

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@695online.com
<http://www.dodfire.com/Retirees.htm>



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Founded - 1990 by Doug Courchene

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Another quarter has gone by, and I really wonder where all the time has gone. I keep telling myself I am retired. I should have plenty of time to do the things I want to do. However, I read today that when you retire you get up every morning with nothing to do and when you go to bed at night you only have about half of it done. I guess I am going to have to come to grips with getting older.

There are so many things that make me realize I am no longer as young as the twenty-year-old person who is trapped inside my sixty-six-year-old body. As most of you know, I have been in a "Gun Battle" with cancer for quite some time. I can really tell I am getting old now that I have to visit the doctor seemingly every day.

I have found that without my consent even my name has been changed. When I was fifty and went to the doctor I was Mr Sanders. Now, when I visit the doctor's office or hospital I am not called Mr Sanders any more; I am called darling, honey, sweetie, or sugar, and I did not know it but I must have a twin because the nurses continue to say "Are WE doing alright today?" For those of you who still think you are ten feet tall, bullet proof, and will never have to face the reality of becoming old-- Just Keep Breathing. I believe you will find several interesting articles in this issue of the QNN. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders Sandy6T5@Comcast.net)

What a great visit I had to Cannon AFB, New Mexico. CMSgt Bryan Foster (Fire Chief) and his team are working hard while transitioning to a new mission and new command. They now provide Fire and Emergency Services for Special Operations



Cannon AFB NM Fire Dept

Command C-130s. Additionally, they provide Fire and Emergency Services for the large Melrose bombing range complex. The Cannon firefighters are enthusiastic about their mission and certainly make one proud to be associated with them. Chief Foster and his team made my visit enjoyable. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders Sandy6T5@Comcast.net)



War Story: RAF Wethersfield, Essex, England, 55th Tactical Fighter Wing, 1956. Before the conversion to F-100s, an F-84F aborted takeoff, dropped his wing tanks on the runway, called for the newly installed barrier, went through that, sheared his landing gear off in a ditch at the end of the runway, and ended up in a ball of fire. The O-10 crash truck on line standby was first in, knocked down the fire around the cockpit, and the crew chief opened the canopy. However, to his shock, no pilot sat in there. The Air Police responded and set up the fire line, the wing commander arrived and asked, "how's the pilot?" After everybody there was directed into a search for the missing man, somebody noticed that under the open rear doors of the cracker-box ambulance the bottom half of a pair of legs in a G-suit could be seen. The pilot had thrown back the canopy, dived over the side, and ran, then strolled back to the crash site as he calmed down. The F-84F canopy swung up and back on two arms, rebounded, and then slammed shut. For a while there, the 55th had a Phantom pilot, but no F-4s! (Bill Ryan ChfChf2@comcast.net)

TAPS



MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. Samuel J. Tassone, 77, passed on to be with his Lord and Savior. Mr. Tassone was born March 13, 1931, in McKeesport PA. He was the son of the late Louis and Mary Tassone. Mr. Tassone retired from the U.S. Air Force, having served in the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War. He was a Mason, a Shriner, and a member of the American Legion, Air Force Sergeants Association and the International Association of Firefighters. He was also a member of Christ United Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn C. Tassone; one daughter, Linda Stutt and her husband, C.W. of Hampton; one son, Phillip Tassone and his wife, Pam of Tucson AZ; three grandchildren, Chris Stutt and his wife, Jen of Winston Salem, NC; Jenny Stutt and her fiancé, Chris Regan of Myrtle Beach SC, and

Ashley Tassone of Tucson AZ; one sister, Stella Heslop; two brothers, Rev. Rocco Tassone and John Tassone.

Some of you may not have known Sam. He was a very low-key guy and served at HQ Tactical Air Command during the 1960s.
(Ben Partin bpartin@cox.net)

Deloris C. Bell (Dee), wife of Chief Willie Bell, was born Deloris C. Scott in Cairo, Georgia, on 15 December 1934. Deloris



graduated from her hometown high school in 1953. Soon after graduation, she moved to New York City. Deloris and Willie A. Bell were married for life on 12 September 1955. Dee lived an illustrious life as a beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. They have three children--Dino, Stephenia and Debrah, five grandchildren, and 10 great grandchildren. She pursued a career as a cosmetologist achieving her goal and her credentials in Abilene, Texas, 3 March 1970. Dee became a resident of the world and an active member of any organization that improved the quality of life for the Air Force service member. Accompanying her husband and love of her life through his military career to such assignments as Walker AFB NM; United Kingdom; Palm Beach FL; Paris, France; Plattsburg AFB NY; Dyess AFB TX; Andrews AFB MD; Travis AFB CA; Ramstein AB Germany, culminating his and her career at Castle AFB CA on 1 Oct 1978, returning back to her roots in Cairo, Georgia where she settled into civilian life with her family. In 1979 she again followed her husband to the Antelope Valley as he was the newly selected Fire Chief at Edwards AFB. As an avid bowler, with a friendly smile for all and a personality that lit up the room when she walked in, she soon gained numerous friends and advocates who will sorely miss her.

