

RETIRED AIR FORCE FIRE CHIEFS' QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Editor dcourchene@goldsboro.net, associate Editors dandahunter@aol.com Chief.one@home.com

OCT-DEC 01

A might premature, but Thanksgiving and Christmas are almost upon us. On behalf of editorial staff, myself, Gus Hunter and Bob Barrow wishing everyone a spirit of happiness and much joy over the holiday season.

I have lots of news to pass on, so be with me in its application. Chief Don Warner has a fire truck album for everyone to review. Simply click: <http://members.home.com/affirealbum/default.htm> Great work by Don. *Editor*

Just to let you know I haven't received the past two newsletters. It seems webtv cannot process the exact computer language to bring it up. Could you mail newsletters? I always enjoy reading them and keeping up with so many I've known over the years. Contribution to help with expenses is enclosed. Hope this finds you doing O.K. Keep up the good work. Job well done! **Chief Bill Goodwin, Rt 3, Box 147H, Port St Joe, FL 32446** Billinportstjoe@webtv.net (Bill I made a note to send future newsletters regular mail. Two past quarterlies are in the mail today. *Editor*)

Hi, Richard had surgery this morning and everything went well. They gave him a saddle block and he is a little slow getting the feeling back in his legs. They sent me home so I could get prescriptions filled before he came home July 8, 01 **Marie Waller, 2316 Skylark Dr. Arlington, TX 72010-8112 (817) 277-7314** MW11936@aol.com (Marie, thank you so much for informing us of Dick's back surgery. I know the back had troubled him for sometime. *Editor*)

TAPS. Dear Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs: It's with a heavy heart to let you know, "My Chief" was called home on March 28, 2001. He died of cardio respiratory heart failure. (Congestive Heart) He enjoyed receiving the newsletters. Thanks. Sincerely, **Margaret Biggs, 4420 Collegiate Lane, Panama City, FL 32404** (I called Margaret Jul 16th and expressed sadness in the death of her husband, Chief Herbert Biggs. He served as Chief Tyndall AFB, FL, for 25 years. Herbert had a stroke in 1971 and retired with 30 years service, Jan 72. He was 85 years old. Herbert supported and contributed to our newsletter since February 26, 1993. *Editor*)

When I received your newsletter, I shut down everything until I had read it in its entirety. Mama and I are sorry to hear about your surgery and we wish you a very speedy recovery. Mama has had two small strokes effecting her speech, however, we communicate very well with notes and sign language. Our daughter and son-in-law wanted us closer to them, because of Mama's condition, so we moved to New Braunfels, Texas and built a new house. When you get in the eighties, it seems that a snail moves faster. Doug, it's so sad that so many of the Chiefs are unable to enjoy their hard-earned retirements due to poor health. I'm sending a check to assist with mailing expenses. Again, Mama and I wish you a speedy recovery and take care. **Chief Glenn Cloud 439 Stone Gate, New Braunfels, Texas 78130 (830) 627-8000** (It was great hearing from you. Sorry to hear about Vera having minor strokes. I told Evelyn, Glenn is a

Texan, he can move anyplace he wants to. Wish you all the best. Glenn, we go back to Ft. Worth Army Airfield. Editor)

I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you or others who write their experiences in Air Force Fire Protection. I do know many of them and it's good to know they're doing well and enjoying life. I'm not a youngster to Air Force Fire Protection (1952-1984) back to when Civil Engineering was known as A.I.O. and Installation Squadrons. I worked for these fire chiefs: Knapp, Van Fosson, Smidth, Barrow, O'Day, Alsbrook, Ferrell, Legg, Parades, Spitzter, Franke, Cherniga and Wilson. I was with CWO Lou Garland at Komaki Air Base, Japan when he was a Master Sergeant, WO1 and WO2. In fact, Vick Robinson's father was our Fire Chief back then. Naming the Fire School after Lou Garland was a great honor owed to a man who put a lifetime into getting Air Force Fire Protection where it's today. Doug, keep the newsletters coming, take care of yourself with hopes that this letter finds you well and in good spirits. I've enclosed a check to help with expenses. **Chief Guy J. Wills, Jr., 837 Whitrock Lane, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547 (850) 862-1185** *(Thirty-two years of fire service experience deserves words of praise from editors as well as all retired chiefs. Thanks for sharing your experience with us. Editor)*

