

Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs' Network
QUARTERLY NETWORK NEWS



*Legendary Pioneers Who Reminisce About the Past
But Focus on the Future*

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Founded by Doug Courchene

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What a busy summer this has been! Having traveled more than I anticipated and facing many personal and family illnesses along with the loss of another nephew to cancer, I must admit that through it all God continues to bless our family. With the strength and love of a great family and much encouragement and support from a superb group of caring friends that I have been blessed to acquire over the years, I remain on the green side of grass and continue to look forward with optimism. Thanks to all. One of the numerous highlights of the summer was to take my autistic grandson, Jacob, on a road trip to New Orleans LA. We were able to obtain billeting in the Navy



Lodge at Port New Orleans for a week, and what a great time we had. Jacob is a special child and readily makes friends. In short order he made

friends with the staff of the lodge and read all he could find about the history of Port New Orleans and told me all about the damage received during Hurricane Katrina back in 2005. As we drove around the Port, he would point out all the unrepaired buildings and the new construction in progress. We arrived in New Orleans on a Sunday afternoon. We had spent the previous night in Pascagoula MS looking for the Mississippi Squirrel that Ray Stephens sings about. We attended Church in Pascagoula Sunday morning and did not change out of our church clothes prior to proceeding to New Orleans. When we arrived in New Orleans, we took the ferry to the West Bank where Port New Orleans is

located. Jacob and I were standing out on the bow on the ferry each of us with coat and tie



on and Jacob said "Poppa I would bet all the folks on this ferry think we have just come from a funeral." Our stay in New Orleans was truly a grandfather and

grandson tourist thing: River Walk, French Market, Aquarium, Imax Theater, stern wheeler boat rides on the river, New Orleans Zoo, Street Music (Jacob is a Drummer so you know he got into that), trolley car rides, Mardi Gras World, and food. Autistic persons in some cases possess somewhat of an aversion toward food. Those who have been touched by autism in most cases have a very narrow range of foods they will eat. Jacob for instance loves chicken strips with french fries, McDonald's double quarter pounder with cheese plain with French fries; additionally he (on and off) likes spaghetti. So you can see the challenge we had to find a



place in the mornings that served the above-mentioned food for breakfast. I did manage to get him hooked up with another food that he liked fairly well--pancakes with plenty of butter and syrup. We did go out to different restaurants that specialized

in different varieties of Cajun food. When Jacob looked at a menu and determined there were no entrées consisting of chicken strips with fries or a Mickey D double quarter pounder with cheese plain with fries, or no spaghetti, we were out of there pronto.

Next stop was Bubba Gump's Seafood Restaurant. I believe those beautiful young female waitresses enticed Jacob to go in and sit down at a table. When he looked at the menu and saw only seafood meals, he said "Poppa loan me your cell phone." He called his Mother in Atlanta and asked "Mom do I like fish"? She immediately said "Jacob you love fish." He closed the cell phone and turned to me and said "Poppa I just remembered I love fish." I am not sure if it was Jacobs love for fish or the enjoyment he



got from watching and talking to the pretty waitresses that kept serving us and talking to him that kept us there for almost three hours, but Jacob sure ate a lot of fish.

During our visit to New Orleans we saved the best for last. We were able to spend one whole day, which was not enough time, at the World War II Museum. What an awesome tribute to the men and women who fought World War II, whether in the Pacific Theater or the European Theater. The surroundings you are subjected to in the Museum provide one with a clear understanding of how antiquated the weapons of warfare were back then. You see no Kevlar body armor or Kevlar helmets. Armor plating for vehicle hardening was nonexistent. Yet our guys and



gals fought the war with those somewhat primitive weapons, equipment, and armament. When the war broke out, the United States

was outmanned and outgunned in Europe as well as in the Pacific. However, the willingness to go to war was one that was felt as a civic duty that must be accomplished so they could get back home to be with their families and build a better world and stronger America. The museum provides audio stations that allow you to listen to and absorb the feelings of the troops in their own words. As you listen to these great men and women talking about their war experiences; invariably, they will begin discussing the ending of the war and returning to the United States and working toward transforming America away from the industrial wartime footing toward a peace-

time industry. Even as they are talking about the horror of war, their discussions will turn to family, friends, and their plans after the war. I picked up on a common thread among all of them as they spoke: family, education and a job. When the troop ships from Europe and the Pacific arrived in America, members of the greatest generation did not want a handout but they did want a leg up. Thousands went to school and became doctors, lawyers, politicians, and businessmen and worked hard to retool America into a strong private sector, thus reshaping America into a strong capitalistic society. When I left the World War II Museum, I was struck by the final thoughts I had about those who returned home after fighting such a bloody war that cost America and our allies such an extreme number of lives and natural resources. As mentioned earlier, they did not want a handout, they did not want food stamps, welfare checks, or a free ride. My impression was they wanted to become that same person that went off to war and now that they were back the cry was "I Want a JOB." What a testament to the character of those people. If you have the opportunity, please go to the World War II Museum in New Orleans LA. Additionally if you are blessed with children or grandchildren, think about doing a road trip just you and one of them. Make the time special between the two of you. I have been doing this each summer with one of my grandchildren, and money cannot buy what we have experienced and shared during the one-on-one time we have had. Our trip did not end when we departed New Orleans. We were able to stop and visit the Navy Battle Ship USS Alabama, which is berthed in Mobile Bay AL. What a great ship that was



manned by many brave seamen who sacrificed much during the war years and made lasting contributions while bringing peace back to our nation. Please forgive me if you think this article is inappropriate for the Quarterly Network

