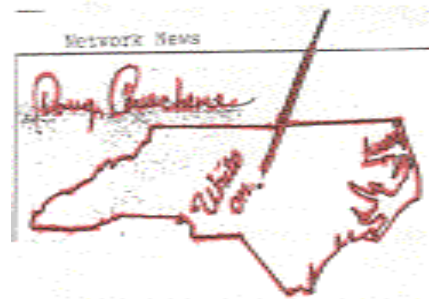




# RETIRED AIR FORCE FIRE CHIEFS'

QUARTERLY NETWORK  
NEWSLETTER (QNN)  
April-June 2004

"LEGENDARY PIONEERS WHO  
REMINISCE ABOUT THE PAST, BUT  
FOCUS ON THE FUTURE"

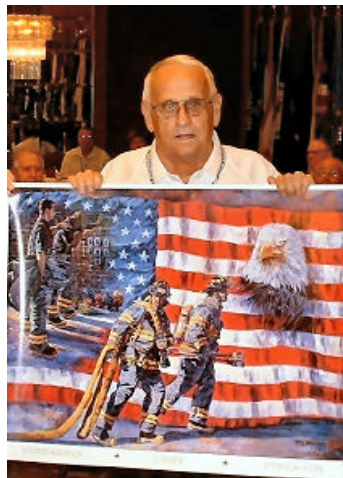


Bob Barrow, Editor  
[chief.one@cox.net](mailto:chief.one@cox.net)  
Associate Editors Ed Sams  
[rosened2@concentric.net](mailto:rosened2@concentric.net)  
& Douglas Courchene  
[dougecourchene@aol.com](mailto:dougecourchene@aol.com)  
For QNN copies click on  
<http://www.dodfire.com/index.htm>



## Chief Gene Courtmanche

[genecourt@webtv.net](mailto:genecourt@webtv.net) display's "911 Muriel" raffle prize won at The Pioneer Day 2003 Gathering at Dallas, Texas, on August 23, 2003. The following story, "A Pioneers Prospective," by Gene is in answer to a challenge made by Chief Doug Courchene (see Chief Courchene's challenge following this article). Gene served 38 years in the military and civil service fire experience (1943 to 1981). He enlisted in WW 11 and received his Ruptured Duck (discharge) as a Staff Sergeant. After a short stint with a municipal fire department, starting out as a tailboard Charlie and progressing through the ranks, he joined the Army Air Corp civil service fire department. As a civilian fire protection leader he quickly rose to Fire Chief at Loring AFB 1960-62 and then was a MAJCOM (ADC) Fire Representative (8 years) for CONUS and overseas remote/isolated facilities. Then



PACAF in SEA assigned to the 7th AF and the 13<sup>th</sup> AF for 5 years. It was during his TDY assignments to South East Asia (SEA) that Gene gained an appreciation about management principals under combat conditions. My wish is to share these experiences with the next generation fire chiefs to improve areas of concern. First, these were the best fire fighters in the world. They were dedicated, young and proud to serve. My first area of concern was senior NCOs (fire chiefs) that were faced with one-year tours allowing no overlap. Generally, the chief rotated before the next fire chief was on base. It was not unusual having four fire chiefs in one year due to early rotation deferments, R & R or late arrivals. This led to some 7 level NCOs being inexperienced in management being assigned fire chief duties. Continuity was lacking with the constant turnover of fire fighters and middle management. Unfortunately back then, many

7 and 9 level NCOs had not been trained to perform as fire chiefs. Continuity was lacking with constant turnover of fire fighters and middle management. A combat zone is definitely not a place to learn! The responsibilities of a fire chief under combat conditions are unique. A SEA Firefighter gained more experience in one year than a stateside fire fighter might learn in a lifetime. SEA runways were the busiest in the world. The aircraft weapon configurations challenged FFs. Simply stated, some stateside fire chiefs didn't impart their knowledge through hands-on application, nor did they delegate authority to their military deputy chief or NCOIC in the 40-50-60-70s. I must admit that I was one of those chiefs who made that serious mistake. Today I would set back and hand the reins to the senior NCO, and offer guidance. The future military fire chiefs must be exposed to top level fire department management. It is essential that the AF establish a program whereas there is an overlap of military fire chiefs in combat zones. Also, the departing chief should maintain a management log so that his replacement can understand what has transpired, unique duties, what are the problems, and management targets. This action would help afford smooth transition. In short the civilian fire chief must exercise a greater role in tutoring the senior NCO. I have rambled long enough. I have other issues that I feel are worth passing on to the ensuing firefighters, but I will wait to see what the repercussions of this article will be.