Editor's Note: What a joy it was to be around Willie and Dee Bell! They loved life and each other. What great folks they were, and I am sure the Edwards Fire Folks miss them both very much.

KUDOS



Fire Chief Robin Gullie receives the Merit Award presented by the Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Board Of Directors on 5 Sept 2008 in Las Vegas NV. The Award was presented to the Offutt Air Force Base Fire and Emergency Services Team in recognition of their act of public service and whose efforts displayed superior intelligence under unusual circumstance of stress and or danger at an aircraft emergency. Robin E Gullie, Civ, USAF, ACC, 55th CES/CEF Robin.gullie@offutt.af.mil

Editor's Note: Congratulations are in order for the 55th Civil Engineer Fire and Emergency Services Flight.

READERS' COMMENTS

Dear Sandy, What a pleasure to hear from you and the exciting news that you were continuing the great work of the QNN. This is indeed an emotional time with the passing of Chief Barrow. I for one am very grateful to you for your devotion and desire to get through this difficult situation and my compliments on an excellent current edition of the QNN. I will miss Bob and our visit when he was in the Tampa Bay area. Also, my admiration and affection for Doug will always be a joy to me. My association with both of these wonderful men began with the printing and publication of "Pioneers with Intent, Memoirs of an Air Force Fire Fighter." You are so correct when you say one cannot find the right words to say goodbye to Chief Bobby Barrow. We are all better people for having known Chief Barrow and for also knowing Chief Doug Courchene. My best wishes to you, Sandy,

Carry on the good work. My compliments and thanks. Sincerely, Iris Joseph McWhirter.

Chief, you did Chief Barrow proud in the last edition. He would indeed be pleased with your work on the QNN. Keep it going! I'm glad I had the chance to know him too. One of the coolest things we did at the fire school during my last assignment was to have Chief Barrow present the badges to the newest graduating firefighters. He was grinning from ear to ear! Terry Ford, Fire Chief Tinker AFB OK Terry.Ford@Tinker.af.mil

Stamp Fund Contributors:

The QNN is privately funded by members. Past quarter, contributors are: Chief Doug Courchene dougcourchene@aol.com, Leo R McCarty and Iris McWhirter. These contributions are greatly appreciated and needed. Donations help defray postage and publishing costs and are voluntary as no membership fees are charged. We have several retirees and widows who do not have e-mail and a hard copy of the QNN is published and mailed to them by US Mail. Prior to this printing and mailing, I have \$81.00 in the treasury. Contact the Editor for more information or any assistance you would like to provide. Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders 110 Kensington Court Dothan, Alabama 36303 (334)-792-3521 Sandy6T5@Comcast.net.



The Silver Star Awarded 34 Years Late to Two USAF Firefighters

To HQ AFPC/DPPRA February 1, 1997

I recommend A1C Martin P. Jester for the award of the Silver Star. Shortly after midnight on November 1, 1964, enemy forces initiated a devastating attack on Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam. Upon hearing the incoming mortar, A1C Jester unhesitatingly led a small group of firefighters from their off-duty huts through gun fire and explosions, toward the flight line and burning aircraft. Arriving at the burning flight line, he found that the fire station and several fire trucks parked adjacent to the station had been damaged by the heavy mortar barrage and ground fire. Airman Jester also realized that on-duty