Newsletter. I just wanted to share a short period of my life spending quality time with my Grandson Jacob Puckett. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)



RALPH "PAPA, SONNY" DEWEY SHELTON, JR. passed away August 28, 2009, at the Northwest Louisiana War Veteran's Home in Bossier City. A mass to celebrate his life was held at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 1, 2009, at Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church, in Bossier City, with Msgr. Earl V. Provenza officiating. Interment



followed in Hill Crest Memorial Park with full military honors. Ralph was born in Beaumont TX on November 1, 1930. After graduating from St. Anthony's High School, he joined the Beaumont Fire Department. He enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1951. He served 20 years active duty for our country. His service included the Korean and the Vietnam Wars, duty stations in New Mexico (where he met the love of his life), Texas, Spain, Japan, and other locations. After retiring from active duty, he became the Fire Chief at Barksdale Air Force Base LA in 1972. During his tenure at Barksdale, he participated in the first Gulf War and was very proud of his accomplishments in Fire and Emergency Services at Barksdale and the Air Force. He retired in 1991. Ralph was proud to carry on the family tradition of serving in Fire and Emergency Services. His father, uncle, and brother all served in the Beaumont TX Fire Department. His son, Ray, is a Retired Deputy Fire Chief and two grandsons continue the fire service tradition while serving in the Bossier City Fire Department. After retiring, Ralph stayed active at his lake house, raising bees, goats, miniature horses, rabbits, and chickens and enjoying his family, to include grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Ralph was preceded in death by his parents: Ralph Dewey Shelton Sr., and wife Helen Mary, his sister Joann Shelton and brother Leon "Buddy" Shelton. He will be greatly missed by the love of his life of 55 years, Kathleen "Kitty"; daughter, Dr. Debra P. Shelton; son Ralph Jay Shelton and wife Anna; son Austin Ray Shelton and wife Bobbie Sue,

all of Bossier City; and son, Samuel Shelton and wife Cyndi of Lexington KY; five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

I am certainly sorry to hear about the passing of Fire Chief Ralph Shelton. He was a great friend to many of us younger Fire Chiefs. Our prayers are with Kitty and the Shelton Family. (Larry Adams, Fire Chief Retired Minot, ND lwadams3@srt.com)

Sharon and I offer our deepest sympathy on the loss of Chief Ralph Shelton. It seems like yesterday when in the summer of 1972 we came to Barksdale, AFB as part of a new influx of a great team (Shelton, Story, Flannigan, Traylor, Risinger, Dembinski, Sweeny, and King). Our personal relationships have continued over these long years. Miss Kitty we thank you for sharing Ralph with us all. He was a great Fire Chief, Noncommissioned Officer, and more importantly. a friend. (George Hall, CMSgt Retired, Mary Esther, Florida. ifac@cox.net)

God bless Chief Shelton and all that he did for our nation. I enjoyed hearing his stories and jokes at the Fire Conferences. America's loss is Heaven's gain. Please accept my condolences to all his family and friends. (Ben Reese, Deputy Fire Chief, Tinker AFB, OK Benjamin.Reese@tinker.af.mil)

My deepest sympathy for Chief Shelton's passing. He will be missed by all and remain a legend in Air Force Fire and Emergency Services. (Gary Schott, CMSgt Retired, garyschott@home.com)

My sympathy and deep sorrow on the passing of another pioneer of the Air Force Fire Service. Our ranks are becoming depleted with each year that sees the old order stealing away into the sunset of life. May Chief Shelton rest in peace. (William Ryan, CMSgt Retired, chhfchf2@comcast.net)

It is certainly a sad day for the fire service with the passing of Chief Ralph Shelton. His footprints can be found throughout the Air Force. How many careers of young Airmen did he impact? Impossible to say but he definitely made a difference. I was blessed to have known him for many years, and he taught me much concerning large-frame aircraft firefighting. He was a kind and sharing person and was much loved. Evelyn and I will continue to pray that God will comfort the Shelton family. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

