



# ***AIRCREW FLIGHT EQUIPMENT AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT VETERANS AND RETIREES NEWSLETTER 2025 REUNION EDITION***

*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 Group website at [www.usafals-afe.net](http://www.usafals-afe.net)**

**May 2025**

## **Looking Forward**

*By Dave Chitwood*

We hope the year 2025 is treating you well! In this issue, we'll dive into the plans for our upcoming reunion in Tempe/Phoenix Arizona this August. It will be held in conjunction with active duty, ANG and Reserve AFE personnel.

On a somber note, just since the last newsletter, we've lost more of our dear members and friends that we are aware of. 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 the names.

## **Final Roll Call**

MSgt (Ret) Bob Bineau  
SMSgt Paul LaRochelle

Nov 2024  
Jan 2025

We offer our sincere prayers and condolences to the friends and families of our dearly 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**

Reunion Planning Team, May 6, 2025

Today we sent out the following message to the entire career field. We wanted you to have access to what and how we are messaging through the official Air Force channels. You are free to share.

I can't convey enough how excited we are to see you all in Tempe this summer as we continue to strengthen both of our organizations...and our single AFE family.

Regards,

DAVID B. SIEMIET, CMSgt, USAF  
CFM, Aircrew Flight Equipment



AFE Veteran & Retiree Reunion and Bi-Annual  
AFE Leadership Workshop

Team AFE,

We're excited to officially endorse and support the attendance of our distinguished AFE veterans and retirees during their reunion occurring in conjunction with the upcoming Bi-Annual AFE Leadership Workshop! This year's theme, "AFE Past, Present, and into the Future," highlights the crucial connection between the experience of those who came before us and the challenges we face today. More information about the reunion can be found by visiting:

<https://usafals-afe.net/reunion/>

Imagine having direct access to decades of hard-won knowledge, innovative solutions, and a deep understanding of how the AFE career field has evolved. That's the opportunity we have by bringing these seasoned professionals to the conference. They are a living library of best practices, historical context, and leadership expertise that can significantly benefit our current active-duty AFE leaders. To

learn more about the veteran and retiree organization, please visit their website at <https://usafals-afe.net>

Specifically, their presence will:

- Enrich Discussions: Their unique perspectives on evolving challenges will add depth and context to our conversations.
- Offer Crucial Insights: They can provide valuable historical context and proven strategies for tackling current AFE issues.
- Facilitate Mentorship: They offer unparalleled mentoring opportunities, guiding and inspiring the next generation of AFE leaders.
- Ensure Continuity: Their participation helps ensure that Air Force AFE policies and procedures are grounded in proven strategies and historical understanding.

By bridging the gap between the past, present, and future, we can maximize aircrew safety and mission effectiveness. Let's welcome them with open arms, actively engage in their workshops and mentoring sessions, and leverage their experience to propel the AFE career field forward.

This is an investment in the future of AFE and the safety of our aircrews. Let's work together to honor their service and legacy by ensuring their wisdom continues to guide the Air Force. Feel free to donate to the cause <https://gofund.me/66c301da>

The reunion is open to all AFE members, past or present and is a unit commander authorized permissive TDY event (DAFI 36-3003 Table 4.3 Rule 7). For information on who can attend the Bi-Annual AFE Leadership Workshop, please contact your unit AFE leadership.

DAVID B. SIEMIET, CMSgt, USAF  
CFM, Aircrew Flight Equipment

ALEX DELGADILLO, CMSgt, USAF  
AFE Veteran & Retiree Liaison

## **Chief's Corner**

By CMSgt Terrance Murphy  
AFSOC AFE Functional Manager

### **Welcome, Teammates, Veterans, and Friends - -**

It's an absolute honor to welcome you to the 28th Annual ALS/AFE Reunion, held alongside this year's AFE Superintendent's Development Workshop. Whether you're Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Civilian, or Retired—your presence here is a testament to the strength of our AFE family and the legacy we continue to build together.

As I reflect on the journey from the 1990s to now, I'm humbled by how far we've come. When many of us first donned the uniform, our field was smaller, our systems more manual, and our roles more narrowly defined. We focused on inspections, equipment maintenance, and tight checklist execution. While the mission was always vital, the recognition of our strategic impact wasn't always front and center.

Fast forward to today—and the transformation is nothing short of remarkable. The merger of Life Support and Survival Equipment brought about new challenges, but even more opportunity. We've grown from gear maintainers into mission enablers—supporting SOF operations, engaging in Joint-level integration, and contributing to programs that directly affect aircrew survivability and mission success. From advanced helmets and NVGs to CBRN readiness and parachute sustainment—we've become a vital part of the warfighting equation.

