

Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs' Network  
**QUARTERLY NETWORK NEWS**



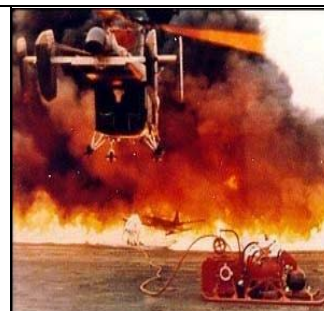
*Legendary Pioneers Who Reminisce About the Past  
But Focus on the Future*

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Founded by Doug Courchene

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Here we are at the end of another quarter. Time is like a slippery slope; and once you get on it at around 50 years of age, the angle of attack continues to get greater and the speed of its passing is phenomenal. However, I did get to spend some quality time with a great group of young Air Force Firefighters the past few days and I feel like I have been somewhat re-blued. Those guys make one want to put on a uniform and go back to work. What a team of outstanding young folks (civilian & military) that Fire Chiefs have to work with. Today's young Air Force Firefighters are smart, well-trained, disciplined, and doing a great job making the Air Force a better place. Having been retired now for almost five years I can say I do not miss the "corporation" but I do indeed miss those "Awesome People" I had the honor to work with. I am so proud to know today's Air Force Firefighters are on our side. The recurring deployments they are faced with are creating a great challenge for each of them. However, they are stepping up and making, in most cases, tough personal sacrifices to meet these requirements. Additionally, those civilian and military firefighters who remain at home station are doing an awesome job of maintaining a creditable quality firefighting readiness posture to meet emergency response needs. I would certainly be remiss if I did not say how much I appreciate the support these deployed firefighters are receiving from their families and those firefighters who remain at home station. Also I want to applaud the leadership (Crew Chief to Fire Chief) (Amn to CMSgt) for their hard work. They are contributing much toward finding solutions to the numerous issues they face in support of these wartime deployment requirements.

What an effort it is, and from what I have observed each team member is doing his/her part. I might add, the two wars we are fighting as a nation have been ongoing for a long time, and we need to make every effort to continually support and do everything we can to thank our firefighters for the service and sacrifices they are making in the defense of our nation. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders [Sandy6T5@Comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@Comcast.net))

### READERS' COMMENTS

Happy Memorial Day to all and a salute to all the veterans! We did a wonderful memorial here at the cemetery in Fort Walton with full military honors and a flyover. (Joe Cherniga SMSgt Ret [Joeskipp@aol.com](mailto:Joeskipp@aol.com))

Hope that y'all had a great Memorial Day. Great newsletter as always. I did note however, that our web site, ([www.firetrucks-atwar.com](http://www.firetrucks-atwar.com)) was misspelled at the end of my letter to the editor. It is easy to do. Keep up the great work. (Jimmie Van [www.firetrucks-atwar.com](http://www.firetrucks-atwar.com))

Chief Sanders (Sandy), I haven't talked with you since the Commanders course at Travis Air Force Base, CA. Fire Chief John Speakman sent the Jan-Mar 09 QNN to me, and I was very sad to learn of Chief Ralph McHenry's (Mac's) passing. I had the pleasure of working with him while on annual tour with the 349th CES/CEF at Whiteman AFB MO and learned much from him. Mac and Joyce were very nice to our group, inviting us to their home for barbecues and just treating us like family. I had many enjoyable conversations with Mac after the tour and spent quality time

with him at the Fire Chief's Conferences. I consider him to be one of the two most influential Fire Chiefs in my career. The other Chief is you. You taught me more about leadership and management when we met during a tour at Yokota Air Base, Japan, than you realize. I also met a good friend there... John Speakman. John (Fire Chief, Travis AFB, CA) and I visit regularly. Our installations are close and we conduct joint training as often as we can. I am now looking at the end of my career. Probably retire in two more years. Started in the Air Force in 1968 at Homestead Air Force Base, Florida, and retired at Travis Air Force Base CA in 2005. It is very good here at Federal Fire and we are working hard to build a better organization. We have gone from Navy (Naval Weapons Station) to Army which is quite a change. Along with a new station, we are looking at new apparatus and updating our equipment. The new challenges we face are keeping me here. Well, enough said. Today is my 24-hour shift and stuff needs to get done. (George F. Day, Fire Chief, Federal Fire [gday2500@comcast.net](mailto:gday2500@comcast.net))

