

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



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

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

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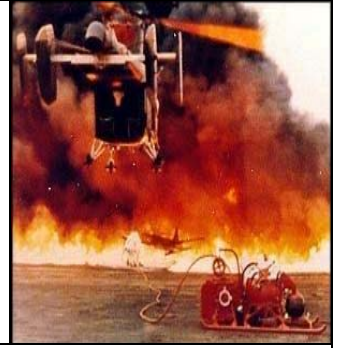
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Volume 2 2013

Founded by: Doug Courchene, CMSgt, USAF, Retired

April-June 2013

**REUNION UPDATE.** The time for our reunion is getting closer and closer. It won't be long now. There are not as many signed up as expected; hopefully, there will be latecomers. I have firmed up the meeting room but was unable to obtain any corporate sponsor to cover the cost of \$250. We will pass "the hat" around to pay for the room. In addition the tours that I tried to set up wanted a minimum number of participants and money up front two weeks before the event.

With the above in mind, we can still do all the things as advertised. We will car pool down to meet the trolley for the tour of Wilmington and the USS North Carolina. It will be on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Our main focus is to honor Chief Doug Courchene for his vision in starting the "Pioneers" and the QNN. In addition Chief Bill Killen will present an updated version of the History of Crash Rescue Vehicles. Chief Ed Wolbert will give us an overview of the ANG Retired Fire Chiefs very successful program. Chief Sandy Sanders will also address the group.

**2013 Military Firefighter Heritage  
Foundation  
Lifetime Achievement Awards**

At the Military Firefighter Heritage Foundation's Muster, the Foundation in cooperation with the DoD FES Working Group announced the

Inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients.



**Chief Tom Smith  
US Air Force FES**

**Chief Donald Steve Collins  
US Army FES**

Congratulations to Chief Tom Smith, Air Force FES, and Chief Donald Collins, Army FES. Chief Collins was unable to attend, but Chief Smith was in attendance. Both gentlemen will receive a gold pocket watch with the Heritage Foundation's logo incorporated into the face of the watch. Congratulations to both of these fine leaders in DoD FES.

I do not know Chief Collins but I have known Chief Smith for quite a few years and know that he is more than deserving of this great honor. If you are not aware of the Military Heritage Foundation, check them out on Facebook.

**2013 MILITARY FIREFIGHTER  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION DOD FES  
HALL OF FAME**

**TAPS**



**UNITED STATES NAVY**

William D. Killen	James M. Manser
Clarence A. Rout	David Butler
William M. Albrittain	Daniel B. Marshall
Nicanor Benavidez	Haraldur Stefansson
Alvah P. Cuthriell	George C. McGuigan
Waverly E. Sykes	Leno "Hank" Vescovi
William Beniker	William Thomann
Harry J. Tagen	Francis L. Brannigan
Lewis E. Meyer	Roy Grubbs
Orville J. Emory	Charles W. Peters
Douglas Thomas	Charles B. Gindele
John J. Wentzel	Leroy "Bud" Ellis
Richard L. Tuve.	

**DENNIS R. HAGLUND, MSGT, USAF  
(RETIRED)**

**May 1, 1941-June 23, 2013**

Dennis Haglund, 72, passed away on June 23, 2013, with his loving family at his side. He was born May 1, 1941, in Morris IL. He was a graduate of Morris High School and joined the United States Air Force in 1960. He married Shirley Gallaway in March 1964. Dennis was a firefighter/fire officer in the Air Force Fire Protection Section for 26 years, serving in numerous locations throughout the world, including a tour in Vietnam. He served as Deputy Fire Chief at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. After retiring from the Air Force, Dennis served 25 years in the Air Force Federal Civil Service System assigned to the 45th Medical Group the entire time. He also volunteered his time as a Red Cross instructor. His interests included woodworking, cars, and fishing. Dennis was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and friend to many and will never be forgotten.

**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

Louis F. Garland	Norma Brown
Ralph Sanborn	Jasper Patterson
Roscoe Lewis Bell	Otis E. Tinkle
Paul O'dell	Ross Stephens
Frank Joseph VI	Robert Vreeland
Joseph Gerrity	Robert M. Malin
Golden "Goldie" Simmons	Hugh Pike
Jim Hotell	Doug Courchene
Tom Smith	Bobby Barrow
Robert A. McAllister.	

**UNITED STATES ARMY**

Verne A. Witham Jr.	Willie "Billy" Shelton
Donald Steve Collins	.

