



AIRCREW FLIGHT EQUIPMENT AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT 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 2024 Edition

Looking Forward

By Dave Chitwood

We hope 2024 is treating you well! This year our reunion is scheduled 12-15 August at the Tuscany Inn & Suites in Las Vegas. The reunion committee has been very busy coordinating meeting space, tours, our picnic, transportation, golf, guest speakers, and our banquet. Details and registration forms are included in this newsletter. Grab an old friend and join us for war stories (some of which may actually be true) and instant camaraderie. We hope you can join us and make this one of the most successful reunions ever!

On a somber note, just since the last newsletter, we've already lost several more of our dear

members and friends. Time is relentless. Please take a moment to reflect as you read these names.

FINAL ROLL CALL

MSgt (Ret) Maynard Bradford	Nov 2023
MSgt (Ret) Jeffery Moody	Nov 2023
MSgt (Ret) Kerrick Brown	Jan 2024
MSgt (Ret) Bob Jungers	Feb 2024
Joe Elbrech	Mar 2024

We offer our sincere prayers and condolences to the friends and families of our dear departed. As we say goodbye, we say thank you for their dedication and service to this great nation. May God bless, and may they rest in peace. They are already missed.

From The Field

Congratulations to our newest Active Duty SMSgt selects!

Binyard, Warren
Caicedo, Phillip
Cargill, Christopher
Cyr, Joseph
Delaney, Justin
Gaffney, Joshua
Hill, Ramon
Leis, Benjamin
Matrana, Cody
Rubenstein, Daniel
Seymour, Michael
Wengel, Jeffery
Wurst, Jeffery

What an impressive list! Congratulations to all!

Chili Sez!

By Bob McElwain



REUNION 2024

The 27th annual reunion for former and current members of the Aircrew Life Support and Aircrew Flight Equipment career fields will take place at the Tuscany Suites & Casino in Las Vegas, NV from 12 through 15 August 2024. Sunday 11 August and Friday 16 August are travel days. Make your hotel reservation by 13 July 2024. The following additional information is provided.

HOTEL AND REUNION REGISTRATION

HOTEL REGISTRATION: The rate per night is \$79.00 plus tax for Sunday, 11 August through Thursday, 15 August 2024 for single or double occupancy. Reservations must be made before Saturday, July 13, 2024, by clicking on [this link](#) or by calling Hotel Reservations at **877-887-2261** and asking for **The USAF Aircrew Life Support / Flight Equipment Veterans & Retirees Group rates.**

Reservation requests received after the cutoff will be confirmed on a space-available basis at the prevailing rate.

Reservations must be guaranteed with a major credit card. The first night's room and tax will be charged when the reservation is made. Hotel cancellation without penalty must occur at least seventy-two (72) hours before the scheduled arrival date. A penalty charge equal to the first night's room and tax will apply to cancellations received after the seventy-two (72) hours. Check-in time is after 3:00 pm and checkout time is 11:00 am. All hotel guests must be at least 21 to check in.

REUNION REGISTRATION:

Be sure to complete the attached reunion registration form and mail it NLT Saturday 12 July 2024. Reunion registration must be paid with a check or money order payable to Bob McElwain. Receipt of your registration form will be acknowledged as soon as possible. An alternate way to pay your registration fee is via Cash App as indicated below for raffle tickets. To cancel your reservation and avoid a loss of your banquet fee, contact Bob McElwain NLT 1 August 2024 at 760-684-3790 or email him at bob.mcelwain@charter.net

WILL YOU BE SETTING UP A BOOTH OR BRIEFING THE ATTENDEES? IF YOU ARE, REQUEST A VENDOR'S REGISTRATION FORM FROM ME AT bob.mcelwain@charter.net.

If shipping giveaways, gifts, or prizes to the hotel handling fees will apply. Contact the hotel for info and possible cost at 702-365-7040. Shipments are to be sent no more than one (1) week before the event. Address items as follows:

HOTEL SHIPPING & RECEIVING

In the event you must ship materials to the Tuscany, all package/box deliveries must be addressed as follows:

- 1) Name of the Onsite Contact: Your name, Bob McElwain, Dave Chitwood, etc
- 2) The USAF ALS/AFE Veterans & Retirees Group Reunion
- 3) Your Arrival Date
- 4) C/O Tuscany Suites & Casino
255 E Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, Nevada 891694708

Your shipments should be sent to arrive no more than three (3) days before your event. All packages and boxes received for individuals or vendors are subject to a shipping/handling fee for the total weight of all materials sent.

