



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.

Reporters: Tommy Tompkins * PO Box 372 * Equality, IL 62934 * Email: tombob@shawneelink.com
Bob McElwain * 17149 Forest Hills Drive * Victorville, CA 92395 * Email: bob.mcelwain@charter.net

Visit our web site at: www.usafals.net

May 2005 Issue

50th Anniversary Coin makes it to the Top

Chief Rich Robichaud, USAF Aircrew Life Support Career Field Manager at the Pentagon relates that as he was walking out of the dental clinic recently he ended up leaving with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers. "I walked with him up to his office on the way back to mine and I related to Gen Myers that Tim Morrow wanted me to say hello next time I ran into him. He was appreciative. As we were walking I presented him with one our 50th Anniversary coins...so he's now a proud owner of our special coin".

For those of you in the Seymour Johnson or Goldsboro area we have learned about the planned 50th Wedding Anniversary celebration for Chief Roger and Mary Lou May. The celebration will be at 4 o'clock on the 18th of June at the NCO Club on Seymour Johnson. I am positive that Roger and Mary Lou will appreciate your attending. Further information on the anniversary party can be obtained from Debby (May) Livesay.

debbielivesay@charter.net

The retirements keep coming and once again there is life after Life Support. I had the opportunity and pleasure to attend the retirement ceremonies of both Dave Delano and Greg Copeland. As mentioned previously each of these ceremonies are

exceptional and reflect the pride that we have in our chosen career endeavors.

I have not heard Greg's post retirement plans but I feel he will keep active in Life Support. MSgt Ken Wallace has replaced Greg at the 16th SOW.

There are some more changes in our Life Support Leadership mostly because of the "new policy" of Chief's only remaining at an assignment for 3 years. When things settle after the next assignment cycle we will provide an update.

I am pleased to report that John "JP" Patti is back in the Life Support arena. JP is working for "Fleet Support" in Enterprise AL. and is the lead on filling contract Aircrew Life Support Equipment (ALSE) positions for Fort Rucker. John reports that most of the supervisory positions are filled but there are still some openings. See the Web Cite for more information and see John at the next US Army ALSE Conference at Huntsville AL in August. John has 9 Technician positions still open as of 24 April 05.

Late last year I was notified of the death of retired SMSGT Gene Thornton. I had worked with Gene at both USAFTAWC and the 33rd Wing. Gene was an exceptional Life Supporter. Gene passed away on Nov 6th at the Birmingham AL. VA Hospital. Gene's son Ken relates that he still had his old

coffee cup with the "retarded ape" logo (58th FS) as well as several of the unit patches. He was very proud of the job he did there and I'm proud of the job he did as a soldier/airman for 28 years. God bless all of our armed forces (past and present) where ever they may be in this world.

We also learned of the passing of Lt Col Ted Harris last May. Col Jim "Jake" Yacobi went to Colorado Springs and conducted the eulogy for Col Harris. Ted was buried with honors at the Air Force Academy. There was also a fly by of F-16's and B-2's. Ted was very active in both the Survival and Life Support area. He was one of the first in Operations at TAC. He also was stationed at Stead and was a Korea POW. Jake tells the story that Ted was the last POW crossing back into South Korea. Ted often briefed of his experiences to Academy Students and was instrumental in developing POW Training for USAF aircrews!

We have developed a great data base of Life Supporters but we really need to concentrate on building up the Life Support Officer listing. Looks like we only remember them after they are gone. I am not sure of how many we have on the list. In my travels I keep up with George Braue, Bill Harrison, Rob Hudson, Cal Crochet, Jake Yacobi, Lou Epperson, Tom Travis, Terry Corrigan, Doc Sears and Jerry Miknis. Don Muir, Chuck Lehman, George Braue, Al Homestead, Al Schneider, Jimmy Bainter, Greg Dean and Rob Hudson have been to the reunions. There are a lot more out there such as Kenneth Molly, Gunner Massen, Ron Wenniger, Bill Strunc, Ken Hawkins, Mike Byers, Art Till, Pete Handley, Jess Jenkins, Col Ken Bears, Jim Downey, Charley Hubbs, Davis Honodel, Rudolph Lucchesi, Dick Rutan, Dickie Fallon, Roman Luther, Marty Govednik, Bob Richmond, Steve Ulosevich, David Poff, and many others.

Need your help on these and any other Life Support Officers that we can add to our listings. Let me know at tombob@shawnelink.net

We have had inputs on the LS Web Guest Book, and interest in the Life Support Forum is starting to pick up. We got nice notes from George Mallard, Tom Roe, Kelly M. Tuck and Raymond France. It is great hearing from these troops and to add their contact information.

Jimmie Cartwright reports that he has been talking with Jim Karas, who was the "oldest" Life Supporter at the Reunions. Jim is in good health and is attending a WW II Bomb Wing Reunion just before the 10th Annual Life Support Reunion this year.

