



**RETIRED AIR FORCE FIRE
CHIEFS'
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
January - March 2002**



Editor [Doug Courchene](#) Associate Editors [Gus Hunter](#) & [Bobby Barrow](#)
<http://www.dodfire.com>

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Readers, please note my new email address above. ...*Editor*)

Enclosed is the check I promised you for supplies/postage for the Fire Chiefs' Letter. Please keep up the good work. You folks and the letter are appreciated by me and I'm sure by all who read it. I'm also sending Bob Kuykendall's memorial card. We lost a well-respected and loved brother when he passed on. Bob a Mason and Scottish Rites funded fire prevention program and van used to transport children to the burn center. He was a highly decorated Vietnam veteran and received the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device. Thanks for including the article about Bob and Betty in the newsletter. Hope you and yours are doing well and your health is better. **Chief William Goodwin, HC 3 Box 147H, Port St Joe, FL 32456** Billinportstjoe@webtv.net (*Bill I'm doing fine and so is Evelyn. For those who knew Bobby Kuykendall, fond memories live on. He served his country for 28 years and retired Senior Master Sergeant in 1980. He also retired from civil service. Bobby was 67. ...Editor*).

Thanks for your good work! Your Pal Val. **Chief Val Allen Jr. 12503 Eagle Nest Drive, Buda, TX 78610** (*A short note but I want readers to know Val calls me often. We have stayed in touch 56 years. That's a solid friendship. ...Editor*).

Hope this finds you OK and doing fine. I've asked about your health via email. My priest remembers you in prayers following your surgery. My wife and I have kept you in our prayers also. God Bless you and God Bless America. Here's some \$\$ for newsletter. **Chief Hugh Akers, Jr. 2807 Woodmere Drive, Panama City, FL 32405-4385** hbakers@knology.net (*Hugh and I communicate almost daily via email. We do keep up with world events. ...Editor*).

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THE NEW AIR FORCE CHIEF OF FIRE PROTECTION IS Chief Don Warner. Congratulations from all retired chiefs. (*Most readers know the superb job Don did at Warner Robins. The development of web sites concerning all aspects of fire protection is noteworthy. What he has done for retiree recognition is outstanding. Remember Pioneer Day 2000, and all those neat photos in Dallas. No one should ever challenge the truth of his commitment to excellence. Doug*)

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 I would like to receive your quarterly newsletter. Pat Jolicoeur gave me your address. I was stationed with Pat at Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino, CA. If you have old issues of newsletter around, I would like to read them. The enclosed check is to help with your expenses. **Peter Marcotte, 96 Colton Place, Longmeadow, MA 01106** (*Pete, welcome to network news. I had back copies of newsletters and mailed them to you. You may contribute writings to our newsletter anytime. The pen should be our paint brush. The paper should be our canvas. ...Editor*).

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I got word that Chief Arthur Hruska had a heart attack on 16 October 2001. He had been to the store and when he got home was carrying in the groceries and was found by his car. 911 was called and declared DOA. Art was 76. That makes the second SAC Sergeants this year. Chief Master Sergeant Trent passed away about June 2001.

I do have an Email address. It's danlong95@aol.com and please send the newsletter accordingly. I thank you and "the staff" for the most informative letter. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of everyone. Some dollars enclosed for helping with your cost. Chief Dan W. Long, 5013 North Lakewood Drive, Panama City, FL 32404-6709 785-3235 email danlong95@aol.com (*I printed your email twice so not to forget. Dan I'm also thankful to my staff of volunteers . . . Gus Hunter and Bob Barrow. How we get so much done without executive sessions, conferences, etc. It's simply marvelous working with fine staff and avid readers. Doug*).

Letter writing is more difficult trying to make sense of it all. Rewrites are plentiful. I wish we had been able to sit down so I could explain my past fire protection experience, the good and the bad. I got a bad case of ulcers at SAC Headquarters prompting my move to MacDill at a much lesser grade.

May 3, 2001, I had a serious heart attack. For two months, everything went bluey, and at times strapped in bed. I lost my driver's license and all sense of being. On October 11th, my cardiologist ordered stress test, but I couldn't use the treadmill. In its place drugs were prescribed to increase heart rate. Everything improved well enough to get my driver's license for local driving only.

I am sorry that I sold my house and moved to Olive Grove Retirement, \$2,500.00 a month and higher cost expected 1 January 2002. It's too late to do anything about it now.

I'm sending you photo and article about the March AFB Fire Department Aircraft Training Facility. The training is provided for a growing number of Southern California departments as far away as Long Beach.

