



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

Dec 2017 Edition

Looking Forward

By Dave Chitwood, Group Vice President

Time is flying! It's already Dec of the year 2017! We're already working hard, planning next year's annual reunion. Our 2018 reunion will be held in Biloxi Mississippi. Details follow.

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

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

From The Field

We start off by offering hearty congratulations to the new active duty AFE CMSgt selectees:

Theodore Angel
Anthony Foster
Denise Kurpier
Nick Kurpier
Wesley Poindexter
Christopher Randel

And 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.

Aircrew Life Support & Aircrew Flight Equipment Veterans and Retirees Facebook Page

The Aircrew Life Support & Aircrew Flight Equipment Veterans and Retirees Facebook page was founded by MSgt (Retired) Kevin (Snyd) Snyder a number of years ago as a site that provided a social media outlet to all current, past and present civilian and uniformed Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard officer and enlisted PE, AFE, ALS, PR, ALSE, and AST professionals.

The Facebook group page welcomes ALL current, former, retired, civilian, and uniformed service Parachute Riggers (PR), Personal Equipment (PE), Aircrew Life Support (ALS), Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE), Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE), Aviation Survival Technicians (AST), and Officers to join the Facebook page to interact with past and present members of the profession. Current and former aircrew members are also welcome.

Current Facebook Page Administrators are:

- Les Davy
- Al Loving
- Mike Grignano
- Shera Gill
- Stephanie Walker

To subscribe to the page shoot on over to <https://www.facebook.com/Aircrew-Life-Support-Aircrew-Flight-Equipment-Veterans-and-Retirees-200003150812/>. You will need a Facebook account to access the Aircrew Life Support & Aircrew Flight Equipment Veterans and Retirees Facebook Page.

While you're at it, we recommend you also visit <http://usafals-afe.net/> and register to become a member of the USAF Personal Equipment/Aircrew Life Support/Aircrew Flight Equipment website. These two sites are THE place to find the latest information related to the profession, annual reunions, past and present newsletters, historical data, and much, much more!

Chili Sez!

By Bob McElwain



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

Our Annual Reunion

As mentioned earlier, we will be returning to the Imperial Place (IP) Casino Resort in Biloxi, Mississippi for reunion 2018. The reunion dates are Tuesday, 10 September thru Thursday, 13 September. As usual, travel days are Monday (the 10th) and Friday (the 14th). The reunion committee will get started on planning this, our 23rd-annual reunion shortly. Meanwhile, if you live in the Biloxi area and have ideas about some fun things to do and or see in the area please let us know. Stay tuned for full details on our next reunion in our May edition of the newsletter, our Facebook Page and our website.

Our last reunion was a blast. It was held in the Langley AFB area and was attended by the following first-time attendees: Tom Harmer & Carol Lee, Ron Hartman, David & Darlene Jensen, and Tommy Marshall. A surprise visitor was the former HQ. TAC Life Support Officer, Ken Hawkins. Ken was on the staff with me, John Weir and Al Schneider. He stopped by and chatted with a few of us for about a half an hour.

During the reunion, some of us who used to be on the TAC or ACC Life Support /Flight Equipment staff took time to visit our old office. The old office for some of us had relocated to the east end of the building on the first floor. While visiting, we noticed a collection of flight

suit name tags that had belonged to former staff members were displayed on a wall. Some name tags were obviously missing so I volunteered to see if I could get them. Will you help? If you were on the staff and still have one of your name tags (leather, embroidered or plastic) please send it to me and I'll see that it gets to the folks at HQ ACC.

On day one of the reunion, Ron Hartman provided a briefing on his days as an ALS Systems Control Officer. Additionally, although he could not attend the reunion, Capt Jon M. Kinsey (Chief of Weapons and Tactics for the 49thWG, Holloman AFB, NM) provided a voice over slide presentation to the group. He gave the group a very informative briefing on the RPA (drone) program and how it interfaces with all assets involved in the present-day fight. He also followed up with a response to a question about the psychological impact of returning home every evening after being fully engaged in missions of war.

Our banquet guest speaker at the reunion was Col (Dr.) Jay T. Flottmann, the Air Combat Command (ACC) Pilot-Physician, and the first pilot-physician to drive the F-22. The Col worked closely with members of our career over the years, and mentioned Chief Ted Poe. His unique skills and perspective were used to investigate physiologic incidents that were reported in the F-22A Raptor. Envied and admired by many, Col Flottmann announced his plan to retire during his speech.

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Assistance Request

During this year's annual reunion, we also had the privilege of having Mark Adams from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's Laboratory at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio brief us on the mission of the DPAA Wright-Patterson Laboratory and how we can assist with the identification of recovered life sciences equipment artifacts that will help with the overall DPAA mission towards resolving the fate of missing personnel from past conflicts. If you are a veteran of the Korean War, the

Vietnam War, or Cold War operations where aircrew members served in a combat capacity it is hoped that with your help DPAA can gain insight into squadron level procedures for equipping aircrew members with flight equipment ranging from flight helmets and oxygen masks to parachutes and survival equipment. This is a unique opportunity for DPAA to acquire information on flight, survival equipment, clothing and custom made related items that were issued for past conflicts.

