

	<p>RETIRED AIR FORCE FIRE CHIEFS' QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER July - September 2001</p> <p>Editor dcourchene@goldsboro.net Associate Editors dandahunter@aol.com & Chief1@gnt.net</p>	
---	---	---

Well, subscribers, I have a computer but I hate to admit, I have not yet mastered its intricacies to the point where I can do the QN with the flamboyance that our senior editor accomplishes. Hang in there, I will learn.

I guess buy now you are all aware of Doug's recent surgery. He was on the table and in recovery more hours than I used to work in a week. I talked to him as of 19 June, 2001, and everything seems to be going OK. So, next quarter, you will get a snazzy computerized letter. **(Associate Editor-Midwest Gus).**

Doug, got your newsletter. My email address is FireChiefOne@aol.com Barb and I are always glad to get your newsletter and catch up on how our fellow chief's are doing both retired and active. We will be retiring soon (exact date to be determined) for the second time. Thanks for the super job. **(Duane & Barb Morgan, 306 Goldenrod Lane, Swansea, IL, 62226. Fire Chief, Scott AFB, IL)**

High Doug – Received your latest newsletter and read it front to back. Don't understand why you can't make it to me via email. The address is still the same ewolbert@erols.com Do you send a hard copy? I have over 40 folks with email so I use that service to send rather than sending a hard copy unless they specifically ask for one. With over 150 customers now for our newsletter it certainly cuts back on mailing costs. As usual, I enjoyed reading about friends from the past and enjoy reading about some of those who I didn't have the pleasure to meet. I should be getting out another newsletter for our folks by April. Haven't talked with Mr. Ben lately but I have it on my "to do" list. He sure keeps himself busy. Well I had better go for now. Keep up the great work with the letter **(Chief Ed Wolbert, 4301 Webster Lapidum Rd., Havre de Grace, MD 21078-1335)** *(Ed, I email 40 newsletters, the rest regular mail, Editor)*

Doug – The newsletter arrived through snail mail and was glad to read the interesting articles. No, my email address has not changed and is still working. Don't know where the problem could have been. It's afdef28@cf1.rr.com so keep trying. I have been trying to locate a film we used to show to the new fire fighters at Chanute when I was there back in 1971. If you could put out the word maybe someone could remember the name and give me some information. The movie was about a family that lived on base and died in a house fire. The family owned a dog named Rex, I think it was the same dog that played the part of Old Yeller. At the fire scene the fire chief was briefing the base commander on what happened and how the family was found. The movie was very touching and there was not a dry eye in the room at the conclusion. It was shown during the first day of the basic fire-fighting course. I have researched Air Force Archives and other sources and cannot come up with anything. Any assistance I could receive would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance and keep up the great news program. **(Thomas Hinson, 385 Elkins Ave, Deltona, FL 32738)**

Dear Mr. Courchene: We received the Apr-Jun issue of the newsletter – thanks so much for sending it. Glen enjoys reading it so much. I commend you for the work and time you put into this. Since finishing taking chemo Nov 16, then spending five days in the hospital to recover, Glen very gradually gained strength and now he even has some hair! Then, he got a sinus infection with a real bad cough. After several weeks and two antibiotics, he seems to feel good now and doesn't cough nearly as much or as hard.

The oncologist and the ENT doctor have been checking him every two months so far and everything looks good as far as the lymphoma is concerned. They are watching him closely. He's playing golf and going about his life pretty normally now, and has attended the Saturday Morning Retired Chief's Breakfast most months. Keep up the good work, (Esther (for Glen) Cocherell, 118 Sotir, N.W. Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548).

