

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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Volume 4 2009

Founded by Doug Courchene

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What a great Holiday Season we had this year! Hope all enjoyed themselves, and "Santa" was good to them. The year 2009 certainly has been a year to remember. Lots of things have occurred, and I believe we have made some inroads toward renewing some old friendships and establishing many new ones. During the past few months I have received several suggestions concerning the QNN that I believe are valid and I hope in the new year we will make every effort to include some of these recommendations. One suggestion is to include more stories/articles concerning the "Now Fire Folks." Stories/articles that showcase the great men and women who are serving on the front line of today's fire and emergency services. The QNN is read by a large number of active duty (military and civilian) fire and emergency services folks. Each edition will include a request for articles/stories, and I certainly do appreciate those who have contributed. However, articles/stories relating to the "Now Fire Folks" have been very limited to nonexistent. So, anyone wanting to contribute an article concerning activities going on today, please forward them to me for inclusion in future issues of the QNN. I look forward to reading about the many contributions being made by the great men and women of today's Fire and Emergency Services. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders CMSgt USAF Ret [Sandy6T5@Comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@Comcast.net))

### **Special Interest Item**

#### **DoD Fire Fighters to be Memorialized at the National Fire Academy**

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation is working with DoD Fire & Emergency Service leaders to collect data regarding Line of Duty Deaths (LODD) involving DoD firefighters. The national Firefighter Memorial is located at the National Fire Academy (Emmitsburg MD), but until now, has never included DoD firefighters who have died in the line of duty. This is where our pioneers can help. If you have any information, including name, date of LODD, location and family information, please send it to: Ernst Piercy, [afafirechief@msn.com](mailto:afafirechief@msn.com). I am collecting any and all data to ensure we appropriately honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. For more information about the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, please visit: <http://www.firehero.org/>. (Ernst Piercy [afafirechief@man.com](mailto:afafirechief@man.com))

**Editor's Note:** For those of you who do not have e-mail and receive a hard copy of the QNN, you can mail any information you may have to me at 110 Kensington Court, Dothan AL 36303-9348. I will make sure Chief Piercy receives it.

### **READERS' COMMENTS**

Chief, best one yet. I could not put it down. I'm taking this home. I know that Kim would be interested. Thank you

**Boss!** It's great that you have the opportunity to share some of your time and experiences with your grandchildren. I know that is a blessing not only to you but to them also. (Doug Smith [DSmith8169@aol.com](mailto:DSmith8169@aol.com))

Thanks Sandy, the QNN just keeps getting better and better! (Larry Daniels CMSgt USAF Ret [ldaniels5@cox.net](mailto:ldaniels5@cox.net))

Please send me your address again so I can send some money. Great job on the current QNN. Thanks for all of your hard work. (Jim Legg CMSgt USAF Ret [leggman10@comcast.net](mailto:leggman10@comcast.net))

Chief Sanders, I have just gotten the Quarterly Network News (QNN). Thanks to Doug Smith and the Luke Fire Department, I was able to get on the distribution list. I retired in 1977 and am excited to see the names of some of the people I served with in the Fire Department. I am interested in making a contribution to the QNN. I heard you have been doing a superb Job, I just read the July-September edition, and it was great. Some of the people I worked with that I see on the list except Risinger and Cain were Pete Semanick and Joe Taylor. I worked with Joe Taylor from 1961 to 1964 at Misawa, Japan. It is very sad to find out this super person left us. I served with him on HH-43s for three years. I look forward to many more newsletters. (Sonny Sonnenberg [nsonnenberg1@cox.net](mailto:nsonnenberg1@cox.net))

Sandy: Well done! The recent edition was superb! I especially enjoyed your Grandson-Granddad adventure. The entire publication was first class, and for us, it is a "keeper." Many thanks. (Dave Cornell BG USAF Ret [davlyncornell@sbeglobal.net](mailto:davlyncornell@sbeglobal.net))

Hey Chief, great newsletter, really let me catch up on some old friends. Can you please add me to your distribution list? thanks for doing this. I keep in

touch with a few folks through email but this is fun too! It's not the same when you don't go the conferences anymore. (Sandy Cooper CMSgt USAF [Sandra.cooper@mcchord.af.mil](mailto:Sandra.cooper@mcchord.af.mil))

Chief, good edition. I think it was well balanced. What an honor for me to be mentioned. Thanks for sharing these with me. Am I on the official distribution list? (Steve Hoarn Col USAF Ret [shoarn@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:shoarn@tampabay.rr.com))

**Editor's Note:** I was fortunate to be able to attend Col Steve Hoarn's retirement at Hurlburt Field FL. Prior to his retirement, he was the Command Civil Engineer for Special Operations Command. During his career he served as Civil Engineer at several Air Force bases, and I was privileged to be his Fire Chief at Luke AFB AZ. You will find an article written by Col Hoarn in QNN Volume 4 October-December 2008. Col Hoarn and his wife, Nancy, now make their home in Tampa, Florida.