JOE TAYLOR, 71, of Peoria AZ and formerly of



Goodyear AZ passed away July 28, 2009, in Peoria. He was born August 13, 1937, in Johnson City TN to John and Hazel Taylor. Joe married Betty (Fisher) Valentine's Day, 1958. They moved to Arizona the same year where Joe became

a firefighter at Williams Air Force Base. Later he was transferred to Luke Air Force Base. While on Active duty with the Air Force, Joe served a tour of duty in Vietnam and two tours in Japan. Prior to returning to Arizona in 1973, Joe and his family moved to Florida, California, and Greenland. He served as Fire Chief while he was stationed in Japan and was an Assistant Fire Chief when he returned to Luke Air Force Base. After retirement from active duty Joe became a civilian firefighter and retired from Luke Air Force Base AZ Fire And Emergency Services as Assistant Fire Chief for Fire Prevention. During his military and civilian fire service careers, he received numerous awards and decorations. Joe is survived by Betty his, wife of 51 years; daughter Sundee & husband Jim North, sister Margaret Laws, brother-in-law Carrol & wife Eileen Fisher, and grandchildren Zachary, Jared, and Bailey. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Quarterly Network Newsletter for Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs, QNN Editor, 110 Kensington Court Dothan AL or to First Southern Baptist Church of Avondale, 1001 N. Central Ave. Avondale AZ 85323 or to the charity of your choice. Interment was at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona.

I worked with Mr Joe Taylor 1989-1994. He was a great boss, mentor, and friend for life. We shared many experiences and memories together during our "Luke Fire" days. His positive attitude was contagious, and I'm deeply saddened to see such an honorable firefighter/brother leave us too early. I thank you Joe for the memories, friendship, support, and guidance. (CMSgt David Fain, Functional Manager HQAETC Fire & Emergency Services david.fain@RANDOLPH.AF.MIL)

I first met Joe as a young Staff Sergeant at Luke AFB AZ in 1989. Joe was a friend, brother, mentor, and father all rolled into one for so many of us. He would ALWAYS take the time to listen to your concerns and help you anyway he could. Joe influenced so many of the decisions I have made throughout my life and

career. He will be missed in the physical aspect but not in our hearts and minds. You never forget a man like Joe Taylor. Joe hasn't left us . . .he's just waiting for us to catch up with him. (David Givens, Assistant Fire Chief, Luke AFB, AZ David.Givens@luke.af.mil)

I met Joe Taylor at Williams AFB, near Mesa AZ in the early 1980s. I rode the back seat of an o-11A crash truck with Joe as our crew driver. I floated down the Salt River on inner tubes with him during a couple of shift parties. We swapped lies and old war stories during countless hours of boredom while on line standby. Joe was honest to a fault and always a friend to the end no matter the situation. I'll miss his big smile and the compassion from a bigger than life heart. We all learned many things from Joe Taylor, but I'll always remember him as good man who cared very much for everyone around him. You just can't ask more from a man than that. God bless Joe Taylor and farewell to a genuine friend. Keep the wind at your back my brother. (Everett Allen, Assistant Fire Chief, Luke AFB, Retired bcatdahood@cox.net)

Mr Joe Taylor was one of the individuals that a young mind would come upon in life and truly be positively influenced forever. He helped shape me into the man I am today. Mr Taylor was such an inspiration to me on how to be a professional and how to be a decent human being. Everyone Joe came in contact with had to have grown without ever even knowing. I worked with Joe at Luke AFB from 1990 to 1994, and I can truly say I'm glad to have known him and he will be missed. "Thanks Joe for helping me to "get there"!!!! (Darryl Mobley, Engineer, Tempe, Arizona Fire Department)

I didn't know Mr Joe Taylor; however, our heartfelt feeling goes out to his family and friends. We who were in the fire service always have strong feelings for those fellow fire service men and women. (Thomas Johnson CMSgt Retired USAF, tomjo120@bellsouth.net)

I worked with Mr Joe Taylor at Luke AFB AZ from 1992 to 1998. He was a pleasure to work with--high speed, low drag, and always ahead of the game. His sense of humor was one of those traits that just made it nice to come to work each day. Respectful and respected, Joe was a great role model for others to pattern their work habits and careers after. I will truly miss my friend, Joe. (Rod Coleman, CMSgt Retired Magnolia, Delaware zoners4@comcast.net)

When I arrived at Luke AFB, Arizona in 1996 to become the Fire Chief, Mr Joe Taylor was one of the first to come to my office and welcome Evelyn and me and offer his full



support and assistance. I might add he was a man of his word and provided complete support in our efforts to improve the Luke Fire Department and provide quality fire and emergency services for the Luke community.

What a great man he was. I will never forget his humor and the easy way he had about himself to get the hard jobs accomplished quickly and efficiently. What a pleasure it was to work with him. He was one of the most well-liked individuals I have ever known. He was especially loved within the Luke Fire Department. I quite frequently recall the fun everyone had (especially Joe) on the day of his retirement from Federal Service. I believe everyone in the Luke Fire Department got wet. We can all be proud of Joe's accomplishments. He had great love for his family and friends, served his community



with dignity and respect, and served the Air Force with integrity and the United States with honor. Further, I certainly appreciate all the sacrifices Joe's wife, Betty, made while

supporting him throughout his career. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

WAR STORY CORNER



PETE E. SEMANICK, JR, USAF RETIRED
Tulln Air Base Austria
"The Good Old Days Part II." My assignment at Tulln Air Base would last for two and a half years. Little did I realize at the time, the exciting history behind this installation flanked

between the base of a hillside on one side

and the famous Danube River on the other. The entire stretch of land was very fertile and flat; over the years the sediment from the continuous overflow of the Danube created a soil rich for farming. Before becoming a German air base, the land was a large plot used for growing potatoes. For years it was referred to by the troops as "The Tulln Potato Patch," a moniker not unlike "Boston Baked Beans." The Germans constructed the site as an air base training location in 1938. It was also used during the Hitler war years as a convenient destination for him to visit Vienna and enjoy the sights along the Danube River. The climate and all-around good weather conditions made it an ideal spot for an air base.