*Editor's comment: A very controversial article of lessons learned. From what I have observed at the DoD Fire Academy and at Base level organizations these conditions should not exist in the Air Force today. Thanks Gene it was a pleasure doing business with you now and then. -Bob Barrow*

**Chief Doug Courchene** has issued a challenge to all QNN readers to send a favorite story of their fire service career. A similar request has been sent to the widows for their response. Send drafts by email or snail mail to Doug or I.

We will give them our personal attention. We send our sincere thanks to all those that have contributed stories in the past. -Doug and Bob Barrow

**THE TEXAS CONNECTION:** Chief W. A. York and wife, Bonnie of Staples, Texas has invited any prior Chiefs in the area to his home to enjoy a big pot of hot coffee and fellowship, Texas style, on Thursday morning, April 15, 2004. Planning to attend are Chiefs Val Allen, Lennie Blau, Glenn Cloud, John Meek, Donato Jaso, Curtis Dunn and Joe Jarrell. Chief Jarrell is the point of contact for any other Chiefs that know Chief York and would like to attend. Contact Joe at [firechief6736@yahoo.com](mailto:firechief6736@yahoo.com) or 512 459 6055. We will expect a good training report on this Joe - please give my warmest regards to everyone.

**STAMP FUND CONTRIBUTORS:** Mr. Clarence Monaco, Spokane, Washington, Chief Glenn Cloud, New Braunfels, Texas, Chief Leo McCarty, Wilmar, Arkansas; Chief Douglas Courchene ([dougecourchene@aol.com](mailto:dougecourchene@aol.com)); Chief Donato Jaso, Austin, Texas; Chief John Hampson ([hampmike@verison.net](mailto:hampmike@verison.net)); Chief Joe Jarrell ([firechief6736@yahoo.com](mailto:firechief6736@yahoo.com)); Chief Jim Cooper ([fdchief1@myway.com](mailto:fdchief1@myway.com)); Chief Paul Hawkins ([Hawkinsp@eglin.af.mil](mailto:Hawkinsp@eglin.af.mil)), Eglin AFB, Florida. *The QNN is privately funded by members' contributions. They are most appreciated. Address checks: Bob Barrow, 126 Clements St NE, Ft Walton Bch FL 32548. Email addresses are used whenever possible to promote networking and reduce costs.*

**FOOT in MOUTH:** I can assure you the QNN staff would not intentionally bad mouth or slight anyone in a QNN story. In a recent article quoted from an Air Force publication, credit was given to those currently in tenure positions and not to the pioneers that nurtured the program from its inception. The thought was the current POC would be accessible to answer any question readers might have. My parents taught me to refrain from making comments about religion or politics in public. I must profess Jesus Christ as my Savior and my

Lord and that I support our Commander-in-Chief. Another piece of advice learned as a fire chief with 30 years experience at the top, is that if you can not say a comment about someone to their face, best not to say it. These lessons have served me well.



**SICK CALL:  
PRAYERS OF  
URGENT  
BLESSING  
NEEDED.**



**Chief Val Allen Jr., CWO, USAF (retired), Buda, TX, is home now and doing well.** He is recuperating from open-heart surgery performed at Wilford Hall in October 04.

**Chief Guy Wills-[chiefwills@aol.com](mailto:chiefwills@aol.com)** long battle with cancer has not been good since Christmas. He was taken off of his chemo protocol and told he would have to wait for a new protocol. Up until that time he had faithfully done his duty as Fire Chief of the Ocean City-Wright Fire District, however, he has not worked since the New Year holiday. A ray of hope opened in mid March when he was approved for a new protocol. He was just honored by his Fire District at a special Fire Commissioners meeting for his dedicated public service. Two beautifully inscribed plaques were presented. One was a ceremonial chrome-plated Fire Chief's Horn from his firefighters and the other a ceremonial gold plated Fire Axe from the Fire Commissioners. Congratulations Guy on this most deserved recognition and the most coveted trophies.

