

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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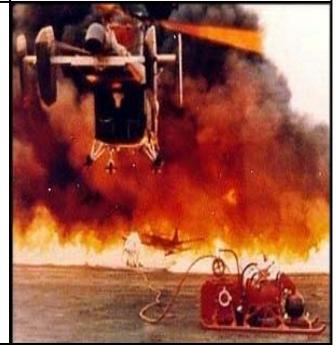
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Volume 3 2013

Founded by: Doug Courchene, CMSgt, USAF, Retired

July-September 2013



Seated L-R: Bernice Partin, Helen Puckett, Linde Richardson, Carol Killen, Ida Wolbert, Gloria Bowen, Evelyn Courchene, and Diane Carroll. Standing L-R: Ben Partin, Milt Puckett, Charlie Richardson, Chet Weger, Ed Wolbert, Charlie Bowen, Doug Courchene and Jim Carroll.

2013 Retired USAF Fire Chiefs' Reunion. What a great time we had at the reunion! The weather and company were great. Our main focus was to honor Chief Doug Courchene for his vision in starting the "Pioneers" and the QNN.

We opened our meeting with the pledge of allegiance to the flag, and Chief Milt Puckett led us in an opening prayer. Following the prayer, Chief Puckett eulogized our lost members since our last meeting with a slide presentation.

Chief Richardson then asked Ms Evelyn Courchene to come up and presented her with an Air Force wife challenge coin "Toughest job in the Air Force." Doug Courchene then came forward and everyone who wanted to say a few words about their experience with Doug had a chance to do so. Chief Richardson then presented Doug with a framed picture of all SAC aircraft (past and present).



Chief Ed Wolbert (Former ANG Fire Chief) briefed on the Air National Guard Retired Fire Chief Reunions. After his presentation an open forum was held and it was agreed that we would be honored to accept the Guard invitation to join them next year. (More on this to come)

We raffled off the door prizes before lunch. After lunch Chief Bill Killen presented a history of crash trucks. That concluded the formal part of the reunion.

Thanks to Jim Carroll and Milt Puckett for their assistance with the raffle and name tags and other things during the reunion.

That evening we gathered into groups and played pinochle and domino "Mexican train"--a new one on me. Lots and lots of stories were told, and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves.

The next morning the hotel bussed us downtown where we joined an educational and very informative trolley tour of old Wilmington. The tour even included a drive-by of the Wilmington Fire Department headquarters. After lunch we were transported back to the hotel for more games of pinochle and dominoes. Most people were reluctant to leave Friday because of the fun and comradeship. I for one am looking forward to next year and our joining the Air Guard wherever they hold their next reunion.

A big thank you to Chief Bill Moore for his sponsoring the meeting room; to Woodmen of the World for loaning us an American and a North Carolina flag; to Mt. Olive Pickle Co. for donation of a pickle gift pack; and to all who attended for making this an important part of their lives.

From Chief Doug Courchene:

Evelyn and I were so honored at the retired Air Force Fire Chiefs' Reunion, Wilmington NC, 7 August 2013. Seeing dear friends of the profession (friendships made decades ago) felt so good. Seeing our extended fire protection family in that room was fellowship at its best. I understand why some couldn't attend like Chief Bill Ryan who called the night before the reunion and cancelled because of illness. Chief Ben Partin and Bernice came just weeks after Ben's major heart surgery. Chief Charlie Bowen and wife, Gloria, drove Ben from Hampton Virginia to Wilmington.

As the meeting opened, I noticed someone seated behind me, unaware of the name tag, someone I had not seen since 1974, by the name of Chet Weger. What a shock and delight to see Chet, who climbed the corporate ladder to CMSgt, served at Major Air Command before retirement. He later served at the Alaska Fire Marshal Office.

I cherish the large-framed photo of Air Force aircraft.

