

Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs' Network
QUARTERLY NETWORK NEWS



*Legendary Pioneers Who Reminisce About the Past
But Focus on the Future*

Editor: Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders, Sandy6T5@comcast.net

Associate Editor: Charlie Richardson, clardb@att.net

Associate Editor: **Vacant**

<http://www.dodfire.com/Retirees.htm>



Volume 1 2010

Founded by Doug Courchene

January-March 2010

As I sit here looking out our back window at the grass sprouting in the yard I get a sense of "spring fever." I have had the yard service folks come by and spray for bugs and apply fertilizer so the grass will grow fast, be beautifully green, and require cutting each week. Evelyn has been telling me I need to get some plants in the ground and also put some fresh plants in all the pots we have sitting around the yard containing remnants from last year's work. Then, I say to myself "life was a lot simpler when we lived in Arizona with a yard that was nothing but rock and cactus," even better was living in the high-rise apartment at Yokota where we could just walk out the door, lock it behind us, and not worry about a yard. Now I have become nostalgic and start reminiscing about my early experiences in the fire service concerning the grounds around the fire stations. It was before contractors maintained the fire station grounds and long before we had janitorial service taking care of common areas within fire stations. Mind you I am not complaining about the point to where we have evolved. However, it was quite a learning experience for me as a young airman accomplishing the yard work around fire stations. One thing I learned right away, the hands of anyone with three stripes or more would not fit a manual lawn mower handle, a rake, a shovel, or any other yard maintenance tool or device. At this juncture I need to add, this rule also applied in the winter months to shoveling

snow. Additionally, I learned I could not volunteer for ramp patrol or line standby to get out of the detail. So, I just learned to grin and bear it. Oh yes, we did not have a lawn service to come by and spray the grass so it would be pretty and green and grow like weeds. We did the job ourselves. When we completed our live fire training we would flush the protein foam from our vehicles on the grassed areas around the fire stations, and guess what, we had the fastest growing and best looking grass on base, which had to be cut sometimes twice a week.

I must admit I did have help, especially at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, Airman Second Class (two stripes) Larry Adams. I am sure most of you know that



later on in his career Larry became the Fire Chief at Minot. The photo at left is Fire Chief Larry Adams and his wife Carol. What great people they are. Almost 50 years ago. Larry and I were

working together in the Minot AFB Fire Department. I wonder who he got to cut the grass when he became Fire Chief. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

Follow-up: I wrote an article about going to New Orleans with my grandson Jacob in the Jul-Sep 09 QNN. He and his brother Andrew had a winter break from school and came to visit. I asked "where would you like to go?" Would you believe it, back to New Orleans again? The World War II Museum was top of



the list to see. Again, if you have an opportunity GO! In this photo they are seen on the foredeck of the submarine USS Drum that is on display in Mobile, Alabama Bay. If we don't take time to teach our children and grandchildren the truth about our nation's history, who will? (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

TAPS



JAMES U. FILE 1936-2010

James U. File, 73, died March 15 at Yuma Regional Medical Center in Yuma AZ, following a brief illness and complications from cancer treatment. He was born on 23 October 1936 in Charlotte NC. Jim was a retired U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant and a former Fire Chief. His active duty military service spanned 23 years as a firefighter. He retired as Deputy Fire Chief of F.E. Warren Air Force Base WY in 1980. In 1981 he returned in a civil service role to serve as Fire Chief of F.E. Warren AFB for the next 17 1/2 years. As a member of the U.S. Air Force, he served in many locations including Tripoli (North Africa); Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland; a tour of duty in Vietnam; Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota; Izmir Air Force Base, Turkey; Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany;

Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho; an isolated tour in Greenland; and F.E. Warren AFB WY. He enjoyed RVing with his wife and spending winters in their motor home in San Diego CA and Yuma AZ. He was known for maintaining immaculate landscaping and was often seen tending to his yard. Jim is survived by his wife of 50 years, Gaye File (Olson), originally of Tioga ND, and now residing in Cheyenne; mother, Addie Hoffman of West Virginia; brother, Earl File (Betty) of West Virginia; sons, James K. File (Linda Allard) of Cheyenne, Darren File (Kim) of Fort Collins, Colo., and Bruce File of San Diego; granddaughters, Angela Hanson (Jeremy) and Sandra Wankel of Fort Collins, and Lauren and Rachel File of Cheyenne; and great-granddaughters Lexus and Taya Hanson and Aiyana Wankel of Fort Collins. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to The Salvation Army or the Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

Jim File..what a guy. I had him as a student in one of the first Advanced Fire Tech Courses at Chanute. He was absolutely a value added to the course. I am sad to hear of his passing. (Wayne Kee CMSgt USAF Retired wayne.m.kee@nasa.gov)

I had the pleasure of meeting Jim during my watch at Chanute. He was a great guy. My condolences go out to his family and friends. (George Hall CMSgt USAF Retired ifac@cox.net)

The Offutt Air Force Base Fire & Emergency Services Team ask the grace of God's hand touch Chief File's family during this difficult time. (David G Eblin, Fire Chief David.Elbin@offutt.af.mil)

My condolences to Chief File's family on their loss. Although I never had the honor to serve under Chief File's leadership, I did receive some fine men who did. I also served a tour at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, and I never heard anything but praise and gratitude for his outstanding leadership. Mrs File and family, you all are in our thoughts and prayers. Chief File will be missed by the entire Fire and Emergency Services Community. (George Chambers, MSgt USAF Retired George.Chambers@arnold.af.mil)

May the peace of God rule your heart this day. I pray peace and blessings for you Gale and all your family. May wonderful memories fill your mind until you are once again united. (Terry Thompson, CMSgt USAF Retired terry-t@sbeglobal.net)

To the file Family: I had the opportunity to work with Jim when we were at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. He always brought out the best in his firefighters. I can assure you he will be remembered. All of you will be in our prayers during this Difficult time. (C. F. "Chuck" Hemphill hemper@suddenlink.net)

My deepest sympathy to Mrs File and all of Chief File's family. I had the opportunity to work with Jim when he was at Thule AB, Greenland. At that time I was at Andrews AFB MD serving in Air Defense Command Headquarters. Again, I worked with Jim when he was Fire Chief at FE Warren Cheyenne, Wyoming. At that time I was serving at Air Force Space Command. Chief File was a true professional. (Norris (Sandy) Sanchez CMSgt USAF Retired bigfire43@msn.com)

Editor's Comment: Jim File was a "one-of-a-kind" person. I met Jim at my first duty station, Minot AFB ND (1960/1961). I admired him for his calm demeanor and the respect he had for other people. At times I served on the first-run engine company with Jim, and he always made me feel like we were working together as a team. When he went through a bad time as Fire Chief at FE Warren some years ago, he and I talked almost daily for several weeks. I learned how much he truly cared for the firefighters under his command. Jim consistently demonstrated that he would always be there should anyone in fire and emergency services need help or support. I am a better person by having rubbed shoulders with James File. I am truly saddened by his passing. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired Sandy6T5@comcast.net)



MR HIDEO KOBASHI
Senior Japanese National
Assistant Fire Chief (Retired)
Yokota Air Base, Japan

Editor's Note: Mr Kobashi passed away around the 1st of March 2010. Information is limited at this time but will be published in the April-June edition of QNN. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH DEPARTMENT

In life we learn many lessons and, we



continue to learn even in our later years. You may recall I placed a wanted poster concerning Ted Taipalus in the previous QNN. My objective was to add a little bit of levity to the QNN.

