



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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Our congratulations to the three new Chief Master Sergeant Selectees. They are Al Reams at Brooks City Base, Troy Donahoo at Mountain Home and Richard Bruck at Tyndall. All are well qualified and due to all of the recent and planned retirements will soon have the opportunity for more challenges. In addition Chief Cathy Cox is returning to the career field and will move into the AMC Requirements Position. Recent and planned retirements are Chiefs Bob Mendez, Al King, Greg Copeland, Dave DeLano, and Randy Loving. We wish them all the best and look forward to their continued Life Support activities and participation at the 10th Annual Life Support Reunion next September.

Cheers,
Tommy

CHILI SEZ



The Saga of CMS John Shields

The legendary CMS John Shields whom many of you know as the successor to CMS John Weir at Headquarters TAC Life Support back in the 1980s, the person the ACC Outstanding ALS Awards Program is

named after, and the person I most admired during my military career had a very interesting career before he crossed trained into life support. More on his cross-training later, for now please read the e-mails below from John's son who is also named John, is a MSgt in the USAF and the reply he received from a friend of his dad

My name is John Shields and I saw on a site that you mentioned that you used to fly as a loadmaster back in the 1960s. You stated that you knew a John Shields whom you flew with. I wanted to let you know that my dad flew on C-130s back in the 1960s. Maybe you knew him. I have attached a picture from the 1970s of him when he was a MSgt. He's the one on the right. If you did know my father at one time...I need to inform you that he sadly passed away in 1997 from cancer...he was 56. He retrained into life support around 1970 and retired as a CMSgt from the USAF in 1988. I really don't know much about his AF life before the 1970s...I do know that he flew a few tours in Vietnam but he did not talk much about it...he always said it was a lot of fun...who knows? If you do remember my father, I sure would like to hear any stories you have of him.

*Sincerely,
John Shields*

John,

I did indeed serve with your father and I have been trying to locate him. I am saddened to hear your father has passed on. I have been trying to locate the men I served with for about a year now, and I am appalled at the number that has died. The ones that still remain have all sorts of maladies i.e. Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart, high cholesterol and some cancers. All of it attributable to our exposure to Dioxins (Agent Orange, Purple and White). Your dad and I were exposed "big time."

Your father was the Flight Engineer on one of the most secret missions that took place in 1965. We were in Tan Son Nhut (Saigon). We were attached to the 315th Air Commando division and were ordered to Naha, Okinawa to pick-up a top secret "capsule" that filled the cargo hold of the C-130. The C-130 had some extensive modifications done to the fuselage and wings as well and your dad supervised all the changes and participated in most of them.

We returned back to Tan Son Nhut and were designated a "Sneaky Pete" aircraft and we, as the crew were guarded 24/7 as there was a price on our heads for being the aircrew assigned to this particular and special aircraft.

We were picked up by armed escorts at 0300 hrs every day, seven days a week. Your dad and I would preflight the aircraft and get it ready to fly. At 0600 hrs the special crew that populated the "capsule" would show up and we would be given priority clearance to depart Tan Son Nhut. We would fly all day receiving coordinates from the mysterious capsule and we went to some very strange and very dangerous places. Every night when we would land and taxi to

our "special" parking spot and the aircraft secured with very tight security, we would de-plane after the capsule crew departed and were taken to our billet under heavy guard. It got to be a little oppressive.

Then one day, after flying a particular torturous route, your dad yelled into the headset "My God, look at that!" When we looked, the sky was almost black with B-52 Bombers out of Guam. It was the very first raid staged by the B-52's and for the first time, ever, they carpet bombed the area below us. It was an awesome sight. As it turned out, the capsule made the C-130 into a "flying Command Post" where every single air-strike in Viet Nam was coordinated from. The capsule always carried a Two Star General at a minimum and was in touch with PACAF and the Pentagon (all this was "Science Fiction" back in those days). We were on that mission for about 60 days then we went back to the Philippines and Clark AFB.

Your dad & I were involved in the IDrang Valley battle which was the first major battle the USA engaged in in Viet Nam. It happened in November and it was a bad one. I still have nightmares from it. There is a movie that Mel Gibson starred in that depicts this battle. The troop carriers were there to pick-up the pieces and to rush supplies, replacements, to the battle zone. We carried out plane loads of wounded, KIA, prisoners and a thousand other items. It was a hard 3 weeks.

Yeah, I knew your dad. I knew him well. He was always unflappable and calm in an emergency (and we went through several together). You can be proud of him and I shall mourn his passing.

If you don't mind me asking, where is John buried? The reason I ask is there is going

to be a 2nd Aerial Port Reunion in Smyrna, TN. When the reunion first started, it was for only Loadmasters and only for members of the 2nd Aerial Port. There were 923 members then. Now we are down to less than 400 so they have included Flight Engineers, Pilots, Navigators and Forward Air Controllers, and the like. I am sure they will be interested and saddened in your father's passing.

And now a few words about John cross training. As I recall, John told me that he started out in the Personal Equipment career field, then cross-trained into Loadmaster and back again into life support. After reading the e-mail from John's son I thought perhaps I was mistaken so I contacted John's widow, Anita to see if I was right. Here is Anita's reply:

Hi Chili. John did start out in "Personal Equipment" then cross-trained into Loadmaster about 1960. He had a little stint of one year in the air rescue business then went back to life support in 1971. He changed career fields because he couldn't stand carrying a plane load of bodies back to Dover every month.

Anita

Lost Life Supporters

Daniel Magaw, Senior Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force, Retired Age 53, of League City, TX. went home to be with his Lord on Friday, September 3, 2004, at Methodist Hospital, Houston, TX. He entered the U.S. Air Force in August 1968. After completing basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, TX, in October 1968 Sergeant Magaw remained at Lackland and played the French horn for the Air Force Band. In April 1969,

he completed the Personal Equipment Specialist Course at Chanute Air Force Base, IL, and was then assigned to the 4538th Fighter Weapons Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base, NV. Later, in June 1972, Sergeant Magaw was assigned as Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the 703rd Tactical Fighter Wing at Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa. In February 1976, he was transferred to the 323rd Flying Training Wing, Mather Air Force Base, CA. While at Mather, he was selected as Base NCO of the Year for 1979. From June 1980 until September 1984, he was assigned to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, NC where he served as Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the 336th Tactical Fighter Squadron's Life Support program and Superintendent, 4th Tactical Fighter Wing's Life Support program. During this assignment, Sergeant Magaw was selected as Tactical Air Command's Outstanding Life Support NCO of the Year for 1981. From September 1984 to May 1985, Sergeant Magaw was assigned to Keflavik Naval Air Station, Iceland as Life Support Superintendent, 57th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. From June 1985 to February 1989, Sergeant Magaw was assigned to Langley Air Force Base, VA, as 1st Air Force Life Support Superintendent, Headquarters First Air Force and Command Life Support Superintendent, Headquarters Tactical Air Command. In March 1989 he assumed duties with the HQ ACC Inspector General. Sergeant Magaw graduated from the Community College of the Air Force with an AAS degree in Survival and Rescue Operations. He was promoted to Senior Master Sergeant September 1, 1988 and retired in September 1994. He currently was employed with Wyle Laboratories as an Operations Engineer at the Johnson Space Center, Houston, TX. Several of his R & D projects were destroyed in the Space Shuttle

Columbia disaster. He loved music and won Karaoke contests in San Antonio, TX.

I would like for you to inform the Life Support Community about the passing of retired Chief Robert (Bob) White who lived in Omaha, Nebraska. Chief White had terminal cancer and passed away last night. I found out Sunday night, 31 Oct that he was in the hospital for Pancreatic Cancer. I do not have the details on how long he has known about the cancer or when he actually started treatment. I spoke with him about four weeks ago and he was in good spirit and never made any indication that he was sick or had cancer. Chief White spent a lot of time in SAC during his career and most of his time was at Offutt AFB.

Larry Cuffee

CMSgt Robert H. White Died Last Night from his fight with pancreatic cancer. It was a short battle and it seems like his health was only poor for about 6 weeks. I spoke with his wife and son last night, & they were making preparations to bring him home from his 2 week stay in the hospital but he didn't make it.

Kevin J. Snyder

Thanks so much for keeping us informed. Bob White & I were SSgt's together in 74 - 76, then from 89 - 92 we served at HQ SAC together where he was SAC/IG. Bob was a

top notch Chief that taught me many things about life and professionalism. We are sorry to learn of his passing.

Tim Morrow

I visited Omaha (Offutt AFB) on 18 Mar 04. Bob and I had lunch together and talked about the old SAC days. He talked about how he missed the Life Support Gang and the fun he used to have at the Conferences. Bob was certainly in good spirits and health, as far as I could see when we had lunch. Bob's passing is a shock and it only reconfirms that tomorrow is not promised to any of us. May the Angels of Heaven rap their arms around Bob's family and help them through this tragic time.

Rob Bentley

An e-mail from Will Oost informed us that retired Tech Sergeant Ed Foust passed away on Sunday, Sept 5, 2004. Ed was 67 and lived in the Panama City, FL area.

According to retired CMS Bill Baxter, we also lost Donald Linker. Don, 74, died October 23, 2004 and was a Concord, NC native. Don was a resident of Wayne County and was a retired Chief Master Sergeant decorated with a Bronze Star. He was also a former JROTC instructor, a retired Guidance Counselor with the Wayne County School System, and a former Georgia GED Instructor.

We were also informed by Leo Gomez that Gary Barrett lost his battle with cancer and passed away Saturday, 27 November 2004. Once Gary started attending our reunions he tried not to miss any, but his health started to slow him down after the 2002 reunion (which was the time we saw him). Gary had his video camera at that reunion and taped a lot of the reunion activities. He provided me with a VHS copy which I plan on transferring to DVD. I'll have some copies at our next reunion for issue to anyone interested in having one.

It is with great sadness that I relate to you that another fellow Life Supporter has passed away. For thoughts of you who knew him, MSgt (Ret) Ross Guy Livermore passed on 24 Nov 04 in Ft Walton Beach, FL. He was born on 23 Feb 43 in Comstock, NE. and later moved to LaPorte, IN. Ross served 20 years in the USAF. His last active duty assignment was in the 33TFW as Wing Superintendent at Eglin AFB, FL. He renewed his Life Support Career in 1988 in Civil Service, and retired in 1999 from the 46 FTW at EAFB, FL. MSgt Livermore is survived by his wife, Martha of 36 years, daughter Holly and her husband Bob and his grandson, Connor. Ross was laid to rest on 28 Nov 04.

Bob Weaver.

Ross, Gary, Don, Ed, Bob, and Dan will be missed by all that knew and loved them.

Life Support History

I'm looking for some back ground information on who developed the program that's widely used in AF Life Support shops called, Aircrew Life Support Management System (ALSMS). I know what the software says about the author but who initially thought up and developed the first version of ALSMS? What part did Dave Cramer play in the development of this program? If you have any info on the origin of this or any of the other incomplete subjects listed on our web site's history page send it to me. I'm still waiting for someone to tell me about the origin of our first patch.

Moving On

It's time for me to hang up the uniform and head out on terminal leave. But, before I leave, I wanted to thank you for your continued strong support of Life Support and our flyers. I think that our extended family is unique, and is something that must be preserved. On a personal level, I have always appreciated the support and friendship you've shown me. We're working hard to bring me back here as a civilian, but that is still up in the air. Either way, I sincerely hope that we continue to cross paths in the future.

*Take care of yourself.
Keep 'em safe!*

Chief Randy Loving

I'm retiring from the ACC IG team after 20 years in the LS business. It's been an education for me and I leave those still serving with this -- Our aircrew protection

community is an insurance policy, of which our end product hopefully not be used. Doing so means a valuable combat aircraft is lost and precious life is at stake. When they do pull that handle however, we find out if striving for perfection was fruitful.

Anytime an aircrew member escapes a deadly situation and returns to his or her family alive, bottle of Beam or not, we've all completed our mission and we've all earned our place.

I will say however, that it is an incredibly rewarding feeling when an aircrew member reaches out with the same hand he used to pull that handle to shake yours, and with the other, hands you a bottle of Beam.

Clay Brase

I spoke with retired CMS Rob Bently at this year's World Wide Life Support Workshop and he told me he was resigning from Belleville Shoe and was singing on with up and coming Tent Cot. Rob will be the Director of Military Sales at Tent Cot whose parent company is Kamp-Rite Inc. Tent Cot specializes in the next generation Armed Forces Sleeping Cots that incorporates protective netting.

Retired Chief Dave Delano has accepted a position with Wel-Fab and will be their "Heartland Representative". Great to have

Dave continue working Life Support Issues as he has been for almost thirty years.

Retired Chief Bryan "Beetle" Bailey has made the transition to "civilian" life and is still real active as the local representative for Scot Inc., H.Koch and Sons, Wel-Fab and Multifab Survival Limited.