Tulln Potato Patch pre-1938
Danube River (left), Langenlebarne and potato fields

The base has the distinction of being the only German air base to be captured by the Russian navy. After learning the Germans were in the process of blowing up the airfield, the Russians, headquartered on the Danube in Vienna, sailed troops up the river to nearby Langenlebarne. The ship docked and the troops marched the few hundred yards to the air base, capturing the site without a shot being fired. According to base historical records, the base incurred very little damage by allied bombers near the end of the war.



Tulln Air Base 1945

In August 1945 Vienna was divided into the four famous zones: American, English, French, and Russian. American forces were granted permission to occupy the base even though it was within the northern portion of Russian territory, 20 miles from Vienna. As new troops we all too soon learned how difficult it would be to visit Vienna during our off time. Special passes had to be issued with a full page of instructions listing what one could and could not do while enroute, and there was only one road to and from Tulln to the American zone of Vienna. The entire trip into Vienna was through the Russian zone, and this was a single two-lane rough pavement road with large signs in English posted every few thousand yards along the way. The first sign one saw was: "RUSSIAN ZONE - OFF LIMITS TO AMERICAN MILITARY and CIVILIANS. From Tulln signs such as: "FOLLOW RED SIGNS TO VIENNA - ALL OTHER ROADS OFF LIMITS" and from Vienna the signs read: "FOLLOW BLUE SIGNS TO TULLN AIR BASE - DON'T LEAVE MAIN ROAD." And to top it off, the joke sign for safety read: "ROAD TO VIENNA HAZARDOUS NARROW WINDING ROAD CLUTTERED WITH CARTS, CHILDREN AND UNPREDICTABLE NATIVE DRIVERS." All signs were in very large print so as to leave no doubt what was ahead on the road. We also had an alternate and much safer means of visiting Vienna. A main train rail ran parallel to the base with a small one-room train station and platform just across from the main gate. Instructions were clear: "Stay on the path to the station platform. When the train arrives, get on the train and do not wander off the platform while waiting for the train." Everything else was off limits as it was within the Russian zone. The primary purpose of the base was to support the Embassy and Attaché personnel in Vienna and numerous dignitaries who visited the base after the 1945 takeover. This list of visitors included: Herbert Hoover, John Dulles, General Hoyt Vandenberg, General Omar Bradley, and Miss Jacqueline Cochran (WASP war hero and first woman to fly the famous "Hump"). The first command to control the base was European Airport Transport Service (EATS). It would later become part of United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) and Twelfth Air Force. Numerous command designations were given to the base: 501st Air Service Group, 516th Troop Carrier Squadron, 10th Airdrome Squadron, 81st Airdrome

Squadron, 313th Troop Carrier Group, 7909th Air Force Base, 7360th Air Base Group, 7360th Air Base Group, and finally 7360th Base Complement Squadron, Tulln Air Base, APO 777, US Army. The base is still active today and is used by the Austrian Air Force to train helicopter pilots, crew members, and mechanics as well as support for NATO. Arriving in late 1952 from Berlin, my nine compatriots and I were quickly assigned to the fire department. The fire station was located in the original base stockade building with six prison stalls, two to a room. The other end of the building was really used as a stockade, with an identical layout of stalls. Believe it or not, when I visited the base in 1998, the building was still used as a stockade for Austrian Air Force prisoners.



*Fliegerhorst Bromowski 2009
(formerly Tulln)*

Tulln Air Base is now named Fliegerhorst Bromowski after the famous WWI Austro-Hungarian air ace hero Hauptman Godwin Bromowski who became Commander of the Austro-Hungary Air Force in 1918. (Pete E. Semanick, Jr. USAF Retired, psemanic@swcp.com)

Editor's Note: I have talked with Chief Semanick and he has agreed to a third part to his story of Tulln Air Base Austria "The Good Old Days." You will see this in the next edition of the QNN. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders, CMSgt Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

During my career in Air Force Fire and Emergency Services, I have been very fortunate to be exposed to some of the most unique and most effective fire protection leaders/managers of our time. Hoyd Sanders was one; Elbert TZ Sherrill is another. Today I would like to relate something to you about