However, what I learned from this is not to say anything about Ted which may be a little disparaging even if it may be in jest. He will show up at your house to get even! Note the photo. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

READERS' COMMENTS

Who Are These Chiefs? Sandy, I got Charlie Peters, Bob Barrow, Norris "Sandy" Sanchez, and then started thinking about the fence post I have to work on later today. This getting older is for the birds. Great newsletter! (*Next e-mail*) Ralph "Dewey" Shelton? (Ricky N. Brockman, EFO, CFO Deputy Director Navy Fire & Emergency Services ricky.brockman@navy.mil)

Editor's Note: Rick you did good! Only took two e-mails to get it. Thanks for input. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

Sandy, Great Letter! Answer to question: Who are these Chiefs? Left to right: Ralph Shelton (Barksdale – I worked for him as his training Officer in 1972-1975 – a great mentor and friend). Sandy Sanchez (aka George Jetson from Space Command) (worked with him as a command counterpart when I was at PACAF, ACC, and USAFE headquarters). Bob Barrow (He was my Chief at Eglin in 1970 when I worked opposite Guy Wills at the 33^d TAC Station, again at Air Force Research Lab when he would activate with AF Reserve as a Warrant Officer). Chuck Peters (He was the Fire Chief at Kadena Air Base, Japan, prior to Rod Winningham whom I replaced in 1983. I believe Chuck went to work for the Navy.) As we all know Ralph and Bobby have passed away. These two icons are certainly missed. Kitty (Chief Shelton's wife) was like a mom to me and I remember Nan (Chief Barrow's wife) always coaching Guy Wills and me on how Bobby was like a big puppy. I see his son Frank once in a while--he's followed in his dad's footsteps and is the Deputy Fire Chief at NAS Pensacola. (George Hall CMSgt USAF Retired IFAC@COX.NET)

Editor's Note: George, Thank you for the trip down memory lane. Each of these individuals had great influence on lots of firefighters. Like you, I had opportunity to work in some way with each of them. Great experience! (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

Sandy, you have done a superb job; thank you for the time and effort you put into the newsletter. Without guys like you, we would lose touch with so many of the people who made the Air Force Fire and Emergency Service so great. It's been a long winter, but we spend part of it in Hawaii every year. I like that warm weather, and I really enjoy the retired life. Who knew it was going to be this much fun? I don't see Chet Weger much, and he only lives two miles away. Again, thanks for keeping the fire family together. (Jack R. McGary CMSgt USAF Retired jackmac@chuqach.net)

Chief Sanders: Just wanted to drop you a line to tell you I am doing okay. I was in the hospital two different times staying 3 days each time, having problems with infections. I'm out and better now. I'm having to wear a knee brace. Hope you and your wife are doing well. God bless. (Joseph M. Jarrell firechief6736@yahoo.com)

Editor's Note: Speaking for Joe I know he appreciates everyone keeping him in your thoughts and prayers during this long period of illness. Additionally, I especially want to thank Joe's granddaughter Jana for helping Joe by sending e-mails for him. Jana, I am certain you have been a special blessing for your grandfather. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

Hi Sandy, Hope all is going good for you and your family. Linde and I are doing great. I'm working on starting a local chapter of AFTEA (Armed Forces Top Enlisted Association). So far we have had two meetings, and there seems to be interest in starting a chapter but it is a long way to go yet. I was wondering if you have heard anything about getting together in Chicago this year. We are working on our schedule and would be interested if they are hosting anything this year. We are leaving on April 29th for Europe and returning on May 29th. (CMSgt Charlie Richardson clardb@att.net)

Editor's Note: An e-mail message on the subject of "Pioneer Day" was sent out on 2 April 2010 addressing the date and location. Following is the content of that e-mail; "I did not receive a large amount of

feedback from my request concerning where to hold the next Pioneer Day. However, a large majority of those that did respond selected Atlanta 2011 as their choice. Therefore Pioneer Day will be in Atlanta 2011. I will get with Chief Warner and work out some early planning details. He has already voiced his support. I will keep you advised and will probably be soliciting help in the planning and execution of this event. Thanks to those that provided feedback" . (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