Thanks again for the Newsletter. I always enjoy hearing from the old guys and some of the newer ones too. I'm enclosing a small contribution to help with administrative costs. All of you who give of your time and talent deserve a "Pat On The Back" or whatever. I do have an email address leggman10@cs.com and I prefer email instead of a hard copy of the Newsletter. Keep up the good work, all of you. **Chief Jim R. Legg, 3308 E. Baldwin Road, Panama City, FL 32405** *(Jim, thanks for the generous contribution supporting our quarterly newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep retired fire chiefs informed of activities within the family. Editor)*

Yes, I received the newsletter. As usual, I enjoyed it very much with one exception. The death notices really floored me. I didn't know that Big John's cancer was so advanced, nor that Wayne Farrar was even ill. Both of these gentlemen were good friends of mine. I had the good fortune of attending the retirement ceremony of Bryce Mason at Rhein Main last month,. Bryce has done a lot of good things for our fraternity over the years and his expertise will be missed in Germany. I also saw most of the chiefs working in USAFE. It was great being there, almost like going home. As you know, I enjoy the best of both worlds now. Actually, retired from the Air Force Fire Service, yet able to regularly visit a lot of my old friends in my new line of work. Life is great!. I certainly hope that your health is on the mend and that your back to full speed very soon. I need to get your mailing address again. Seems that I've misplaced it and can't figure how to send stamp money on this computer. Take care and keep up the good work with the newsletters --**Chief Ray Porter, 19 Dorothy Drive, Poquoson, VA 23662** fireequip@widomaker.com *(Ray, make hay while the sun is shining. I emailed you my postal address upon receipt of your email. It doesn't seem possible that not too many years ago, you were Assistant Chief at Langley Fire Department, but you kept your roots in Poquoson. Who said you can't go home again. Thanks for keeping in touch, Editor)*

Sir: Could you add me to your Retired Chiefs' Pioneer Newsletter? I was a Military Fire Chief at Scribner, NE, 72-74, Temporary Chief at Kwang Ju ROK, 74-75, RAF Woodbridge, 77-79 and RAF Chicksands, 79-81. I think you are doing a super job with the web sites(s) and I really enjoy just browsing through it. Thanks, **Chief Dave Meade** djbmmade@cyberriver.net *(This letter was sent to Chief Don Warner who forwarded it to me. It's always a delight to add another retiree to our list of special people. Editor)*

Just got my quarterly newsletter and realized I hadn't sent you my email address. Very sorry to hear about your problem, but thank the Lord, things appear to be looking up. That bad dude sure seems to be getting around in our ranks. I had malignant melanoma two years ago, but was also blessed with early detection. I saw that Bob Remel is in Florida. I assume the same Bob Remel that was at England AFB, LA, about 20 years ago. I'll locate him on internet and give him a call. What are the meet dates in New Orleans? Oh! I almost forgot. I have pictures of the HH-43B helicopter earlier assigned to England AFB, 1964. Do you need one? Take care and continue with a speedy recovery. **Chief Milton Wallace, 4205 Coliseum Blvd, Alexandria, La 71303** mickeywla@yahoo.com (Thanks for email address. Milton, I have several photos of H-43B helicopters. You and I are talking about the same Remel. Concerning requests for New Orleans 2001 meeting, I refer them to Chief Barrow Chief.one@home.com Editor)

I just got word about your recent surgery. Hope you are back to 100% by now. Have had several friends had the same surgery with full recovery. It's amazing what our modern medicine can do for cancer. My prayers are with you for complete recovery. I really appreciate the newsletter and share it with many folks here at NASA-KSC. Guess I need to tag up with Marty Jester. I too ride my HD Electra-Glide a lot. Me and the wife made trips to Canada, Branson, MO, and to New Orleans the past few years. Here is my new email address: kee-1948@worldnet.att.net **Chief Wayne Kee, 1289 Potomac Dr. Merritt Island, FL 32952** (Thanks for your concerns. I've received countless mail since my bout with cancer, all supportive and much appreciated. Wayne, you need to saddle up with Marty. I can see two Harleys cruising down the road, wind to your faces. My uncle Joe Campbell died at 98. He rode Harley Davidson in WW1. Ten years ago he gave me a brass license tag dated 1915. The tag has a slot for leather strap to secure it to handle bar. A real treasure. Editor)