Thanks for the kind remarks made by Chief Richardson, Chief Milt Puckett, Chief Ben Partin, and Chief Ed Wolbert.

Following remarks made by Chief Wolbert, discussion led to merging ANG and AF reunions offered by Linde Richardson. Everyone unanimously agreed. Thanks Linde. To all who brought door prizes, thank you so much. Thanks to Chief Bill Killen for outstanding presentation on crash rescue fire trucks.

I received the following information on next year's reunion to be held in conjunction with the Air Guard Retired Fire Chiefs.

Hi All

Ida and I have just returned from the Boston area. Met with Bill Murray and Paul Valente (Our Hosts) who are former 102nd Firefighters and looked at the area for a hotel for next years' reunion. We have chosen the Holiday Inn Express in Brockton, MA as our hotel. Rate is \$104 per night plus tax. Those in the immediate Boston area are extremely high in price and range from \$200 to 500 per night. We are working on the transportation from Logan and will provide that at a later date. I would like to get a feel on the number who are PLANNING on attending so we can work on tours which relies on numbers for the best prices. So would you please respond with the following:

YES/NO I am planning on attending

We plan on FLYING/DRIVING

The dates set are 9-14 September 2014.

Thanks in advance for your prompt response.

Ed

Ed. Thank you for the update. For those of you who do not have Ed's address it's ewolbert@comcast.net 4301 Webster Lapidum Rd, Havre de Grace, MD 21078-1335. 410-939-0751. I will pass along information as I receive

it. If you think you are going, please let Chief Wolbert know as soon as possible. Charlie

TAPS



Chief John Clifford Stokes

SMSGt, USAF (Retired)

September 8, 1933 - September 11, 2013

John C. Stokes, 80, passed away on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013 at his home in Wewahitchka FL. John was born on September 8, 1933 in Sulphur Springs, Florida to Leonard Stokes and Josie Webb.

He retired as SMSGt USAF, retired Civil Service as a Fire Chief (served 45 years total). Mr.



Stokes was a Mason for over 42 years. His favorite pastime was fishing, sitting on his porch visiting with friends and family and watching his grandchildren play sports.

Mr. Stokes was preceded in death by his mother Josie Cone, stepfather Tom Cone and father Leonard Stokes; sons Grady Kite, Leland Harmon, and Curtis Harmon. He is survived by his wife Vivian, children Jane Conner, William J. Stokes, Betty Jo Higgins, Beth Ann Trevathan, William R. Kite and Becky Kite, 20 grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren, several nieces and nephews, and two sisters Deloris Webb and Norma Stokes.

Chief Gerald "Jerry" Garrett
TSgt USAF (Retired)
April 14, 1934-August 2, 2013

Gerald "Jerry" Garrett, 79, passed away on August 2, 2013 at his home following a short illness. Jerry was born on April 14, 1934 in Wilmington, Delaware. He married Margie Chamberlain on July 3, 1953, in San Angelo, Texas.



Jerry served in the Air Force from 1952 to 1973. He retired at Dyess AFB, Texas, in the fire department. In 1973, Jerry returned to the Dyess fire department as a civil servant, where he served until his retirement in 1993 as Assistant Fire Chief. After his retirement, Jerry volunteered to help local veterans organize parades, place flags at cemeteries, and was an Interim Veterans Service Officer.

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 by his side. He was born May 1, 1941, in Morris Ill. He was a graduate of Morris High School. He 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 and 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 a friend to many and will never be forgotten.

Assistant Fire Chief Jerry Chalker
October 21, 1941-August 9, 2013

Jerry Chalker of Geneva AL passed away at Wiregrass Medical Center on August 9, 2013. He was 71. Mr. Chalker was born in Geneva County, AL on October 21, 1941 to the late Daniel D. and Lottie Posey Chalker. Jerry was a retired civil servant and had served as an Assistant Fire Chief at Tyndall AFB FL for a number of years. Prior to entering civil service, Jerry had served in the US Army as a helicopter crew member.



