

THE LIFE SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

May 2000

Greetings; we have had a very active six months since the last newsletter. The Internet has really been active and at last count we have over 200 on the e-mail list. As you know this really helps for the mail. In addition all of the MAJCOM's have been forwarding the Newsletter and other interest items to the troops. We have had several retirements announced and promotions. Steve Culbreth has retired from his position as Air Combat Command Life Support Requirements Functional Manager. It was in this last assignment where Chief Culbreth really hit his stride; helping achieve the first Life Support Program Element (PE) that gives the Air Force Life Support community it's own "funding line" at Air Staff level. He was also instrumental in developing and more importantly "getting approved" the first ever umbrella Life Support Operational Requirements Document (ORD). This new in-place ORD will allow the Life Support community to evaluate new emerging equipment and technologies. It cuts out what has been a 2 to 3 year approval process to develop; coordinate, and get approved a specific ORD to look at a specific piece of equipment or technology. The good news is that Steve's life support knowledge and talents will not be lost because he is currently working at HQ ACC as a contractor and will still be working life support issues! Good luck Steve. Steve's replacement in the Requirement Position is Chief Randy Loving.

Chief Rob Bentley also retired and I along with Al Loving, Bill Wood, and Tim Morrow had the opportunity to attend. The AMC Staff did an exceptional job in setting up and running the Retirement Ceremony. As I have said before each of these retirements that I am privileged to attend just gets better. The Special Flag Folding ceremony was outstanding. Bob McElwain has added it on the Life Support Web page. Rob's accomplishments were many and I think he holds the record for being recognized over the years as the Outstanding Life Support Technician, Superintendent and Command Manager. His time

as a "Military Training Instructor was recognized by MSgt Bill Beckett in full Military Instructor Uniform. In the words of MG Williams, AMC Director of Operations "the next generation of Air Force Leaders will certainly profit from your strong, positive leadership. As with Steve we will be seeing Rob in retirement as he is working for the Bellville Boot Company and will be at SAFE and other life support meetings. Chief Rich Robichaud now heads up AMC. Other retirements announced are Chief Rob Darter and MSgt Rick Cox at Brooks. I hear that Al King will replace Rob Darter and MSgt Jim Craft has replaced Rick Cox. The new Senior Master Sergeants this year are David Brown at Fairchild, Lee Hawkins at Nellis, Robert Manning at Davis Monthan, Richard Schneider at McGuire, Steve Skaggs at Langley and Theodore Torrence at Elmendorf. Congratulations to all!

We now have two active duty troops at Wright Patterson working in the Labs. MSgt Brian Grattan is the Superintendent Biodynamics and Acceleration and MSgt Mike Sedillo is Superintendent of Test and Evaluation of Night Vision Systems.

We have also had some bad news in the loss of two very important life supporters. Chief Pat Burke was laid to rest with full military honors in Seymour Indiana on Monday 7 February 2000. A 10 person Honor Flight provided military Honors from Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio. Pat's father and brothers were very appreciative of the military presence and appreciated all of the condolences. Pat was a special son, a special person and a super Life Supporter. In addition to retiring as the Chief Enlisted Manager at MAC/AMC Pat also taught many years at the Life Support Officers Course and his impact will be felt for many years. Family and friends will miss him. Life support family members in attendance were, Greg and Jane Dean, Al Loving, Ray Blanchett, Tom and Polly Tompkins and Mike Carroll.

Albert J. Young passed away 23 March 00. A.J. served in both the US Navy and US Air Force and was retired from the US Government Civil Service. The last eight years of his civil service duty, A.J. served as the Chief of the Personnel Equipment and Escape Systems Division within the San Antonio Air Logistics Center (SA-ALC), Kelly AFB, Texas. During this time, he was the catalyst of numerous USAF life support equipment and egress systems improvement and modernization

programs. After retirement A.J. remained active in SAFE and represented several leading companies in the area of Life Support Systems and Equipment. A.J. has always been a strong proponent of aircrew life support systems, equipment and safety. A.J. can be best eulogized as a true gentleman and an exceptional friend to all who knew him.

As usual I have been extremely lucky to be in a position to really keep in touch. The letters have not been as many but the Internet has taken its place. Still time for a few calls and or visits with Ed Chewning, Roger May, Dave Curran, Jimmy Cartwright, Arlan "Ed" Rappe, Hal Stamp, Danny Keith, John Damron, Tim Morrow, Durrell Bess, Al Loving, Bill Wood, Skip Clawson, Jerry Miknis, Paul Swindell, Kenny Troup, John Patti, and even got to visit with Bob McElwain at NASA. If you ever get in the area be sure and give him a call. The Life Support Shop there is a virtual history of Life Support Equipment and he is very proud of the shop. Also got an outstanding tour of the Life Sciences Lab at Brooks conducted by Jim Hodges. Once again if you are in that area its really interesting.