Thank you for including me on the mailing list for the quarterly newsletter. I appreciate the courtesy and find all the information of interest. And, I give you a lot of credit for attempting to save and document USAF fire protection history. As with all history, it seems few people are dedicated to it. Looking forward to adding your book to my library when it becomes available. I did note that you mentioned your service at Lowry AFB. I've attached a scan of an older fire department patch from my collection. Curious if you have any contacts at AFCESA, Tyndall. A few years ago, they were kind enough to send me a listing of all USAF Fire Departments and their addresses. I've tried to get a more current one, but with little success. Thanks again for your time and if I can be of any assistance to you, please don't hesitate to let me know. **Jack R. Bol, 2802 S. Roslyn St. Denver, CO 80231** jrbol@hotmail.com (Jack, welcome aboard. The leadership changed at Tyndall after Chief Jim Hotell's retirement. I would suggest email to Chief Hugh Pike Hugh.pike@tyndall.af.mi.)

Thanks for the newsletter. It was good to hear about some of my old friends. As I write this, I'm recovering from a fall through my roof above family room, not the ceiling. I was rebuilding it and stepped on a loose piece of decking. I was very lucky as there appears to be no permanent damage. Just proves we don't all get smarter as we get older. **Chief Fred Owens, 4857 Pamela Dr. Abilene, TX 79606-3214** (Fred, you were indeed fortunate not to have more serious injury from that fall. Editor)

Sorry I've been late writing. Torn rotator cup has laid me up for three months. Then, I had surgery and now up to speed. Your newsletters give flashbacks of names remembered of the past. Also, chiefs that have passed on to be with God upstairs. I'll dig through my stuff and

send you. I talked recently with Chief Joe Jarrell in Austin. He seems to be doing O.K. So Chief Lloyd Garner is still alive. He is a smart one and knows his stuff. Stamps are enclosed to mail newsletters. I hope you get well soon and have no more problems. I heard Chief Mickey Butler had surgery and doing fine. I did not know about the 2000 meeting in Dallas, Texas until I read the newsletter. That's close to me, about 3 1/2 hour drive. Two of my sisters live there. I close for now and will send some items soon. **Chief Donato Jaso, 5006 Merritt Dr. Austin, TX 78744-2844** *(Thanks for the stamps. I have 60 retirees without computers so regular mail is the manner in which they get their newsletters. Your stamps will save trips to the post office. Anyone wishing to contact Chief M. C. Butler, 152 Wampum Way, Sequin, TX 78155 (830) 303-6734. Donato, I don't know what you are sending me. It must be a surprise? I'm please to hear your surgery was successful. Editor*

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 Sorry it had taken me so long to get back to you. Things have been a challenge to say the least. I didn't know Mac until he was retired, so I don't have much information. Here is what I got off his DD Form 214. He entered the service in Sacramento, CA and his last duty assignment and Major Air Command was – 50 CES (USAFE). He separated at McGuire AFB, NJ, as a Chief Master Sergeant. Mac was the recipient of Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Good Conduct medal with seven oak leaf clusters, longevity service award ribbon with five oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force long and short term overseas tour ribbons with three oak leaf clusters, Vietnam Service Medal with three bronze stars, Army Occupation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with valor and one oak leaf cluster, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with palm, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Mac was stationed in Germany for about 10 years. He was also stationed in Taiwan and Alaska and other bases in the states. Here are a few pictures of family, his graduation picture from Eastern Washington University, June 13, 1998. Mac was an elementary school teacher. The third picture of Mac is in his dress uniform. **Joy, wife of the late Douglas McMurphy, P.O. Box 251 Chatteroy, WA 9003-0251 MAC26024@aol.com** *(I deeply apologize for not including beautiful photographs of Mac and wonderful family. I simply do not have the expertise or equipment to do it. I've kept the photos. Perhaps I can later use the photos in future newsletter. I'm very grateful to Joy for being so graceful in time of sorrow. I requested more information and she responded. Because of Joy, retired chiefs know more about Mac. Joy, I thank you. Editor)*

An atheist took a walk through the woods, admiring all that the “accident of evolution” had created. “What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals,” he said to himself. As he walked alongside the river he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him. He turned to look. A 7-foot grizzly charged toward him. He ran as fast as he could up the path. He looked over his shoulder and saw that the bear was closing. He ran even faster, so scared that tears came to his eyes. He looked over his shoulder again, and the bear was even closer. His heart pumped frantically and he tried to run even faster. He tripped and fell to the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up, but saw the bear, right on top of him, reaching for him with his left paw and raising his right paw to strike him. At that instant the atheist cried out “ Oh my God!”

