



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

Dec 2019 Edition

Looking Forward

By Dave Chitwood, Group Vice President

We had an awesome 24th annual reunion, and we are already planning next year's landmark 25th annual reunion, set for September 21-24, 2020 in Laughlin, Nevada.

Please spread the word and encourage fellow veterans, retirees, Active, Guard, or Reserve to join us. All are welcome no matter your rank, or whether you did a single "hitch" or made a career out of it. If you spent time in PE/ALS/AFE/SE, you are encouraged to attend and reignite old friendships or create new ones! Be sure to stop by the website <http://usafals-afe.net/> often for all the latest and greatest info!

And speaking of the **SILVER ANNIVERSARY REUNION** coming up in 2020, this is a great opportunity for all you budding artists to see your work immortalized! We are planning to create a limited-edition 25th Anniversary ALS/AFE Retirees Coin and offer it at the Reunion. We are looking for ideas or concepts of what you think this coin should look like, what it should "say" to the person holding it or presenting it to a new member, whether they are retired or active duty.

So send us your ideas, sketches, or even crayon drawings! We want this to be an unforgettable token you'll be proud to carry everywhere. Send your suggestions to mjones@gentexcorp.com, deadline is 15 Feb 2020.

From The Field

We offer our hearty congratulations to the new active duty AFE CMSgt selectees:

SMSgt Jody A. Nededog
SMSgt Joshua R. Spooore
SMSgt Joseph W. Rust
SMSgt Lawrence Twitty II
SMSgt Charles L. Hall
SMSgt David B Siemiet
SMSgt Barry J. Hamilton

Best wishes! We hope you find your new assignments, both challenging and rewarding!

Living History

By Tommy Tompkins

Our current senior Chief is Leaster Williamson with a date of rank, 1 Jan 1964! The new Chiefs will be numbers 243-249, and are numbers 57-63 since the change to AFE. The Last PE/LS Chief was Chief Dwayne Roberts. The Initial AFE Chief was Chief Stew Stangl.

The first SMSgt in our career field was Roger Davidson. The First Chief promoted June 1960 was Merle H. Kelley. Dec 1960 was Dewey Place and James Karas. I don't know much about Chief Kelley except that he was a SAC Troop and his background was Supply or Parachute Rigger as were a lot of the early Senior NCO's.

I have some work to do on the Guard and Reserve Chiefs. I have the HQ Chiefs, NAF's covered, and some of the Guard Team Chiefs. The first AFRES Chief was Chief Irv Carey and the first NGB Chief was Chief Jim Wood. Need Help Chief Mike Majestic!

Thanks and Cheers Tommy!

24th ANNUAL PE/ALS/SE/AFE REUNION

RECAP

By Steve Wyatt

The 24th Annual Personal Equipment, Aircrew Life Support, Survival Equipment, and Aircrew Flight Equipment Veterans and Retirees Group Reunion was held September 16-20, 2019 in sunny Las Vegas, Nevada. Our host hotel and reunion central was the Orleans Hotel & Casino just off the fabulous Las Vegas strip. For those of you who were unable to attend, you missed another truly spectacular career field get-together with colleagues and friends.

Numerous individuals and industry partners assisted with event planning and ensured every attendee was properly registered so they could enjoy the 2019 scheduled reunion activities. Committee members "staffed" the hospitality suite each night to ensure food and beverages were available for every guest. Many individuals and companies provided generous financial support to help offset many of the reunion expenses including the picnic, transportation and the Farewell Banquet.

We had around 80 attendees. We've set a goal to double attendance and participation in 2020 in Laughlin. You can help meet that attendance goal! Block those dates now and attend!

Bob McElwain, Reunion Committee Chairman, served as the Master of Ceremonies (MC) for this year's opening activities and business meeting and Steve Wyatt served as our MC for the traditional Farewell Banquet on Thursday evening.

The Nellis AFB Honor Guard opened the festivities with the Posting of the Colors and the National Anthem, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to this great nation. Attendee introductions and a Remembrance and Reflection segment honoring our departed "family" members followed.