Chief, congratulations to Col Hoarn on the occasion of his retirement. It certainly was a great honor for me to serve with him at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. What tremendous leadership he displayed while commanding the Civil Engineer Squadron. I pray that God's blessings will be upon him and his family during a long and happy retirement. Also, I wish I could have been there to sing the National Anthem at his retirement ceremony. (Heidi Landers [gringal@live.com](mailto:gringal@live.com))

Sandy, Hope everything is going well. Texas is agreeing with us so far, and my job couldn't be better. I will always remember Col Hoarn telling the Support Group Commander that, if he didn't give us enough money to do our jobs, he would just let our craftsmen go play golf. He certainly had a poignant way of getting his ideas across and was a great defender of the troops. Margie and I wish him and Nancy all the best in their retirement. (Richard Zumbahl [rzumbahl@juno.com](mailto:rzumbahl@juno.com))

**Editor's Note:** Mr Rich Zumbahl served as Deputy Civil Engineer for Col Hoarn at Luke AFB AZ.

"Then" Lt Col Steve Hoarn's leadership was highly visible in the fire station. He was every bit as interested in and supportive of fire protection issues as he was engineering issues, which is what many other BCEs fail to embrace. That made him a standout with our firefighters; he was one of us, because it was clear that he cared, understood, and fully supported our mission. He provided the dollars needed for training, tools, equipment, and quality of life programs. Promotions for airmen were as important to him as they were for officers and SNCOs. After he PCS'd from Luke, he remained a valued mentor and advisor, willing to share his valuable time with anyone. It's great to feel I'm not one of his "former" troops, but "still" one of his troops!! Luke Dragon Slayers!! (Rodney E. Coleman, CMSgt USAF Ret [Rodney.Coleman2@dover.af.mil](mailto:Rodney.Coleman2@dover.af.mil))

Chief, thank you for the QNN. Awesome read and a great story on the grand opening of the Hurlburt Field FL Fire Station. Glad I was there. Look forward to the next QNN. (David Tijerina [David.Tijerina@keesler.af.mil](mailto:David.Tijerina@keesler.af.mil))

Sandy: Great Jul-Sep QNN. Good story about your trip with family. So many times folks put off things like this and

before one knows it, too late !! That's why I retired the first time in 1968 as "Uncle Sam" wanted me to take another trip to Southeast Asia. I politely told the guy at Randolph "no way mister" I'll retire first as I think my family needs me more than the Air Force. That was one of the best decisions I ever made even though I gave up the CMSgt stripe. I recognize many of the names throughout the articles. Good memories. I wonder where Sherrill is located. He and I go back a long way. He paid me a visit at Davis-Monthan many years ago, and we discussed his retirement plans. At that time he was very uncertain on what his best decision would be. Many thanks for allowing me to pass on my experiences at Tulln. I especially give thanks to my daughter Brenda for her assistance in editing my articles. Keep up the excellent work. I know it really encourages those who are following in our footsteps. Best regards. (Pete Semanick [psemanic@swep.com](mailto:psemanic@swep.com))

Chief, thank you for keeping the newsletter going, I really appreciate reading about the pioneers. I learned to appreciate them when I was first assigned to AFCESA and helped Milt Puckett and Doug Courchene set up Pioneer Day in Louisville KY. I believe this was 1998. The article you wrote in the latest edition talking about your grandson was very heart touching. With two granddaughters (4 and 7 years old) myself, it doesn't matter what kind of day you have at work. When you come home and they are waiting for Papa, life doesn't get any better. God bless! (Mark Captain [mcaptain77@comcast.net](mailto:mcaptain77@comcast.net))

Sandy: Printed 12 pages of quarterly newsletter, Jul-Sep 09. Great publication for readers to enjoy. Concerning dedication of the new fire station at Hurlburt Field, Florida, Mrs Esther Cocherell, wife of Chief Glen Cocherell, lives in the local area and certainly would have enjoyed the dedication. Her husband, Glen, served

as Chief at Hurlburt. Before Chief Glen Cocherell, Chief Bob Rushin served Hurlburt as Fire Chief. Also, Betty Munn, wife of late Chief Raymond Munn of Ft Walton Beach, would have loved to have been there. I have been wondering what happen to Ted Taipalus. I had to look up Alba, Texas, on the map. Certainly a small spot east of Dallas. I included Chief Joe Jarrell in this email. Joe and I are perhaps the few of WWII vintage. Joe, combat infantry, saw action in the Pacific. I didn't. The national emergency was still on when I enlisted. I'm a WWII vet. December 7, 1941, events mobilized all Americans in an unprecedented effort on all fronts to fight Japan and Adolf Hitler's Nazi machine. Every one determined to defeat the rising sun in the Pacific and Nazi occupation of Europe. Planes, tanks, guns, ships were mass produced, the likes of which had never been seen before. We were proud people standing erect ready to fight for freedom. That is the generation to which I belong. Sandy, you need time to yourself. Take it! Readers need to know the huge email and regular mail situation. I had 168 retired Air Force Fire Chiefs on my mailing list. Very few had computers including myself at the time. I relied on a printing company in Goldsboro NC. Yes, it did cost money, but retirees supported me fully and made my job as editor and publisher so much easier. I will always be grateful to them. Sadly, most have passed on. First suggestion. . .take care of self and family. (Doug Courchene CMSgt USAF Ret [Dougecourchene@aol.com](mailto:Dougecourchene@aol.com))

