



AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT/ AIRCREW FLIGHT EQUIPMENT 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

December 2015 Edition

Looking Forward

By Al Loving, Group President

Our 20th annual reunion was a huge success! A brief recap is included in this edition of the newsletter.

I wanted to take just a minute to personally thank each of you for your sustained individual contributions and to thank those of you who stepped forward to accept our "Instructor Challenge" this year. Your generous support and contributions made this year's reunion another "First-Class" gathering. We have received a number of heartfelt thanks and positive comments about this year's festivities and featured speakers.

I realize this level of success wouldn't have been possible without the personal involvement of each

person that attended and/or spoke to our gathering. For that, I'm very grateful.

On behalf of your Board of Directors, we look forward to the 2016 reunion that will also be held at the Tuscany in Las Vegas, NV, September 18-22. We hope many of you will again join us for our 21st Annual Reunion and be a part of our career field heritage. Again, thank you so very much!

I can't say enough good things about the fantastic support we received from the Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) community and leadership at Nellis AFB. Thanks you to the Nellis AFE Team and Nellis leadership!

Finally, the Reunion Committee Chairperson, Bob McElwain, and the entire Committee are to be

thanked and congratulated for the hard work put forth in pulling together another successful reunion. Thank you!

New Group Vice President Named

It gives us great pleasure to announce the appointment of CMSgt (Ret) David Chitwood to the position of Group Vice President effective October 1, 2015.

Dave has graciously agreed to fill the remainder of CMSgt (Ret) Steve Wyatt's two-year term who has dutifully served as our Vice President since September 2014. Dave has been an integral part of the Group's activities for many years. We now welcome him to the Group's governing body.

Steve, we thank you for your dedicated service and energy you have brought to the Group as an elected member of the governing body. We know you will continue to provide the same dedicated service and energy to the Group where and when possible. On behalf of the Group, thank you!

From The Field

We congratulate all of the uniformed and civilian AFE professionals who have been selected for promotion since the last newsletter.

The following active duty AFE Senior Master Sergeants that have been selected for promotion to Chief Master Sergeant:

Kevin R. Gallemore
Jennifer M. Hellwig (first female 1P0 Chief select)
Ronald J. Ruzek
Charles R. Stephens

Congratulations one and all!

The HQ AFSOC/A3TL ceremony team led by SMSgt Dan Lewis did an outstanding job orchestrating the June 2015 retirement ceremony for CMSgt Ricky Wagner, outgoing AFSOC AFE Functional Manager. Several "family" members and other AFE familiar faces were in attendance. They included CMSgt Dale Lawrence (incoming

AFSOC AFE Functional Manager), CMSgt John Rozell (1st SOW AFE Superintendent), Mark Jones, Al Cricks, Steve Wyatt, Richard Carlson, Dan Meadows, Jim Gough, Corey Waldman, and Paul Elstone.

To those who will soon or have retired from the military or civil service since the last newsletter, please accept our sincere thanks for your dedicated service to this Great Nation and the United States Air Force.

If you want to get a glimpse of today's AFE career field, click on the link below and give it a read. Thanks to Chief Mike Lightner, USAF AFE Functional Manager, for making us aware of its July 2015 publication.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 11-301, Volume 5, Aircrew Flight Equipment Career Field Development, includes:

- Standardized AFE Duty Titles
- AFE Special Experience Identifiers
- AFE Enlisted Development Teams
- AFE Upgrade Training
- AFE Personnel Requirements
- And more...much, much more

www.static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a3/publication/afi11-301v5/afi11-301v5.pdf

If We Could Talk For 5-Minutes

*By CMSgt Mike Lightner
USAF AFE Career Field Manager*

After serving nearly 30-years in the Air Force there are so many things I wish I could share with you before I retire. If we could talk for 5-minutes these are some thoughts I would share:

LEAD BOLD

Step Up – Volunteer to help with projects; don't wait for the projects to be given to you. Helping to solve problems and tackle issues not only helps our community, it also helps to develop your experience and prepares you for future roles. I can't tell you how many times knowledge I gained as a TSgt or MSgt, from working projects like the

manpower study, Air Force Instruction rewrites, database issues, etc... has been used in solving issues and developing policy in my current position.