firefighters had abandoned the fire station and evacuated back to the cantonment area in search of shelter from exploding aircraft loaded with fuel, bombs, 2.75 rockets, and incoming mortars. Despite the chaos and multiple unexploded mortar shells sticking out of the ground around the fire station, Airman Jester assembled a small team of firefighters and directed them to man the fire trucks that were not severely damaged. Instructions given were to get out on the flight line and extinguish as many fires as they could until additional help arrives. With disregard for his personal safety, Airman Jester jumped into an O-11A fire truck with another firefighter and an armed U.S. Army soldier acting as a door gunner in the rear crew compartment. They responded through heavy mortar, and ground fire, to try and save a HH-43B Rescue Helicopter that began to burn when the ground power unit hooked directly to it sustained a direct mortar hit and began to burn. Once the flames were extinguished from the damaged helicopter, Airman Jester drove across the taxiway to the alert aircraft parking ramp, where numerous aircraft were on fire, exploding, and burning out of control. While still under heavy mortar and ground fire, Airman Jester drove his fire truck up to a burning B-57 Bomber, directed foam from the turrets, and extinguished the fire on one of the burning wings. A large burning fuel spill under the aircraft was also extinguished, preventing further damage and the possibility of fuel tanks and munitions exploding. About the same time another explosion occurred behind the fire truck and a B-57 on the next row received a direct hit and was totally destroyed. The back of the fire truck also sustained damage by shrapnel. Airman Jester and his crew once again repositioned at another burning B-57 bomber loaded with fuel and bombs and extinguished a running fuel fire spreading toward stockpiles of bombs and fuel bladders between the aircraft. Without his protective fire suit, he advanced a hand line disregarding the exploding munitions and extinguished the fire in the aircraft. After determining that the bombs were still hot from the fire, extinguishing agent had been depleted, and the fire was extinguished, Airman Jester withdrew his vehicle and told other personnel in the area to do the same for safety. Throughout the rest of the night, the enemy withdrew.

Airman Jester and his crew continued to extinguish smaller fires using portable fire extinguishers and conduct search and rescue operations. He used rags and strips of his uniform to plug leaking fuel tanks on battle-damaged aircraft preventing further disaster. The heroic firefighting actions performed beyond the call of duty by Airman Jester are a credit to himself and the United States Air Force.

William E. Bethea
Colonel, USAF (Retired)

I recommend A2C Eugene J. Traczyk Jr., for award of the Silver Star. Shortly after midnight on November 1, 1964, enemy forces initiated a devastating attack on Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam. Upon being woken and stunned by the incoming mortar explosions and ground fire, Airman Traczyk grabbed his AR-15 and immediately responded from his hut with another off-duty firefighter to the burning flight line through ground fire and a barrage of mortar explosions. Upon arriving at the damaged and abandoned Fire Station and without regard for his personal safety, Airman Traczyk jumped on to a partially damaged fire truck with another firefighter and responded to the flight line where aircraft were burning and exploding due to incoming mortar fire. Airman Traczyk started the pumps on his O-11A fire truck and proceeded to the HH-43B Helicopter location in an effort to stop the spread of fire from the attached ground power unit hit by mortar. Extinguishing the fire, Airman Traczyk then proceeded with his vehicle to the B-57 bomber parking ramp where several aircraft loaded with bombs and fuel continued to explode and burn out of control. Airman Traczyk successfully extinguished a fire on one wing of a B-57 utilizing foam through the turrets of the crash truck. A fuel fire under the aircraft was also extinguished. Another B-57 bomber sustained a direct hit and Airman Traczyk deployed a hand line and fought the fire to no avail. Running low on foam and fire-extinguishing agent, after efforts to keep fires from reaching bombs and fuel bladders between the aircraft, Airman Traczyk and his crew evacuated the area, serviced the fire trucks with water and foam, and began search and rescue operations. Airman Traczyk and his crew continued to

extinguish smaller fires with portable fire extinguishers. During the night after the mortar attack had subsided, he and other firefighters utilized bayonets to force portions of their fatigues and T-shirts into leaking fuel tanks to temporarily plug the leak. The heroic firefighting actions performed beyond the call of duty by Airman Traczyk are a credit to himself and the United States Air Force.

William E. Bethea
Colonel, USAF (Retired)



Editor's Note: It took 34 years, but the Air Force finally made it right. A1C Marty P. Jester and A2C Eugene J. Traczyk, Jr. are now recognized on a monument installed next to a static display B-57 Aircraft on Lackland Air Force Base TX. The photos above were made during a recent visit by Marty to the monument. We thank Marty and Eugene for their service to our nation and congratulate them on the receipt of the Silver Star.

This quarter I asked Joseph A. "Bud" Ahearn, Major General, USAF Retired and Larry R. Daniels, CMSgt, USAF Retired to provide some insight as to the establishment of the Chief of Enlisted Matters in the Office of the Air Force Civil Engineer. General Ahearn had the vision to establish the position and Chief Daniels was first to serve in this new ground breaking position.

CMSgt (USAF Retd) Larry R. Daniels Guest Contributor: When Chief Sanders asked me to write an article for the QNN. I had to pause for a few moments to decide what to say and where to begin. As I reminisced



about my active duty days, it became clear that the most powerful memories are about relationships—both professional and personal. I want to share a few precious memories, but first let me give a brief biographical sketch of myself for those who don't know me.