**Editor's Note:** Chief Courchene, I have been looking for Ted Taipalus as well. All I was able to find was the following Wanted Poster.



**WANTED**  
**Ted Taipalus alias "Terrible Ted"**  
**For**  
**Sleeping out loud on his front porch & illegal fishing in and around Alba, Texas**

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Thank you for the Quarterly Network Newsletter (QNN) and all the work that goes along with it. I enjoyed the article about you and your grandson's trip. It reminded me of the trip my grandson and I took across country from Phoenix to Florida. We called it the Gum Ball Rally. He was ten or so then and we had a blast. He and his folks were living in Sarasota, Florida, at the time. I have been doing very well and keeping in touch with Rex. As to the fireman who have passed away. John Smith was a surprise. I worked with Joe Taylor back when the chopper guys were at Luke. In fact, I remember the HH 43 every time I see the QNN with the photo on the front page. I believe it was in the late 60s or so. During my 4 years of service with the United States Navy I worked as a firefighter. After discharge I worked three years with the Navy in Civil Service then went to work for the Air Force at Luke AFB AZ in 1961. Those were the good old days. Worked hard and played hard. Lots of memories. Worked with Jim Hotell when he was in the military at Luke. I often wonder

how far he got up in the Command. I am certain he would be retired now. Luke is on the list to get the F-35. We live up in the White Mountains of Arizona and have a good blanket of snow. I am feeding about 6-8 ELK out in my back pasture. (Hugh Shaw [shawmbranch@aol.com](mailto:shawmbranch@aol.com))

**Editor's Note:** Jim Hotell is now retired. When he retired he was Chief, Air Force Fire Protection. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders [Sandy6T5@Comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@Comcast.net))

Sandy, I just finished reading the latest edition of QNN. All the articles were informative, especially when I saw names like Jim Legg, Ray Guise, and others. However, I must say I certainly enjoyed the article about you and Jacob. We get so tied up with the world around us that we forget the great things so near and dear to us. I have 4 grandchildren myself, 1 lives here in Clovis NM, 2 in Roswell NM, and a grandson in New Castle PA. When he comes down for his summer visit, I stop the world and make time to be with him because I know if the good Lord doesn't take me home it will be another year before I see him again. I believe your article about a great adventure of a grandfather and his special grandson, Jacob, brought some of us down to earth concerning priorities. Thank you for sharing this adventure with us. (C.F. "Chuck" Hemphill, SMSgt, USAF Ret [hemper@suddenlink.net](mailto:hemper@suddenlink.net))

Chief, way to go sir! Made me cry again. The story of you with Jacob on tour was both touching and appropriate. I only hope that I will have that close relationship with my grandsons (3 so far) when they get to be his age. It is wonderful to see you enjoying time with a young man you obviously love very much and to know how much joy he brings to your life. It reminds me that you were like a big brother to so many of us and how much joy you took in our success and our off-duty activities. I

wish we were as accommodating as Jacob. I am almost jealous thinking about how we wasted so much of our time messing up when you were so ready to open your friendship and leadership to us. On and off the job. God bless you! (Ben Reese [Benjamin.Reese@tinker.af.mil](mailto:Benjamin.Reese@tinker.af.mil))

Chief, first off, thanks mucho for the newsletters. As soon as I can find some time, I will definitely read! And definitely put me on the distribution list. And if you would like me to reciprocate, I can put you on my Fire Dawg listing for whenever I get information, either product, procedural, informational, etc., I send it out. And I try to keep it to a minimum, so only the important stuff. I am a 30-year retired CMSgt firefighter. I was in the same class at Chanute with Dave Mounsey (he's standing behind me in our class picture), and we still converse—he's the Fire Chief at Sheppard AFB, Texas, now. Daryle Lopes was in the class ahead of us. We call ourselves the "Three Amigos." I was never the guy who would have been voted to make Chief, but I just kept pluggin' along, and it came. I didn't know who you were when I received one of your first e-mails, so I turned to my buddy Larry McDonald, who berated me for not knowing who you were. I retired in 2007, and took the Fire Chief's job at Fort Meade while I was still on terminal (something Charlie Butler advised me NOT to do—and maybe I should have listened.) Charlie Bowen was my first Deputy Chief, and he falls to the floor whenever he sees my stripes or bugles (I was NOT the perfect airman). Lew Everett (Lackland AFB TX) had to deal with me as my Deputy Chief at Osan Air Base, Korea, where we worked for Bryce Mason. Rocky Cook was my CENTAF Reach Back, when I was the Fire Chief at Prince Sultan in 99/00, and then deserted me for a contract gig at Avon Park. I was Don Spitzer's Deputy from 2000 to 2003, when I left

