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Smokejumper Magazine, January 2013

National Smokejumper Association

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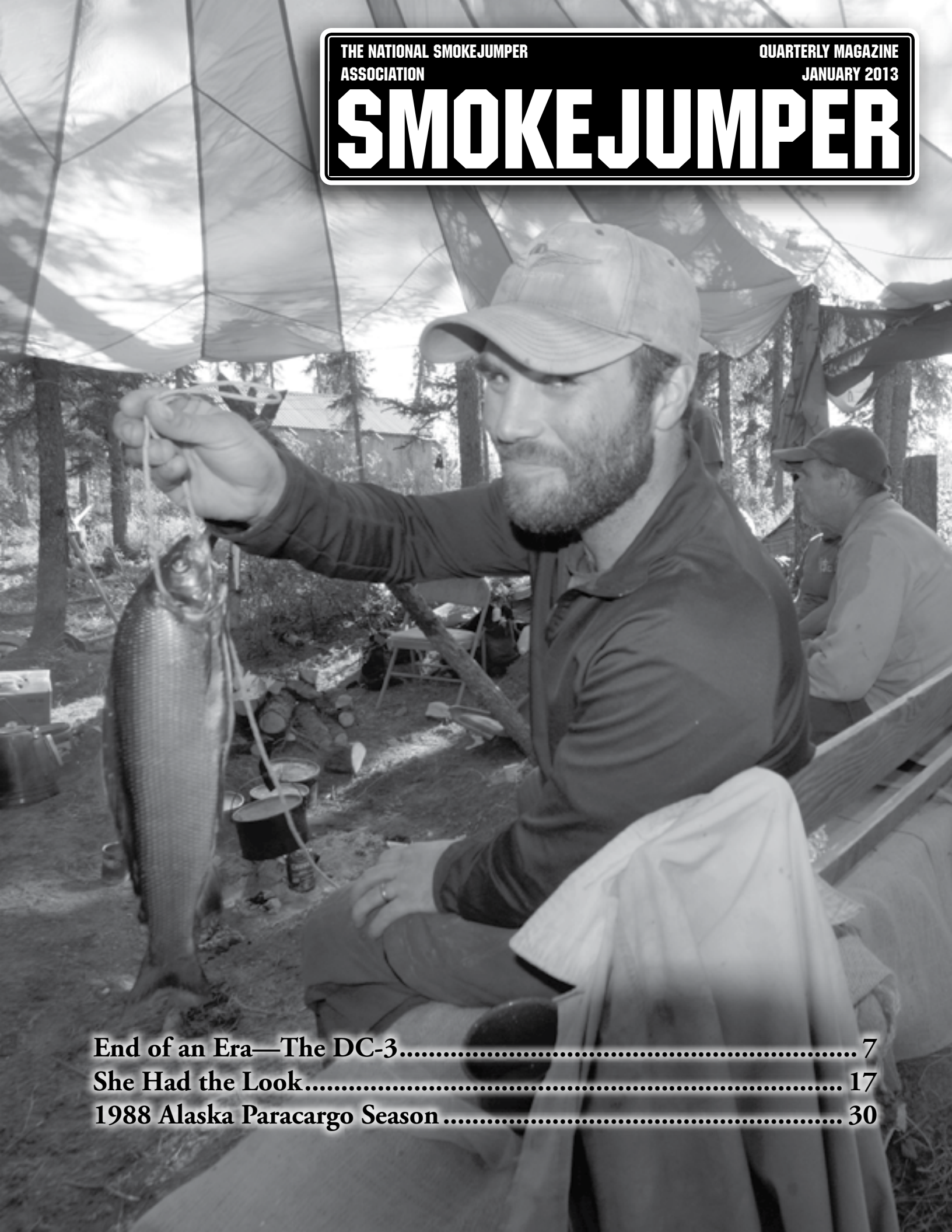
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SMOKEJUMPER



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Message from the President



by **Jim Cherry**
(Missoula '57)
PRESIDENT

IN MY HOLIDAY letter to you – which you should have received around Thanksgiving – I made reference to the old, three-legged milk stool as I wrote about the three elements necessary for building a solid, stable, financial foundation for an organization such as the National Smokejumper Association. The holiday letter addressed “annual gifts” as one leg of financial support.

Since writing that letter to you, the NSA Board of Directors has addressed another leg of the “milk stool” at our October board meeting in Seattle. We entered into a relationship with the Montana Community Foundation by establishing the National Smokejumper Association Endowment. Building an endowment can be critically important to the future stability of any nonprofit organization.

An endowment is a nonprofit’s financial cornerstone, the core of its ability to accomplish its mission. Our endowment allows us to be less dependent on unpredictable sources of revenue.

Your donation to the endowment will ensure that our programs have the steady support they need to preserve the history and lore of smokejumping, maintain and restore our nation’s forest and grassland resources, and respond to special needs of smokejumpers and their families.

Establishing an endowment is an act of great generosity and vision. Donors who decide to give to our endowment do so because they understand the importance of supporting the NSA not only during their lifetime, but for generations to come. These visionary individuals, families and organizations are building an extraordinary resource for NSA.

The MCF was created in 1988 to provide a permanent source of funding to respond to the needs of Montana’s communities as they emerge and change over time. By encouraging individuals, families, businesses and organizations to create endowment funds at the foundation, it has succeeded in building forever into Montana’s charitable future.