Sandy, you asked what I am doing these days. Pat and I are living our dream. Since the cancer treatments and my return to the land of the living, we retired from civil service and sold the house. We now travel full time in our motor home and play golf two to three times a week year around. Winter somewhere in the south and summer somewhere up north, can't believe how lucky we are but somebody has to do it!! Take care of yourself and those close!! (George Cannode CMSgt USAF Retired gpcannode@qmail.com)

This is the best one yet. You are to be congratulated. Had cancer two years ago and have recovered. Just had back surgery last month and am recovering. Now the doctor tells me I have a right hip which must be replaced. So goes the golden years. Again thanks for publishing my articles about Tulln. Best regards. (Pete Semanick psemanic@swcp.com)

***Editor's Note:** A few weeks ago I was in my doctor's office complaining about all the problems I was having in my "Golden Years" and the wise old doctor cleared it up for me. He told me to remember that our eyes also go bad when we age. The guy that started that "Golden Year" thing was about my age and had bad eyes. He thought he was looking at Gold but he was really looking at RUST! (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)*

Over many years, I've stayed in touch with a number of the fire folks from Minot. Larry Adams, Pat Fox, Juan Ozuna and Morris Tillman. In 2000, we got together in Tampa for a couple of days. Now we are thinking how great it would be if we could get

together with some of the other people that were at MAFB. The years in particular were from 1959 through 1962, or even before or after that. Sandy, 1959 thru 1962 was a real beginning for Minot (SAC) we were the guys that were there to enjoy it. Ha. I know, with your network of friends and connections, you could be a great help. Any assistance you could give us in finding old friends, you included would be greatly appreciated. Let me know what magic you can do. Thanks greatly. (Thomas Flaherty tjflaherty@embarqmail.com)

***Editor's Note:** Tom here is my magic! Anyone who served at Minot AFB especially between 1959 and 1963 wishing to have a Minot AFB Fire and Emergency Services "Get-Together," please contact Thomas Flaherty, 2227 Lakeville Drive, Fort Meyers, FL 33917-6732, phone (239)-567-0658, or at tjflaherty@embarqmail.com (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)*

Just wanted to say thanks for everything. I have been able to be in touch with a lot of the Firefighters I worked with and some Fire Chiefs, Also, just got an e-mail from Jerry Ball whom I worked with on Helicopters at Misawa AB, Japan, from 1962 to 1965. What a great pleasure it was to hear from him. I just e-mailed Jim Legg who was my Fire Chief at Ramstein AB Germany. The QNN has proven to be a spirit uplifter to those of us who served and many of those who are trying to find the ones they served with. Thanks (Sonny Sonnenberg nsonnenbert1@cox.net)

Received and printed quarterly newsletter Oct-Dec 09. Great work. Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs Network, Quarterly Network News (QNN) became print twenty years ago. In the past year, the newsletter has transitioned as it should from pioneers to the next generation of retired Air Force Fire Chiefs. Every generation must write its own history. It is my hope the new generation will carry the torch of an honored profession.

Sandy, you have the ability to string words together to convey what you have to say. And you write about people not things. And a writer, without a reader, is not a writer. Your articles move forward, and transitions, somewhat like the couplings between the cars of a rolling train, ensure

the forward motion. In closing, an anecdote. A man facing the gallows was asked if he had any statements to make. He replied, "I have nothing to say at this time." Have a great day. Write On! (Doug Courchene, CMSgt, USAF, Retired Dougecourchene@aol.com)

Editor's Note: *What an honor to receive kind words like those above from Doug Courchene CMSgt, USAF, Retired. He is "the real deal." I am certainly humbled by his gracious unsolicited comments. Chief Courchene founded the Quarterly Network News twenty years ago. Additionally, he is the author of the book "Pioneers with Intent." If you have not read it please contact me and I will e-mail you a copy. Permission was granted in June 2006 to publish an electronic edition of the book and make the document publicly available. What a great read. Pioneers with Intent will give you insight into the early days of Air Force Fire Protection as it transitioned from the Army Air Corp to the United States Air Force. Those early pioneers in Air Force Fire Protection established legacies which continue to benefit the Air Force Fire and Emergency Services Community today. Following is an excerpt from the Introduction of "Pioneers With Intent" and I believe it will whet your interest to obtain a copy and read it.*