Chief Sherrill that is very unique but very effective. When I arrived at Ellsworth AFB, I strutted into the administration office and announced who I was and that I was ready to go to work. Where is Chief Sherrill? When he came out of his office, my first impression was that I was going to be working for my Dad. He had a kind face and a voice that immediately put you at ease. He shook my hand and immediately asked me to assess an idea of his that all airmen should be able to take leave any time if the manpower was good. I said "certainly . . . isn't that what the civilians get to do?" His huge smile let me know right away that he was a man that cared for the troops and was willing to take on silly rules when he saw they had no practical benefit. After one week of inprocessing and five standup meetings, I determined that this gentleman Fire Chief was very pragmatic, old fashioned, and progressive all at the same time. I had heard of his 3X5 cards over the years but always thought it was an old wives' tale. Let me assure you . . . they existed. Chief Sherrill kept a stack of 3X5 cards in a small box near his desk. On my second Monday he called me to his office and said we were going to go over the Department Rules, I would have to remember them, and we would not leave until I did. OK I thought this is different but I was beginning to trust this man more with each passing day, so I listened. He took the cards out of the box and removed the rubber band holding them together. "Rule #1 the Chief exclaimed: Supervisors will always take care of the airmen and place them first." OK I thought . . . good stuff! "Rule #2: always try to find a way to say yes!" "Rule #3: Leave may be granted under the following provisions.".. (A short list on the single card followed). After each card the Chief would ask me to repeat the rule. Now; I was a 36-year-old MSgt and this was beginning to seem frivolous! But I bit my tongue and listened. He went through the 40 or so cards and at the end he asked me; "What is rule #1"? I repeated it verbatim. He smiled and said "great, you will do just fine here." You see, it wasn't about me or the cards. It was about the people we were responsible for. As Chief Sherrill saw it we had a responsibility to the parents and families of our young airmen to care for them while helping them grow into productive adult citizens. He didn't care where they came from, what color they were, or what education they had. They were

firefighters and airmen. That's all he needed to know. And he expected his NCOs to follow that creed. We did and the cards worked. I miss the cards. Chief Sanders helped make me a professional NCO and gave me confidence that I didn't have before. Chief Sherrill showed me how to grow people through diverse programs and rules that sometimes pushed the boundaries. They didn't worry about the small stuff. Neither man sought glory or fame. I saw both turn down enviable jobs that others would die for. I thank them for making me a better firefighter and a better person. (Ben Reese, Deputy Fire Chief, Tinker AFB, OK Benjamin.Reese@tinker.af.mil)

Editor's Note: I must say Ben Reese has placed Chief Sherrill in a bad situation. I am certain that my reputation can only be improved with my name being in the same article as Chief Sherrill. Somehow I doubt Chief Sherrill's reputation will ever be able to recover with my name being in the same article as his. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt Retired Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

PUBLISHING AND MAILING FUND



The QNN is privately funded by members' contributions. All donations are strictly voluntary as no membership fees are charged. Donations help pay postage and publishing costs, which include ink, paper, and maintenance of my old printer. Members have been extremely generous with contributions to financially support the QNN. Thank you for the funds you have contributed to keep this effort going. As of today the QNN has a checking account with Tyndall Federal Credit Union. If you want to contribute by check please make it payable to "Hoyd O. Sanders, Jr., Editor QNN." If you want to send cash through the mail that is your call. For planning purposes, as money becomes available, I plan to purchase a laptop computer that will be dedicated to the QNN. As of now I have the QNN information loaded on my personal computer. Should

anything happen to me it could become difficult for the information to be gleaned from my computer and passed on to the next QNN Editor. With a dedicated laptop it would just be a matter of handing it off and providing the password. Additionally, I want to purchase a quality printer for use with the laptop to publish the QNN. As of now I am using my personal printer to print the QNN. However, the list of folks who do not have e-mail and need a hard copy through the United States Postal Service continues to grow. This is a good thing and I am happy to do this for those that want it. With each edition, I am printing approximately 400 sheets. But, my printer is getting old and may not be able to continue supporting this effort. The contributors for this past quarter are: Ms Iris Joseph McWhirter, CMSgt Retired Paul Sutphin, Mr William Ogletree, and Mr Ted Taipalus. Before publishing and mailing this issue, we have \$600.29 in the treasurer.

FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH DEPARTMENT

“ACTION --- SANDY” (Ted Taipalus, Alba, TX)

Editor’s Note: I probably need to interject information here to explain the above note I received from Mr Ted Taipalus. I personally believe the worst thing that was ever invented has to be the “sticky note” pad. When I arrived at AFCESA back in 1979 I reported in to Lt Col Robert Allen who at the time was Chief of Air Force Fire Protection. He asked me what part of the fire service I enjoyed most. Those who know me can attest to the fact that I enjoy operations. Col Allen said “Great you will be working in Operations; Mr Ted Taipalus heads up that section.” Col Allen escorted me back to Mr Taipalus’ office and asked him to take care of me. It did not take me long (approximately 2 minutes) to get to know that Mr Taipalus did not like to deal with correspondence. He told me “hello, glad to see you again.” He pointed to a desk that was piled about two feet high with paperwork and said “that is your desk over there, I was expecting you to be here earlier, and I believe there are some pieces of correspondence on the desk somewhere that needs to be responded to.” End of Conversation! Everything from a White House Inquiry, Congressional Inquiry to numerous questions concerning delivery of the P-15s was on that desk with a sticky

note from Mr Taipalus saying “Action--- Sandy.” Had I kept all those sticky notes with “Action --- Sandy” on them that I received from Mr Taipalus over the next 3 years, I would have had enough to wallpaper a 5,000-square-foot home. The most recent “Action --- Sandy” note above is his way of saying you and Evelyn pack up the car and come visit me in Alba TX. We may just do that real soon. (Hoyd “Sandy” Sanders CMSgt Retired Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

