



# ***THE LIFE SUPPORT NEWSLETTER***



*News for the men and women who served in the USAF or civilians who work in Government or industry in the Aircrew Life Support business.*

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**Dec 2008 Issue**

I dedicate this part of the newsletter to Lt. Col Cal Crochet USAF Retired. Cal is retiring after over 50 years dedicate service to the USAF and Aircrew Life Support. Cal served initially as a SAC Pilot flying B-47's, B-52s, and FB-111's and early on Helicopters. Cal followed as the SAC Life Support Officer and after retirement from the Active Air Force continued as the SAC Life Support Requirements Program Element Manager. Upon Cal's retirement from Civil Service he continued as a consultant in the Aircrew Protection area. Among Cal's many accomplishments are Thermal Flash Blindness Goggles, TS-24/P Tester, Strobe Lights, OBOGS, all B-1 and B-2 LSE. Cal was recently recognized at SAFE 2008 with the SAFE Career Achievement Award and more recently recognized by the USAF Active AFE/Life Support Chiefs as an Honorary AFE/Life Support Chief. This award was presented by Chief Al Reams along with a Chief Bust and Chief Coin. Several retired Life Supporters attended the ceremony as indicated in the photo below. Congratulations Chief Cal and good luck.



**Cal Crochet (seated in front), From Left to Right Mark Jones, Curly O'Neal, Al Reams, Tommy Tompkins, James Calloway, Rob Darter, Jim Rooney and Chuck Hunnefeld. Not pictured Joe Lynch and Bob Mendez.**

The new Chiefs for 2009 are Stew Stangl at Tinker, Keith Geltz at Charleston, Newlin Carter at Eglin (33<sup>rd</sup> Wing) and Rodney Welch at Davis Monthan. Congratulations to all!

These are the first Chiefs that competed and were selected for promotion under the new CEM code 1P000, Aircrew Flight Equipment. Stangl, Geltz and Welch have Life Support backgrounds and Carter came from a Survival Equipment background. Again congratulations.

Retirements that I know of this coming year are Steve Wyatt and Jerry Stoddard both after 30 years of service. Good Luck!

Two great Life Supporters passed on this year Retired Chief Fred Foss and SMS Alex Moorhouse. Both will be missed!

As the Christmas cards are arriving it brings back many memories of great friends. Roger and Mary Lou May, John and Peggy Damron, Bill and Cyndi Farver, Cal and Barbara Crochet, Greg and Sue Copeland, Rich and Vicki Lahn, Rolfe and Linda Swain and others. I really relish these Family contacts and especially my enjoyable telephone conversations with Jimmie Cartwright. Jimmie was one of my first supervisors and along with Chief Bill Brooks one of the two “Sharpest” NCOs that I ever worked with! On a hot humid day at Eglin Jimmie (back in the days of the one piece fatigues) was razor sharp. I always thought he went home at noon just to change uniforms. Bill Brooks at Stead I thought kept shined boots in the refrigerator and changed ever hour on the hour. If you notice above there are Life Supporters, Survival Equipment, and Survival (SERE) troops and that is what I mean by the Aircrew Protection Family.

We need your support and inputs to keep this newsletter going and interesting to all.

Cheers and Keep in Touch,  
Tommy

## ***CHILI SEZ***



Thanks to everyone who attended and supported the 2008 reunion. Without the contributors to our hospitality room and the banquet raffle, I don't know if the reunion would have had the success it had. The food was fantastic and the stories (lies) told throughout the hospitality room were better

than ever. And as always, it was great to see new faces at the reunion. This year we were honored to have Dan & Glenda Hawkins, Vicki & Jim Ages, L.C. Ford, and Dave & Kathy Cramer.

While I'm addressing the reunion, let me stress something that I briefed at this year's World Wide Aircrew Flight Equipment (Life Support) Workshop. Every now and then a rumor surfaces regarding eligibility to attend the reunion or join the Retirees Group. As I stated at the World Wide, the reunion is not a LSO, Chief, or even a Top Three Reunion! All we ask is that you are currently working or have worked in something related to the safety or protection of aircrews. You can be any rank, you can be a civilian, and you can be active duty, in the Guard or Reserves, retired, or prior service from any branch of the military! Now stop using the rank card as an excuse for not attending the reunion!

