

RETIRED AIR FORCE FIRE CHIEFS' QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JAN-MAR 2001

HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ALL.

This has been a hectic summer. I have several usual senior citizens' health problems. My driving is rather limited to short drives such as to the Sun Harvest Healthy Food Store, about a mile from our home. Normally, Ruth and I arrange our schedule so that one of our two daughters living with us is available to drive. I will not be at the Pioneer Day activities in Dallas due to chronic radiculitic (chronic nerve inflammation) and fibromyalgia that prevents me from sitting up and driving, other than for short distances.

I have met Tom Smith over the years on several occasions. We were in the same classes on the 4th degree through the 32nd degree of the Scottish Rites. I demitted in 1993 for personal belief. I'm thankful Tom's recovery is on schedule and shall remember him in prayer.

The travel trailer park at Georgetown Lake is nice according to all reports. **Chief Joe Jarrell, 8306 Stillwood Lane, Austin, TX 78757 (512)459-6055 email firechief6736@aol.com** (I'm sorry you couldn't be at the Dallas celebration 26th August 2000. A great day for retired chiefs. By the way, Tom Smith is doing fine. Editor).

Thanks so very much for the nice article and copy of the Oct-Dec 2000 newsletter. I appreciate your kind words very much. I get memorials and messages from many friends from all over the country. It is so nice to be remembered. Thanks again for remembering us in this way. **Faye Stephens, Memphis, TN. Fstep@aol.com** (I wanted to share with retired Air Force Fire Chiefs the loss of Chief Stephens. Thank you for writing. Editor).

Sorry I missed the get together in Dallas, August 26th. I had an accident that prevented my attendance and would you believe, at the same time, I lost your email address! Would you please send it again. \$20.00 enclosed to assist with Newsletter. Thanks Doug and I look forward to each publication. **Chief Willie Barron, 6207 S Ridge Road, Ft. Worth, TX 76135-1331 Wrbar@juno.com** (Willie, the feedback from Pioneer Day was positive. It's unfortunate you couldn't attend, but you had a reason, not an excuse. Always good to hear from you. Thanks for contributing to the newsletter publication. Editor)

The Old, The New, and A Parrot In Between. An old man was sitting on a bench in the mall when a young man with spiked hair came over and sat down beside him. The boy's hair was yellow and green and orange and purple. He had black makeup around his eyes and was wearing bright, neon colored clothes.

The old man just stared at him.

The boy looked at the older man and said in a cocky tone, "What's the matter old man, haven't you ever done anything wild in your life?"

The old man answered, "Well yes, actually, I once got drunk and had an affair with a parrot. I was wondering if you were my son." Editor.

Just to let you know your newsletter was received via email in fine condition. I am the one who won your oil painting in the door prize drawing at Pioneer Day Activity, Dallas. The winter landscape is hanging on my wall and looking very good during the heat of the summer here in Florida. I enjoyed the celebration in Texas. I spent two tours at Chanute Fire School. It was wonderful to see so many people that

I once knew. Thank you for the newsletter. I look forward to future issues. **Chief Tom Hinson, 385 Elkin Avenue, Deltona, FL 32738** afdef28@CFL.rr.com (I'm glad you are enjoying the Alaska snow scene. Landscapes are my favorite; seascapes are second. Editor).

Marty Jester, 9530 S. W. 187 Street, Miami, FL 33157, called October 2, 2000. Marty's new Harley Davidson has taken him to motorcycle rallies out west and closer to home in Florida. There is something exhilarating about riding a motorcycle, especially a "Hog." In Arkansas, it would be Hawg. I know, I rode a used Harley Davidson on Texas highways in 1948. Seems everyone with a badge knew me. At that time, open range meant cattle roamed and crossed highways at random. One night, I struck a full-size Brahma bull in the rear as he stood in the middle of the Highway 190. I don't remember what happened next, but to find myself in the hospital and a wrecked motorcycle. Beside five stitches, I was fine.