An endowment fund is permanent – the initial investment that creates the fund, along with the gifts that are added over the years, will always be at the community foundation to generate income to meet the future needs of the NSA.

Partnering with the MCF allows the NSA to benefit from lower investment and administrative costs resulting from economies of scale. The MCF can also help facilitate complex gifts, such as planned gifts, real estate and closely held business interests.

Planned gifts include charitable gifts such as bequests in wills and trusts, charitable trusts, charitable gift annuities, life insurance gifts, beneficiary designations, and other tax-advantaged gifts. Montana residents who give

to the NSA Endowment can also take advantage of the Montana Endowment Tax Credit, a generous Montana incentive to promote giving to endowments.

For more information on making a gift to the endow-

ment, contact the NSA at 2335 300th St., Ventura, IA 50482, or the foundation at P.O. Box 1145, Helena, MT 59624. You can also telephone them at (406) 443-8313 or visit their website at www.mtcf.org.

Montana Community Foundation – Charitable Instruments

The MCF offers a variety of giving methods tailored to your unique situation ...

- **Outright gift.** You can make a gift of cash,

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Smokejumper base abbreviations:

Anchorage.....ANC	GrangevilleGAC	Redding.....RDD
Boise.....NIFC	Idaho CityIDC	Redmond.....RAC
Cave JunctionCJ	La Grande.....LGD	West Yellowstone WYS
FairbanksFBX	McCall.....MYC	Whitehorse Yukon YXY
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stocks, bonds, real estate or other assets to the NSA at the Montana Community Foundation. Your charitable gift qualifies for tax advantages under federal law.

- **Bequest by will.** You can designate a gift or portion of your estate to the NSA at the Montana Community Foundation and, in some cases, receive a substantial reduction in federal gift and estate taxes.

- **Charitable gift annuity.** You can make a gift of cash or property to the Montana Community Foundation now, get immediate tax benefits, and ensure that you or a loved one receives fixed quarterly or annual income payments for life. Donors who take advantage of this gift instrument qualify for the Montana Endowment Tax Credit.

- **Charitable remainder trust.** You can place cash or property in a trust that pays annual income to you (or another named beneficiary) for life. After your death, the remainder of the trust transfers to the Montana Community Foundation and is placed into a charitable fund you have selected. You receive income tax benefits the year you establish your trust. This gift allows donors to take advantage of the Montana Endowment Tax Credit.

- **About the tax credit.** The Montana Endowment Tax Credit allows donors to pay less in Montana state income taxes when they give a qualifying planned gift to a Montana charitable endowment. The incentive is 40 percent of the gift's federal charitable deduction, up to a maximum \$10,000 tax credit, per year, per individual, and a credit of 20 percent of a direct gift by a qualified business, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per year.

- **Learn more.** You can run calculations for these gift instruments and read more about planned giving with the Montana Community Foundation on our website at www.mtcf.org.

- **You receive personalized service.** Each individual, family or organization we work with has unique charitable interests ... and unique financial circumstances. We help you make the most of both, so you receive the greatest return on your community investment. You can reach us by mail at P.O. Box 1145, Helena, MT 59624 or by telephone at (406) 443-8313.

The CIA, Smokejumpers And B-17s

by Fred Donner (Missoula '59)

After the Communist victory in China in 1949 and the entry of the Chinese into the Korean War in November 1950, the U.S. Government decided to open three covert operations on the edges of China in attempts to relieve pressure on the Korean front.

Smokejumpers and B-17s were involved in at least two of these operations. One specific B-17 emerged from these events to be identified with smokejumpers in three operations other than China. This is that story.

The U.S. opened a covert operation on Taiwan known as Western Enterprises, Inc., in March 1951. The mission of WEI was to monitor Chinese activity on the offshore islands held by Communist China, attack any island possible, and eventually to drop Taiwan commandoes on the mainland. Run by military and CIA officers, smokejumpers were involved in both cargo drops and training of Taiwan airborne troops.

WEI flew the first deep penetration of northwest China in March 1952 to make a commando and cargo drop to Muslim dissidents. The initial flight was made in a Civil Air Transport C-54 (DC-4) with a Missoula smokejumper kicker on board. These northwest penetrations continued for another year with the C-54 being replaced by a B-17.

Raiders of the China Coast: CIA Covert Operations during the Korean War by Frank Holober (1999) is an account of WEI by a WEI staffer. Page 207 names seven Missoula smokejumpers involved. According to Holober, "By early 1955, taps sounded for Western Enterprises Incorporated, even though many of its members lingered on for another tour or returned later, in either case wearing a different hat."

Some of the WEI smokejumpers moved on to Tibet; the Tibetan air operations are well documented. *The CIA's Secret War in Tibet* by Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison (2002) is the most definitive account often quoted in other sources.

Per Conboy and Morrison, "Between 1957 and 1960, the CIA conducted approximately 40 such drops over Tibet in a secret effort, code-named ST-BARNUM, to assist local forces in their struggle against Chinese occupation."

Another account is "Secret Mission to Tibet: The CIA's most demanding, most successful airlift," an article in *Smithsonian Air & Space*, December 1997/

January 1998. The author is Dr. William M. Leary, now deceased, a history professor who has written extensively on CIA air operations in East Asia – and won CIA awards in the process.

