

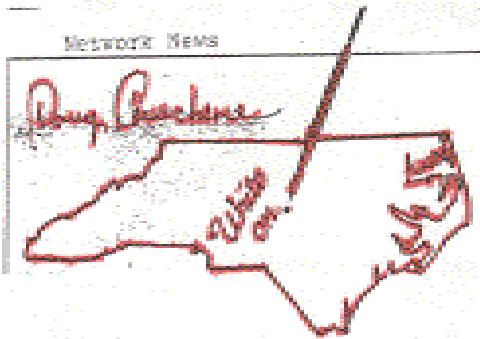


# RETIRED AIR FORCE FIRE CHIEFS'

QUARTERLY NETWORK  
NEWSLETTER (QNN)

Oct - Dec 2005

"LEGENDARY PIONEERS WHO  
REMINISCE ABOUT THE PAST BUT  
FOCUS ON THE FUTURE"



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## *Mother Nature Unleashed one of the Worse Disasters in US History.*

Our prayers are with the survivors of the Category 4/5 Hurricane Katrina. It has had a devastating effect upon our country for some more than others. However, the post effects of Katrina will be felt for a long time into the future. Gasoline prices keep climbing, and McDonalds' sausage biscuit is now \$1.70 plus tax. The response by our Armed Services and First Responders has been spectacular during the search rescue and

recovery operation. Their heroic efforts will be told and documented in lives saved and the impact upon those who have had to suffer through this natural disaster.



First responders throughout our Nation responded, ready to work at disaster scenes along the Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana Gulf Coast region. Prayers go out to them for a safe return and to those with relatives and friends in the disaster area that have not been accounted for. Please let us know that you survived the storm and how you are doing. My son, Frank, has just

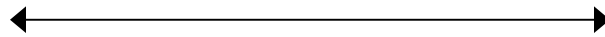


Arlington Ave, Riverside on August 17th. A graveside service was held on August 18th at Crestlawn. Contributions are suggested to the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army.

On behalf of The Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs our heart felt condolences to Barbara and the Vreeland Family on the loss of a love one. We will miss a dear comrade and an extraordinary fire pioneer. His contributions as a WW II and Cold War veteran and as a Firefighter and Fire Chief for the Air Force Strategic Air Command (SAC) will long be remembered as part of our Fire Protection's rich heritage and history.

Chief Vreeland was legendary in fire protection circles, the American Red Cross, and to American veterans. This is a man who made a noble effort and succeeded in improving Fire Protection at every level. He served with honor and distinction at Air Base as well as Major Air Command Headquarters levels. - *Editor*

I *knew* Chief Vreeland 56 years. This is a man who made a noble effort and succeeded in improving Air Force Fire Protection at every level. He developed most of the firefighting techniques in use today. Bob loved his country and his fellow man. We will miss him. - Chief Doug Courchene USAF (Retired)



***Honoring our Pioneers.*** Chief Don Warner has issued the Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs a challenge. “Lead an effort to develop biographies on pioneers we know, including ourselves, with as much information as can be found concerning their contributions to Air Force Fire Protection. All career firefighters should prepare a bio immediately after retiring so their families and friends (and us) have a record of their service, whether they accomplished anything dramatic or not. I think everyone deserves to leave a “marker” and what better way to do it than with a

brief bio that can be shared with successive generations of the family and firefighters.” Biographies will be submitted to the Editor of the Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs for review prior to forwarding to the Air Force Fire Protection Office. Individuals identified by biographies will consider when dedicating present or future Fire Protection facilities. Please contact Chief Courchene or Chief Barrow if you need more information. Following is an example biography for and by

