reunion will be held in Laughlin, NV on 27 - 30 Sept 99. We are switching hotels this year to the Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino located at the north end of Casino Drive. We invite you to come meet old friends and to see and hear what's new in life support. Remember that reservations must be made with KB and he will not mail out confirmation of your reservation unless asked for. See the reunion registration form on this web site for additional information.



Past support from civilian contractors for the hospitality room at the reunion has been great. This year promises to be even better so don't miss it! Those of you who fail to come will not be there to protect yourself from all the bad things that will be said about you.

## LESSONS LEARNED

TSgt David Guenther, 62FS at Luke AFB is attempting to improve his safety program for the new troops. He's looking for "There I was" stories or first hand accounts of past accidents/incidents in life support. He wants to know if there are any "old timers" out there with some war stories that he can pass on to the younger troops? Send your story to me and I'll see that he gets it. By the way, he promises not to use names.

### *LOST LIFE SUPPORTERS*

Former **Staff Sgt Diana D. Makar**, of Sedro Woolley, Wash., died Sept. 4, 1998. Her assignments include RAF Lakenheath, England; Blytheville AFB, Ark. and Loring AFB, Main.

A Note from Chief Gale Bradish to Tommy follows:

A while back I heard that **Saul Valardi** had died of a heart attack. Paul Cramer sent me an email today confirming that he did. Saul was at McClellan AFB, CA for several years in charge of the "Connie" Life Support Shop. He retired because of medical reasons and lived in Sacramento.

## SPECIAL REQUEST

All active duty life support personnel are requested to extend a personal welcome to the retired and former life supporters in your local area. Let's make reunion week (27-30 Sep 99) " Life Support Retirees Week". Put an ad in your base and local newspapers inviting ex-life support personnel in your community out to your shop. Show them around; let them see how a shop of today operates. To help them feel at home, put away the computer and break out the old status board and grease pencil. Have the floors highly buffed (I know you all have janitorial service and no longer do this yourselves) and leave the buffer in the corner so they can see it and get a feel of what it used to be like. If they can't attend the reunion and be with their old family, let's invite them out so they can be with their new family.

If any of you retired or ex-life supporters don't see an invitation in your local paper late this summer, call the public affairs office at your nearest base, tell them you want to visit life support. You'll be surprised at the attention you'll get.

Hopefully, I'll see you at the reunion,

Chili