The first Tibet airdrop mission was in October 1957 by a B-17 taking off from then-East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. A Polish crew flew it with no Americans on board but with a smokejumper in charge of the operation. Later Tibet missions were flown by C-118s (DC-6) and eventually C-130s.

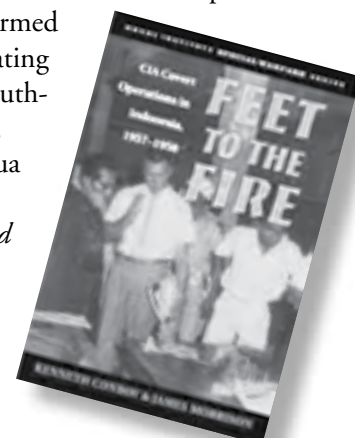
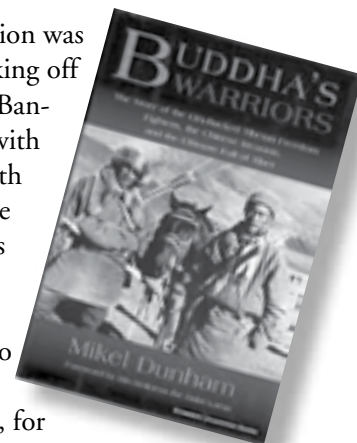
While the U.S. continued to support the Tibetan resistance into the 1970s by other means, for all practical purposes the Tibetan airdrop missions ended May 1, 1960, when the Soviets shot down the U-2 airplane piloted by Francis Gary Powers.

The index of the Conboy and Morrison book names at least 12 smokejumpers involved in Tibetan air operations. Dr. Leary's article names three smokejumpers in Tibetan air operations, one of whom "knew 12 fellow smokejumpers who joined the Tibet project: six from McCall, Idaho, and six from Missoula, Montana."

Buddha's Warriors: The Story of the CIA-Backed Tibetan Freedom Fighters, the Chinese Invasion, and the Ultimate Fall of Tibet by Mikel Dunham (2004) draws heavily on Conboy and Morrison and Dr. Leary for his description of Tibetan air ops. One smokejumper is named in the index.

The one covert anti-Chinese operation not known to have involved smokejumpers dealt with the Kuomintang (Taiwan) army elements that had escaped China into Burma. These were armed and resupplied by the U.S. operating from Thailand for strikes into southwest China. This author's friend, Richard M. Gibson, with Wenhua Chen, best tells the story in *The Secret Army: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Drug Warlords of the Golden Triangle*.

Concurrently with WEI operations, Tibetan operations, and Golden Triangle operations,



the U.S. overflow mainland China from 1951 to 1969. The crewmen, of course, were all from the Republic of China (ROC) Air Force flying under CIA supervision. The U.S. maintained plausible denial by stating it was a civil war without U.S. involvement.

The complete story is told in *The Black Bats: CIA Spy Flights Over China From Taiwan 1951-1969* by British author Chris Pocock with Clarence Fu (2010). Ten B-17s, B-26s, and P2Vs were lost in this effort; more escaped with battle damage.

According to Pocock, the U.S. retained ownership and control of the B-17s and B-26s and could move them without consulting the Taiwanese government. He goes on to mention one B-17 that was withdrawn “for use in another covert action over China to which the ROC was not privy.” This, of course, was Tibet.

Since the ROC upholds the Chinese claim to Tibet, then and now, it was essential to keep this move quiet from the Taiwanese. Pocock goes on to describe the Tibetan operation in virtually the same terms as Conboy and Morrison, noting there were only two B-17 Tibet flights before turning to C-118s and then C-130s.

However, the Pocock book introduces one particular B-17 that went on to smokejumper fame. It is not known if this was the same B-17 earlier over Tibet or not. All other B-17s having been lost, this last surviving B-17 of the Taiwan Special Mission Group flew several missions over China in 1959 and early 1960.

According to Pocock, one may have been the longest ever flown by a B-17 anywhere and anytime – 19 hours and 10 minutes – February 26-27, 1960. Obviously, extra fuel tanks had been installed.

The following paragraph is quoted verbatim from page 56 of *The Black Bats* with the specific permission of the publisher, Schiffer Publishing (www.schiffer-books.com).

“GOODBYE TO THE B-17 – We were preparing to send our last B-17 back to the US. A Chinese crew stripped the airplane of all the ELINT equipment. But after this work, someone forgot to reconnect the airspeed line to the pitot tube. During takeoff on the subsequent test flight, the airspeed indicator failed to register. But instead of flying by instinct, the Chinese pilot pushed the

throttles all the way forward – and firewalled the engines. He flew around the circuit for an emergency landing. If he didn’t make it on the first pass, he told the tower he would ditch at sea. Fortunately, a flight engineer from Lockheed was onboard and realized what the problem was. He pulled the throttles back so that a safe landing speed was achieved.”