With these additions to the life support industry community we should really have a great "Hospitality Suite" at our 10th Annual Reunion.

Other News

Linda Percival at Gentex provided the following information on Uncle Dave Heitman. Dave was a regular attendee at the reunions until medical problems kept him close to home:

Hi guys.

Just thought I'd let ya'll know the latest that is going on with "uncle" Dave Heitman.

I have been concerned that I haven't heard from Uncle Dave lately and was worried that he might be sick or something had happened to him or Bette Jo. However, I called him to find out what is going on. I spoke with him and Bette Jo briefly and here is the "skinny". Dave had a two week stay in the hospital for heart problems (Congestive Heart Failure to be exact) in early November of this year. He has been on a very strict (can we say "salt free") heart healthy diet and has lost lots of weight. He is down to 194 pounds and Bette Jo says nobody would recognize him

(yeah, I think I would). I talked to Dave for a short while and he sounded okay but tired.

Anyway, he is not totally out of the woods yet. Apparently they are going to replace the pace maker he has with a defibulator (not sure if that is how it's spelled). They have that procedure scheduled for December 17th. Bette Jo said she'll contact me after the procedure and let me know how he is doing.

Just thought I'd let you know what was going on. Just keep Dave and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Linda K. Percival

We've been informed that retired CMS Steve Culbreth had a heart attack a few months ago and is now back at work. It appears that he will be fine. I'm told that they had to open him up and do a little work.

Herb Boughn mailed me with news about his new bride and two new hips!

Life Support Employment

Are you an employer looking to hire someone with aircrew or aviation life support experience? Do you want to expose your vacancy to active duty, former or retired life supporters? A link has been added to our web site for life support jobs that I hope employers will make use of. All they have to do is provide the information about the job to me and I'll post it to our Web site. I'll include a link to their corporate Web site or even into their Apply Online system if they want me to. I know that several Army and AF bases are

converting some of their military life support slots to civilian slots and this would be an excellent way to get the word out.

Thank You!

Thanks for all the letters and e-mails alerting me to changes in street and e-mail addresses. Someone at the reunion gave me an e-mail address for Ray Huffman. When I looked at it a few days latter I realized I couldn't read it! If that was you please send me that info, but this time make sure it's readable.

The stamp fund is flourishing thanks to donations sent in and the \$300 plus donated by the reunion attendees. Speaking of donations, I want to send out a special thank you to Bob Biggs, Cesare Bruno, Camille McDaniel, Chuck and Ann Warren, and Mary and Frank Provenzano for the time and resources they put into making and donating the prizes that we raffle off each year at our reunions. The funds collected will be used to help mail the newsletter and pay the annual cost of our web site.

Thanks to Art Wade for being the unofficial reunion photographer and for including copies of the candid shots he takes in his Christmas cards. And finally, thanks to Jim Rooney's brother, Tom who occasionally attends our reunions for the pictures he took and donated.

Next year's reunion will be held in Laughlin, NV and will be the tenth in a row! Just think KB and I started this thing back in 1996 and never thought we would still be doing it today! Big events are planned for our next reunion and it will be held during the month of September. Hopefully there won't be any major conflicts with other life support meetings. Thanks again for all who made it to this year's affair and to all the vendors and individuals for their contributions towards our hospitality room. Look for more details

on the 10th Annual Life Support Reunion in our May 2005 newsletter.

Since I've got a little space left on this page I thought I'd add the following:

6. Egg nog will NOT be dispensed in vending machines.

In spite of all this, Tommy, Ed Chewning, KB, and I encourage you all to have a Happy Holiday. Until next time, I hope Santa will be good to everyone and that you all can attend our next reunion.

Chili

Holiday Memo

To: All Life Supporters
From: The Authors of this newsletter
Subject: Conduct During the Christmas season

Effective immediately, life supporters should keep in mind the following guidelines in compliance with FROLIC (the Federal Revelry Office and Leisure Industry Council).

1. Running aluminum foil through the paper shredder to make tinsel is discouraged.

2. Playing Jingle Bells on the push-button phone is forbidden (it runs up an incredible long distance bill)

3. TDY requests are not to be filed under "Bah humbug."

4. Government or company vehicles are not to be used to go over the river and through the woods to Grandma's house.

5. All fruitcake is to be eaten BEFORE July 25.