In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by a son, Gregory Chalker.

He is survived by his life companion, Carolyn J. Golden of Geneva; one granddaughter, Shayla Chalker Odokey of Panama City FL; one stepson, Anthony Cox of Radcliff, United Kingdom; two sisters, Elizabeth Wheeler of Geneva and Sue Brown (David) of Enterprise; two step grandsons, Dan and Donald Melton; two great and two step great grandchildren; several nieces and nephews.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

**STILL LOOKING FOR THE NEXT
VOLUNTEER TO BE FEATURED.
IT COULD BE YOU!!!!**

**AFTER ACTION REPORT, B-52
ACCIDENT**

At KI Sawyer AFB on 6 December 1988 at 0109 hours, an explosion occurred on the flight line. A P-2 crew observed fire along the runway and immediately responded. At the same time, the Alarm Room was notified via the primary crash phone of a B-52 crash on the runway. The

Assistant Chief on duty departed the station after hearing the explosion and enroute directed the recall of off-duty personnel and mutual aid. The initial response consisted of two P-2s, the P-15, a P-4, a P-20, and two pumpers. The Control Tower advised responders that the aircraft had been doing a touch and go on Runway 01. Initial size-up of the situation revealed fire and wreckage from the mid-point of the runway to the south end of the runway. The cockpit of the aircraft and the wing section, which was located about 35 feet from the cockpit, were fully engulfed in flames. Various parts of the aircraft were burning for 5,000 feet down the runway. The first arriving P-2 began agent application and identified what appeared to be the cockpit section. At this point, the assistant chief could see the cockpit section. It had separated from the wing section and was burning on the west side and the rear of the severed crew compartment section. The first P-2 quickly controlled the fire on the top and sides of the cockpit section. The second P-2 positioned to the left of the first. One of the P-2s was then directed to move to the rear of the cockpit section and extinguish the fire on the east and rear of the cockpit section. At 0112 hours, movement was reported inside the cockpit. A P-2 was directed to attack the west side of the cockpit section and to keep the fire away from the crew compartment. The P-15 was redirected to the east side of the wreckage and instructed to extinguish the large wing section fire and to keep it from the cockpit section. The P-4 was directed to set up on the left side and cover the rescue operation, but not to discharge agent, as good progress was being made controlling the fire near the cockpit. The assistant chief set this as priority and left the rest of the aircraft to burn, which was not in the reach of the vehicles protecting the cockpit. At about 0115 hours, the rescue crew laddered the aircraft and assisted three crew members from the top of the cockpit to the ground. They had

escaped from the cockpit through a hole in the top area of the cockpit. Handlines were advanced from both P-2s to provide coverage for the rescue crew. Two crew members with broken legs and severe lacerations were moved down the ladder. The rescue crew made entry into the cockpit through the EWO hatch. Five crew members were found inside the aircraft, and none were able to exit due to various injuries and fractures. A resupply point was set-up by both pumpers at the nearest hydrant (2,200 feet) to the accident site. The foam trailer was towed to that location. Crew members in the gunner and EWO seats were removed using rescue straps at 0135 hours. The three remaining crew members had severe back injuries. Cerebral collars, short and long boards were used to prevent more serious injury to these crew members and to stabilize them during their removal from the aircraft. The fire was being controlled and time was not a factor in this operation. The second arriving P-2 ran out of agent at 0117 hours, was reserviced and back in service at 0132 hours; the other P-2 was down to ¼ tank of agent and the P-15 was down to ½ of a tank. The assistant chief directed all crews to conserve agent and keep the fires in check. At 0130 hours, the F-6 arrived at the scene manned by off-duty personnel and was immediately directed to reservice the other P-2. A mutual aid 2,500-gallon tanker was used to resupply the P-15, which was in position to control the wing fire and prevent the fire from reaching the fuselage area. AFFF was delivered by off-duty personnel and all vehicle tanks were topped off. Foam was not as critical during this firefighting operation as was water. The rescue crew was informed their rescue efforts could be covered and a supervisor on the ground was assigned to watch for fire advancement and to keep the assistant chief informed of activity on the west side of the accident side. A fire in the main wing root could not be extinguished using AFFF and the P-20 was assigned to attack this