to go to McGuire as the Fire Chief, then finished off at Hurlburt Field FL, where I retired. Mikey Robertson at Goodfellow AFB, Texas, and I were airmen together back in 1978. Stay safe! Edward Rouvet CMSgt USAF Ret [edward.rouvet@us.army.mil](mailto:edward.rouvet@us.army.mil))

Greetings Chief Sanders. I have been wondering where you had finally put down roots. I see you are still staying active and judging from your picture in the latest QNN you are still healthy. I have not been out to Luke since you left, but I have been busy with my grandchildren and getting back into my Masonic studies. I didn't know Joe Taylor had passed until after the funeral, and then an individual I know from Georgia called to let me know. The writeup in QNN for Joe was excellent. I apologize for taking so long to get back with you, and I have no excuse, I never got the chance to thank you for having such a great influence in my life and career; you are a true mentor, because I know I would have never gone out and used the skills that I had acquired if you had not forced me to move on, and I thank you. I still use the quote you always say: If the fish is in your net, it's your fish. Tell your wife, Miss Evelyn, that Bernice and I said hello and God bless you both. With Great Respect. (James Clay [jclay@cox.net](mailto:jclay@cox.net))

Hi Chief! I was wondering if you could add me to the distribution list for the QNN. I retired as a CMSgt from Fire and Emergency Services Jan 99 and am currently the fire chief in NAS Sigonella Italy. I just happened across the April-June edition of the QNN when doing a Google search. I was amazed at the great information provided. I was especially saddened to hear of the passing of Ralph McHenry. He was one of the great ones and will be missed. Thanks so much for everything you're doing (and have done) for Fire & Emergency Services! While we never worked together, my most cherished

memory of you is the e-mail you sent me when I was selected for CMSgt. That made a huge impact on me. And for that, thanks again. Most respectfully, (Jim LaConte CMSgt USAF Ret [james.laconte@eu.navy.mil](mailto:james.laconte@eu.navy.mil))

Chief, hope you and Ms. Evelyn are doing well and enjoying those grandkids! Funny how this email came about, been thinking and writing about you a lot, just putting down points of leadership and what real leaders do to help others become better both as a person and professionally. Again, thank you for the QNN and everything you did for me during my career--both personally and professionally! (Rick King [firecrash@gmail.com](mailto:firecrash@gmail.com))

Chief, thanks for sending the news. I was sad to learn about Joe Taylor's passing; he was a fine firefighter and a fine man. When I got to Luke in 1979 we had big challenges--old buildings and equipment and the need for strong leadership across the squadron. Joe was a shining light, with his dedication and loyal support--truly one of the best. You have done better with the news than I have. I recall that I missed my commitment to contribute an article. I am not as eloquent as some, but if you still want an article I will do better. We are fine here in Durango. Ian keeps this old guy busy, and I love him dearly. He and I with the rest of his Cub Scouts are going to visit the Durango Fire Department on Friday. Best wishes, Jim McCarthy MG USAF Ret [jimmccarthy@durango.net](mailto:jimmccarthy@durango.net)

Thanks Sandy, for reminding me of Christmas long ago. Hope you & Evelyn enjoy this memory with me. As youngsters, my siblings and I always loved visiting the fire stations where my dad was stationed. One Christmas Eve, when Dad must have been working, we went to the fire station and got a peek into the dispatcher's office. While Dad was chatting with him, over

the intercom came a loud announcement. SANTA had been spotted in his sleigh, flying over the city! Fast as possible, we grabbed our jackets, rushed out into the chilly night, and stood scanning the starry sky in hopes of spotting the sleigh overhead. Although we must have been too late, I still can feel the excitement of that night, the eager anticipation and the wonder of it all. And, sure enough, by the time we got home, Santa had already been there! Recalling that special night, I realize how much my dad loved us and how he must have enjoyed arranging that Christmas Eve, even though he couldn't be home. Hope you have a great Holiday Season! (Margie Zumbahl [rzumbahl@juno.com](mailto:rzumbahl@juno.com))

**Editor's Note:** Margie is the wife of Richard Zumbahl. Evelyn and I served with them at Yokota Air Base, Japan, and again at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. Rich was the Deputy Civil Engineer at both Yokota and Luke. They are wonderful friends, and by the way Margie cooks a great lamb stew. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders [Sandy6T5@Comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@Comcast.net))