My friend rode his Harley alongside, saw the bull in time, and narrowly missed it. He often enjoys telling the story what happened to me next. He saw me hurled in the air, landed on gravel shoulder by a telephone pole. That accident took the gusto out me.

Three months later, I bought a new 1949, 74 cubic inch Harley Davidson for \$900.00. That price wouldn't be a down payment today.

Marty happy motoring and stay off those Interstate Highways. And you are always welcome to stay with us on your annual trek to Washington, D. C. Evelyn and I enjoy your company. (Editor)

Crash Boats. Langley Air Force Base Fire Department, Virginia started water rescue in 1987. General Velcillio acted after crashes in Arizona and Texas. Post action findings stated the pilots might have survived if there had been a rescue boat with trained rescue crew. A private boat brought pilots to shore before CPR was administered according to investigators.

Langley obtained a surplus 22' Boston Whaler rescue boat from the United States Coast Guard, then purchased a 1993, twenty-five foot Parker Boat with twin 150 horsepower Mercury motors.

I thought all crash boats had long been placed in mothballs. My thanks to Richard Pettyjohn, Langley HAZMAT/Safety Officer. Richard.pettyjohn@langley.af.mil for contributing this article. (Editor)

Can you tell me how I can get on the mailing list for the Retired Fire Chiefs' Quarterly Newsletter. I was the Fire Chief at RAF Woodbridge, RAF Bentwaters and RAF Wethersfield before I retired in September 1989. I spent 28 years in Air Force Fire Protection. **Chief Bob Mitchell, 4524 Gasparilla Avenue, Orlando, FL 32812** firehse1@cfl.rr.com (Bob, your name has been added to the mailing list. Welcome aboard. (Editor).

Great work – you finally got rid of the bug! Get the Norton Anti-Virus 2000 installed on your computer and it warns you beforehand not to download an attachment with a bug on it. Norton is much better than McAfee. This is a great way to communicate and it will save postage. Don't need to mail us one any more, just email it!

I am trying to locate a Master Sergeant who I was in Vietnam with me, named Benjamin Hyder from North Carolina. Can you put this in your next newsletter? **Chief Don Smith, 113 laywood Drive, Ft Worth, TX 76126 (817) 249-7319;** donchief@swbell.net (The "bug" interrupted communication in a big way. It took two weeks to get rid of it and \$104.00. Editor).

Pioneer Day Group Photo, Air Force Fire Protection Award's & Banquet Video and Pioneer Day Video are available by contacting Mark.captain@afcesa.af.mil or Chief Bob Barrow – Chief1@gnt.net The cost of group photo is \$10.00. The costs of the two videos will later be announced. Retirees wishing to write or call Bob or Mark: **Bob Barrow, 126 Clements NE Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548 (tel 904-243-**

1774) Mark Captain, Hq AFCESA/CEXF, 139 Barnes Drive, Suite 1, Tyndall AFB, FL 32403-5319.
(Editor).

Chief Fred Elkin's comments in the last newsletter concerning Pioneer Day, 26th August 2000, were more brief than intended simply because the editor's inability to take faster notes, therefore, more from Fred in this issue.

1948. . . Fred, went directly to Germany as a Class 155 turret operator, in time for the Berlin Airlift. As the flying increased so did the practical crash fire fighting training. Fire fighters suffered burn injuries during training because protective clothing was inferior.

1953. . . Clark Air Force Base, Philippines was Fred's next assignment. Fire Chief Frank Bernackie, a former GI, and Filipino guerrilla fighter who fought the Japanese invasion forces in WWII. Master Sergeant Mathews, a Bataan Death March survivor, was the Deputy Fire Chief. Vic Robinson was the Assistant Fire Chief.

1956. . . Fred came home to Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, South Carolina, Fire Department. Chief. Victor Bailey from Donaldson Air Force Base, SC, was the first Myrtle Beach Base Fire Chief. "Boys, you take care of fire fighting, I'll take care of politics," Chief Bailey said.