Doug, once again I thank you for the super job of keeping us in touch with each other. As my five-year tour at Rhein Main AB comes to an end in June, I'm faced with a tough decision. For a variety of reasons, mostly personal, I have decided to hang it up and step aside and let someone else have fun being the Rhein Main AB Fire Chief at a unique and dynamic joint use civil/military international airport, Frankfurt International. Like those that have gone before me, I too have countless memories of people and experiences enjoyed since becoming a USAF fire fighter in December 1962. I feel very fortunate to have known so many professionals who have given their all in the service of their country and mankind. This has been an adult lifetime experience that has no price tag and for which I can only say thank you to so many supervisors, peers, and friends who I have known throughout the years. I gave some thoughts to trying to name a few of them but the list would be too long and I would probably omit someone, so let it suffice to say, you know who you are and you have all been great! I, like many others, benefited from the efforts of those who came before me, who pioneered and met the numerous challenges, and who helped make USAF Fire Protection what it is today, the world's best! I am humbled by this experience and very proud to have had the honor to serve with so many true professionals. I intend to stay in Germany and enjoy the fruits of my endeavors with my lovely German wife, Tina. We will live a short distance from Ramstein AB and once settled, I'll give you my address so that I can stay in touch. Thanks to one and all for a wonderful experience. (Bryce E. Mason, 469th ABG/CEF, Rhein Main AB, Germany, APO AE 09097-5000

.....
Contributors: Bill Schaber (Chief John Schaber's son), Chief George Godward, Chief Martin Jester, Chief Joe Cherniga, Chief Gus Hunter.
Thanks!!

.....
I returned home to find a large express package at my back door. I read the return address: **Robert W. Remel, 103 Seminole Circle, Niceville, FL 32578.** Having no idea what could possibly be inside the package, I unwrapped it and found a 12 inch highly polished brass Air Force Fire Protection Badge. Wow! What a surprise. The badge has a blue velvet backing and framed. I immediately wrote Bob and thanked him for such a wonderful gift. Then, I placed it on the wall with other plaques, awards, and photographs. Evelyn has been very kind, letting me convert a bedroom into office space,

JUL-SEP 2001

Page 3

I call, room of one's own, desks, computer, printer, and assorted fire protection stuff. Robert and I have conversed on the telephone at times past. We have shared many experiences veteran fire people like to talk about. **Editor Doug Courchene.**

The reason it took me so long to respond was that shortly after coming home from Dallas, Texas, I gave my computer system to my daughter, the schoolteacher. I now have a new system and a new Internet service. My email address is: petzez@mail.com About two months ago, I received a call from Hugh B. Akers and we discussed he training courses that were taught at Chanute. I think we covered all the bases even though it was over 30 years ago. I have in my possession a VHS tape of the structural fire training that was made in '68 at Chanute. Would a copy interest you in your research? If so, I will be glad to send a copy to you. The kitchen fire scene is of particular interest to me as the family is mine and it brings back memories of days gone past. I'm sending \$20.00 to help pay for mailing. Keep up the good work. I enjoy the newsletter very much. **Chief George E. Godward, 500 Harmony Lane, Georgetown, TX 78628-3904, phone 512-863-4001** *(After a spell, a reconnect. Now I know why I couldn't reach you via email. George, who produced the tape? Was it a firm from California? Film Communicator or something like that. I recall using the tape for fire prevention education programs. It was a first of its kind in the Air Force. A timely production when so many kitchens burned. It had a convincing message. Editor Doug Courchene)*

.....

Enclosed is a check to help with mailing costs. I ran across a picture of you and my Dad, Chief John Schaber at Lowry Air Force Base, Fire School. I think it was taken March 1952. There are two Type 0-10s in the background. Can you tell me if it was March 1952? My Dad who is 86 had a bad stroke in October. His left side is paralyzed. His spirits seem fine even though he is bed ridden most of the time. I hope the book you are working on is coming along well. I would really like to read it. Anyway, I wish you the best and look forward to the next newsletter. **Bill Schaber, s. 11610 Spotted Road, Cheney, WA 99004** *(Bill, thank you for supporting our newsletter and sending photo. You certainly hit on something very special to me, the black and white 8x10 photo of the first Type 0-10 Graduating Class at Lowry AFB, CO. I remember the bitter cold and snow. I had a photo, but in my military travels lost it. Thirty-six fire chiefs attended first class. On the first day, all six 0-10s were deadline . . .all dead batteries . . .hydraulic leaks and many electrical failures. We knew at that moment 0-10s would be a maintenance problem. We predicted right. Chiefs spent two days in classroom, then to the burning pits. Some old fire chiefs had difficulty driving the 0-10 and more difficulty wearing crash hood and using handlines and performing rescue. Looking back, it was stupid for instructors to expect fire chiefs to do elementary fire fighting.*

