



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

May 2020 Edition

Looking Forward

By Dave Chitwood, Group Vice President

This year, we are all sailing on uncharted waters. The Wuhan COVID-19 virus is wreaking havoc on all our lives. Let me start off by hoping you are all doing well and staying safe and healthy. Social media is filled with inspirational stories of AFE personnel making protective masks for their communities. Active duty, ANG, and Reserves all pitching in to help fight this invisible enemy!

Prior to the outbreak, we were getting outstanding response to this year's 25th annual reunion. Lots of new faces expressing interest in joining us. We were praying that it will be safe to travel by September, and that everyone will be eager to get out after so much social isolation and join us in our premier event.

However, that does not appear to be the case, as explained by Bob McElwain in his "Chili Sez!" article in this newsletter. You are strongly encouraged to check website <http://usafals-afe.net/> often for all the latest and greatest info!

From The Field

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. We hope you will consider attending future reunions and get a chance to share great memories with old and new friends.

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

MSgt Sedrick F. Evans
MSgt Marshall Turner II
MSgt Lemuel Velazquez Santana
MSgt Nicole Marie Rios
MSgt Daniel R. Hinojosa
MSgt Daniel L. Tripaldi
MSgt Clint A. Haynes
MSgt Crystal N. Kistler
MSgt Michael L. Assmann
MSgt Jason M. Truskowski
MSgt David D. Ohl
MSgt Kyle E. Yager
MSgt Marc C. Goddard
MSgt Patrina L. Groscup
MSgt Paul A. McArdle
MSgt Rey T. Andrade
MSgt Jeremy R. Scott
MSgt Kimberly J. Vaughan

2019 AFE AWARDS

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2019 USAF Aircrew Flight Equipment Awards. These individuals and units were highly recommended by their respective commanders and are truly deserving of this recognition.

Outstanding Airman: A1C Schoof, Paige
- 35th OSS Misawa (PACAF)
Outstanding ARC Airman: SrA Shelton, Alison
- 176th OSS JB Elmendorf/Richardson (ANG)
Outstanding NCO: TSgt Ibarra, Jose
- 48th OSS Lakenheath (USAFE)
Outstanding ARC NCO: TSgt Lujan, Dakota
- 419th OSF Hill AFB (AFRC)
Outstanding SNCO: MSgt Parks, Kristin
- 720 OSS Hulburt Field (AFSOC)
Outstanding ARC SNCO: MSgt Stoll, Andrew
- 189th OSS Little Rock AFB (ANG)
Outstanding HQ Staff Member:
SMSgt Lotito, Dennis-HQ AMC/A3TL Scott AFB
Outstanding AFE Officer: Capt Sare, Michael
- 22nd OSS McConnell AFB (AMC)
Outstanding Civilian (Cat I): Hazelwood, Ruben
- 55 OSS Offutt AFB - (ACC)

Outstanding Civilian (Cat II): Freebury, Michael
- HQ AMC/A3TL Scott AFB - (AMC)
Outstanding Small Program:
354th OSS Eielson AFB - (PACAF)
Outstanding Large Program:
19th OSS Little Rock AFB (AMC)

Coin Update

By Mark Jones

We are still designing the 25th Annual Reunion coin! Check our website <http://usafals-afe.net/> for more information as it becomes available!

Chili Sez!

By Bob McElwain



Cancellation of the 2020 USAF Personal Equipment/Aircrew Life Support/Survival and Flight Equipment (USAF PE/ALS/SE/AFE) Reunion

It is with deep regret and sadness that we, in partnership with the Golden Nugget Casino & Hotel, Laughlin, NV, have decided to cancel the 2020 USAF ALS/AFE Reunion.

This decision was made due to the Novel Corona-virus (Covid-19) pandemic. After careful consideration, we felt that it is in the best interest of the LS/AFE community that we cancel the event. We are aware that many of you have underlying health conditions and are in the age groups that are most susceptible to the Covid-19 virus. We feel it is better to err on the side of caution rather than risk causing you ill health. In addition, we feel that even if the country opens up, reunion attendance and

vendor support will suffer.

A few of you have made hotel reservations all ready and will have to cancel. If you have any problems doing that please let me know. I've also added a great article to the website on the advantages of purchasing travel insurance!

I Was There

By MSgt (Ret) Frank O'Loughlin

Capturing our history with humorous stories about a first in the career field, or anything of interest involving the Personal Equipment, Survival Equipment, Aircrew Life Support, or the Aircrew Flight Equipment career fields).

"In July 1974 I was assigned to the 52nd Tac Fighter Wing, NCOIC of the Life Support Shop, 23rd Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-4 aircraft), Spangdahlem AB, Germany.

After processing in one of my NCOs took me to supply to pick up L-2B and MA-1 Flight Jackets. I asked how we were authorized to wear the jackets and no one had any idea. It's always been that way, so goes the response. It was standard practice that all Life Support Personnel in the two F-4 Fighter Squadrons on base all had flight jackets with squadron patches and name tags identical to those worn by the aircrews.

In late March of 1975, a new Wing Commander was assigned. (Withholding his name) One of his first visits was to the 23rd for a new parachute harness and have his helmet & mask inspected.

He immediately introduced himself to me as the new Wing Commander and wanted to know why I was wearing a flight jacket. What authority allowed me to do so. I did not have a good answer, so he ordered me and all Life Support people on the base to turn them in to supply.

