



CITY OF MUSCATINE
215 SYCAMORE STREET
MUSCATINE, IA 52761
PH. (563) 264-1550 • FAX (563) 264-0750

CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

For more information contact:

Kevin Jenison
Communication Manager
E-Mail: kjenison@muscatineiowa.gov
Phone: (563) 264-1550 • Fax: (563) 264-0750

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 24, 2019

RONZHEIMER RETIRES FROM NAVY AFTER 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

Senior Chief Gary Ronzheimer honored during retirement ceremony on July 13

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Senior Chief Gary R. Ronzheimer, Jr., served the citizens of the United States as a member of the U.S. Navy for over 20 years. His watch is now over. Senior Chief Ronzheimer, currently a Battalion Chief with the Muscatine Fire Department, was honored during a Retirement Ceremony on July 13, 2019, as he officially retired from service.

“I have not thought about it too much,” Ronzheimer said about his retirement from the U.S. Navy. “You do get a little emotional because you have done something for so long with so many great people. And some of my friends passed away in the different conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. It comes in another chapter of your life but it is a very hard thing to walk away from.”

Throughout his time with the Navy and with the Muscatine Fire Department (MFD), Ronzheimer said that the support of his family, coworkers, and the community made being away from family and friends a little less difficult.

“I think there is a certain amount of respect for military personnel in our community and the sacrifices they have to make, and the sacrifices the community has to make,” Ronzheimer said.

Those sacrifices extend to the MFD who had to deal with his absence when he was deployed.

“The fire department does not have staff that the Navy has so every firefighter counts, and when one is gone that falls back on the rest of the team,” Ronzheimer said. “Even if you get a new guy to fill that spot, that absence of that one senior person falls back on the team. Having to contend with the absence of that knowledge, the mentoring, and the friendship is difficult.”

Ronzheimer graduated from Bettendorf High School in 1999 and immediately joined the U.S. Navy, receiving his basic training and attending Hospital Corpsman “A” School while at Naval Training Center Great Lakes in Chicago. After graduation he attended Field Medical Service School at Camp Johnson in North Carolina and was stationed at Naval Hospital Charleston where he was promoted to Second Class Petty Officer.

During seven years of active duty, Ronzheimer was deployed to Camp Arifjan in Kuwait with Fleet Hospital Pensacola, to the Troop Medical Clinic at Camp Bueing in northwestern Kuwait, to Okinawa, and to Japan. Ronzheimer left active duty in 2006 after returning from his deployment to Kuwait and was hired by the City of Muscatine as a firefighter and paramedic.

The Navy was never far from his mind, however, reenlisting in the Navy Reserves in August 2007, and was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines Golf Company out of Madison, Wis. During his 13 years in the Navy Reserves Ronzheimer has been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

“One of the interesting things is that no matter where you move in an organization, like the Navy, you carry with it a certain regard for responsibilities,” Ronzheimer said. “You literally can be thrown into any situation and be expected and trusted to have a good outcome and do the right things. It is hard when you start to walk away from that.”

That regard for responsibilities has followed him into his position with the MFD.

“We have that (regard for responsibilities) in the fire department, but it is different when you have over 600 sailors that you have to be concerned about,” Ronzheimer said. “There is less responsibility here but still, in this job, the community depends on me, and the firefighters depend

on me. So you still get that sense of pride, and sense of belonging to something bigger than yourself.”

Ronzheimer was promoted to First Class Petty Officer during his deployment to Iraq in the Fall of 2008, transferred to Operational Hospital Support Unit (OHSU) Great Lakes Detachment Kilo, was selected for Chief Petty Officer in 2011, and then deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Ronzheimer said that the support and generosity of family, friends, and the community were evident whenever he was deployed.

“I was amazed by the support and the things that came in from our community ... the schools and school teachers, and from various other members of the community who sent care packages,” Ronzheimer said.

He recalled going to one mail call and finding 17 packages that were sent to him to be delivered" to the Iraqi children.

“I remember I showed up at mail call in Iraq and there were 17 packages there for me to deliver to these kids in Iraq filled with school supplies that came from our community,” Ronzheimer said. “Somebody did a drive to gather the items and these children needed the pencils and paper because their infrastructure was destroyed and they have had a hard time getting that.”

Ronzheimer noted that the children and teachers were very excited to receive this material for school.

“When we delivered these items to the kids and the teachers they were so excited that they would have stuff for school,” Ronzheimer said. “That impact, those little gestures, is what really makes our country amazing. It is really neat about the support that our community has for our veterans, for each other, for public service, and everything else. You just want to pay it forward.”

After returning home from the Role III Hospital in Afghanistan (similar to a Level 1 trauma hospital), Ronzheimer was selected to attend the Navy War College where he completed the



CITY OF MUSCATINE
215 SYCAMORE STREET
MUSCATINE, IA 52761
PH. (563) 264-1550 • FAX (563) 264-0750

Senior Enlisted Academy. He later served with the Navy Reserve Medical Education and Training Command before wrapping up his career back with the 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines.

Ronzheimer joined the Muscatine Fire Department in 2006, was promoted to lieutenant in 2013, named a captain in 2016, and was named a Battalion Chief on June 1, 2018. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Fire Science from Columbia Southern University and his Master's Degree in Executive Leadership and Disaster Management through Grand Canyon University.