Continuing, italicized as in original: *“(named CIA employee) interview. (The B-17 left the 34th squadron in November 1960. It was sent to the Skunk Works in 1961, where it was fitted with the ATIR jammer for another covert operation. All four engines had to be replaced. The B-17 was subsequently fitted with the Fulton Skyhook and flown in Operation Coldfeet, when it dropped and then extracted two Americans who investigated an ice station that the Soviet Union had abandoned in the Arctic. The same B-17 became a movie star when the Skyhook was used to pick up James Bond and his girlfriend at the end of the film ‘Thunderball.’)”*

And thus we have the smokejumper B-17. However, a potential additional operation loomed before the *Coldfeet* and *Thunderball* missions. The U.S. launched covert operation HAIK (pronounced Hike) in 1957-58 against the Indonesian government of President Sukarno, which it feared was getting too close to the Communist camp.

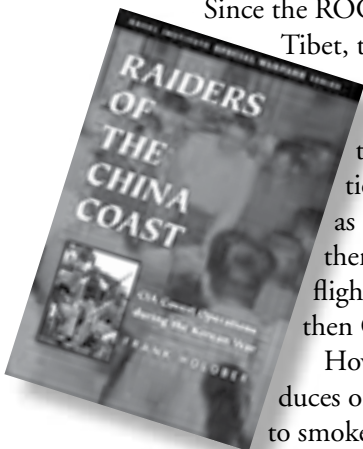
The most definitive account is *Feet to the Fire: CIA Covert Operations in Indonesia, 1957-1958* by Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison (1999), the same authors of *The CIA’s Secret War in Tibet*. In the HAIK air element were veterans of the WEI and Tibet operations, including at least two Missoula smokejumpers.

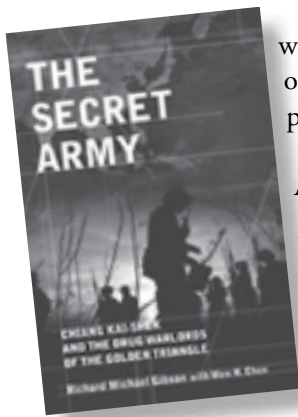
The HAIK operation proved inconclusive and ended within a year, though not before triggering another series of events that lasted four years. According to Conboy and Morrison, the CIA immediately pulled the plug on HAIK when a B-26 with an American pilot was shot down in May 1958.

But the U.S.’ Indonesian problems continued with the B-26 American pilot in an Indonesian jail. He was sentenced to death by firing squad two years later. As Conboy and Morrison state, “This execution was something the CIA wanted to avoid at all costs.”

Intermountain Aviation in Marana, Ariz., a CIA proprietary, took delivery in August 1961 of a certain B-17 with the Fulton Skyhook apparatus installed. First mission – rescue the pilot held by the Indonesians. The problem was how to get a jumpsuit, a 500-foot rope, and a balloon kit into a Jakarta prison.

Various schemes, some involving smokejumpers known to this author, were practiced and thought feasible. But this drama ended in February 1962 when U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy had a meeting





with President Sukarno about other matters but raised the pilot issue.

The pilot was released in August 1962, removing the possible need for a Skyhook rescue attempt. Sorry, guys – it would have been spectacular.

The Intermountain Ful-ton Skyhook-equipped B-17

performed “Project Coldfeet” in May

1962. The definitive account is *Project Coldfeet: Secret Mission to a Soviet Ice Station* by the aforementioned Dr. William M. Leary and Leonard A. LeSchack (1996). The *Coldfeet* story was told in the previous *Static Line* newsletter of April 1997 and more recently in the January 2010 issue of *Smokejumper*.

There was a second Intermountain Fulton Skyhook B-17 mission in 1963 to pick up the body of an American scientist who had died at an American ice station. It is recounted in the January 2011 issue of *Smokejumper*.

The prime mover of *Coldfeet* was LeSchack, a friend of this author. The January 2010 account in *Smokejumper* stated LeSchack was a speaker of Russian and the January 2011 account in *Smokejumper* stated he was a U.S. Air Force officer. He did not speak Russian nor was he an Air Force officer.

LeSchack was a U.S. Navy Reserve intelligence officer, lieutenant junior grade, on active duty with a background in Arctic and Antarctic matters when he learned that the Soviets had abandoned an ice station that they thought was going to break up beneath them. The ice did break but not directly under the station, leaving it afloat on a smaller piece.

He conceived the idea of the U.S. Government retrieving material from the abandoned station. This mere reservist, wearing the single silver bar of a lieutenant junior grade, energetically pushed his plan upwards through a reluctant Navy bureaucracy to finally win the endorsement of the chief of naval operations.

The Navy abandoned an earlier plan to do the mission with Navy aircraft and turned to the CIA. LeSchack underwent parachute training with Navy parachute riggers. The *Coldfeet* B-17 parachuted LeSchack and a Russian-speaking, jump-qualified U.S. Air Force officer on to the empty Soviet station May 28, 1962, with instructions to sort out important materials and package them for Skyhook retrieval.

The B-17 picked up the prepared cargo and the two heroes five days later. Five smokejumpers assigned to operate the Skyhook apparatus were in the large B-17

crew for the 1962 *Coldfeet* mission. The 1963 Skyhook Arctic mission to pick up the dead American scientist had a crew of eight, including four smokejumpers.

Interestingly enough, the *Project Coldfeet* book also contains a description of the HAIK operation in Indonesia. Following that is an account of smokejumper involvement in airdrops over Cuba in late 1960 that preceded the Bay of Pigs by months and smokejumper involvement during the 1961 Bay of Pigs event itself.