And from Cal Crochet:

Last week during my visit to OKC, I called Dave Heitman's home, as he has been MIA for the past year or so. Well, I am happy to report that Dave is alive (barely) and still drinking Wild Turkey (occasionally). Dave reported that he had a kidney removed, a pace maker installed, a 5-bypass operation, a bad ulcer and recently, he broke an ankle and is in a cast. Other than that, Dave is well with Betty Jo nursing him back to life. Dave also reported that he got a new computer, but lost his address book and, as such, the reason for his MIA status. I am sure that he would love to hear from his old friends and, as such, he can be reached at: davidheitman@sbcglobal.net Also, Dave's address is 3016 Bella Vista, Mid West City, OK 73110. His telephone contact is (405) 737-2123.

CHILI SEZ



Greetings to all, I hope everyone had a good winter. It's time to shed some clothes, get ready for some fun in the sun and our annual reunion.

I've received a lot of inquiries about this year's reunion so I'll get right to it.

The Tenth Annual Life Support Reunion will be held 26 -29 Sept at the Flamingo Hotel in Laughlin, NV. Travel days are 26 and 30 Sept. If you plan on arriving a day or two early, or staying later than 30 September, call KB and let him know. Check-in at the hotel is not earlier than 3 PM on 26 Sept 05. All former, retired, active duty, AFR, ANG, DoD civilian, and contractor personnel in the Aircrew Life Support business, and their families and friends are invited to attend. To guarantee reservations complete the attached reservation form and send it in to the address indicated NLT 15 July 2005.

As all returning attendees know, Laughlin is located 90 miles south of Las Vegas, NV (217 miles from Phoenix, AZ) 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 air charters. Free shuttle transfer service is available from the airport to the hotel. If you are flying into Las Vegas you should make reservation ASAP. August and September are the height of the

conference season in Vegas, which makes it very hard to get flight reservations. Just about everything you'll need is in the hotel so a rental car is not a necessity. There is a shuttle van you can catch from the Vegas airport to Laughlin (Tri-State Super Shuttle, 1-800-801-8687). To ensure you'll get a seat, a 14 day advanced reservation is encouraged. Check with the information booth as you come out of baggage pick-up. They can tell you where to meet the shuttle.

TAPS

Back in January of this year we lost Carl Jennings. Carl as a lot of you know was an instructor at Chanute. He and his bride Ruby attended several reunions and were very popular judging by all the people that gathered around them. Carl always had interesting stories about the early days at Chanute and usually came to the reunion with lots of old class photos. I had hoped to get a copy of those photos so that I could post them to the web site. The interesting thing about Carl that I didn't know was that he was also a veteran of the US Navy. He served in World War 11, Korea and Vietnam. While in the Navy, he worked as a fireman. After retiring from the AF, Carl worked in supply at Seymour Johnson AFB. Carl was 76 when he died.

George Braue received a call from Ken Marks stating that Fred Ewing had passed away at age 89. George stated and I quote, "I want you young guys to know that I remember Fred starting from the 50's when he had the Water Survival School out at Langley. In the later years he had the school in Japan, but I'm not sure about Okinawa. Fred also built up the Jungle Survival School during the Vietnam era. He had a large impact on the Life Support/Survival arenas. His efforts played a large part in the safe return of many downed

aircrew members, be it from combat or accident situations. Fred's teachings were a key factor in the return of the involved aircrew personnel. I know of at least 776 crewmen by 1969 in South East Asia that used Fred's training to survive and return ALIVE".

Life Support Coin

As indicated on the web page, I am completely out of coins and will not order anymore until I get enough requests that total 300 or more. So far I have had about 6 requests that total about 50 coins. If you or your unit would like to have some of these coins on hand for future retirements or other occasions, let me know ASAP so that I can get them on order. This will be the last buy so get your request in now!

It's been reported to me that some people have discovered that the enlisted rank on the coin will eventually rub off. My guess is that excessive handling will cause this and that there is nothing anyone can do to prevent it short of keeping the coin in its original zip lock bag (that is if you're going to carry it around in your pocket). I will check with the vendor to see if anything can be done to eliminate this problem in the next batch.

Thanks to Rich Robichaud, we now have a General we can challenge at the bar for drinks.

Bad Addresses

Have you moved recently - or not so recently? Do we have your correct mail and e-mail addresses and phone number? Please let us know when you move.

The newsletter is mailed out to everyone who doesn't have an e-mail address or access to the internet, and as always we ask that address changes be sent to us. The post

office does not forward the newsletter to you. They return it to us - and charge us 37¢. Then we update our address file, put your newsletter in another envelope, slap on a 37¢ stamp, and mail it out to you. Total cost to us is nearly 80 cents per returned newsletter.

I have also run into a problem with e-mailing the newsletter. A lot of the e-mails are bounced back due to incorrect addresses or, there are people that don't have Adobe Reader on their computer so they can't open the newsletter. Adobe is free and can be downloaded to your computer. Adobe's web address is:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readerman.html> .

The additional time I spend on resending newsletters is tremendous. Please help out by sending us your new address.

Thanks for reading this issue of our newsletter. If you have a suggestion on how we can make it more valuable to you please let us know.

Chili