



## ***AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT/ AIRCREW FLIGHT EQUIPMENT VETERANS AND RETIREES NEWSLETTER***

*News for the men and women who served (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-afe.net](http://www.usafals-afe.net)**

**May 2017 Edition**

### **Looking Forward**

*By Dave Chitwood, Group Vice President*

Time is flying! It's already May of the year 2017! We've been working hard, planning this year's annual reunion. As you may recall, our 2017 reunion will be held September 18-22, 2017 on the East Coast - not far from Langley AFB, in Newport News, VA. This year's theme will be a "Salute to the Gulf War Veteran".

Please spread the word and encourage fellow veterans, retirees, Active, Guard, or Reserve to join us. All are welcome!

A large portion of this newsletter will be devoted to information about this year's reunion and

details about how to register for the reunion, and sign up for the various tours, golf, and other events. Many of the events have price breaks based upon the number who sign up, so please plan early, and meet the deadlines noted in the registration form.

Additionally, feel free to stop by the website <http://usafals-afe.net/> often for all the latest and greatest info!

### **From The Field**

We offer hearty congratulations to the new active duty AFE SMSgt selectees:

Mary K. Cicle  
Alexis Delgadillo

Alvin W. Edmunds  
Trevor D. Gilliland  
Michael S. Kerin  
Erick J. Matos  
Lester E. Patrick  
Ashley J. Peterson  
Nathan M. Schasse  
Christopher Scott  
David B. Siemiet  
Joshua R. Sporre  
Bryan P. Teeples

**Chili Sez!**  
By Bob McElwain



To those who will soon or may have retired from the military or civil service since the last newsletter, please accept our sincere thanks for your dedicated service to this Great Nation and the United States Air Force.

**Job Opportunity**

Aviation Life Support Services is looking for highly motivated technicians and supervisors for the upcoming contract at Fort Rucker Alabama (Positions are Contingent on Contract Award). Estimated start date would be mid December 2017. We are looking for technicians with at least four years of aviation life support experience and supervisors with at least 10 years of experience with at least four as a technician working in a fast paced 24/7 operations.

All beginning flight training starts at Fort Rucker and we have AH-64, C-47, UH-60, LUH-72 and TH-67 aircraft. Experience working with Army aviators and their equipment is a plus, but not necessary.

Must be able to maintain a secret clearance.

Present, former or retired personnel are desired.

For more information, you can find the complete job description for the technicians and supervisors on the indeed web site under Aviation Life Support Technician/Supervisor. You may also contact John M. Patti at johnpatti7@gmail.com or call 864-245-0715.

**The Personal Equipment, Aircrew Life Support, Survival Equipment, and Aircrew Flight Equipment Reunion**

Join us this year in Newport News, VA at the Newport News Marriott at City Center, 740 Town Center Drive for our 22nd annual reunion on Monday, 18 September thru Thursday, 21 September, 2017. Travel days are Monday, 18 Sept and Friday, 22 Sept. For those of you who would like to arrive a few days early (Saturday, 16 Sept or Sunday, 17 Sept), you can and will get the discounted rate as long as you indicate you are coming in for the reunion. All veterans, active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel who worked (or are working) in the USAF Personal or Survival Equipment career fields, Aircrew Life Support or Flight Equipment career fields, and individuals in other branches of the US military and civilians in related professions and their guests are invited to attend.

**REUNION RESERVATION:** To register, send in the attached registration form NLT 31 Jul 2017. To cancel your reservation and avoid a loss of your banquet fee, contact Bob McElwain NLT 31 Aug 2017 at 760-684-3790 or email him at [bob.mcelwain@charter.net](mailto:bob.mcelwain@charter.net).

**HOTEL RESERVATION:** Hotel Rates: \$95.00 plus tax per night Saturday, 16 Sept. through Thursday, 22 Sept. single or double occupancy. The rooms come with complimentary Internet and discounted self-parking of \$3 per car per night. Reservations must be made NLT 15 Aug 2017 by dialing

866-329-1758 and asking for the USAF/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion group block. Reservations can also be made by using the following group link: [Book your group rate for USAF/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion](#). The hotel will accept reservations from attendees after the Cut-Off Date, and/or for dates up to 3 days before or after the Event dates, only on a space- and rate-available basis.

All reservations must be accompanied by a first night room deposit plus the applicable state and local taxes, or guaranteed with a major credit card. In the event a guest wishes to cancel a reservation; the deposit is refundable if notice is received before **72 Hours** prior to the day of arrival and a cancellation number is obtained.