Time stopped.

The bear froze.

Even the river stopped moving.

...As a bright light shone upon the man, a voice came out of the sky. “You deny my existence for all of these years; teach others I don’t exist; even credit creation to a cosmic accident. Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?”

...The atheist looked directly into the light. “It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask you to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps could you make the bear a Christian?”

...“Very well,” the voice said.

...The light went out. The river ran again, and the sounds of the forest resumed. And then the bear dropped its right paw, brought both paws together, bowed its head and spoke. “Lord, for this food which I am about to receive, I am truly thankful.”

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Contributors: Chief James R. Legg, Chief Guy J. Wills, Chief Glenn Cloud. Chief Donato Jaso, Chief Bill Goodwin

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There have been some recent developments concerning Glen, the cancer and I would like to share them with you.

It has been VERY difficult for Glen to breathe through his nose for two months. Also, he has been having a dull, numb feeling in his forehead and hasn’t had the energy he had been having.

On Monday, Dr. Pennington, an ENT specialist, did a biopsy inside both nostrils and the results showed Mantle Cell Lymphoma has returned in the left side again. He said that lymphoma is a systemic disease, apparently in contrast to cancers which are localized, at least at the outset. The good news is that the doctor removed some of the lymphoma so Glen should be able to breathe through the nose again when the swelling goes down and everything in the nose is healed.

Since Mantle Cell Lymphoma is the most aggressive form of lymphoma, Dr. Andrews, the oncologist, recommends a more aggressive treatment probably having to be done somewhere other than this area including Pensacola. Next week they’ll be a PET Scan (yes, it’s related to a CAT Scan) and a bone marrow test. Then, we’ll see Dr. Andrews again and talk about the next step. This calls for prayer, so please do so, and ask anyone else to pray who you believe would be willing to. Thank you very much. Very Sincerely, **Esther Cocherell, wife of retired Chief Glen Cocherell, 108 Sotir, NW Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548 (850) 862-5004 email address: gecocherell@cybertron.com** (Esther, you and I have often communicated mostly through prayer for people in need. Now I add Glen to my prayer list. Now, all retired fire chiefs will know of Glen’s plight with cancer. Doug, Editor).

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The 2001 New Orleans Conference was a huge success. More than 650 attended and all activities received favorable review. The conferees honored Chief Jim Hotell at the Air Force Recognition luncheon along with the AF Award Winners for 2001. Major Air Commands,

NFPA., all the men and women of AF Fire Protection and key individuals showered gifts on Chief Hotell. Major General McCarthy, retired USAF ILE, highlighted Jim's career as fire chief at Luke AFB, AZ. Chief Hotell thanked everyone and recognized key people for his success in fire protection. Air Force Fire Fighters won these DoD Awards. The DoD Military Fire Fighter of the year was SSgt Kile Stewart, 18th Civil Engineer Group, Kadena AB, Japan. The DoD Civilian Fire Fighter of the Year was Joseph R. Suddarth, 96th Civil Engineer Group, Eglin AFB FL. And Outstanding Fire Department of the Year was the 35th Civil Engineer Squadron's Fire Protection Flight, Misawa AB, Japan

Special viewing during luncheon included earlier Fire School at Lowry AFB, CO. and training film on B-52 fire at Chanute Fire School, IL, depicting 50 years of progression in Air Force Fire Protection. Plan is to show footage at the next Pioneer Day event.