But some things haven't changed: our pride, our precision, and our people. The same work ethic, attention to detail, and sense of purpose that built this career field in decades past still drives it forward today. What has changed is how we develop and lead—from tech school to Superintendent, we're growing multi-capable Airmen who think critically, innovate boldly, and never lose sight of the “why.”

As we look ahead, our mission will only become more complex—but our foundation is strong. We must continue to mentor, modernize, and maintain the trust our aircrew and commanders place in us. And we do that best by standing together, learning from each other, and honoring the past while leaning into the future.

To our veterans and retirees—thank you. Your legacy laid the groundwork for today's success. To our currently serving teammates—stay sharp, stay proud, and keep pushing. And to all who made this reunion possible—know that this gathering reflects the very best of our community.

## **Chili Sez!**

By Bob McElwain



For the second time in two years, Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) professionals and reunion attendees to this year's reunion will link up during the reunion. We have been invited to join AFE Superintendents in Tempe, AZ, for a planned workshop. The workshop and reunion are being held from August 11-15, 2025, and Monday, August 11, and Friday, August 15, are travel days. Retirees and veterans interested in attending the reunion will be housed at the Hyatt Place Tempe/Phoenix/University Hotel at 601 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Tempe, AZ. The Workshop is being held at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel, less than one mile's walk away or a short Uber or taxi ride.

**HOTEL REGISTRATION:** The single or double occupancy hotel rate is \$110 per day and includes a hot breakfast buffet. Self-parking costs \$16.00 per day with in/out privileges, but I recommend not renting a vehicle since we will have vans available to transport us to reunion events. Additionally, please note that if you are flying to the reunion, don't forget you must have your military ID card or a Real ID if you don't want your flight to be delayed. Additionally, remember that the Sky Harbor International Airport is just 10 minutes away by Uber or Lyft. The hotel check-in starts at 4 pm, and check-out must be completed by 12 pm. Reservations should be made by July 20, 2025. Cancellation policy: 11:59 pm Hotel Time, 1 day before arrival, or pay a fee equivalent to one night's stay. A credit card is required. Please call 888-591-1234 to cancel. Refer to the attached registration form for complete hotel registration information.

**REUNION REGISTRATION:** Complete the attached registration form and mail it to the address indicated with a check or money order payable to Bob McElwain, NLT July 15, 2025. An alternative way to pay the registration fee is via Cash App. To do so, mail or email your completed registration form to me and pay your registration fees via Cash App. To use Cash App, you'll have to download it on your iOS or Android device, then link it to a debit card. Allow it to access your bank account and then enter the amount you're sending. Select me from your contact list. If Bob is not in your contact list, add bob.mcelwain@charter.net. Once you have confirmed the transaction, authorize the app to debit the funds from your account and transfer them to me. The service is completely free. To cancel your reservation and avoid a loss of your banquet fee, contact Bob McElwain NLT August 1, 2025 via email or at 760-684-3790.

A special rate is available for residents who live in the Tempe, AZ area who would like to attend the reunion for just one day. For example:

- If they would like to attend our Tuesday morning event on August 12, 2025, the cost is \$45
- If they would like to attend our Wednesday, August 13, 2025, activities, the cost is \$45
- If they would like to attend our banquet on Thursday, August 14, 2025, the cost is \$55.

If interested, complete the back of the registration form and send it to me as instructed.

### **Corporate Partners**

If you and/or your company are interested in helping us support this year's reunion, please send a check or money order made out to our Reunion Committee Chairman, Bob McElwain, at the address on the provided Registration Form.

The amount you choose to send is entirely up to you. In appreciation of your generosity, we also invite you to attend the joint AFE workshop/reunion and present your company's product lines to all attendees. A recognition board will be proudly displayed at the hotel entrance and hospitality suite, recognizing both corporate and individual generosity. Available briefing time slots will be provided for our business day meeting, so please be

on the lookout for that. The reunion is open to anyone involved in the Aircrew Protection business.

The 2025 Reunion planning committee thanks you in advance for your thoughtful support and generosity. Please consider providing a donation and joining us later this summer in Tempe for the 28th Annual Reunion. Finally, feel free to share this request with other industry partners you believe would be interested in assisting, supporting, and attending.