Warrant Officer Lou Garland was the crash rescue officer. Lou impressed Myrtle Beach fire fighters by his leadership, shared knowledge of fire protection and emphasized the need for more education. Lou gave Fred a textbook by Lloyd Layman, titled: "Attacking & Extinguishing Interior Fires," using high-pressure fog with less than 40 gallons of water.

1960. . . Fred's next assignment was Lockbourne Air Force Base, Ohio. Chief Larry Donavon was the fire chief and Billy Ferrell was the Deputy Fire Chief. Fred recalled making a mistake. "I parked in the chief's reserved parking space." Fred never heard the last of it.

1961. . . Fred was off to Toul Rossiers Air Base, France. Several fire chiefs served for the next five years. Master Sergeants Louis R. Hardy, Marvin Oxner and Alfred McKowen. Technical Sergeants Doug Ward, and Fred were Assistant Fire Chiefs of Operations. At that time, a young and wild trainee arrived from Greenville, Mississippi. His name: **Hugh Pike** and Fred remembers **Charlie Huff** also.

1966. . . Fred headed to Binh Thuy Air Base Vietnam. Fire Chief O. B. Kyle and Hamp Cayson were fire chiefs during that period. Besides, the late Alfred McLain, Milt Puckett, Jim Norris, a resounding crew performed in an exemplary way under the most hostile mortar attacks and widespread fires.

1967. . . Fred returned home to the Fire Department, Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina. Bob Barrow was the base fire chief. At the same time, Fred became Deputy Fire Chief. Paul Durham and John Crowell were Assistant Fire Chiefs. Don Spitzer was Assistant Chief, Technical Service, and Glen Cocherell was Assistant Chief of Training.

1969. . . After military retirement, Fred became the Fire Marshal, Catawba County, NC. While serving in that office, he created new fire districts, Sherrillsford, NC, home of T. Z. Sherrill. Fred and his wife Helga, found themselves too distant from the military community. When an Assistant Fire Chief for Technical Service vacancy occurred at Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, Fred applied and accepted the job. Fred stayed at "Myrtle" for 20 years. (Editor).

A bit of history, 50 Years Ago. The 0-10 Crash Truck Goes To Washington. The Congressmen and Senators are all wet! Chief J. K. Schmidt, Roscoe Bell and Ray Smith demonstrated the new crash truck before distinguished lawmakers in Washington, D. C. 1950

The 0-10 turret operator "froze" at the controls and accidentally sprayed lawmakers. To be sure, everyone feared the 0-10 project was doomed. Despite the drenching, the lawmakers were impressed and

appropriated funds for fire apparatus manufacturer, American LaFrance, Elmira, New York, to mass produce the 0-10 for the Air Force. Chief Schmidt told this story at Pioneer Day. (Editor).

I want to thank you for all your hard work keeping the newsletter coming to us. I eagerly await each one. Air Force Fire Protection is the greatest way of life. I have been fortunate to serve with some of the best in the business. The Air Force operated a fire school at Albrook Air Force Base, Panama in the late 40's, I started my career there in April 1948. I just want to mention a few of the guys I have been fortunate enough to work with. Bolling Field, early 50's Al Sherrill, Bill Thomas and Carvon Hudson. Middle 50's McConnell Air Force Base, Jimmy Patterson, the late Harold Engle, Henry "Hank" Patrick. Late 60's Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, Bob Barrow, the late Paul Durham, and Mitch Butler. Late 70's, Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina Wayne Kee and Bruce Sincox. I also served with the late Alan Hoover and Ted Taipalus.

Doug, I just wanted to write and say hello and to thank you once more for the newsletter. Stamp money is enclosed, also pictures and articles. I don't know if you can use any of them, but I'm glad to send them. **Chief Don Spitzer 363 CES, 452 Killian Avenue, Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina 29152-5123** (Don, thanks for the update, articles and photos. A single photo is worth more than a thousand words. The Air Force talks quality of life for its airmen, by providing everything they need. i, e, no more barracks, but elaborate suites. I noticed you lived in a barrack in North Africa and operated from a one room crash station. The re-enlistment rate was low then, and it's no better now. So much for quality of life. Editor).