## NOTES FROM TWO GREAT LADIES

Chief Sanders, thank you so much for the article you put in the last newsletter about Ralph. I also want to thank everyone for their prayers and notes of sympathy. He loved the fire service and all of his many friends. It was his life. He always told me the fire service came first and the family and I came second. We did not mind. I always wanted to be a fire person, but back then women could not serve in that capacity. As most of you know our two grandsons are carrying on the tradition of firefighting as a career. Ralph and I read the newsletter on line every time he received it and enjoyed the articles that kept us up to date. I wish all of you firefighters and your families much

happiness and pray all of you have a wonderful life together and enjoy each day with your family and friends as we have. Sincerely, Kitty Shelton (Wife of Ralph Shelton)

Chief Sanders, I want to thank you for the nice tribute to Joe you included in the last newsletter. Those were great days while Joe worked at Luke Air Force Base. I want to thank everyone for their prayers, phone calls, and notes of sympathy and encouragement. We got to celebrate 51 years of great marriage. I see you and Evelyn are coming up on your 50th. Congratulations! Not many people today are blessed with a 50th. Please give my hello to Evelyn. Sincerely, Betty F. Taylor (Wife of Joe Taylor)

## WAR STORY CORNER

LOOKING BACK AT THE GOOD TIMES  
*PETE E. SEMANICK, JR, USAF  
RETIRED Tulln Air Base Austria "The  
Good Old Days Part III"*



My tour at Tulln Air Base was very exciting at times. Even though we were isolated from the mainstream of other military installations, our leaders made every effort to make us comfortable; and we were fortunate to have a frequent number of USO shows in the Vienna area. On one occasion a USO flight landed at Tulln. The weather had been very bad all week, and this particular day was no exception as rain and more rain kept coming down. The single runway was slick and the ground areas were saturated and very soggy when we received word that a C-54 Skymaster aircraft would be landing shortly with VIPs from the states. As was typical for all aircraft landings, our small 4-man crash crew had to stand by

on the flightline with the “fabulous” Class 155 (0-5) crash truck, a 1,000-gallon monster with capability for premixed foam containing two large cannon-type turrets and two high pressure water/foam handlines. Our crew room was below the control tower, which was atop one of the hangars that survived the bombings from the war; we had a direct view of the runway for quick response. The tower notified us that the aircraft would be landing shortly, so we mounted the crash truck and watched as it landed. To our great surprise, it overshot the normal landing area of the runway and proceeded to stop off the end of the runway ending up with its nose through the perimeter barbwire fence. This area was in the Russian Zone, which meant the crew, passengers, and aircraft had to be brought back onto the base proper as soon as possible. The flightline maintenance crew soon found this was not as easy as originally thought. Every available able-bodied man was dispatched, and eventually the Class 155 crash truck had to assist in towing the aircraft back onto the runway. VIP passengers included some of my favorite celebrities: Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Ernest Tubb, Oswald, and little Jimmy Dickens to name just a few. They were immediately placed on the GI buses and transported into Vienna. Needless to say, the USO performance next day was very rewarding for those lucky enough to see the show. To add to this 1952 tale, in 1965 while I was stationed at Whiteman AFB and during a side trip from the Memphis Fire Chief Conference to the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, TSgt Roy Sellers (now retired CMSgt) and myself paid a visit to the Roy Acuff museum. We met Roy Acuff and Oswald and during our introduction to each of them I asked Mr Acuff if he remembered landing at the air base in Austria. He looked surprised and was even more surprised to hear me say I was among the crash crew that responded to the aircraft emergency.



*Pete in front of the Russian Zone, 1952*

Another experience, which will remain with me for the rest of my life, was the day MSgt Fire Chief Clarence Martell gave several of us the task of cleaning our crash firefighting training area. This was a concrete floor of a bombed out building with one large partially collapsed wall. As we were using our high-pressure water streams to remove debris, one of the guys shouted, “What’s this piece of metal underneath this wall?” All work stopped, and we soon discovered this was no ordinary piece of metal, it was a 500-pound unexploded bomb left over from the war. Evidently this bomb hit the target but failed to explode. Army Explosive Ordnance folks from Vienna were called to the site, and they determined that the bomb was ripe for explosion as the charge had turned to nitroglycerine. They said we were a lucky bunch of firemen. The highlights for many of the firefighters included occasional T-6 & L-5 flights. Lt Col Wilbur St. John (now deceased) and 1st Lt John J. Murphy (retired Lt Gen) were well known for their antics of dogfighting in these two aircraft. They were also known for flights along the Danube River. Quite often some of us firemen would obtain hops, fully utilizing the back seats of these unique aircraft. Most every flight along the Danube entailed a flyover of a large nudist camp. The Austrians were well known for their love of nature in the buff. As we would fly over the camp,

their usual game of volleyball would cease, and most nudists would show us their bare bottoms.