Editor's Note: Fire Chief George Day brought a team of firefighters to Yokota Air Base, Japan, while I was serving as the Fire Chief. What a great team they were. Each member of the team melded into our organization and demonstrated what the term "one team, one fight" means. By the way, it cost me quite a large sum of money to get Chief Day to say those good things about me. Thanks Chief. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt Ret [Sandy6T5@comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@comcast.net))

Hi Sandy: Latest QNN was great. Thanks for your efforts and success in doing it each time. I found out that another one of my old buddy firefighters died on 22 May 2009. He and I were in Vienna (1949-1952) and were on the same orders to Nellis Air Force Base NV on 9 April 1952. From there we parted company and I finally was able to contact him about 6 years ago. I am now in contact with one of his daughters. She found one of my recent E-mail messages to him and sent me the bad news. My old group from Tulln AB near Vienna Austria are rapidly passing on. He and I were there

when Martell was our Fire Chief. There were 21 of us in the time frame 1949-1952 and only 6 of us are left. One never knows about death, just be ready when the time comes. You want me to send you a short story about the guys I worked with in Vienna and the purpose of the air base in Austria? I have a CD which contains the history of the base from 1945-1955. We were one of a few bases within the Russian Occupational Zone after the war. (Pete Semanick [psemanic@swcp.com](mailto:psemanic@swcp.com))

Editor's Note: I took Chief Semanick up on his offer to provide an article concerning Tulln Air Base, Austria. And, since I received his article before I published this edition, I have included it on pages 4 and 5. I certainly believe you will find it as interesting as I did. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt Ret [Sandy6T5@comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@comcast.net))

Sandy: Not sure we know each other, but we may have bumped into one another at one of the chiefs' conferences over the years. I have a close friend who is a retired firefighter as well as a Vietnam veteran who would really enjoy receiving your Quarterly Network Newsletter. His name is Jack Gates; he retired at Kirtland Air Force Base NM about 8 to 10 years ago; he also worked at Peterson Air Force Base CO and Schriever Air Force Base CO. In the 1960s he was assigned to a Pedro unit working with Jerry Ball somewhere in Vietnam (not sure where). I have access to some scanned photos of him and the crew including photos of Jerry Ball in that group from Vietnam. If you could include him on E-mails of the Quarterly Network Newsletter I'm sure he would be very pleased to receive it. If I can do anything for you please don't hesitate to ask. (Dennis R. Chaltry, Assistant Fire Chief, USAF Academy Fire and Emergency Services [firedawg1952@aol.com](mailto:firedawg1952@aol.com))

Editor's Note: It is rewarding to get notes like the one above from Assistant Fire Chief Chaltry. Identifying new readers for the QNN is great. Right now the numbers of readers have caused me to develop three distribution lists. My net provider was getting upset with the quantity of E-mail addresses I had on the original list. I was

shut down for awhile. Then I split them and have not had a problem. So, if you know any fire folks who would like to receive the QNN by E-mail or hard copy through the United States Postal Service, get approval from them then please let me know. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt Ret [Sandy6T5@comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@comcast.net))

Sandy: I am late in responding to your news-filled E-mail. It seems the longer we are retired the busier we get! Honestly, I don't know how we found time to hold down full-time jobs. I have corresponded with CMSgt Doug Courchene, and it appears we share a passion for art. I suspect he is actually a modern master just maintaining a low profile! I have also heard from Chief Jim Legg and need to respond to him - and will do so soon. Your Quarterly Network Newsletter is providing a great service to our Fire Chiefs and to all firefighters. I saw a lot of familiar names among those who have gone to the great beyond. Their time among us definitely made this world a better place. The D-Day Memorial (65th year) really gave me cause to reflect on the greatness of that generation, but it also reminded me that all firefighters, both military and civilian, respond to a higher calling as they lay their lives on the line for us every moment of every day. When is your next newsletter due out? I would be honored to include a short article. If too late for this issue, then let's aim for the next quarter. Best Wishes to you and Evelyn. (David Cornell Brig Gen USAF (Retired)) ([davlyncornell@sbglobal.net](mailto:davlyncornell@sbglobal.net))