Rhein-Main AB Firefighters Reunion; Upon returning home from a small but very successful reunion (See article Reunion of Sorts last issue of QNN), I received a call inviting me and Linde to a Rhein-Main AB firefighters reunion in San Angelo TX. It was for all firefighters stationed at Rhein-Main AB in the 1980s and -1990s. We were thinking of taking a trip to Texas to visit friends in Fort Worth, so this sounded like a good idea. I was told that I could get all the information on a Facebook site. I have never used Facebook but how hard could it be. After a few tries I was finally able to access the Rhein-Main Firefighters page. All that was listed were the dates and the motel. Linde and I arrived in the early afternoon. We asked if any of the other people had checked in yet. No. We asked if there was any information available on the reunion again, no. Linde and I just went to our room and tried to get more information. Suddenly there was a knock on the door, and Troy Todak was standing there. He informed us that we were getting together in Dan Robitaille's room at the end of the motel. Down we went and more folks came in and in just a few minutes Marty Andres and Dave Bryant came in. In no time at all we were all up to speed on everyone and it was like old times at Rhein-Main AB . After a few hours we left for our dinner date and met Mike and Janet Robertson. After dinner it was off to Dan’s room and more talk. The next day we had a picnic at Goodfellow AFB recreation area at the lake. Dave did the cooking and the food was fantastic. More and more folks joined us and before we realized it was starting to get dark so it was back to Dan’s room again and lots more war stories, Troy kept on say something about carrot cake and that there were no railroad tracks on Rhein-Main, but we know that he was wrong as Dan showed us on his computer with pictures of Google earth. There are railroad tracks on

Rhein-Main, but we could not find the carrot cake. The next day we went to a good Mexican restaurant for lunch before everyone started to leave for home. After lots of goodbyes and promises to keep in touch, we all headed out for our long trip home.



Front Row L/R: Janet Robertson, Linde Richardson, Dave Bryant, Denise Sirmans, Middle Row: Danny Herbert, Mary Ellen Walsh, Mike Robertson, Son of Tim, Tim Sirmans, Daughter of Tim, Charlie Richardson, Troy Todak, Michele & Robert Coffin. Back Row: Curtis Walsh, Marty Andres, Dan Robitaille, Russ White. (Missing from photo, James Hazelip.)

We all decided to make this a semiannual affair and we are all looking forward to the next reunion. Check out the Rhein-Main Firefighter site on Facebook.com for more comments from the folks. The best part of the reunion for me was the number of the attendees that are still in Fire Protection either still active or retired military or civilian working for military or civilian departments throughout the United States. (Charlie Richardson, CMSgt USAF Retired, clardb@att.net)

READERS' COMMENTS

Sandy, it has been quite some time since we have chatted and I must apologize for my lazy behavior. I have had some serious medical issues and have spent a lot of time in and out of the hospital. I am saddened by the loss of so many dear friends over the past few years, especially Chief Rod Winningham. Rod and I served together at Kunsan Air Base, Korea; Kadena Air Base, Okinawa; and the Air Force Civil Engineer Support Agency (AFCESA) Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida.

We were very close friends for over 30 years. After retirement we spent many a day at each other's homes. I cannot express my deep sadness at losing my friend and mentor. I love reading the QNN and seeing the writings of so many dear friends. George Hall and I taught Fire Prevention way back in 1975 at "good old Chanute." I went through fire school at Greenville AFB MS in March/April 1964. I had the good fortune of serving with so many outstanding fire guys like Chief Richard Duncan, the late Chief Ray Guise, Chief John Carroll, Chief Jim Hotell, Chief Ben Partin, Chief Duane Morgan, and now Chief of Fire Protection USAF Chief Don Warner and so many other greats. By the Bye, I have many fond memories of your kind guidance while working for the late Chief Doug Knowles at AFCESA. Our trip looking at large-frame aircraft accidents was extremely rewarding. I think I still owe you a steak dinner for my first job after retirement. I had a wonderful career spanning almost 29 years. I was fortunate to have served on numerous installations to include remote tours in Alaska and Korea where I met and married my wife of 30 years, Miss Charlie. My last tour was very memorable at Torrejon Air Base, Spain. We were closing the base when Operation Desert Strike/Desert Storm erupted. We recovered and launched untold numbers of large-frame aircraft in 200 days. The firefighters at Torrejon were some of the most dedicated, loyal folks I ever had the honor of serving with. Here is some money to support the continuation of the QNN. I certainly look forward to receiving the next issue. God bless our firefighters serving everywhere. I wish I could be standing next to them. I am working to get my computer back on line in the near future. (Paul D. (Sut) Sutphin, CMSgt, USAF Retired, Panama City, Florida)