Attendees were welcomed by Major Joshua Mofatt from the 57th Wing Weapons School. A1C Alexis Whittemore from the 57th Wing's AFE operations followed by providing an excellent safety briefing. Then 1st Lt. Mark Aguiar, the deputy Director of Public Affairs for the Nevada Wing of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) with an enlightening CAP mission orientation

presentation. CMSgt Ted Angel, the Senior Enlisted Leader from Air Force Material Command's (AFMC) Air Force Life Cycle Management Center (AFLCMC) at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio then provided an Aircrew Chemical/Biological Protective Equipment update briefing to all attendees. We thanked Chief Angel for joining us in the midst of an extremely busy travel schedule at the Human Systems Program Office (SPO).

We were delighted that the incoming Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) Career Field Manager (CFM), CMSgt Shane Sandlin, was able to join us for the week and briefly address attendees on day one. Mr. Bill Courter from the Nellis Retirees Activity Office also provided our attendees a fantastic VA/DoD benefits briefing during our first day.

The annual business meeting was held on Tuesday. This forum allowed participating military members and industry partners, to present interesting information to the attendees. This also gave attendees up-to-date information on the latest program developments and equipment concerns impacting the field today.

Our "Salute to our Industry Partners" and other supporting individuals was highlighted by speakers and presenters that included Mr. Kevin Divers, Staff Physiologist, Mr. Robert Munoz, Managing Director at Pro Flight Gear, Jeff Schneider, TEDGAR LLC, Mr. Corey Waldman, Essex Industries, Mark Jones, Gentex Corporation, Rick Wagner, Butler Parachutes, Mr. Matt Miller, Cobham Mission Systems, and Mr. Josh Minton, Capewell Aerial Systems.

Rounding out the week's festivities was a trip to Nellis AFB for a Red Flag presentation and facility tour by the 414th CTS. SMSgt Pamela Kelley and her Nellis AFE Team provided exceptional "Grill Sergeant" support to our traditional picnic outing at Nellis Park. Our first-ever Top-Golf Tournament was held on Thursday morning on the famous Las Vegas Strip.

The Farewell Banquet was held on Thursday evening in the hotel ballroom. Steve Wyatt narrated a dignified and reverent POW/MIA Table

Honors ceremony supported by the Honor Guard from nearby Rancho High School's AF Junior ROTC Cadet Corp.

It was our honor to welcome Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Anthony "Tony" Marshall to provide the keynote and farewell address. Lt. Col. Marshall was an F-4C aircrew member who was shot down in Vietnam and taken captive as a prisoner of war in 1972. He graciously joined us to relay how much our career field meant to him personally as an Air Force aviator. He took time from his busy schedule to visit with us and brief the attendees on what he encountered during his ejection and those enduring many years of captivity. To see video of the POW/MIA presentation and Lt Col Marshall's presentation, click on the following link: <https://usafals-afe.net/pow-mia-ceremony-intro-to-our-2019-reunion-keynote-speaker/>.

Finally, the Board of Directors election results were announced. Leading us into the future will be William "Bill" Ricketts, President, Dave Chitwood, Vice President, Mark Jones, Secretary, Bob McElwain, Treasurer, and John Patti, Immediate Past President. We concluded the banquet night with closing comments from our Group Vice President, Dave Chitwood, and Reunion Committee Chairman, Bob McElwain, followed by the Benediction.

The Reunion Committee thanks everyone who attended and played a role in organizing and making the 2019 reunion another resounding success. The Orleans hotel and restaurant staff did a remarkable job supporting our day-to-day and Farewell Banquet needs. They ensured the smallest of details were attended to. A very special "Thank You!" to SMSgt Pamela Kelley, 57th Wing AFE Superintendent, and the numerous Airmen assigned to Nellis AFB who ensured the absolute success of our annual reunion.

We are really looking forward to welcoming new "First Timers" and reunion regulars to our upcoming **SILVER ANNIVERSARY REUNION** in Laughlin, NV. Regardless of rank or how long you served, if you spent time in our career fields, please join us! If you are interested in helping us plan our 25th Reunion, or have new ideas, please

feel free to contact Bob McElwain:
bob.mcelwain@charter.net



Chili Sez!