Another item that needs to be addressed is the fact that none of the younger troops are joining us at the reunion! With the passing of so many of our founders, we need younger life supporters to join us. This will help with carrying on the history of the career field, future reunions, the newsletter and the web site. We can't let what we've created die!

### **Lost Life Supporters Video**

If you were in attendance at our reunion this year, you were treated to our video presentation of “A Tribute to Lost Life Supporters”. If you did not get to see it but would like to have a copy, just send your request to me, Bob McElwain (my address is at the top of this newsletter) along with two dollars to cover the mailing cost. As always, if you know of a life supporter who has passed on, please let us know.

### Updates to the Web Site

Mike Freebury spent a lot of time updating our Headquarters Assignment History file located on our web site and we are indebted to him. Mike stated "I apologize in advance for any misspelled names, wrong dates or improper rank (or lack of rank)!"

Although Mike provided a lot of missing names and dates, most assignment dates are still missing and that's where you come in. Visit the web site and peruse the files. Help us fill in the missing information if you can.

In addition to providing the updated info on the headquarters roster, Mike also identified some of the people in tech school photo file.

### Looking For a Life Supporter?

I get e-mails occasionally with a request for contact information on life supporters. If the person they are looking for is not on our address list, or on active duty I cannot help them. However, I did promise I'd put their request in our news letter in hopes that someone out there might be able to help. The following requests were sent in:

I would like to find any troops who were stationed at Castle, AFB from 1971 to 1975. This was the time period when we moved the shop from the end of the flight line to the old chow hall.

James "Mike" Crownover  
[j.crownover@yahoo.com](mailto:j.crownover@yahoo.com)

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I've heard from several of my old pilots from the 18th FS at Eielson and they are trying to track down a few members of the squadron

for a re-union. I was Chief (then TSgt) Steve Wyatt's Assistant NCOIC up there.

Michael Eaton  
[meaton5@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:meaton5@tampabay.rr.com)

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I'd like to contact a few people I know from my AD life like Joe Lynch, John Duren, Sean Baker and others.

Rosie Rosario  
[hannah22@comcast.net](mailto:hannah22@comcast.net)

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Can you help me with any contact info for a Sean Grohman or a Rich Cheshire?

Noel Concepcion  
[cepie@hotmail.com](mailto:cepie@hotmail.com)

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I am looking for anyone who was stationed in Misawa Japan in life support from Nov 61- June 65. I left in June 1965 and crossed trained out of life support in 1972 so I've kind of lost track of everyone.

Tom Toomey  
[ttoomey@cox.net](mailto:ttoomey@cox.net)

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I was wondering if you happen to remember a Pat or Dave Johnson from Clark AB? Light reddish hair, freckles. He went by the name Pat but I'm not certain if that was his middle or first name. He would have been there for certain in '73 and I think he was there in '74, but not certain for how long. Unfortunately, I don't know what squadron he was in. I do

know that he hung out at the Honky Tonk bar near the base.

Katherine  
[angelski@fidnet.com](mailto:angelski@fidnet.com)

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I'm a retired Life Supporter (ANG), who served on active duty with Karl Wicker. I see that he is on your list and I would like to get in touch with him. If you could help I would appreciate it.

Paul Herrick  
[tsgherr@mac.com](mailto:tsgherr@mac.com)  
[www.paulandcate.com](http://www.paulandcate.com)  
704.277.9989

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I would like to say hi to some of my old Life Support comrades, i.e., Jimmy Shaw, Roger Wade, Jim Minot, Archie Davenport, Ed McKenzie, Dave Candland, Duke Wells, Waymon McGee, and others who mentored me throughout a great career in the Air Force and the greatest career field in the Air Force. I would love to be able to hear from each and every one of you.

Mark Nourse  
[marknourse@comcast.net](mailto:marknourse@comcast.net)

### **The Life Support Merger**

Tommy & Chili,  
I've been watching the merger news. It's a shame that the "mafia" does not exist anymore. This would have never happened under our watch. I tried to send the following to the Air Force times however every time I tried to submit my comments, I got "there was an error with your submission". I think maintenance had something to do with it! Here' what I tried to submit.