Bill, I'm sorry to hear of your Dad's health problems. Please give him my best regards. We go back many years in SAC. During a staff visit to Fairchild 1964-1966, we ate out one night. I recall him telling me of a son in Vietnam on helicopters. Editor – Doug Courchene Please say hello to your Dad for me too, Bill. He was a great guy to work with when I was at Headquarters, SAC. Always relied on Chief Schaber to give me the "word." Associate Editor –Midwest Gus Hunter).

.....

JUL-SEP 2001

Page 4

Chief Jim Hotell Retired. I want the family of retired fire chiefs to know Jim has joined our ranks. Jim served with distinction at the highest level of Air Force Fire Protection. It reflects, in itself, a fast mover through the level of competition. My association with Jim started when he was fire chief at Luke AFB, Arizona. From there to Hq TAC as Deputy Chief of Fire Protection. In 1985, he accepted the position as Deputy Chief of Fire Protection, Hq USAFE, Ramstein AB, Republic of Germany. He was later promoted to Chief, Fire Protection. The next and final step was Chief, Fire Protection United States Air Force for 11 years. Jim retired with 30 years of Federal Service. Jim, on behalf of all retired Air Force Fire Chiefs, we wish you well in retirement and many restful years after a long journey. Editor, Doug Courchene

.....
The Same Patrick J. Jolicoeur, Years Apart. I first met Patrick at March AFB CA, in October 1958. The Strategic Air Command's Inspector General had not been kind to Chief Charlie Wellwood's Fire Department, monthly earlier. Besides the civilian Assistant Chiefs Tucker, Hutchinson, and "mighty" Duffy, I remember the military supervisors, the doers . . . TSgt Mullins, TSgt McCutchen, SSgt Ryan, SSgt "Big" John T. Anderson (deceased), SSgt Bill Neer, SSgt Rodney B. Hughes who was known to say Rodney 'B' from across the sea, SSgt Roa and of course, Patrick. These dedicated non-commissioned officers and civilian officers turned an unsatisfactory IG rating to excellent in six months. When the SAC IG, returned, the department was ready to demonstrate its capability. The department had overcome a momentary setback.

I lost track of Patrick after my departure to Moron Air Base, Spain, in 1960. Patrick, however, excelled in fire prevention. While at March, the fire prevention section under his leadership garnered a fire prevention award in the 15th Air Force and placed ninth in the annual National Fire Protection Association competition, 1960. He scaled the ladder to the top earning Chief Master Sergeant and retired. He quickly changed uniforms and continued as Assistant Chief at Norton AFB, California.

While still in the military, Patrick was transferred from March to RAF Brize Norton, United Kingdom. At the same time, Frank Cox arrived at March. Patrick worked for the late Chief Frederick D. Moore at Brize Norton and made Technical Sergeant. (*Patrick, I'm very late writing this piece. The draft was in my newsletter folder too long. You had sent photos much earlier, but I'm not smart enough with computer to include them. As I write, I'm sitting on a six-inch foam cushion to ease the pain from prostate surgery. In short, March AFB Fire Department was an excellent assignment. We came out of the ashes. The ones who excelled above expectation made it better for me as Master Sergeant and NCOIC. Forty-three years later, a time to recall. Patrick, it's been a delight to write about it now. Editor - Doug Courchene*)

.....
TAPS: Sadly, we must advise of three more of our fire chiefs who have answered the alarm for the last time:

Chief John T. Anderson, "Big John" died of cancer on March 29, 2001. He battled cancer for one year. The fire protection family will miss him and our prayers are with his family. Anyone wishing to contact the family may write or call Mrs. John Anderson, 4633 Western Ave, Davenport, IA 52806, KlayKidz@aol.com (319) 391-6655.