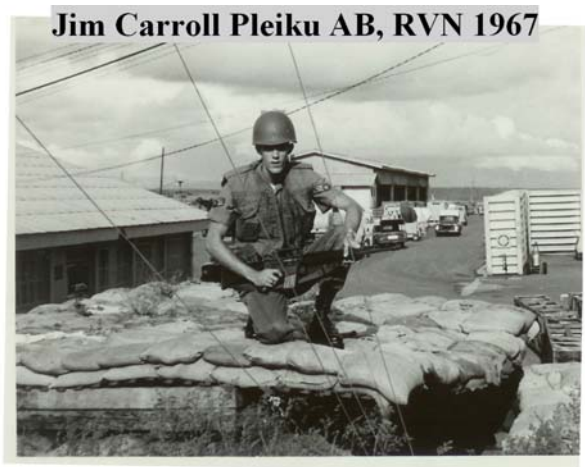
**SMSGT JAMES DOUGLAS CARROLL-USAFA (Retired)**

Chief “Jim” Carroll was born August 19, 1946, in Manchester, Georgia. He completed his high school education in Charleston SC and enlisted in the United States Air Force on 30 September 1964. He completed the first phase of basic training at Lackland AFB TX and was transferred to Chanute AFB IL to complete basic training and attend the Air Force firefighting school. His class was the first to attend all phases of fire school at the new Chanute AFB location. In January 1965, Airman Third Class Carroll was reassigned to Orlando AFB FL. The base was a Military Air Transport Command base without a runway. Major tenants were a Mace Missile School (TAC), Photo Squadron and a Pararescue School. He was selected for promotion to Airman Second Class (A2C) and then to Airman First Class (A1C) with only two years in service.

A memorable fire at Orlando AFB was the Photo building, where burning movie film made for a real hot fire. This huge warehouse structure is where Jim learned what the term “smoke-eater” meant since he suffered smoke inhalation during the fire. This was in the days of the canister air mask, and not everyone had one.

In December 1966 A1C Carroll began his journey to Pleiku AB, Republic of Viet Nam, and was quickly introduced to the horrors of war. While standing outside in the processing line at Tan Son Nhut AB, a person a few feet behind him was shot and killed by a sniper on a water tower.

He was assigned as a crew chief on an O-11A crash truck. After a short period, Jim volunteered for permanent tanker driver, which provided lots of experience. He worked grass fires, fuel spill wash downs, and off-base calls downtown and at the nearby US Army helicopter base [Camp Holloway](#) where a major fuel dump fire occurred. Jim also volunteered to teach the Army troops how to be firefighters and operate a 530B pumper. One of his most memorable ventures in Nam was to the famed "Dak To." While there, two C-130 aircraft were "hit" and caught fire during the [Battle of Dak To](#). The three firefighters found both aircraft destroyed and smoldering but couldn't do anything due to unexploded ordnance everywhere. While waiting to put out the fires, the base ammunition dump was hit and a major fire with explosions began. While fighting the fire in the ammo dump with the base still under attack, shrapnel or enemy fire struck the radiator on the truck and put it out of service. The firefighters performed guard duty on a convoy containing the only ammo left on the base as they evacuated the Army base. Then, the enemy attacked the convoy so they had to make a hasty retreat. Under attack, they finally made it to a safe area. Enemy attacks continued the next day, but firefighters still recovered the fire truck and repaired it in time to join a convoy back to Pleiku.



After Viet Nam, Jim was stationed at Eglin AFB FL in January 1968. He started at Eglin Auxiliary Field #2. When promoted to Staff Sergeant in September 1968, he was assigned to Field #1 as crew chief and station chief. After a short period, he went to Site C-6 (the Space Track Radar Site). Then, he was assigned back at Field #2 as a Station Chief.

During this period of his assignment, the Air Force decided to replace firefighters on the HH-43 helicopter "[Pedro](#)" and train Pararescue (PJs) in firefighting. Since the initial training school for this was at Field 2, Jim was a training instructor on the use of the Fire Suppression Kit and joint firefighting operations with a fire truck and helicopter. Jim's next assignment at Eglin was the NCO in Charge (NCOIC) of the Main Station Fire Alarm Center where he transformed an ordinary alarm room into a modern dispatch center. Finally, he became a Base Fire Inspector. After remaining at Eglin for four years, Jim got transferred to Charleston AFB, SC, his hometown and base of preference, in November 1971. [Click Here](#) for a little history of Eglin Field, Florida.