**Again, all donations must be made payable to and addressed to Bob McElwain. Thank you in advance for your continued support.**

### **Request for Reunion Support**

Your help is needed in "Spreading the Word" about our upcoming 28<sup>th</sup> Annual ALS/AFE Veterans and Retirees Reunion.

We solicit the support of every retired Active Duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve AFE Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) to please send Bob McElwain, our Group Treasurer, a donation via the mail or through the Cash App utilizing the instructions provided or the "Go Fund Me" link provided on Page 4 of this newsletter.

Remember -- NCO's lead the way, AND the amount you donate is entirely up to you!

**Your donation will help defray the costs of:**

- **Passenger van rentals needed for transportation support**
- **Expenses/meal costs for Active-Duty participants**
- **Picnic and banquet expenses**
- **Hospitality room expenses, door prizes and Group website costs**

**A sponsorship/donation recognition board will be proudly displayed at the reunion hotel.**

Please consider providing a supportive donation and joining us in Tempe AZ, August 11-15, 2025 for our annual reunion.

Again, please mail reunion donations to our Group Treasurer, Bob McElwain, at 12320 Roadrunner Lane, Victorville, CA 92392

## **Donations Via Go Fund Me**

Again, please consider donating via the Go Fund Me Fundraiser - no contribution is too small to help. Sharing with your network also helps reach more potential donors.

Here is the link to the fundraiser:

<https://gofund.me/bc59e64a>

## **Donations Via Cash App**

You will need to download the Cash App to 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 donating and select Bob McElwain from your contact list. If he's not in your contact list you will need to add Bob's email address which is: 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 him. The best part about the service is it's completely free.

Again, to donate:

1. Open the Cash App
2. Enter the amount

3. Tap Pay
4. Enter Bob's email address: bob.mcelwain@charter.net
5. Enter what the payment is for: 2025 Reunion Donation
6. Tap Pay

Be exceedingly cautious when entering the recipient information. One wrong number or letter, and you won't get that money back unless you happen to send it to someone ethical enough to return it.

Thank you all so much for your generous support. Finally, please share with others who may have an interest in attending the 2025 Reunion.

## **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!

# 28th Annual USAF Aircrew Life Support/Flight Equipment Reunion

11 – 14 August 2025

*Held in conjunction with the 2025 USAF AFE Superintendent Development Workshop*

## ***The Hyatt Place Tempe Hotel***

601 E 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Tempe, AZ 85281 (480) 207-1578

### **Registration Form**

The registration fee includes one U.S. Military Active Duty, Veteran, National Guard, or Reserve member 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/WHO \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

### **HOTEL AND REUNION REGISTRATION**

**HOTEL REGISTRATION:** The rate per night is \$110.00 plus tax for Sunday, 10 August through Thursday, 14 August 2025, for single or double occupancy with free breakfast. Reservations must be made by 20 July 2025 by clicking on the following link: [Hyatt Place - USAF Retirees](#) and clicking "book." Select your arrival & departure dates and the number of rooms and beds, then click "Book" again. Under "Special Rates," select "Corporate or Group Code,". The group code G-U075 is entered for you on the next page. As an alternative, you may call 888-591-1234 and ask to reserve a room using the group code: **Hyatt Place – USAF Retirees**. Cancellation Policy: 11:59 pm Hotel Time, 1 Day Before Arrival, or Pay 1 Night Fee.

***Will you be staying at the Hyatt Place 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 15 July 2025. If your bank supports it, you may use Cash App to pay your registration fee. If you do, mail or email your registration form to me and send your registration fee via Cash App. To cancel your reservation and avoid a loss of your banquet fee, contact Bob McElwain NLT 3 Aug 2025 via email or call him at 760-684-3790.

**REUNION REGISTRATION FEE (Covers handouts, & etc.):**

**\$85.00**

**BANQUET FEE: \$55.00 Per Person Times the Number of People** \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

A special rate is available for residents of the Tempe, AZ area who would like to attend the reunion for just one day. Select the day below that you would like to attend and send payment as stated above.

- I would like to attend on Tuesday, 12 August 2025, at the cost of \$45 \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to attend on Wednesday, 13 August 2025, at the cost of \$45 \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to attend the banquet on Thursday, 14 August 2025, for \$55. \_\_\_\_\_

***I'm paying my fees with Cash App and will email the registration form to Bob.*** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Complete this form and mail it NLT 15 July 2025 with a check or money order payable to:  
Bob McElwain  
12320 Roadrunner Ln  
Victorville, CA 923  
Cell Phone: 760-684-3790  
Email: [bob.mcelwain@charter.net](mailto:bob.mcelwain@charter.net)