Then the book mentions smokejumpers in the formation of Intermountain Aviation before describing the actual Arctic operations in 1962 and 1963.

And now to James Bond and *Thunderball*. The movie released in late 1965 was based on a 1961 novel. Considerable legal wrangling occurred in the transition from book to film, according to Wikipedia.

The account of **Tony Beltran** (IDC-69) in the April 2011 issue of *Smokejumper* is a classic on several counts. Two pilots – one a smokejumper – and four more smokejumpers made up the crew.

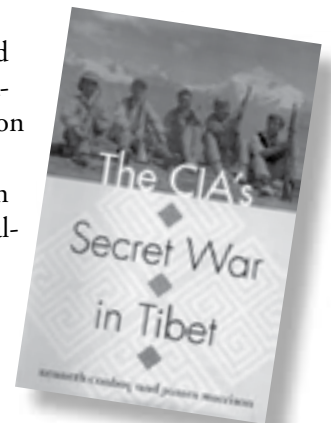
First, there is no other known public account of the circumstances surrounding the B-17 Skyhook “rescue” of James Bond and his girlfriend from the ocean at the end of the film. Second, that this B-17 had its second major in-flight emergency would not pass muster for a Grade B novel.

And third is that Tony’s humor and wit is well worth the price of admission. If this author could write as well as Tony, he would be rich instead of good-looking.

Thunderball was not the last appearance of the Fulton Skyhook in a movie. According to Wikipedia, a Navy P2V Skyhook appeared in the 1968 John Wayne movie, *Green Berets*. The Navy was very active in early Skyhook trials. As described in *Brave Men, Dark Waters: The Untold Story of the Navy SEALs* by Orr Kelly (1993), the Navy made more than 100 Skyhook pick-ups in the early 1960s.

Unfortunately a sailor was killed in a Skyhook accident on one occasion. Kelly also states that the Fulton Skyhook was once considered in a plan to rescue the Dalai Lama from Tibet, a mission that never materialized. Again, that would have been spectacular.

Eventually the Air Force mounted the Fulton Skyhook on C-130 special mission aircraft, but this system was abandoned by the Air Force in 1996 due to the development of long-range helicopters with air refueling capability. Apparently no Skyhook-equipped aircraft exist today.



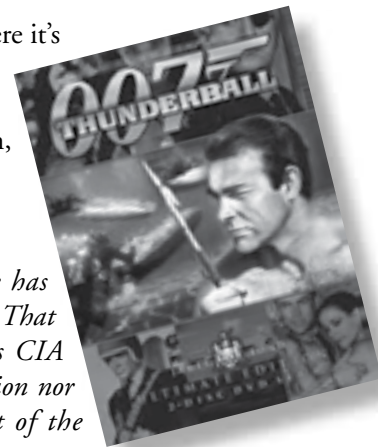
And where is the Fulton Skyhook B-17 today? For a photo of it, perform a Google search of “B-17G at Evergreen Museum.” Then Google “Evergreen’s Mystery Lady” for some history of this plane, including mention of Taiwan operations with a picture on Taiwan.

You will learn that this plane flew as a forest fire air tanker from 1975 to 1985. It was then restored to World War II combat configuration – ironic since this plane had never flown in World War II. It flew at air shows from 1990 to 2001 until it was grounded for suspicion of structural fatigue.

And lastly, according to the same account by its present owner, Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum

in McMinnville, Ore. where it’s on display, its tail number has changed many times, the original now unknown, in attempts to mask its amazing history. 🗿

Editor’s note: This article has been reviewed by the CIA. That review neither constitutes CIA authentication of information nor implies CIA endorsement of the author’s views.



End Of An Era-The DC-3

by Marc Anderson (Pilot)

The Douglas DC-3 has served our country faithfully since 1935. The DC-3 served the U.S. military through World War II, the Korean Conflict and Vietnam. Dwight Eisenhower credited it as one of the four weapons that helped win World War II. This remarkable aircraft remained in federal service continually until 1990.

From 1935 on, the “Doug” has flown for numerous airlines all over the world. Freight operators and foreign governments continue operating them. It is recognized and revered today as probably the most versatile, reliable, rugged and economical aircraft of its type ever built. This feat will never be repeated.

The following narrative relates the last time the standard DC-3 went to work for the U.S. Government. The mission was wildland fire suppression for the U.S. Forest Service smokejumpers. It’s a true story. I know; I was on that flight.

Ernest K. Ganns’ book *Fate Is the Hunter* examines the reason some pilots’ lives are ended and some spared when they both commit almost-identical errors. He concludes it may very well be fate. During this flight, fate took over and allowed me and others to continue with our lives and careers.

It was one of those mornings that people who live in the mountains savor. Summer not quite over but change is in the air; crisp, cool mornings and when the sun comes up, folks begin to stir slowly and stretch in the comforting warmth.

At the smokejumper base at McCall, Idaho, Sept. 27, 1990, I’m doing the preflight on “my” aircraft, N146Z, one of the only two remaining DC-3s in federal service. Since the 1930s, DC-3s have served our

government in almost immeasurable ways. It is only fitting that these last two are still working in support of Forest Service wildland fire suppression.