Chief Wayne Farrar: Chief Farrar lost his battle with cancer on April 20, 2001.

JUL-SEP 2001

Page 5

A dedicated fire fighter, he worked at the Guard Bureau as Command Fire Protection Chief for almost two years. Our prayers are with the family and anyone wishing to contact the family may write to Pat Farrar, 420 Golden Valley Drive, St. Louis, MO 63129-2746.

Chief D. L. McMurphy: Chief "Mac" passed away on May 21, 2001, in Davenport, WA. Survivors are his wife Joy L. Hart, P.O. Box 251, Chatteroy, WA 9003-0251, MAC26024@aol.com a daughter Tiffany, two sons, Duane and Patrick, two step-children, Todd and Cory, and five grandchildren. "Mac" a retired Chief Master Sergeant became a volunteer fire fighter for Spokane County, then returned to school for a BA in education, and to pursue a Master's Degree. He was teaching in an elementary school. Again, our prayers are with the family.

.....
Greetings Doug and Evelyn, Ole Chief Bob Remel called the other day and said he had talked to you. He keeps pretty much to himself these days, but he still hold you, and a few old smoke eaters, close to his heart and thoughts. I recently sent him an illustrated History of the Kaman H-43 (our flying fire truck), and another copy to Jim Hotell, last year. Next time you talk to either of them, ask them to lend it to you.

Here's a Fire Protection Decal for your vehicle window. It seems these things have gotten to be rare. Oh, well gotta get packed up now, got a big road trip (on the Harley) coming up. **Chief Martin Jester, 9530 SW 187th St., Miami, FL 33157-7862** *(Thanks for the contribution and Air Force Fire Protection Decal. Bob Remel and I talk over the telephone and reinforce each other with fire protection stuff. Marty, I do have the history of H-43B helicopter. It's time to thunder roll with your Harley on a road trip. Every time I see a Harley with its distinct sound, I get the urge to saddle up and ride. Editor - Doug Courchene*

.....
Dear Doug. . . Here is a check for stamps or whatever. I enjoy reading your very informative quarterly newsletters. Keep them coming. Chief Bob Barrow told me that Fred Elkins has medical problem. God's blessing and good health to both of you, whom I met for the first time in Dallas last year. Hope to see you again in New Orleans, 2001. **(Chief Joe Cherniga, 112 Alden Drive, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547)** *(Thanks for being concerned about Fred and me. Editor - Doug Courchene).*

We had some disconcerting news from one of our former associate editors and his wife, Chief Bob Vreeland and Mrs. Barbara Vreeland. Bob is one of our true pioneers and fire fighting veterans. He suffered a severe heart attack on May 3, 2001. The medics did a good job on that, but he was having problems with some subsequent medication. Presently, Bob is recovering in a nursing home. Barbara says he is showing improvement. They had sold their home in December 1999, and had been living in a Senior's Retirement Home. Barbara noted there were a number of incapacitated people in that home and said Bob had saved a life or so there using the Heimlich maneuver. Their son, Albert, and daughter, Barbara, have been of great help during this trying period.

Bob was one of the first fire protection people I met after I joined the Fire Protection Division of Headquarters SAC. He met me on my first official staff assistance visit. Being elderly, I cannot recall which 15 Air Force Base it was, but I got "indoctrinated." I

JUL-SEP 2001

Page 6

Had then, and still have now, great respect for Bob. I know the fire protection family, including myself, hopes for a swift and complete recovery. Their address: **Bob and Barbara Vreeland, 7858 California Ave, Apt 207M, Riverside, CA 92504-2541 (909) 688-5205** (*Associate Editor-Midwest Gus*).

.....
Donald W. Warner, CMSgt. USAF (Ret), Command Fire Chief, Air Force Reserve Command is collecting Air Force Fire Truck History <http://members.home.com/affirealbum/default.htm> I commend him for undertaking such an enormous task, starting in 1980, with intent to someday having a complete Historical Pictorial Album of Air Force Fire Trucks, structural as well as crash trucks. I urge retired chiefs to help Don by sending photos. But first, visit the website and see what he has already collected. Don's email: Donald.warner@afrc.af.mil Don assures me money isn't the criteria driving this effort.

