

RETURN TO OUR ROOTS

Now that the 1P career field consolidation has been in effect for several years and the "new" has worn off I thought I would take a few minutes to refresh all on some of the actual Army Air Corps /USAF background of our career field. I have a lot of information, photos, and documentation from Mr. Don Bock and Oscar Norberg including several audio tapes that I have provided to Bob McElwain. Bob has placed the recordings on the Web for all to listen to. Oscar Norberg was an Instructor at Chanute in the Parachute Training Course in the early 50's

Lester Williamson has told us at the reunions of his first duty as a parachute rigger when he first signed up in the late 40's and I also know that Jim Cartwright was a parachute rigger (Military Occupational Specialty, MOS 620) in his early career and specifically during the Berlin Airlift when he was stationed in England. I am sure that several of the other initial "Life Supporters" also came up Parachute Riggers.

The first formal fact that I know is from Bill Baxter who graduated from Chanute in the spring of 1951 with a MOS of 594 which covered both Parachute Rigger and Personal Equipment. Bill told me "Five of us young airmen went to Carswell AFB TX and I was the only one who ended up in

Personal Equipment on the B-36 with 15 crewmembers, talk about a warehouse of equipment".

I remember that while I was at Chanute during the mid 60's the Mobile Travel Teams (MTT's) traveled with a Life Support and Parachute Rigger as a team. I traveled with TSGT Pemberman on several trips (Yakota, Osan, and MacDill) with the F-4 and I remember Clarence Benton and another Parachute Rigger made the USAF circle of ADC Bases teaching the F-106B Seat. The MTT's always "fought to travel to Bergstrom or any 12AF Base" because Hank Counts made sure the trip was successful.

While I was at TAC Requirements Chief Roberson from LGMF traveled as the acquisition manager for SEAWARS, AFWARS and other programs.

Later it was Jim Cooper and the Survival Equipment Troops at Tyndall that kept the Life Preserver Technical Order up to date on the LPU-9/P for Wright Pat/Brooks.

So it is easy to see that since September 1947 and through the years we have always been working together and continue to this day!

Mostly from memory, comments and corrections appreciated.

Tommy Tompkins