All retired Air Force Fire Chiefs were welcomed, participated and discussed hosting another Pioneer Day Event next year in Kansas City. Of course, all this is predicated on the next Chief of Air Force Fire Protection

Other than the usual "retirees" working for contractors, vendors or seeking employment our numbers at the 2001 conference were dismal. I would like to hear from any retiree who attended the conference for his account and views. **Chief Bob Barrow, Associate Editor, 126 Clements NE Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548 (904) 243-1274 Chief.one@home.com** (*I'm thankful for this report on 2001 Conference, Doug*)

Hello There: My name is Stacey Merker and I am Chief Joe Schmidt's granddaughter. He asked me to contact you so that the two of you can keep in touch. You can email him at this address and he will get the messages. Thank you for keeping in touch with him. I know he appreciates it very much. Take care and I hope to hear back from you soon. Stacey evstar_99@yahoo.com (*I'm so pleased to establish email with you. Editor*).

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TAPS. Chief Paul Dillon died 31 July 2001. Paul was one of 6 original NCO's assigned to the "fire teams" (ACREFAT) mid 1971. The six were Akers, Sherrill, Dillon*, Duncan, Whatley* and Jenkins*. Major Daniels and Captain William served as team leaders. Paul's hometown was Columbus, Ohio. He retired as SMSgt late 1975 at Tyndall AFB, FL. **Cheryl Dillon, P.O. Box 764, Canton, GA 30114-0764 (706) 692-4112** (*Chief Hugh Akers emailed me upon Paul's death. Any one having more information about Paul is asked to send it to me for publication in next newsletter. Editor*).

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Thanks for thinking of us. Right now the biggest problem is a lot of rain. The forecast is 5-10 inches of rain for the panhandle. We were in Panama City today and on our way home, Tyndall looked like the fire fighters and sky cops were the only ones there. I am reminded of the time several years ago, shortly after we came to Tyndall, when the base was evacuated before a major hurricane. Bobby Kuykendall was still military and he and Betty were living in base housing. Of course, they were forced to evacuate, sent northward, headed for the Dothan near Ft Rucker. After a harrowing trip to Alabama with pine trees blown over on the roads, bumper to bumper traffic and as they pulled into a motel, the motel sign flew over them. While on the road, his car was hit and damaged by a barrel being tossed about by the high wind plus having to have major window repairs.

Needless to say, when they returned to Tyndall, they found the flower pots they forgot to take in undisturbed on their front porch. They were ready to go looking for the “mental giant” who dreamed up that evacuation.

Got to go . . . need to look for our swim fins and water wings. Thanks again for being concerned about us. **Chief Bill Goodwin, Rt 3, Box 147H, Port St. Joe, FL 32456** Billinportstjoe@webtv.net (*Bill, you got rid of Hurricane Barry. Get ready for the next one and hope it will hit somewhere else. Editor*).

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September 11, 2001

That Tuesday morning, terrorist struck and stunned America. For some, Pearl Harbor is fresh in memory once again, but then we knew the enemy. Today, we are uncertain of our enemies, scattered in operative cells to destroy freedom and a nation founded on democracy. We seek wisdom and strength to mend our nation and make it whole again. The wounds are deep; the scars are visible. Our people are angered and hurt. Nonetheless, it's our resolve to never surrender this country to terrorism. We are united and stand resolute in that purpose.

It's a different kind of fight. We could define history as a continuous struggle with no end in sight. We must stand firm with a strong will and determination not to give in to terrorist.

Fifty-six years ago, after 35 days of bitter fighting on an island only five miles long and two and half miles across at its widest point, the U. S. flag was raised on Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima. One of the five marines was from my hometown. His name: Rene Gagnon, Fifth Marine Division. 8,770 marines were killed or wounded in 35 days. All five brave marines are all dead now. The Iwo Jima War Memorial sculpted from a photograph stands in Arlington, Virginia, a lasting tribute to them who fought for our freedom.

September 11th two American airliners at the hands of terrorists crashed into twin towers in New York City. In minutes over 6,000 innocent people died. For some people there is no similarity between Iwo Jima and New York City. Perhaps not, but the brave marines went after the enemy in caves and wiped them out. That's what we have to do with terrorism! I have received so many emails since the attack on New York and the Pentagon. I've spent days answering them or tried to. I observed an Air Force Crash Truck spraying foam on the Pentagon. The aircraft impact most likely destroyed the building sprinkler system, if the Pentagon had one.

We all need to pray for our country, its leadership and families who have lost loved ones
Editor.