By Bob McElwain

One Of The First Women In Life Support

I received the photo below from a young lady by the name of Jan Canini. The photo is of the people in her shop at McChord AFB. She stated the following:

“This was taken in 1973. I was one of the 1st women in Life Support. They came into our basic training class at 5 weeks and said they were opening Life Support to women and volunteered the front row of our class. In 3 days, we were at Chanute AFB. After graduation I was off to McChord AFB, loved working on the flight line, Ahhh to be 19 again.”



Bottom row left: Trevor?, Wheeler, "Slick", Jan Webster, Benny Locicero, John Feeney, Dave Webster, Steve Malischek

Middle row: Brad Matisoff, ??, Frank Eggers, William Welcome, John Fredrickson, ??, Shemia, Cliff Hadley

Top row: ?, Williams, Mike Kraus, Dennis Struck, ??, Ken Hamilton, ??, Steve Carrier

Jan's name will be added to the list of the first women in the career field on our website's history section. I thank her very much for contacting me with this valuable piece of information and the photo.

An Alternative Payment Method

If you trust online banking, you'll soon be able to use Apple Pay, or a couple of the other apps to pay your reunion registration fee, for items in our website's store and to make donations towards our annual reunions. I've already set this up on our website's Store Page with two of the new apps and will have others working by reunion registration time.

Chief's Corner

This edition of Chief's Corner is brought to by newly retired, CMSgt Mark Wiley

I officially retired 30 Sep 19 after 30 years and 26 days (every minute counted) of service to our Air Force and my/our career fields (Aircrew Life Support (ALS) and Aircrew Flight Equipment AFE). Throughout my career, I had 12 assignments that started at Carswell AFB, TX and ended as the Air Mobility Command AFE Functional Manager at Scott AFB, IL. Although some were better than others, for numerous reasons, I learned and enjoyed every single one of them.

My initial assignment in Strategic Air Command (SAC) taught me the value of "Black and White" regulations, the importance of "the Good Book" (SAS term for Technical Orders) and the value of being a part of the great team. From there I moved on from a closing base (received two choices, Dover AFB or Cannon AFB; if I hadn't won BTZ, my choices would have been Cannon and Cannon) to Dover AFB and my initial experience as a military working dog supporting the C-5. What I learned there was how studying hard pays off (a lesson from AKR) and how supervisors' value hard work

and got my first opportunity to supervise. If I only knew then what I learned later and know now...

I went on to PCS to Osan AB, ROK and learned sometimes your "Dream Sheet" isn't really a dream, the value of trust from my leadership and really learned what "work hard, play hard" really meant! My next assignment, Aviano AB, allowed me to deploy and run a shop, experience Allied Force, Red flags, Operation Northern Watch and most importantly, realizing overseas assignments were all they were cracked up to be and then some. That being said, I went back to Osan and strengthened my "work hard, play hard" skills and continue to build relationships that still are with me today (Met the wife).

From there, I PCS'd back to Dover and started to move up the chain from ALS "military working dog" to ALS "kennel master" as a new TSgt with more supervisory and leadership opportunities. I had several experiences with AMC visits where I met Chiefs and staff members that gave me the first itch "to be there one day." I moved from the number four TSgt to the only MSgt in a matter of two years and boom, now I'm the BDR (Big Daddy Rabbit), another term I picked up from a huge influence of mine (SAS). I also had one of the most memorable opportunities in my career to take part of, at the time, a Joint Pacific Accounting Command (JPAC) Mission to Vietnam.

I ended up moving on to MacDill AFB, FL because of being Join Spouse (broke my heart to move to Tampa...) and picked up Superintendent duties there where I left off at Dover. At MacDill I learned the value of a command staff, and especially the relationship I started to build with MJF and his ability to assist and tell me what I needed to hear, not always what I wanted to hear. I deployed twice out of MacDill, a 4-monther as the ALS Superintendent and then after the merger, deployed on the last 365-day deployment to Qatar as the AFE AOR Superintendent. The latter was one of the best experiences in my

career as I got to move around all over the AOR and witness all the hard work our AFE personnel were doing to make their missions happen.