In closing we have several Life Supporters who really would appreciate calls, e-mails, or letters. David Heitman is recovering from an operation and can be reached at HEIT101@aol.com. Richard Traufeld is home from a 7day stay in the hospital to have a feeding tube put in and can be reached at baltra@bellsouth.net. Skip Clawson talked with Tom Lujan and he is not doing real well. Any of the guys who know him might want to drop him a few words to give him a little encouragement. He told us he is fighting cancer as well as other health problems. Skip noticed his spirits really picked up when he talked with him about the guys at the last Exec and about times at Chanute. So maybe a card or call to let him know we are thinking about him may be in order. Tom is at Box 1217 3700 N. Capitol St. N.W. Washington DC 29317. Phone 202.723.7980.

So as you can see the life support career field is in good shape. We have operational types at Air Staff and at the Air Force Research Labs, and after many years we have our own Program Element to defend for funding. And I finally got the first of, and I hope many more Army Life Supporters interested. Jerry Johnson is a retired Army Helicopter Pilot and Aircrew Life Support Equipment (ALSE) Specialist (What a

combination!) and is very knowledgeable of all things Army. Jerry works out of the Fort Rucker area and can be reached at jerryj@snowhill.com

In closing, Polly and I hope to see all of you at the reunion or if not let me hear from you snail mail or electronically so we can keep this newsletter and comradeship growing.

Cheers and keep in touch,

Tommy

CHILI SEZ

I hope everyone is healthy, happy and ready for reunion 2000. After a lot of thought it has been decided to have this year's reunion at our usual place, Harrah's Hotel/Casino in Laughlin, NV from 18 - 21 September. All former, retired, active duty, guard, reserve, and civilian contractor personnel in the Aircrew Life Support 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. If this will be your first reunion remember the following:

- 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 will not be mailed out unless asked for.

- Rooms will not be available for check-in until 3 PM, 18 Sep 00. 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 reunion attendees to sign-in.

- After checking in, don't forget to stop by our hospitality room after 5PM for some libations and snacks.

FROM OUR READERS

Thanks to everyone who sent in letters, post cards, historical information, e-mails, etc. Below are some of the e-mails that were received during the past 12 months.

I was just surfing the web when I came across your web site for retired/ex PE folks. Though I did not retire, I found many names of wonderful people that I had worked with in the years gone by. Sitting next to me is my brother-in-law who is a retired MSgt and a career PE person (Walter Ortiz). His last assignment was as the superintendent of the March AFB PE shop (SAC side). Thanks for a great web site. Bob Moir

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I had 105 days of terminal leave to take when I retired. My wife and I drove our motorcycle from Anchorage, Alaska to Las Vegas, NV. We put on over 11,000 miles in six weeks before I returned to Anchorage. It was a blast! I cannot wait to do it again! After retirement I worked for a company called CTG, Computer Task Group. I was a Desktop Support Analyst and was contracted out to Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to maintain their desktop computers. It was an excellent job. I traveled the entire length of the pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez, Alaska. I was able to see a part of the state that I have never seen before. Currently I am working for the USAF as the Forman of the Survival Equipment shop at Elmendorf AFB. I really like the job. However, working on the maintenance side of the house is a little different. MSgt (Ret) Antonio (Tony) Sanchez

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I retired from the USAF in 1979. I then got a job with the Corps of Engineers, in Washington State, working at a hydroelectric dam on the Columbia River (Chief Joseph Dam) I plan on retiring next year and joining the ranks of the "triple dippers". For those of you that hadn't heard, my wife, Marilyn died several years ago after a 5-year battle with cancer. I really enjoyed the June '99 edition of the newsletter. I recognized the names of a few people I used to know...like Al Wenzleburger and John Wesson. I was stationed at Bitburg AB, Germany with Wesson and "fast Eddie" Chewing. A note to "Tom Tom" Tompkins, You're doing a great job, keep up the good work. I'm on my way to buy another book of stamps. Mike Saint