Dear Sandy, I enjoyed your latest edition and thanks so much for the "hard copy" sent to us that are without e-mail! We share the same affection for Chief Doug Courchene! He surely did inspire me to contribute to the "Pioneers With Intent" edition for firefighters. I was married to Chief Frank Joseph and spent many years "responding!" I am so happy you are carrying on the great tradition you are. Thanks again & again. Sincerely (Iris Joseph McWhirter, St Petersburg, Florida)

DAVID M. CORNELL
Brigadier General, USAF Retired



I felt honored when Sandy asked if I would contribute an article for the Quarterly Network Newsletter. It has been a long while since I had the pleasure of working with our Air Force Fire Chiefs, but the memories remain strong and positive.

Above all else, that exceptional quality of Leadership among our firemen stands out in my mind. In time of emergencies, I knew it was vitally important to listen to my Fire Chief as a reliable source for sound advice and guidance. In my experience, all successful Fire Chiefs possess a wealth of knowledge gained through years of training and hands-on experience; thus, it is not by accident that they have an instinctive knowledge of what to do in emergency situations. They were always ready to step forward and take charge of fire protection and rescue efforts involving aircraft, vehicles, buildings or natural disasters. In most emergencies, large groups of people gather at the scene, and each has a piece of the action (like the old story of ants floating down stream on a stick, each ant thinking it is steering the stick). But, it was always the Fire Chief who would arrive first on the scene and take charge of the overall effort, keeping others safe until the immediate danger could be brought under control and turned over to an On-Scene Commander. It was great to be a part of that team at Base level. As the Base Fire Marshall, I was privileged to know my Fire/Crash Rescue Teams and enjoy a level of their confidence, afforded not even to our Senior Commanders. After going on to MAJCOM level, much of that confidence remained through past associations and continued involvement in fire prevention and protection. I enjoyed getting out to all the MAJCOM units and meeting with the Fire Chiefs and their crews. Then, there were those Annual Fire Conferences in Cincinnati, Ohio where I was invited to be a guest speaker from time to time. But my favorite contacts were in conjunction with periodic visits to the Base Engineer School at Wright

Patterson AFB with Chief Sandy Sanders and Chief Jim Legg. We were invited to talk about the “real world” of fire prevention and protection. I guess the students regarded us as “old geezers,” but we enjoyed watching those young lieutenants listen to our experiences in wide-eyed wonder. Chief Legg liked to start each session by saying: “General Cornell and Chief Sanders will lay out the facts for you, while I will baffle you with BS and fancy footwork!” (Actually, he laid out hard facts and pulled no punches—and the students loved it.) Those classes and conferences gave me the opportunity to periodically reconnect with Jim and Sandy, and they kept me apprised of developments in the field. I owe a debt of gratitude to all my Fire Chiefs but especially to those two outstanding individuals. Since retiring from Wright Patterson AFB in 1987, I have been fortunate to hold several jobs in civilian engineering. The biggest and best was Project Manager for design and construction of a \$319 million joint-use airport adjacent to Scott AFB. Two fire station projects were included in the project, which allowed me to continue my association with our Air Force firefighters. Since the year 2000, I have returned to my earliest calling: landscape painting. The pay is minimal, but the satisfaction and enjoyment are priceless. In my studies I ran across a piece written by Sir Winston Churchill wherein he likens military command to his efforts at painting. I think some of his observations also apply to the challenges you have all faced in your careers with fire prevention/protection and crash rescue. (The following is taken from Churchill’s book entitled “Painting as a Pastime”):

“In battle, two things are usually required of the commander in chief: to make a good plan for his army and secondly to keep a strong reserve. Both of these are also obligatory upon the painter.”

“To make a plan, thorough reconnaissance of the country where the battle is to be fought, its fields, mountains, rivers, bridges, trees, flowers, its atmosphere all require and repay attentive observation from a special point of view. So many colors on the hillside, each different in shadow and in sunlight, such brilliant reflections in the pool.”

“In order to make this plan, the general must not only reconnoiter the battleground, he must also study the achievements of the great captains of the past. He must bring the

observations he has collected in the field into comparison with the treatment of similar incidents by famous chiefs. Not only is your observation of nature sensibly improved and developed, but also you look at the masterpieces of art with an analyzing eye.”

“But it is in the use and withholding of their reserves that the great commanders have generally excelled. After all, when once the last reserve has been thrown in, the commander’s part is played. If that does not win the battle, he has nothing else to give.”

“The event must be left to luck and the fighting troops. But these last, in the absence of high direction, are apt to get into sad confusion, all mixed together in a nasty mess, without order or plan and consequently without effect.”