Editor's Note: What an honor for me to have served at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea with Brig Gen Dave Cornell (Colonel Cornell back then). He was the Civil Engineer Commander for the "Fighting 51<sup>st</sup>." What a "Cool" commander he was. Anyone having served at Osan or Kunsan can testify to the fact it is hot in the summer. Adding to the heat in those days (78/79) the wear of field gear to include gas mask occurred quite often. Col Cornell was so "Cool," when he would show up on the flight line for an exercise or emergency situation, he would not even have sweat on his upper lip. At all times he was the poster

boy for what an Air Force Officer should look like. I must say I was quite intimidated while standing next to him sweating like an overworked mule. However, I was extremely impressed with his calm approach to leadership and was proud to have him for a commander. After Osan Air Base, it was an honor for me to travel with Col Cornell and discuss contingency firefighting operations with the students of the Contingency Engineering Course at Wright Patterson Air Force Base OH. For you old guys--we did a "Huntley/Brinkley." Col Cornell was certainly consistent in his ability to dazzle them with his brilliance, and I was fairly capable of baffling them with my stupidity. I look forward to reading an article written by General Cornell. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF (Retired)) ([Sandy6T5@comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@comcast.net))

Sandy: Aloha from Hawaii; yes, still at work but looking to finally retire 3 January 2010 after 48 years with Air Force Fire Protection. The merger of Hickam with Pearl Harbor under BRAC is just not for me. Good QNN, thanks to you and Charlie for all the work. I saw the picture of Greenville firefighters in the QNN; I am not in the picture but did take my fire training at Greenville Oct-Dec 1961 time frame. Sandy, I misplaced your address once again; please provide as I want to send some dollars your way. (William A. Moore, CMSgt Retired, Fire Chief, Hickam Air Force Base HI [William.Moore@hickam.af.mil](mailto:William.Moore@hickam.af.mil))

Sandy - all of this is great stuff. I'm learning to appreciate my past associations more and more as I enter the twilight of my fire protection career. My military training and experiences have served me well. It is sad to read of so many fine chiefs passing; makes one feel a bit vulnerable. God bless you for keeping the newsletter going. I send my best to you and your family. (Bruce T. Sincox CMSgt Retired [btmsincox@comcast.net](mailto:btmsincox@comcast.net))

Sandy, haven't talked to you in quite some time. Recently, 21st of April, Betty and I traveled to Jamestown TN for CMSgt Rod Winningham's funeral. Betty had received a call on the 18th of April from Rod's

daughter Kim who was visiting him in Panama City FL. Kim informed Betty that Rod had suddenly passed away. As you well know, Rod and I had been friends for over forty years. He worked for me at Blytheville, AR, Germany, and was my Deputy Fire Chief at Kadena Air Base, Japan. In regards to his passing and going home to be with the LORD, I miss him very much. Winnie was one exceptional human being and was loved by all. Betty and I send our love to you and your loved ones; stay in touch, and God Bless. (Charles "Chuck" Peters ([cpeters5@comcast.net](mailto:cpeters5@comcast.net)))

Sandy, thank you SO much for the E-mail containing the last Quarterly Network Newsletter. I haven't received the hard copy yet, but I will keep my eye out for it here in the next couple of days. These are tough days for me, Sandy, I must tell you. When Daddy died, I also lost a friend. It touches my heart to hear people speak so highly of him. He truly was a quality person. (Kim Winningham Luther [johnkimluther@bellsouth.net](mailto:johnkimluther@bellsouth.net))

Chief, I was a co-worker with Dan Pimpsner for the last 5 years here at Melrose Bombing Range NM. I put a video together about Dan for his friends and family. He was a special individual who touched our hearts. It is funny because the way you describe him in the Quarterly Network Newsletter is exactly how I remember him. Here is the link to the video.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fs0hKSrQ3JQ> (Noel Hailey [noel33@suddnelink.net](mailto:noel33@suddnelink.net))