**Fliegerhorst Bromowski Air Base  
2009 (formerly Tulln AB)**

Serious attention to educational advancement began while I was at Tulln AB. A program called “Operation Bootstrap” was sponsored through the University of Maryland. Knowing that better education would enhance my chances for promotions, I immediately enrolled in several college courses. The classes were held twice a week in Vienna and were actually held at the University of Vienna, with both Austrian and American professors. The shift concept in the fire department was ideal for attending classes and self-study. Yes the duty at Tulln AB was indeed very interesting. I was indeed lucky to have served during this time of the Cold War--what an unforgettable experience for a group of young airmen. (Pete Semanick [psemanic@swcp.com](mailto:psemanic@swcp.com) )

**STAMP FUND CONTRIBUTORS**



The QNN is privately funded by members’ contributions. Thank you for being so generous. Your continued

financial support certainly keeps the QNN going. The contributors for this past quarter are: Tom Johnson, Paul Sutphin, Irazell McWhirter, William Ogletree, Ted Taipalus, Hoyd Sanders, James Legg, Steve Hoarn, Eugene Courtemanche, Pete Semanick, Leo McCarty and Sonny Sonnenberg. Your donations cover postage and publishing costs which include ink, paper, and equipment maintenance. Donations are strictly voluntary as no membership fees are charged. There are numerous retirees and widows who do not have email, and the list continues to grow. Hard copies of the QNN is printed and mailed to them via the US Postal Service. Before publishing and mailing this issue, we have \$858.89 in the QNN bank account. Contact the Editor for more information or any assistance you would like to provide. (Hoyd “Sandy” Sanders 110 Kensington Court, Dothan, Alabama 36303 (334)-792-3521 [Sandy6T5@Comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@Comcast.net))

**FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH DEPARTMENT**

Charles Edward (Ed) Chedd *By Milt Puckett, CMSgt, USAF (Retired)*



*Puckett, CMSgt, USAF (Retired)* (Note: I was asked to do an article on Chief Ed Chedd; however, much of this was previously published in the Jul-Sep 2005 edition of the

QNN. For those who might have missed it, following are my thoughts on Chief Chedd along with some quotes from Chief Doug Courchene.)



Chief Ed Chedd was born on 9 May 1916 in Hartley-Wintney, England. After moving to the USA, he enlisted in the United States Army as a paratrooper with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne “Screaming

Eagles.” He parachuted into Ste. Mere Eglise during the Normandy D-Day invasion on 6 June 1944 and was awarded a Purple Heart for wounds received. He also was awarded a Bronze Star for his military service. After leaving the military he began his Civil Service career as Fire Chief at Itazuke Air Base, Japan. In 1951 he moved to Orlando, Florida, and was Fire Chief at Pinecastle/McCoy Air Force Base. In 1964 he made a career change to Fire Prevention Engineer and lived in Ankara, Turkey; Wiesbaden, Germany; and Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, from where he retired to Cape Coral, Florida.

I arrived at Pinecastle AFB FL in 1954. Chief Chedd was my chief during my first 4 years in the Air Force. He was a very strict Chief with lots of pull with the Wing Commander. This was a SAC base, and the commanders were very strict on fire prevention and safety and had a rating system where fires, crashes, and the number of fire hazards reported weighed very heavy against the wing's ratings. The Wing Commander had an open door policy with Chief Chedd due to his position and importance in helping keep him out of trouble. Chief Chedd was very influential. The base had 2 B-47 Bomb Wings and experienced several crashes both on and off base. There was always excitement with the B-47s. One crash in particular was the one where a B-47 crew detected smoke in the cockpit immediately after takeoff, declared an emergency, and had to return and land with such fast air speed, due to the heavy fuel load, that he couldn't stop on the runway. The drag chute burst open immediately after deployment on landing, and then the aircraft slid down the runway leaving tires and wheels on the runway until it crashed on the overrun and burned. An O-10 crash truck bogged down on setup and also burned. When it was all over, I think we saved a part of a wing. There was also one of the weapons on board that we