Also recuperating from long-term illness at home in Fort Walton Beach, FL are Chiefs Bill Wilson and Glenn Cockerell-[gecockerell@cyberton.com](mailto:gecockerell@cyberton.com). Both have shown improvement. Also several Chief's wives have been hospitalized or under doctors care this past quarter. Mrs. Phyllis Cooper has started a new round of chemo treatment and is doing well. Mrs. Ruth Jarrell is at home recovering from surgery and is scheduled a phase II

operation in a month or so. Mrs. Nan Barrow is schedule a gall balder removal in a month or so.

**TAPS: Fire Chief Albert L. Wise** passed away at his home in Ogden, Utah home, February 27, 2004. He retired from Air Force Fire Protection as a TSgt. He was the RAF Chelveston Base Fire Chief 1960-1964 when the base won the Grand Award for NFPA Fire



Prevention Annual submittals. He served as Deputy Fire Chief at Suffolk County AFB, Long Island, New York and served in a variety of positions at Vandenberg AFB Fire Department. Chief Wise was a respected leader in fire protection and was a member of the AF Regulation 92-1 (The AF Fire Protection Bible) rewrite team. After his



Chief Albert L. Wise,  
TSgt, USAF (Retired)

USAFA retirement, he worked 13 ½ years in Turkey as a Contract Fire Chief for the Tumpane Corporation, and other contract companies at 4 different military installations. Millie, his wife of 47 years, passed away only a few months ago. 6 daughters and a son survive Chief Wise and Millie. On behalf of all the retired Air Force Fire Chiefs, we extend our sincere condolences to the family on the loss of their parents in the short span of six months. Also, we extend our great appreciation to Chief Hank Howard ([HAZMATKING@aol.com](mailto:HAZMATKING@aol.com)), a close friend and firefighting comrade, who provided this obituary. Hank, please see that the family receives a copy of this QNN.



**Mrs. Vera Cloud**, wife of Chief Glenn Cloud, CWO, USAF (Retired), of 439 Stone Gate, New Braunfels, Texas 78130, passed away after an extended illness on February 13, 2004. They celebrated 64 years of marriage on November 29, 2003. Chief Cloud's last Fire Department was Bergstrom AFB, Texas. He is a charter member of the USAF Retired Fire Chiefs. Please remember Chief Cloud and his family in your prayers of remembrance to a loving wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother and friend to all that knew Vera... Chief Cloud stated that the family deeply appreciates the many calls and sympathy cards received after the loss of Vera from our QNN readers. "She was our life and had many friends".

**Mrs. Stephonie Ackers**, wife of Chief Hugh Ackers ([hbakers@comcast.net](mailto:hbakers@comcast.net)), CMSgt, USAF (retired) of Panama City FL, passed away after an extended illness on February 25, 2004. "Stephie" had suffered with Alzheimer's disease since late 2000. Chief Ackers and "Stephie" attended The Pioneer Day Gathering in Dallas, Texas, August 2000. Please remember Chief Ackers and his family in your prayers of remembrance of a loving wife and mother. Chief Ackers was the principle caregiver for "Stephie" these past years.

**Mrs. Ruth Wright**, wife of Chief John T. Wright, 190 Payes Fork Road, Princeton WV, passed away while hospitalized. She was interned in Princeton on January 18, 2004. Ruth had suffered from crippling arthritis the past 10 years had bravely battled to pain and never gave up. John had retired medically from the Air Force Fire Department at Seymour-Johnson AFB after open-heart surgery. Chief Doug Courchene visited them at their WV home beside a running brook whenever in the area to talk the night away. Ruth and John were two of the most hospitable people in the country. On behalf of the Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs, our sincere condolences to the family on the loss of a love one.

#### **NETWORKING COMMENTS:**

Chief Stephen P. Mock ([hh43huskey@hotmail.com](mailto:hh43huskey@hotmail.com)) sent this tidbit: MSgt Raymond Perry served in Pararescue until his unit at Otis AFB MA was deactivated in 1959. He later served as military Base Fire Chief at, of all places, Hickam AFB HI, where he retire and continued in this position as a civilian. Does anyone remember Chief Perry? Please let QNN know.

Chief Jim Carroll ([carrolljd@homexpressway.net](mailto:carrolljd@homexpressway.net)): I received my QNN in the mail today. I enjoy the personalized notes on them; however, you can save the paper and stamps as I already receive them by email. Diane and I will be heading to the Norfolk area in February 2004 and hope to get a chance to see Ben Partin while there. Art Vogel (retired CMSgt and Fire Chief) is the Safety Manager at Portsmouth Naval Hospital and is planning a reunion with some of my old friends at Langley AFB and I hope Ben will be there also.