This is the end of their last year, though, and as you’ll see, N146Z managed to end her career by saving the lives of her crew and smokejumpers.

The season of 1990 was what we might have called normal. It started for me in about April and continued through the summer with little to distinguish it from most other summers. Yeah, we had our share of fires, trips around the west, breakdowns, and frustration with the bureaucracy and moments of fear or apprehension over circumstances over which we humans have little control.

Aerial firefighting was, and is, a complex business with more than its share of peril. My job was the easy one; the jumpers did the work. Once we delivered them to the fire, dropped them and sent their cargo out, I got to go back to base. They had to work long hours, sometimes all night and more, digging fire line with hand tools and often facing a long packout back to civilization.

We had two small jumper fires that morning and by mid-afternoon, we all thought we might get off at 6 o’clock. Fall was in the air and our thoughts were on the end of the season. That wasn’t to be the case.

The siren went off again about 3 o’clock. While the jumpers suited up, Dan Jarvis and I got the Doug ready. We were loaded and off the ground in about 10 minutes and turned north toward the Main Salmon River. In 30 minutes we’re circling a single smoke on a ridge overlooking the Main Salmon.

Our spotters, Neal “Hurricane” Davis (MYC-69)

and **Dan Felt** (MYC-77), briefed two jumpers and soon they were in the air. Both jumpers, “**Desert Pete**” **Amell** (MYC-71) and **Rich Nieto** (MYC-87) ended up in some trees, but once safely on the ground, we dropped their paracargo and head toward fire number 2.

This fire is in a side drainage of the Main Salmon. I see a small smoke in the bottom of a steep drainage; our maps tell us it’s Corduroy Creek. The fire was only burning slowly, but it is way down in the bottom of this steep canyon with just a small narrow clearing for the jumpers.

As the spotters briefed the jumpers, Jarvis and I were already wondering about just how in the heck we’re going to get down in there to drop the cargo. Jump spot selected; a couple of passes with drift streamers and “jumpers away.”

Larry “Outlaw” Wilson (MYC-84) and **Scott Anderson** (MYC-84) were first out the door. For some reason, Outlaw landed about 120 feet up in a huge tree. In this business veteran jumpers and spotters sometime make small mistakes. (I have even *heard* that occasionally pilots will make a mistake and put paracargo in a tree, but that’s a hard one to believe.) We would have fun teasing Outlaw about this one.

We put out the last jumpers, **Mitch Kearns** (GAC-89) and **John “Stealth” Davis** (GAC-88), both from Grangeville. Three jumpers were on the ground and Outlaw was almost out of the tree across the canyon. It was time for Dan and me to go to work.

The air was pretty good and the escape out the drainage mouth was fine, so it was just a matter of starting way up top and configuring the aircraft for a long, downhill run to a small, rocky slide. This was where we all figured was the best place to put the paracargo; at least it wouldn’t get hung up in trees.

Over the top of the creek just above tree top, flaps to and gear down. Now work really hard to keep the speed from building and keep the Pratt and Whitney radials operating “over square.”

Radial engines had a peculiarly bad habit of coming apart if the pilot didn’t maintain this “over square” condition. That is, keep the manifold pressure higher than the prop revolutions per minute at all times until it was necessary to land. On a run like this, it could be very difficult.

On our first cargo run it all came together, and we got to the drop spot on speed and at about 150 feet over the rocks. The canyon walls were a little close and intimidating, but it was cargo away and back to do it again. Out the mouth of the canyon and we began a slow, laborious climb back over a thousand feet to do it again.



*Marc Anderson and 46Z at Jackson, Wyoming, about 1988.
(Courtesy M. Anderson)*

Gear up, flaps up and keep a close eye on temps and pressures. Sometimes we would have to level out a bit to allow the cylinder head and oil temps to come down. We do this a couple of more times and it should be over unless the jumpers need anything else – extra water, a chain saw or anything we had on the plane.

No, Outlaw said. They had all they needed and we were cleared to head back to McCall. Nice piece of work.

We landed at McCall and taxied to the ramp. While the engines clattered to a halt, the loudspeaker came to life: “Cap’n Andy, come to dispatch – we have a trip to Grangeville for you.” So much for getting off early.

Walking by the left engine, I saw oil that appeared to be coming out of the breather and streaking back on the cowling. Now, oil leaks on the Doug were common but this was a little strange, so I yell to Dan to check the oil.

Breather oil could be indicative of overfilling or maybe a cracked ring. Up in dispatch, I got the flight sheet and then went back down to the plane. Dan, who besides being a great pilot and a certified aircraft mechanic, said oil level is fine and wiped the engine so we could keep an eye on it.

We were just about to start engines when the loudspeaker came to life again: “Cancel the trip. Shut her down for the evening.”

We taxied the old girl over to her spot and when we shut her down, there was more oil on the cowl. Neither Dan nor I was too concerned, but we decided to come on early the next morning, clean her well and flight-test her.

The morning of Sept. 28 is bright, cool, crisp and beautiful. Running up 46Z, she never seemed smoother and all power checks were normal. The takeoff into

the cool morning air with a lightly loaded aircraft was a delight. We were more accustomed to ratty air in the afternoon loaded to gross weight.