## **WAR STORY CORNER**

### **LOOKING BACK AT THE GOOD TIMES**

As an eighteen-year-old airman firefighter, I never dreamed my assignments would be in places like Berlin and Vienna. In 1949 my assignment was Templehof Air Base which was a key receiving installation for the Berlin Airlift designated as "Operations Vittles." Arriving from my stateside assignment near Pittsburgh the final step was leaving Frankfurt on a troop train with instructions not to open the compartment outside window shades under any circumstance. It seemed this assignment

was really hush-hush with travel right through the Russian occupied part of East Germany. On arrival at Templehof, I found that it was a small operation with just a handful of firefighters. After six months of working shift we all became close friends. At the close of airlift, phasedown was imminent so we were not surprised to see posted on the squadron bulletin board a list of other European bases where we could sign up and volunteer for a new assignment. When I saw Vienna listed, I immediately put my name on the sheet along with several other firefighters. A short time later ten firefighters were notified of our new assignment to Vienna, and I was one of them. Soon, off we went with the same routine as when we arrived. Troop train out of Berlin with instructions not to open the compartment window shades. Arriving in Frankfurt we changed trains for travel south into Austria. Shortly after traveling into Austria, another set of instructions were verbally given not to open compartment window shades. At this time we were traveling through the Russian-occupied zone of Austria. Back then the Russian rules to all occupants on trains included no looking out the windows while on the trains. And they meant it!! Arriving in Vienna we were met by a military bus for a trip twenty miles north to Tulln Air Base. This new assignment was right in the middle of the Russian Zone. In fact the bus had to travel through a 5,000 Russian Army Compound. We were stopped at the Russian Compound gate and a mean, rough looking Russian soldier entered the bus with his machine gun at the ready. He walked up and down the aisle looking under each seat. Later we were told he was looking for anyone hiding in an attempt to leave the Russian Zone via our base. Unlike our important mission in Berlin the assignment was really laid back. We had three VC-47, a T-6 and two L-5 aircraft and various transient aircraft from time to time. The base was even a scheduled landing site for Pan American World Airways which consisted of DC-3, DC-4, and the Constellation aircraft. Fire protection included two Class 135 C/T, one Class 155 C/T, one class 325 pumper, one 1020 pump/trailer, and a modified personnel carrier equipped with fire hose



and various tools. Our main mission was to support the American Embassy and Attaché personnel in Vienna in the event of an evacuation situation. My assignment would last through early 1952. During the 1949-1952 time period, 22 of the firefighters would really get to know one another. Rotation seemed to arrive rapidly, and one by one we departed this ideal assignment. Several of us remained in contact over the coming years. Just as we departed Tulln Air Base, one by one, my friends have departed the good earth. Names such as Robert Gamelgard, Richard Reilly, Clarence Martell, Benedict Niolu, Robert Arnold, Robert Dodge, Theron Duncan, Fred Elkins, James Flemming, Willy Kralicek, Foster Harvey, David Hundley, David Finn, Paul Fowler, William St. Clair will be remembered by each of the seven remaining. These include Lee Bradshaw, Irwin Fordyce, Harry Griffin, James Hughes, Lester Schnaible, James Weir and Pete Semanick. Over the years some remained in fire protection and others cross trained into different career fields. But many of us have stayed in contact, never failing to share our experiences and good times in Austria. I'm glad this camaraderie still exists today among our firefighters. Note: Anyone who may remember any names please contact me. (Pete Semanick [psemanic@swcp.com](mailto:psemanic@swcp.com))

### **STAMP FUND CONTRIBUTORS**



The QNN is privately funded by members' contributions. You have been more than generous to continue financially supporting the QNN. I want each of you that have contributed and continue to contribute toward this effort to know it is very much appreciated. The contributors for this past quarter are:

William "Bill" Moore, Marty Jester, Glenn Cloud, and George Hall. Donations help defray postage and publishing costs which include ink, paper, and maintenance of my old printer. These donations are voluntary as no membership fees are charged. We have several retirees and widows who do not have E-mail. I might add that this list is growing. A hard copy of the QNN is published and mailed to them by the US Mail service. Before publishing and mailing this issue we have \$616.78 in the treasurer. 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](mailto:Sandy6T5@Comcast.net))