Step Out – Stand-up for what you believe is right. Don't let fear get in your way of doing the right thing. If it looks wrong or feels wrong...it's probably wrong. Be bold and raise your concerns, don't just stand by and whisper "I told you so" in the background, stand up and say "I'm telling you". In the end, even if no one is listening, at least you will be able to sleep at night knowing you did what you could.

Lean In – Get involved and stay involved. Changes are happening every day and our Airmen...your Airmen...need you to keep pace. Get out from behind the desk and find out what is going on around you and your team. Figure out what the changes are and how they will affect your people. Don't be lazy...do your homework.

LEAD STRONG

Take a position...for God's sake...take a position but have the courage to change your position as the situation changes or new information is learned. There have been many times throughout my career when I thought I was moving the ball in the right direction, only to find out later I was going the wrong way. That's ok; it is much easier to turn the wheel on a moving car and it is much easier to change your position if you had one to start with.

Defend your people but don't give them a pass. For your people to learn and grow they need to be free to make some mistakes. They need to know you "got their back" or they will start to play it safe. Defend them from outside criticism but hold them accountable when issues are brought to your attention.

OWN IT! No matter what IT is...if IT is your responsibility, make IT yours. Whether you're taking out trash, washing your unit's vehicle, or managing a team of 40 Airmen, take care of IT like IT was your own. There are many reasons I'll never own a rental car, the largest has to do with how I drive them. There is no way I would every drive my own car like that and that is because I own IT.

LEAD WELL

Leadership is about people...get involved. A large majority of leadership is about influence. Your position and rank will only get you so far, it will take influence to get you across the finish line. Get out from behind the desk and get out to where the people are.

Every dollar counts but every Airman counts as well. There is no shortage of people in the world willing to provide statistics on how to save money but that savings mustn't come at the expense of your people. Too often we make decisions without fully considering the workload we are putting on our folks. Break the cycle and ask the question(s).

BE THE EXAMPLE! Whether you're walking past trash while walking into the BX, running from your car to the door at work because you forgot your hat, or taking extended lunches to spend time with your wife, know that someone is watching you. More importantly, what your Airmen see is what they will believe is ok. Mentorship isn't about what you say; it's about who you are and what you do. Our people are always watching, acknowledge this and set the example.

Tricare Enrollees Now Have to Refill Certain Drugs Via Mail or at Military Facilities

As of October 1, 2015, TRICARE beneficiaries have to obtain refills for certain drug prescriptions through the mail, or at military treatment facilities, according to a new interim final rule <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/08/06/2015-19196/civilian-health-and-medical-program-of-the-uniformed-services-champustricare-refills-of-maintenance> from the Defense Department.

The new policy affects refills of non-generic prescription "maintenance medications," or drugs that people take on a regular basis for chronic conditions, such as high cholesterol or blood

pressure. The change does not apply to medications for sudden infections or illnesses. Express Scripts (ESI) Phone No. is: 1-877-363-1303

Dental Care For Veterans

The 2015 Healthy Mouth Movement is a program that helps veterans who are unable to find oral healthcare due to financial or access barriers. Sponsored by Aspen Dental, dentists and team members in nearly 30 states devote their time to providing much-needed dental care. Aspen Dental works closely with local veterans' organizations to reach those in need in their community. For more information and to find where the MouthMobile will be next, visit the Aspen Dental website.