I joined the Air Force in April 1966 and received a direct duty assignment as Base Carpenter Apprentice at Travis AFB CA. I served with the 820th Red Horse Squadron in Viet Nam (Tuy Hoa, Dong Ha, and Quang Tri) from 1967 to 1968. After promotion to TSgt, I retrained into the "triple nickel" AFSC of Programs and Work Control. I went on to serve four tours of duty in the European Theater (Cold War Era), Luke AFB, Tyndall AFB (HQ AFESC), and at the Pentagon (during Desert Shield/Storm).

Perhaps my most memorable career highlight came ten years after I retired when in 2002, I received a letter from Major General Earnest O. Robbins asking for permission to use my name for an Air Force award. Hence, the "Civil Engineering Military Superintendent of the Year Award" became the "Chief Master Sergeant Larry R. Daniels Award." I was invited to Washington DC to assist General Robbins in presenting the first "Daniels" award to a Firefighter, SMSgt Kevin N. Remedies of the 86th CES, Ramstein AB, Germany.

It was also my distinct privilege and pleasure to serve as the first Chief, Enlisted Matters for The Civil Engineer, Major General Joseph A. "Bud" Ahearn from 1989 until my retirement in 1992.

Early in his career, General Ahearn recognized the importance of including senior enlisted leaders in the decision-making process. He championed the cause and challenged the status quo to "physically" seat Chiefs at the conference table whenever major policy issues affecting the troops were discussed. The following quote is from General Ahearn's "Oral History Interview" dated March 2008 (emphasis mine):

"CMSgt Larry Daniels is from Tennessee, a big, tall easy-going guy, but he's got a lot of personal energy. He was very alive. He was on the USAFE staff and he got together a couple or three others, including the fire chief. We had some remarkable fire chiefs. The notion of the whole thing was to engage all of our capabilities, because we were only using a part of the hierarchical organization. The notion was to free it up and let it run. By the way, they can improve on our work most of the time. There was a little bit of challenge selling it to the hierarchy, and I challenged it greatly. I'm not sure that a large proportion endorsed that whole tack, because it does run a little counter to the culture of the military."

General Ahearn's insightful decision to include CMSgt leadership at the senior executive level has withstood the test of time and is now "institutionalized." The incumbent "Chief" for The Civil Engineer, CMSgt Pat Abbott—is number seven! Furthermore, Major General Del Eulberg has declared that all persons past and present who have held this top enlisted office are now included as members of the AF/CE Legacy Team. This demonstrates a tremendous expression of confidence and respect for the entire CE enlisted force!

Now let me tell you about some of my relationships with Air Force firefighters over the years. My first close working relationship with the Fire Department was

at Luke AFB when I was a young TSgt in the mid-1970s. I was the NCOIC of Work Authorization and Mr. Lou Mossinger was the Assistant Chief for Tech Services. Lou was always coming to my office to track the work requests for FPDCs. Remember those things? Fire Protection Deficiency Corrections! We had a special "red" stamp for those work requests, and they would be tracked throughout the system. Lou and I spent many hours together trying to get his work requests expedited. We became good friends and spent hours and hours shooting skeet on the base skeet range. Lou almost single handedly built the "Phantom Skeet Club" at Luke AFB.

One day, Mr. Mossinger brought in his brand new "sidekick"—a young fellow named Jim Hotell. Jim was given the responsibility to track AND brief all Fire Discrepancies at the Commander's update meeting. Even at the entry level, Jim Hotell was recognized as an effective communicator and leader. We too spent many hours together going through literally thousands of work order/job order log entries to update Jim's slides for the Commander's briefing. His slides were hand-written with red or black "grease pencil."

Not long before I retired, Jim (who was then Chief of Air Force Fire Protection) and I had lunch together at the Pentagon. We had a good time remembering those days of jumping through hoops over the "crayon" briefing slides.

After Luke AFB, I found myself as a member of the advanced party to reactivate RAF Fairford, United Kingdom in 1979. As Chief of Program Development, I worked closely with Chief Lowell "Al" Young to get the Fire Stations and related facilities up to Air Force standards (after sitting in a derelict condition for several years). This was quite a challenge, and we worked real hard to meet the base's operational capabilities on time, but not without some fun memories. I was known as quite a competitive dart player during those days, and our Fire Department would "slip" me into their lineup against the British Fire Departments in the area for "friendly" competitions. I guess you could say I was an "honorary" Firefighter, at least for the dart tournaments!