fire. PKP extinguishers were directed through a cellar nozzle to extinguish remaining wing fires. The ground supervisor informed the assistant chief that the rescue effort was going well and no fire was threatening the operation. Complete control and extinguishment of the fire occurred at 0208 hours. Packaging and removal of the last aircrew members were accomplished at 0214 hours. A total of 14,800 gallons of water, 400 gallons of AFFF, and 500 pounds of PKP were used to control and extinguish this fire incident. Richard Duncan, CMSgt, USAF (Ret)

VISIT WITH TED TAIPALUS

Recently I took my grandsons along with our pastor's son on a road trip to President George W. Bush Library and Museum, which is located on the campus of Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas Texas. I made contact with Ted Taipalus; and on our way to Dallas, we stopped for a short visit with him in Alba, Texas. For those of you who do not



know Ted, he is one of the "Old Pioneers" of United States Air Force Fire and Emergency Services. In the early days Ted worked in Headquarters Air Force Fire Protection which was located at that time in the Pentagon. During his long career Ted held numerous positions within Air Force Fire Service. He culminated his Fire Protection career at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, while serving as Chief of Operations in Headquarters Air Force Fire and Emergency Services. Now in his 80s Ted's health continues to be good, and he is content living in the small community of Alba, Texas. He was a terrific host and served us an excellent meal of smoked ribs. We sat around a table on his screened porch; and for three hours, he held

the attention of the three boys with me. Not one time did they get on their cell phone which they all seemed to be addicted to. He told story after story of his younger years in the fire service along with antidotes about friends and fellow fire protection folks. We had an enjoyable afternoon with Ted. Not only did we go to the Presidential Library and Museum of George W. Bush, but we also visited Dallas Cowboy AT&T Stadium, the Presidential Library and Museum of George H. Bush in College Station, Texas, Texas A&M campus, the Johnson Space Center Houston, Texas, The USS Texas (World War 1 Dreadnaught), toured a Blue Bell Ice Cream factory, Coast Guard Cutter Cobia Mobile, Alabama, and the Battleship USS Alabama. When I asked the boys what they will long remember about this road trip each one said "sitting out on the screened porch and listening to the colorful stories from Mr Ted." (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders (Sandy6T5@comcast.net))

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 was 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 web site 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

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



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 \$1288.09. The cost of printing and postage for the last QNN was \$42.22 (discount coupon on printing and enough stamps on hand kept cost low), leaving a total of \$1245.87. During the past quarter a total of \$195.00 was donated by Chiefs Sonny Sonnenberg, Ira "Lennie" Blau, Chet Weger, Arthur Hill and Doug Courchene for a new total of \$1440.87. I will keep the total posted in each edition so you know where we are on fiscal issues. If you would like to contribute to the stamp fund, please send contribution to Stamp Fund c/o Charlie Richardson, 5473 Landis Ave, Port Orange, FL 32127-5525.

PEDRO'S CORNER

Len Shults, SMSgt, USAF Ret.

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 HH43s at any time. Contact Neil McCutchan, secretary, njmcc33881@gmail.com or me, Len Shults, 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 June 2014; we are looking at Colorado Springs, Colorado. You are invited to join us for either event. I have been enjoying a site on Facebook, entitled: HH43 Pedro Air Rescue/Vietnam. This site has some interesting stories, personal accounts, and photos, of various units in SEA. I am sure you will enjoy reading these accounts and looking at the photos.