### **BUS TRIP TO THE VIRGINIA AIR & SPACE**

**CENTER:** Included in our agenda is a trip to the Virginia Air & Space Center located in Hampton, VA. This is the birthplace of America's space program, the Virginia Air & Space Center (VASC) is the official visitor center for NASA Langley Research Center. Its mission is to educate, entertain and inspire explorers of all ages. VASC features interactive aviation exhibits spanning 100 years of flight, more than 30 historic aircraft, a hands-on space gallery, and more. Guests can pilot a space shuttle, program Mars rovers for a mission, become an air traffic controller, fly an airplane, and climb aboard a WWII bomber. The Center is home to the [Apollo 12 Command Module](#) that went to the moon, a Mars meteorite, a moon rock brought back by the Apollo 17 mission, and the Lunar Excursion Module Simulator (LEMS) used to train the first astronauts to land on the moon. VASC also features the Riverside 3D Digital IMAX Theater. The cost for this trip is \$20 per person.

### **GOLF TOURNAMENT THURSDAY 21 SEPT**

**2017:** Our annual golf tournament will be held Thursday, 21 September 2017. Please contact Dave Chitwood and let him know you intend to play NLT 31 Aug 17. Send Dave a \$55 golf fee per person and advise him if rental golf clubs

are needed. Rental golf clubs are not included in the golf fee and must be requested. If you'd like to sign up or donate prizes/freebies, Dave can be reached via Email at [pantoum5@gmail.com](mailto:pantoum5@gmail.com) or postal mail at 9792 Corbett Place, Manassas Park, VA 20111.

**HOTEL CHECK-IN / CHECK-OUT:** Check-in time is after 4 pm and checkout time is 11 am. Any changes from this policy will be subjected to an early check-in and checkout fee.

**REUNION CHECK-IN:** After getting your room, look for the reunion check-in counter/booth in the hotel lobby to sign-in for the reunion. Don't forget to stop by our hospitality room after 5:30 PM for food and drinks.

**RAFFLE:** We are accepting prizes/gifts for our tournaments and raffle and thank you in advance for your support. Please bring your donations to the reunion or put them in the mail NET 14 Sept and NLT 15 Sept 2017. Address all donations as follows:

**Newport News Marriott at City Center**  
**Attn: Bob McElwain (USAF/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion)**  
**740 Town Center Drive**  
**Newport News, VA 23606**

IF YOU ARE JOINING US AT THE REUNION AND ATTENDED ONE OF OUR RECENT REUNIONS, BRING YOUR REUNION ISSUED NAME TAG WITH YOU OR YOU WILL BE ISSUED A GUEST NAME TAG. NEW NAME TAGS WILL ONLY BE ISSUED TO FIRST TIME ATTENDEES AND TO ATTENDEES WHO INDICATE ON THE REUNION REGISTRATION FORM THAT A NAME TAG IS NEEDED. GUEST NAME TAGS WILL BE ISSUED TO EVERYONE ELSE.

**CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP:** If your company or business is interested in helping support this year's reunion, please send a check or money order payable to our Reunion Committee Chairman, Mr. Bob McElwain at the address below. For your contribution, a board

will be proudly displayed at the hotel entrance recognizing corporate and individual generosity. The amount you send is *entirely up to you*, but please mail it by 31 July, 2017 to:

**Bob McElwain**  
**12320 Roadrunner Ln**  
**Victorville, CA 92392**

### **Flights to the Newport News Area**

There are two airports in the immediate area...Newport News (15 minutes away) and Norfolk (30 minutes away). Some people might elect to use Richmond which is an hour north of Newport News. The hotel is close to Interstate 64 and easy to get to...whether you're driving or flying.

### **Transportation from the Norfolk Airport to the Hotel**

#### **James River Transportation**

The counter is located in the Arrivals Terminal (baggage claim area) near baggage carousel 3 and is staffed 24 hours daily. Shuttle service to Newport News, VA is expensive and can run from \$99.00 for 3 people one way to \$185.00 for a van one way.

The best bet would be to get a taxi, Uber, or Lift. For instance, a check of a one way trip to the hotel from Norfolk International Airport using Uber showed a price of \$23 - \$35. That price might be per person so call and check. To use their service we recommend you sign up for an account and download their app on your phone. To sign up click on the following link: <https://www.uber.com/>

#### **Rent a Car**

Honestly speaking, a rental car is not needed once you arrive at the hotel. This is because a military van will be available to transport us to and from the events scheduled on Langley AFB. However, if you do decide to rent a car, seven national rental car agencies are conveniently located onsite awaiting your

arrival at Norfolk International Airport. For advance reservations, please contact individual rental car companies directly. Upon arrival, simply check in at the rental car customer service desks located in the baggage claim area below the main terminal lobby.

#### **Companies to choose from include:**

Alamo (800) 462-5266  
Avis (800) 831-2847  
Budget (800) 527-0700,  
Dollar (800) 800-4000  
Enterprise (800) 736-8222  
Hertz (800) 654-3131  
National (800) 227-7368  
Thrifty (800) 367-2277

### **Reunion 2017 Theme**

Take a look at our theme for this year's reunion and then check out the upcoming TV special from PBS. A PBS television show producer from the UK asked me if I would post the flyer below to our website. As you can see, this producer is looking for Gulf War veterans for a special documentary and we have been asked to help. Isn't it ironic that as we celebrate and honor our Gulf War Veterans this year, these veterans are also asked to contact this producer to possibly take part in this TV special? If this is you we urge you to consider a contribution towards our challenge and to get in touch with this producer regardless of how minor you consider your involvement in the war might have been.