didn't know about (scary). I was riding rescue that day; and lucky for me, the crew members were able to exit on their own. I was on duty the day Colonel McCoy (Wing Commander) crashed just north of the base during a bomb competition in which the British were participating. Colonel McCoy was the pilot and had the British Commander (Lieutenant Colonel Joyce) on board with him. The entire crew perished. The base was then renamed from Pinecastle to McCoy AFB in honor of Colonel McCoy. I was there during the dedication ceremony. One day a C-124 Globemaster flew in carrying a fire truck. They asked Chief Chedd to get the truck off the plane. He came and instructed me to do the job. We went out to the aircraft and looked up into the cargo bay. There was a fire truck. We knew that from the color of it. I asked Chief Chedd “what is it?” He said, “I don't know, but don't let them know; just get in there and drive it off.” I climbed into the truck and started looking for the starter. I must have pulled every lever and pushed every button. Luckily, I found the starter before I raised the CO2 discharge boom. I was then able to drive it off without incident, which was a big relief to both of us. It was an O-6 Cardox. During that era the Air Force had no dedicated rescue vehicles. Chief Chedd developed his own with a one-half ton pickup truck equipped with four 50-lb CO2 bottles and the limited emergency entry tools we could carry. The rescue vehicle was Chief Chedd's pride and joy. He always said, "If I am not the first to arrive at a crash site, the rescue vehicle had better be the first." He gained fame from the Air Force Film “Broken Arrow” and rewrite of T.O. 11N-20-11 governing Air Force firefighting guidance at a nuclear incident. He was truly a pioneer in Air Force Fire Protection.

To sum it up, Chief Chedd was a very well known and popular Fire Chief, and I will never forget my experiences under him and the influence he had on my

career. Helen and I were honored to have him attend our wedding at McCoy Air Force Chapel in 1958. I was very surprised that after his retirement he chose to live such a quiet life that none of us retired fire chiefs knew anything of his whereabouts. He could have added so much to our gatherings. I thought of him often and wondered where he retired and what he was doing. Guess this is just another chapter in our lives where one of our comrades answered the final call. Chief Chedd died at the age of 88 in Lecanto, Florida, on 6 April 2005.

**QUOTE FROM CHIEF DOUG COURCHENE:** "Chief Chedd served as Fire Protection Specialist, Headquarters Alaskan Air Command (AAC), late 1960s to early 1970s. He made Command Staff Assistance Visits to Elmendorf Air Force Base where I was fire chief. He offered professional advice based on expert knowledge of the profession. 'Assistance' to him meant command support and upgraded approach to fire department operations. We became friends and often enjoyed wilderness campings and fished streams and lakes. In short, a true friend and pioneer."

### **AN OLD FRIEND**

Chief Dan Nevins, born in Texas, and I have been friends for 63 years. Dan and I were in the Fort Worth Army Airfield Fire Department under the Leadership of Chief Otis E. Tinkle, Assistant Chief Walter Sherrill, O. A. Kembrough and Cecil Burt. Dan was a Staff Sergeant and I was a Corporal. Rank was hard to come by in those days; however, Dan was promoted to Master Sergeant during his tenure at Fort Worth. Without question during that period of time the Fort Worth Army Airfield Fire Department was the best in the Air Force. Dan was my military mentor while Fire Chief Tinkle and Assistant Fire Chief Sherrill were my Civilian mentors. A sad day occurred in April of 2009 when Dan lost his wife, Mary,

after 63 years of marriage. From the time we met our families have always been close. We kept in touch with our military whereabouts throughout our military and civilian careers. Dan served as Fire Chief on Strategic Air Command Bases in French Morocco and the United Kingdom. Dan retired as a Senior Master Sergeant at Offutt Air Force Base, Omaha, Nebraska, and returned to Texas. The Nevins family and the Courchene family have a perpetual friendship that has lasted now for many years. Dan has always been a good man doing good things for others. We certainly need more people like Dan Nevins who concern themselves with doing good. (Doug Courchene, CMSgt, Ret, USAF [dougcourchene@aol.com](mailto:dougcourchene@aol.com))



Fire and Emergency Services welcoming a KC-135 after its last flight as it taxied to its final resting place at the AMC Museum at Dover AFB DE. (Rodney E. Coleman, CMSgt USAF Ret [Rodney.Coleman2@dover.af.mil](mailto:Rodney.Coleman2@dover.af.mil))

### **Congratulations!**



**Ben & Bernice Partin 53d Anniversary**

## **PEDRO'S CORNER**



This section of the QNN is provided for those of you who served as crew members on the HH-43B Husky Helicopter. Some of you may not be familiar with the HH-43 Rescue Helicopter program. It began in the early 1960s whereby firefighters were selected to perform aircrew duties involving firefighting and helicopter rescue. "Pedro" was the call sign for the HH-43. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders [Sandy6T5@Comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@Comcast.net))