Jim was off to Wiesbaden AB, Germany, in December 1972. After being at the base with the largest land mass (Eglin with 474,000 acres), he was now at the base with the most real property (buildings). Besides the base proper, there were 4 housing areas, 3 hotels, golf course, hospital complex, Lindsey Air Station, and other kaserns (small stations) in town within the fire department's 4 fire station response areas. SSgt Carroll was assigned as a crew chief on a P-8 pumper in the main station. After a while, he transfer to the Fire Inspection Section. In 1974, he was promoted to Technical Sergeant. Then Wiesbaden AB was turned into an Army Post and the Air Force firefighters gradually left.

Jim was assigned as an Assistant Fire Chief of Operations and had other duties assigned such as Training Officer and Fire Inspector. While on duty as an operations chief, he was required to accomplish fire inspections, closing inspections of public assembly buildings (clubs were clear across town), etc. While inspecting the Army barracks, he had to have armed MPs with him for protection after he was threatened on several occasions. An agreement was made with the towns and cities to respond to all emergencies off the base. As the Assistant Fire Chief, he had to respond to all fire emergencies which could be as far away as the golf course, approximately 15 miles. Needless to say this was a very stressful assignment and it lasted four years.

Despite Jim's wish to stay in Europe, he was assigned to remote Alaska in December of 1976. His orders were for Shemya, but he was diverted to Cape Lisburne AFS, an early warning radar site, as far northwest in Alaska as you can go. TSgt Carroll was the Site Fire Chief, Site Safety NCO, and Airfield Manager. Luck was with Jim and his tour was cut to eight months when the AF decided to hire contractors to operate early warning radar sites.

Jim then became a "Tactical Air Command Warrior" at Nellis AFB NV, in August of 1977. Jim started this assignment as the Military Station Chief, but was soon assigned to transform a bomb assembly building into a fire station. In 1978, Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief were relieved of their duties and the senior NCO, TSgt Carroll, became the unofficial fire chief. He held this position on and off for a year and a half until a permanent Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief was assigned.

1980 was an eventful year with Jim's promotion to Master Sergeant and the famed MGM Hotel fire. All the fire departments in Clark County NV, assisted in combating this fire and evacuating hotel guests. Jim's was the logistics officer where he accounted for all equipment and supplies that were sent to the scene. He also tracked fill-in fire crews at Clark County and City of Las Vegas' fire stations, and all helicopter takeoffs and landings in rescue attempts. While Jim was acting fire chief, a fire in the Las Vegas Hilton resulted in County and City officials quickly asking for help. The Air Force responded with trucks and personnel from Nellis and Indian Springs AAF.

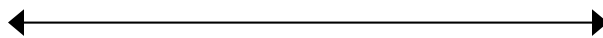
In September of 1981, Jim took his family to wonderful Mountain Home ID. Jim was the Deputy Fire Chief at this TAC base with F-111 and EF-111 aircraft. There were 3 crashes in a 6-month period. The high desert is also noted for its range fires, which were plentiful during the summer months. For three wedding anniversaries he was out fighting range fires. Jim experienced first hand the high order detonation of MK-84 (2000 lb) bombs loaded on an F-111. The base Fire Department was named the Best in TAC twice during his tenure. In 1982, Jim was selected as the Civil Engineering Squadron's Senior NCO of the Year; and, in 1983, Jim received a promotion to Senior Master Sergeant.

In September 1984, Jim went to George AFB CA as the Base Fire Chief, this was the only major TAC base in CONUS with a military fire chief. The Fire Department was named Most Improved in TAC in 1985.



Tragedy struck when Jim's wife passed away from cancer, and he decided to retire from the USAF in October 1986 and move back to South Carolina to be with family. He remarried in 1989 and has worked for the US Navy for the past 18 years, where he is the Occupational Safety and Health Manager at Naval Hospital Charleston. Fire safety is one of his duties, so he's not completely away from his past. He has six wonderful and enjoyable "grand" children and is looking forward to retirement some day.