#### **Our Theme**

#### **“A Salute to the Gulf War Veteran”**

For the last several years we have challenged and recognized various entities within our profession at the annual reunion. In 2016 we recognized our veterans from the Vietnam era through “A Salute to the Vietnam Veteran”. In 2015 we recognized our “educators” through “a Salute to our Instructors”. This year we challenge and will recognize the members of our career fields who participated in the Gulf War that began on August 2, 1990, and ended on February 28, 1991 (also known as

Operation Desert Shield) through our “Salute to the Gulf War Veteran”.

The 2017 effort is pretty simple. We respectfully ask our Gulf War veterans who can afford it (and anyone else who would like to support this effort) to please make a \$20 contribution to help with the reunion expenses and be recognized for your contribution and service during the first Gulf War.

A recognition placard containing the names of our contributors will be prominently displayed at the reunion registration desk, at the general business meeting, in the reunion hospitality suite, and at the farewell banquet.

We say “Thank You!” in advance for your support of the reunion and for your assistance in recognizing our Gulf War veterans. This includes all USAF civilian and military Aircrew Life Support and Survival Equipment veterans who were assigned to an installation, unit, or served in any of the countries in the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Shield.

To ensure your name is included on the recognition placard, please make your check or money order payable to Bob McElwain and mail to Bob at 12320 Roadrunner Lane, Victorville, CA 92392 no later than Tuesday, August 1, 2017.

We truly hope to see and talk with you at the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual reunion being held September 18 – 22, 2017, at the Marriott Newport News City Center in Newport News, Virginia.

**Proposals for the Next Two Reunions:** We are accepting proposals for reunions 2018 and 2019. If you are interested in having the reunion in your local area or elsewhere, please find a hotel to host the reunion and fill out the attached reunion work sheet with the help of hotel management. Email the completed worksheet to bob.mcelwain@charter.net **NLT 4 Sep, 2017.** Your proposal (worksheet) will be reviewed by our 2017 reunion attendees for consideration for our next two reunions. The two proposals with the

most votes will determine the location of those reunions.

### **How to Report a Change of Contact Information:**

I know we’ve posted this information before, but it bears repeating. Members are still calling or email us (Al or myself) with their change of address, phone number or email address and it’s not necessary unless they are not registered members of our website. If you are a registered member you can update your profile with the new information yourself. Here’s how: Login to the website and click on “Edit My Profile” located in the upper right corner under your name. **IMPORTANT:** You must be logged in to be able to edit your information and you can tell if you’re logged in if you see your name in the upper right corner of the site. After clicking on “Edit My Profile” make the necessary changes to your information.

If you do not own a computer or for some other reason are not registered on our site, you must call, email or write to us with your changed information.

### **Fill Out Your PE/ALS/AFE Assignment History:**

You were supposed to complete the section on your PE, ALS or AFE assignment history when you registered on our website. If you didn’t or only completed part of it, go back and complete it by logging in to the site and follow the instructions above on “How to Report a Change of Contact” information. Click on your name and then “Edit My Profile”. Scroll down until you see “Assignment History”.

The assignment history is that of our military veterans and civilian counterparts. The information you provide is very important to our history.

## **Final Roll Call**

We have been advised that the following members of our "family" have made their final roll call:

- SMSgt (Ret) Joe Allen Caldwell
- MSgt (Ret) Henry Abraham
- MSgt (Ret) Robin Beal
- CMSgt (Ret) Don Yager
- CMSgt (Ret) Donald L. Windsor
- CMSgt (Ret) Duncan Hannigan
- James "JC" Smith (Life Support SPO)

Special note: CMSgt (Ret) Gary Winchester will be interred at Arlington Cemetery on 4 August 2017 at 1300.

We offer our sincerest condolences to the family and friends of our dearly departed.

## **In Closing**

*By Dave Chitwood, Vice President and Newsletter Editor*

Once again let me say thank you for the honor to serve as the vice president of the USAF ALS/AFE Veterans and Retirees Group and your newsletter editor.

And finally, one last call to the masses - plan now to attend the 2017 reunion and please...**spread the word!** Registrations forms are attached! I'll see you in Virginia in September 2017!

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*Mark your calendars now for the 22nd Annual USAF PE/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion being held September 18-22, 2017, at the Marriott Newport News at City Center, in Newport News, Virginia. September 18 and 22 are the travel day. Be sure to visit our Group website ([www.usafals-afe.net](http://www.usafals-afe.net)), and on social media.*



