

4-1-2003

Smokejumper Magazine, April 2003

National Smokejumper Association

Dale Schmaljohn

Chuck Sheley

Don Courtney

Follow this and additional works at: https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_mag

Recommended Citation

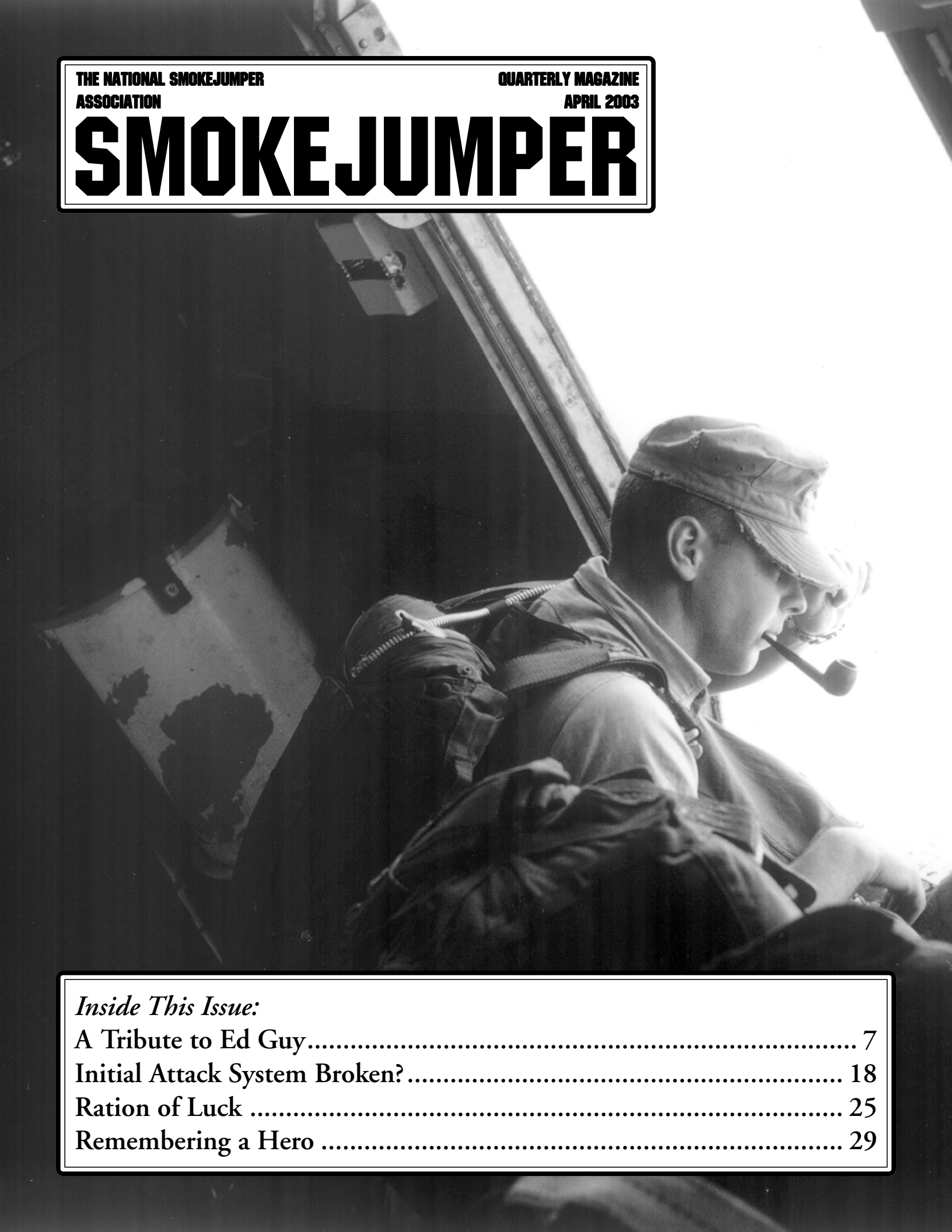
National Smokejumper Association; Schmaljohn, Dale; Sheley, Chuck; and Courtney, Don, "Smokejumper Magazine, April 2003" (2003). *Smokejumper and Static Line Magazines*. 39.
https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_mag/39

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives & Special Collections at EWU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Smokejumper and Static Line Magazines by an authorized administrator of EWU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jotto@ewu.edu.

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
APRIL 2003

SMOKEJUMPER



Inside This Issue:

A Tribute to Ed Guy.....	7
Initial Attack System Broken?	18
Ration of Luck	25
Remembering a Hero	29

CONTENTS

Message from the President 2
 Spaghetti-O's vs. a .30-.30 at Fort Yukon 3
 U.S Forest Service Culture and Tradition 5
 FBI Joins Probe into Killing of
 Smokejumper Ted Burgon 6
 White Boots, Tribute to Our Friend Ed Guy .. 7
 Hold Those Cookies 11
 Sounding Off from the Editor 12
 Key Congressional Contacts 13
 Let Your Views Be Known to Your
 Congressional Representatives 14
 Readers Respond 14
 "Managed" or Not, Dry Forests Burn 17
 A Final Look at the Biscuit Fire — Is the
 Initial Attack System Broken? 18
 "Once a big fire was seen as failure, ..." ... 19
 Odds and Ends 20
 Member Profile, Chuck Corrigan 21
 Checking the Canopy 22
 My Brush with History/CPS 103 Jumpers 23
 Featured Life Member, Fred Donner 24
 Ration of Luck 25
 Featured Life Member, Jimmie F. Dollard .. 27
 The View from Outside the Fence 28
 Remembering a Hero 29
 NSA Solicits Information, Photos to Honor
 KIA Jumpers 31
 Letters 32
 Items from the Fire Pack 33
 Off the List 34
 Those Were the Days: McCall, Idaho
 1944-45 35
 Blast from the Past 37
 Not Just a Job. 37
 Interview with the Dragon Slayer — Troop
 Emonds 39
 Associate Member Profile, Norm Silver 41
 First NSA Trail Crew in R-6 42
 Early Chain Saw Use in Missoula 43
 Smokejumper Milestones 44
 Historical Summary of Region 8
 Smokejumper Program 44
 Museum of Mountain Flying Inducts
 Six into Hall of Fame 45
 Featured Life Member, Wallace D.
 Henderson 46



SMOKEJUMPER, ISSUE NO. 39, APRIL 2003

Smokejumper is published by:

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION
 ISSN 1532-6160

The opinions of the writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the NSA.

NSA Web site: <http://www.smokejumpers.com>

Managing Editor: *Chuck Sheley*

Editing: *Francine Gair and Jill Leger*

Illustrators: *McElderry Books, Nick Holmes,*

Chris Demarest, Ken Morris, Dan

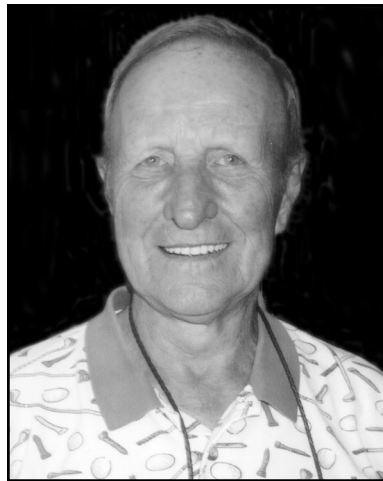
Veenendaal and Eric Rajala

Layout/Printing: *Larry S. Jackson, Heidelberg Graphics, Chico, CA*

Cover photo: *Don Courtney (Courtesy Don Courtney)*



Message from the President



by **Ron Stoleson**
 (Missoula '56)
 PRESIDENT

IN MY LAST COLUMN, I mentioned reaching the 91st Life Member and went on to say that I hoped we would reach the 100 mark in the next few months. Well — we made it to 100 in early January and Jim Cherry our Life Membership coordinator called this achievement quite a milepost. It is and I really applaud all those who have seen fit to invest in our organization and its objectives.

Two of the last memberships sold were purchased by Bill Woolworth (MSO '68). One (an Associate Life Membership) was for his son currently serving overseas with a Special Operations team. The other he put in the name of Squad VI, a group he was a part of and who Neal Walstad called "the biggest bunch of duds that I ever met." Others in the group were Bert Tanner, Dave "Tiger" Thompson, Menno Troyer, Tommy Trusler, Willie Von-Bracht, Steve Walker, Fred Wolff and Gary Youngquist. Sounds like there could

be a good story for the magazine about this group.

Others making the move to Life Members in December were Charley Brown (MYC '56), Stan Linnertz (MSO '61), Perry Rahn (MSO '61), Raymond Osipovich (CJ '73), William Mills (MSO '65) and Matthew Sundt (RAC '83). Thanks to all of you.

As you read this, we will be nearing the time for our meeting in Redding. I hope those of you in that area will attend the social on Saturday night. You're also welcome to attend our business meeting that day. The main order of business will be to establish our objectives for the coming year. Chuck has already started lining up facilities.

I have had some members contact me regarding editorial opinions expressed in the January issue of the magazine. One person thought it was the best issue he had seen and another person was concerned that readers would get the impression that the NSA was taking a position without having all the facts. My impression is that the articles on the fires of 2002 were very relevant and timely and certainly stirred up a lot of interest. Jerry Schmidt's "How Would You Handle It?" was particularly well done. I hope we continue to have a robust exchange of views in the magazine. At the same time, readers should know that no editorial or article represents a position taken by the NSA unless specifically stated as having been voted on by the Executive Board.

See ya next time. 🐼

Spaghetti-O's vs. a .30-.30 at Fort Yukon

by Larry Welch (Cave Junction '61)

Usually fire season in the Yukon starts off with small fires, as the fuel is still damp from winter snows, but it took the whole planeload of jumpers to man this one.

I was first on the jump list; therefore I was fire boss. I ordered retardant to be dropped on the head of the fire when it got to the mountaintop. Anyone who has ever held a burning match should know fire burns uphill much better and faster than down. I didn't think we had the manpower to stop the fire from going up, but I figured the retardant plus slow downhill burning would allow us to contain the blaze once it reached the ridge.

I put half the crew on either side of the fire to keep it from getting wider. It took us several days to dig the fire line and get control of the fire, but we got it under control. More fires were breaking out, so the jumpers were needed back for initial attack on new fires. Even though our fire was contained, there were still hot spots and small fires within our fire lines that had to be put out before it could be safely left. As fire boss, I had to stay, but the other jumpers got to go back.

The chopper that came to take out the jumpers brought in emergency firefighters, natives hired just for this fire.

Jumpers out for a long time on the fire line usually got a fresh food drop once a week. This time we got a drop containing steaks, fresh bread, peanut butter, jelly and fresh fruit.

When we got word that the other jumpers were going to be pulled back, they saved what was left for me. I had been out on C rations for a week, and the native crew had just gotten there, so I kept the peanut butter, jelly and bread for myself. No one knew about my cache except for a young black bear that had been dodging me since I landed. I'd chase him away, but in thirty minutes he'd be back.

Now that the danger from the fire was gone, I moved my camp up above the fire to the ridge top. I moved for two reasons: one, I could see the crew's work, and two, I could get water from the ice and snow on the ridge top.

I laid out several black plastic tarps, built small sidehill rock dams on them, then dug out a reservoir under the downhill side of the plastic. I would shovel snow and ice onto the black plastic; it would slide down, hit the rock dam and be melted by the sun's energy stored in the black plastic solar collector. The water from the melted snow ran on down the black plastic and collected in the reservoir. Carrying the water downhill was much less work than hiking down to the stream at the bottom of the mountain and packing it back up to use on the fire's remaining stubborn hot spots.

I set up my firefighters into two crews and one timekeeper. One lazy-looking young fat-assed native told me he was timekeeper. I'd already picked out the one I thought would best fit the job — a 65-year-old Indian man who had started to work as soon as he got off the chopper. The first thing this young kid had done was take a coffee break. The kid was P.O.'ed. He said he only hired on because he thought he could be timekeeper. I told him a chopper would be back in two or three days, and if he didn't want to work, he could have a free ride home. I doubt he did much work, but he did stay out on the fire line, at least pretending to work.

The old man kept track of everyone's time, and always had a blazing fire and hot coffee ready when each crew came in. He got his sleep during the middle of the crew's work time. He was sleeping when someone rolled a couple of boulders down the hill through his tent. I didn't know what happened, but I had my suspicions. 🐻

NSA Members — Save This Information

Please contact the following persons directly if you have business or questions:

Smokejumper Magazine & Merchandise

Articles, obits, change of address, orders

Chuck Sheley 530-893-0436

cnkgsheley@earthlink.net

10 Judy Ln

Chico CA 95926

Membership

Fred Cooper 503-391-9144

frederi920@aol.com

NSA Membership

1445 Rainier Loop NW

Salem OR 97304-2079

All Else

Ron Stoleson 801-782-0218

rmstoleson@aol.com

NSA President

1236 E 2925 N

Ogden UT 84414

Trail Project

Jon McBride 406-728-2302

N2601@aol.com

Smokejumper base abbreviations:

Anchorage	ANC	Grangeville	GAC	Missoula	MSO
Boise	NIFC	Idaho City	IDC	Redding	RDD
Cave Junction	CJ	La Grande	LGD	Redmond	RAC
Fairbanks	FBX	McCall	MYC	Winthrop	NCSB

The bear was getting braver and braver all the time. I caught him tearing up my shelter one time. I also woke several times to see his face looking at me from a foot or two away. Consciously, I wasn't worried because he never hesitated to run away if I acted aggressive.

I was shoveling snow when I heard something. I felt the ground tremble, and just as I turned to look, this huge black shadow blocked out the sun. I thought of sticking my sharp shovel where it would hurt Mr. Bear the most. Just as quickly, I realized the black thing that was now all over me was my black plastic tarp that had been blown by a gust of wind. The shaking and noise was a small earthquake, one of several that occurred that year. I never knew if the wind gust was associated with the quake or not.

I had to do something to keep my troops from warring with each other, and I also wasn't getting any good sleep because of Mr. Bear, so I moved the old Indian timekeeper up on the ridge to my camp. He kept time and watch while I slept, and I kept an eye out for him while he slept. We got the fire out without any other acts of aggression.

At the bottom of the mountain were blaze marks on the trees. There were no visible signs of a trail other than the blaze marks, and they were higher in the trees than a man could reach, so we knew it was a winter trail used when there were a few feet of snow on the ground.

We discovered that the trail led to Sam's Village some four miles away, so we packed out to the airstrip by the village.

I was given strict orders not to let the troops go into town, as the men in the village were gone on a hunting trip, and the government feared trouble would break out if these men went into an unprotected village.

Low rain clouds socked us in for a couple of days before a plane could get in to pick us up. There were two or three dozen natives on the crew and only one of me.

I went into town and solicited help from some of the native boys I'd made friends with on previous visits. The boys were to let me know when any of my crew went into the village and were to come running to get me if anyone in the village protested any of my crew's actions. Some of my crew had kinfolks in this village, and others hoped to try to create some, but even though several men did slip into the village, my young scouts told me no one protested any at all.

The plane came, and we were off to Fort Yukon. Several other jumpers had de-manned fires in the area and were also waiting to go back to Fairbanks as soon as there were enough of us to make a planeload.

I went to a roadhouse (combination bar, restaurant, hotel) to get a warm meal. On my way in, who should I meet but the native who had been ticked off about not being timekeeper. He stopped right in the middle of the doorway and said in a derogatory tone, "Where are you going, cowboy?"

I didn't break stride as I lowered my shoulder and hurled on past, saying, "In here, Indian." I didn't look back — not that I was all that confident he didn't want to tangle with me, but I could see his reflection in a pane of glass as I walked on in. He turned, took one step, stopped, then turned again and left. I sat at a table with my back to the wall, so I could keep an eye on the entrance. I was relieved to see three other jump-



Larry Welch (NSA file)

ers coming in, as I now had capable allies in case my Indian would-be timekeeper should dream up some scheme for revenge and return.

One of my fellow jumpers was a Southern California boy. He had a can of Spaghetti-O's and was in the process of eating them with a plastic spoon, when in walked a young native man armed with a lever-action .30-.30 rifle. Luckily, it wasn't my would-be timekeeper.

The native man began to slap around a young native girl seated at the bar. In a heartbeat, our Southern Cal buddy was on his feet and standing between the two of them with a plastic spoon in one hand and a can of Spaghetti O's in the other. I'd personally seen this jumper in action on more than one occasion, and although he wasn't real large, it would take one hell of a man to tangle with him and enjoy it.

This self-appointed protector of young damsels had all the confidence in the world until the sound of that lever-action chambering a round filled his ears and the cold steel of a rifle barrel in his gut caused him to take a close look at the realization of mortality.

Uh, oh, Spaghetti-O's! Spoon, can and Spaghetti-O's filled the air. If I'd been in his boots, I'd probably have asked the Indian if he'd like me to hold her while he beat her about the head with his rifle. Our friend changed from John Wayne to counselor in less than the blink of an eye. The rifle bearer finally did calm down and leave.

Our California friend took some good-natured ribbing about "Uh-oh, Spaghetti-O's!" but everyone knew that they wouldn't have ventured to trade places with him at that moment.

Most of us at that age of our lives didn't mind a good clean fight. It was kind of like a football game or something, but these guys didn't seem to know the rules. None of us had any vested interest in Fort Yukon worth getting permanently damaged for, so we were glad when our plane got airborne and out of rifle range. 🦋

Larry taught school for 34 years and was a rancher in Texas during that time. He says he taught school just so he could have the summers off to jump.

U.S. Forest Service Culture and Tradition

by Karl Brauneis (Missoula '77)

History — Knowledge — Wisdom

In 1972, as a college freshman in forestry school at Colorado State University (CSU), I was enrolled in the Army Reserve Officer Training program. Several of our classes focused on military history. Our instructor, Captain Allwein, challenged us to become effective leaders by applying the historic knowledge of conflict to present-day operations. Fortunately, during my junior year, the Vietnam War ended and all candidates were encouraged to resign due to a surplus of officers. This was good news to me. Any student who sat through our military history classes knew that our efforts in Vietnam were doomed to fail.

Upon graduation, I reported for smokejumper training at Missoula, Montana. Our instructors used the same historic and operational approach I remembered from the CSU Army program. Smokejumper squad leader Rod McIver's history lesson on the Mann Gulch fire in 1949 brought the tragedy to life for us and left a lasting impression. It became apparent that we could learn a lot from the study of historical fire tragedies and close calls.

Through the application of historical knowledge, I have developed a definition of history. I am sure that English language experts will find fault with the definition; however, firefighters and soldiers should understand the concept at first glance. *"History is knowledge that can become wisdom if applied in the present tense."*

To study history is not enough. As firefighters we must approach each incident with an attitude of confidence, curiosity and a deep respect for the rules of engagement (The 10 Standard Fire Orders). A fire is best approached with an attitude that says, in effect, "I am fairly certain this is what will happen, but there is still the unknown. I must recognize the unknown and be prepared for the unexpected."

Every fire should be a learning experience that adds to the firefighter's historical knowledge base in order to better prepare for the unexpected. To approach each fire as "a learning experience" sets the firefighter on the path of wisdom.

A Tradition of Innovation

Innovation is a tradition in the U.S. Forest Service. In 1940, Major Lee (later General Lee, commander of the 101st Airborne) reviewed the smokejumper program in Montana and adopted Forest Service techniques in the development of the Army's airborne school.

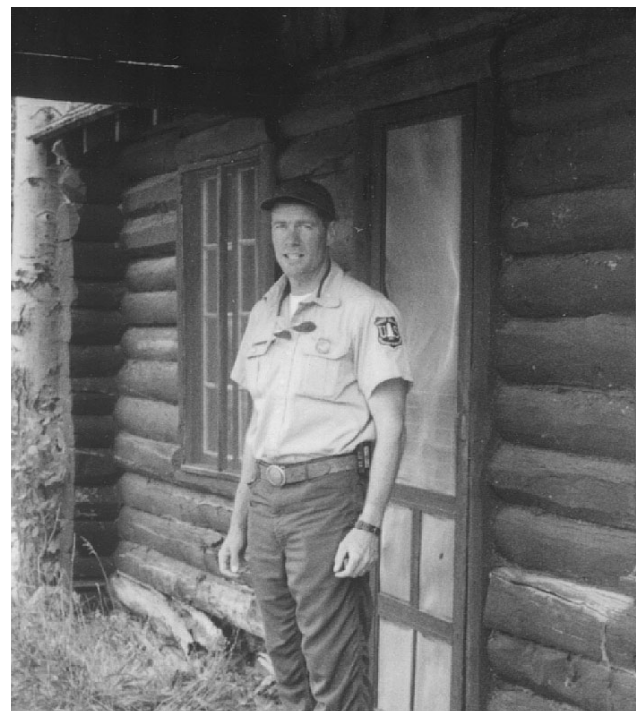
By following Forest Service operational standards, U.S. Army airborne troopers became the first military paratroopers to jump with a reserve parachute to be deployed in case of a main parachute malfunction. Hundreds of lives have

been saved through the use of this "backup chute." The Forest Service parachute project exemplifies our strong tradition of preparing for the unexpected. "Old Foresters" seem to whisper through time: *"Let's get the job done, but let's do it in such a way that we can all grow old and wise together."*

There are many traditions unique to the Forest Service. Backcountry horsemanship has always been a cultural tradition in our outfit. On rugged wilderness forests like the Shoshone, we employ some of the world's best horsemen and packers. The 1964 Wilderness Act assures that this tradition will continue through time. Only through horse and mule power can we successfully maintain trails, fight fires and conduct administrative duties within our wilderness areas. Still, our rangers continue to develop new ways to utilize our four-legged companions. Today, innovative officers in the southwest have demonstrated that the ignition of prescribed burns in some areas is best accomplished on horseback (see *Fire Management Today*, vol. 61, no. 3, summer 2001 — Britton/Mitchell/Racher/Fish). It would appear that the Forest Service could save dollars and accomplish burns in a more productive manner if we look to our horses and not just our feet or helicopters.

Tactics and Strategy or Politics

Another principle I rediscovered from the CSU Army program is that an officer should be an expert in tactics and



Karl Brauneis

strategy, not a politician. In the U.S. Forest Service, we have overplayed the idea that our leaders need to be politicians. Several years ago I listened to a top official present a national and regional perspective of the agency. Here was an intelligent and dedicated man with a brilliant career who spoke for over half an hour and did not say much of anything. What have we done to our leadership? Why are they forced to balance each word to assure that no one is offended? We should leave the popularity contests up to the elected officials and provide safeguards within the organization that stimulate an open and professional dialogue within the scope of our mission.

Mission Focus

That brings me to the fourth lesson I carry with me from college: *Focus on the Mission*. How many Forest Service officers know the mission? In short, the *Forest Service Manual* says (from the “Region 2 News Notes”):

“Our mission is to provide a sustained flow of natural resource goods and services to help meet the needs of the nation. The Forest Service is charged by the Congress to provide a sustained flow of renewable resources; outdoor recreation, forage, wood, water, wilderness, wildlife and fish, and to administer the non-renewable resources to help meet

the Nation’s needs for energy and mineral resources.

“The basic foundation of the National Forest System is to provide healthy watersheds that produce a variety of resources to the American people. Congress was also specific with instructions to the U.S. Forest Service to prevent large conflagrations (fire) that could destroy those resources.

“We as a collective culture also affirm that firefighter and public safety is the number 1 priority all of the time. No resource value is worth the life of a firefighter.”

The education process is not a game of memorization, but of study and application. What you learn must make sense in real world terms to be effective. For me, the real world often requires a large dose of divine intervention to make sense. Still, the application of history, mission focus and an open culture that values innovation and tradition is a good place to start. 🙏

Karl trained as a Missoula smokejumper (1977–79) and then converted to a forester position on the Kaniksu National Forest and worked his way up to the timber management assistant position on the Bonners Ferry Ranger District. In 1988 he transferred to the Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming where he now serves as a zone fire management officer. You can reach Karl at: kbrauneis@fs.fed.us

FBI Joins Probe into Killing of NSA Director Ted Burgon

The following was taken from Reuters Web site news Jan. 23, 2003:

FBI agents Thursday joined an Indonesian investigation into the killing last August of two American schoolteachers in the restive province of Papua.

The move follows Jakarta’s failure to charge anyone over the attack. A U.S. official said last week a proper resolution of the case would help ties between the United States and Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation.

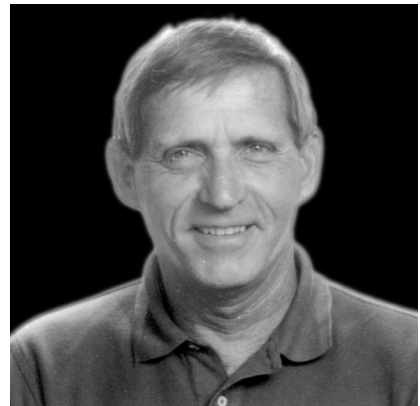
One Indonesian was also killed when gunmen ambushed a convoy of mainly American school teachers and their families near a giant U.S.-owned copper and gold mine.

The two FBI agents held initial talks with Mangku Pastika, police chief of Papua at the time of the attack. Indonesia has rarely allowed foreign participation in investigation of domestic crimes. Indonesian police have said some weapons used in the shooting in remote Papua were of the same type as those carried by troops stationed nearby, but that it was too early to point fingers at the military.

If any military hand were found in the ambush — which Washington has called an “outrageous act of terrorism” — it could cause problems for Jakarta’s bid to restore normal military ties with the United States, slashed after bloodshed gripped East Timor’s 1999 vote to break from Indonesian rule.

The teachers killed worked at an international school serving the mine’s expatriate staff.

Soldiers provide the main security for Freeport’s mine in Papua, where a low-level rebellion has simmered for decades. 🙏



Ted Burgon (NSA file)

White Boots, a Tribute to Our Friend Ed Guy

by Dale L. Schmaljohn (McCall '60)

"Off the List," NSA *Smokejumper* quarterly magazine, January 2002:

Edward E. Guy (McCall '60)

Just received a note from John Guy who informed us that his son, Edward, passed away on September 21, 2001, from a heart attack while living in Guatemala. Mr. Guy said that he was glad that Ed was able to attend the reunion in Redding where he was able to visit with many old friends from McCall, and that his time at McCall was one of the happiest times of his life.

Those of us who jumped out of McCall during the 1960s have many memories of Ed Guy. For the rest of you NSA members, I want to share some of my never-to-be-forgotten memories of Ed Guy, my jumper partner, friend and world-class humanitarian.

Ask most any smokejumper about boots and they will sing the praises of their "Whites." It's not unusual for non-jumpers to question, "Why do you call them 'Whites?' They look black to me." Then you have to explain that they are called "Whites" or "White boots," not because of their color, but because they are made by the White Boot Company in Spokane, Washington.

I picked "White boots" to represent Ed in this article because this boot could be a mascot or symbol representing smokejumpers in general. The boot most of us wore when we were smoke jumping is actually named the "Smokejumper" by the White Boot Company. As Ed's father, John Guy, stated in the death notice he wrote for our NSA journal, Ed's smokejumping years were some of the happiest days of his life. Ed loved smokejumping and he loved White Boots, yet he was one of the few jumpers I ever knew who never owned a pair of these wonderful boots. He never owned a pair for only one reason: they cost too much.

To the best of my knowledge Ed never spent money on himself for anything that wasn't absolutely necessary. He bought the cheapest brands when he couldn't buy previously owned clothes. I'm sure he would have denied himself health and dental care unless he was convinced that doing without would cost him more later or interfere with his efficiency. To the best of my knowledge, Ed never owned a car, a home, furniture or anything more than he could carry in his arms. I had not known Ed Guy long before I knew he would leave this world with no more worldly possessions than he had when I first met him: an old suitcase of worn clothes, a box of books, maps, and personal items, and a BB gun. Ed was the least materialistic person I have ever known.

I met Ed in June of 1960 when he, five other young men, and I joined the Region Four Smokejumper Training program in McCall. First year smokejumpers in McCall are referred to as "Neds." We soon learned what Ned meant, even though we didn't know the origin of the word. Ned is synonymous with rookie, greenhorn, freshman, or whatever else means naïve and new to an experience. When Ed and I met we didn't know how



Ed Guy (Courtesy Dale Schmaljohn)

significant joining the Ned Class of 1960 would prove to be; we didn't know that these four weeks of training would turn out to be one of our life's markers. For the rest of our lives we would use this period of time to remind us of other important events in our lives.

Ed and I remained in touch from the time we were in "Ned training" together until his death in September of 2001. There were times when years would pass without a visit or phone call from Ed, and following these contacts I often said good-bye thinking it might be for the last time. For a long time I have had some understanding of the dangerous world Ed lived in and his selfless need to support his calling.

By our second day in McCall the paperwork had been completed and preparations made for a weeklong work project. Ed, two other new men, **Bob Donnelley** (MYC '52), our squad leader, and I drove east of McCall to the Secesh River. We spent the week working the trail that runs along a cliff above the river. We built up the tread where it had been washed out by the spring runoff and we cleared the logs that had blown down during the winter. We ate, slept, and worked together on the narrow ledge. It

felt good to be working in such beautiful country and the exercise, good food, and camaraderie prepared us for our upcoming training.

The weekend following our work project, Ed joined some of his church friends at their camp on Cascade Reservoir, a few miles south of McCall. In the years to come, this camp would serve as an important link between Ed and his church.

After becoming friends with **Stan Tate** (MYC '53), pastor of the Saint Andrew's Church and former smokejumper, Ed started joining Stan's Episcopal congregation on those Sundays when he was in McCall but didn't have time to get to Cascade to join his own congregation. At Stan's request, Ed would sometimes speak at the Sunday morning service. Stan said his church members appreciated Ed's talks because his lessons were down to earth. Ed's teachings could vividly illustrate the practical applications of one's faith and his humble, humorous personality presented the congregation with an unusual variation on man's responsibility to his fellow man.

Ed loved mastering the skills of parachuting, fire fighting, and living under primitive conditions during his nine summers as a smokejumper and his seventy-four Forest Service parachute jumps. I know Ed enjoyed the camaraderie even more than the adventure because of his dominant interest in people. Aside from this, he was curious about survival methods. He was forever doing things to test himself. I remember the time we were packing our hundred pound packs up a steep, bushy mountain slope when I realized Ed was moving at an unbelievably slow pace. He moved as if he were slowly climbing a ladder, taking very deliberate steps with long pauses between each step. When asked about his pace, Ed said, "I read that Sherpas in the Himalayas move up mountains this way and they never need to rest."

Ed did other field tests of such significant scientific issues as: Are you better off to drink a quart of water a day by drinking half of it in the morning and the other half in the late afternoon, or does it serve you better to ration it out? He had the same question about consuming food. He often tested the gulp and gag versus the spare and savor method.

I wasn't in the planeload, but Ed told me about an event that he had experienced while flying patrol behind a lightning storm our Ned year. **Shep Johnson** (MYC '56) was the spotter and he was riding up front in the copilot's seat. Shep had some experience as a pilot and on this particular flight he volunteered to take the controls of the trimotor Ford and give Frank, the pilot, a break. This was when the rowdy jumpers in the back decided they could watch the ridges for smoke and still have a little fun with Shep. One of the more experienced jumpers took out his flat letdown rope and made a couple of wraps around the control rod that ran near the ceiling the full length of the fuselage. The rod was exposed because the plane lacked upholstery and the easy access to this rod was too great a temptation to resist. The jumpers now had things rigged up so that a subtle tug on either end of the rope would throw the trim set out of balance and change the levelness of the plane. Ed said that Frank had trimmed out the plane and had it flying level when he turned it over to Shep. Shep looked confident as he took the stick and positioned his feet on the rudder pedals.

Frank began looking for fires. Shep no more than got the feel of the plane when it began gaining altitude. Good-naturedly, Shep spun the overhead control that trimmed out the plane's wing flaps and, again, the plane leveled out. In a short time, however, the nose of the plane slipped from the horizon into a slight descent. Shep dutifully adjusted the overhead controls to

raise the nose of the plane slightly. With the plane flying level again he relaxed. Neither he nor Frank noticed the overhead trim control wheel turning slowly as the jumpers continued to control the plane with the jump rope. The unaware jumpers giggled under their breath as the plane crept closer to disaster. This nose up, nose down problem continued to worsen despite Shep's best effort to level the plane.

Shep was getting frustrated and the jumpers in the back silently laughed. Frank, being a sly old pilot, put two and two together and figured out what the boys in the back were up to. He motioned for Shep to give the controls back and, without a warning, he jammed the stick forward sending the plane into a violent dive. The fire packs shifted forward and the eight smokejumpers in the back tumbled toward the front of the plane. They grabbed for something to hold on to as their hearts jumped to their throats. Panic raced through the eight smokejumpers as the ageing aircraft's nose-down descent picked up speed. Frank then pulled back on the stick as suddenly as he had pushed it forward, pulling the trimotor Ford out of its steep dive. The startled, wide-eyed jumpers untangled themselves from the gear in the back as Frank and Shep roared with laughter.

Ed said that when the plane began to drop, he was probably more frightened than anyone, because he had grown up hearing stories about airplane crashes. Ed's dad had been an airplane mechanic in the early days of aviation. He had told Ed, "I am more worried about you flying in old airplanes than jumping out of them. If you fly in those crates long enough, they'll get you." Ed had been convinced that the screwball crew had broken something. He felt that the whole planeload was "buying the farm." "Buying the farm" and "Sometimes you get the bear and sometimes the bear gets you" were two common expressions we heard a lot around the base.

I've never known anyone who enjoyed life more than Ed Guy. He was quick to laugh at himself, and no one enjoyed a funny movie more than he did. Ed would laugh so hard he would have tears running down his face. I remember one time I realized that more people in the theater were watching Ed than were watching the movie.

Ed was a master at taking the joy out of a would-be bully. When anyone would start to tease him, Ed would join him in a good-natured laugh at himself.

Ed loved to laugh and tell the story about his professor at Central Washington University. He had asked Ed to drop his Spanish class. He told Ed that he appreciated his effort and motivation, but concluded their conference with the statement, "Not everyone is capable of learning to speak Spanish." Ed must have taken that statement as a challenge, for it was the summer following his college graduation that he began saving his money to go to Mexico and submerge himself in Spanish. He chose a program that Ohio State University was conducting at a university in Mexico City and attended that next winter. Years later, Ed told me that most of the American students there were fun, but he thought they were going through a goof-off period in their lives and had gone to Mexico City to party. "They were kind of like the guys we smoke jump with, Dale," Ed said. I wonder if this Spanish professor ever heard that Ed later mastered Spanish. I wonder what he would say if he knew that Ed's church sent him to Australia for several months to translate for a group of Guatemalans migrating there.

All the years I knew Ed, he was a student. I lost track of what he did in the way of formal education after he finished his master's degree in social work in 1965; but I can say, without a doubt, that he continued to educate himself. He never stopped

reading, searching, and exploring. Ed always saw more to do than he possibly had time for. While living in Ed's barracks, it was a familiar sight to see him reading and studying maps late into the night.

During my Ned summer, I was contemplating starting at Boise Junior College in the fall. I was a C average high school student and had little confidence in my ability to be successful in college. When I talked to Ed about my concerns with college, he said, "Look, Dale, if I can get through college, anyone can," and I knew he meant it. I did enroll in junior college that fall and I did give studying a try. Ed was right. It made all the difference. I'm sure that I am only one of many people Ed encouraged to continue their education. I know that a few years later when Ed was working on his master's degree, he provided a home and financial support for a Mexican boy, allowing him to complete high school here in the United States.

Ed told me how he dressed when he was in Mexico. He said a summer weight wash-and-wear suit worked well for him. It was practical because he could wash it in the sink, let it drip dry, and it was ready to wear again the next day. His white shirt was made of the same material and could be cared for the same way. Ed often got off the major roads when traveling to remote villages, and he realized this was dangerous. He felt that when he was wearing a suit, the people who didn't know him would assume he was a government official and he would be safer. After spending some time in Mexico, Ed changed his mind and started dressing differently. He began dressing like the common people he worked with and found that they were more comfortable with him. He stopped wearing a suit; his personal safety wasn't worth creating distance between him and the people he wanted to help.

Thinking about the way Ed dressed, I am reminded of an incident he told me that happened when he was finishing his master's program at the University of Missouri in Kansas City. Ed was doing his field service in social work and he was dressed informally, which was comfortable for him and the families he worked with. His supervisor emphasized the importance of dressing professionally on several occasions before coming right out and asking Ed to clean up his act. A few days after Ed had this conversation with his supervisor, he was restocking his wardrobe at a Goodwill store (a used clothing store), and as luck would have it he ran across an outdated tuxedo that was in prime condition. Like a light bulb clicking on in his head, an idea came to him and he bought it for a couple of bucks. Ed put it on the

very next day with his white shirt, bow tie, and all the trimmings. He made it a point to say good morning to his supervisor as he walked in acting as if nothing was out of the ordinary. He said the man didn't smile, ask any questions, or anything. "My supervisor just got this funny look on his face. I'm sure to this day he thinks I'm retarded," Ed said with a smile. "You know what was really funny about the whole thing? None of my clients said a word about it either. I'm not sure if that tells you something about them or something about me, but I just went about my business of making home visits."

"Well, so what happened?" I asked Ed.

"Nothing," he answered. "I just went back to dressing like I always had and my supervisor never brought the subject up again. He was just relieved that I stopped wearing the tuxedo."

Ed's individuality was always showing up when least expected, like the time we were returning from a fire and ended up waiting in a small town for transportation back to McCall. The local ranger's office gave each of us a coupon that said something like this: COUPON GOOD FOR ONE MEAL UP TO A \$5.00 VALUE. Then, as a group we went to a restaurant and ordered from the menu. Ed's orders were typically more creative than the rest of ours.

"I'll have three hamburgers, buttermilk, a chocolate milkshake, a piece of pie, and four candy bars," Ed would say to the waitress.

Looking puzzled, the waitress said, "Excuse me, do you want buttermilk or a chocolate shake?"

"Yes," Ed answered.

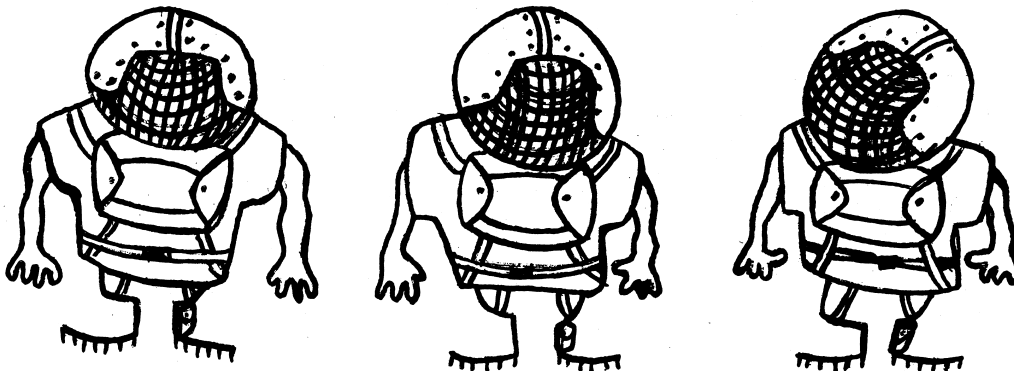
"Yes, what?" the confused waitress asked.

"Yes, the buttermilk and chocolate milkshake," Ed replied.

This may sound like someone flirting or trying to give the waitress a hard time, but Ed wasn't and the young woman knew he wasn't. Ed was never a showoff or a smart aleck, and he certainly wouldn't put someone else out. Waitresses usually just found Ed confusing.

Finally the waitress read back Ed's order and he said, "Yep, that's right. What's the total?" Had the total been less than the full \$5.00, Ed may have asked her to add another burger or candy bar.

Ed usually had a wrapped hamburger or two and a few candy bars stuck away in his personal gear bag. He was more than willing to share them with anyone who would take them. One time when Ed had been trying to get a hungover comrade to eat



YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT TROUBLES

at least one of his extra hamburgers for breakfast, Wayne Webb, our loft foreman said "Ed these guys are grown men, even if they don't act like it. You don't have to be their mother."

If we found ourselves with an overnight layover in Salmon, Idaho, or some other town en route back to McCall, the crew got excited about hitting the bars. As soon as we would get to town, though, Ed would ask, "Anyone want to go to a movie with me?"

Ed was not big on talking about himself, but once I found out he had lived in Alaska, I pumped him for information. He taught me that under certain circumstances a moose could be as dangerous as a grizzly bear and a hundred other facts about survival in Alaska.

Ed had some interesting stories that centered around his working summers on a boat that carried supplies up Alaskan rivers. It seemed that alcohol was a problem for most of the boat's crew. When the boat was unloaded and tied up for the night the crew took off for the closest bar. When it was time to get underway the next morning, the crew was usually hard to find. The boat would then be delayed until they were bailed out of jail or otherwise rounded up. Ed, wanting to be helpful, painted the name of their boat on the back of his jacket in bold letters. The other crewmembers thought this was a great idea and did the same. After that, when the crew got drunk the local authorities dumped them back at the boat and they were there when it was time to continue up river. I suspect that it saved several crewmembers their jobs.

The boat's crew was mainly made up of Native Alaskans. Ed had a great deal of compassion for these people and at that time he talked about wanting to return to Alaska someday and help them improve their lot.

Ed was a lifelong member of the Reorganized LDS Church, but he didn't believe in religious boundaries. He worked side by side with all denominations during floods, earthquakes, and revolutions. Ed didn't believe God, or whatever you called the organizer of the universe, was petty.

Besides being a humanitarian, Ed was spiritual. He adamantly believed that God was his source of strength and that God didn't hesitate to directly intervene in individual lives.

In July of 1961, our second summer of smoke jumping, Ed and I were on a crew that jumped a fire in what is now known as the Frank Church Wilderness Area. We parachuted into a smoke-filled Salmon River canyon shortly after daylight, landing on a steep grassy slope just up from the river. The fire covered less than

a hundred acres. By three in the afternoon, ground crews were arriving and we nearly had the fire controlled — when suddenly, the wind came up and it spread wildfire in all directions. By dark, the fire had destroyed thousands of acres of grasslands and forests, overrunning all our fire line and leaving fire crews in disarray.

Just before the blowup, Ed, Jim Tracy (MYC '61), Del Hessel (MYC '59), and I were sent down the east side of the fire to reline an area near the river. We had no more than started to dig line when all hell broke loose. That was the only time in my thirteen years of firefighting that I thought I was about to die. It was many years later that Ed told me this was the first of four times he felt God had directly intervened to save his life. I had always felt that we had escaped the five-foot wall of rolling cheat grass fire because of a number of unrelated random events happening at once. I contributed our survival to a brief change in the prevailing wind, a well-placed retardant drop from the WWII torpedo bomber that soaked the four of us, and luck. I now think Ed's explanation is at least as credible as mine.

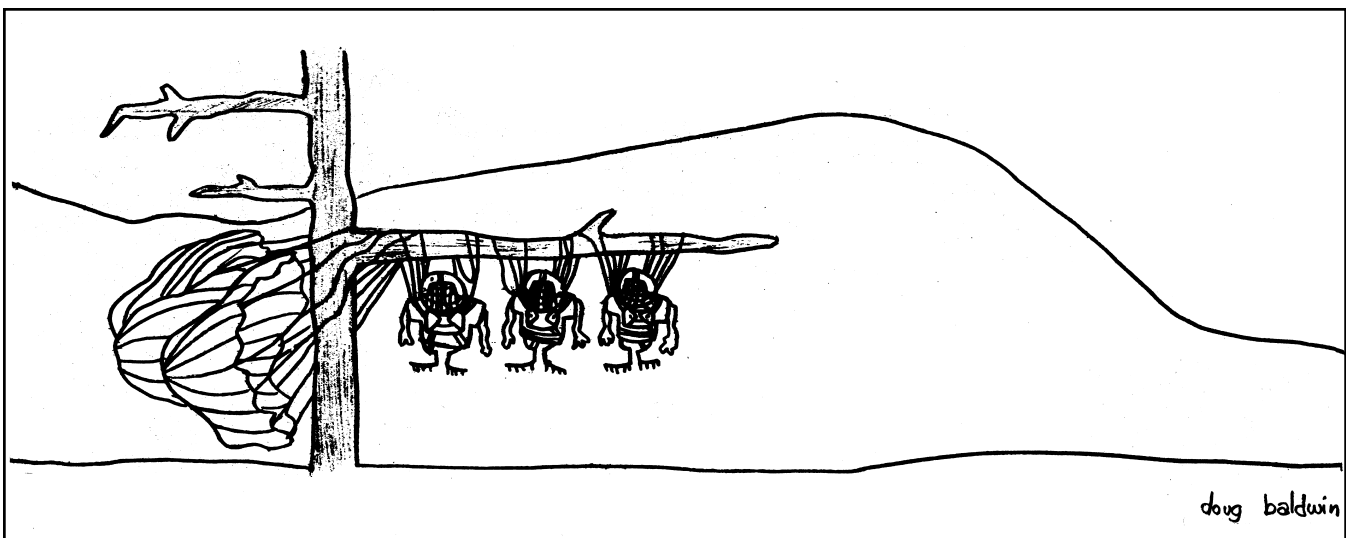
Several years before Ed's death, he told me about having his first heart attack when he was in a remote village, high in the Honduras mountains. He lay on a cot for a month, thinking he would die any time. He said he thought about his life, knowing that all he had to do was let go and his life would be over. "I questioned how God would grade my life and decided if I died then I had probably earned a D," Ed said. "I thought maybe I should let go and take the D before I screwed up," he added.

"Ed, if you have a D, I don't want to know what the rest of us have," I answered in disbelief.

Besides all the regular daily work of being a missionary, Ed worked with two different United Nations committees, one that sought justice for crimes against humanity that had been committed during the many political upheavals Ed had witnessed in Guatemala and one trying to stop the stealing of children. Ed said it was not uncommon in Central America for children to be wrestled from the arms of their mothers in broad daylight.

Our friend, Ed Guy, saw and lived in a world different from most of us, and our world is better because of him. When I think of him now, I imagine him in a better place, perhaps walking an easier trail in his White boots made of soft white leather. 🍄

Dale L. Schmaljohn (McCall '60) is author of Smokejumper, a Summer in the American Wilderness, Hyde Park Press.



Hold Those Cookies

by Pat Harbine (Missoula '51)

The word was out at the University of Montana. Several students had earned enough in the 1950 fire season as smokejumpers to pay room, board and tuition for the entire year. Everybody wanted in on the action but it was hard to get into the organization unless you knew someone important.

Wally Dobbins (MSO '47) was one of my pretty and popular sister's most persistent suitors and perhaps to gain more notice from her, offered to introduce me to the man in charge. We walked into a large sunny room at the district headquarters and there surrounded by maps was Earl Cooley (MSO '40). There were maps that charted the locations of all the known and unknown spots in the Northwest.

Suitably impressed, I sat down and answered the questions he asked. After a short time he nodded approval of this fresh piece of meat for his project. I was in!

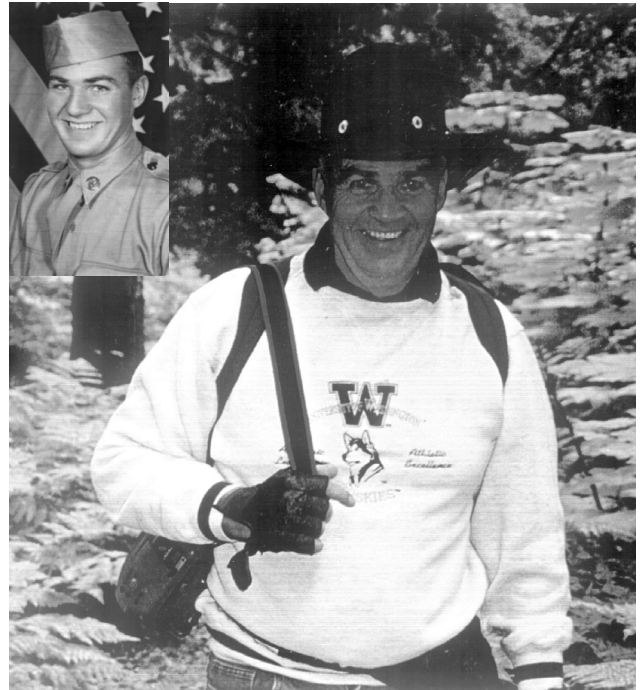
They came from all over the USA in cars, on motorcycles and on trains (some even rode the freights). Some drove day and night but most came from Missoula. All were in their twenties and in top shape. Nine Mile Camp was a small place but everyone found a bed for the night. Training began right after breakfast with a very fast half mile run. Those who were not runners or who partook too heavily of the large breakfast in Effy's kitchen often lost the meal at the end of the run. The exercises were well planned to challenge even the fittest of our number. The classroom lessons were extensive and the instructors highlighted the harsh lessons learned in the Mann Gulch catastrophe. Twelve of the 15 jumpers and one ex-jumper, who was a fireguard, lost their lives as they raced a fast moving fire up a steep slope. Two were fortunate to find an opening in a rock wall that had blocked the escape of others. The foreman used an untested idea of a backfire to provide a safe haven as the fire roared over him. This event had occurred two years earlier but was still on the minds of our peers who were determined we would be trained to meet similar events. We were in good hands!

We spent two weeks climbing ropes, climbing trees with spurs, practicing landing rolls, letdowns and mock-ups. We were finally ready for the first jump. The healthy activity of the camp always brought out the evening volleyball games. Veterans like Gar Thorsrud (MSO '46), Lyle Grenager (MSO '48) and the Gorsuch (Howard MYC '46 and Bob MSO '47) brothers enjoyed spiking well-set returns into the faces of the beginners who dared to invade their dynasty.

The last week of June was the time when most of us would not only take their first jump but our first ride in a plane as well. Fully dressed in the heavy canvas suit and helmet and the mandatory White brand boots, we suffered with our clothing saturated with the sweat that could not escape from under our armor. Bent forward by the restricting straps of the harness and the weight of the two parachutes, we were ushered into the planes and dutifully clipped our static lines to the overhead cable.

The 1930s vintage Tri-Motors from which we would jump were well maintained by the Johnson Flying Service and most had newer, more powerful motors transplanted from surplus WWII fighters. The flights started from the graveled airstrip near Nine Mile.

The jumpers were hot and sweaty and grateful for the breeze



Pat Harbine (Courtesy Pat Harbine)

from the propellers through the open door. As the plane rose from the ground and leveled off a silence prevailed. The reason was obvious. Everyone was airsick except the pilots and spotter. No one wanted to use the available barf bags and they struggled to keep from puking through the mask which would not only trap the evidence, but would maintain enough odor to prompt another episode on their next flight. Once above the drop zone the spotter would move to the side door, find the target and throw out a drift chute. Then one by one he would motion the jumpers forward to drop one on each pass. The air was clear and cool after the wait in the cabin. It would take more courage not to jump at this point. The chutes had evolved from the early surplus ones and slots and guidelines had been added.

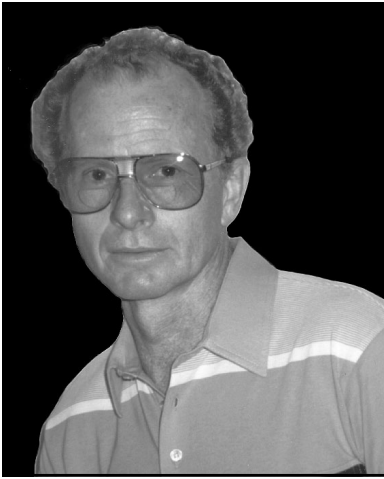
Once on the ground the trucks headed back to camp were full of loud boisterous young men flushed with the excitement of their first jump. They wouldn't remember the nausea until their next ride when the iron-gutted pilots would grin at their misery.

It was hard to get into this outfit but it was easy to loose your cookies! 🍪

After completing his jumping career in 1954, Pat returned to the University of Montana where he completed his degree in 1957. He went to physical therapy school in Houston, Texas, and worked 40 years as a therapist and supervisor. He and his wife have four sons and nine grandchildren. Pat is active as a Telemark skier and does whitewater and sea kayaking. By the time this article is read, Pat will have completed 1700 miles of kayaking and will have finished a tour that covered the entire length of the Columbia River from Canal Flats, B.C., to Astoria, Ore.



Sounding Off from the Editor



by **Chuck Sheley**
(Cave Junction '59)
MANAGING EDITOR

THE 2002 FIRE SEASON WAS ENORMOUS in the amount of money spent and lives lost (22). The 2003 season is just weeks away, we have drought conditions and rookies are already training at some bases. Will there be any changes for the 2003 season? Will the number of smokejumpers be increased?

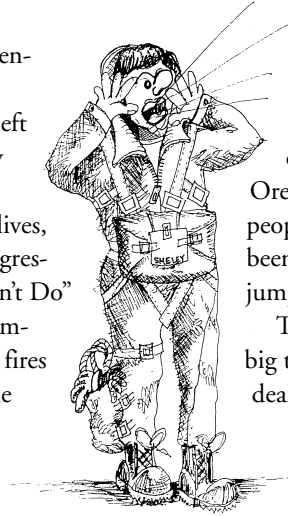
I'm still trying to get emphasis placed on timely initial attack as being the proven method to keep fires small, reduce the dollar cost to the taxpayer and save lives. I've heard that currently only four dollars out of every \$100 spent on fire is spent on pre-suppression.

Let's look at the 2002 season. The Western U.S. was experiencing severe drought conditions. Megafires developed which gobbled up valuable resources. The lack of resources led to more megafires. New safety rules coming from the 30-Mile fire fatalities took away from what you and I know as "aggressive" fire fighting. Crews don't work at night; burnout lines were established miles away from the fire making some fires larger than they would have been if

no action were taken. "Disengage" was added to the vocabulary list. Fires were left to burn for days before any action was taken.

Under the guise saving lives, we have fought fires less aggressively and fostered the "Can't Do" attitude. Larger fires are commonplace. However, when fires get to the megafire stage the potential for loss of life is greatly increased. The Biscuit fire had close to 7,000 people working on it at one time. You can easily see the potential for vehicle accident, aircraft accident and increased hazards to fire line personnel. I'm sure that the probability for a fatality in moving 7,000 personnel across the nation is much greater than that of someone getting burned in the fire. With the number of people who worked that fire, I'm also sure the number of personnel involved over the length of that fire was double or triple the above number.

The point of my op-ed "How the West Was Lost" (Jan. 2003 *Smokejumper*) is there were smokejumper resources available to use in the early stages of the Biscuit fire. The Biscuit fire was declared out a day before the new year with costs currently running at \$170,000,000. I had little or no luck trying to spread the word that base availability records show there were over 70 jumpers in the lower 48 states. The Siskiyou N.F. tried to order jumpers but was told "there would be none available for 48 hours." This is a ridiculous statement. Can anyone associated with smokejumping remember *anytime* in the history of smokejumping when there we no jumpers available for two days?



During this time, the Redmond base continued to jump 14–20 jumpers a day on forests in southern Oregon. Wonder where these people came from? Must have been a new breed called "ghost jumpers."

The Portland *Oregonian* did a big three-day spread on the fire dealing with all the problems and lack of resources. They bought the Forest Service line and told the public there were no jumpers available.

This winter I was contacted by Andy Stahl, executive director Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics from Eugene, Ore. Andy had read my piece on the NSA Web site and asked some key questions. He made some phone calls to check out my statements to him. Please read the e-mails that he sent back to me:

(1) "Chuck— I just talked with a fellow at the Redmond base. He said, to paraphrase, 'hell, yes, we had jumpers available and ready to go that day.' Also thinks the problem is more systemic than just this one dispatch center; that there is a pervasive anti-smokejumper perspective within the FS fire hierarchy because smokejumpers are viewed as renegades (his words)."

(2) "Chuck— Northwest Coordination Center told me today that there is *no* record of a smokejumper resource order for 7/13 from the Siskiyou, from Grants Pass Dispatch, or Central Oregon Dispatch. NWCC also called Central Oregon dispatch, which confirmed *it never received* a smokejumper resource order from Grants Pass Dispatch or the

Siskiyou.

So, no formal order was ever made.”

It's time to start thinking outside the lines. The cry is that jumpers weren't/aren't available, which indicates a need for more jumpers. On the other side people want to know what to do with all those jumpers during low-use years? Two years ago we increased the number of Hotshot crews.

Why not add 100 jumpers who can be turned into five Hotshot crews during low jumper use times? Make multi-use firefighters. There are no firefighters more highly trained than the Hotshot crews and they see plenty of action.

You want OT? — work on a shot crew.

Why not start more programs similar to the “Re-tred” program that was used in Redding from 1962–74? Same concept as the National Guard-trained reserves that go back to the district and be called up when needed during emergencies. The number of potential jumpers is greatly increased without bearing the daily salary costs.

Why not work with state fire agencies and see if they will foot the bill for a number of jumpers that they can be assured to get when called? This might stop the unofficial hoarding that some of us think happens to jumpers. I bet somewhere down the line states would invest in the training. If states with jumper bases would support the addition of five jumpers to bases in their states, we could increase this resource by 50 jumpers next season.

In the January issue of *Smoke-jumper* page 46, Chuck Mansfield wrote an article “Your View Counts—So Share It.” On page 14 of this issue there is an article by Cherie Cooper, former Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee staff director titled “Let Your Views Be Known To Your Congressional Representatives.” There is a list of elected representatives on this page.

*Put pen in hand and start demanding—
check the NSA Web site*

Key Congressional Contacts to Request Support for Smokejumper Program

Following is a list of key U.S. Senators on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, which is responsible for allocation of funds for the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. They are key Senators to contact because they are from the Western states where we have a high number of NSA members. To obtain the greatest influence, NSA members should write to *their* state's U.S. Senator on this list. Correspondence from non-constituents is normally disregarded.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Ted Stevens, Alaska | 2. Conrad Burns, Montana |
| 3. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Colorado | 4. Larry Craig, Idaho |
| 5. Patty Murray, Washington | 6. Diane Feinstein, California |

The **House Committee on Resources**, chaired by Richard Pombo of California, considers forestry issues.

Hon. Richard Pombo
Chairman, House Committee on Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The **Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health**, chaired by Scott McInnis (Colo.), is directly in charge of smokejumper issues.

Web: <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/forests>. (This site has e-mail message services and the general e-mail address for the subcommittee on Forest and Forest Health: forests.health@mail.house.gov)

Congressmen on the House Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health

- | <i>Republicans</i> | <i>Democrats</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Scott McInnis, Colorado, Chair | 1. Jay Inslee, Washington |
| 2. John Duncan, Tennessee | 2. Dale Kildee, Michigan |
| 3. John E. Peterson, Pennsylvania | 3. Tom Udall, New Mexico |
| 4. Mark Souder, Indiana | 4. Mark Udall, Colorado |
| 5. Mike Simpson, Idaho | 5. Rush Holt, New Jersey |
| 6. Thomas Tancredo, Colorado | 6. Anibal Acevedo, Puerto Rico |
| 7. J. D. Hayworth, Arizona | 7. Mrs. Betty McCollum, Minnesota |
| 8. Butch Otter, Idaho | |

Other Senators and Congressional Representatives to contact with a significant impact due to the high number of fires and acres burned in Oregon last year would be:

1. Senator Gordon Smith, Oregon
2. Senator Ron Wyden, Oregon
3. Representative Peter DeFazio, 4th District, Oregon

A critical time for contacting Congress is during the months of March and April when members are working on budget allocations for FY 2004.

Increased mail security measures can add up to three weeks of delivery time to Washington, DC. It is advisable to use e-mail. E-mail addresses for all House and Senate members can be obtained and sent from the <http://thomas.loc.gov> Web site through their Quick Links to the Senate Directory or the House Directory listings. If you do not have e-mail, **correspondence to Senators can be addressed to the U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510. Address Congressional Representatives at the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.**

Links to the Senate and House Web sites are:

<http://www.senate.gov>
<http://www.house.gov>

Thanks to Fred Cooper, Chuck Mansfield and Fred Rohrbach for developing the above information.

Let Your Views Be Known to Your Congressional Representatives

by Cherie Cooper, former Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee staff director

Knowing about the congressional appropriations process will help you be more effective in corresponding with your congressional representatives. Annual funding and some authorizing legislation for the land managing agencies are provided through the appropriations process. Federal agencies begin their annual budget preparation for the President in September. The law governing the President's budget specifies that the President is to transmit the budget to Congress no later than the first Monday in February for the following fiscal year, which begins on October 1. Your congressional representatives use the President's budget as a basis to determine the appropriate funding levels for individual programs and projects and to determine the suitability of proposed legislation.

Appropriations Subcommittee work begins as soon as the budget is released to Congress. House and Senate subcommittee hearings are typically held from March to June. The hearings are important to the Senators and Congressmen in that this is the time they pose questions to the Forest Service chief and the Bureau of Land Management director about the program funding levels, individual project requests, and legislative proposals (such as adequate funding for the smokejumper program or funding for urban interface fire

suppression). Informal meetings are held between subcommittee staff, agency representative, special interest groups, congressional members' personal staff, and House and Senate members during this time also.

The President's budget will be available online at www.omb.gov for you to review and to prepare questions that your Senators and Congressmen may be interested in asking the Forest Service chief and the BLM director. *The months of February, March, and April are key time periods for contacting your congressional Representatives and those members who have subcommittee assignments on the Appropriations Committee.*

In June, July, and September, the members debate the merits of the 13 Appropriations Bills on the floors of the House and the Senate. The month of August is typically recess month in Congress. The summer months are a time for refinement and passage of funding levels and Appropriations Bill legislation.

Since new members of Congress were recently elected and the majority party is changing, the congressional committee assignments are being determined as we go to press for our January issue. The key contacts for the House of Representatives and the Senate are in this issue. ♣

Readers Respond ...

I read your article "How the West Was Lost" in the most recent issue of *Wildland Firefighter*, and must say you're right on the money. It pains me that sufficient resources were available on the Biscuit Complex and were unused. I work for an Emergency Services District providing fire, rescue, haz-mat and EMS. We actually run more wildfire alarms annually than structural. The key to avoiding the mess we have seen on CNN all year is aggressive initial attack and our profiles reflect that policy. We all know that there are truly times when resources are just not available to get on the fire fast, but that is generally an exception. Thanks for shedding the light on the real problem and their roots. **Jesse E. Cecil**, Chief Travis County Emergency Services District #1

Dear Congressman Walden:

This is the third article I have sent to you about the 2002 fire season. All I receive is the email notice that your department has received it. Could I get something that confirms that you actually read it? The *Oregonian* article referred to in this editorial was certainly biased in favor of USFS with no question of their competency. Nobody works harder than a group of jumpers at a fire. You have a jumper base in your area of representation!! I would sure like to hear from you on this issue. **Roy Wagoner** (NCSB '61)

Hello Chuck, Keep pressing the issue of no smokejumpers being called to the Biscuit fire. I am on a Committee for the American Tree Farm System. Our committee met in Washington D.C. last week. We were on the hill pushing issues with our legislatures. One of issues we pushed is to return the \$800 million to the Forest Service for fire fighting expenditures in 2002. In each group we met with I pointed out that no jumpers were called in and that no action took place on the fire for three days after it was reported. The question everyone asked. Why did they not call in the Jumpers? Keep on the press. We need this question answered. **Doug Stinson** (CJ '54)

Chuck: I retired from the FS under firefighters, and am still engaged in fire and the Incident Command System. I am the IC for any emergency in Boundary County, Idaho. I have had that position for twenty years. Most importantly I was the Fire Boss (Incident Commander) for one of the most active and successful National Overhead Fire teams from 1972 until 1981. I bossed large fires in every region except Alaska.

For my jumper background, I believe I was the first to jump out of the twin engine Beech, (1953) and my jumper career ended with a Ford Tri-Motor crash the same year. But for your current topic, my

contribution should be the years of large fire experience and I was the Ass't Forest Supervisor for Fire on both the Bitterroot and Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

The FS is not going to change their fire approach unless they look back to the years past. **They must get back to peer review of large fires and escaped fires.** The review board should be high-level employees who have some fire background and that can ask the right questions. Those reviews were invaluable for keeping fire overhead responsible and on their toes. The reviews were some of the very best training some of us ever got.

The FS can start with a fire in 2002 out of Hope, Idaho. The fire started next to a highway and the suppression cost alone was 1.8 MILLION dollars. I hope I would have been on the carpet had I had such a fire! **Bob Graham** (MSO '52)

BRAVO CHUCK!!!! I've been in Fire Control since 1974 and have fought fire in just about every fuel type in the lower 48 and filled fire line positions from line digger to IC. I still learn something on each fire. But the one thing I see every where I go, from coast to coast, is the varying degrees of power dispatchers seem to have and the old problem of some dispatchers trying to "run the fire" from the Dispatch Center. This year I saw a 70-year old BLM dispatcher in Arizona hand over a dozen IA fires with precision logistics in one day ... by himself! Then, I saw four dispatchers in Carolina that couldn't keep up with two IA fires less than one acre each! One problem I see is many dispatchers know nothing about fire fighting and some have not been on the fire line. So I have no problem believing the "run-around" you got. **Billy Bennett** (WYS '98)

CRY HAVOC AND UNLEASH THE DOGS OF WAR! **Chuck Mansfield** (CJ '59) and Wm. Shakespeare

Chuck— I'm told by the CDF (Calif. Dept. of Forestry) Firefighters Union that CDF has proposed closing the Porterville and Ukiah Air Attack; not hiring up to the authorized strength of seasonal employees and "freezing" any new permanent hires. During the 2002 Fire Season, CDF only hired up to the 88% authorized level. The "augmentation funds" promised by the governor never materialized. Right now there is a serious "experience gap" in the CDF middle management and employee morale is starting to lag. **Norman J. Silver** (Associate) (CDF State Forest Ranger I, retired)

Awesome edition (January). The quality of both the writing and the publishing continues to escalate. I love it. **Kim Maynard** (MSO '82)

It is clear we need to get fire back into some forest ecosystems, BUT NOT UNDER HIGH OR EXTREME BURNING CONDITIONS. The key to minimizing extreme fires and buying time is maximizing the effectiveness of Initial Attack (IA). This means immediate (automatic) dispatch of aerial firefighters (i.e., jumpers, helitack, and/or rappellers) and retardant when a fire is reported during high or extreme burning conditions. This needs to occur even if ground troops are dispatched at the same time. It seems to me the need for automatic dispatch is obvious and an easy fix. Ideally, it would be done by the fire management of agencies involved but if


Advertise Your Business/Support the Magazine!

Send us your business card and we will run it in **four** issues of *Smokejumper* magazine for \$100. It will be an excellent opportunity to show the membership what smokejumper owned and operated business services are available. Besides being an inexpensive way to reach 1800 potential clients, you will help us to meet the expenses of publishing this magazine. **Support the NSA with your business advertising!** Send to Chuck Sheley, 10 Judy Ln., Chico CA 95926.



MIKE McDONNELL
 P.O. Box 436
 331 Deinhard Lane
 McCall, Idaho 83638
 (208) 634-4707
 Fax: (208) 634-7594

(McCall '98)



MERRITT STARR BOOKS
 805-544-6214
 285 BUENA VISTA
 SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93405

Featuring books by
STARR JENKINS
 CJ '48

Smokejumpers, '49: Brothers in the Sky
 with photos by LIFE's Peter Stackpole:
 to present or former jumpers or firefighters,
 \$22 (including free shipping).

(Cave Junction '48)



JERRY HOWE
 President

(480) 505-0125 OFFICE
 (480) 797-9279 CELL
 JERRY.HOWE@GOBI.COM

GOBI INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS, INC.
 8095 N. 85TH WAY • SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85258 • WWW.GOBI.COM

(Cave Junction '65)

Caldwell Securities Incorporated

John C. Helmer, CFA
 President

925-838-5525
 Fax 925-838-5526
 800-456-1119
 john@cald.com

931 Hartz Way #100
 Danville CA 94526-3400

(Redding '59)

they can't or don't do it, congress needs to investigate and make the change. If a situation occurs again where a fire blows up, aerial IA forces and retardant were available and not dispatched immediately, heads should roll. **Jon Klingel** (CJ '65)

I received your email today and wanted to comment on a few points. When the Biscuit fire started, Redding also had jumpers available but to be used in R-6 would have been a major "logistical chore" of sharing between regions which is bullshit. That's what the dispatch centers get paid for and should consider— ALL resources when the country is in such a drawdown. I also agree with the anti-jumper feeling. I can recall many times when jumpers were ready to (always) go but weren't used. A perfect example was on the Yosemite last summer when ordered jumpers were cancelled and fires continued to grow.

There are many people out there who don't want to use jumpers which continues to baffle us every time a fire goes huge. In the Eastern Great Basin they are probably the best at staffing fires with all resources. Jumpers usually roll to all IA fires and if they aren't needed at least they are in the air ready for deployment. **A Redding Jumper**

Reply to **Chuck Mansfield** (Cave Jct. '59) concerning his Biscuit Fire chronology sent to D.C.: Mr. Mansfield, thanks very much for sending this to the Chief. I will make sure that he sees this, and that the Fire and Aviation Management Staff have the opportunity to see it also. **Karla J. Hawley** Assistant to the Chief

I think the information that you and Chuck Mansfield had in your latest missives could be combined to generate an investigative report in a major newspaper. You have to realize the news people don't care about the same thing you care about, which is proper use of jumpers for early suppression. What they do care about is journalistic integrity and governmental ineptitude. The *Oregonian* ought to be interested since they were lied to but if they prove to be unwilling to correct their own mistakes, I think a west coast competitor paper would be glad to point out their errors for them! Good luck. **Ron Thoreson** (CJ '60)

Chuck, Great that you're pursuing this thing but I have doubts that you'll get very far. From past experience I can tell you that they don't want any input. They don't have any means of accountability and that's the biggest problem. My take is that the current Federal Wildland fire establishment has created a system wherein the fat cats get the most of the pie. These big fires are the place they make their names for themselves and the their big money. No one wants to rock the boat and risk being the one that kills the goose with the golden eggs. So they go big with this safety thing. If you want to get good ratings in the ICS system you have to say safety at least in every other sentence. The end result of all this nonsense is a highly inefficient big fire organization.

During my different book tour talks, several fire crewmembers have come to me and begged that I do something to change the "sad situation taking place on big fires." It is killing pride and nurturing a community of mediocrity among the workers. All these new rules like the 30 Mile Abatement Plan plus the 2 to 1 work/rest ratio is bullshit. **Murry Taylor** (RDD '65)

If you profit from constructive criticism you will be elected to the wise men's hall of fame. **Solomon** (CJ '42)

Your Internet editorial was excellent and thought provoking. Like the BLM and FS Chief's said recently about the Air Tanker program,

the fire suppression program from top to bottom "is broke and needs fixing". Your suggestions were appropriate and need expression at a higher level than the FS. I feel that the entire initial attack program needs to be controlled and managed from a centralized spot, (no smaller than a state or region, or perhaps larger) and manned by fully qualified personnel. By the use of instantaneous communications dispatch can be accomplished with no delays and can prevent the kind of foul-ups that have occurred repeatedly in recent years. **Dale Matlack** (Pilot)

I appreciate the time and effort you've taken to write the article. I hope others in the Forest Service hierarchy will take the time to read it and ponder if we aren't moving in the wrong direction with regard to how we fight fires in the 21st century. I'm appalled that jumpers were not called for immediately on the Biscuit Fire. **Jack Spencer** (MSO '52)

Thanks for sounding off about the 2002 fire season. I agree that getting a timely initial attack is the key to fighting forest fires. I have some thoughts about mega-fires and the agencies involved. My perspective is mainly from the Black Hills National Forest that is covered with roads so they don't use jumpers. But the fire hazards worsen every year, as the ponderosa pine gets thicker. It goes back to the well-known problem that over the years fire suppression has resulted in a buildup of fuels. In the summer of 2002 the Black Hills had several large fires. SD Governor William Janklow has been a critic of the US Forest Service, saying, "The management of the forest is a disaster." Our governor has flown over Black Hills fires, sometimes violating air space, and has brought in the South Dakota National Guard. In 2001 firefighters were unable to communicate to an air tanker working in contract with the state. The lessons here are that better coordination among agencies is needed.

I agree that in western forests small fires can become large due to lack of initial attack, and smokejumpers should be used in remote areas. Lightning starts most of these fires and the lightning strikes can be located effectively with new electronic devices. But from my perspective the mega-fires are not caused by lightning. The big problem is the man-made fires. There is little defense against a nitwit who deliberately throws a match into dry grass on a hot windy day. **Perry Rahn** (MSO '61)

Hey Chuck: I got the magazine shortly after you emailed me. The last two *Smokejumper* magazines have been great. The October issue with Jimmy B.Pearce on the cover — that great article by John Culbertson really brought back memories. Jumping with Jimmy & John and the great crews/ Alaska Smokejumpers the mid-1970s. Then the January 2003 issue with the mind-blowing news about passing of Ted Burgon. Ted did a great job on my bio; he'll be missed by all Smokejumper Bro's who came in contact with him. A little update on me. I'm living in Las Vegas now. Running a Raw Material Warehouse for E-gads electric gizmos & display systems. My twin grandsons just turned five years old. Recruiting all Smokejumpers I come in contact with to join the NSA. Most guys from my era are members. **Milford Preston** (RDD '74)

Chuck: It looks to me like you may have President Bush's attention with your initial attack campaign. It sounded like he plans to do something about shaping up the FS big wigs on the fire suppression issue. As citizens, as well as a Smokejumper we are all in debt to you for your effort. **Michael E. Stepe** DVM (IDC '61) 🐾

“Managed” or Not, Dry Forests Burn

by Joe Gutkoski (Missoula '50)

Leaping out of airplanes over burning forests provides a unique vantage from which to contemplate wildfires. With 13 years of smokejumping behind me, I understand fires are dangerous and unpredictable. Fighting fires throughout the West, I developed great respect for their power. That respect also extends to the courage and dedication of men and women on the fire lines today.

Logged and Unlogged Fire Areas

Something else smokejumpers realize is that fires are a natural phenomenon, integral to the ecology of Western forests. They've always been with us, and lways will be. I recall old timers talking about Montana's storied 1910 fire season and of the burns in the 1920s and '30s in the Selway and Lochsa country of northern Idaho. Not much of the region had been logged or “managed” then, but vast areas were scorched. The same is true of the Yellowstone fires of 1988.

Conversely, many of the blazes we've witnessed recently charred forests that have been logged for decades. Last year, two fires burned thousands of acres on the Gallatin N.F. south of my home in Bozeman. From the perspective of a 35-year career with the Forest Service, I don't know of any two places that were more heavily logged and roaded, yet they produced extremely hot fires. The fact is, “managed” or not, forests burn.

Fifty years ago, there were relatively few homes immediately adjacent to national forests. Montana experienced its share of fires, but they didn't seem dire simply because communities weren't threatened. Now subdivisions and second homes are common in fire-prone areas of our state. A wildfire burning in the backcountry is simply nature taking its expected course, while a blaze threatening homes becomes a crisis.

When I was fighting fires in the 1950s and '60s, we believed protecting

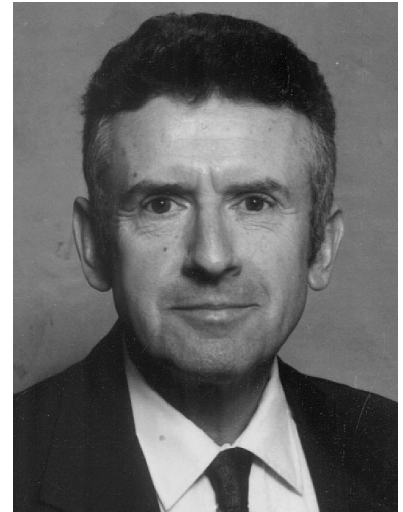
forests meant trying to put out every fire that appeared, and speaking as a jumper oremen, we did a pretty good job doing just that. In hindsight, however, we now realize we should have let many of those fires burn. Decades of unrestrained efforts to extinguish nearly all wildfires have created conditions conducive to current fires. If we allow small wildfires to burn in the backcountry periodically, we'll see fewer huge conflagrations.

Lessons of Fire Fighting

The Bush administration, and Gov. Martz (Montana) don't seem to appreciate these points. The president's proposed “Healthy Forest Initiative,” calling for more intensive management of our National Forests, ignores what a century of fires in Montana have taught us. No matter what we do, fires will occur. Scientists tell us drought is the single most significant factor creating fire conditions. Intensifying roading and thinning in the backcountry and giving logs to timber companies in exchange for that service, as the president's plan proposes, will benefit the logging industry but do little about fire. If anything, large commercial trees create cooling canopies for forests, reducing fire threat. Eliminating them is about as sensible as clear-cutting a forest to save it.

Stripping Citizens' Rights

The “Healthy Forest Initiative” also strips away citizens' right of appeal to insure that basic conservation laws are heeded on our public lands. When President Bush announced his plan in Oregon on Aug. 25, Martz was at his side; claiming “obstructionists” prevent the Forest Service from stopping fires. But according to the Government Accounting Office, only 20 out of 1,671 fuels reduction projects on National Forest lands were appealed last year. The president's plan focuses on groundless complaints about red tape and assigns



Joe Gutkoski

blame where it isn't due, essentially locking the public out of forest decision making and handing the keys to industry.

The plan also diverts fire fighting resources away from places they'll make a difference. Intensive thinning of brush and saplings around communities adjacent to forests is the answer, not logging under the guise of thinning commercially valuable fire-resistant trees in remote areas. Unfortunately, only a third of the acreage where the Forest Service is reducing fuels this year is anywhere near threatened homes.

The president's plan suggests most of our national forest lands are at risk. They aren't. It's counterproductive to spread fire fighting resources so thin, unless the real aim is opening more of our forests to the sort of commercial logging exploitation we thought we'd put behind us. Smokejumpers know smoke when they see it. 🦅

Joe Gutkoski graduated from Penn State University in 1951 after serving in the U.S. Navy on the destroyer Lansdowne. He rookied at Missoula in 1950 and jumped there until 1962. From Missoula, Joe transferred to the Division of Lands in the Region 1 office and later went to the Gallatin National Forest in Bozeman where he retired in 1982 with 32 years of service. He can be reached at: 304 N. 18th Ave., Bozeman, MT 59715

A Final Look at the Biscuit Fire — Is the Initial Attack System Broken?

by Chuck Sheley

A few days ago, Andy Stahl (Director/Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics) sent me a packet of documents that he obtained using the Freedom of Information Act. After going through the stack of log book pages and other wildfire related communications, I'm still standing ground at the same point as last summer.

My conclusion is the same as it was six months ago: the Biscuit fire could have been stopped in its infant stages; there were smokejumpers available and the Initial Attack System needs to use all available resources in a timely manner. Below I will lay out the chronology of the most expensive wildland fire in history.

I've inserted my statements and e-mails from Andy into the chronology. Andy has been aggressive and more knowledgeable than myself when it comes to making phone calls to the proper sources. I asked him to look over my statements so that so that my prejudice toward smokejumpers use didn't cloud this article.

Hello Andy, I wanted to thank you for sending me the Biscuit fire info. I've listed some of that info on the attached document with my comments in bold. I'm copying Chuck Mansfield who has done a lot of writing on this. Chuck grew up in Grants Pass, was a smokejumper at Cave Junction and his dad was in on the creation of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area.

I'm keeping the focus of my pieces in *Smokejumper* magazine on the breakdown of the initial attack system nationally and don't want to get into forest management policies.

It looks like my assumption that the Siskiyou did NOT call jumpers is incorrect. At the same time, it looks like the request was derailed and never got beyond Grants Pass. Beyond that, it looks like there is no coordination on a national level for available resources. I still can see no reason to have 70+ jumpers showing as being available when they should have been used. Each region seems to be operating in a box which is not the way the IA system is supposed to work. I can see no reason why jumpers weren't moved to Redmond or CJ during the night of the 13th and why resources just over the border in R-5 are ignored. Would you look over the attached doc and see if I have missed anything that you feel is important in this chronology. Thanks

Chuck (e-mail)

Biscuit Fire Chronology from USFS Documents:

7/13/02: Type 3 helicopter, Number 07C, positioned in Merlin was assigned all day to fires being managed by the Or-

gon Dept. of Forestry in Douglas County. (*Type 3 helicopter: 3 to 5 passengers depending on weight of payload and the working altitude. If set up for rappelling payload is about 2 rappellers per mission.*)

7/13/02 1658: Del Monte requests smokejumpers or rappellers for Chrome Creek Area and Carter Creek Area. The USFS Chronology for the Biscuit fire lists request time as 1702.

7/13/02 1700: Per Shelly Hoffer (Merlin Fire Center manager)— No SJ or raps available for 48 hours. USFS chronology: 1716: Grants Pass Dispatch relayed that Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center reported smokejumpers and rappellers were unavailable for a minimum of 48 hours.

The local Merlin rappel crew was assigned to the Spring Creek fire in Colorado at this time.

[Comments: Slight time difference not important but it looks like jumpers were reported as being unavailable without really checking. It also looks like all of this was verbal and a resource order was not filed and that the Redmond base was completely out of the loop. It shows a breakdown of the system as smokejumpers are a national resource and the NIFC shows 110 as being available at 0800 on 7/13/02. This number was reduced to 76 on the morning of 7/14/02 at 0800.

We will probably never be able to pin down who said "no smokejumpers available for 48 hours." However, this statement was so ridiculous that any experienced firefighter should immediately follow through and get the needed resources. As later stated by "Joyce":

"As I recall, we were recycling them (jumpers) every couple hours."

A check of the NIFC availability would show that is exactly how the smokejumper program works. Smokejumper availability for the 13–15th was 110, 76 and 70 even though it was a very high use period.

Why was the rappelling crew in Colorado during a time of extreme fire danger, and they being a key to quick initial attack on the Siskiyou? I really don't know how to find out what they were doing on the Spring Creek fire but I will guess that they were involved in "busy" work and that the fire had been contained. Were they being used so that the local fire staff could have another resource — also known as "hoarding" of resources?

If the Siskiyou was content to have their rappellers work in Colorado, they needed to fill that gap with another resource. (Chuck)]

Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center Situation Report lists six smokejumpers available at 2237 Mountain Time.

[I'm seeing six jumpers at Redmond late in the day of the 13th. Being so close there would have been time to jump 1–2 fires the evening of the 13th. In my opinion, the key is manning the fires early on the 14th that could have been done by moving resources during the night of the 13th.

It also seems that since Redding is in R-5, those jumpers are completely outside any plan to get resources even though they are within an hour flight time of the Siskiyou. (Chuck)]

“I was unable to determine number of smokejumpers available at the beginning of the day. As I recall, we were recycling them every couple hours.” — from a faxed page by Joyce headed attn: Shelly

7/14/02 1011: Boothe and Del Monte depart on a reconnaissance flight from Merlin, Oregon, aboard helicopter 07C. GACC Detailed Situation Report for 7/13/02 at 2237: List six available smokejumpers (RAC) and 15 at Winthrop for total of 21.

GACC Detailed Situation Report for 7/14/02 at 2010: Lists six available smokejumpers at Redmond.

End of USFS documents.

Chuck, I agree totally with your summary. I've talked with virtually every protagonist in this drama — dispatchers, receptionists, FMOs, jump base manager, Portland coordination center — **none takes credit for the “48 hour” statement.** Personally, I think ——— at Merlin called someone in Central Oregon dispatch who told ——— that Siskiyou wilderness fires were so low on the regional priority list that they probably wouldn't be able to get any jumpers. Had the Siskiyou folks really wanted jumpers, however, they should have submitted a resource order to Portland and pushed the issue. I suspect they would have gotten what they wanted if they'd made the order. The take home lesson is as you describe — the system is broken.

Andy (e-mail)

I get many e-mails and calls from NSA members. Many have been involved in fire for over 30 years and are very discouraged with the present operation. In a recent call a professional forester (ex-jumper) who is currently involved in fire at a high level, stated that he was looking to get out of the USFS at the first opportunity. We can't afford the loss of quality people from the wildland fire service but it has happened and will continue.

With all the regulations and the current mind-set limiting wildland fire fighting, it would seem that smokejumpers are the “natural” answer to help solve the problem of megafires. Since safety is a key ingredient in the wildland equation, quick initial attack by a highly mobile and trained group would be the best way to “keep 'em small.” Better use of the current smokejumper force is necessary. We can't continue to have 70+ jumpers sitting somewhere when \$170 million fires are developing. Again, the best use of jumpers is to have ZERO jumpers available on the morning report! 🦋

“Once a big fire was seen as a failure, now it is seen as an opportunity. ...” —Jim Veitch

Congratulations on the “Biscuit Special” in the January *Smokejumper* magazine. Your great article is exactly the type of activity the NSA needs to get involved in. Reader response indicates the high level of member interest in fire policy issues. The NSA must be involved in present day issues if active jumpers are to show an interest in the NSA. It is also clear that many non-active jumpers still care about the health of fire management.

I am an active Smokejumper jumping out of Fairbanks. I have had two distinct jumping careers, the first from 1967–83, the second following a 15-year break from 1998 to present. My biggest impression of these two eras is that Initial Attack (IA) used to be king, but today “Big Fire is King.” Once a big fire was seen as a failure, now it is seen as an opportunity.

The Forest Service was once filled with people who had walked hours, if not days, to attack fires. The culture understood the need for urgent initial attack. Managers began their careers as smokechasers and knew fires were easier to put out when small. Everyone thought “IA.” Now accountants tell us per acre containment cost of a small fire is huge compared to a large fire even when the large fire costs millions. Today, small fire expenses are seen as a waste of money. Big fire is where the action is. A huge part of the Forest Service management has never “IA'ed” a fire but have spent days in base camp running Xerox machines, writing plans and drinking coffee.

Today's managers think real fire is “going Type II or Type I” (big fire staffs). Management is confused — it wants fire, but doesn't want fire. The woods do need to burn and a huge part of the West is ready to burn. How to do it safely is too big a problem. Escape from responsibility has been sought in the syllogism, “fire is natural, natural is good; therefore fire is good.” The logic fails because American forests are no longer “natural.” Fire is natural in a natural setting, but in a human dominated ecosystem, fire is simply another mechanism to be manipulated by management.

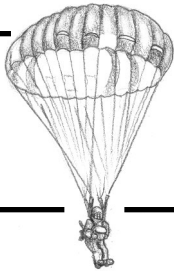
Our forests are a mix of parks, roads, towns and watersheds. We have “denaturalized” the forests by fighting fire for years. Natural fire is, per se, unmanaged fire. The agencies tasked by law with managing fire know they cannot handle all the prescribed burning required. So the great lie that “natural fire is good” is sold to the public and the politicians. Natural fire is portrayed as an act of God and thus unmanageable with no one to blame. But for nearly 80 years aggressive Initial Attack was highly effective. So effective it contributed to the problem of fuel build up.

The reality is foresters were too greedy. They wanted to harvest not husband the forests.

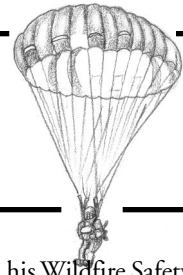
While willing to control fire, foresters underutilized fire as a tool. Now IA has become the whipping boy for “natural fire” advocates seeking an escape from a monumental profession-wide screwup.

Years ago the term “fire control” became politically incorrect and was replaced by the nature friendly label “fire management.” Learn this: to manage fire you must first control fire. The ONLY way to control un-prescribed fire is with aggressive initial attack.

We have historical proof that Initial Attack is effective. What is not effective, and costs billions of dollars annually, is large fire management. Every single fire start, lightning or human caused, should be put out immediately unless a full burn plan has been written and all criteria of the plan are met. Such a policy would help clear the “natural fire” smoke from the air. **Jim Veitch**, Alaska Smokejumper 🦋



Odds and Ends



by Chuck Sheley

A string of November rainstorms brought a watery curtain down on the Biscuit fire, the biggest and most expensive single wildfire in the 2002 season at nearly 500,000 acres and more than \$154 million in fire fighting costs. Nearly four months after the fire started, final control was not declared until more than two inches of rain fell on the fire. One hundred fifty-four million, eight hundred and sixty-eight thousand and sixteen dollars has been spent putting out the fire, and \$6,982,633 more on rehabilitation.

The "Spruce Goose" located in the Evergreen Aviation Museum in McMinnville, Ore., officially became an historical landmark last July. According to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, it represents what they called "an amazing engineering feat." The Evergreen Museum is working with the NSA to include a smokejumper exhibit in the 120,000 square-foot facility.

Jerry Dixon (MYC '71) e-mailed the following: "Last week I was hiking near the base of Exit Glacier near Seward when I ran into a young female national park ranger who asked me, 'Have you seen two men climbing on the glacier? They are Fairbanks smokejumpers, the park superintendent asked me to check on them.' My response, without knowing who they were was, 'Why is she worried, they're smokejumpers.'"

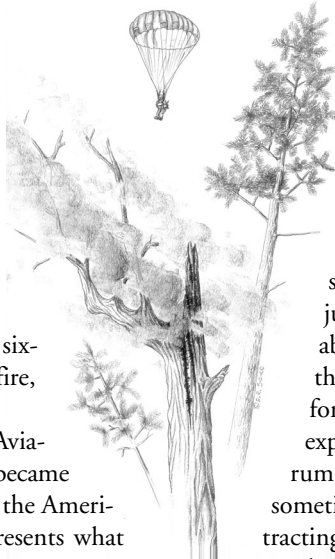
"I left a note on their truck, 'There is fire on the horizon, we jump at dawn. Looking for a few good jumpers,' and included my phone number. Paul (**McGuire**) and Ryan (**Ringe**), FBX rookies, gave me a call. They showed up for dinner, spent the night, had breakfast and then I took them hiking to look at new ski routes. Turns out Ryan was born the year I jumped in FBX (1976). If Ryan and Paul are typical of the jumper rookies then the caliber is high."

Perry Rahn (MSO '61) is now retired and living near Hill City, SD. He taught at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology for over 30 years after receiving his Ph.D. in geology from Penn State. Perry can be reached at: perry.rahn@sdsmt.edu

Got a nice card from **Pic Littell** (MSO '44). Seems like 2002 has been a good year for Pic as he got married in February and was taking a cruise on the Mississippi for Christmas. All this in addition to celebrating his 80th birthday last year!

Gregg Phifer (MSO '44) turned 84 this last year but is still going strong. The retired Florida State professor edits the retired faculty newsletter and will officiate home track meets this spring for the 51st year.

Troop Emonds (CJ '66) should have completed a teaching stint in China by the time this issue comes out. A group in



that country is interested in his Wildfire Safety Program. We can hope that they will also be interested in the "Troop Tool."

Mike Cramer (CJ '59) left me a message on December 31st that the Biscuit fire had finally been declared out. Cost to that point had approached \$170 million and the Siskiyou N.F. was still trying to sell the story that there were no smokejumpers available even though Redmond was jumping and there were 70+ jumpers listed as available in the lower 48. I've read several articles saying the fire was much larger due to the suppression efforts than if it had been allowed to burn naturally. I expect that they could safely declare it out as it was rumored that an older gentleman with a large boat sometimes know as an Ark was trying to sign up at contracting.

Several members forwarded an obit for **James Colby Manley** 83, of Homer, Alaska, who died in November of 2002. Mr. Manley joined the Army National Guard at age 15 and was a pilot for 52 years. He had enough adventure to fill three lifetimes flying the "Hump" (Himalayas) during WWII and serving in Korea and Vietnam. His obit said that after WWII, he spent some time flying smokejumpers. If any of you have any details, please let me know.

I was talking to one of my ex-students who is a deputy sheriff and a **Jim Klump** (RDD '64) story came up. Some time ago, Jim who complained about one of the locals giving the USFS female employees a hard time when the local would drive by the Ranger Station during the lunch break, contacted the deputy. This station was up in the hills in Northern California where many of the locals are very anti-social and could have had starring roles in the film *Deliverance*. The local was a guy called "Hecker the Wrecker" and had a bad reputation. The deputy told Jim that he would talk to Hecker. When the deputy confronted Hecker at the General Store, his two behemoth sons accompanied Hecker and the deputy called back to the Ranger Station and asked for Klump. It seems that Jim warmed up on the way to the store and was ready to handle the situation. He jogged up and planted a roundhouse on Hecker's jaw and told him never to say a word to any of the women as he drove by the station in the future. Hecker, minus one of his front teeth, never was a problem again.

Fred Cooper (NCSB '62) just sent an e-mail saying that we now have 103 NSA Life Members. This is a milestone for the organization! One hundred percent of the Life Membership money is put into an interest-bearing fund. Only the interest is used to meet our expenses and the principle is not touched. If you ever want to help the NSA, please consider a Life Membership. That commitment adds to

the financial base and helps guarantee that we will be a strong organization years down the line. Fred's contact information is on page three of this magazine if you want to talk to him about making taking this step. There are payment plans available.

Speaking of Life Members, **Bill Woolworth** (MSO '68) just joined for "Squad VI." This was a nine-member squad of 1968 Missoula rookies described by Training Foremen **Neil Walstad** (MSO '61) as "the biggest group of duds that I ever met." If anyone would send me the names of Squad VI, I would be glad to publish. I'm sure that most of this squad are CEO's at this time.

At the same time Bill also purchased an Associate Life Membership for his son **Brian Woolworth** who is serving with his Special Operations team in Afghanistan at this time.

Life memberships come in a multitude of ways. They of course include personal LM but they have also come in the form of Honorary LM by family members or friends, Company sponsored LM, contributions for Associate LM, contributions solicited by fellow jumpers for a LM, and even a contribution for a "squad" of jumpers. Let your imagination determine what you want to do for a LM and we can accommodate. Remember too that you can make a one-time contribution of \$1,000 or various payment schedules are available.

Heard from **Al Boucher** (CJ '49) just as I was wrapping up this issue: "I jumped at CJ and Redmond over a period of twenty years but the highlight of my association with jumpers was at the Cave Junction reunion last summer when I

was presented an NSA Life Membership by the guys from the Gobi. I have a lot of good memories of CJ jumpers and look forward to getting together again and swapping stories."

Got a good note from "**Jake Dougherty**" (MSO '48) along with his membership renewal. Jake is a retired Lt. from the Ft. Lauderdale, Florida Fire Dept. He related that he was one of the first ones to go to the Mann Gulch fire "rescue" and that one of the bodies that he found was that of a close friend. On a brighter note, Jake lives near **Chuck Pickard** (MSO '49) who is retired from the police dept. in Ft. Lauderdale.

Lee Gossett (RDD '57) passed along some bits from the Medford newspaper about the 2002 fire season:

SALEM - A request for \$1.3 million in state revenues to pay the costs of protecting homes from forest fires last summer came under heavy attack from Sen. Lenn Hannon Thursday. The Ashland Republican, after listening to a presentation from the state fire marshals office, said the "damned arrogance" of federal officials hampered efforts to combat the 500,000-acre Biscuit fire and other blazes in Southern and Central Oregon in July and August. He said fire fighting pilots complained to him that they were not allowed to dip untreated water to fight fires. As a result, nine pilots "sat on their butts" in Grants Pass, he said.

D-Clatskanie, who owned and operated a helicopter for 20 years said, "I offered one of our helicopters for free to help fight a fire in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Washington, but we were turned down because our gas-cap locks did not meet federal standards." [Wan'a bet there are a thousand more stories out there? -ed.] 🦋

MEMBER PROFILE

CHUCK CORRIGAN (ASSOCIATE)

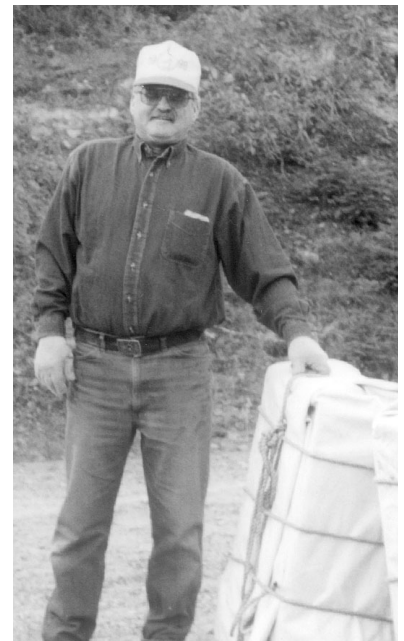
THE TRAIL IMPROVEMENT Program is something of which the NSA can be very proud. At the October Board Meeting in Boise, Trail Program Coordinator **Jon McBride** emphasized the importance of key helpers in the area of EMT's, cooks and packers. Associate Chuck Corrigan has supported four trail projects in the last three years by packing equipment and serving as a camp cook. Chuck is a retired educator having served in various Dean positions for 20 years and finishing up as president of Mid-Michigan Community College. He received his Ph.D. in 1974 at Michigan State University.

"Nothing in my career prepared me for the outdoor life I now lead in the mountains of Montana; however, almost everything in my personal life did. I've spent every chance I could

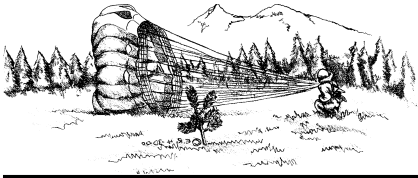
get outdoors hunting, fishing, camping and riding trails with my horses. I learned to pack from one of the most skilled horsemen in Montana and have about 1,000 trail miles of packing over the past seven years".

"I look forward to six or eight more years of packing and intend to work with the NSA as much as possible. Keeping trails open is an important task. Once any close for lack of maintenance, it seems they are lost forever. The USFS apparently doesn't have the budget or personnel to keep them all maintained. I am happy to be a part of and support the effort by the NSA to do this important job."

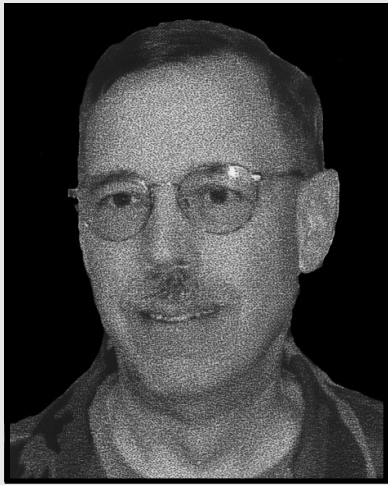
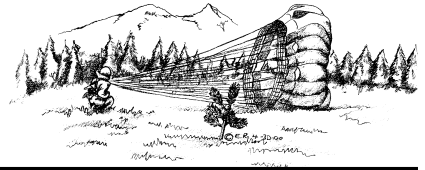
The NSA is very proud and appreciative to have Chuck as a member. 🦋



Chuck Corrigan (Courtesy Chuck Corrigan)



Checking the Canopy



by Tom Decker
(Idaho City '64)

Colonel Tom Decker recently retired from the U.S. Army and is now a part-time parish pastor at the St. John Lutheran Church in Long Beach, Calif. He can be reached at deckertr@earthlink.net

The Beetle God

The closest I came to God
Was on the Ola burn when it was so hot
We'd take a break from digging water bars
To absorb the quiet of the canyon.

With not a breath of wind stirring, and
The loggers had shut down the jammer,
All quiet, except
A steady, loud, dedicated chewing,

a real crunching,

A primeval m-u-n-c-h,
m-u-n-c-h,
m-u-n-c-h,
Rasping the silence

'til a newbie, standing it no longer,
Bellowed, "Hey, what is that?"
One of the old timers would then explain
The cycle of beetle larvae eating
Their way through dead logs
Encouraging rot for a healthy forest.

Doubters, we chopped and peeled back bark
Where the munch was loudest,
But found only a few fat, pale larva,
Chiseling along in slimy wooden relief,
Looking like they'd never survive
If exposed to the light for long.

In the end, maybe the beetles
Accomplished more for the forest
Tunneling through the burned out trees
Than we did cutting water bars on skid trails.

That was as close as I got
To God that summer
And it's no wonder
That I did not recognize him at first.



My Brush with History/CPS 103 Jumpers

by Gregg Phifer (Missoula'44)

We Jumped Frank Derry's Slotted Irvin Nylon Chute

Our parachutes, the Derry Slotted Irvin developed by Frank Derry (NCSB '40) to replace our 1943 Eagles (silk chutes with porch and ears), were far more maneuverable than anything the military either had or wanted. Two rear slots gave us a modest forward speed. We could plane our chutes by pulling down hard on our front risers to speed toward a grassy knoll, slip our chutes by pulling down on selected load lines to hurry our descent and avoid being carried off course, or turn our chutes around to head for the target area pointed out by our spotter.

We needed maneuverable chutes since we often had to reach small clearings surrounded by tall trees and dangerous snags, and had to avoid lakes or rock slides. On one jump I sailed over piles of big rocks, but bad luck swept the next jumper into rocks, where he broke several bones.

Several military doctors who came to Missoula for Forest Service jumper training profited from use of our maneuverable chutes. One repaid the courtesy of his training when he jumped to treat a severely injured smokejumper, whose chute caught over and broke the top out of a tall snag.

I remember that fire well. I jumped with what the Forest Service planned to be a rescue unit, but the original crew had carried the injured jumper to the nearest trail and we were left to fight their fire. By a combination of luck and skill (probably more of the former), I dodged all those tall snags and hit the ground in a small clearing. After that tough jump, bringing the fire under control proved only routine. Even so, we had a hard-enough job (six hours sleep in our first 64) on that Cooper Creek fire.

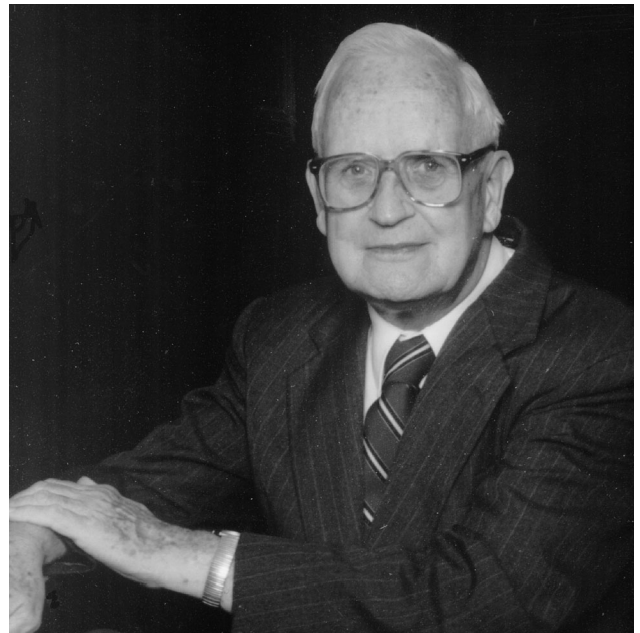
Injuries Were an Inevitable Part of Smokejumping

Smokejumpers suffered a number of injuries, some of them severe. However, the only death came when a Negro paratrooper (Malvin Brown) of the 555th parachute battalion assigned to fire fighting duty failed his letdown procedure and fell to his death on the Siskiyou N.F. in southern Oregon. The Mann Gulch fire, which claimed the lives of a dozen jumpers, came in 1949, four years after CPS 103 disbanded. A monument has recently been erected in their honor.

We are proud of what we accomplished during our three-year stint as CPS/USFS smokejumpers. We fought fires in five Western states, two national parks, Indian country in Montana, and even in Canada. We Civilian Public Service jumpers transformed an experimental unit of no more than thirty men into a more than 200-man force responsible for primary fire control in our Western forests.

Technical Help as Well

Photographer Phil Stanley (MSO '43), who initiated our CPS effort, developed the "mouse trap" so that pictures could be developed in the plane and prints dropped to help the fire boss. By 1943 smokejumper radio had virtually vanished. Remaining USFS technicians had little time for repairs and not any for



Gregg Phifer (Courtesy Gregg Phifer)

experimentation. Harry Burks (MSO '43), a graduate electrical engineer with radio experience, filled this gap. His experiments improved SJ and SX high-frequency radios.

Harry also developed a standard technique for carginoing SPF radios between fire packs. Before that time, radios often shattered on impact. I know; on my first fire jump in the Clearwater, we never found the crosscut saw dropped to us. Our radio just tinkled and we never could raise Missoula to ask for a replacement saw. So with our Pulaski blades we chewed down a huge pine with fire established high up.

As the War Wound Down, CPS 103 Became History

By the end of the '45 fire season the war in Europe was winding down, and the Forest Service wanted to replace us with newly demobilized paratroopers and students majoring in forestry at the University of Montana or another Western university. We from the CPS 103/USFS Smokejumpers scattered to all parts of the country and, when released from Civilian Public Service by a point system paralleling that used for demobilization of the armed forces, returned to varied civilian occupations.

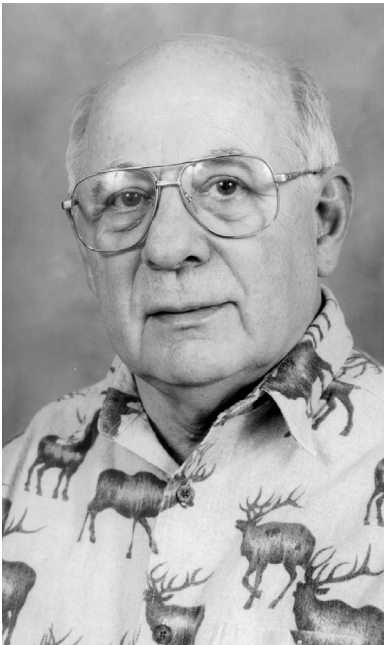
In the fall of 1946 I took a job as assistant professor of speech and journalism at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio. More than two hundred CPS men took with us memories of our smokejumper years we can never forget. 🦋

By 1944 when Gregg joined the CPS/USFS smokejumpers, he had earned his B.A. from Pacific and his M.A. from Iowa. After release from CPS and two years teaching at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, he returned to Iowa for his doctorate. He joined the faculty at Florida State University in 1949 and retired as professor emeritus in 1994.

FEATURED LIFE MEMBER

FRED DONNER (MISSOULA '59)

From the Forest Service to the Foreign Service



Fred Donner (Courtesy Fred Donner)

UNLIKE MANY OF HIS 1950's colleagues, Fred Donner was not motivated by the 1953 movie *Red Skies Over Montana*. He was a 4-H Club forester in eighth grade when he read about smokejumpers in the 1949 yearbook of agriculture — *Trees* — and decided to become one before helicopters made them obsolete.

After a year at Syracuse College of Forestry, Fred started his first Forest Service job in 1955, working on spruce budworm damage surveys for the Forest Insect Laboratory in Missoula. At 17 years old, he was “a green Eastern kid,” by his own description, and a GS-4 on per diem traveling all over Region One.

In 1956 he was a GS-4 BLM fireguard in Fairbanks, Alaska. He was in charge of one large and several small fires, all with untrained pick-up crews — quite an adventure. In 1957 he went to the San Bernardino National Forest as a GS-3 tank truck operator. Halfway through the season with no fires, he quit the GS-

3 job to be a GS-2 crewman with the Del Rosa Hot Shots in San Bernardino, where he went to about 40 fires.

He started as a Missoula rookie in 1958, but broke his leg on the sixth jump, joining two colleagues who broke an ankle on the second jump. When the leg mended, he went back to the Del Rosa Hot Shots, then went through Missoula rookie training again in 1959, along with one of the broken-ankle rookies.

Ten years after reading *Trees*, Fred made five fire jumps in his first season. The first was in Oregon with **Jim Cherry** (Missoula '57) and two Gobi jumpers. Second was a two-jumper fire with squad leader **Ray Schenk** (Missoula '56) where they were mislocated six miles in the wrong township. After a cold night wrapped together in only a plastic sheet on top of the Bitterroot Divide, with Ray in Idaho and Fred in Montana, they were picked up by a helicopter. On the third jump, a 16-jumper out of Redding, Fred was in the air when the great August 1959 earthquake shook the West. His fourth was a four-jumper west of Hamilton on what he says must have been “the most jumpers dropped on the smallest fire in smokejumper history.” Finally, he jumped a four-jumper with two foremen, a squad leader and himself near West Yellowstone in September. He finished the 1959 fire season with two Missoula jumper crews in the Cleveland National Forest east of San Diego.

After 1959, Fred says, “life was anti-climactic.” He was an Air Force air transportation officer in Washington state, Texas, Taiwan and Vietnam for five years. In 1965 he flew as aerial observer on the St. Joe National Forest in Idaho. He then spent two years with Air America in Vietnam as traffic manager at

Danang, where met his wife, Beverly, a Public Health Service nurse officer from Minnesota. They married in Hong Kong. He earned a college degree in East Asian studies and spent some years as a business manager for a church group, some of it back in Vietnam where they adopted their Vietnamese daughter. After earning an M.A. in Chinese and Japanese history, he spent five years as a Foreign Service officer in Manila and Washington, D.C. For ten years, until his retirement in 1996, he was a Southeast Asia intelligence officer at the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Since retiring, he has worked part-time/flexitime for Raytheon Corporation on an intelligence project. In his town of Falls Church, Virginia, he is known as the “local woodsman,” he says, because he cuts and splits firewood and trims trees with his truck, a power log splitter and a logger chainsaw. He also makes rugged picnic tables and other woodcrafts. “You can take the boy out of the woods,” Fred says, “but you can't take the woods out of the boy.” He is also working on several magazine articles and a true aviation crime book that will be a great surprise to many, he says, “especially me, if I ever get it done.” Beverly has retired and both are active in their church. Summers are spent at a home they built near Aitkin, Minnesota, on the lake where Beverly grew up.

“From the Forest Service to the Foreign Service and beyond was strictly by default, not design,” Fred says, “but it could not have turned out better. My only regret about jumping is that I never knew **Mouse Owen** (Allen Owen, Cave Junction '70).”

Fred is looking forward to a great Missoula 2004 reunion. 🐿

Ration of Luck

by Don Courtney (Missoula '56)

Reprinted with permission from *Air & Space*,
November 2002

There's probably nothing to it, but sometimes I think that airplanes, and maybe people come equipped with a finite amount of luck. As with all things finite, maybe luck can be used up. And when it's gone, it's gone.

In the spring of 1961, I was one of eight or so U.S. Forest Service smokejumpers at the Royal Thai Air Force base in Takhli, on loan to the Central Intelligence Agency. We were theoretically not aware of the identity of our employer because our job came with a "risk of capture," and the less we knew, the better. The CIA liked to use smokejumpers for airdropping supplies because we were very good with parachutes, did not get airsick, were strong and fit, and were used to operating without much supervision. Perhaps most important, at least in the eyes of bureaucrats, we were not military, and any U.S. government connection to us could be denied should we end up in unfriendly hands. Our duties were to rig, load, and drop arms, ammo, and food to a small but growing irregular army in Laos.

In this incarnation, our job title was parachute dispatch officers — PDOs. We lived in (and were confined to) a not-too-large compound in a not-too-bad barracks. The food was okay, although for some reason the eggs in the mess hall tasted of diesel fuel. There was a movie every night, which tended to be the same movie every night, so everyone memorized the dialogue and shouted it at the screen, which was the back wall of the mess hall. There was beer, and there were bug fights: Collect a variety of beetles, mantises, and other six-legged items in a big dishpan, stir it with a stick until all occupants were highly annoyed, and then bet on the bug you like. The workday began in the pre-dawn dark and ended well after dark. The workweeks were seven days long; Sunday was different only because that was when you took the malaria pill. An individual PDO would rig cargo and load airplanes one day and fly and drop the next. Flight days were the best because it was a lot cooler at 12,000 feet and you could catch up on sleep for much of the time aloft. You also got extra pay — "danger money" — for time spent north of the Mekong River. The downside was that bad things sometimes happened north of the Mekong River.

The airplanes were Curtis C-46's Commandos. After flying the China-Burma-India "Hump" in WWII, they were bought by Flying Tiger General Chenault when he started his Chinese airline, Civil Air Transport (CAT). Controlling interest in CAT had been bought by the CIA, and had recently spun off a corporation called Air America, which could legally bid on U.S. government contracts. A different CAT/Air America C-46 and crew would rotate

into Takhli every week. One week, a crew came in a C-46, tail number B-916 — a particularly good airplane and crew.

"Rich" Richardson was the pilot, an ex-Flying Tiger and was fun to work with. First Officer Fred Reilly was an ex-U.S. naval aviator and deeply Irish. One particular day, the PDOs were **Fred Barnowsky** (MSO '42), two trainees from the Thai army, and me. We got to our drop zone early in the morning and saw the safety signal, which for this drop zone was a white "O."

The people on the ground were supposed to display this signal only when they heard the airplane overhead, but this bunch of good guys had gotten lazy and made their signal permanent. The previous night, the good guys had been chased off by the bad guys — Pathet Lao, or North Vietnamese, or both. The place was overrun with hostiles, the signal on the ground said it was safe to make the drop, and here we came.

While we looked the drop zone over, we heard a four-round ripple of machine gun fire. Barnowsky and I looked at one another, then shrugged. Probably some training going on down there, we thought. Later we would learn that if you are in an airplane and you hear gunfire, what you are hearing is not the weapon firing but the sonic boom of flying bullets, many of them, coming right at you.

On the next circuit, when we were lined up to drop, the world turned into a popcorn popper. Bullets everywhere. They just ate us up. I was nearest the cockpit and so went forward, bent over, and told Rich that they were shooting at us. He said he knew already. There was a particularly loud crack that made my ears ring for some time afterward. We found later that while I was bending over, a bullet had passed behind my head. Old Marine Corps instincts said that I should hit the deck, but then logic whispered that this would be dumb because those guys were below us shooting upward, and flat on the deck would offer the largest possible target. For a moment it seemed like the smart thing to do might be to climb on top of a pallet of ammo. This began to seem dumb also, and in the end I just stood there and listened to the popcorn popper until we flew out of it.

Barnowsky and I checked the damage and counted bullet holes. Fuel was pouring out of the left wing, but Rich said no problem, we had an empty tank on the right we could use. He started transferring fuel, and then gas started pouring out of the right wing too, through a hole we hadn't known about.

C-46's were famous for enduring an engine fire for about 45 seconds before the wing came off. B-916 now had fuel pouring out of each wing, right over each engine exhaust. Everybody chuted up and kept their eyes on the streams of avgas. On approach to the airport in the Laos capital of

Vientiane, as soon as we were too low to jump, we shucked off the parachutes and pulled open anything that resembled an emergency exit. We waited to see what would happen when B-916 backfired on final approach, as it always did, and to see if one or both of the main tires had caught bullets and gone flat.

Neither main was flat, and B-916 did not backfire. We just rolled out to the parking ramp and shut down the engines. It was rainy season, and the ramp was submerged in several inches of water. We piled out and watched fuel pouring out, spreading avgas rainbows all over. We waded about a hundred yards before we found a dry spot where we could safely light smokes. We all stood there, shaking and cussing and puffing away.

About a year later, Fred Reilly was landing with a load of rice on the Plaines des Jarres, a field of ancient monuments in northcentral Laos, just as the Lao Neutralists split in two and started an intramural firefight. Reilly was stitched across the legs by .50-caliber machine gun fire and his C-123 piled up at the end of the grass runway, crushing him under several tons of rice. The wreckage of his airplane, shining on the grassy plains, became a landmark.

B-916 went back to Tainan and was rebuilt. Right after it came back, it was hit just south of the Plaines des Jarres, got a fire in the left engine, and shed the left wing in less than a minute. Two Thai PDOs —Varaphong and Kukinchin — and nobody else, left it on T-7 static line chutes at about 200 feet. And very soon after, Kukinchin was killed when C-46, tail number 77 Victor, went straight into a ridge and blew up.

Meanwhile, back at Takhli, another C-46, B-136, came in with pilot Bill Beale. Beale had a Smilin' Jack moustache, a laid-back outlook, a fat and interesting logbook, and an addiction to paperback westerns.

On a hot humid morning, B-136, with Beale, a first officer whose name I don't remember, a big load of ammo, and PDO's **Art Jukkala** (MSO '56), **Russ Kapitz** (MSO '58) and two Thai trainees, left Takhli and headed north. Once the load was settled and ready for delivery, the guys in the back sacked out. Onboard, even when you are a deep sleep, one sound will bring you right out of it: a change in engine power settings. Jukkala got up and went forward, looked over Beale's shoulder, and saw a ridge coming — a ridge that the airplane would not clear, and there were spur ridges on both sides that prevented a turn out of trouble.

Jukkala woke up everybody and had them strap in. Then he belted himself in, listened to the power come on up as far as it would go, and waited for the crash. It didn't come, and finally he got up and went forward again. Over Beale's shoulder he saw B-136 just barely scrape over that first ridge and come face to face with another one that was higher still. By now, there was nothing to do but stand there and watch.

B-136 buried its nose in a big tree. Branches went by on both sides of the cockpit; there was a series of thumps. The plane stalled and nosed over.

Laos is limestone country and there are sheer white karst cliffs all over. B-136's tree was on the edge of one of those cliffs, and when the airplane nosed over, it fell free, over the



Laotian mountaintop drop zone. (Courtesy Don Courtney)

edge and down. It picked up flying speed. Beale nursed the nose up and flew away.

Air blasted up through the cockpit, blowing dirt and dust up pant legs and into faces. The crew went to Vientiane, dropped the cargo over the airport, and headed south to Udorn, Thailand. Beale put B-136 onto the pierced-steel-planking runway, and everybody on board was soon kissing muddy ground. Another C-46 came up from Bangkok, collected some of us at Takhli, and that night flew north to pick up Beale and company and get the roller conveyor and other drop equipment off B-136 so we could use it the next day. We went over B-136 with flashlights, whistling and making blasphemous comments in awed tones.

On the left side, a branch about a foot in diameter had passed between the fuselage and the propeller arc, missing the prop but driving a hole nearly two feet deep into the wing root. Another branch punched a head-size hole right under Beale's feet, missing the rudder pedals but letting in the torrent of air that sent all that World War II dirt up Beale's pant legs. All along the belly were dents and holes. The left end of the horizontal stabilizer and elevator were sheared off about an inch from the outboard hinge. Everywhere we looked there was damage that just barely missed being fatal.

Like B-916, B-136 went to Tainan for total rebuild, and was back in a few months. That summer, while trying to

turn out of a mountaintop karst bowl, heading for the one gap where it could get out, B-136 hooked a wing into a spur ridge and cartwheeled into little pieces, its luck all used up. On board were smokejumpers **Dave Bevan** (MSO '55), **John "Tex" Lewis** (MYC '53), and **Darrel "Yogi" Eubanks** (IDC '54). Their deaths pretty much brought an end to the CIA PDO program, and Air America began hiring its own cargo droppers. By the end of 1961, most of the CIA PDO's had moved on to other things. On a hot day in 1962, Bill Beale hit another tree at the end of a short airstrip. It was his final tree.

There may be nothing to this, this thing about there

being only so much luck, and about using it up and all that. Everyone who is reading this has used a bunch of luck already, or you wouldn't be getting this magazine. If you buy into the luck quota idea, you might find yourself sort of watching what you say these days because what we say now might be the last thing we ever say, our last words, what people will remember of us.

So much luck has been used up. There just can't be much left. ☛

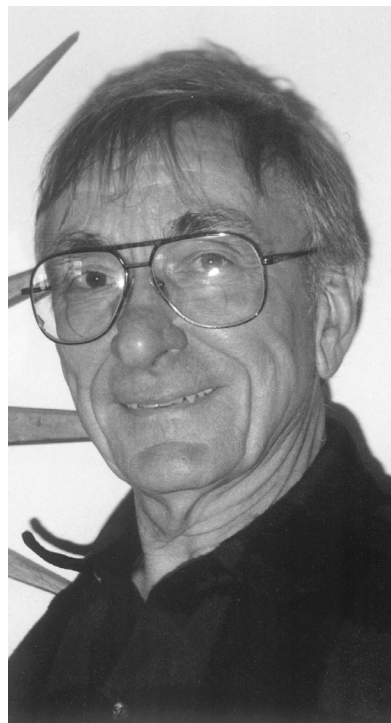
As required by law, the above has been screened by the Central Intelligence Agency and approved for publication as containing no currently classified information.

FEATURED LIFE MEMBER

JIMMIE F. DOLLARD (CAVE JUNCTION '52)

FROM PARACHUTES TO MOON shots to solar energy, Jimmie Dollard has always had his sights set high. He grew up in Claremore, Okla., where his best friend was Apollo astronaut, Stewart Roosa (CJ '53), who also became his college and Gobi (Cave Junction) roommate.

After high school the two friends worked at the USFS blister rust control (BRC) camp 52 near Bovil, Ida. They received hotshot training and had a very active '51 fire season, where they first encountered smokejumpers.



Jimmie Dollard (Courtesy of Jimmie Dollard)

Dollard was so impressed that he immediately applied and was accepted at Cave Junction for the '52 season. Roosa was not convinced at first but later applied for the '53 season, after visiting CJ in '52. Dollard returned for the '54 season, but Roosa joined the USAF and became a test pilot and astronaut. Dollard said there were few fires during his years at CJ and most of his fires were routine, fun and uneventful. In his rookie year, he jumped 3 times in one day to qualify him for an expected fire bust that never happened.

After the '54 season, Dollard completed his B.S. at Oklahoma State, then earned an M.S. at Purdue before joining Boeing's space and Apollo programs, where he helped design the launch vehicles that sent Roosa and others to the moon. In 1971 he founded and became president of PRC SSc, which he built into a very successful engineering firm.

From 1977–1981 he served the U.S. Department of Energy in Washington, D.C., where he directed national solar and renewable energy programs. In 1981 he

founded Sunbelt Energy, which became the second largest solar company in the USA.

In 1986 he moved to San Diego and started and served as CEO of MACTEC, which grew into an environmental firm with over 4,000 employees and \$400 million in annual sales. His proudest accomplishment (except smokejumping) was directing an employee buyout, making MACTEC one of the few 100 percent employee-owned firms in the U.S. In 1999, the employees elected to sell the company and he retired as chairman.

His current interests are volunteer work, travel, oil painting, golf, fishing, bow hunting, skiing, woodworking and home improvements. He and his wife Arrie live in Evergreen, Colo. They have 7 children and 9 grandchildren.

He says, "Smokejumping at the Gobi (CJ) was the best job I ever had. It changed me from an insecure teenager into a confident young man. The experience has served me well in all aspects of life, and I've tried to develop that Gobi spirit in other groups with which I have been involved." ☛

Upcoming Reunions

McCall _____ June 20–22, '03

NSA _____ June 18–20, '04, Missoula

The View from Outside the Fence



by **Chris Sorensen**
(Associate)

LAST YEAR'S LOSS OF air tankers 130 and 123 was both horrific and tragic. In the aftermath of such tragedies, it's instructive to reflect on how they may have been prevented, and to speculate on the best way to meet future fire seasons.

Behind last year's crashes were tightfisted contract policies on the part of the government, which has for years failed to adequately fund modern testing and maintenance of the aging fleet of tankers. Making matters worse, in the aftermath of the crashes, federal agencies in December chose to ground one-fourth of the federal tanker fleet with the swipe of a pen, and no plan was put in place for replacement aircraft for the 2003 season. According to an internal document out of Boise, the air-support priority for 2003 will be initial attack and structure protection. Apparently, protecting firefighters on the ground is a lower priority.

I find all of this misconceived. The West is facing its seventh year of drought, and another major fire season looms. Hawkins & Powers Aviation, the owner of the two tankers that crashed, has received harsh criticism for last year's accidents, but in fact there has never been a fatal PBV air-

tanker accident due to structural or mechanical failure prior to the loss of tanker 123 on July 18. There have, however, been many documented near misses involving the PBV, including at least two in which the aircraft lost three engines but landed safely. In one of these incidents, Gene Powers (co-owner of Hawkins & Powers) was at the controls himself.

If the government grounded every military aircraft that suffered a near-catastrophic mechanical failure, we would have no military capability in the air. However, with a president obsessed with thinning forests and waging war, it is unlikely the military will be taking over tanker operations any time soon.

The answer is not grounding reliable, solid aircraft like the PBV Privateer; the answer is funding a maintenance program. If privatization is the battle cry of the White House, then the administration should give the private air-tanker industry the money it needs. With the C-130s and PBV Privateers grounded, I am very worried about the troops on the ground this year.

I recently found this quote from a Forest Service mimeograph dated January 27, 1940, and it's as relevant today as it was back then. It reads, "Utmost care and foresight must be used in planning and conducting forest flying, else our record may be blemished. As a needed precaution, the Forest Service should be permitted such authority as necessary to employ and retain, year after year, the services of skilled, trained pilots, experienced in this type of flying. Authority for hiring ships and equipment designed especially for mountain flying is also necessary to safety. Continuing, renewable, or long-term contracts would permit obtaining such facilities. At present, under legal restrictions which require solicitation of competitive bids each year for airplane

service, there is no assurance that our lives will be entrusted to the most capable mountain pilots. And one final word to dispatchers and fire bosses: Don't ask the flying boys to do the impossible or the obviously dangerous thing."

During the Hayman fire last year, Dr. Patricia Nelson Limerick of the University of Colorado's Center of the American West reflected on big fires and the young people who fight them. Writing in the *Denver Post*, Dr. Limerick suggested that the solution to losing lives in order to protect trophy homes, worthless cheat grass and scrub pine would be to require every new firefighter to read *Young Men and Fire* by Norman Maclean and *Fire on the Mountain: The True Story of the South Canyon Fire* by John N. Maclean. Noted Limerick, "You've got these vulnerable young people crazed with testosterone who are way too willing to put themselves in harm's way just so some mountain home doesn't turn to ashes."

While I have great respect for Dr. Limerick as a historian, I think we should start with requiring that every fire *manager* read the Maclean books. It's the managers and the politicians who are way too willing to put young men and women in harm's way to protect mansions in the urban interface. The creation of a safety culture begins not with the firefighters but with those officially charged with their well-being — cabinet secretaries Gale Norton and Ann Veneman, Forest Service chief Dale Bosworth and BLM director Kathleen Clarke come to mind. I suggest we voice our concerns to them. 🦋

This column is dedicated to the memory of NSA member and volunteer Ted Burgon (IDC '52), who was killed in an ambush last year on August 31 in New Guinea.

Remembering a Hero

April 25 of this year is the 50th anniversary of the death of **Hugh Jenkins** (Missoula '49) as an infantry soldier in the Korean War. Hugh had been a smokejumper out of Missoula the summers of 1949–51, and joined the Army in 1952. A graduate of Oberlin College in Ohio, he was a pacifist and was classified as a conscientious objector when the war began. He volunteered as a medic but changed his mind and entered the infantry.

"I am certain that the only way for a man to be truly happy, to feel serene and peaceful in his soul, is to give himself to God. I don't claim to have done this yet, but I'm getting closer; I'm trying. When a man is with God completely, he will have four qualities: faith, hope, love and courage. And if he has these things, he will be happy, no matter what his outward circumstances are. He will be steady, strong, smiling and humble, and confident. No one with hope can despair. No one with courage can quit, while no one with love would want to quit. And no one with faith can fail." Hugh Jenkins, age 16, diary entry, October 16, 1945.

Mrs. Beatrice S. Jenkins — 1953 April 28

The secretary of the Army has asked me to express his deep regret that your son Cpl. Jenkins, Hugh was killed in action in Korea 25 April 53. Confirming letter follows.
Wm. E. Bergin, Major General, USA

Award of the SILVER STAR (POSTHUMOUS) 24 December 1953

Corporal Hugh Jenkins, Company F, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, United States Army. During the early morning of 25 April 1953, in the vicinity of Surang-ni, Korea, Company F was defending strategically valuable Outpost "Harry" against a large scale enemy assault. Disregarding the intense mortar and artillery concentrations accompanying the attack, Corporal Jenkins bravely directed the fire of his squad upon the enemy. While leading his men, he was seriously wounded by fragments from an exploding artillery round but, ignoring his wounds, courageously continued to defend the outpost. Through Corporal Jenkins's sound judgment and aggressive leadership, his men mortally wounded or repelled all enemy troops attacking their sector. Observing a friendly casualty, Corporal Jenkins left his position and rushed to aid the man. In this valiant attempt to save his comrade, he was mortally wounded by the enemy fire.
Corporal Jenkins's outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself and the military service. ...

**BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL CANHAM
JOHN F. FRANKLIN, JR., COLONEL, GENERAL
STAFF**

One of the best ways to remember his excellent young life is to read some of his own writings:

Letters from a smokejumper, July 1949:

Dear Charles [his former roommate at Oberlin College]:

Believe it or not, here I am learning to be a smokejumper. I was turned down all three places I applied for the job, when I got a telegram from the Forest Service office in Missoula offering me employment as a smokejumper. My brother Starr got an offer at about the same time, and we're up here together. So far everything looks pretty terrific; interesting work, a bizarre group of fellow employees, ideal chow, and \$1.43 an hour, which to me looks like a lot of money.

We've been in training since we got here (our camp is 30-odd miles northwest of Missoula), and so far we have made three jumps. The first week was all ground training. We'd spend each morning on "units" — one hour at calisthenics, tumbling and running the obstacle course; one hour on the shock tower; one hour on the mock ups; and one hour of rope letdowns in which we learn to let ourselves down out of trees. Afternoons are spent either in learning first aid, fire suppression, radio operation, etc., or project work. It's a pretty tough pace, but there are enough ordinary guys like me sprinkled in among the hot-rocks to make it tolerable.

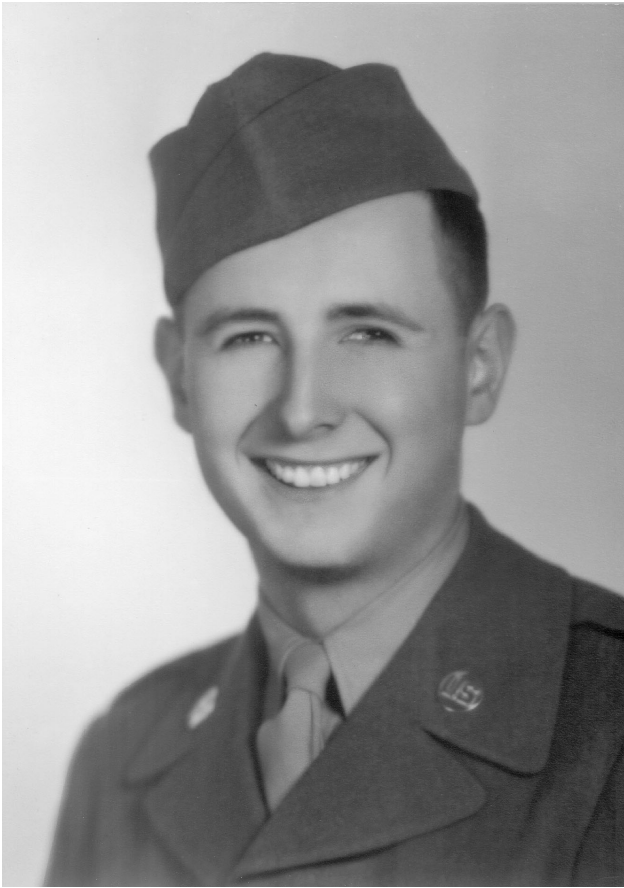
I hope you are looking forward to Yale with more eagerness than I am to another frustrating year at Oberlin. Lately I've been considering Oberlin as a necessary evil — something you have to make yourself stand, like a cold shower. After all, it's only a year. I don't know what I'd do without my annual summer tonic of a stretch with the Forest Service.

Dear Folks,

Well, we're all back at work again after a long Fourth of July weekend. And appropriately today we had our fourth jump, out of a big old C-47 — also called a DC-3. It was okay, although my chute opened inside out and the lines were consequently so fouled together. They say that happens occasion-

Did You Lose Your Rookie Jump Pin?

Here's a chance to get it replaced. Order item # 132 on the merchandise order form. Each pin is \$10.00. Only sold to smokejumpers listed in the NSA master database.



Hugh Jenkins (Courtesy Starr Jenkins)

ally but it is of no importance as far as speed of descent goes. These chutes are about the most reliable things in the world, and having a reserve makes the whole thing about as safe as anything can be.

Smokejumper Diary:

Last Monday three of us plus our foreman were sent away from that comfortable Sullivan Lake Ranger Station out to a decidedly primitive trail camp some thirteen miles away. This camp, romantically named Gypsy Meadows, consisted of two log cabins in a marsh near a creek, and was inhabited by approximately two dozen porcupines and sixteen million mosquitoes, as well as a worn-out old wino who served as our cook. Oh, the adventurous life of a smoke jumper!

The work itself was good; trail and telephone line maintenance. In the morning we'd crawl out of our sleeping bags, rinse our hands in the icy water of the creek, and put down one of our wino's breakfasts: fried eggs, hot cakes, coffee. After breakfast we'd pick up a saw, a couple of axes, and some climbing spurs and start up one of the many nearby trails. The trails would always be going up, because Gypsy Meadows is in a bottom; and the places trails lead to are lookouts and the lateral ridge trails. Our job was to clear out the tree-trunks fallen across the trail during the winter, and to repair the breaks in the telephone lines to the lookouts.

A couple of hours from five o'clock we'd start back down over the trail we'd worked, walking rapidly past the freshly cut windfalls. Back in Gypsy Meadows we'd eat supper, try to wash

up a bit while fighting the mosquitoes, and after an evening of reading or talking, crawl unshowered and unshaven into our sacks.

Our foreman was Carl. Carl was born in Minnesota about sixty years ago, German stock, and has spent a lifetime working in the woods. He's a short, stocky old wood-tick, with the big stubby hands of a workman, and he can outwork any of these twenty-year-old college punks any day. We've decided he's invulnerable. You couldn't hit him without smashing your hand. A good man to work for.

Colville, Washington. July 17th

The deal out here in the Colville National Forest has turned out pretty well, so I'll probably hang on to the job for the rest of the summer. There are two of us here living in a big white nine-room farmhouse surrounded by pasture and meadow. So here we are with plumbing, a big kitchen with wood-burning stove and a green Forest Service pickup to drive around in. Yep, smokejumping is a tough racket. The two of us have been working telephone line and trail around here. We're completely out of touch with Missoula; and what kind of a fire season they are having I don't know. Presumably not very much of a one so far. The first fire jump was on the 5th of July, and on the 8th sixteen men went in the C-47 clear down to the Boise Forest in Region Four.

Note left for Starr:

It's been an active week; and if things keep up like this for the rest of the season, I'll be a rich man. I've gotten sixty-plus hours of overtime in the last seven days, which is about average for everyone in the outfit.

A week ago Friday the two of us at Colville were flown back to Missoula. After hanging around for a day, I was dispatched in a Ford load to the Clearwater Saturday afternoon. The eight of us were to split up to cover four small fires. The third crew before us jumped on a high ridge with the storm crawling in on three sides. Lightning below in the distance, and the beginnings of rain spattering the windows during the final pass when the guys stepped out. We had to dive down through a light mist to drop the cargo. For our fire, we dropped on another high ridge, and I glanced off the dead top of a big fir and was flipped head-over-heels for a moment before straightening out for a soft landing in the brush.

We put out the little fire that night, slept a little in the cargo chutes and got our stuff together to go out the next day. The briefing sheet in my map case gave the instructions for traveling out in seven unfortunate words: "Down Obia Creek trail to Obia Cabin." Unfortunately, as the dispatcher in the Lochsa Ranger Station nervously told us later, he was new on the district, and didn't know that Obia Creek Trail had been abandoned for ten years. As it was, we spent five hours Monday morning moving all our gear down the slope to the so-called trail. It didn't take long to find out that the trail, except for a few antique blazes, was non-existent. So there we were — crawling over huge seven-foot cedar windfalls, falling into mudholes, wading the rock-bottomed creek over our boot-tops again and again. This kept up for about four miles. About an hour before dark we got out of it to where the trail was main-

tained and tramped wearily down the remaining two miles to the cabin. I called the ranger from the cabin, and he made a half-hearted apology for the mix-up and told us to walk on in to the ranger station in the morning. We flew back to Missoula from Orofino, Idaho, on Tuesday afternoon.

Everything at Missoula was a continuous mass of confusion. On Wednesday morning I was 40th on the jump list, but by Wednesday afternoon I was off again in the Ford, this time part of an eight-man crew heading for the Bitterroot. Half the guys in the plane were reading their mail and making out overtime slips from the last fire.

We jumped in a stand of tall timber about two miles above the Salmon River. Two of our crew were hurt, both of them by having their canopies spilled by the limbs without hanging up. One boy, named Forbes, plowed down through the branches for eighty feet and cracked both his ankles as well as wrenching his knee and bruising his back. Another, the squad leader, Wilkerson, did the same thing and fouled up his shoulder somehow. My own experience made me damned nervous. I smashed down into one of the big pines, and ended up in the limbs, head down, with my legs hooked over one branch and another under my back. The shock came when I looked up and saw that the chute was barely hung up, merely by a few dead tips, and that all my weight was supported by the network of limbs I'd landed in. I clumsily worked my way up astride one of the branches and made my letdown with the

rope cinched around the tree, using 65 feet of my rope in the process.

By this time it was approaching dark, and it was too late to take the hurt men out that night. We made a stretcher out of a sleeping bag and got the casualties together to do what we could for them. Wilkerson was vomiting and had a cut on his forehead, and at first it was kind of painful for him to lie prone; but eventually he went to sleep. He's in the hospital now, and apparently it's nothing permanently serious. Forbes's ankle was broken, and the other badly sprained. We worked all night to clear a spot for the helicopter.

The copter, together with another Ford load, came in soon after daylight. The Ford crew jumped while the copter buzzed around. Cochran spotted the men one at a time from five hundred feet, and got everyone in without hanging up. While the men were coming down, Forbes was pretty agitated. He kept muttering that somebody was going to land on him. Yesterday, we walked out. It was a good twenty miles, but a fine trail all the way. Your bro ... Hugh

Parachute Loft, Missoula. Tuesday, August 16, 1949

Dear Folks,

Here I am at the Loft again, waiting for another fire jump.

(Continued on next page)

NSA Solicits Information, Photos to Honor KIA Jumpers

by Carl Gidlund (Missoula '58)

The National Smokejumper Association has initiated a program to honor the 30 Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management smokejumpers who have been killed in the line of duty, but it needs your help in the form of information and photos.

NSA President Ron Stoleson explained the NSA has fabricated 13 plaques that list the dead jumpers' names, their training bases, the year each trained, the location of the fire or other incident that took their lives, and the dates of their deaths.

The plaques will be presented during 2003 to the nine active jump bases plus the National Interagency Fire Center, the National Forest Service Museum, the Museum of Mountain Flying and the Evergreen Aviation Museum.

"We've also assembled what we've learned about the jumpers' lives and the circumstances of their deaths," Stoleson said, "but we're missing information on half the men and we don't have photos of any of the 30. Those are two areas where we need help."

The president explained the information on the jumpers' lives and deaths plus their photos will be incorporated into booklets that will accompany the plaques to the bases and museums. It's also accessible on the NSA Web site, www.smokejumpers.com.

"In addition, we're inviting donations to help pay for the plaques, which cost \$300 each," he said.

Stoleson explained the names of donors or their organizations will be listed on the first page of each of the booklets and on the Web page. Donations are being accepted in three categories: platinum level for those who donate \$300 or more, gold for

donations of \$150 to \$299, and silver, for those who donate up to \$149.

Stoleson said information is needed on the lives of Leonard Piper, Henry Thol, Jr., Newton Thompson, Silas Thompson and Joseph Sylvia, Missoula jumpers who were killed in the Mann Gulch Fire of August 1949.

In addition, the NSA doesn't know the life stories of Keith Hendrickson, Gerald Helmer and Robert Carlman, North Cascades jumpers killed in a 1958 plane crash; Kenneth Salyer, a McCall jumper killed in a 1965 plane crash; Arden Davis, a Fairbanks jumper who died in a 1966 parachute accident; Tommy Smith, Cave Junction, who drowned in 1961; Thomas Regginetter, Redding, who died in a 1970 parachute accident; Bill Martin, LaGrande, killed in a parachute accident in Missoula in 1991; and Don Mackey, Missoula, killed in the 1994 Storm King Mountain fire.

Finally, the association knows neither the life story nor the circumstances of death related to Steven Grammer, a Redding jumper killed in a helicopter accident on the Angeles National Forest in 1970.

Information on the KIA jumpers and photos of them should be sent to Carl Gidlund whose e-mail address is gidlund1@earthlink.net. His mailing address is 9232 N. Clarkview Place, Hayden Lake, ID 83835.

Donations for the project may be sent to NSA Treasurer Dean Longanecker, P.O. Box 643, Waterville, WA 98858. Checks should be written to the National Smokejumper Association with a note that the donation is for the KIA fund. ☺

(Continued from previous page)

Starr was sent on a fire a couple of days ago and hasn't gotten back yet. Today Bob Holmstrom and I worked out at the radio station. Am reading Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*, and adore it. For all its ragged, jagged edges, it makes more ordinary masterpieces seem strained and affected. Critics who scorn purplish prose seem foolish to me. Why not make full use of the language you're using? Yep, after I get out of Oberlin I'll have to write a novel.

Dear Folks,

Another two weeks and my summer will be over. Rain and cold have been closing in this weekend, and there may be no more fires this year. I can be satisfied with the season, though. Have made plenty of overtime this year, although getting fewer jumps than some of the other guys. And this job, in spite of the occasional monotony, pettiness and filth, has plenty of splendid moments. Flying low over mountains is always unbelievably exciting to me, seeing the completely patternless, jumbled topography of Montana and Idaho from the air, with so many ragged peaks and shadowed canyons stretching everywhere to the horizon.

Firefighting is wretched work, but jumping has my interest more than ever. I can get real enjoyment out of a jump — standing in the door with the terrific wind in the face, and then stepping out into that moving air — the sensation of falling and then the opening shock, and the easy sliding down to earth. Wonderful!

I may write a book myself someday. *Seven Seasons Among the Montana Fire Devils*, by H. Jenkins. Violence and color on every page. ...

Another note to Starr; fall 1951:

We've had rain and cold these past few days, and it looks like the fire season has come to a premature end. The breeze has that September chill in it, and the end-of-season blues are hanging heavy over the whole outfit. A few of the guys have terminated, and the yearly disintegration of the outfit has begun. This particular group, the 150 men who made up the 1951 Region One smokejumping crew, will be disbanded and dead in a few more days. Both the chicken shit and the glory will be past, reliving only in an occasional memory. Times like these bring out the meditative in me . . .

The boys who flew over to Grants Pass, Oregon, haven't returned yet, and exactly what they are doing is uncertain. By the way, that fellow Nolan (Bob) you worked with at Cave Junction passed through the other day. He took first place in that jump contest at the National Air Races at Detroit, and won a couple of thousand dollars. He was travelling with George Harpole, who took fourth; and we shook hands. There were five slotted chutes among the twenty competing, but Nolan and Harpole were the only smokejumpers, and only their slots did any good ... your bro ... Hugh

Letter from the Main Line of Resistance Korean War: April 14, 1953

Dear Mom,

The regiment is still on line, having been up here since the last of January — a long hitch, but rewarding in points. Tomorrow I'll have 25 points, with 11 to go to get rotated.

Birthday packages have arrived from you and Starr, and thank you. Twenty-four years old — a third of a life span. Have very little idea what to do with myself after my discharge. More school, perhaps. The peace talks are most encouraging. Somebody may contrive a monkey-wrench somewhere, but there's no point in pessimism.

It is still cold at night here but sunny during the day, and we have turned in our parkas. Living conditions have been rugged for the past few days, since we have been on an outpost ahead of the Main Line of Resistance — 160 men, living on top of a steeply sloping hill 400 yards from the Chinese, dwelling in a series of trenches and bunkers and tunnels, surrounded by barbed wire, mines and booby traps. During the day we eat C rations, clean weapons and rest hunched up in our little caves; at night we all stand guard and spend the long hours looking down through the night and listening. The nightly spectacle is quite something: arching bursts of tracer bullets sing past us, and the shells of both armies whistle by our little mountain. Then there are occasional illumination flares, and the great searchlights used by our side — artificial moonbeams located way back out of enemy artillery range, and sending strong beams forward for miles through the darkness. The glow keeps the Chinese from surprising us with a night attack.

This outpost, called "Harry," was hit the day before we came up here. A handful of attacking Chinese reached the trenches but most of them died coming up the slope and in the wire. George Company suffered seven killed and 37 wounded.

"Joe Chink" will not try again. This hill is too easily defended.

"During the early morning of 25 April 1953 Company F was defending strategically valuable Outpost 'Harry' against a large scale enemy assault. ... In this valiant attempt to save his comrade, he was mortally wounded by the enemy fire. Corporal Jenkins's outstanding gallantry and devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself and the military service. ..." 🦋

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

Last summer I participated in the NSA Trail Maintenance Program by cooking for the Webb Lake crew. It was an experience which I consider a highlight of the year and for which I feel great appreciation. I was in awe of the crew; their expertise, camaraderie, hard work and consideration gave me a glimpse of cooperation that is a rarity.

I am extremely flattered to become an Associate Member, and look forward to receiving your publications and participating in a project next summer.

My golden retriever, Jake, and my horse, Walker, concur!
—Diane Tidwell (Associate) Missoula, MT 🦋



Items from the Fire Pack



One Fire Each on the Gila

The fire call came requesting four jumpers but there were only three of us left. While flying to the fire, we spotted four or five fires. **Cook** (Oscar-Missoula '46) jumped alone on Ring Canyon and **Cockran** (Arthur-Missoula '42) and I jumped near two fires expecting to get them both. —**William F. Mitchell** (Missoula '47)

More Action on the Gila

We had been instructed to pick up another fire when we had ours under control. **Steve Henault** (Missoula '46) didn't have any luck in finding it. I looked for five hours the next morning without finding it. About 1530 two men were dropped on it. It was east of our fire instead of south as we were instructed. —**Fred Barnowsky** (Missoula '42)

Lost the Rip Cord

It was the third jump where I lost my rip cord. You couldn't have pulled it out of my hands on the first jump. —**George Honey** (North Cascades '40)

The 1940 Missoula Crew

Region 1 had send **Rufus Robinson** over to Winthrop to take his training. He came back to Seeley Lake and made on demonstration jump. This left **Jim Waite**, **Jim Alexander**, **Bill Bolen**, **Dick Lynch** and myself to take the training at Seeley Lake. **Chet Derry** was the parachute rigger. —**Earl Cooley** (Missoula '40)

Reaction to Women Mixed

The reaction to having women on the crew was mixed. They were scared to say anything because they were told we might sue them. I didn't like that we had that power over them. It made me totally unapproachable as a friend. The rookies were real tight and you'll notice that people tend to be good buddies with those in the same rookie class. —**Wendy Kamm** (Missoula '82)

18 Miles of Trail

My first fire jump was on the middle fork of the Salmon. There were three of us on a nine-acre fire. We packed our gear down to the middle fork that was about four miles straight down. We had to get across the swollen river one at a time on a little yellow survival raft. From there it was 18 miles on a pack string to the roadhead. —**Wayne Webb** (McCall '46)

Happy Mennonite

We jumped in the evening when the wind was supposed to have abated. But it hadn't. My buddy broke his ankle and was in pain but not complaining. Rescuers reached us the next morning and we carried him on a stretcher to the trail. He hurt a lot being placed on a horse so one of the rescuers pulled out a bottle and told him to drink as much as he could. We had one of the drunkest, happiest injured Mennonites you ever saw! —**Alan Inglis** (Missoula '45)

250 Foot Letdown Ropes

The Willamette and Umpqua forests are treacherous due to the old growth fir that are very tall and brittle. Some of the Cave Junction guys would carry 250-foot letdown ropes. **Ed Weisenback** broke through a tree on the Willamette and landed on the rocks. He suffered a severed tongue a couple inches back from the tip, fractured femur, hip and arm. We jumped and worked furiously to get a helispot cut to get Ed out before nightfall as we felt he wouldn't make it through the night. We later found out that was probably true. —**Bruce Jackson** (Redmond '69)

Thanks for the Tree

My experiences in smokejumping were very gratifying and I felt that we contributed substantially to the national welfare. Once on a practice jump my chute fouled up and I had to use my reserve. I had nylon all over my head. I landed in a 100-foot tree that probably saved my life. —**Gus Janzen** (Cave Junction '43)

No High School to Medical School

After grade school, my father put me to work on the farm. It was the depression and times were hard. The high school was 10 miles away and transportation too expensive. I joined the smokejumper unit in 1945 and it was a new learning challenge. After the war I wanted to attend college and started as a theology student. I had no other choice since I did not attend high school. Later I graduated from college, medical school and an internship in Spokane, Wash. My heart was begging return to Montana. Whitefish gave me the opportunity I was dreaming of, general family practice, doing surgery and delivering babies. —**David Kauffman** (Missoula '45)

Hepatitis Worse than Smokejumping

After smokejumping, I later volunteered for the Philadelphia Jaundice Program in which we drank 2000 cc of water infected with the hepatitis virus. Although less dramatic, hepatitis did more damage to the CPS men involved than did smokejumping. —**George Leavitt** (Missoula '44)

Five Fires/One Jump

After seven training jumps, I was on my way. Surely no work could be this enjoyable. A few fires later I changed my mind a bit. Once **Merle Hoover** and I jumped a fire and ended up extinguishing five fires before we left. —**Ralph Miller** (McCall '45)

Unconscious for Six Days

I can't even remember getting up that morning. My friends tell me I was helping cut down snags when part of one fell on me smashing the lower part of my jaw and knocking me unconscious. **Phil Stanley** and friends put me on a stretcher and carried me out of the woods and transported me 36 miles to the hospital. I was unconscious for six days. After a six-week stay in the hospital, I went back to camp and got ready to jump again. —**Sheldon Mills** (Missoula '43)

Helmets and Face Masks

Before we got the football helmets, we were wearing one of those leather caps. The helmet and facemask was a good idea. —Virgil Derry (North Cascades '40)

Didn't Need that Reserve Anyway

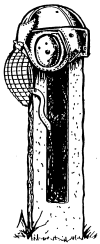
We jumped one fire near the Canadian border and found the remnants of one of the military jumps (555th). We found an old reserve and. ... —Bill Moody (North Cascades '57)

Weekend Jumpers

I never jumped before. I was strictly an artilleryman in the Marine Corps in the Pacific campaigns. Later Dave Burt, Jack Nott, myself and a fellow named Harpole (George) bought private parachute outfits and were jumping on weekends. We put on pretty good shows at the old Johnson Field. Jack and Dave were leaving Missoula to jump at rodeos in the surrounding area. One hundred bucks a whack. —Chuck Pickard (Missoula '48)

My Dad Was One of the First Jumpers

I suppose the reason I got into jumping was that my dad jumped in 1940. Then I was raised in Winthrop and was familiar with the base. The best thing I liked was that you never knew what you were going to be doing from one day to the next. You could be puttin' up hay on the district or be in California or Idaho on a fire. —Ray Honey (North Cascades '55) 🦋



Off The List

We want to know! If you learn of the serious illness or death of a member of the smokejumper community, whether or not he or she is a member, your Association wants to know about it. We would like to express your Associations's sentiments and

spread the word to others. Please phone, write or e-mail the editor (see contact information on page three of the magazine). Include the name, address and phone number of the subject's next of kin. We'll take it from there.

Wallace James "Coach" Dobbins (Missoula '47)

Wally passed away November 18, 2002. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Marian. He grew up in the Northwest and served in the Army with the Corps of Engineers in the Philippines and Okinawa during World War II. After the war, Wally joined the smokejumpers and fought forest fires for eight summers. He graduated from the University of Montana in 1952 and was recruited by the CIA on a project in Taiwan. In 1969, Wally returned to his passion of teaching and coaching for Marana Public Schools until his retirement in 1987.

James R. Elms (Missoula '59)

Jim died of a brain tumor on July 16, 2000, in Hillsboro, Ore. He was a retired forester for the USFS and owned his own woodworking business call The Elm Tree. Jim was a graduate of the University of Montana and had been living in Hillsboro for 20 years. Survivors include his wife Bonnie, a son and three daughters.

Edward 'Nick' Nicholson (Missoula '60)

Nick, 62, passed away Aug. 2, 2002, at his home in Darby, Mont. Following graduation from high school in Darby, he attended Western Montana College and worked as a logger. He was a smokejumper for 11 years, and then was employed as a dispatcher on the Bitterroot National Forest before retiring in 1992. His interests included rodeos, horses, hunting and leatherwork. He loved the outdoors and

always had a story after each outing. His wife Donna, a daughter, two sons, seven grandchildren, his parents and a sister survive him. Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Edward Nicholson, P.O. Box 34, Darby, MT 59829. The family suggests memorials to the Guardian Angels, c/o Judy Schmidt, M.D., 2835 Fort Missoula Road, Building 3, Suite 301, Missoula MT 59804; New Life Four Square Church, c/o John Yuhus, 303 Cole Ave., Darby, MT 59829; or Marcus Daly Hospice of the Bitterroot, 1200 Westwood Drive, Hamilton MT 59840.

Walter S. Stokes (Pendleton '45)

Walter (Buddy) Smith Stokes, 72, of Tampa, Fla., and Great Falls, Mont., died of cancer at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C., on Oct. 11, 2002.

Born in Louisville, Ky., on July 5, 1930, he joined the U.S. Army at age 14 and was a smokejumper with the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion (the "Triple Nickles") when it was deployed to the Northwest in 1945 to fight wildfires and those ignited by Japanese balloon bombs. A veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, Walter was awarded a Silver Star and a Purple Heart. He retired from the Air Force in 1972 and went on to retire from Federal Civil Service. He then volunteered in various community programs, was the sergeant-at-arms of the Tampa Bay Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, a member of the Fraternal Order of Police, the VFW, and a life member of the Triple Nickles Association. 🦋

Those Were the Days: McCall, Idaho 1944–45

by Harvey H. Weirich, CPS-103 (McCall '44)

I was six years old in 1930 when I saw my first airplane — a two-seater open cockpit, probably from World War One. The pilot landed in a cow pasture on the edge of our small town and offered rides to all the locals. I can still see him walking with the gas can and pouring it in behind the engine.

By the time I was a teenager, I was making model airplanes and parachutes. I would throw them from the upstairs windows and off the roof of the house to see if they would sail, float or crash. At nineteen, I was in Civilian Public Service (CPS) at Dennison, Iowa. I asked to transfer to the smokejumper unit at Missoula, Montana.



Harvey Weirich (Courtesy Harvey Weirich)

Welcome to Missoula

In the spring of 1944, I got off the train at Missoula and was soon west of town at the Nine Mile campgrounds. For six weeks it was calisthenics, hanging on the steel cable for letdowns, going out the door of a wooden mock-up of the Ford Tri-Motor, jumping off the wooden tower, coming to the end of a rope, and of course a lot of jump and rolls off a wooden platform. One of our favorite maneuvers was finding ourselves so far down the road that we would have to run all the way back to camp or miss our evening meal.

We finally all gathered at the airport for our first one-way ride in the Tri-Motor. I managed to hit the airport but the wind dragged me over into the rail fence. After several more jumps, it was on to McCall, Idaho.

Memories of McCall

Our camp was across from the McCall-Donnelly High School on the edge of town. **Lloyd Johnson** (Stuart S.) and **John P. Ferguson** (MYC '43) were our squad leaders. Pilots **Penn Stohr** and **Bill Yaggy** (MSO '41) flew the Travelair for us. I remember Penn Stohr as a very no-nonsense pilot. You didn't move around in his airplane on takeoffs or landings, but you always believed you would get there and back if you flew with him. Bill Yaggy gave me lessons in the Piper Cub. After I ground-looped the plane, he decided it was time to solo — now or never. I made three more takeoffs and landings solo before I quit for the day.

In 1944 at McCall, there were 17 CPS jumpers making 45 jumps on 17 fires. In 1945, there were 35 CPS making 232 jumps on 66 fires. I was on only two large fires. On the one I remember we couldn't hold a fire line. We finally gave up and went that way. I guess we were fortunate, because the fire went the other way. When it came back down, we had walk-in help, including a cook. We had to hang the food in a tree at night and chase bears with sticks and flashlights. It was soon decided that the jumpers were needed somewhere else, so we walked out to the road, got on the truck and nursed our sore feet all the way to McCall, leaving the mop-up work to the walk-in people.

When we got the fire call, it was mid-afternoon. **Gordon Miller** (MYC '44) and I headed out in the Travelair across McCall and Payette Lake to our fire. Two lookouts had reported the fire and one aircraft pilot agreed with the lookouts, but we had a difficult time finding it. After spotting a small wisp of smoke halfway down the slope from



CPS-103 McCall 1944 (Courtesy Harvey Weirich)

Top L-R: Michael Ritzman, Laurel Sargent, Junior Eberly, Chester Swartz, Norman Moody, Allen Lehman, Merle Hoover, John Whitesitt, Gilbert Weldy, Harvey Weirich, Homer Chance. Bottom L-R: Earl Stutzman, Merlo Zimmerman, Harold Holden, Lester Gabler, Gordon Miller, Cornelius Vogt, George Anderson.

a ridge top, we agreed that was it. After lining up with the drift chute and so forth, Gordon found himself on the ground, and I was fifteen feet off the ground hanging on a green tree. After we gathered up all our gear, I headed for the fire. Later Gordon found me sitting beside our “fire” in disbelief, staring at a bubbling hot water spring gurgling down the side of the mountain — and yes, it was steaming. A packer with mules soon picked us up and left us at an airport. We flew back to McCall. I think this fire is listed as happening in the Boise Forest on Indian Creek on July 28, 1944.

The Last Jump

On September 14, 1945, I made my last jump as a smokejumper. We left the McCall airport as usual with the Travelair, but we couldn’t find our fire! Finally giving up in disbelief, we headed for home. It was getting late in the day, so it looked like there would be no jumping. With McCall in sight, Johnson hollered back from the front seat, asking if I wanted to jump. I didn’t even answer on my way to the back of the plane. He put me out above McCall and then I hollered for the sheer joy of it!! It was a very calm evening. I

came in at our camp on the back side of our new parachute loft that was built in 1944.

Most of my time at McCall, when I wasn’t on a fire, I was working at Lick Creek Summit, northeast of town, on the last rock bluff on the road over the mountain. We’d jackhammer holes and load them with dynamite, to break up and clear an area for the roadbed. My job was using the bulldozer to push boulders off the road and to level hauled-in dirt for the new road. We also had a small bulldozer, with a four-foot blade, that we needed to use to clear and extend an airport runway. After deciding it was not an option to take it apart and fly it in with the Tri-Motor, we first walked the trail, and then I spent two days driving it in. In our spare time, we built a shower with five-gallon buckets, chased deer at night, caught trout and waded in the river spearing salmon. For a young Amish farm boy from Indiana, It was quite an experience. 🍷

Harvey worked in the pleasure boating industry for Starcraft and Chris Craft for a total of 50 years and retired in 1995 as vice president of engineering. He is married and has three children and four grand children. You can reach him at: 17434 S R 4, Goshen, IN 46528 or e-mail Waterboy70@msn.com



Blast from the Past



Raleigh, N.C. News & Observer, July 1994

Leaping into Danger

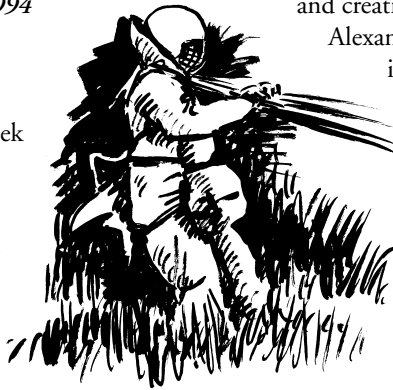
by Greg Easterly

The deadly blaze that took the lives of 14 firefighters in the Colorado Mountains last week struck both nostalgic and painful chords with James “Smokey” Alexander.

Although more than 50 years and 1,500 miles separate him from his past, memories of his two years as one of the first fire fighting smokejumpers are keeping the tragedy close to heart. Now 76, Alexander lives with his wife Dorothy in Ferrington Village. Tall and somewhat tan with sky-blue eyes and a crop of white hair, Alexander’s grandfatherly looks belie his history.

He was one of the six men who served as the original smokejumpers, recruited in 1941 by the U.S. Forest Service to parachute into blazing forests and prevent the fire from spreading. Armed with only a shovel and a Pulaski and a lot of courage, their job was to reach the fire’s front and cut off its fuel supply by digging trenches and removing flammable materials. Most of Alexander’s jumps were made in the heavily forested Northwestern states.

Sometimes the digging deprives the fire of a way to spread. Other times, as in last week’s tragedy, the wind can give the fire a boost, helping it to jump through treetops



and creating a fiery trap for the firefighters.

Alexander recounted a fire that killed 13 firefighters in 1949, after he had retired from smokejumping and was selling business forms in the Northwest. “Sometimes the fire can burn so fast it just takes all the oxygen out of the air and people actually suffocate. Some of those kids were sons and friends of mine.”

Many of Alexander’s memories are pleasant. Others are hair-raising. Asked about the most frightening of his 47 jumps, he focused on one that didn’t even happen near a fire. “My chute failed during a training jump,” he said. His backup chute saved him, but the free-fall was unnerving. “You’re traveling at 1,200 feet a minute, so you get the point. My instructor never said a word. He just put another pack on me and within 10 minutes I had made another jump.”

For taking on such a high-risk job, Alexander was paid \$2,000 per year, roughly equivalent to \$20,000 today. Modern firefighters are higher paid, and also have the benefit of helicopters, chain saws, and aerial fire retardant. But, Alexander said, last week’s events demonstrate that the level of risk has remained the same. “It’s hot, dirty and dangerous work. They earn every penny.”

Not Just a Job. . . .

by Terry Egan (Cave Junction ’65)

My first fire jump really sold me on being a smoke jumper. Since I was in sorry shape and hadn’t passed my PT test, another jumper and I in the same condition were not on the jump list when a fire bust hit the coastal range. Very soon the base was jumped out and Jim Allen didn’t have any choice but to jump us.

I got paired up with squad leader **Garry Peters** (CJ ’63) for a fire on Horseshoe Bend in the Rogue River country. The spotter was **Mick Swift** (CJ ’56) and the pilot was **John Cowan**. As we approached the drop zone, I was busy looking out the window since flying was new to me. This was my ninth flight and I still hadn’t made a landing yet — just one skydiving and seven Forest Service jumps. I had a pretty good look around by the time Mick waved us both into the door. The jump was pretty uneventful and I landed without hanging up. I had

quickly figured out that those who could steer a parachute didn’t have to climb trees and I hated climbing trees. Garry was not so lucky and hung up about 75 feet. He got down very quickly just in time to see our fire packs come out of the plane. The chute on one of the firepacks malfunctioned and we watched it go sailing off into oblivion. That was Garry’s pack. Mine landed a short distance away. The five-gallon water can hit a rock and broke open. The climbing spurs, which were free fallen, landed in the drop zone.

Taking stock of the one fire pack between us, there was one canteen of water and probably two days of rations. Not a problem. We went off to fight the fire. It was a small one, probably a couple of acres, but it provided us with a bit of a challenge controlling it. By the end of the day we had consumed all of our water and had the fire lined and under a modicum

of control. After eating some of our rations, Garry went to sleep in my paper sleeping bag and I went to sleep in the bomb chute that had been attached to my fire pack. It was a miserable night. I was extremely cold because the bomb chute provided no warmth or insulation at all and I was very dehydrated. All night long I could actually hear the Twin Beech coming with water. The night passed all too slowly. In the morning, I remembered that I had seen a patch of green on the hillside not far from the jump spot. I convinced Garry to let me go look for it.

It didn't take long before I came across a patch of ferns and grass that spoke of WATER!! Sure enough, there was a natural spring in the center. I drank my weight in pure, cold, spring water and filled the canteen for Garry. Now that we had plenty of water, the issue of us controlling the fire simply wasn't in doubt. We put out a panel marker "P" and before long a spotter plane came along, saw our signal and wagged his wings in reply. Later in the afternoon, the Twin Beech came along and dropped a bladder pump that really put us in control of the fire. Except for the fact that our groceries were running low, we were stepping in very tall cotton, indeed. That night, both Garry and I slept in the paper sleeping bag. I can't remember what was said in the morning, but it must have been straight out of the John Candy movie, *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles*.

We now were in the third day of the adventure. Although I hated climbing trees, I felt that as a rookie I needed the practice, so I volunteered to get Garry's chute out of the tree. He very graciously let me do the climbing. The retrieval was relatively uneventful as Garry lounged around on the ground proffering advice and encouragement. We then ate the last of our food, checked the fire again and went to sleep.

The next morning we had a final walk around the fire, packed our equipment on the GI surplus backboards, and got ready to leave. The prospect of climbing up a mile to the top of the ridge was not too encouraging so we decided to go down to the Rogue River, about half a mile below. Just before we got to the river, we came to a rustic hunting or fishing cabin. No one was home nor did it look like anyone had been in residence for a while. It did look like it had been used so I convinced Garry that the law of the wilderness would permit us breaking in. I didn't have a clue what the law of the wilderness said, but I was hungry and must have made a convincing argument because Garry went along with it. We found a cedar shingle that could be pried off without damaging anything and voila! We were in. Better yet, we found peanut butter and crackers that we quickly consumed which is to this day one of my favorite snacks. Before we departed, I left a dollar and note with my name and address and explained why we broke in. It must have been okay with the owner because I never heard anything.

We headed off to the river where we dropped our equipment on a sandbar. Garry explained to me, with the wisdom of several years of smokejumping, that the base would send a helicopter for us. With that he walked down the river a ways to wash. About half an hour later a guy and a girl in a rowboat came up to the sandbar and asked me if we were smokejumpers. I said we were, and he explained that he was Dave Waters and the girl was his daughter Anne, and that the For-



Terry Egan (Courtesy Terry Egan)

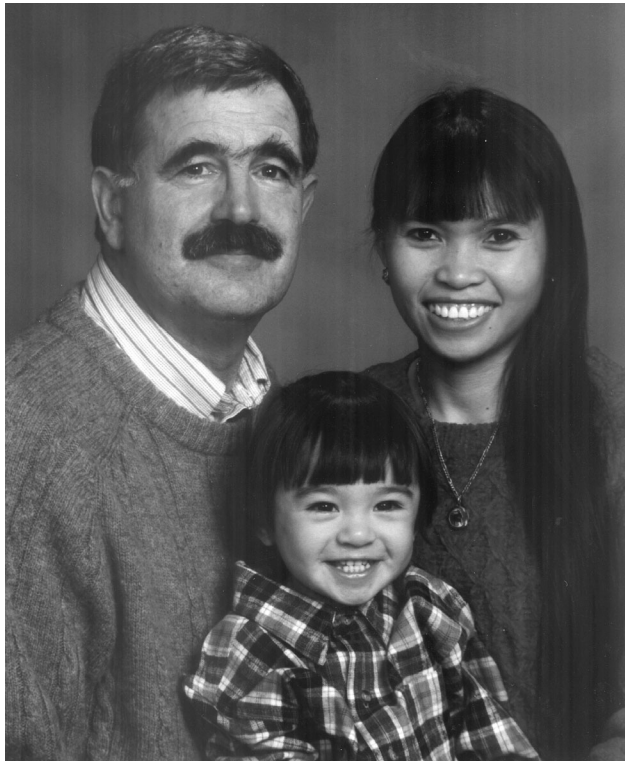
est Service had paid him to take us downriver to Marial. I shouted to Garry that our helicopter was here and before long Dave was deftly maneuvering us down the river pointing out various flora and fauna. There were huge salmon spawning in the clear river. We saw a family of river otters nattering at each other as they slid down a six-foot mud slide into the river and then back up the slide again. We saw majestic eagles soaring in the sky on air currents streaming up the river.

It was over too quickly. Before long, Dave had landed us at Marial where the ubiquitous Forest Service pickup awaited us. We thanked Dave and his daughter and headed back to the Gobi. That marked my first real adventure. Since then I've tramped the mountains of eastern Washington teaching survival to aircrews. I've walked the Chagres River Trail in Panama being hunted (in friendly fashion) by Choco Indians. I've fished from a junk in the South China Sea and also sipped mate with Mapute Indians in the remote regions of Chilean Patagonia where I helped rescue eleven British trekkers who got lost high up on Volcan Hudson. In short, I've had a life full of wonderful adventures, but nothing can compare with the jump at Horseshoe Bend. 🐾

Terry jumped at Cave Junction from 1965–1968. He joined the Air Force and retired after 20 years, having served in a variety of command and staff positions. He currently is the manager of the Mitigation, Analysis and Plans Unit in the Washington Emergency Management Division where he is the principal investigator of a NASA grant for integration of remote sensing into emergency management operations. Terry has a bachelor of arts degree in political science, a master of arts in public administration and a doctorate in education from Seattle University's Department of Education Leadership. You can contact him at: grandparka@yahoo.com

Interview with the Dragon Slayer — Troop Emonds (CJ '66)

by Chris Sorensen (Associate)



Troop, Revina and Jed (Courtesy Troop Emonds)

Chris: Troop, tell us a little about your background for those who might not know you.

Troop: I always wanted to be a smokejumper. ... I was a forestry student in Massachusetts and earned my way through school working for a private forest consultant. I cruised timber and ran tree-planting crews. I took a couple years off between my junior and senior year and got a job with the Austrian Forest Service and they sent me all over Europe. Then I hitchhiked across Europe and Asia to get to Australia. I ended up living with desert nomads in Syria and Iraq and logged a lot of time on camels and pilgrim ships. Had run-ins with slave traders and other assorted bandits to eventually end up in Australia where I worked for the Queensland Forest Commission.

I was a government deer-culler in New Zealand when I got word that the Siskiyou Smokejumpers had hired me. I jumped the summer of 1966, then returned to forestry school to get my degree when the draft caught up with me. They wanted to draft me as soon as I graduated, but I wanted to jump one last season before military service. I

beat the draft by joining the Marines, as they were the only military outfit that would give me the summer to jump another season at the GOBI. I was not looking forward to the military, but it ended up being my favorite of all jobs. It was crazy, but I liked the work. Stayed in Vietnam '68, '69 and '70 about half the time in the infantry and the second half as an airborne tactical air controller.

After the service, I went back smokejumping at Cave Junction until they closed the place. Then jumped in Alaska till 1992 when I took a job as a fire management officer with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I am now married to a wonderful lady from Asia and we have a happy fun-filled little boy who is five. He is my favorite way to spend time. Another fun thing I am doing is trying to become a wing shot with a new bespoke shotgun. It is an Ansley H. Fox .28 gauge. Other than that, I work on the tools and our Escape Fire Academy.

Chris: What is the Escape Fire Academy?

Troop: The Escape Fire Academy is a land management and leadership course that teaches local fire departments, state and federal agencies, and interface dwellers, a strategic and tactical method to eliminate the loss of critical sites when extreme fires roll over homes. Look up www.dragonslayers.com and there will be a diagram that is a "universal blueprint" for all fuel types.

Chris: I first became aware you were working on a tool after reading Murry Taylor's book, *Jumping Fire*. Tell us about the tools you have designed.

Troop: The tools were a consolidation of good ideas from all over the world. It was more of a system than just a tool. As the Incident Command System of Organization came into being we began moving troops out of region more and more. Traditional tools were perhaps good for fire ops in the early 1900s; you know, before every crew had a chainsaw. It is just that wages and support costs now are just too high to arm people with single function tools.

The Asians seemed so far ahead of the Americans in both war and fire fighting. Most people who haven't actually spent a lot of time in third world cultures can't seem to pick up on the idea that maybe we are not so advanced and sometimes we don't have the humility to really look at the brilliance of simple people who have tried to make things better for themselves. Take line scraping for example. The Vietnamese use long handled Asian Eye Hoes. They are upright and comfortable and can put in five times as much

line as a tough American crew all bent over chinking line with a three-inch grub-hoe on the end of a 34-inch Pulaski.

When I was in China I saw a guy with a wooden pole with an inner tube lashed to it. Some guys from Sweden were laughing at him, but I thought it was brilliant. At that time Americans in Alaska were using burlap bags, bent over with their faces in the flame lengths, dehydrating, and destroying their backs. That Chinese fellow was the inspiration to emerge from spruce boughs and burlap bags to the fire hammer with conveyor belting on the end of a nylon rod and wooden handle. In China was born the idea of a Universal Fire Tool for a Universal Handle. I didn't just wake up one morning and figure it all out. I made a lot of costly trial and error mistakes and incurred the wrath of firefighters who did not like change and hated my particular attempts to improve the lot of the fire culture.

Chris: In 1910, the average man was what? About five feet, six inches and weighed 145 pounds? Today, the average man has to be approaching six feet tall and weigh over 180 pounds and many women are bigger than the average man of 100 years ago. It isn't hard to see that the Pulaski is no longer ergonomically practical or efficient. Is it time for the government to retire the Pulaski to the museums?

Troop: Wages and support costs are way too high to resign human resources to non-versatile fixed handled tools. Traditional fire tools came from local tools that could be used for local conditions. New people coming into the fire culture adopt these old tools as gospel and simply endure being uncomfortable and limited in what they can do.

Chris: I noticed that the GSA was auctioning off, among other things, Pulaskis this spring. I suppose they were worn out from years of sharpening. I noticed your Magnum Pulaski and Titanium Felling Axe have a replaceable blade. Tell us about it.

Troop: The Magnum Pulaski and Titanium Felling Axe are a series of improvements to advance the Pulaski to its proper place, which I believe is a secondary tool head option. It should only be used when specifically needed for cutting chores. The Pulaski is a brutal, unsafe tool that has become an icon for those who have not been Pulaski drivers for as long as I have. It does not make any sense at all to have 30 to 50 thousand fire fighters bent over and dig thousands of miles of fire line with a three-inch grub-hoe. Its life is two weeks on a campaign fire and then you have to throw out the thing because it does not meet specifications.

I changed the mass of the tool by using an alloy. The Magnum Pulaski is balanced in its center making it safer. It has replaceable blades so that the entire tool does not need to be thrown out if the blades wear down. The blades should last a lot longer, because the tool is not meant to be used only as a secondary tool. The most important aspect of the tool is that it is detachable from its handle and there is a better primary tool. This Pulaski should quite easily last a firefighter an entire career. It is the type of tool that should be even more endearing than the traditional Pulaski. We are not trying to do away with the Pulaski. We simply made it better and evolved it into its time and place to be even more

valuable. Also, the Magnum Pulaski does have a wider grub-hoe, but really we have better tools for both mop-up and line scraping. Traditional Pulaskis were fine before the days when every crew had a chainsaw.

Chris: Chuck Sheley mentioned in the April issue that the Bureau of Land Management had ordered another 100 tool sets for evaluation. How have the Federal Resource agencies responded to this new concept in tools?

Troop: Well, it's been a long hard road to hoe. Thus far I've sold about \$150,000 worth of tools to the government. The BLM jumpers out of Boise have been the leaders in boldly trying something new. They have bought 250 sets of these tools and the rumor is they plan on another 100. The government is very conservative, and slow to change. I always seem interested in working on things that are not asked for and may be someone else's business. Spain just ordered a sizable number of tools.

Chris: A bureaucracy moves slowly in order to preserve itself. Has there been any interest in your tool system from any of the big municipal departments or state agencies that are engaged in wildland fire fighting such as Los Angeles City, Los Angeles County, Orange County Fire Authority or the California Division of Forestry?

Troop: No interest at all in the tools from water squirters and engine types. The suppression tools are certainly the second most important thing that our company does. What I'm more concerned about is that the most important thing we do is teach a basic fire management course called the Escape Fire Academy. This lays out the option to be effective on these extreme fires, where defensible space and fire engines won't help. This fire management system is so basic that it makes the problem of interface dwellers into a useable resource. I'm not even interested in selling them fire hand tools; the priority is to make them effective on extreme fires to eliminate loss.

Chris: How big is your shop?

Troop: It is 64 x 34 feet. All the workstations were made from a huge spruce tree that was leaning over my house. There is a bench for each part of the tool system.

Chris: How many people do you employ?

Troop: I am alone right now. I do everything. If the big order for Malaysia comes through, I'll need to hire local high school kids to produce 4,000 sets of tools.

Chris: Do you do the welding and machine work yourself or do you contract that out and do the assembly in house?

Troop: I contract the best people in the world to do the casting of aluminum, titanium and stainless steel. These castings are all sent to very exacting CNC machine shops where they are machined to tolerances much finer than the human hair. I get custom handles made in Arkansas, rubber plug extrusions, and all the remaining parts and assemble them myself. Nothing is welded anymore, but just putting all the parts together really chews up all my time.

Chris: Here in the rural West, politicians are always running for office on a platform of economic development and helping the small businessman and they are always making trade missions to Asia. Have your representatives been helpful in opening the Asian markets or here at home with the federal agencies?

Troop: No!

Chris: What are the major obstacles a small businessman has in trying to sell a product to the federal government?

Troop: Turf guarding in the fire agencies and high paid people thinking they know what is needed. Anything coming from a brain-dead smokejumper can't be what is needed. If you think I'm trying to be funny or kidding, all I can tell you is people in fire think they know it all, and they are the experts. Tradition is also a tough one.

Chris: Having spent a lot of time in Asia must give you somewhat of an advantage. What are the barriers you face in doing business overseas?

Troop: I'm just not a businessperson. All my experience in life was killing communists and jumping fires. This whole thing never started out to be a business. It started out to be a contribution to make things better for rock-head laborers like myself. I really am quite bad about this business thing. I made every expensive mistake anyone could have made trying to make things better.

Chris: I understand businessmen are reading Sun Tzu's The Art of War and applying it to business. Are you integrating Asian culture in your business?

Troop: I am a student of Sun Tzu, in that what he clearly lays out is exactly how man ended up the top predator on the planet. All that he says is valid, and there are no shortcuts. I did well at war because I was lucky, and the troops basically covered me. I take good ideas from Asian people and equally great ideas from Americans, Africans, Australians and anyone else who will talk to me. Incidentally Sun Pin, Sun Tzu's grandson, expanded on a lot of the ideas of Sun Tzu. I particularly think he did a far better job on the Twelfth Principle of War, which was on the use of fire in military operations. "Knowing how to attack by fire is

important, but it is imperative to be ready against a fire attack from others!"

Chris: After visiting with you, it looks like you are trying to change the entire wildland fire culture single-handedly on two fronts. First by adapting to fire rather than trying to control it with the Escape Fire Academy and changing how fire is controlled with ergonomically efficient tools.

Troop: Only trying to help change two itsy-bitsy-things: (1) Trying to encourage fire leaders to use the urban interface dwellers as a resource to stop all the losses. (2) Trying to offer the grunt firefighter hand tools that make their job safer, more efficient, and versatile. I did just get a great phone call from an assistant fire management officer on the Upper Snake River BLM District ordering several thousand dollars worth of tools. He said he's been carrying a Troop tool for over a year and that it is the only tool he ever used that actually delivers all the things needed. Also he said everyone he runs into using the tool remarks, "What the hell is that? It's really lightweight! Where do you get them?" I especially have good days when some young firefighter, who doesn't know me from squat, calls just to tell me he really thinks the tools he just saw were incredible.

Chris: I was going to ask this in my column, but I'll ask you. Is the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management becoming a fire department for people living in 10,000 square-foot trophy homes in the urban interface at the expense of the natural resources these agencies are responsible for protecting?

Troop: They say 70 percent of all cost in suppression is to save homes. Although people not involved with fire fighting think they do a great job, it looks like they are doing all the wasteful reactive management that is a far departure from really effective fire management. So many smart people all doing the things that are not working.

Chris: It has been very enlightening visiting with you. Best of luck in your endeavors and keep us posted about your activities. 🍄

For more information contact: Troop Tom Emonds, Dragonslayers, Inc., 8455 Treasure Rock Road, Nehalem, OR 97131. Telephone/fax: (503) 368-7099, e-mail: troop@dragonslayers.com

ASSOCIATE MEMBER PROFILE NORM SILVER

THE NSA WELCOMES 42-year California Department of Forestry veteran Norm Silver. Norm, who served for 25 years as a battalion chief, is now retired in the Vacaville, Calif., area. He was CDF's first local government funded training officer and was assigned to organize and train the Napa County Fire Dept. Norm also developed training manuals for the CDF in addition

to many additional aspects of the fire program including three years on the R-5 Type I Incident Management Team #3. He now volunteers as one of the chief officers with the Vacaville Fire Protection District and acts as a consultant to local fire agencies. It's encouraging that the NSA is attracting associates, such as Norm, from the ranks of the veteran firefighters. 🍄



Norm Silver (Courtesy Norm Silver)



The crew cooking supper, L-R: Jon Klingel, Cliff McKeen, Chuck Mansfield, Ron Price and Dave Mansfield. (Courtesy of Cliff McKeen)

First NSA Trail Crew in R-6

by Jon Klingel (Cave Junction '65)

Chuck Mansfield (CJ '59) promised this Kalmiopsis Trail project would be just like a "good deal Fire Jump." The project got off to a questionable start when truck #1 was abandoned halfway to the trailhead, then the battery fell out of truck #2 and was reinstalled using shroud line. We began to wonder if this really was going to be like Chuck promised.

Four of us set up camp at the trailhead while **Ron Price** (CJ '56) headed for a nearby mountaintop at a run. Knowing Ron's reputation, there was concern about the pace he might set for trail work. He was known by those he trained at CJ as "Run till it hurts, then run some more." When Ron returned, we threatened him with the hobbles brought for just such an occasion, and he settled down. The Forest Service packers including former jumper, **Dave Atwood** (Redding '67) arrived around suppertime. We brought out the bourbon and told a few stories. The next morning, one of our crew wasn't feeling well. Initially we thought he had the flu but after analysis by the crew psychologist, **Cliff McKeen** (CJ '59) determined the victim

was suffering from a bird bite (Old Crow) and would recover. We worked the four miles of trail to our gear and set up camp.

The Mt. Billingslea Trail runs along a ridge top adjacent to an old burn with lots of snags so there were plenty of windfalls, up to 3 feet in diameter, to cut - 120 of them, by Chuck's estimate. We cut brush, rolled boulders, kicked rocks, relocated a section of trail, and constructed a new trail to a water source. Inevitably we would encounter a log that almost cleared the trail and were tempted to conclude it didn't need to be cut, but then we'd hear Ron say, "Wouldn't meet Owen's standards!" **Dave Owen** (Missoula '51) was a former district ranger in the Bob Marshall Wilderness who set high standards while working on NSA trail projects. Without further comment, the saw was cutting through the log. It felt good to be working a misery-whip and swinging an axe again.

The first few days were hot and humid. Personally, I was concerned about my skin. The gallons of water I was drinking flowed out through my pores without ever slowing

down. Someone suggested radiator stop-leak, but fortunately we didn't have any. Coastal humidity is tough on a desert rat who is used to sweat evaporating and cooling, not running down your body to fill up your boots. The last morning we woke to rain and the prospect of a day in dense wet brush. Anyone who has ever jumped in the Kalmiopsis knows what real brush is. Despite sloshing up the trail, it was hard not to enjoy the acres of pink rhododendrons in full bloom. Late that evening as we crawled into camp, soggy and tired, Ron came up with the ingredients for hot toddies — perfect timing!

The logistics worked well for the small crew. It was a drop-camp operation where the Forest Service packed in our tools and gear, and we backpacked out our personal gear, leaving tools for the packer to retrieve. We supplied our own food and camp gear. Most of us packed light; not knowing how much backpacking might be involved during the project. Chuck and Dave (Mansfield) were apparently trying to replicate a true fire jump and carried huge packs.

It was great to be with jumpers again who knew how to work, didn't talk much about what had to be done, and then really got after it. The diverse backgrounds of this crew made the experience especially interesting. Physicist Chuck's analysis of all the forces involved in moving 500-pound logs out of the trail proved handy, or at least entertaining. Child psychologist Cliff insisted his background made him especially well suited for psychoanalyzing jumpers. I hope he was joking about sending a psychiatric evaluation to the

NSA. Fortunately, we didn't need Ron's military skills on this project, except his strength and stamina, but his descriptions of the SCUBA diving and beautiful ladies of the Philippines made us envious. Dave didn't get in much programming during the project as no one brought a computer, but since our return, his electronic distribution of photographs has been very helpful. I especially enjoyed evenings hunkered around the campfire, cooking supper, and sharing jump stories with an interested audience. My wife got tired of my stories several decades ago after hearing them at least a zillion times.

Selection of the Kalmiopsis area wasn't random. Chuck grew up in the area and has long-term ties to the Siskiyou Forest and the Kalmiopsis area. His father was a botanist who worked for the Siskiyou in the 1940s. Later he was instrumental in getting the area established as wilderness because of its unique endemic plants and unusual geology.

Chuck kept his promise; it was a lot like a "good deal Fire Jump" with good company, great physical exercise, beautiful flora, fine spirits, and the satisfaction of a job well done. 🐿

Note: Two weeks after the Kalmiopsis trail project, lightning started fires combined into the Biscuit fire which burned a half million acres and was the largest fire of the 2002 season. The trail in this article is now in the middle of the Biscuit fire burn.

Jon Klingel is currently working as a pipeline quality control engineer on the North Slope, Alaska. He has been married to Marlene for 32 years and they have a daughter at UC Santa Cruz.



Early Chain Saw Use in Missoula

Chuck Pickard (MSO '48) sent along a couple great photos from the Missoula '49 era. Chuck was the squad leader in charge of this group that was sent over to the St Joe forest to fall some big trees. Chuck is pictured on the left end of a monster two-man McCullough saw. On the other end is **Hugh Jenkins** (MSO '49) who was later killed in Korea. Standing on top of the "victim" on the left is **Gar Thorsrud** (MSO '46) opposite **Ed Nurse** (MSO '48) with Chuck standing below them. Chuck said that he and **Fred Barnowsky** (MSO '42) tested McCullough, Diston and Maul brand saws in '48 with the Diston being the choice for both speed and weight. Regardless of the results, chain saws didn't show up with the jumper until years later. Gar currently splits time between Arizona and Montana while Chuck lives in Florida and Minnesota. 🐿

SMOKEJUMPER MILESTONES

"Milestones" was created to serve as both a "Hall of Records" for smokejumping and as a way to encourage you to write in with related stories. If you know of an event that relates to any of the listed categories or want to nominate someone, please send it in. You will be helping to preserve our history.

Starting with this April issue, "Milestones" will contain the complete listing of the marks obtained and recorded. Future issues will contain the marks submitted since the prior issue. The following is a cumulative listing of entries received over the past four issues:

Fire jumps in one season:

- 29-Bill Murphy (Missoula '56) 1961
- 28- Bruce Yergenson (McCall '54) 1961
- 28-Robert Turner (Redding '99) 2001
- 27-Lynn Sprague (McCall '59) 1961
- 27-Chas Bull (Missoula '57) 1961
- 27-Ted Mason (NIFC '88) 1999
- 26- Fred Rensmeyer (McCall '58) 1961
- 26-Ted Mason (NIFC '88) 1994
- 26-Chuck Sheley (Cave Jct. '59) 1961
- 26-Shannon Orr (Redding '92) 1999
- 26-Steve Price (Missoula '95) 1999
- 26-Shannon Orr (Redding '92) 2001

Search and Rescue jumps:

- 33-Bill Moody (NCSB '57)

Easternmost fire jump (longitude):

Longitude 79° W, George Washington N.F., Virginia, 1974. Ron McMinimy (Redding '65), David Oswalt (Cave Jct. '65), Tom Emonds (Cave Jct. '66), Gary

Thornhill (Cave Jct. '68), Walt Congleton (Cave Jct. '68), Pat McNally (Cave Jct. '67), Mike Marcuson (NCSB '64)

Westernmost fire jump (longitude):

Longitude 170° W, Little Diomed Island, 1991. Rod Dow (McCall '68), Robert Collins (Redmond '69), Al Biller (Fairbanks '82), Jon Larsen (Fairbanks '89), Lance Clouser (Fairbanks '85)

Northernmost fire jump (latitude):

Latitude 70° N, Alaska, 1993. Dustin Matsuoka (Boise '93), Steve Theisen (Fairbanks '86), Bruce Ford (Missoula '75), Mike Niccoli (Boise '93), Rod Dow (McCall '68), Bob Hurley (Fairbanks '87), Pat Kenny (Missoula '87), Al Seiler (Fairbanks '85)

Highest elevation landing:

12,187' — White River N.F., Colorado, 2000. Mike Tupper (Fairbanks '85), Dennis Terry (Redding '90), Todd Jenkins (NIFC '98), Mel Tenneson (Fairbanks '86)

11,193' — Humbolt N.F. Nevada, 1966. Bill Yensen (McCall '53), Nick Kennedy (Idaho City '64), Bruce Yergenson (McCall '54)

10,700' — Shoshone N.F. Wyoming, 1965. Tony Peiffer (Missoula '61), Jim Thompson (Missoula '63), Vern Bush (Missoula '63) Jerry Lebsack (Missoula '62), Gary Romness (Missoula '62)

10,690' — Custer N.F. Montana, 1947. Wally Henderson (Missoula '46), Jim Ward (Missoula '46)

10,100' — Shoshone N.F. Wyoming, 1974. Steve Clairmont- (Missoula '62), Ted Kamrud (Missoula '66)

Longest letdown:

270' — Olympic National Park, Washington, 1970. Larry Hyde (NCSB '70)

Most consecutive seasons with a fire jump:

34-Jerry Ogawa (McCall '67) 1967 through 2000

Oldest first year jumper:

Age 50-Jason Greenlee (Redding '99)
Age 49-George Cross (Missoula '74)

Youngest first year jumper:

Age 17+ 2 mos.-John Lewis (McCall '53)
Age 17+ 2 mos.-Wally Henderson (McCall '46)

Oldest active jumper:

Age 59-Murry Taylor (Redding '65) 2001
Age 58-Walt Currie (Missoula '75) 2001
Age 57-Bob Reid (Missoula '57) 1995

Historical Summary of Region 8 Smokejumper Program

When Jumped: 1971 through 1976, a total of 6 seasons. In 1974 jumpers were used there in the spring and fall.

Where Jumped: Virginia and West Virginia south to Georgia and Alabama, plus Arkansas. Total of eight different states, ten national forests, Great Smokey Mt. National Park and the state of Virginia.

How Many Jumps: Made a total of 705 fire jumps to 126 fires. 460 of these fire jumps were made in 1976.

Jumped Out of: Wise, Virginia; Tri-Cities, Tennessee; Andrews/Murphy, North Carolina; Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Fire Jumps by Forest: Jefferson-224, Daniel Boone-124, Nantahala-98, Cherokee-58, Pisgah-46, Chatahochee-36, Ozark-48, Ouachita-37, Uwharrie-17, George Washington-11, Virginia State-4, GSM National Park-2. ♣

Ford Tri-Motor Pin

Two inch lapel pin \$5.00 S/H
included.

Use merchandise order form: item #1943

Jumping at or beyond age 50:

Greg Anderson (MSO '68)	Phil Brollier (NIFC '71)
Mike Burin (MYC '88)	Mark Corbet (LGD '74)
George Cross (MSO '74)	Walt Currie (MSO '75)
Mitch Decoteau (GAC '78)	Chuck Flach (MSO '68)
Bob Ford (MSO '75)	Dennis Golik (MYC '74)
Jason Greenlee (RDD '99)	Bob Harris (RDD '75)
Doug Houston (RAC '73)	Tim Huntington (RDD '77)
Bert Mitman (RAC '70)	Bill Moody (NCSB '57)
Ron Omont (RDD '78)	Bob Reid (MSO '57)
Al Seiler (FBX '85)	Murry Taylor (RDD '65)
Dick Tracy (MSO '53)	Jim Veitch (MSO '67)

Longest break in service between fire jumps:

35 years-Bob Reid (Missoula '57) 1960 to 1995

Number of different bases employed:

06-Willie Lowden (NCSB '72)
05-Pat McGrane (Boise '76), William Ferguson (McCall '70), Tim Pettitt (McCall '75), Chris Palmer (Redding '75), George Steele (NCSB '72)

Number of states jumped (practice and/or fire):

17-Troop Emonds (Cave Jct. '66)
14 -Mark Corbet (LaGrande '74)

Number of aircraft types jumped (on the job):

25-Bill Moody (NCSB '57)
16-Eric (The Blak) Schoenfeld (Cave Jct. '64)
14-Willie Lowden (NCSB '72)
13 -Richard Fox (Fairbanks '80)
13-Murry Taylor (Redding '65)
12-Bill Yensen (McCall '53)

Fires spotted in a single season:

70-George Steele (NCSB '72) in 1994
60+-Jim Veitch (Missoula '67) in 1977
60+- Skip Scott (Anchorage '71) in 1977

Milestones requested for next issue:

Longest pack out (carrying all jump gear):
Longest walk out (carrying less than all jump gear):
Second or third generation jumpers:
Southern most fire jump (latitude):

*Please send your information and marks to:
pegmark@juno.com or mail them to Mark Corbet, 1740 SE
Ochoco Way, Redmond, OR 97756. ☺*

Museum of Mountain Flying Inducts Six into Hall of Fame

by Chris Sorensen (Associate)

The Museum of Mountain Flying in Missoula inducted six new members into the Museum's Hall of Fame last August. All six inductees hold a special place in the history of mountain flying, smokejumping and aviation in the Northern Rockies. The six join six other members of the hall of fame inducted since 1995. The most recent inductees are:

- **Warren Ellison** learned to fly in 1936 and flew Ford Tri-Motors from 1943 to 1956. He was chief pilot for Albertson's Corp for 23 years before retiring in 1985. Warren is a member of the National Smokejumper Association.
- **Dale Gyles** worked for Johnson Flying Service in the shop from 1955 until the company was sold to Evergreen Helicopters, Inc. of McMinnville, Oregon, in 1975. Dale was an FAA certified inspector of fixed and rotary wing

- aircraft. Dale operated the Fire Department at the airport solo until the Missoula Rural Fire Department assumed responsibility for fire protection at the field. Dale is active in the Museum of Mountain Flying.
- **Maurice Owen** flew for Johnson Flying Service for 10 years including work as a smokejumper pilot and flew air tankers. He flew for the United States Forest Service, Sierra Pacific Airlines and Empire Airways from 1974 to 1986. He retired in 1998 after 15,000 flying hours without an accident.
- **Clyde "Chubb" Riggleman** worked for Johnson Flying Service from 1949 to 1975 where he became director of maintenance for heavy aircraft. After Johnson Flying service was sold he worked for Chrysler Flying Service and later worked as an inspector for the United States

- Forest Service on contract aircraft.
- **Frank Rosich** worked for Johnson Flying Service from 1947 to 1975 where he was the chief welder and a master mechanic.
- **Rod Snider** (NCSB '51) jumped out of the North Cascades Base until joining the Air Force and flying helicopters during the Korean War. After the war, he began working for Johnson Flying Service in the shop and logged time in the Ford Tri-Motor. On August 4, 1961, flying a Bell helicopter Rod made a daring rescue of twenty smokejumpers on Moose Creek northeast of the Moose Creek Ranger Station when they became trapped by a fire fanned by gusty winds. Rod was awarded the North American Forest Service Medal heroism and the Stanley-Hiller Jr. Pilot of the Year Award from the Helicopter Association of America. ☺

FEATURED LIFE MEMBER

WALLACE D. HENDERSON (McCALL '46)

by Jim Buden (Missoula '73)

History: A Young Kid of 17

In 1944 Wally, as he is known to his friends, was 16 years old, working on an Idaho blister rust crew. At the end of the summer, he volunteered to go on a lookout.

When everyone else pooped out at the end of the summer, Wally stayed on, working out the rest of the fire season. This impressed the Region 4 ranger, **Glenn Smith** (NCSB '40), who told young Wally he'd make a good smokejumper. Ranger Smith probably didn't know that Wally was only 16, but, with such a strong recommendation, Wally didn't let his age stop him from applying to be a smokejumper.

So, in the spring of '46, Wallace H. Henderson mailed off an application — through Ranger Smith. That spring, while doing a combination junior/senior year in high school, Wally got a letter telling him to report to jump the Monday after graduation. "I lied about my age," Wally confesses now.

Wally remembers: "On a Friday night I marched across the graduation stage in my jeans and logger boots, got my diploma, and marched out the door straight to the bus station in Ontario, Oregon, to make the bus to Missoula."

Wally was driven out to Camp 9 Mile, an old CCC camp, in the back of a Forest Service 2-ton truck. For a youngster like Wally camp was an intimidating experience. He was the youngest guy there — *only two months past his 17th birthday*. Most of the men were ex-GIs back from the war, many with extensive combat records. Many had been quite badly wounded in the fighting. Most were using smokejumping as a way to decompress from combat.

The training was difficult — similar to what it is now, Wally says, though the training apparatus wasn't as fancy — and 10 percent to 15 percent washed out.

Wally reminisces: "I remember one rookie in my group who landed in the woods on the first practice jump, then just lay there. When people went over to see why, they were surprised to see he was coughing up blood. When the hospital medics took his shirt off, they could see he had been stitched up — he taken nine rounds from a German BURP gun. The guy was 100 percent disabled. He was asked his name: 'My name is Johnny Littlebear,' he said. When asked why he'd gone through rookie training and on a practice jump in his condition, he replied: 'I'd rather die with people who treat me like a man, than live with people who treat me like an Indian.'"

Wally played poker every night with **Wag Dodge** (MSO '41), **Fritz Bauer** (MSO '41), **Earl Cooley** (MSO '40) and **Glenn Smith** ("Smitty"), who had introduced him to smokejumping. Smitty, who was one of the original jumpers in 1940, having jumped the second jump after Earl Cooley's first, had become head rigger for the Missoula operation.



Wally Henderson prior to first jump in 1946 (NSA file)

Wally was the only rookie in this crowd.

The chief of the Forest Service was on hand to witness Wally's final practice jump. The chief was an over-eager photographer and ran out to the center of the X to get a photograph of trainee Wally coming down. Wally had to lift his feet up as he came down near the X, but nonetheless he kicked the hat off the chief's head as he landed.

Wally noted, "The chief of the Forest Service gave a speech saying how important smokejumping was. But he advised us that none of us should think about making a career of it because within three years helicopters and water bombers would do all the firefighting."

Wally still chuckles at kicking off the chief's hat and also how wrong that chief was about the future of smokejumping.

The Fire Season of '46

Once he made his way to the top of the jump list, Wally was quartered with the other jumpers in the old horse stables at Hale Field, right beside the Montana State Fairgrounds. Muckers had cleaned out half the racehorse stables and the studly jumpers were stabled in the barns. That was it for barracks. The State Fair kitchens fed them.

Wally remembers being part of a crew of 12 ordered to

attend a “water bombing” demonstration. The chief of the Forest Service and a few Air Force generals were on hand, along with camera crews to record the results. The crew set a logpile on fire and stood back with the brass to watch in awe as a P-51, using former “drop tanks” filled with water, dropped water bombs on the burning pile.

Unfortunately, the water bombs scattered fire further than they scattered water and it took the crew two days to put out the fire. The brass, however, declared the bombing run a success and went home. An RKO Newsreel showed the bombing in movie theaters and announced what a big success the water bombing was. When the newsreel ran in Missoula, Wally and a few of the crew stood up and booed. They were invited to leave the theater.

Wally’s first fire season cooked up when he and 11 other jumpers, with **Al Cramer** (MSO ’43) as foreman, were detailed to McCall to help out Region 4. He would eventually jump 12 fires.

He remembers, “We were jumping with hand-me-down equipment. The half-dozen Eagle chutes dated back to the ’20s and our Derry chutes were modified cargo chutes. **Frank Derry** (NCSB ’40) was in the original group and may have made the second jump. We had leather football helmets and a two-piece canvas suit similar to the ones we have now. The reserves were 22-foot chutes. A couple of the bigger guys had to use their reserves and they smoked into the ground pretty hot.”

Even worse, Wally recalls, was when “**Smoky**” **Stover** (MYC ’46), who weighed about 220 pounds, insisted he wanted to jump an Eagle parachute. The Eagle was a special parachute originally designed for gliders. It had a 32-foot canopy with a 4-foot lip around the bottom, with two 7-foot ears that could be collapsed by pulling on a line, allowing a parachutist turn in that direction. To Wally, one impressive thing about the Eagle chute was that it was three years older than he was. The reputation of the Eagle was that a jumper got two opening shocks — one when the parachute opened and one when your asshole snapped back in.

True to its reputation, the Eagle’s opening shock knocked Smoky out and he didn’t come to for 10 minutes. Wally weighed only about 140 pounds, so the Eagle experience was fine for him.

Sadly, he remembers it was also the fire season of the second smokejumper fatality. **Lester Lycklama** (MYC ’46) was killed by a falling snag. Wally sadly noted that Smokejumper Lycklama had gone through three or four combat jumps in Europe without a scratch, but was killed on his first fire jump.

John “Snake” Hennessey (MYC ’46), one of Wally’s jump-partners, got his nickname because he was afraid of snakes. As a practical joke for his birthday, some jumper-buddies killed a rattlesnake, wrapped up like a birthday present, sent it to his hometown of Boise, and mailed it

Northern California Smokejumper Gathering

Please save Saturday, April 26, on your calendar. The NSA is planning a social that day starting at 5:00. Final information has been mailed to those in Northern Calif. If we missed you and you are interested, contact Chuck Sheley (contact info page 3). Family and friends are invited to a good evening of talk and seeing some old friends. Hope to see you in Redding!

Please Tell Us When You Change Your Mailing Address

The postal service does NOT forward your copy of *Smokejumper* when you move or leave home for an extended time period. It is returned to us and the NSA is charged an additional first class postage fee. With 30–40 returns per mailing it gets expensive and takes a lot of time. Please let Chuck Sheley know if you have any change in your mailing address. Contact information is on page three.



ASSOCIATION
Chuck Sheley

10 Judy Lane · Chico, CA 95926

(530) 893-0436

E-Mail: cnkgsheley@earthlink.net

Put NSA on Your Business Cards

Business cards include:

- NSA 5-color logo
- Your name, address, phone and e-mail
- 500 cards
- Only \$43.50 including shipping/handling

Order from Chuck Sheley

(see format sample on left)

back to him in a box with his mother's return address. Snake opened the box and this dead rattlesnake fell on his bunk. He never slept in that bunk again!

How hard did smokejumpers work in those days? Wally flatly noted that on one big fire, "In 24 hours, 12 or 16 jumpers built more fire line than 200 loggers who were helping us fight the fire."

Then snow came. Wally and Ed Case (MYC '46), who died recently, made their last jump about the 10th or 12th of September. Wally and Ed were on patrol in a Ford Tri-Motor when they spotted a fire. It was a high altitude jump. Just as they exited, it started snowing. So the fire was easy to put out. But once the fire was dead and they tried to prepare some K rations, they realized they didn't have any matches. So they had cold K rations for dinner that night and for breakfast. They walked out in about a half-inch of snow.

Wally returned to work behind a counter at a meat market, but he missed life among the jumpers in the Forest Service. After a month, he called the jumper headquarters in Missoula and they got him a job on a survey crew on Rattlesnake Creek above Black Canyon Dam doing a logging road.

The Fire Season of '47

The next spring he reported to Missoula and jumped there in '47. They moved back into the stables at Hale Field. From the poker parties, "Smitty," the loft foreman, picked Wally out and trained him to be a rigger. So Wally got to work in the parachute loft instead of doing trail work. That season he got six fire jumps and one rescue jump.

He remembers the rescue jump vividly: "We got a call telling us that a guy on a trail crew had been shot. We took off in the Ford with six jumpers. At the same time, a Travel-Air was dispatched to Helena pick up Doc Little, a famous jumping doctor for the Forest Service at the time.

"The six of us got on the ground. I dropped down light and slow and I remember it well, because one of the other rookies came down whizzing past me and I ended up inside his parachute, under his canopy, inside the shroud lines. I just got my knife out to cut myself out when a gust of wind pulled me away.

"When we landed, we walked into the Guard Cabin and saw this shot guy lying in the bunk. When Bill Wood (MSO '43), the foreman, walked in, the guy raised his head and said, 'Bill, I was hoping they'd send you.'

Need Help with Magazine

With the death of Ted Burgon, I've lost the person who writes many of the Life Member and Member profiles. If you are interested in helping, please contact me at: cnkgshley@earthlink.net

The job involves contacting an assigned member, gather personal information, write it up in a Word document, obtain a picture of the individual and mail the completed package to me. Having e-mail is essential to the job. Can you help out?

"He was fully conscious and had worked for Bill on a trail crew the previous summer. His face was totally black and blue. His trail-crew buddy, a flatlander from the East, had shot a porcupine and had come in to wake up his buddy and tell him about it. He still had his pistol in his hand, and the shot went in just to the right of his right nostril.

"Doc Little jumped in shortly after, cleaned him up and gave him a shot of morphine. We put him on a wire stretcher and started out. Much of the trail went down a canyon side with a scree slope, and we dropped the poor bastard about 5 or 6 times when the stretcher broke. Each time we dropped him, he'd apologize to us for the inconvenience he'd caused us!

"We finally got him out to a landing strip and he was flown out. I visited him in the hospital, smuggling in a beer. I think he recovered and went on to become a cop in Missoula."

Wally left jumping a little early that season to start at Parks Air College in Illinois, which had just become a part of St. Louis University. He went into the Navy and the next summer had to make up lost school time.

Reflections

The downside of jumping for Wally, he says with hindsight, was that in some ways he never got to be a kid. "All through school I was a kid-buckaroo, a bronc-stomper, and I had worked hard in the meat market while finishing my junior/senior year. There was not much time in there for just being a kid."

Wally thinks his smokejumping experiences may have saved his life during the Korean conflict, during which he flew 72 missions as a radar technician.

He remembers that "we flamed out over Korea and I opened my chute. When I looked up, my ejection seat was in my shroud lines over my head. At that high altitude, there was no visibility in snow. I started planing like crazy to see if I could get that ejection seat to have some forward momentum, so it wouldn't come straight down on me and kill me. When I broke through the cloud cover, I planed along and landed beside an irrigation ditch, and the seat landed about four feet beside me. If I hadn't had experience with planing — which you learn as a smokejumper — I wouldn't be talking to you right now."

Honors

Life Member Wally Henderson went on to take advanced degrees in nuclear engineering and international relations.

His life after jumping has been an illustrious one, with many honors, including a Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster for flying 72 combat missions during the Korean conflict.

He rose to the highest levels in both the private sector and in government, where he was honored with the Legion of Merit for his work in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The National Smokejumper Association is proud of to highlight Wallace D. Henderson's contributions to smokejumping. 🍄