THE JAMES ROONEY COMMEMORATIVE REUNION GOLF TOURNAMENT

Attention golfers! We will have our annual golf tournament on Nellis AFB on Thursday August 15, 2024. It will be captain's choice (choose best ball and everyone hits from there). Always a fun event – you don't have to play well to have fun! Cost will be only \$53 including golf, cart, range, and burger/bag lunch – payable at the course or during reunion check-in. To make this event successful, we really need to know if you intend to play by 30 July so we can let the course know how many players we'll have and set up tee sheets. Please contact Dave Chitwood at Pantoum5@gmail.com and let him know if you intend to play, and whether you need to rent clubs.

SPECIAL RAFFLE

We are raffling off a unique quilt that was designed and made by Mrs. Joan Shepherd spouse of retired MSgt Reginald Shepherd at this year's reunion. Anyone can purchase a raffle ticket for \$10 or 3 for \$25. One winner will be drawn at our reunion banquet on Thursday 14 August 2024, and you don't have to be present to win either prize. A second-place drawing will be held for another quilt with a different design on it. Send in your request for ticket(s) with your reunion registration form and your ticket(s) will be issued to you at the reunion. If you are not attending the reunion, mail the completed request form (attached) along with a check or money order payable to me and I will put your ticket in the basket with your name on it. The depositing of your ticket(s) into the basket and the drawing will be videotaped. The video will be posted on our website located at www.usafals-afe.net after the reunion. Every ticket you purchase helps with the cost of our newsletter, website, and our reunion. You won't want to miss your chance to win the special quilt with a design that hopefully captures your USAF ALS/AFE military career.

An Alternate Way to Order and Pay for Tickets is to Use Cash App

Email your request for tickets to me along with payment via Cash App. To use Cash App you'll have to download it on your iOS or Android

device. Link it to a debit card and allow it to access your bank account. Once done you can enter the amount you're sending and then select me from your contact list. If I'm not in your contact list add the following: bob.mcelwain@charter.net Once you have confirmed the transaction, you authorize the app to debit the funds from your account and transfer them to me. The best part about the service is it's completely free.

Again, to order and pay:

1. Open Cash App
2. Enter the amount you're sending
3. Tap Pay
4. Enter my email address bob.mcelwain@charter.net
5. Enter what the payment is for i.e., 3 tickets, and your email address
6. Tap Pay

Be exceedingly cautious when typing in my information. One wrong letter, and you won't get that money back unless you happen to send it to someone ethical enough to return it.

THANKS

Thank you to all who responded to my question in the December 2023 newsletter regarding the reunion, especially you Bill Lynn.

CHIEF'S CORNER

By CMSgt Alvin W. Edmunds

Greetings to everyone that will have the opportunity to read this month's Chief's Corner. I want to thank Steve Wyatt and Dave Chitwood for asking me to take a moment and reflect of my career and provide my parting thoughts. I enlisted into the Air Force on 19 September 2000, and I will have served 24 years, 4 months, and 12 days when I finally hang up the uniform. I enlisted in the Air Force at a time of relative calm in the world outside of deployments for Operation Northern and Southern Watch. However, we all know that would change just short of a year later. The Air Force and the world had to change.

My first duty station was Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta Georgia, and as a Life Support troop there, I felt the tempo of the Air Force change after the attacks. Someone from our unit was pretty much gone out the door for 60 to 90 days at a time every 60 to 90 days nonstop until I left the unit in 2005. My next duty station was to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro North Carolina working on the mighty F-15E. The deployments continued, but they

also lasted a little longer to give people more time at home with their family, which was important to keep families together after constant rotations became the norm.

During this time, the career field took the opportunity to merge with the survival equipment side of the house. I saw Airmen doing their best to learn both jobs and gain proficiency at the same time. We made it work but there were a lot of lessons learned over the years. After leaving Seymour Johnson, I went to Hurlburt Field Air Force Base in Florida I had the pleasure to work with the 6th Special Operations Squadron as a Combat Aviation Advisor. As an Air Advisor, we were responsible for training foreign partners on Foreign Internal Defense, or FID for those that love acronyms. As a Life Support troop, I trained them on the ways of our career field, and how we did things in the mighty U.S. Air Force. I learned quickly how critical it was to support another nation's defense, because it meant that was one place that maybe U.S. soldiers wouldn't have to go and fight.

At the end of this tour, big Air Force saw my advising potential, I was selected to move to U.S. Air Force Central Command and lead the charge for all AFE/ALS members in the Area of Operations (AOR) performing the advisor roll. I had the opportunity to see our advisors hacking the mission down range in Iraq and Afghanistan, providing the best advice and guidance possible during that time. A few years later, I spent time at Travis Air Force Base, I was selected to the highest rank in the Air Force. I have had the pleasure to work with, and for some of the best this country has to offer. I have had the pleasure to influence the lives of those under my charge. These Airmen are so motivated to do this job. Even though sometimes it is a thankless and mundane job, they do their best to provide quality equipment for our aircrew members. Even though they are a lot more independent minded, educated than I was when I enlisted, they want to get after the mission just as we all did during our time in the Air Force.

My final assignment as the MAJCOM Functional Manager for Air Force Material Command, I have had the opportunity to see a different part of our career field. Getting to see our civilian teams that are responsible for leading our depots, where aircraft go for their maintenance overhaul, to our civilian Life Support shops working for defense contractors that bring our planes fresh from the assembly line to our flight lines, to the active-duty teams that support aircrew conducting test and evaluation of the latest and greatest technology the world has ever seen.

These Airmen provide the support required to keep these pilots performing at their highest potential, and ensuring that when their day goes bad, our equipment will bring them back safely to the fight. It has been an eye-opening experience, and I stand in awe of what they do every day.

As I leave this Air Force, I have no doubt that they will continue to take the fight to any enemy on the horizon, wherever that fight will be. Whether it is pond jumping across the pacific, taking off from highways or dirt strips, our Airmen are preparing to do it the best way possible based on the guidance and training they have received. I want to say thank you to everyone that had anything to do with supporting me in my career and I look forward to participating as a retiree and seeing you all in the future. God Bless each and everyone of you as you go forward.

CMSgt Alvin Edmunds
MAJCOM Function Manager, AFMC

REQUEST FOR BIOGRAPHIES OF ALS/AFE CHIEF MASTER SERGEANTS

If you are an active duty, retired, ANG, or AFRC CMSgt and have not seen this request for your biography read on. CMSgt David Siemiet, AFE Career Field Manager at the Pentagon would appreciate it if you would send him a copy of your military biography. CMSgt Siemiet is collecting the bios to post on the USAF AFE SharePoint page as part of our career field's history. The bios are to be emailed to david.siemiet@us.af.mil

Chief's Challenge

Chiefs -- Your help is needed in "Spreading the Word" for our 28th Annual ALS/AFE Veterans and Retirees Group Career Field Reunion "Chief's \$100" fundraising challenge!

We extend a "friendly challenge" to every Retired/AD/ANG/AFRC CMSgt to please mail Bob McElwain, our treasurer, a \$100 donation in an envelope or through Cash App utilizing the instructions below. Remember -- CMSgt's lead the way!

Your donation will help:

- **Fund the 15 PAX Vans Needed For Transportation Support**

- **Reduce hotel expenses/meal costs for Active-Duty Participants**
- **Reduce Picnic and Banquet Expenses**
- **Support Hospitality Room/Door prizes and Group Website Costs**

A sponsorship/donation poster board will be proudly displayed at the Reunion Hotel.

Please consider providing a supportive donation and joining us in Las Vegas/Nellis AFB 12-15 August for our Annual AFE Career Field Reunion.

Please mail reunion donations to: Bob McElwain 12320 Roadrunner Lane Victorville, CA. 92392, Telephone: 760-684-3790 or use the cash app as described earlier in the newsletter. Thank you all so much for your generous support!



From the Dinosaur Den

*By Al Loving
Chief Dinosaur*

The annual meeting of the **Order of Life Support System Dinosaurs (OLD)** Club will be held during the upcoming 62nd Annual SAFE Symposium being held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center (VBCC), Virginia Beach, VA, October 22-24, 2024. All current and eligible OLD members are asked and encouraged to attend.

For those members who are not able to join us in Virginia Beach, your feedback regarding the Dinosaur Club is important and can be provided directly to the Chief Dinosaur, Al Loving, by way of email at aloving@cox.net or by mobile phone at (757) 218-8560.

I also want to acknowledge and welcome new Dino Club member Hal Watson, Jr. Hal began his career

in “the business” with Universal Propulsion Co. in 1979. He’s currently employed by TASK Aerospace as an Egress and AFE subject matter expert.

We’re looking forward to welcoming you to the upcoming Dino Club meeting and the 62nd Annual SAFE Symposium in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

PROPOSALS FOR REUNION 2025 AND

2026: If interested in hosting one of our reunions in your area download and complete the reunion worksheet located online at: <https://70531f.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Worksheet-For-A-Future-Reunion.pdf> or visit our website at www.usafafe.net and look for the worksheet under the Reunion tab. Email it to bob.mcelwain@charter.net.

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

Do you receive our newsletter via snail mail (postal service)? If you do, then do you have a computer and are you online and have an email address? If this is you then let us know so we can save a stamp and start emailing you a link to the newsletter.