Another site on Facebook is: Air Force Firefighters/Fire Dogs. This site has many

comments from former firefighters and rescue team members, including photos. Roland La France Sr. seems to be the coordinator of this site, and is an interesting person too. He is currently building a P-2 from scratch, building the parts, everything.

He would appreciate anyone who has photos of the P-2 undercarriage and any other views of the vehicle to help him build this. If you have or know of where he can obtain schematics, design/detail drawings he would appreciate your contacting him.

Roland also is collecting information for a book. He is asking any and all firefighting troopers to answer these questions: "Did you choose firefighting as your AFSC/MOS, or did you get put in it? Also, did you go OJT or School?"

He has received many responses and they are interesting.

His e-mail is: disabldfirefighter@hotmail.com the title of the proposed book is: "Ten-Ten-Ten."

I am certain you will enjoy the Facebook site, if only for the photos and stories from former/current firefighters. It is interesting to see how the vehicles and fire gear have changed, I was an OJT firefighter at Charleston AFB in '58.

Enjoy the fall season; remember Nov. 11 is Veterans Day. Golden Coral/Texas Road House offer free dinners to veterans, either on Veterans Day or the day after. Enjoy!

YOUR WORD

Charlie

Hope this finds you well and kicking. I am still fire chiefing in Japan; just don't know when to quit. 52 years with DOD Fire Protection and having fun.

Please send me your address as I would be honored to sponsor the meeting room for this year's reunion. Later, Bill

William A. Moore, Jr.
Regional Fire Chief
Fire Emergency Services
Directorate of Emergency Services
DSN 263-3335
DSN FAX 263-3366
Cell 090-3579-3078
Comm: 81-46-407-3335

Thank you Bill; it was well appreciated by all in attendance. Charlie

Hi yea, Charlie & Staff,

I enjoy the information you guys write about Fire Chief and the Fire Service. Please keep up the good work.

Benny and me are doing well just getting older, but we are blessed we are still here. Give our love and best wishes to all.

Art (Chief Arthur Hill, 1000 E. Tangerine Ave., Lompoc, CA 93436..d

Thank you Art, it's good to hear from you. Glad you enjoy the QNN and hopefully you would be willing to be featured in one of our "Where are they now" articles. Charlie

Hi Charlie

This is a little money for the QNN. I do not need you to send it to me. I read it on the web.

Hope all is well with you and yours. I don't live too far from where the reunion will be held this year. I may try to attend at least some of it. Chet Weger, 217 Boswell Lane, Clayton NC 27527-3969.

Thanks Chet, It sure was good talking with you at the reunion. It's been too long a time. Charlie

Charlie,

Enjoy reading the QNN. I know it takes a lot of your time, but keep up the good work. The same to Doug C and all the other editors. all good friends. I'm sorry I missed the reunion in Wilmington but I'm just too old to travel that far from home. (Edna turns 90 on 3 Sept and I will

be 89 on 23 Oct) We both feel good however. Enclosed is a little stamp money to add to the pot.

Regards, Ira "Lennie" Blau, 2031 Oak Mist, San Antonio, TX 78232-5474

Thank you Lennie it was good to hear from you. Thank you for the donation. Charlie

Charlie, I'm privileged to receive retired Air Force and Air National Guard newsletters. With these newsletters, donations to support their publications become responsibility of readers (retired fire chiefs) to keep publications solvent. Charlie and ED you spoke in unison at the reunion, indicative of leadership personified. I believe the merger will create more interest and participation at future reunions.

I fully support newsletters to keep extended fire protection family informed.

Again, it was special seeing you and others in Wilmington. I was honored to be in your presence.