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I served in the USAF from 1983 to 1987. I was stationed at Loring AFB from Feb '84 till my discharge in Aug 87. The time I was in service with the life support gang hold memories that I will never forget. I worked with some of the wildest, craziest, and calmest people I have ever known. But the one thing they all had in common is that they were good people. I still miss each and every one of them. Since I got out of service I have had a very good and blessed life, thanks to the Lord. I have no regrets for leaving, but I miss my people. I have been on line for about a year now and have tried to find some of my friends with no luck. Just this past week I stumbled across your web page and my heart skipped a beat. I have already made contact with one of my friends and have noticed a few more on your address list. I know this is longwinded, but I need to preface this next statement to show its importance to me. I just want to thank you for your time, effort and the hard work that you have put into the web site. I am sure you know what this means to me being that we have stood in the same shoes before. I have taken enough of your time so I will go now. I just wanted to express my gratitude to you for creating this link to my past. Jeff Hines

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It is a great thing what you guys are doing with the newsletter. To include contractors is an honor for all of us who know and try to help the progress of the Life Support community and in turn the crewmember. I was introduced to the Life Support community 14 years ago while trying to sell vacuum packed sleeping bags to Timmy Morrow at Elmendorf AFB. (Of course, he found the biggest guy he could to try it out...with boots on.) We hired Rick Stewart and it was downhill from there. With many trips to Alaska, SAFE, Life Support conferences and other strange get togethers; I have been lucky enough to meet some great individuals. Tommy, you're one, but haven't had the chance to see you for a few years. I've seen Timmy Morrow around. Ron Ziegler, a beautiful person, good friend, and sorely missed, was kind enough to include me on the mailing list. I can't stop by just mentioning those few; others include John Shields, George Brau, Kenny Marks (Still need that survival gear?), Dennis Struck (weren't we going hunting?), and Cal Crochet (thanks for the leads). There are many others that I can't put faces with names anymore (I need to go to the reunion). As long as we have something good to sell, the life support troops want to see it. They have made the contractor

*very welcome in their community. Again, thanks for including the contractors on your lists.
Bob LaFrance, Pacific Scientific Energetic Materials Co.*

OTHER LOST LIFE SUPPORTERS

In an e-mail from MSgt (Ret) Larry Garcia he stated, "Retired TSgt Carl Shellinkhout died a few months ago."

Another life supporter that is no longer with us is SMSgt (Ret) Jack Paulson. He passed away on 13 April 00. Below are some words on Jack.

*SMSgt Jack Paulson was the Eielson AFB Superintendent during the four years while I was the PACAF Life Support Chief and there is no question that he was one of PACAF's finest. He and his Life Support team always focused on Priority One -- "keeping his aircrews safe". As one of our senior superintendents, he was always ready to help out. Our staff gladly used him as an IG augmentee, JTFFA investigator, and mentor for our high turnover base superintendents. We knew that he would do a great job. During our PACAF workshops in Korea, Jack always supported our efforts to build PACAF Life Support esprit d'corps. I trusted that he was an extension of our PACAF Staff and a positive influence and helped us keep the team safe especially during our green and brown bean tours. Jack loved the outdoors and had as many fish stories (most true) as anyone I know. We always enjoyed his fishing success, especially when he sent us a care package of smoked salmon. I know that everyone that knew Jack Paulson feels the same way as I do, he was a professional that helped lift up the life support program to new levels, a trusted friend, and will be sorely missed by our Community.
Chuck Hunnefeld*

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Jack was one of the NCOICs when I got to Alaska in 1985. He was outstanding in every respect. Even as a youngster (as Johnny Nevada would say) Jack often stepped up to the plate as the superintendent when Jim Price was out of pocket. He was a professional with a passion. He loved all that life support stood for.
Timmy Morrow

LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT ACRONYMS

In closing I'd like to challenge everyone attending this year's reunion to come prepared to answer the following questions. A special prize will be awarded to the person with the most correct answers. Here is

the question. Everyone knows that the acronyms PLD, BA, SA, LPU and LRU mean Personnel Lowering Device, Back Automatic, Seat Automatic, Life Preserver Unit, and Life Raft Unit respectively, but what does the following mean (if anything):

"AN/URC" as in radios?

"AN/PRC" as in radios?

"AN/URT" as in beacons?

"CNU" as in survival kit?

"CSU" as in g-suit?

"CWU" as in exposure suit/coveralls?

"F" as in 20 man raft?

"HGU" as in helmet?

"M" as in survival rifle/fire starter?

"MBU" as in oxygen mask?

"MA" as in sun goggles/clothing?

"MB" as in survival kit?

"MD" as in survival kit?

"ML" as in survival kit?

"MK" as in flares/desalter kit/mirror?

"MC" as in knife?

"PCU" as in lowering device/torso harness?

"SRU" as in minimum survival kit/survival vest/sleeping bag/survival tool?

*I'll bet you thought these were going to be easy, didn't you? See you at the reunion.
Chili*