As I finished up at MacDill and moved on to the 436 Training Squadron at Dyess AFB, TX, I learned another very important lesson, in that most of the things (assignments, jobs, etc) that I wanted and didn't get, I was probably better off. At the 436th I got to develop three new courses, assist in moving another one to the 436th and most importantly, I had the pleasure of interacting with over 500 AFE professionals a year. I also had the pleasure of working for a commander that allowed me to be a SNCO and taught me what empowering meant. In fact, because of the working relationship we had, I chose him to officiate my retirement.

From there, I got an awesome opportunity to be on the ACC IG team (because of my wife's selection to Chief) and completed 19 inspections in about 16 months. The skill I think I picked up from that assignment was to be able to feed someone a crap sandwich and have them leave talking about how good the bread was... Langley is where I was selected to be a Chief, but it was all the assignments, relationships, failures and so on before them that made it possible.

I got selected to be the AMC Functional Manager and had the pleasure of working with a "Dream Team." The team I was with in A3TL at the beginning and the one I retired with was hands down, some of the hardest working professionals I had the pleasure to work with and it led to some of my proudest moments. We got new equipment for our aircrew and passengers, we got new direction for our career field, we got new leaders in our career field promoted and all because we showed up and put in the work.

I said all that to say this, I owe everything I have in my life to the Air Force. My wife of 17+ years will also retire in Feb with 30 years and we met because of an incentive ride. We eventually had a son who is now eight, and I tell him all the time, everything we have we

owe to the Air Force, be grateful for what you have because it took a lot of hard work and perseverance to get it, but it was well worth it and I wouldn't change a thing. Sorry this is so lengthy but I am retired and don't have a job... Take care and Best Wishes

“Chief Retired”, Mark Wiley

Final Roll Call

This year, we sadly bid final farewells to:

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Sgt Susan Dent | Dec 2018 |
| CMSgt (Ret) Milton Yopp | Dec 2018 |
| A. V. “Tony” van Haastert | Jan 2019 |
| MSgt (Ret) Danny Eppling | Jan 2019 |
| TSgt (Ret) James Ages | Jan 2019 |
| SMSgt (Ret) Ed MacKenzie | Apr 2019 |
| SMSgt (Ret) Bill Farver | Jul 2019 |
| SMSgt (Ret) Bob Weaver | Jul 2019 |
| CMSgt (Ret) Bud Glass | Aug 2019 |
| TSgt (Ret) Jamie Payne | Sep 2019 |

Our hearts and prayers go out to family and friends of all who have passed. We will miss you greatly, and will never forget the times we shared, or the impact you had on our lives and career field.

Thank you

By William “Bill” Ricketts, Group President

I am still processing everything that has happened. I got a call asking if I would like to be considered for the president's job of this great group of professionals. You all know how you felt when you get nominated for something but don't win, you tell yourself it was an honor just to be nominated. Then there is the absolute shock you feel when you're told you've won. Well I'm still reeling from that feeling.

I would like to start with a huge “Thank You” to all of you for having the faith in me that I can do a good job for you. One of my goals for this upcoming year is to try to get more of our Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve brethren to join our group. I am sure they would love the community that our group has developed as well as seeing old friends again.

Knowing that this is the 25th year of our origination makes me think of how fast those years have gone by. I remember there was a time if you worked for 25 years in Life Support, they would call you a dinosaur, I guess our origination has finally made it to “Dinosaur” status.

I would like to thank Mark Jones, Dave Chitwood, and Bob McElwain for making up the executive council for this term of office and Steve Wyatt, Al Loving, and John “JP” Patti for leading this group the past few years. I look forward to serving you this year, my promise to each of you is to do my best!

Regards,
Bill Ricketts

In Closing

By Dave Chitwood, Vice President and Newsletter Editor

To all current AFE members who will soon, or may 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. This is an awesome group, and I look forward to seeing both familiar and new faces at the upcoming reunion. Please plan now to attend our landmark 25th annual reunion. We'll see you in Laughlin, Nevada in September 2020!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all! Hope to see you in Laughlin next September! Be sure to visit our Group website (www.usafals-afe.net), and on social media.