The last QNN featured a career civil service Fire Chief's biography. In this issue an autobiography of a military Chief's own story is told and quite well I might add. Thanks Jim and best wishes to Diane. – Editor



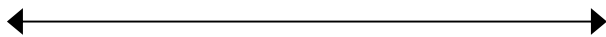
***Sick Call – Prayers Urgently Needed! Power of Prayer (PoP) WORKS.***

Mrs. Phyllis Cooper, Fort Walton Beach FL, wife of Chief Jim Cooper, is recovering at home from an operation that will hopefully cure the infection that had settled in one of her "total knee replacement" (TKR) joints. The TKR joint will be replaced after the infection is gone. In the

interim, Phyllis must keep the weight off the knee. This process takes months, please keep the prayers coming for a more speedy recovery.

Chief Joseph Jarrell, Austin, TX, has had a serve attack of "cellulitis" settle in his right foot causing immense pain. His last report was the antibiotics were working and he should be back on his feet again soon.

Chief Ed Sams, Yreka, CA wrote: I am not doing that well. Rosie is doing a great job of taking care of me. She does everything around the house except for the computer work. That is the reason for the lack of communication. However, I am beginning to feel a little better and perhaps I can get back to writing. Meanwhile, you don't need to send me paper copies of the QNN as I can get them by E-mail. Please, take care of yourselves and thanks for your testimonies for the Lord in the Newsletter. I wish I could have kept on as Assistant Editor but it was not to be. Thanks again. - Ed



A Memorial for Chief William Albert York USAF, BORN May 26, 1921-Died January 31, 2005 was held by members of the Texas Chapter,



Retired Air Force Fire Chiefs that served with him. The Manchaca Fire House Café and Kitchen located in the suburbs of Austin TX was the site of this event on September 27,

2005.

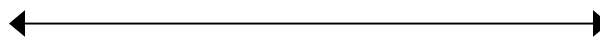
This memorial coffee honors one of the outstanding United States Air Force's late Fire Chiefs. Thirty years ago, on September 27, 1975, Chief and Mrs. William A. York were united in Holy Matrimony.

Many pioneer Air Force Fire Chiefs served as Base Fire Chiefs. Some also served as "Fire Inspectors" at Major Air Command Headquarters. Chief York's heritage and traditional strengths were in the area of a Technical Firefighting and Aircraft Crash Rescue School Instructor, Base Fire Chief and Volunteer Community Services. Three retired fire chiefs and Chief York's former Commander at QNN Volume 4, 2005

Randolph AFB, TX, agreed to "say a few words" about Chief York. These gentlemen are: Colonel Maynard Hamilton, USAF, CES Commander (Retired), and Chiefs John Meek, Lennie Blau, and Donato Jaso Jr. Colonel Hamilton said "I feel at home since I am still an active member at age 85 of my Garden Ridge



Volunteer F.D. I should have worn my fire badge like the others in attendance today." Others in attendance were: Chief Joe Jarrell (Master of Ceremony), Mr. Jim Overcash, Mrs. Bonnie York, her son, Bill Jr. and daughter, Priscilla Speed and their children. Shown L to R: Bill Jr., Colonel Hamilton, Blau and Jaso, Mrs. York, Meek, Jarrell, Priscilla.