I told my guys to just store them at home. It was still cold in April, so we were wearing our

Field Jackets. While sitting in the office I had an idea. I told one of my NCO's to go with me to pull a survival kit. He thought that I should be reading the checklist while he took the survival kit out. But I insisted I should do it. As I sat in the ejection seat checking the safety pins etc., I was somehow able to move my arm around so that the jacket wrist strap got caught on some part of the seat. (for the life of me I cannot remember what it was) But, it was enough for me to tell my young NCO to take notice of it as a witness. On 11 April 1975 I wrote up a hazard report (#HEP75-19-DO-09) on the field jacket and at the same time I made a suggestion to replace the field jacket with unused flight jackets while working in the ejection seat. (I was not smart enough to keep copies)

In July of 1976 the safety Office at Norton AFB sent a msg. to CINCUSAFE Ramstein and WR ALC Robins AFB GA. The short version, bottom line reads: Concurred with above recommendation and Jacket L-2B has been included in TA 016A to issue 1 per 922X0 for use in and around ejection seat aircraft. The MA-1 flight jacket was also added to that recommendation.

We all know that USAF does not move very fast. On 10 Aug 1976 USAF sent a letter to: 52 TFW/SE. Subject: Hazard Elimination Program Item 75-19-DO-09, 52 TFW Hazard Report 75-W-01, Clothing for Life Support Technicians. Basically, repeating the msg. noted above.

Please thank the originator for taking an active part in the USAFE Hazard Elimination Program.

On 23 Aug 1976 the 52nd TFW Commander sent a letter to the 23rdTFS/CC and 23TFS Life Support.

"I extend my personal appreciation for your initiative in identifying this problem area and your active support for our Hazard Elimination Program."

I know he was not happy having to write that very short letter. I told my guys to start wearing their newly authorized flight jackets.

The Wing Commander continued to fly with us and never once said anything about us wearing the flight jackets nor to me personally. I do have copies of the last three documents mentioned.”

Thanks for the input, Frank! Hopefully this will inspire others to send in their stories.

Chief's Corner

By CMSgt Joseph M. Shelton

I am honored to be asked to contribute to the 'Aircrew Life Support, Aircrew Flight Equipment, Veterans and Retirees Newsletter' as my last parting shot after 30 years in our great Air Force. A special thank you to Steve Wyatt for reaching out. I first met Steve when he was the Wing Life Support Trainer at the 57th Fighter Weapons Wing at Nellis in 1990. He was a TSgt and I an Airman Basic and as you all know, Steve is the definition of a professional and was a huge influence throughout my career.

Thanks to Steve's influence early on, I have been blessed with a great career that I can break up into three distinct periods. The first 10 years as a Life Supporter was with HH-60's at Nellis, F-16's at Kunsan, F-15E's at Seymour Johnson and F-16's at Nellis again. The second 10 years were all special duties as USAF Thunderbirds Life Support, Military Training NCO at Air Force Academy and a First Sergeant at Andrews. The last 10 years have been AFE with Rescue at Moody, F16's and F-35's at Hill and AC-130 U/J, MC-130 U/J, CV-22's and U-28's at Hurlburt Field. It has truly been a great and varied ride and I am grateful to have been a part of it all.

Steve asked me to comment on the career field changes I've seen since I enlisted until now, and my thoughts on the merger. The overarching mission from Life Support to AFE to provide safe and reliable life-saving

equipment to the aircrew, of course has not changed over the years. As a field level Chief, I can attest that the men and women in AFE are working hard to ensure the career field is performing at higher levels than ever before.

From my perspective I think us old guys are embracing technological advances more readily these days and it seems to arrive in much more rapid succession than just 10 years ago. The younger Airmen enlisting today are way more adept with technology than I ever was. I believe they will continue to usher in new ideas that may seem far-fetched now but may be the solution to decade's old problems. We need to feed their curiosity and allow them to take the career field to higher levels for the future.

AFE Superintendents are holding everything together as they continue to be the vital link ensuring the Airmen in the shops are properly trained, outfitted and ready to properly support flying operations all while managing the never ending tasks and requests for manpower and information from the Operation Support Squadron commanders, MAJCOM Functional Managers, as well as a host of other entities. The merger made the AFE Superintendent position a "make-it" or "break-it" position in a wing's flying program and need all the help they can get.

There was a lot of emotion from the merger that still echoes today. Both constructs have pro's and con's and nearly everyone has an opinion. While I don't have the answer to solve all the problems, I know there are many people smarter than me that have great ideas and need to be heard. Experimenting with ideas and trying different options may lead to a better way of doing business and thus make the career field stronger. I know I am preaching to the choir and the next 30 years are going to be very different than the last 30. I look forward to seeing how the young leaders today perform and succeed for the greater good.

In closing, I would like to thank you all for your service and dedication to our mission. We truly

stand on the shoulders of giants. Good Luck and God Bless.

Final Roll Call

We have been advised that the following members of our “family” have made their Final Roll Call:

Maj (Ret) Allen Homstead	Jan 2019
MSgt (Ret) Ken Hazely	Nov 2019
MSgt (Ret) Chris Brown	Dec 2019
MSgt (Ret) David Buzan	Feb 2020
SMSgt (Ret) Cecil Pixley	Feb 2020
SMSgt (Ret) Riley Crumley	Apr 2020

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

In Closing

By Dave Chitwood, Vice President and Newsletter Editor

It is a shame that we had to cancel this year’s reunion and delay our 25th year celebration. But no worries, we will be back and bigger than ever! Our 25th annual reunion will be in Laughlin NV in September 2021. While there, we will vote on where and when to have the next two reunions. You have plenty of time to plan, so please make the effort, and invite fellow veterans and retirees to join us.

Additionally, if you would like us to hold a future reunion in your area, please put together a proposal using the reunion planning form on the website (www.usafals-afe.net), and present it to the group so we can vote on it! It doesn’t have to be near an Air Force base, (but it helps to get base support and tours). We are wide open to ideas!

Take care and be safe!

Be sure to visit our Group website (www.usafals-afe.net), and on social media.