Checking In

“Check In’s” since the last newsletter included:

- Al Cricks
- Paul Swindell
- Mark Jones
- Al Reams
- Bill Wood
- Jerry Clark
- John McNaughton
- John Blankinship
- Greg Boggs
- Terry Ache
- Jeff Scism
- Greg Cassidy
- Tim Morrow
- Chief Mike Lightner
- Chief Dale Lawrence
- Chief Shane Sandlin
- Tim Brockway
- Bill Sparman
- Tim McQuitty
- Ray and Betty Blanchette
- Truman Pittman
- Ted Poe
- Dan Chambers
- Joe Lynch

Our Store

The USAF Aircrew Life Support (ALS) and Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) Veterans and Retirees Group is proud to announce that the Aircrew Life Support and Aircrew Flight Equipment lapel pins and patches are now available for purchase! Show your career field pride and affiliation by owning one or both of these pins. They look great and will be an important part of our identity. Order a few for your troops to boost morale, build motivation and pride, to recognize an achievement or as a collectible. The interest in the lapel pins has been overwhelming...so successful that we've run out of the ALS pins. A new shipment will be in around January 15, 2016. Don't let that stop you from placing an order, we'll put your order on our backorder list and notify you when we receive the new shipment.

All available career field related items are listed on our website at www.usafals-afe.net. Click on the “Our Store” link located at the top of the page.

The “Store” point of contact is Bob McElwain (email: bob.mcelwain@charter.net). Hurry as quantities are limited. If you have questions about how to acquire lapel pins, patches, and the like, visit the link provided to answer many of your questions regarding career field related items and how to get them. Link: www.usafals-afe.net/our-store-3/.

Also, Bob's mailing address is:
Bob McElwain
12320 Roadrunner Lane
Victorville, CA 92392

The Afterburner

Did you know that the latest edition and archives of the Afterburner, Newsletter for Retired Personnel, are available on-line? The newsletter can be viewed by visiting the Air Force Retiree Services at the following link: www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner/

Final Roll Call

We have been advised that the following “family” members have made their Final Roll Call:

- CMSgt (Ret) Robert Thornburg
- SMSgt (Ret) Larry Crawford
- SMSgt Dennie Darnell
- MSgt (Ret) Marek Czajkowski
- MSgt (Ret) Herb Boughn
- TSgt (Ret) James Staples
- SSgt (Ret) Kenneth Ernest Dunfield
- Mr. Charles J. Bergman

We offer our sincerest condolences to each of the family members and friends of our dearly departed family members.

In Closing

By Al Loving, Group President

We wish each of you the happiest of holidays and hope that you will have had the opportunity to spend time with family and friends this Christmas. Please remember our men and women serving at home and abroad this and every day of the year.

Lastly, please mark your calendars now for the 21st Annual PE/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion to be held September 18-22, 2016, at the Tuscany Suites and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. **Spread the word!** See you in September in Vegas!

2015 USAF Personal Equipment, Aircrew Life Support, Survival Equipment, and Aircrew Flight Equipment (PE/ALS/SE/AFE) Reunion Recap

The 20th Annual USAF Personal Equipment, Aircrew Life Support, Survival Equipment, and Aircrew Flight Equipment Reunion was held September 21-25, 2015, in Nevada. Reunion Central was at the Tuscany Hotel and Suites just off the fabulous Las Vegas strip. SMSgt (Ret) Ed McKenzie was the Master of Ceremonies (MC) for the first day’s business meeting and was also the MC for our Farewell Banquet on Thursday evening. It was great to see quite a few first-timers in attendance that included active duty CMSgt’s Mike Lightner, USAF AFE Career Field Manager, and Jonathan Redfern, AFPEO Agile Combat Support, Aircrew Flight Equipment, and the several local Nellis AFE Team members. For those of you who were unable to attend, you missed a truly spectacular career field get-together with colleagues and friends. Ask anyone who attended this year and you’ll understand what we mean.

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 “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 transportation to banquet needs.

Before going any further, please make sure to mark your calendars now for the 21st Annual USAF PE/ALS/SE/AFE Reunion being held September 18-22, 2016, once again at the Tuscany Suites Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Tuscany’s proximity to Nellis AFB and the USAF Air Warfare Center make it an ideal spot for golfing, outdoor activities and, of course, visiting on-base facilities. The Board of Directors and Reunion Committee have already begun preparing for what is sure to be another great reunion in Nevada. This year’s reunion totaled around 110 attendees. We have set an AFE community goal and objective for an increase in ANG, AFRC and active duty participation at our 21st reunion. Please don’t miss this, and highlight your calendar now!