**WILLIE ROY BARRON**

**July 20, 1928-February 6, 2010**



Willie Roy Barron, 81, died Saturday, February 6, 2010, at his home in Graham. Willie was born July 20, 1928, in Graham, Texas, to the late D.E. and Ora Lee Smith Barron. He served 20 years in the United States Air Force

during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, retiring as a Chief Master Sergeant. He married Irene Galbreath in 1946, She preceded him in death in 1989. Willie also worked at General Dynamics in Fort Worth for over 23 years, retiring as a Fire Chief. He married Mary Mahaney Burgess, September 23, 1989, in Azle, Texas. They moved to Graham in 2001 from Fort Worth. Willie was a member of River Oaks Masonic Lodge #1311 in Fort Worth, a member of Eastern Star, and a member of the First Baptist Church in Graham. Survivors include; wife, Mary Barron of Graham; son, Roy Earl Barron and wife Mary of Lebanon, Indiana; daughter, Patricia Oestreich and husband Ralph of Lampasas; grandchildren, Reece Oestreich and wife Beth, Rustin Oestreich and wife Blaine, and Lee Barron; five great grandchildren, Taylor, Riley, Radley, and Bayley Oestreich, and Faith Barron; three stepdaughters, Linda Kay Anderson, Nancy Campbell, and Vicki Hanna and husband Alan; stepson, Richard Wayne Burgess and wife Louise; brother-in-law, Earl Mahaney; six step grandchildren and five step great-grandchildren.

### **WHERE ARE THEY NOW**

I am a product of the Strategic Air Command but this article isn't about me; it's about Mr. Duane "Gus" Hunter.

In 1979, while serving as the Deputy Fire Chief at Minot AFB ND, I received a telephone call from HQ SAC telling me that I was being reassigned to the headquarters. I was elated and intimidated at the same time. I was a brand new Chief Master Sergeant and never imagined working at that level. Anyway, I reported to HQ SAC at Offutt AFB NE and was greeted by Mr. Hunter. I had never met him or any of his current staff. I found Mr. Hunter to be a real gentleman. He made me feel welcome and comfortable at the same time. Mr. Hunter got his start in fire protection in an odd way. During World War II, he was a navigator on a B-17

bomber flying combat missions out of Foggia Airfield in Italy. Being a second lieutenant in the Army Air Corps meant that you were at the bottom of the officer food chain and prone to receiving lots of delegated duties. Well, 2nd Lt "Gus" Hunter was appointed unit Fire Marshal. After the war, Mr. Hunter worked in the Canal Zone in an engineering capacity. He later gained employment with HQ SAC as an "Atlas" intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) site engineer. When the "Atlas" ICBM program was ended, he was selected as the new Chief of Fire Protection at HQ SAC. Those two little words "Fire Marshal" on his resume changed his life forever, and he became a member of our brotherhood. In addition to his engineering abilities, this man has an incredible vocabulary, is a gifted writer, is quick witted and is an accomplished pianist. He was a great teacher and mentor to all. Mr. Hunter retired from HQ SAC in 1989 and now resides in a senior residence. I am sure that he would enjoy hearing from other retired fire folks who had the pleasure of meeting or serving with him. Mr. Hunter's address is: 12606 W. Dodge, Apartment #115, Omaha, NE 68154.  
CMSgt (Ret) Richard A. Duncan

### **FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH DEPARTMENT FROM AROUND THE NET**

I believe that most of you know that Chief Ray Porter suffered a stroke. I talked with Ray the other day and he was in a good mood considering. He is going through rehab and hopes to be back to "Ray's" normal soon. Unfortunately he will be unable to attend this year's reunion but hopes to be able to join us in the future. Keep Ray in your thoughts and pray for a speedy recovery.

togetherweserved.com is a website for all military and ex-military. They also have a USAF Fire Fighters page; check it out.



Other organizations you may be interested in:

Air & Space/Smithsonian  
MCR 513 P.O. Box 37012  
Washington, DC 20013  
[www.airspacemag.com](http://www.airspacemag.com)

Armed Forces Top Enlisted Association  
P.O. Box 90030  
Washington, D.C. 20090-0030

## PEDRO'S CORNER

Len Shults, SMSgt, USAF Retired



## PUBLISHING AND MAILING FUND



The QNN is privately funded by members' contributions. All donations are strictly voluntary as no membership fees are charged. We started off last quarter with a total of \$1,244.49. The cost of printing and postage for the last QNN was \$116.40, leaving a total of \$1,128.09. During the past quarter, a total of \$160.00 was donated by Chiefs Ted Talpalus, Glenn Cloud, and William Ogletree for a new total of \$1,288.09. I will keep the total posted in each edition so you know where we are on fiscal issues.

The Pedro's Corner, is to provide the reader with information about the doings of the Pedro Rescue Helicopter Association. Our reunion group meets every other year. In the off year many attend the "Jolly Green" reunions or the Air Rescue Association Reunions. We have open membership to all who have served or were associated with the HH43's at any time in their career. Contact Neil McCutchan, the secretary, [njmcc33881@gmail.com](mailto:njmcc33881@gmail.com) or me Len Shults, [sugardaddyfor1@gmail.com](mailto:sugardaddyfor1@gmail.com). We will send you an application via e-mail. Our dues are \$10.00 a year.

The ARA reunion is Oct 16-19 in Fort Worth, Texas.

The USAF Helicopter Pilot's Association is Oct 7-10, in San Diego, California.