CONTRIBUTORS. Chief Willie Barron, Chief Don Spitzer. Chief Marvin Boyles, Chief Bob Barrow, Chief Jack R. McGary, Chief Charles A. Richardson, Jr., Chief Rodney Winningham

Here is a little to help with the cost of newsletter publication. The newsletter is great!

Would you please start sending Chet Weger his newsletter at the same address as before. He has retired from the Alaska State Fire Marshal's Office, but is staying in Alaska a little longer. **Chief Jack R. McGary, 5928 Camden Circle, Anchorage, Alaska, 99504.** (I had put "hold" on newsletters to Chet until I heard from him. Now, I know why the new address never arrived. Chet had not left Alaska. Once in Alaska, many decide to stay and homestead. If you and Chet have email addresses, please let me know, and I'll email newsletters to both of you. (Editor)

I'm searching to locate names/information concerning USAF, on-duty fire fighter deaths. My starting point was the names listed on the Allen Fire Fighter Memorial at the DoD Fire Academy. I've already discovered names unlisted at the academy.

Chief Piercy and Doug Courchene, please run a short note in your next publications. Anyone with information, news articles, please send to carl.glover@afcesa.af.mil or CMSgt Carl Glover, Hq AFCEA/CEX, 139 Barnes Drive, Suite 1, Tyndall AFB, FL 32403-5319, DSN: 523-6112 Commercial: 850-283-6112, FAX 523-6390 Commercial 850-283-6390. *(One positive way to remember our fallen fire fighters. I encourage everyone to support this effort. Editor)*

Any retiree who wishes to write for PACAF, USAFE, AMC, AETC, please send drafts to editor.

Peter Bell, son of the late Chief Roscoe Bell sent the last piece to finish his Dad's writing for the book. I'm happy to announce that Chapter I, Pioneers is done! Editor.

Retired Chief Hugh Akers has email address: cmshakers@aol.com Hugh has contributed so much to the book concerning Chanute Fire School and H-43B Helicopter era. He shared IFSTA 206, Aircraft Fire

Protection and Rescue Procedures, 1970. I extracted material from that first edition and found a place in the Operation Chapter and Training Chapter of the book. Others from the Chanute Fire School included: Bruce B. Bobbit, George E. Godward, Merton G. Grigsby, Harry L. Kiel, Raymond J. Schmidt, Elbert T. Sherrill, and Thomas M. Walsh. All helped script the first publication of sort. Just think for a moment, they wrote 277 pages. Editor.

Exposure to Agent Orange. Vietnam veterans, January 9, 1962 – May 5, 1975 are presumed by the Veterans Administration to be victims of Agent Orange, if they were treated for certain cancers. Diabetics were added, June 2000, as well as people who not served in Vietnam. DoD includes everyone who manufactured Agent Orange, Agent Purple and other toxin herbicides connected to “Operation Range Hand.” Eglin Air Force Base conducted aerial spray testing of toxins at Range C-52 in the 1960s. At the same time, Eglin Fire Fighters, military and civilian, were at C-52 and on C-123’s used for aerial spray. Fire fighters washed C-123 bays and containers of toxic agents. They didn’t use self-contained breathing apparatus, nor chemical suits. Fire fighters, also, found drums of Agents Orange and Purple at their fire training area.