With your help, Mark can create an informal database of veterans, industry partners, and others to discuss life sciences equipment and any anomalies that DPAA could potentially encounter in their studies based on valuable personal photographs, memorabilia, personal recollections, copies of contemporary technical data, and personal records that you may have.

If you think you can help please provide Mark with your name, contact information, units in which you served, the aircraft types you supported, tour dates, theater deployments (location), and any non-standard equipment items that were specific to the unit(s) (i.e. custom equipment), etc.

If you've got Korean War, Vietnam War, or Cold War operations "in-theater" experience submit your information to the following address:

Mark Adams
2060 Monahan Way (Bldg. 17) Area B,
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433-7808

If you are online and have not submitted your information to Mark yet, his email address is as follows: mark.p.adams2.civ@mail.mil

NKP/Da Nang Help

Mary Williams, (whose husband SMSgt Ron (Willie) Williams passed away on 23 Jul 2017), reached out to us for help confirming Ron served at NKP and Da Nang during the 1971 – 1972 time frame. Ron's VA claim that his Parkinson's disease is a result of his service in

SEA has been denied now the 2nd time. She's hoping to find someone who was stationed with him who can confirm that he was assigned to OLAA NKP. He departed NKP around Thanksgiving 1972, and was replaced by MSGt Bobby Hanks.

Below is a picture of SMSgt Ron (Willie) Williams that might help somebody remember him.



If you remember Ron and can help Mary, please contact her at:

Mary Williams, Georgetown, Texas
thetas@msn.com
512-868-9216

Paper vs Electronic Newsletter

Our newsletter is published twice a year and is posted to our website. A copy of the newsletter and an announcement regarding its online availability is emailed to registered members and mailed to those who do not have an email address on file with us. If you're receiving the newsletter via postal mail and have an email address, please let us know. This will help us save on the cost of printing and mailing you a copy of the newsletter.

See you in September at the reunion.

Chili

How to Report a Change of Contact Information:

I know we've posted this information before, but it bears repeating. Members still call or email us 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.

Public Service Announcements

Veterans Choice Program Scam

Scammers have set up a phone number nearly identical to the number veterans dial to find out if they are eligible to use approved health care providers outside of the VA system. Veterans call the fake number and a message prompts them to leave their credit card information in return for a rebate. They debit your account, and the vet gets nothing in return. Make sure to dial the correct number for the VCP: 866-606-8198.

Identity Theft Scams - VA phishing

Scammers call veterans claiming they work for the VA and ask for personal information to update their records. If you get an unsolicited call from the VA, hang up.

Veterans Benefits You May Not Know About:

Long Term Care: Through the Aid and Attendance program, many veterans are eligible to receive money to cover the cost of nursing homes, assisted living programs, and other long term care options.

Caregiver Support: Should you choose to take care of an ailing Veteran at home, the VA offers a caregiver support program. The program does not offer any monetary support, but they offer a free support line and a caregiver support coordinator to help navigate military benefits and the stress of care giving.

Death Benefits: Families may request a U.S. flag to drape over the casket. They may also request a Presidential Memorial Certificate to honor the deceased loved ones. The VA will also provide a free Headstone or grave marker. For more info, go to: <http://militarybenefits.info/10-veterans-benefits-you-may-not-know-about/>

VA SUSPENDS APPLICATIONS FOR NEW ID CARDS

The Department of Veterans Affairs has suspended applications for its new veteran identification card program due to a large number of applicants, according to a notice on its website.

The new, free ID card was ordered by Congress in 2015 as a way to give veterans proof of service at businesses without carrying a copy of their DD-214 forms. The VA a week ago rolled out the online application for the card for all honorably discharged veterans, but the system appeared to immediately face technical problems.

Tests by at least two Military.com reporters accessing the site with their own VA logins and military service credentials encountered repeated errors. One was able to successfully complete the process despite multiple rejections and system timeouts.

Currently, however, veterans who look to apply for the card are instead told they need to come back later.

"Thank you for your interest in the Veteran Identification Card! Currently, we are experiencing a high volume of traffic. We apologize, and want you to know we're working to fix the problem," the notice states. "In the meantime, please enter your email address and we'll send an update when the Veteran Identification Card application is back online."

To apply for a card, users had to log in to the VA website using either a DS login or the ID.me system, provide a variety of personal information, and upload a copy of a government-issued ID. They also needed to provide a shoulders-up photo to be displayed on the ID card. VA officials said Nov. 29 that users could expect to receive their new ID cards within 60 days of application.

Some veterans, such as those who receive health benefits from the VA and military retirees, already have IDs that can provide proof of service. The new IDs will not qualify as official government-issued identification for air travel or other uses. The ID card program is voluntary.

Final Roll Call

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

- Capt Paul J."Stuck" Barbour
- SMSgt (Ret) Ron (Willie) Williams
- MSgt (Ret) Tommy Blevins
- MSgt Juan Canopii

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

Veterans and Retirees Group and your newsletter editor.

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

And finally, we wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a blessed New Year! See you in Biloxi this next September!

Mark your calendars now for the 23rd Annual USAF PE/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion being held September 10 - 14 at the Imperial Place (IP) Casino Resort in Biloxi, Mississippi. As usual, travel days are Monday (the 10th) and Friday (the 14th). Be sure to visit our Group website (www.usafals-afe.net), and on social media.