The Pedro Rescue Helicopter Reunion will be in June 2014. We are looking at Colorado Springs, Colorado.

You are invited to join us for either event posted. Joe Luther, a Pedro crew member, posted the following item on Facebook, and it rang my bell, because the HH43 he writes about is the one I was a fire/rescue crew member on and flew in at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. It was one of the two 43's from Maxwell that went to SEA in August 1964. The following is taken directly from the accident report dated Oct. 1968:

"On 10 October 1968, at approximately 2037 hours HH43B 'Pedro 44' SN 58-1845 assigned to Det. 1 38 ARRS, Phan Rang AB, Republic of Vietnam, crashed and burned while on an emergency intercept with the FSK for a B-57. As

'Pedro 44' was in hover, during the landing of the B-57, it entered a left-hand climb as if returning to the alert pad, without any radio transmission, 'Pedro 44' crashed and burned, inflicting fatal injuries to all five aircrew members. The Fire/Crash equipment responded immediately and extinguished the fire within 15 seconds, then removed the crew members."

Check out this website: [groups.yahoo.com/group/Pedro rescue](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Pedro%20rescue), look at some photos of reunions of 2006-10 & 12. Also, check out Facebook under, HH43B Pedro rescue Vietnam for some good material and information on the activities of the Pedro during that time.

I know there are many stories and personal experiences of our brave and dedicated crash crews and rescue persons out there. More and more are putting them in writing and doing memories for their children and grandchildren. We often don't want to talk about what we experienced while in the service. I am finding more and more family members want to know "What Dad or Granddad did in the service?"

Sit down and write it, print it, and give it to your family. They will have more appreciation of your service time and will cherish what you have done for them and our country.

Have a great summer, thank a veteran, and keep your blades dry. ....Len Shults

## **YOUR WORD**

Reprinted from the VA Veteran Locator: Seeking fellow firefighters who served at Bien Hoa AB in 1965. Contact: Warren Driver, 1415 W. Ball Rd., Apt. 352, Anaheim, CA 92802-1749; 562-338-9800; [warrendriver007@gmail.com](mailto:warrendriver007@gmail.com) (Editor's note. This was printed in the last QNN but I thought it was worth leaving in again. Charlie)

(This is my first email attempt since my incident so let me pass my status on "from the horse's mouth." ☺ Odd things sure happen in your life) As you recall, I had a heart attack in March, 1983. They did no catheter, based all the results

on blood tests and xrays. So I did rehab then went 30 years without incident. This time was totally different. On April 8, I was tossing some bags of mulch from the pickup to the yard, bent over & got dizzy (warning #1), decided to toss another bag and got chest pains (warning #2), and started to sweat profusely (warning #3). I thought if I sat in the garage it would pass. I finally realized what was happening and called 911. I experienced an arrhythmia attack and was defibbed by some very sharp EMTs to stop the flutter. As I recall, this started a series of roller coaster events that I will never forget. At our local hospital, I was lucky to have a cardiologist from a team of great Norfolk Sentara Doctors on duty who did a catheterization, determined I had blockages (creating a heart attack either preceded or followed by arrhythmia) and sent me to one of the best hospitals on the east coast.

I had two days in recovery, was scheduled for surgery, then had another arrhythmia attack. I was stabilized and put back on the surgery schedule for the 12th. They prepped me for this surgery and while I was being wheeled to the surgical room, the Chief Cardiologist called in sick. Disappointment is not the word to describe my feelings. Finally I had triple by-pass surgery on the 18th which included two ablations to hopefully mitigate the arrhythmia attacks. In addition on the 23rd they installed an ICD (Pacemaker & Defibrillator) that gives me a third line of defense. They sent me home on the 24th. My prognosis looks great, I am one week into a 4-6 week recovery period and am blessed to be here.

Finally, thanks for all the prayers, concerns, cards, and thoughts. They meant a lot. See you soon, Ben Partin

Chiefs, I hope this email finds you all well. As you know this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Louis F. Garland Fire Academy here at Goodfellow AFB TX. In recognition of this milestone, the Military

Firefighter Heritage Foundation, has established the inaugural DoD firefighter hall of fame and will be recognizing two individuals as Lifetime Achievement Award recipients. The official induction will happen on 4 May during our annual firefighter gala event. This year was put together quite quickly, and we know we will not recognize all of the individuals deserving of this recognition this year. What I ask of you and the members of the Air Force Fire Chiefs' Network is to poll your members for next year's class and nominate those deserving for both the hall of fame and Lifetime Achievement Award. I have attached a link back to the heritage website and the Hall of fame committee's email address.

I appreciate your time and consideration on this matter.

P.S. We will be posting this year's inductees within the next week on the MFFHF website.

Very respectfully,

MSgt Stephen S. Thompson  
NCOIC of the Fire Officer Courses  
312th TRS/DOFBD  
Louis F. Garland Fire Academy  
Comm: 325-654-4864  
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DSN: 477-4864