I do have a vehicle decal to visit Chief Picknall at March AFB. **Chief Bob Vreeland, 7858 California Avenue, Apt #207M, Riverside, CA 92504-2541 (909) 688-5205** (*The above writings are from two letters 24 Oct 2001 and 28 October 2001. Bob, I purposely combined the two. At 88 there is a lot of fight left in you. All retirees wish Pioneer Bob the very best. Also, Bob sent a package of historical fire protection material. In fact, Bob has sent more material than any other retired chief all of which made my book research more complete. The book is done. A publisher is being sought. If one isn't found, I will pay for publication. One copy for me, and a copy to*

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Pioneer Chief J. K. Schmidt, Pioneer Chief Paul Odell and Pioneer Chief Bob Vreeland Widows of deceased pioneers will also receive the book Doug)

CONTRIBUTORS: Chief Hugh Akers, Jr, Chief Gene Courtemanche, Chief Bill Goodwin, Chief Bob Vreeland, Chief Dan Long, Chief Peter Marcotte.

When I get mail from Chief Bob Vreeland, I type two pages single space in response. I share excerpts with readers of my letter to Bob and Barbara.

The saga of SAC Fire Protection is history and for many no recollection of the hard fight to make fire protection better. You mentioned writing a letter troublesome. I never known you being short of words. I admit as a writer staring at blank paper at times when words don't seem to come. When that happens, I put everything away and eventually words will come another day, or week. It takes much longer with age.

I too longed for a sit-down with you and discuss old times. Lots of interesting happenings are untold. Old stories made fresh again. Yes, stress brings on ulcers and hair loss and you experienced it all. You found comfort taking a lesser GS Grade to preserve your health. You made the right choice and reached age 88.

Sad news about Art Hruska and Trent. I'll mention the unfortunate news in the Jan-Mar 02 newsletter. On occasion, I wrote Art and never got an answer. I couldn't understand the silence. Perhaps it was illness that made him unresponsive. Anyway, he was a good friend. I didn't know Chief Master Sergeant Trent.

The volumes of material you have shared with me are now manuscripts for the book. The final draft is complete.

You appear to have second thoughts about Olive Grove. Home is a special place. Any other place is away from home. Evelyn and I visit people in Mount Olive Nursing Homes and other names given to such institutions. All who are able to express themselves mention their homes. Evelyn's mother is in a nursing home, DeRidder, La. We try to visit her every six months. My surgery has changed the frequency of visits. I agree with you nursing home care is very expensive.

After WWII, the Air Force desired separate identity. The Air Force got its wish. The 'break' from the Army Air Corps didn't come without pain. In retrospect, the Air Force discarded well-established standards to create its own by people uncertain of direction. In that persuasion much was lost in light of dramatic change. Too much too quick.

I also remember the transition from Class 155 and Class 150 to Type 0-10, Type 0-11 Type 0-11A. Radical new design under a cloud of reliability. If it looked good, buy it! And, the Air Force bought newness without reliability. All fire chiefs of that time remember it well. Crash stations were filled with hybrids.

SAC had the greatest need for new and larger crash trucks. The command E-36 prescribed it.

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SAC should have been seated at the head table at Major Air Command Planning Group Sessions. As I researched historical papers; I sensed squabbling among commands. I witnessed some of it first hand. Although most of the leadership agreed, a few fire chiefs were vocal and offered little solution to the problem. They simply didn't know what they wanted; their ideas were unconvincing to higher authority.

Some readers may disagree with me, but I remind them I've documents as proof. Editor

Documents support my position. For example, Chief Ed Kautz, Biggs Air Force Base, El Paso, Texas made derogatory comments that made me sick. How he could openly criticize the military fire fighter. I offer one of his quotes: "Some of the GIs we get are not competent or capable and cannot be trained to a point where they can operate this equipment." Chief Kautz was addressing the new 0-10 and 0-11A. Little did I know Chief Kautz that well while he served at Biggs. I do know he didn't attend the first 0-10 Class at Lowry, March 1952. He seemed critical of the military. I believe he felt threatened by the military so he criticized them. It was Ed Kautz's job to train the military fire fighters. He failed to do so because it was easier to criticize. Bob, I remember well how some civilian fire chiefs and assistants felt about the military fire fighters. I was there!. To pioneer chiefs like yourself, Chief Ross Stephens, Chief Paul Odell, Chief Golden Simmons, Chief Jasper Patterson, Chief Otis E. Tinkle, Chief Bert Kwist, Chief Walter Sherrill, Chief O. A. Kimbrough, Chief J. K. Schmidt, Chief Charlie Wellwood, Chief Spencer Allen, Chief Frank Joseph, Chief Roscoe Bell to name a few . . . A proud and snappy salute!