All was so well this morning that I said to Dan: “Shoot, she’s running too good, I won’t waste time flying around. We’ll just stay in the pattern and land.”

After shutdown, there was more oil on the cowl. *Hmmm, dammit – we must have a cracked ring or something. I’ll call dispatch and take her out of service. Then I’ll call Stan in Ogden.*

The jumpers and pilots called Stan “the wizard.” He was largely responsible for keeping these aircraft in the air and was the force to finally get them converted to turbine engines. I’d see if he wants us to ferry her down there to get it fixed. No big deal.

While I’m on the phone, Dan got a ladder and is poking around in the front of the engine. While I’m talking to dispatch, a visibly shaken Dan came in and says, “You ain’t gonna believe this,” and held out a handful of sheared bolts.

“These are the ones that hold the nose case on,” he said. “There are only four left in place!”

What? The nose case is the front of the radial engine to which the prop and its gearing are attached. There are dozens of these super-strength bolts that hold it in place. If the nose case had come loose, it would’ve been catastrophic. If the prop and case did not come through the fuselage or chop off the tail, it still would’ve caused a huge shift in balance and start a massive fire. None of the options would have held out much hope for all occupants.

I, and most others, think that the engine had only minutes left before it would let go.

So, if Outlaw wanted more paracargo, if the trip to Grangeville had not been canceled, if our test flight had lasted a few more minutes, if we had tried to ferry

to Ogden, or Dan had not been curious ... my fate, and that of the others, would have been different.

To this day, Bryant, Davis, Felt and I each have one of those sheared bolts. I carry mine sometimes as a reminder of that one day things went very, very well for all of us.

Like some old pilot once said, “Trust God and Pratt & Whitney.”

Five days later, the central Idaho Mountains received their first snow. Fire season 1990 was over.

After this incident N146Z was repaired and sent to Basler Turbo Conversions and refitted with turbine engines. She started the 1991 fire season as a DC-3TP and with a new number, N115Z. The second Forest Service Doug, N100Z, was also converted and became N142Z. I continued to fly both until my retirement in 2003. As of this writing, they are still in service with the USFS.

The Marshal Mountain Fire at Corduroy Creek was the end of a noble career for N146Z. It was certainly the last mission flown by a “round engine” DC-3 for the Forest Service and may very well have been the last “working” mission flown by a DC-3 in federal service. 🍂

Marc Anderson began a 23-year stint ferrying smokejumpers and their equipment to fires in 1983, based in McCall. That period included wildland fire suppression as he flew DC-3s, Twin Otters, Beech 99s and a turbine DC-3. He retired in 2006. Anderson began his flying career in the late 1960s on the GI Bill, getting his first job as a power line patrol in Florida; next came a job as fire patrol for the Florida Division of Forestry. He moved west in the 1970s and spent time flying charter aircraft, retardant bombers and Yellowstone National Park sightseeing trips. Anderson also had a brief employment with the legendary Johnson’s Flying Service before Evergreen Air acquired that company.



N146Z and N100Z after refitting with turbine engines March 2009. Now numbered N115Z and N142Z. (Courtesy Doug Houston)

THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE THE FENCE



by **Chris Sorensen**
(Associate)

FOR SOME TIME we've been hearing rumors about a memo that states all fires in wilderness are to be fought aggressively. While we have been unsuccessful in locating a copy of the memo, apparently the memo does exist. In midsummer various media outlets reported on the existence of the memo. If you have a copy, send it to me or tell me where I can find it.

A tip of the hard hat to **Ben Oakleaf** (NIFC-05). Ben was one of the winners of a contest organized by the Obama re-election campaign in which the prize was dinner with President and Mrs. Obama at a Washington, D.C., area restaurant. The two other contest winners were a professor from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and an assistant high school principal from Florida.

Ben's guest for the evening was his mother, a retired teacher. The president stated: "I'm glad we've got at least one firefighter to mix things up." We hope Ben

got at least a couple of minutes to explain what smokejumpers do and how important their role is to the president.

Forest Service employees with the Rocky Mountain Research Station have completed the eighth air tanker study since 1996. One of the roles of management is to hire and manage consultants. But you have to be able to tell the consultants what your goal is, and when the project is completed, you have to have the ability to interpret the data.

According to the University of North Carolina, there are Seven Deadly Sins of data analysis: indifference; procrastination; refusal to use what is available; analysis Paralysis; being a lone ranger; failure to effectively utilize resources; and worshipping at the altar of technology.

While the article from which I drew this is on the subject of No Child Left behind, it's not a stretch to apply most of these principles to the air-tanker fiasco. Let's form a committee and then we'll hire a consultant to study the studies and write another report.

Author Jerry Pournelle, whose "Pournelle's Law" applies to any bureaucracy, states the people devoted to the benefit of the bureaucracy itself always get in control, and those dedicated to the goals the bureaucracy is supposed to accomplish have less and less influence, and sometimes are eliminated entirely.

We can only speculate how the year would have gone with-

out the help of the Canadians – especially the Convair 580 air tankers, which operated in eastern Montana much of the summer.

Another tip of the hard hat to the anonymous RAC booster who was reading a copy of Smokejumper magazine when I walked by during a visit to the Missoula base in August. I pointed to the magazine and said, "That's a good magazine you're reading there!" He just looked up and grinned ...