I marvel at fire person, not people, seems there are so few these days who are interested enough to search relentlessly and document history of our profession. Folks, time is running out unless the few act. Don Warner is such a person, so go to your attic, closet, wipe the dust. If you have material and don't intend to share or use it, what are you going to do with it before you . . .depart the scene. Chief Gene Courtemanche, Chief Fred Elkins, others, and I are working with Don, supplying, identifying and clarifying items relating to older fire trucks. As you can see, it's a team effort by those who truly love the profession.

Don, isn't riveted to one thing. Last year in Dallas, Texas, he captured activities at Pioneer Day, 26 August 2000. Was his personal effort appreciated? You bet! Just ask Chief J. K. Schmidt, one the earliest pioneers, along with Pioneer James O'Regan whom attended the special event in Dallas. Chief Schmidt's eyes told the story. I felt privileged sharing the platform with Chief Jim Hotell, opening remarks followed by Chief George Hall, Chief Milford Puckett, Chief Fred Elkins, Chief Bob Barrow, Pioneer Chief J. K. Schmidt, Pioneer James O'Regan, and Chief Tom Smith. At times, I felt the presence of departed pioneers, Chief Jasper Patterson, Chief Ross Stephens, Chief Otis E. Tinkle, Chief Golden Simmons, Chief Frank Joseph, VI, Chief Roscoe Bell, Chief Joseph Gerrity and others. We have three living pioneers: Chief J. K. Schmidt, Chief Paul Odell and Chief Bob Vreeland.

Chief Hugh Pike suggested Pioneer Day every three years. I agreed. Other retirees may disagree with that, but I feel the work involved, planning, organizing much dictate the three-year cycle is best. No doubt retired fire chiefs will go to New Orleans, 2001. I know Chief Bob Barrow is going to New Orleans. Chief.one@home.com **Editor – Doug Courchene.**

.....
Dear Doug . . .I thought you would enjoy a copy of this biography since it was uyou who inspired me to look into and complete this work.

JUL-SEP 2001

Page 7

Hope you enjoy it and appreciate the great family for whom it was written. Let me know what you think about it and use it in whatever way you choose. I'm sending Chief Lloyd Garner a copy also. How is that book progressing? Looking forward to that.

Hope you are well and would enjoy hearing from you.. **Mrs. Iris McWhirter, 4600 18 Avenue N. St Petersburg, FL 33713** *(What Iris eluded to was a Photo-Journal Biography "Family of Fire Fighters – Chief Frank Joseph VI, and A Great Family of Fire Fighters" written by her. I share with readers my response to Iris: "I'm so appreciative for the Photo-Journal Biography. I will cherish that document. The unique biography is a literary work of art. This historical record of the past is a convincing story of a pioneer in the annals of fire protection. Chief Frank Joseph was that man. Again, thank you so much for a most impressive document. Words on words, beyond style – great work. Editor – Doug Courchene*

I continue to write manuscripts for the book. I finally finished research on the Pacific Theater of Operation. For some strange reason(s) people who served there are reluctant to respond to research. Each chapter needs more editing and rewrites. I'm not pleased with fragmented parts. In short, I need to rid excess baggage. Also, I mailed the photo-journal to Chief Don Warner and gave him permission to further publicize the document. Don has done that. In fact, he placed it on disc and sent me a copy along with the return of photo-journal. For sure the word will get out concerning Chief Joseph and how well it should. What better way to honor a pioneer. Lastly, I thank Chief Lloyd Garner for being a key part in supplying fitting words. After all, Lloyd work for Chief Joseph at MacDill and was Crew Chief of famous Rescue 10, the Air Force first rescue truck
Editor – Doug Courchene dcourchene@goldsboro.net

Finally, after some very somber and sad portions of this newsletter, I have a couple of lighter items to relate to you subscribers.