In 1969 the Military Personnel Center (MPC) selected me to serve as Flight Examiner for firefighter aircrew members in Vietnam. At the time I was a Technical Sergeant, Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) A57170. The special assignment was called PALACE DRAGON and my base of assignment was Pleiku Air Base, Vietnam. My duties included travel to different bases within Vietnam to perform Flight Certification for Air Crew Firefighters AFSC A571X0. While at my home base in Pleiku, I performed flight duty and Deputy Chief after hours. Thanksgiving 1969, the Fire Chief and fire department staff had planned a big Thanksgiving bash. They included in their planning for hot food to be delivered to the Rescue Detachment for the aircrews that were pulling alert duty. So Thanksgiving 1969 we planned on having one of the biggest feasts the Fire Department and HH-43B aircrews had seen. Everyone was so excited to have turkey and all the trimmings. Alert status had been pretty quiet the past 3 or 4 days, so we accomplished pre-flight and then got ready for the "big dinner." The fire chief called and reported they had all the food and were on their way from the dining hall. Just as they arrived the alert bell rang and we responded to a Huey helicopter

crash at Camp Hollaway an Army base not too far from us. So off we went and returned to Pleiku 2.5 hours later. The fire chief and the food service personnel went back to the dining hall and got warm food and started back to the rescue unit; once again upon their arrival the alert bell sounded, and we responded to a T-28 aircraft crash approximately 40 miles from Pleiku. There were no survivors, and we performed recovery operations then returned to Pleiku at 1700 hours (5 PM). Again, the fire chief and food service personnel went back to the dining hall and got warm food. They arrived at the rescue detachment and we were setting up for the meal and the alert bell sounded for an F-4c aircraft landing with battle damage. Off we went again. Once the aircraft landed we returned to the alert pad and again the fire chief and food service personnel returned to the dining hall to get warm food for us. They kept the dining hall opened for us because of all the emergencies we had responded to. Once again they came back with warm food. Once we got everything set up and were just sitting down Major Gordon yelled "ALERT," and we all started responding to the helicopter. He stopped us and said: "that was just a trial so maybe the alert bell will not go off again and we can enjoy a great Thanksgiving dinner." We certainly did! It is hard to put into words how much we appreciated the efforts of the fire chief, fellow firefighters, and the food service personnel to ensure the helicopter alert crew members had a great Thanksgiving meal. Major Gordon commented that "in all his years with helicopter rescue never had he had a fire chief take so much initiative to ensure the alert air crew received a great Thanksgiving meal. In the end we all agreed there was a lot to be thankful for and especially to have a person in Vietnam such as our Fire Chief making sure everyone associated with the Fire Department had a wonderful

Thanksgiving day. I might add all firefighters had a great Thanksgiving day. The dining hall supervisor paid special attention to ensuring they had a specific place set up in the dining hall for firefighters to be served Thanksgiving dinner. It was an honor to serve in the Pleiku Fire Department with a great fire chief and outstanding firefighters. Thanksgiving day 1969 will remain a special day in my memories. We as firefighters and airborne firefighters will never forget the job we had to do and were very proud to do it to the best of our ability. I feel honored to have been selected to serve as a firefighter and will never forget the people who dedicated their time, effort, and lives for the protection of others. I hope this will be part of the QNN as this was a special holiday for me. (Sonny Sonnenberg [nsonnenberg1@cox.net](mailto:nsonnenberg1@cox.net))

Pedro Rescue Helicopter Association (PRHA) Reunion will be held in Montgomery, Alabama 22-24 April 2010. It will be a time to renew old friendships, meet fellow H-43 associates, and help keep alive the memory, history, and accomplishment of both the Kaman HH-43A/B/F (*the bird with blades of wood*) and its crews of dedicated Air Force men and women. Many activities are planned for the reunion however, the highlight will be the dedication of the Pedro Rescue Helicopter Association Memorial at the Enlisted Heritage Museum. The memorial depicts the HH-43, its mission and accomplishments, along with an area dedicated to A1C William Pitsenbarger, a Pedro Pararescue Specialist, who received the Medal of Honor posthumously for his heroic actions in Vietnam. For information concerning membership in the Pedro Rescue Helicopter Association and/or registration for the reunion please contact Len Shultz, Reunion Planner (334)-273-9804, or cell (334)-868-9115. (Len Shults [nortnsailor1@att.net](mailto:nortnsailor1@att.net))

## **EDITOR'S COMMENTS**

*First let me thank everyone for their patience with me for not getting the QNN out on time. I have told everyone in the past I wanted to get it out at the end of each quarter. I failed this time to keep that commitment. Our family has been focused since Thanksgiving on the health of our daughter. She and her family live in Atlanta and much of our time has been spent there. She is to be operated on next week here in Dothan, Alabama. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers. Additionally, I want to thank all of you that take time to send emails of encouragement and phone calls wishing us well. I may not get back to you on the phone when a message is left, but I want you to know they are appreciated. Hopefully, things will be getting back to some kind of normalcy next week. I have received several articles for inclusion in the Jan-Mar 2010 edition. However, I continue to solicit articles or email comments that can be used in the QNN. I want to also ask some of you active duty fire officers and firefighters to provide articles for inclusion in the QNN. I am sure you are doing some great things, and the information would certainly be interesting to the readership. Again, thank you for all the moral and financial support for the QNN. (Hoyd "Sandy" Sanders*

*[Sandy6T5@Comcast.net](mailto:Sandy6T5@Comcast.net))*



*Test--Anyone know these Fire Chiefs?*