"For as long as military aircraft have flown, fire fighters have done their part to respond to mishaps, rescue aircrews, and protect the air bases from which airmen operate. Despite the importance of their mission, very little has been written about Air Force fire fighters and their profession. This book, long overdue and written by one of their own, helps begin to fill that void. Doug Courchene, who served 42 years as an Air Force military and civilian fire fighter, has spent many years compiling information on the machines, clothing, vehicles, and equipment used by Air Force fire fighters. Along the way, he has also gathered stories about individual fire fighters, specific fire incidents, and the heroic deeds that have saved Air Force lives and property over the years. Among the ranks of early Air Force fire fighters are some whom Mr. Courchene has singled out and designated as Pioneers. These men, most of whom he knew personally, helped lay the foundation of what is today the most modern and best trained fire

fighting force in the world. They designed and established criteria for early military firefighting equipment for the Army Air Corps, the Army Air Forces during World War II, and the Air Force after its establishment as a separate service in 1947. They set the standards and developed the guidelines that govern the career field. They created training programs and established schools. They brought their own integrity to bear in building fire departments that they and the Air Force could be proud of. Many of their stories are told here." (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

PUBLISHING AND MAILING FUND



The QNN is privately funded by members' contributions. Monetary donations are strictly voluntary as no membership fee is charged. Donations help pay postage and publishing costs. Members continue to be quite generous with their financial support of the QNN. Thank you for the funds which keep this effort going. If you want to contribute make checks payable to "Hoyd O. Sanders, Jr., Editor QNN." If you want to send cash through the mail that is your call. Contributors for this past quarter are: Doug Courchene, CMSgt USAF Retired; Glenn Cloud, CMSgt USAF Retired; Mrs Ralph Shelton, Frank Denny, and Mrs Joe Taylor. Before publishing and mailing this issue, we have \$937.40 in the treasurer.

PEDRO'S CORNER

Sandy, in writing my article for the Oct-Nov 2009 QNN edition concerning my tour at



Pleiku on helicopters, I mentioned the efforts of a Fire Chief who went beyond his duty to ensure his airborne firefighters were taken care of. I

failed to mention his name. I am proud to say it was MSgt Eugene W. Hawks. He was

an inspiration to all assigned to the Fire Department and helicopter rescue. If anyone should know him and have information as to how to contact him, please let me know. (Sonny Sonnenberg nsonnenberg1@cox.net)

Recently I had the honor of attending the Dedication Ceremony for the Pedro Rescue Helicopter Association Monument at the Enlisted Heritage Research Institute, Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Alabama. The memorial depicts the HH-43 and its mission and honors the accomplishments of the aircrew members who flew it and those who maintained it.



Additionally, an area is dedicated to A1C William Pitsenbarger, a Pedro Pararescue Specialist, who received the Medal of Honor posthumously for his heroic actions in Vietnam. If you should visit the Gunter Facility, the monument is located in a very prominent place in front of the Enlisted Heritage Research Institute. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired



Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired
Sandy6T5@comcast.net

EDITOR'S CORNER



What an honor it has been to serve as the editor of the QNN for the past couple of years. I must admit it has been quite a learning experience. I have had much help and advice which is much appreciated. Further the financial support has been tremendous. We will soon have a computer and printer solely dedicated toward publishing the QNN. As I continue my quest to make improvements to the QNN, I come to you for help. I need articles for inclusion in future editions. Please take some time and write something to be published. I do have a few articles in my file which will be published in upcoming edition; however, I need more. So, as Chief Doug Courchene says "Write On"! (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

TEST



Anyone know these chiefs?