"As a retired Life Support functional manager having served 20 years in this career field, I see no benefit for the Life Support career field in this merger. The AF has only added more work to an already exhausted career field. Yes, some overlap of equipment maintenance is apparent. However, when you look at the manpower element, we gain much more work. The partial gain of personnel is offset by the increased workload. In the end, the final result will be" a lost identity" for a great Career Field".

CMSgt (Ret) Dave Cramer

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Dave,  
I think the jury is still out on this merger. Your concern is with the manpower issue and mine is with lost responsibilities. I don't know about you, but I enjoyed working the flight line when I was in fighters and bombers. The troops working fighters in the future will never know what that's like and will miss out on a great part of the career field that connected us with the aircrafts.

Bob McElwain

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Chili,

I concur with your concerns, but I thought why in the world would we take on more responsibility with little or no increase in manning. This issue has been around a long - long time and the MAJCOM chiefs decided back then that it was not advantages for our career field. I can't believe how many times I've discussed with our director any many unit commanders.

I've always thought about the safety issue and advocated the "Ops Eyes" are always better, just to ensure the aircrews knew that we were looking out for their safety as well.

It won't be long till Maintenance takes us over.

Thanks for your reply.  
Dave Cramer

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As you can see some retirees are still concerned about the merger. We welcome comments from you, especially the active duty troops who are living this merger. I'll add your comments in the next newsletter.

### **Sick and Shut-Ins**

In a truly disheartening discussion with SMS Larry Owens I learned of his recurring battle with Cancer. Many of you know Larry and are aware of his battle early this year, hopeful prognosis and now the unfortunate reoccurrence. As I understand from my discussion with Larry, additional tests are scheduled to determine the degree to which the Cancer has spread. This will help to make decision on the treatments to undergo, beginning in January. Larry is going to continue to work until his treatments prevent it.

Please keep him in your thought and prayers for successful and bearable treatment. If you get a chance to call him before the holiday break I am certain this will add to his strength and endurance during the difficult days ahead. Larry's office number is 817-782-5184

Tracy A. Kopp, CMS, USAFR, 10AF/A3T

As we close out 2008 I want to say thanks to all who have made the newsletters, the reunions and the website possible. And as always, our thoughts are with the men and women who are serving in the military looking out for our aircrews. Many of you are scattered across the world, some in war zones, so keep safe until you get home.

I've got to use the remaining space for something of interest, so here are a few words about identity theft.

### **Are You Worried About Identity Theft?**

The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs as well as other Federal Agencies and corporate America have experienced many aspects of "Identity Theft." Within the Federal Government your Social Security Number (SSN) has been used as identification.

Last year, the Military Officers Association Of America (MOAA) urged the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to explore options to protect service members from identity theft by removing the Social Security account number (SSAN) from military ID cards. The fallout was a provision in the FY2007 Defense Authorization Act that tasked the Pentagon for a report and recommendations on how to address this pressing issue. The Pentagon report, forwarded to Congress in July by Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) David Chu, cited the difficulties of moving entirely away from use of the SSAN, which is fundamental to all of the services' personnel records and innumerable embedded networks of security and record-keeping systems. However, it acknowledged that the current system poses problems that need to be addressed and said the Defense Department intends to phase out the use of the printed SSAN on ID cards over the next several years. The plan is to move to an ID

card that would print only the last four digits of the SSAN, with the full SSAN electronically encrypted on the card. This would provide additional protection to the individual members while still preserving data deemed essential for hundreds of purposes, from validating commissary check purchases to confirming the identities of prisoners of war. The reason for the multi-year phase-out is to allow time to convert the large numbers of hardware and software systems to conform to the new card, and also to allow a phased replacement of more than three million ID cards of current members, retirees, family members, and survivors so ID card facilities aren't overwhelmed. MOAA recognizes that making changes on such fundamental data elements is never easy or quick. We commend the Armed Services Committees for pressing the issue and defense leaders for acknowledging the problem and initiating a plan to address it.