I expect mail from these comments and I welcome criticism. I can only mention the fire officers I knew. I encourage readers to write about their feelings, whether positive or negative concerning this subject or any other topic. Editor

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A Look Back 1953. (*Book Excerpts*) I and Chief .Charles E. Turner, Dow Air Force Base, Bangor, Maine attended SAC's third Annual Fire Protection Conference, Officer's Club, Offutt AFB, Nebraska. At that time the headquarters fire protection staff consisted of: Major Alden M. Vandenoorn, Chief Fire Protection Section, Robert W. Vreeland, Assistant Chief, Fire and Rescue Section, Bert A. Kwist, Fire Prevention Engineer, Justin H. Patrick, Fire Prevention Engineer and Roy T. Ayres, Plans and Training Officer. Chief E. E. Yenny, Offutt AFB Fire Department hosted the conference. . Guest speakers were Mr. Gifford T. Cook, Headquarters USAF, and Mr. Ross Stephens, Headquarters Air Defense Command.

Attendance at all sessions was mandatory; roll call was taken at each session.

The dinner and entertainment was \$3.50.

Chief Bart Tillotson, Ellsworth AFB, SD, Chief Otis E. Tinkle, Carswell Air Force Base, TX, and Chief John F. Schaber, Fairchild Air Force Base, WA. led the B-36 Bomber Panel Discussion.

Chief Ross Stephens, and Technical Sergeant Carl K. Barker presented the Fire Equipment program.

Chief John F. Schaber, Edward C. Kautz, Chief Warrant Officer Val Allen Jr, and Staff Sergeant

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Harold W. Denne were Fire Prevention Panelists.

Another Look, Way Back To 30 September 1942, 31/2 Years Before My Time. (*Book Excerpts*)

The fire protection program of the War Department involved four phases: 1) Design, 2) Construction, 3) Fire Prevention and 4) Control and Extinguishment.

1942 Fire Department Personnel. Provisions were made for the operation of Post Fire Department by civilian personnel, enlisted personnel, or by a combination of civilian and enlisted personnel. Where enlisted personnel were used, such members were obtained from the station complement until an Engineer Service Detachment was available. The use of enlisted personnel detailed to Fire Department duty from troop organization was not desired unless absolutely necessary. Where the use of enlisted personnel was contemplated, it was desirable to employ civilian Fire Chiefs, Assistant Fire Chiefs and drivers using the enlisted men for the balance of the fire fighting strength.

The civilian fire chief position was not graded. His annual salary was \$2000 to \$3,500.00.

All major fire fighting equipment for initial issue and replacement, included fire trucks, fire hose, fire extinguishers, hose carts, nozzles, appliances and fire-fighting clothing. All were centrally procured and obtained on standard requisition form submitted to the Division Engineer of the appropriate Service Command.

1942 Gas Masks. Gas masks for fire-fighting purposes were authorized only in connection with standard fire trucks on the basis of two masks for each standard pumper. Masks were obtained from the Chemical Warfare Service and were known as "Mask, Gas, Diaphragm, M1A1-All Purpose III."

1942 Motorized Fire Apparatus. The three types of apparatus were issued by the Office of the Chief of Engineers. (1) Standard Fire Department pumping engines (2) Standard Brush fire trucks (3) Standard Chemical Crash (Airplane) trucks. The first chemical crash truck was the Class 100 followed by the Standard Class 110 and Class 125. Holabird Quartermaster Motor Base designed the Class 100 on a 6-wheel four rear wheel drive with provisions for producing foam and carbon dioxide gas for fighting gasoline fires involving aircraft. Foam was produced by introducing a special liquid foam solution into water stream through foam applicator nozzles. Some Class 100 fire trucks had a special foam generator for chemically producing foam by the introduction of powdered chemicals into the water stream in place of the liquid foam solution. Carbon dioxide gas was produced from cylinders under extreme pressure and discharged through high- pressure hose and a horn-like nozzle to form a white smoky "snow." The Class 150 and Class 155 joined the fleet about 1945.

The Standard Class 110 was similar to the Class 100 crash truck, but assembled on a different chassis and without separate foam tank, foam solution being mixed directly in the water tank. The Standard Class 125 differed from the Class 100 and Class 110 trucks in that a special high-pressure positive-displacement water pump for producing a fine water "fog" was substituted for the carbon dioxide equipment. The pump was operated at 600-700 psi.

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I thought back in time may interest readers. 1942 was before my time, but ripe for Pioneers Chief J. K. Schmidt, Chief Paul Odell and Chief Bob Vreeland. Documents preserved made these writings possible. A snippet of history retold. A unique gift shared by pioneers. Thank you pioneers. . Editor

After 11 years publishing the quarterly newsletters this is my last issue. As a self-appointed editor, I began publication June 1990. At the beginning, I had 38 retired Air Force Fire Chiefs; the number grew to 190, not counting widows. Then the downward trend thinned ranks as printed in newsletters. A new generation of retired fire chiefs have come upon the scene and that's good. I have mentioned before every generation must write its own history.

Why did I throw myself into the newsletter business? I wanted to credit pioneers who took me under their wings so I could later become a fire chief. I made it because of them. Now, I pass the pencil and pad to my good friend Bob who is more computer skilled than I. Accordingly, he will add more spice to the newsletter by adding photos and color to every page. I wish all my retired friends the best in years to come.