*Please, someone, send training report to the QNN. Give my warmest regards to Diane and family. It would be nice if you could make a reunion trip back to Site C-6 and the Elgin area. -Bob*

Chief Bob Crevisour ([crevisour@insightbb.com](mailto:crevisour@insightbb.com)): Fire protection personnel at Myrtle Beach when I was assigned there in the 50s: The Civilian Fire Chief was Victor N. Bailey; the NCOIC was MSgt Joseph P. Gerrity; and Ernest E. England was an Assistant Fire Chief. I have a 1957 "Year Book" with nearly everyone that was assigned to firefighting pictured in it as well as many scenes of the base and its activities. I had the pleasure of working with SSgt Billy G. Austin, who transferred from Foster AFB with me to Myrtle Beach, and with TSgt Samuel F. Douglas and TSgt Omer Desrosier among others. SSgt F. D. Elkins is included in my yearbook and I do remember him. It would be great to hear from him! Hope this helps "bring back" some old memories.

**Chief Thomas B Blalock** ([tomb1@rdee.net](mailto:tomb1@rdee.net)): Thanks for sending the QNN. Chief Gene Courtmanche sent my name to you. The QNN and the DoDFire Site are great. Here is some of my info. I was stationed at Nellis AFB in 65, Cam Ranh Bay, Mildenhall, Ellsworth AFB, MacDill AFB, NKP, back to MacDill and then to England AFB as Deputy Fire Chief and 6 months as Fire Chief when Chief Gerald Sperry retired. Besides a 57 AFSC, I also, held a 75 Training AFSC. I Retired in 1985.

**Chief Bob Borges** ([beckborges@cox.net](mailto:beckborges@cox.net)) this is just to let you know that your e-mail came through. Dale Sedbrook was my first Chief when I was a young AF firefighter and Ted Taipalus was my Asst Chief at McConnell AFB. Ted called me last week when he heard that I was finally back in the U.S. from Korea. He is the one who told me about your News Letter. Thanks again for answering so quickly.

*Editor's comment: Hi Bob & Linda. I appreciate the profile sent from DoDFire.com. You can browse through the Quarterly Network Newsletters in the Pioneer section. You will find a lot of friends and comrades. The QNN had an article on Andersen AFB a few issues back about the terrible storm damage. Paul Giles was Fire Chief at the time, but has since relocated to Ramstein AFB, GE. I remember the Chief Ralph Sanborn Award being won by Andersen Fire Dept in 1997. As Editor I have info on about 475 Chiefs. If you have someone in particular you would like addresses on let me know. McConnell AFB always brings back memories of Chief Dale Sedbrook and his Ass't Fire Chief Ted Taipalus, back in the 1950s. The direct link to download past and current QNNs is [www.dodfire.com/Retirees/pioneers.htm](http://www.dodfire.com/Retirees/pioneers.htm).*

**Chief Bill Beniker**, US Navy/USMC (retired) visited the gravesites of Chief J. K. and Josephine Schmidt in Fruitland Park FL with Fire Marshal Jim Manser, US Navy (retired).

They were all good friends and this was a time to reflect. Jim, a member of the Fruitland Park Fire Department, assisted in providing a FD Color Guard for J.K.'s memorial service and helps keep the grave marker clean. "J.K" was laid to rest in Fruitland Park FL in the Family plot, August 2002.

NOMADS CORNER ON FLORIDA'S EMERALD COAST

**Chief Bob Barrow, USAF, (retired) visits with Chief Bill Beniker, USN/USMC Retired** at his campsite at Navarre Beach's Emerald Beach Campgrounds, February 2004. Bill relocated from Virginia Beach VA to Alvarado TX when he lost his wife in late 2003. Bill is outfitted for a round robin trip that will exceed 6,000 miles when he finishes his trip this fall at his new



home "20." He plans to take his time and visit a lot of family, friends, military installation FAMCAMPs and his old camping group in NC/VA of which he is a charter member and past president. Bill