Doug Courchene, 104 Meredith St. , Mount Olive, NC 28365-1536

Charlie,

On 17 July 2013, I was working on a Basic Course on Veteran's Benefits Law from the National Veterans Legal Services Program (nvlsp.org) and chatting with several friends on Facebook. As we chatted and I worked on the correspondence course, I had a "Genesis Moment"--a brainstorm. Nearly all of my friends who were firefighters had severe health issues related to their service as firefighters. Most of them had also had a very difficult time proving to the VA that their health issues were likely as not caused by their service as firefighters. Because of what the Basic Course had taught me, my brainstorm was this, "What if we could foster a network of Accredited Veteran Service Representatives who were Firefighter Friendly and Knowledgeable?" to

help these Representatives and Veterans who were firefighters in their dealings with the VA trying to get the Veterans Disability Compensation, collect as much information as possible about firefighters' health issues into an online database that can be used to support the Veteran's Disability Claims to the VA.

We also need to form an Organizing Committee to develop a founding document (perhaps using the white paper published by the Firefighter Cancer Support Network, www.firefightercancersupport.org [Taking-Action-Against-Cancer-in-the-Fire-Service.pdf]) as a model. This committee needs volunteer members and someone who is willing to be the Chairman. We should find a sponsoring organization for the project, and one of the long-term goals should be to lobby for presumptive disability laws for the VA for firefighters.

Check out and join the "Firefighter Health Issues" Group on Facebook for more information. We have uploaded several very informative documents and links to the Files tab at the top of this group's page.

John A. Carley

1jimmy2john3@gmail.com

P.S. Charlie, please don't change my primary email address for the QNN or the Retired Fire Chief's list Also, we will be forming a working group to create the database and review information that is submitted. I am not trying to get credit or anything other than to help my fellow firefighter veterans. I am already an 80% Service-Connected Disabled Veteran. I have 2 more claims and an appeal slowly working their way through the system. These will more than likely push me up to 100% disabled.

PLEASE, PLEASE HELP IF YOU CAN!!!

Thank you John. It is of great importance for all of us to help in this project. I'm sure that the USAF did not spend millions of dollars to clean up our training areas of contaminated materials just for the exercise. We should all be looking for some connection to firefighters' health issues and our "Burn Pits." Charlie

FIRE HOUSE ANTICS

We have all observed or heard of firefighters pulling pranks on other firefighters. I want to share one from the Air Force Academy when I was the Fire Chief there. Someone learned that one of the Operations Chiefs was afraid of mice. They constructed a tin foil ball with an attached string and ran the string over the suspended ceiling from the A/C's bedroom to the SCBA room which was separated from the bedroom by the training room. They inserted the tin foil ball into one of the wall cavities adjacent to the bed. After the A/C would retire for the night, a firefighter would go to the SCBA room and pull on the string causing the ball to go up and down making a scratching noise. They did this for hours each night. They decided that the other A/C would get suspicious if this happened only on the nights that he occupied the bed, so they invited a couple of folks on the opposite shift to join in the prank. It wasn't long before both A/Cs were complaining about mice in the walls of the bedroom. After several months and numerous calls to CE to get rid of the mice, I received a call from one of the firefighters

explaining what was going on and that a crew from CE was on the way to tear down the walls to find the mice. The firefighters involved were afraid that they were going to get in serious trouble if they didn't put an end to the prank. They asked me to diffuse the situation and protect them from any form of retaliation. Since I had been young once and occasionally participated in these types of events and knowing that these two A/Cs were really upset about the mice in the wall, I invited my Commander to accompany me to that station the following morning. We both entered the A/C's office and were immediately confronted about the mouse situation. While we were talking, one of the A/Cs said "be quiet, I can hear it now"! Sure enough, it sounded like a mouse in the wall. We went into the training room next door to listen for the mouse. It still sounded like it was in the wall, but the Commander and I continued to pretend to investigate the source of the sound. We made our way to the SCBA room and found a firefighter sitting on the floor pulling on a string. The two A/Cs were humiliated and very angry. Just another fantastic day at the Air Force Academy.

Richard Duncan, CMSgt, USAF (Retired)

Thanks Dick. How many more stories are out there waiting to be told? Send them in. Charlie