The first: A C-141A Starlifter had been delayed for take-off for over an hour at Thule Air Force Base, Greenland, because its sewage container had not been pumped out. An Airman meandered up to the aircraft with the containment pump, fiddled around for a while, then got ready to leave. The young Captain, who was the aircraft commander, confronted the airman, and stated, "You have caused me to be two hours late for my take-off. I'll see that you are not only reprimanded, but punished as well!"

The young airman smiled and said, "Sir, with all due respect, I have no stripes, I'm stationed at Thule Greenland, it's 20 degrees below zero, and I'm pumping crap from an aircraft. Just what kind of punishment did you have in mind?"

All you fire fighters do not take this next one seriously. We know you would not act like the guys depicted in the "Joke."

The second: Fire!

A Brunette, a Redhead and a Blonde escape a burning building by climbing to the roof. Firemen are on the street below, holding a blanket for them to jump in.

The firemen yell to the Brunette, "Jump! Jump! It's your only chance to survive!" The Brunette jumps and swish, the firemen yank the blanket away . . . the Brunette slams into the sidewalk like a tomato.

"C'mon! Jump! You gotta jump!" say the firemen to the Redhead.

"Oh, no, you're gonna pull the blanket away!" says the Redhead.

"No! It's Brunettes we can't stand! We are OK with Redheads!"

"OK" says the Redhead, and she jumps. Swish, the firemen yank the blanket away, and the lady is flattened on the pavement like a pancake.

Finally the Blonde steps to the edge of the roof. Again the firemen yell "Jump!" "You have to jump!" "No way! You have to jump! We won't pull the blanket away!"

"Look," the Blonde says, "Nothing you say is gonna convince me that you're not gonna pull the blanket away! So what I want you to do is put the blanket down, and back away from it. . ."x

Please note these guys were called firemen, and you are fire fighters. So don't take the joke seriously, hah! Take care, we will see you in the Oct-Dec 01 edition of the QNN. **Associate Editor-Midwest Gus.**

I wish to remind readers that **Chief Bob Barrow is also an Associate Editor** email Chief.one@home.com **Between Bob, Gus and I, please correspond with any of the three concerning information for newsletter. Bob is one to keep in touch and so is Nan.**

That cluster of fire chiefs and their wives about Ft. Walton Beach, FL are so busy fire chiefs appear to be still at work and not retired. They are the busiest at their monthly breakfast. Undoubtedly, the breakfast is an ideal place for a story to start.

At the beginning of our newsletter eleven years ago, Chief Bob Vreeland was the Associate Editor until he could no longer perform in that capacity. During his tenure, at less than minimum wage, he contributed articles, but most of all, he sent boxes of material of historical significance, much of which will appear in the book. Bob has

JUL-SEP 2001

Page 9

given me original documents and pictures for the book. He gave me enough material to write a book on Chief Bob Vreeland. Like Chief Joseph's generations of fire fighters, so does Chief Bob Vreeland's family go back several generations of fire fighters. Chief Vreeland was born in New Jersey and Chief Joseph was born in New York City, nonetheless, the Garden State and Big Apple bordered each other for good reason and what a difference that has made to Air Force Fire Protection.

Now, I wish to comment about another Associate Editor – Gus Hunter. Each time I've asked Gus to help with the newsletter, he has promptly responded by doing a quarterly publication, once a year. On this occasion, the timing was perfect. Since March 2001, my life changed because of medical concern. My prostate biopsy on March 8, 2001, indicated cancer in one of six. I immediately decided to have surgery over treatment, but I had to wait until May 14, 2001, for surgery. After surgery four hours in recovery, and five days of hospitalization, I went home with my not so favored friend, catheter for three weeks. I returned to Duke Medical Center to have 20 staples removed from my stomach, but the moment most anticipated was removal of catheter. For others who have been there, it's difficult to sleep with that "thing."

I'm grateful to Gus for doing this newsletter. Without him, this quarterly would have been late reaching you. Gus can be counted on!

I'm thankful for all the words of encouragement from all parts of the world. My friends didn't forget me when the uplift was most needed. Thank You. Editor – Doug Courchene.