Chief Guy J. Wills, and Bill Wilson participated in these tests. They strongly urge this message reach everyone. The VA, website <http://www.va.gov> & <http://www.vabenefits.vba.va.gov> are sources of more information concerning toxic agents. **Chief Bob Barrow, 126 Clements NE Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548 (904) 243-1274, Chief1@gnt.net The Fire Fighter Group Website <http://www.gnt.net~chief1/> Also, check <http://www.afrc.af.mil/hq/ce/FIRE/PAGES/firehome.htm> (I too encourage everyone suspect of Agent Orange place their names on record with the VA. Don’t wait! Some Veterans of WWII experienced hardships getting treatment they deserved because records were lost, or no record at all. You lose track of buddies, people pass away, memories grow dim. Act now! Editor).**

The Air Force Produced A Compact Disc, A Pictorial Perspective, Titled “Then & Now.” The disc sold at the Pioneer Day Celebration, August 2000. The disc has aircraft rescue and fire fighting, crash vehicles, pumpers, aerial vehicles, rescue vehicles, water tankers, miscellaneous vehicles, support equipment, incident photos and people pictures.

Thank you retirees. . . The old photos of crash vehicles and training came from retired fire chiefs. . . Just simply shared our collection with Air Force since they had the means for worldwide publication on a single disc.

For the first time, Air Force Pioneers and early training can be seen on computer screen. To see crash fires of B-17, B-25, B-36, B-47, B-52 and others stirs emotion and conversation.

The present staff at Air Force Fire Protection is doing more to preserve eras of fire protection than all previous staffs. That statement may offend someone. If you feel offended, I apologize. But I’d ask the offended to look back to Pioneer Day 2000 in Dallas.

Today, editors and writers contribute, unofficially, to Air Force success. Take for example the **The Fire Fighter Gazette. Editor, Deputy Chief Piercy; The Air National Guard Retired Fire Chief’s Newsletter, Editor, Ed Wolbert; our Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs Quarterly Newsletter, Doug, Editor and Gus Hunter Associate Editor; numerous writings by Frank Livingston; Don Warner’s Website and for those hungry, Chief Bob Barrow’s monthly breakfast call at Quinicy.**

All these caring people aren’t being paid extra for this noble effort, for retirees, not even minimum wages. It’s like anything else, you must want to do it! **The computer has brought us together. Editor.**

Dirt Roads. What’s mainly wrong with society today is that too many Dirt Roads have been paved. There’s not a problem in America today, crime, drugs, education, divorce, delinquency that wouldn’t be remedied if we just had more Dirt Roads, because Dirt Roads give character. People living at

the end of Dirt Roads learn early on that life is a bumpy ride. That it can jar you right down to your teeth sometimes, but it's worth it, if at the end is home . . . a loving spouse, happy kids and a dog.

We wouldn't have near the trouble with our educational system if our kids got their exercise walking a Dirt Road with other kids from whom they learn how to get along. There was less crime in our streets before they were paved. Criminals didn't walk two dusty miles to rob or rape, if they knew they'd be welcomed by five barking dogs and a double-barrel shotgun. And there was no drive by shootings.

Our values were better when our roads were worse! People did not worship their cars more than their kids and motorists were more courteous, they didn't tailgate by riding the bumper or the guy in front would choke you with dust and bust your windshield with rocks. Dirt Roads taught patience. Dirt Roads were environmentally friendly. You didn't hop in your car for a quart of milk, you walked to the barn for your milk. For your mail, you walked to the mailbox. What if it rained and the Dirt Road got washed out? That was the best part, then you stayed home and had some family time, roasted marshmallows and popped popcorn and pony rode on Dad's shoulders and learned how to make prettier quilts than anybody.

At the end of Dirt Roads, you soon learned that bad words tasted like soap. Most paved roads lead to trouble, Dirt Roads more likely lead to a fishing creek or a swimming hole. At the end of a Dirt Road, the only time we even locked our car was in August, because if we didn't some neighbor would fill it with too much zucchini.

At the end of a Dirt Road, there was always extra springtime income, from when city dudes would get stuck, you'd have to hitch up a team and pull them out. Usually you got a dollar. . . always you got a new friend. . . at the end of a Dirt Road. **Chief Bob Vires, 4592 Highway 163, Doyline, LA 71023 (318) 987-2764 Robert.vires@barksdale.af.mil (Your words fit my childhood days being born in a house at the end of a dirt road. I'd not exchange dirt for tar. It was easier to walk barefoot or run on dirt than hot tar in the summer. Editor)**

CORRECTION. Robert Gamelgard wasn't the first Chief Master Sergeant in Air Force Fire Protection. It was CMSgt., Joseph O'Day. Editor.