The 20th reunion opened with the Posting of the Colors by the 57th Wing Honor Guard from Nellis AFB and the playing of our National Anthem. CMSgt (Ret) Ray Blanchette then followed with the opening invocation. SMSgt (Ret) Ed Mackenzie welcomed all attendees and provided his perspective and remarks on the importance of the Aircrew Flight Equipment Career Field. Attendees were also welcomed by Lt Colonel Taylor Ferrell, 57th OSS Commander, CMSgt Wendy Hansen, 57th Wing Command Chief, and welcome letter from the 19th USAF Chief of Staff, General (Retired) Norton A. Schwartz. CMSgt Mike Lightner, USAF AFE Career Field Manager then took the podium to provide a "State of the Career Field" briefing to all attendees. Our sincerest thanks to Chief Lightner for joining us in the midst of an extremely busy travel schedule.

The first day also included our annual business and first formal general membership meetings. These forums provided up-to-date information on the Group and the latest program developments and equipment concerns currently affecting the field.

Invited speakers and presenters included MSgt Heather Devine from the 57th Wing Aircrew Flight Equipment office. MSgt Devine provided both a safety and wing mission briefing. Industry partner briefings included a Martin Baker Aircraft and TEDGAR LLC briefing from CMSgt (Ret) Ted Poe; Survitec briefing from Major (Ret) Mark Gruber; a Gentex Corporation briefing from CMSgt (Ret.) Mark Jones; a Booze, Allen, Hamilton Tracking update from SMSgt (Ret) John Patti; Butler Parachute demonstration from CMSgt (Ret) Rick Wagner; an East West Industries, Inc., presentation from Mr. Joe Spinosa; and a Retirees Activities/VFW briefing from Mr. Richard Szyg.

SMSgt (Ret) Kemper Kinchen and the Tuscan staff provided excellent food and beverage service to us each morning with breakfast refreshments and evening libations with snacks in our hospitality suite...great job!

Rounding out the week's activities were a trip to Nellis AFB for a consolidated AFE Shop/Flight line tour of the 66th Rescue Squadron and hands-on static display of the HH-60 Pave Hawk Helicopter and luncheon at the golf course club house. SMSgt (Ret) Bob McElwain organized and led our Pinochle tournament later that day in the hospitality suite at the hotel. We concluded the reunion with our Golf Tournament at the Nellis Sunrise Vista golf course on Thursday morning and semi-formal farewell banquet on Thursday evening in the hotel ballroom. At the banquet, CMSgt Jon Redfern provided inspirational comments during the evening "Salute to our Instructors" tribute followed by Colonel Pete "Shadow" Ford's keynote and farewell address. Colonel Ford, an active duty officer assigned to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, joined us to relate how much our career field meant to him personally as a fighter pilot. Colonel Ford experienced an ejection from an F-15C in 2003 during air to air combat testing at Nellis against an F-22 Raptor. He took time from his busy schedule to visit with us and brief us on what he encountered during his mishap and the importance of family and properly inspected AFE equipment and training programs.

The hotel and restaurant staff did a remarkable job supporting our banquet needs on Thursday evening, and ensured the smallest of details was attended to.

The Reunion Committee wishes to thank everyone who attended and played a role in organizing and orchestrating the 2015 reunion. We look forward to another excellent event currently being planned in Las Vegas. Again, please mark your calendars now and plan on joining dear friends and colleagues for our 21st Reunion in September 2016.

In closing, we offer a special "Thank You!" to SMSgt Carissa Saugstad, the 57th Wing AFE Superintendent and her AFE Team. The approximately 30 AFE professionals and individuals assigned to Nellis AFB ensured the absolute success of our 20th Annual Reunion.

If you are interested in becoming a committee member and helping plan our 2016 reunion, please contact Bob McElwain at bob.mcelwain@charter.net. We look forward to welcoming "first timers" and returnees again next year in the great desert southwest!