My next job was at HQ USAFE, Ramstein AB, Germany where I traveled with the Civil Engineering and Services Management Assistance Team (CESMAT). We had 32 main operating bases in Europe during those days (1982-85), and the travel was frequent and intense. This is where I became familiar with the actual details of how Air Force Fire Departments operated. I had the privilege of working with some top-notch Fire Chiefs during this phase of my career: Marshall McCorkle, Keith Moser, Paul Giles, and Charlie Richardson to name a few.

During a two-year stint at HQ 3AF, RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom, I again had the opportunity to work with a high caliber Fire Chief—CMSgt Bruce Sincox. I wound up at Tyndall AFB, Florida in 1987, as Field Operations Superintendent for HQ AFESC Research & Development. I had a wonderful relationship with the Fire Research guys such as Dick Vickers, CWO-4 Bobby Barrow, Wade Grimm, and Chuck Risinger. I later moved to the Acquisition Division and became Chief, Technology Transition. This is where I worked closely with Mr. Doug Knowles, CMSgt Hoyd “Sandy” Sanders, and Hugh Pike. In 1989, I moved to the Pentagon as Chief, Enlisted Matters. I continued to work closely with, and was always a staunch advocate for, Air Force Fire Protection.

I mentioned in the beginning of this article that my most powerful memories are about relationships, both professional and personal. I have been blessed richly to know and work with so many fine people throughout the Air Force. Many of the names I mentioned here were true “pillars” in Air Force Fire Protection. But we must never forget—the “backbone” of the Air Force is represented by that airman riding the tailgate of the fire truck and dragging the hose. Thank you for this opportunity. May God bless each and every one of you! (Larry R. Daniels, CMSgt (Ret) ldaniels5@cox.net)



Major General (USAF Retd) Joseph A. “Bud” Ahearn, Guest Contributor:

The Air Force conducts its air and space missions on the shoulders of its enlisted force. For all of the facets of the Civil Engineering (CE) mission, this perspective could not be truer. While we were in Europe together fighting the Cold War we saw the roles of our CE enlisted force to be much more visible and downright indispensable to air base operations. To gauge and strengthen the authentic performance readiness of our enlisted craftsmen and first responders our CE officers needed to engage our CE Chief Master Sergeants as trusted leadership partners. Including the Chiefs was intended to strengthen the CE leadership team's effectiveness for the whole of USAFE. The Chiefs knew the state of enlisted matters best, they were given more freedom to self empower and they multiplied our troops' ingenuity, productivity, and pride. As one key result, the senior commanders and staff in that era of USAFE's history often cited the surge of readiness and the strength and commitment of the Civil Engineers as force multipliers for their fighting wings. Together we saw the Berlin Wall come down.

It was this USAFE experience that created the vision and generated the need for a position called "Chief of Enlisted Matters, Air Force Civil Engineer." Our intent was to partner with the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and his counterparts in the major commands to define and deliver solutions for the priority needs of the Air Force enlisted force.

Thanks to all who built on this partnership to make it better over the years. Today the shoulders of the Air Force enlisted force are all the more strong.

Best Regards, Bud Ahearn
(Bud.Ahearn@CH2M.com)

Editor's Note: It was certainly my pleasure to work closely with General Ahearn and Chief Daniels during my Air Force career. I might point out the now one plus one dormitories we find on our installations are the result of much hard work these two Airmen put into quality of life improvements. On a personal note General Ahearn was my retirement officer when I retired from the Air Force in 1991 after 31 years of active duty. Additionally, he was retirement officer when I retired from Federal Service in 2005.



Editor's Corner:

First I must apologize for not getting this edition out on time. The goal I have set for myself is to have it finalized two weeks prior to the end of each quarter. Evelyn

and I had some medical problems which required us to be out of town to receive care

and delayed my efforts to meet the goal. I will certainly attempt to be more prudent in the future.

There are some interesting articles in this issue. I believe the Guest Contributors added much to what we did and are continuing to do in Air Force Fire and Emergency Services. I have a couple articles in the basket for the next issue; however, I need your inputs to make your QNN interesting and successful. So, please think about what you can contribute. I am sure you each have anecdotal stories which would certainly be interesting to others.

Additionally, if you know anyone who should be receiving the QNN whether it is by e-mail or United States Mail Service, please provide me an address (e-mail or home) and I will make sure they are added to the appropriate mailing list. Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders 110 Kensington Court, Dothan, Alabama 36303 (334)792-3521
Sandy6T5@Comcast.net

HAPPY



AUTUMN