“Mere masses count no more. The pictorial battlefield becomes a sea of mud mercifully veiled in a fog of war. It is evident there has been a serious defeat. Even though the general plunges in himself and emerges bespattered as he sometimes does, he will not retrieve the day.”

All Fire Chiefs know the value of reconnaissance, though it must often be accomplished in a split second, with equally fast decisions for method of attack, deployment of forces and commitment of resources. Knowing when to commit forces takes all of a Chief’s knowledge and experience, but sometimes knowing when to withdraw involves an even more difficult decision. I have seen Fire Chiefs make these hard decisions many times, and sometimes lacking solid information they must rely on gut instinct--which most often turns out to be right! Chief Jim Legg told me about a time when a fully armed F-4 was engulfed by flames inside a revetment at Osan Air Base, Korea. While in the process of putting down the fire, the Chief suddenly ordered his men out to safety--just seconds before an explosion of on-board ordnance occurred that would have taken them all out. How did he know? I suspect it was gut instinct backed by years of experience. Although he didn’t say, I suspect Jim Legg may have been that good Fire Chief. Best wishes to all my friends in Fire Protection. (David M. Cornell, Brigadier General Retired USAF davlyncornell@sbcglobal.net)

Editor’s Note: What an honor it was for me to serve as General Cornell’s Deputy Fire Chief and Fire Chief at Osan Air Base, Korea,

1978/79. I was able to view first hand quality leadership in action. As I said in the last edition of the QNN, he was one “Cool Commander.” I never saw him excited; and I can say we had numerous situations where my blood pressure and pulse rate came up a bit, but he was always calm and confident. He is a gentleman of the first order, and I am blessed to be able to call him and his lovely wife, Lynn, friends. (Hoyd “Sandy” Sanders CMSgt Retired Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

EDITOR’S CORNER

Recently I was asked by CMSgt Tim Segal, Fire Chief Hurlburt Field, Florida, to participate in the grand opening ceremony for their new fire station. Everyone from the Commander of the 1st Special Operation Wing down to the firefighters riding the trucks were “Fired Up,” and rightly so, about their new fire station. In today’s climate of austere funding, this was truly a team effort to ensure a favorable result of the project. Additionally, I applaud the support given by Headquarters Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) headed up by Col Steve Hoarn (AFSOC A-7) and all the hard work by the folks on Hurlburt that resulted in an “awesome” fire station. It was definitely an honor for me to participate in the grand opening ceremony and to be able again to rub shoulders with some of the greatest people in the world, Air Force firefighters.



Col Mark Johnson 1st Special Operations Mission Support Group Commander looks on as Airman Edward Wooten 1st Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter and Hoyd Sanders, CMSgt USAF

Retired, uncouple fire hose signifying the official opening of the new Hurlburt Field FL Fire Station



This is the new combination crash/structural and Headquarters Fire Station Hurlburt Field, Florida. What a beautiful facility it is. The Hurlburt Field firefighters can certainly be proud of their new “digs.” The design and functionality of the facility are awesome. We old guys never had it so good!



Fire Chief CMSgt Tim Segal, and Deputy Fire Chief Michael Blakely contributed much to ensure all mission requirements were included in their new fire station. Further, Deputy Fire Chief Blakely served as the using organization’s point of contact from start to finish of this project. He played a vital role in making certain that from a user’s perspective things were done right and took the lead on identifying the appropriate furnishing packages to meet individual functional area needs.

Special Recognition: Congratulations to Deputy Fire Chief Michael P. Blakely. Mr Blakely received recognition as 1st Special Operations Wing Civilian of the year, received the Air Force Special Operations Command Harry P. Rietman Award, and topped all this off by being selected as the Department of Defense Civilian Fire Officer of the Year. Way to go Mr Blakely!

Editor’s Note: Let me say that being around these awesome firefighters at Hurlburt Field pumped me up. They got me thinking I should go get some desert BDUs and pack a bag for Iraq or Afghanistan. Miss Evelyn was able to quickly get my thinking straightened out. She said “Sandy, you are not twenty years old, ten feet tall, and bullet proof; look at those guys then look at yourself, you are fifty years older than they are.” Yes my wife of 49 years has developed a real talent for throwing cold water on my inflated ego. (Hoyd “Sandy” Sanders CMSgt Retired Sandy6T5@comcast.net)

Job Vacancy: There is a vacancy that needs to be filled. The position is Associate Editor for the Quarterly Network Newsletter (QNN). Don’t pay much but benefits are great. Work as many or as little number of hours as you want, all the time off you want, weekends and holidays off if you want, and work nights only if you want to. I must say it is a very rewarding job. So, anyone want to volunteer? Further, if you want to nominate someone for the job go right ahead, and I will make the call to them for a yes or no answer. The QNN has two Associate Editor positions. Chief Charlie Richardson is filling one of the positions, and the other one has been vacant for some time now. Please e-mail or call me if you are willing to serve. (Hoyd “Sandy” Sanders CMSgt Retired, Sandy6T5@comcast.net)