2016 Reunion Activities in the Planning Stages

Bus Trip to Pahrump Valley Winery

You might recall the bus trip to the Pahrump Winery that we tried and failed to setup for our last reunion. Well, we're going to attempt to set it up for reunion 2016. To do so we need to know in advance how many people are interested in going on this trip and which menu you will purchase. Yes, you have to purchase lunch to go on this trip!

Cost of the trip minus the cost of lunch will be \$25 - \$35 per guest (depending on how many people sign up to go). For an open beer and wine bar add \$15 per guest.

GRAPEVINE (\$22 per guest + tax)

Glass of their award winning wine
House Salad or Lobster Bisque

Guest chooses one:

- Roast Beef sandwich
- Smoked Turkey sandwich
- Grilled Portobello sandwich

Chef's Dessert & Coffee

VINTAGE (\$29 per person + tax)

Glass of their award winning wine
House Salad or Lobster Bisque

Guest chooses one:

- Vintner's Prime Meatloaf
- Sautéed Chicken Tuscany
- Portobello Mushroom Ravioli

Chef's Dessert & Coffee

(Sales tax of 7.6% and a 18% gratuity will be added to final bill)

As a reminder of what this trip is all about, read last year's introduction to it here:

Bus Trip to Pahrump Valley Winery: Pahrump may be a "one-horse town", but the "fine" Continental cuisine and "excellent" service at this "change-of-pace" winery/eatery make it a "must-stop. Escape the Las Vegas Valley for the day with a tour of the Pahrump Valley Winery, one of Southern Nevada's best kept secrets. Located just 50 miles South West of Las Vegas, the Pahrump Valley Winery has received over 300 national wine awards since 2004. Sip award-winning wines in the tasting room, stroll through the tranquil rose garden with its gazebo and Spring Mountains backdrop. Dining at Symphony's, wineries Zagat rated upscale-casual restaurant is a must. Visit the well-stocked gift shop to purchase your favorite wine and gather one-of-a-kind items for friends and relatives or take home personal souvenirs of your experience at this unique desert winery.

Sit back, relax and leave the driving to someone else. Enjoy the beautiful scenery of Red Rock Canyon while traveling to Pahrump Valley and more importantly indulge in the award winning wines without having to worry about the drive back home. Whether you are a first-timer or an experienced connoisseur, the Pahrump Valley Wine Tour will create an unforgettable experience. Expect a 1:00 pm departure, arrive @ 2:30 for Winery Tour and Wine tasting, followed by lunch and return to Las Vegas by 6:00pm.

The price of the tour includes transportation to and from the Pahrump Valley Winery, a guided tour of the winery and vineyards, and wine tasting. Lunch cost at Symphony's upscale, casual restaurant are not included in the tour price.

High Roller Ferris Wheel

Another thing we're looking into is a package deal on the giant Ferris wheel that's close to the Tuscany Hotel called The High Roller. The High Roller in Las Vegas isn't your average Ferris wheel. There's nothing average about it. And it's not really a Ferris wheel; it's an observation wheel -- the biggest in the world at a staggering 550-feet-tall. Yes, you read that right: 550 feet. That's nine feet taller than the Singapore Flyer and 107 feet taller than the London Eye. It currently holds the Guinness World Record for largest observation wheel. With panoramic views of the Strip, the valley and the mountains, there's something to see from every angle.

Shining bright on the Las Vegas Strip, the 550-foot-tall High Roller is a true standout at The LINQ's outdoor shopping, dining and entertainment promenade. The wheel takes 30 minutes to complete one full revolution and features 28 glass-enclosed cabins with broad views of the famed resort city. Each spherical cabin can hold up to 40 people. There are benches on either side of the cabin, with plenty of floor space in between. But we imagine you'll want to stand against the window and admire the view. Happy Half Hour admission includes one 30-minute ride and an open bar inside the cabin! Happy Half Hour cabins roll daily from 4pm to 1am, Monday- Thursday and from NOON-1am Friday-Sunday.

Let Bob McElwain (bob.mcelwain@charter.net) know if you're interested in riding the High Roller or taking the winery tour in an email or a note to Bob **NLT April 30, 2016**. Bob's mailing address is provided above.