I never claimed to be an aspiring writer, but an aspiring rewriter. My trash can is proof of my writing errors. I enjoyed the freedom of writing that didn't have to be perfect. There is no recipe for good writing, only constant trial and error and discovery. I discovered the writer within me who only needed encouragement to turn the thoughts and special moments of my life and that of others into enduring words on a page. It's been a good 11 years exploring and discovering.

Yes, I've learn to weed sentences and make them bloom. The only down-spin was when one of our own passed on. Words for such occasions were very difficult for me, but retired chiefs pitched in and helped me through tough times. Actually, there were no words to soften the hurt and sorrow. I just wanted the immediate family to know the entire retired family of fire chiefs cared. Editor

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I'm retired Fire Chief Bob Barrow and your new editor. I ask that each recipient (Chief) confirm their mailing/e-mail addresses by sending a brief message by letter or computer to me as soon as possible (ASAP). Then, the updated list will be useful for future distribution of the newsletters. Short stories of current or past events suitable for publication will be appreciated as will support for stamps and publishing materials from those who enjoy the newsletters. Those that have not contributed lately, i.e., past year, there are no annual dues for our fraternal organization, only small but generous donations in stamps or funds have worked quiet well. Doug has done a fine job in accounting for these funds and has been very caring in their use. I will continue in this tradition and will make an annual report of contributions and expenditures. News articles will be forthcoming. **Editor Bob Barrow, Chief.one@home.com 126 Clements NE Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548 (904) 243-1274**

New York City Revisited. These are my thoughts on the 9/11/2001, NYC and Pentagon tragedy. Our nation's news media covered the tragic happenings around the clock. To our astonishment we saw compassion, closeness, love and enduring bond of brotherhood so prevalent among the NYC Fire Department.

We too understand this from our very first month in an Air Force firehouse.

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The profession that we hold so dear was severely tested at the twin towers as well as the Pentagon. The whole world witnessed devotion to duty and bravery by our nation's finest. This selflessness and bravery was expected. We as a peer group knew pretty much the norm for all American fire fighters. New York's bravest are indeed truly great.

While our Air Force Fire Protection fatality losses paled in comparison to the World Trade Center devastation, I am reminded of the devotion and courage displayed by our own fire fighters in that far-away place, called Vietnam. I personally witnessed our bravest fire fighters attack fires and make rescues from battle-damaged aircraft, unaware of dangers facing them.

Should the unfortunate situation be reversed, these same young men would have climbed stairwells inside twin towers to save others as occupants by the hundred fled down the same stairwells.

The USAF Fire Organization makes me very proud to have served along with the very best. **Chief Fred Elkins, 711 62nd Avenue, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29572-3208 Felkins26@aol.com** (*I asked my friend Fred to write this article and I appreciated his response. Over the years he has shown love of the profession. He can be counted on to share that love with others as demonstrated at our 2000 Pioneer Day in Dallas. Fred was a key speaker at that special function along with Chief Bob Barrow giving every reason Pioneer Day being so successful for retirees. I would be remiss not mentioning the support by the Headquarters Air Force Fire Protection Staff Members. Without their support and the company catering the meal, Pioneer Day may well have met at MacDonalds. meet, eat, burp and leave. ...Editor*)

About Writing . . . You shouldn't start vast projects with half-vast ideas

First-time authors may find the prospect of writing a book less intimidating if they look at it as a series of long articles.

Writing well is what's hard.

You can't package style, it's too fluid. You must create your own style.

Writing gets more interesting as it acquires precision, not length.

I learned about redundancy like two-wheel bicycle, red in color is redundant because a thing can't be red in anything but color. Enormous giant is redundant.

Show don't tell . . . most of the time. Show means create a picture for the reader.

If you try to always be "right," you'll end up crazy instead.

The words you write make sounds, and when the sounds satisfy the reader's ear, your writing works.

Write about people, not things. (*these quotes may help*) ...Editor)

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I encouraged the retired chiefs to write and they did for 11 years, not all, but enough letters to fill eight pages of each newsletter. Now, I challenge retirees to support Chief Bob Barrow, editor. You can support him two ways 1) write 2) financially for cost of envelopes, stamps and paper. The train won't run on one track.

The Air Force Academy Fire Department, Deputy Chief Peirce, Editor, publishes the GAZETTE, a fine publication. My good friend Chief Ed Wolbert publishes the AIR NATIONAL GUARD NEWSLETTER, also a fine publication.

I'm on page eight and it's time to quit. Doug, Editor past 11 years[BFB1]

Please send Bob Barrow, new editor, a TEST email at chief.one@home.com to confirm he received your email address. Enjoy the Holidays.

WRITE ON!