### **FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH DEPARTMENT**

Signing Guest Book for Deceased Air Force Fire Folks: Retired and Active Duty Fire Protection folks who are on the Quarterly Network Newsletter distribution list are urged to respond when they learn of a death of a fellow firefighter. Since August 2006, sixteen have passed on. When learning of a death we are normally provided an E-mail from Chief Sanders, Editor of the QNN, which will provide a link to the Guest Book for the deceased person. Please go there and sign these Guest Books which provide words of comfort and support for the family. We must express our willingness to support the family of our brother firefighters. Firefighter families need to know we care for them and that our thoughts and prayers are for them. It's the least we can do. (Chief Doug Courchene (Ret) 104 Meredith Street, Mt. Olive, NC 28365 [dougcourchene@aol.com](mailto:dougcourchene@aol.com))

### **REQUESTING FEEDBACK**

**DOD FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES HALL OF FAME:** Over the past year several friends and acquaintances have asked me about the Navy Fire & Emergency Services Hall of Fame, and why there wasn't a DOD Fire & Emergency Services Hall of Fame. Most often my response was "do you know how hard it would be to reach agreement and consensus among the Components to establish a DOD Hall of Fame?" "What do you mean it would be too hard to do?" they

## EDITOR'S CORNER

would ask and I replied after twenty years experience on the DOD Fire & Emergency Services Working Group trying to reach agreement on revising the DOD instructions and manuals, it would take months to accomplish. Also, it would be difficult for a DOD selection panel to elect candidates from multiple services, not knowing some of the history and rationale behind the individual nominations. The Navy Fire and Emergency Services Hall of Fame was established in 2004, and the nomination and selection process appears to be working quite well. It appears the simplest approach would be for each component to develop its own Hall of Fame program, since each is in the best position to establish criteria and processes unique to their agencies. Once each component has established a Hall of Fame program, it would be relatively simple to establish a DOD Fire & Emergency Services Hall of Fame by combining each component's Hall of Fame within the DOD Fire & Emergency Services Hall of Fame. I solicit your comments and suggestions. Please E-mail your thoughts and recommendations to me concerning the establishment of a DOD Fire & Emergency Services Hall of Fame. (William D. Killen, CFO, MIFire , Director Navy F&ES 1985-2004, International Association of Fire Chiefs President 2005-2006)

This quarter's QNN largely focuses on readers' comments. Thank you for all the E-mail, cards, and notes of encouragement and suggestions you send. One area I would like to clear up is obituaries that I place in the QNN. I was asked why I publish them. If everyone who receives the QNN had e-mail it would not be necessary to include the obituaries. Through the E-mail system, everyone would receive the information when the message goes out concerning the death and the Guest Book link. However, we have quite a long list of folks who do not have E-mail, and they receive a hard copy of the QNN by United States Postal Service. I hope that clears up why the obituaries are included. Help! I continue to "beat the bushes" for stories to be included in the QNN. I know there are many out there, and I encourage you to take a moment and put together something that I can include. Please submit a story about where you were stationed or some fire/crash incident in which you were involved that you feel would interest the readers. Don't worry about the format; you just make it readable. We have a couple people (Milt and Helen Puckett) who help me with the final edit. I am not sure I contribute much, but they sure are great when it comes to the final edit of the QNN. Again, thank you to all for your support. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt Ret [Sandy6T5@comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@comcast.net))



## A FIREFIGHTER'S PLEDGE

I PROMISE CONCERN FOR OTHERS. A WILLINGNESS TO HELP ALL THOSE IN NEED.  
I PROMISE COURAGE—COURAGE TO FACE AND CONQUER MY FEARS.  
COURAGE TO SHARE AND ENDURE THE ORDEAL OF THOSE WHO NEED ME.  
I PROMISE STRENGTH—STRENGTH OF HEART TO BEAR WHATEVER BURDENS MIGHT BE PLACED UPON ME.  
STRENGTH OF BODY TO DELIVER TO SAFETY ALL THOSE PLACED WITHIN MY CARE.  
I PROMISE THE WISDOM TO LEAD, THE COMPASSION TO COMFORT,  
AND THE LOVE TO SERVE UNSELFISHLY WHENEVER I AM CALLED.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN