



# ***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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**Dec 2024 Edition**

## **Looking Forward**

*By Dave Chitwood*

We hope the year 2024 treated you well! In August we held our reunion at the Tuscany Inn & Suites in Las Vegas, and it was a great success! We toured an F-35 Fighter Squadron, held a TopGolf tournament, and received outstanding support from the active duty AFE personnel at Nellis, as well as the current MAJCOM, ANG and Reserve Chiefs. We look forward to teaming up with them again next year in Tempe Arizona!

On a somber note, just since the last newsletter, we've already lost several more of our dear members and friends. Time is relentless. It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of

these great Americans. Please take a moment to reflect as you read these names.

## **Final Roll Call**

CMSgt (Ret) Larry McCarty	Jul 2024
MSgt (Ret) Tom Pfeil	Aug 2024
CMSgt (Ret) Ray Turbyfield	Aug 2024
SSgt Christopher E McCain	Aug 2024
CMSgt (Ret) Cesare Bruno	Nov 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 CMSgt selects!**

Reginald Cormier  
Courtney Flowers  
Daniel Hinojosa  
Kristen Jordan  
Michael Lundell  
Nichole Rios  
Jeremy Scott

What an impressive list! We wish them all the best as they begin their new journeys as career field leaders. Congratulations to all!

### **Chili Sez!**

*By Bob McElwain*



As expected, we had a good turnout at reunion 2024. The good turnout can be attributed to all the MAJCOM, ANG and Reserve Chiefs who attended the reunion, and an AFE meeting that was scheduled at the same location and time as our reunion. We are looking forward to doing something similar for reunion 2025. It will be combined with a biannual active-duty meeting called the "AFE Superintendent Development Workshop" in Tempe, AZ.

Our reunion will be held Monday, 11 August – Thursday, 14 August 2025 at the Hyatt Place Tempe Hotel, 601 E 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Tempe, AZ 85281. Monday, 11 August and Friday, 15 August will be traveling days. The AFE Superintendent Development Workshop will be held a mile away at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel. There will be over 200 military AFE personnel attending their workshop so, I suggest making your airline reservation accordingly.

On a sad note, the loss of Chief Bruno was difficult for me to take. I'm sure some of you felt the same way about the loss of Chief McCarty. We all lose friends... we lose them in death, to distance, and

over time. The deaths of so many of our reunion friends so close together have been horrific, and each time we lose one of them I'm reminded of how hard great friends are to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget. Be grateful every second of every day that you get to spend with your friends and loved ones. Life is so precious. Cesare's funeral mass will be at St Joseph Parish 280 Oak Tree Lane in Lincoln, California at 10 am on January 10, 2025. A luncheon will follow and internment at the national cemetery in Dixon, California.

Thank you for the kind words, email updates, and birthday wishes this year. Until our May 2025 newsletter, may this holiday bring you closer to the people you love and cherish.

### **2024 Reunion Recap**

*By Steve Wyatt*

The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Aircrew Life Support and Flight Equipment Veterans and Retirees Reunion was held under sunny skies 12-15 August 2024 in fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada. Reunion center was at the Tuscany Hotel and Casino located on Flamingo road just off the world-famous Las Vegas strip.

Our currently serving Vice President MSgt (Ret) Kevin Hill was the moderator for the first day's events and MC for the farewell banquet on Thursday evening. For those of you who were unable to attend, you missed a truly spectacular 27<sup>th</sup> career field gathering with colleagues and friends. Please place our 28<sup>th</sup> Reunion on your "to-do bucket-list" and plan to join in the fun for our 2025 USAF ALS/AFE reunion in Tempe Arizona!

Numerous individuals and industry partners assisted in event planning and pulled out all stops to ensure each attendee was properly registered, comfortable and cared for so they could enjoy the reunion festivities. Committee members and hotel employees "staffed" the hospitality room each night to ensure snacks and beverages were available for every guest. Many individuals and companies provided generous financial support to off-set high costs in the Las Vegas area, covering everything from mandatory hotel expenses to picnic needs.

The Tuscany's proximity to Nellis AFB and the USAF Air Warfare Center made the 27<sup>th</sup> reunion an ideal location for golfing, visiting various on-base facilities

and the F-35 squadron tour. Your currently elected Board of Directors has already begun preparing for what is sure to be another great reunion in 2025. This year's reunion totaled around 70 attendees including Active Duty members. We have set a community goal and challenge for at least **200 attendees** at our 28<sup>th</sup> annual reunion next year. We encourage your support in attaining this goal and respectfully solicit more participation from AFRC, ANG and Active-Duty members. This is your career field, and with thousands of friends on our various Facebook sites, we should certainly be able to increase reunion attendance. Please consider joining us next year!

The 27<sup>th</sup> reunion opened with the Posting of the Colors by the 57<sup>th</sup> Wing Honor Guard from Nellis AFB and the playing of our National Anthem. MSgt (Ret) Kevin Hill then led our membership in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and immediately followed with the opening invocation. SMSgt (Ret) Bob McElwain, our reunion committee chairman, and Lt. Colonel Johns then welcomed all attendees and provided their perspective and remarks on the importance of the Aircrew Flight Equipment Career Field. Attendees were also welcomed by letter from the USAF 1POX0 Career Field Manager, Chief Master Sergeant David Siemiet, and the 57 Wing A3 Senior Enlisted Leader CMSgt (Sel) Daniel Hinojosa.

For the most part, the first day of the reunion Tuesday, 13 August was a business meeting. This forum allowed for open discussions and participating industry partners, (many of which were ALS/AFE retirees) to present information to our family which members found enlightening. This also gave attendees up-to-date information on the latest program developments and equipment issues currently impacting the field.

Speakers and presenters included, Lt. Colonel Johns, 57<sup>th</sup> Weapons Support Squadron CC, CMSgt David Siemiet, our Career Field Manager from the Pentagon, and Commander David McNeil from VFW Post 12093 who provided an excellent presentation on the Veterans Administration recently approved PACT Act. The Tuscany hotel management staff provided outstanding service to us each evening during our hospitality suite fellowship gathering.

Finally, rounding out the week's activities were a trip to Nellis AFB for a F-35 squadron tour, AFE Shop tour, and a TEDGAR LLC sponsored career field picnic at Freedom Park. A very special thank you to Retired Chief's Ted Poe and Martin Austin for their kind and

generous support! We concluded the reunion with our Top Golf Tournament in Las Vegas led by CMSgt (Ret.) Dave Chitwood on Thursday morning, and a semi-formal farewell banquet on Thursday evening the 15<sup>th</sup> of August at the Tuscany hotel.

MSgt (Ret) Kevin Hill MC'd the banquet with special video presentations shown by Bob McElwain. Colonel (Retired) Dirk "Orca" Jordan, a former Life Support Officer and Red Flag Commander provided our keynote/farewell address by telling our attendees how much our Career Field meant to him personally as a Fighter Pilot. Colonel Jordan's experiences as a fighter pilot and personal lessons learned regarding "leadership" were an excellent way to close out our 2024 ALS/AFE reunion. Finally, the hotel catering staff did a remarkable job during our banquet and ensured even the smallest of details were carefully attended to.

The 2024 ALS/AFE Veterans and Retirees Group Planning Committee wishes to thank everyone who attended and played a key role in orchestrating the 2024 reunion. We look forward to another excellent event currently being planned for next year.

In closing, we look forward to welcoming each of you in 2025 for our 28<sup>th</sup> Career Field Reunion. Make those plans now to join former ALS/AFE colleagues and see what you've been missing all these years!

### ***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 28<sup>th</sup> Annual reunion. It's the perfect opportunity to reconnect with old friends or make new lifelong connections. See you there!

*Hope to see you at the 28th Annual USAF PE/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion being held in Arizona! Please visit our Group website ([www.usafals-afe.net](http://www.usafals-afe.net)), and on social media to stay abreast of the latest.*