has promised to send a training report now and then. Here is his first report: Bob - having a good time with Jim and Madelyn Manser in Fruitland Park (Central Florida). Spent 3 days with one of my retired Assistant Fire Chief's -Dave Gourley- in New Port Richey FL. My next plan was to visit some camping buddies that live North in Kingsland GA. I should have stayed awhile longer in FL, as it has been nothing but cold miserable rain. In fact I head back south to NS Mayport FL to find some warm weather. Oh well, I will try the Georgia Coast out tomorrow. First, some more FFs at NS Little Creek, Brunswick, GA. Then up to MCAS Beaufort SC to visit another Ass't Chief buddy in the Marine Corps. Hope to be in VA Beach by the 1<sup>st</sup> of March for the roundup. I really appreciated you coming to the campground to visit. We covered a lot of

territory, old friends and acquaintances. Hope we meet again someday soon. Best regards, Bill. P.S. my email handle is [billbeniker@juno.com](mailto:billbeniker@juno.com). I have a motor home hookup.



## VETERANS BENEFITS & HEALTH CARE - UNITED WE STAND:

Many QNN readers belong to veteran organizations that lobby Congress for legislative support and do contact their legislative representative on veteran issues. This support really works. Effective January 1, 2004, disabled military retired veterans with 50% or higher VA compensation regained some of their retired pay withheld because the VA award was considered dual-compensation. It will take 10 years to get the full amount, but at 100% disable I will receive \$750 per month of my offset retired pay in 2004. Then the next 9 years I will be paid 10% more of my remaining offset retired pay, until I am back where I should have been to start with. No retroactive pay for the period prior to the effective date of January 1, 2004 was granted. There is a bill in Congress currently to consider all disabled military retired veterans with less than 50% rating their offset pay. Also before Congress is legislation to improve the Military Survivor Benefit (SBP). When SBP was enacted in 1972, Congress intended that the government would pay 40% of the cost. Over time, because of unrealistic actuarial assumptions, the government's share is now 17%. The retirees' premiums now cover 83% of the expected long-term program cost, versus the intended 60%

Original cost. HR 548 in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress will restore equity and eliminate any offset to survivors when they reach age 62 and start drawing Social Security. HR 1726, if passed, would eliminate any SBP offset to survivors entitled to VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). DIC is payable to survivors of deceased service members who died of service-connected causes. Congressman Jeff Miller- Florida 1st District at <http://www.house.gov/jeffmiller> is a member of the House Armed Service and Veterans Affairs Committees and a sponsor of both bills. If you would like more information please contact his office or the office of your representative. Thanks to Chief Joe Cherniga ([JOESKIPP@aol.com](mailto:JOESKIPP@aol.com)) for providing details on this information.



**Department of Defense**  
**Fire & Emergency Services Training Conference**  
August 11-18, 2004  
New Orleans, LA

The Department of Defense & Emergency Services Training Conference is set for August 11-18, 2004 in New Orleans LA. There are no planned activities for the Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs this year. The next "Pioneer Day Gathering" held in conjunction with this conference is planned for August 2006, at Dallas TX. Any retiree attending on their own, please let QNN know by June 5, 2004 - name, rank, and dates at conference. Please include email or home address. This information will be included in the July-September 2004 issue of QNN for fellow-shiping. Several Retired Air Force Chiefs have told me that they plan to attend at least a portion of the DoD and IAFC "Fire Rescue International" Conferences. Use this link for more detail information: <http://www.iafc.org/conferences/dod/index.asp>

## THE NEW:



“CRASH 5”, a P-19 Jaguar at Nellis AFB Fire Station in Nevada. (2004). Credit to Bob Owens, Nellis Fire Department and DoDFire.

## THE OLD:



“Class 500 & 750 Pumpers and Type 0-5 Crash Truck” at Craig AFB Fire Station in Alabama (1949). Credit to Mike Hodgden ([hodbod@bellsouth.net](mailto:hodbod@bellsouth.net)).

*That’s a wrap for this quarter. I enjoy the networking with each one of you.*

*Keep the calls, letters and emails coming, Doug, Ed and I need your input. Let us know how you are doing... Many of our military installations are having “Open House” this spring and summer. Eglin AFB is 3- 4 April. Loring AFB, deactivated is 16 -18 July. If interested contact the Loring Fire Department at their website [www.loringfire.com](http://www.loringfire.com) or call Fire Chief Norman McPherson at (270)328-4108. They would like to hear from all prior members. Happy Easter and Support Our Troops. Best regards from the QNN Staff.*