It's been a while since I have contributed to the stamp fund. Please accept my apologies for the delay. Hope that all is well with you and Evelyn. I always enjoy the newsletter and look forward to each issue. I know that it is a lot of work and just wanted to let you know that All of us who receive it do appreciate your hard work. **Chief Charlie A. Richardson, Jr. 5473 Landis Avenue, Port Orange, FL 32127-5525, (904) 760-62186. (Charlie, our friendship goes back many years. Thanks for writing and contributing to our publication. It's always good news when readers like you voice approval of the newsletter. It encourages the editor and associate editor to press on. Charlie, is this your email address? Clardb@n-jcenter.com Editor)**

I hope this has been a good year for your family. For us, it has been challenging as Dimple has had to deal with bone cancer. Thanks be to God and modern medicine plus efficient doctors at Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida. She is slowly improving and we are hopeful for a complete recovery. I enjoy reading what's going on in the newsletter. Keep up the good work. Small contribution enclosed. **Chief Rodney Winningham, 110 Spruce Court, Panama City, FL 32404-8833 (Ron, I had heard about illness in the family, but didn't know the extent or seriousness of it all. Thanks for**

sharing with the fire protection family. We are concerned about Dimple; we too wish her a speedy and total recovery. Editor).

Glen asked me to write to you. Bob Barrow gave him the message that you would like some information on Glen. We don't know just what you do know. In November, 1999, he had to have a prostatectomy due to cancer and while he was preparing for that, mantle cell lymphoma was discovered in his nose. He had the prostate surgery and the doctor was quite sure he got all of it and his test s have been normal up to now.

The oncologists wanted to do chemo for the nose cancer which is very aggressive serious lymphoma. Glen took a week of it in the hospital at Ft. Walton, Beach, December 1999. He came home a few days, but had to go back into the hospital and was very, very sick. He was so weak, had a high fever, his white blood count was almost zero, among other problems. He came home in time for Christmas and decided he would take no more chemo. His symptoms were gone; he cold now breathe fine through his nose.

After several months, his nose plugged up again and he coughed and choked, so he began treatment again; this time in Pensacola as an outpatient. He has been taking two treatments in one week, then, two weeks off, two treatments the next week, two weeks off, etc. He did six cycles. One of the treatments was Rituxan, which is fairly new and isn't chemotherapy, but is given like chemo and is an antibody attaching to and killing both the good and bad "B" cells. Then, two days later, he had the chemo drugs.

At first, he tolerated the treatments pretty good, but like the oncologist said, "It will become increasingly hard to come back as time goes on." He would get tires and weak and he lost his hair. He took the last treatment November 16, 2000 and a few days later became very weak. A few days later he started running high fever so he had to go to the Sacred Heart Hospital, where he had been treated.

In the hospital, he was given two pints of blood, antibiotics, fluids and rest. He came home December 1st and is slowly regaining strength now. But it's slow. He can't tolerate very much activity. He's eating fine and did go to the Firemen's monthly breakfast, Saturday morning, but it was almost too much for him. He tried to call yhou few times yesterday, but couldn't reach you.

This is what is going on. He'll see the doctor this week; he'll probably order some tests now that the treatments have ended. Hope you and your family have a wonderful Holiday Season. **Mrs. Esther Cocherell, 118 Sotir, NW Ft Walton, Beach, FL 32548 (850) 862-5004 – email gcocherell@bsc.net** *(Esther, the news shocked me. With your permission following our conversation, Dec 12, I share your letter with retired fire chiefs. Glen has many friends in the former Tactical Air Command (TAC), and friends throughout the Air Force. We collectively wish him well. I'll pray for my friend and ask others to do the same. Doug).*