In Closing

By Dave Chitwood, Newsletter Editor

As you can see, there’s a tremendous amount of planning and preparation for our reunions. Please join us and become a part of this amazing group! We look forward to seeing veterans and retirees from Aircrew Flight Equipment, Aircrew Life Support, Personal Equipment and Survival Equipment come together and enjoy this year’s 28th Annual reunion. See you there!

Hope to see you at the 28th Annual USAF PE/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion being held in Las Vegas! Please visit our Group website (www.usafafe.net), and on social media to stay abreast of the latest.

27th Annual USAF Aircrew Life Support/Flight Equipment Reunion

12 – 15 August 2024

The Tuscany Suites and Hotel

255 E. Flamingo Rd
Las Vegas, NV 89169

Registration Form

Registration fee includes one U.S. Military Active Duty, Veteran, National Guard, Reservist, and one family member or guest. It also includes one civilian working in any profession related to aircrew survival/protection and one family member or guest.

YOUR NAME (as you want it on your name tag) _____
PHONE NO _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____
STREET ADDRESS _____
CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
NAME OF YOUR ATTENDING FAMILY MEMBER/GUEST _____
DO YOU OR YOUR GUEST NEED ONE OF OUR NAME TAGS? YES _____ NO _____

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Will you be staying at the Tuscany Hotel? Yes _____ No _____

REUNION REGISTRATION: Complete this form and mail it with a check or money order payable to Bob McElwain. Send this form to the address below NLT 26 July 2024. An alternate way to pay the registration fee is via Cash App as explained in the raffle order form. To cancel your reservation and avoid a loss of your banquet fee, contact Bob McElwain NLT 1 Aug 2024 via email or at 760-684-3790.

THE JAMES ROONEY COMMEMORATIVE REUNION GOLF TOURNAMENT

We will have our annual golf tournament on Nellis AFB on Thursday, August 15, 2024. It will be captain's choice (choose best ball and everyone hits from there). Always a fun event – you don't have to play well to have fun! Cost will be only \$53 including golf, cart, range, and burger/bag lunch – payable at the course or during reunion check-in. To make this event successful, we really need to know if you intend to play by 30 July so we can let the course know how many players we'll have and set up tee sheets. Please contact Dave Chitwood at Pantoum5@gmail.com and let him know if you intend to play, and whether you need to rent clubs.

REUNION REGISTRATION FEE (Covers handouts, meeting rooms, coffee, pastry, and other free food, &, etc.): **\$75.00**
BANQUET FEE: \$55.00 Per Person Times the Number of People _____ = \$ _____
RAFFLE TICKET: \$10.00 Per Ticket or 3 for \$25.00. Number of Tickets Ordering: _____ = \$ _____

Reunion Registration Fee Paid with Cash App: Yes _____ No _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED OR PAID: \$ _____

Complete this form and mail it NLT 26 July 2024 with a check or money order payable to:

Bob McElwain
12320 Roadrunner Ln
Victorville, CA 92392

Cell Phone: 760-684-3790
Email: bob.mcelwain@charter.net

Aircrew Life Support/Flight Equipment (ALS/AFE) Raffle Ticket Order Form

If you are not attending the reunion, mail this completed form by 26 July 2024 along with a check or money order payable to me and I will put your ticket(s) in the basket with your name on it. The depositing of your ticket(s) into the basket and the drawing will be videotaped. The video will be posted on our website located at www.usafals-afe.net after the reunion.

An Alternate Way to Order and Pay for Tickets is to Use Cash App

To use Cash App you'll have to download it on your iOS or Android device. Link it to a debit card and allow it to access your bank account. Once done you can enter the amount you're sending and then select me from your contact list. If I'm not in your contact list add the following: bob.mcelwain@charter.net Once you have confirmed the transaction, you authorize the app to debit the funds from your account and transfer them to me. The best part about the service is it's completely free.

Again, to order and pay:

1. Open Cash App
2. Enter the amount you're sending
3. Tap Pay
4. Enter my email address bob.mcelwain@charter.net
5. Enter what the payment is for i.e., 3 tickets, and your email address and phone number
6. Tap Pay

Be exceedingly cautious when typing in my information. One wrong letter, and you won't get that money back unless you happen to send it to someone ethical enough to return it.

Every ticket you purchase helps with the cost of our newsletter, website, and our reunion. You won't want to miss your chance to win the special quilt with a design that hopefully captures your USAF ALS/AFE military career.

RAFFLE TICKET: \$10.00 PER TICKET OR 3 FOR \$25.00 NUMBER OF TICKETS REQUESTED: _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

YOUR NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ **CITY** _____

STATE _____ **ZIP** _____ **PHONE** _____

Mail this form to:

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