### ***Old Fire Trucks Never Die!***

The Elmendorf AFB Fire Department has title to a 1922 American LaFrance 750 GPM Fire Pumper, thanks to Chief Douglas E. Courchene in the early 1970s. Doug, a recently retired CMSgt, had been accepted for the civilian Deputy Fire Chief's position at Elmendorf working with the late Chief Spencer Allen who became very ill just 3 months later. He was placed on sick leave until his date of retirement. Doug was promoted to Fire Chief after his year's probationary period was completed. With the help of Mr. Roscoe Bell at USAF Fire Headquarters he was able to convert the Deputy's position to a military slot. The pumper was discovered abandoned in an open field near the Wasilla Lake area in 1969. After much searching, Doug was able to locate the owners in Palmer, Alaska, and secure an authorization from them to donate the pumper to

Elmendorf AFB for education and historical purposes. The discarded wonder of an era long gone was in sad condition when found. Its pump cavity housed a family of birds. Bullet holes riddled its body from its use for target practice. The hard rubber Firestone Tires were flattened and rotted. But there was something about this little fire engine – something that wouldn't and couldn't die.

And it sat there waiting on something or... someone. That someone was members of the 21st Civil Engineering Squadron and that something was the Base Motor Pool.

The Base Commander, Colonel Al Johnson, and the Civil Engineer, Colonel A. M. Dougherty, supported the restoration project. Elmendorf fell in love with the old truck from the beginning and interest grew base-wide as more people offered their help to make the project a success. Colonel Dougherty donated a large brass bell. A master mechanic out of transportation fabricated miscellaneous parts and repaired the chemical foam tank. Firefighters refinished the wooden spoke wheels and wood hose bed and reworked



the fire pump, plus performed the basic teardown and cleanup required. It took 6 months to get the engine running. But when cranked the sound was loud and healthy. Next came the CE painters'

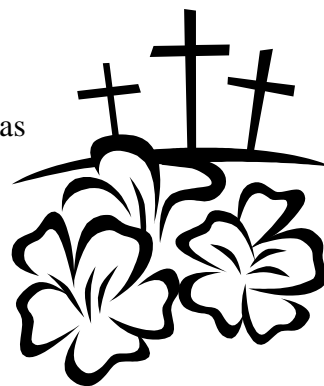
bright red covering of the body, with the CE Sign Painters adding decorative gold leaf design. Its glory days were reborn-death would not take its toll on this little red fire engine. Since then the truck has spent many years in parades, Fire Prevention Weeks, and community events along side today's modern firefighting apparatus. Chief Courchene said it best "Tradition has been associated with Fire Departments everywhere, and I am proud to share a part of it. All the hard work was worthwhile and very rewarding." Let us hope that this little fire truck stays operational for a long time. Photo below shows the truck in all its glory of yesteryear!

***Final thoughts are of Katrina and Rita.***

Natural disasters and other forms of adversity bring out the best and the worst in people. Reports of despair and lawlessness emanating from the hurricane stricken areas have been mitigated by acts of heroism, generosity, and pure love. Numerous firefighters, who in many cases were victims themselves, having lost all their material possessions, continued to work around the clock rescuing fellow sufferers. The ICHIEFS report that more than 4,000 firefighters from around the country have come to their aid to take up their duties so that local firefighters can take care of their families and personal needs. Our services will be continually needed in the coming months of recovery and rebuilding. Let us hope that our resolve is equal to the task at hand. Remember the Master's words "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). Please contact Doug or Bob if you have a story to tell or a bio you would like write. Remember the next issue will have the preliminary plans for the Dallas 2006 Pioneer Day Gathering in mid-September 2006. Your input is requested, especially if you plan to attend this three day event. Our last Pioneer Day Gatherings at Dallas were in 2003 and 2000. They only come around every 3 years, so start planning now! The planning committee will meet December 10, 2005, Golden Corral Restaurant, Fort Walton Beach, Florida. Hope to see you in Dallas.

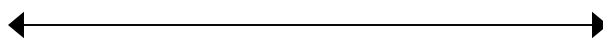
When Minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

"Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.



We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare.  
We have killed our unborn and called it choice.  
We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable.  
We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self esteem.  
We have abused power and called it politics.  
We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition.  
We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression.  
We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, Oh, God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free.  
Amen!"



*A Psalm. For giving thanks.*

Shout to the Lord, all the Earth,  
Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs.  
Know that the Lord is God.  
It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.  
Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.  
For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations.

- Psalm 100, NIV