I am always impressed when I visit the bases. Everyone is always busy. I never see anyone standing around holding a coffee cup or wandering. Everything is always spotless, even when it's busy. Every smokejumper is always pleasant and highly professional.

I was at Montana State University in October and heard a presentation by the state climatologist. We are in an El Niño year, but he refreshingly said, "We have no idea what kind of winter we are going to have." If the winter is dry in the West, we can only speculate about what kind of fire year 2013 is going to be.

As always, work and play safely, and if you are inclined, say a prayer for those who went out in 2012 and didn't come back.

Speed-Range-Payload. Aggressive initial attack! 🍌

You can reach Chris Sorensen at cmsorensen59@gmail.com. Please put "NSA" or "Smokejumper" in the subject line.

Development Of The Military Aviation Firefighting Systems

by Jim Hickman (Missoula '52)

Little snow during the winter, even less spring rain, record-breaking heat, and strong winds all came together in the West to create the “perfect” fire season of 2012. This, in turn, created the need for fire suppression resources far in excess of what was immediately available, particularly in the area of civilian and U.S. Forest Service retardant dropping aircraft.

Consequently, the Air Force and Air National Guard C-130 MAFFS Units were activated. The development of the Military Aviation Fire Fighting Systems (MAFFS) came about some 40 years ago (1970-73) while I was assigned to the Washington Office of the USFS.

The history of the program is not well known. As a result, I'd like to share some personal knowledge about the MAFFS program, without specific dates, since most of those have been lost to my memory over the years.

My job as staff was in the Fire and Aviation Division, Equipment Development, working for an assistant director, who was also the national aviation officer. We were involved with any equipment directly related to fire management and suppression, including aircraft, parachute canopies, retardant equipment, and other items.

I had an appointment at some time in 1971-72 with Mr. Arnold, a personable gentleman from Food Machinery Corporation (FMC). He had seen some news releases of fire retardant drops on wildfires.

Arnold was wondering if there might be some method of adapting the military equipment used for dispersing Agent Orange to delivering fire retardant on wildfires. FMC manufactured the equipment for military use, and was very anxious to convert it to some peaceful, civilian use.

This first discussion was followed by many others. It appeared the Agent Orange tanks, designed to fit in the cargo bay of C-130 aircraft, would be easy to configure for use with retardant.

I traveled to an FMC manufacturing facility in San Jose, Calif., to examine the tanks and other equipment. We talked to their engineers, our pilots, and commercial retardant aircraft pilots about tank capacities, liquid viscosity, air speed, drop altitudes, and other parameters considered in dropping retardant.

These early discussions indicated that the adaptation of the FMC equipment to retardant drops was promis-

ing. As a result, the Air Force was contacted for discussions regarding use of the C-130 cargo plane.

Several months and many reports later, we convened a meeting at the Pentagon to present a briefing on what had become known as the MAFFS Project. I was there, representing the Forest Service, along with the national director of Aviation and Fire Management, national aviation officer (assistant director and my direct supervisor), another assistant director from Fire Management, and a deputy chief of National Forest Systems.

Arnold and several corporate executives represented FMC. The Air Force had a general, three colonels, and a couple of high-level civilians. The meeting included sufficient seniority to make a decision to proceed with or to cancel the project.

Arnold presented the basic idea for the plan, emphasizing the conversion of equipment from Agent Orange use to fire retardant use. I presented the Forest Service concept for use of retardant in wildfire suppression, with major emphasis on protection of communities and valuable resources, and continued with the location of tanker bases then in use and the potential use of C-130s in several locations, especially in the Western states.

Those in attendance asked many questions and shared valuable information, and after about three hours the senior members of each agency and FMC agreed to continue and to expedite the entire program. Details were worked out on final acceptance of equipment, procedures, and guidelines and how to establish the necessary liaison between agencies.

I left the meeting anticipating how much was left to do, and with a great amount of excitement and personal satisfaction. The next morning, I was informed the entire program had been reassigned to the assistant director from Fire Management, who was present at the meeting; he was not my supervisor.

Despite that unexpected change, I continued to participate in retardant drop evaluations at the Marana Training Center. It was a treat to ride on the lowered ramp of a C-130, as it made low-level flights over the desert, and watch the retardant as it roared out.

There were bugs to be worked out. For example, on one flight, when I was not aboard, a malfunction reportedly allowed retardant to fly back into the cargo bay, coating the inside of the aircraft almost to the cockpit.

The current configuration of the aircraft and equipment is typically to carry a crew of six, drop 3,000 gallons of water or fire retardant and cover an area one-quarter mile long and 100 yards wide. They can be refilled in 12 minutes.

The final task, which did not involve equipment development, was to work out all the legal requirements for the agencies involved. Although 40 years have passed and I do not remember when the final agreement was signed, or even when we used the first C-130s on an actual fire

deployment, the program has continued to this day with great success. I have fond memories of being involved in the early development.

This year we witnessed the unfortunate loss of the first MAFFS C-130 in the 40-year history of the program. The aircraft was deployed to the White Draw Fire in South Dakota and was one of eight MAFFS aircraft that were all deployed at the same time. There were casualties among the crew, and our thoughts and prayers go to those injured or killed and to their families. †

My First Jump And A Close Call With A Propeller

by Gary M. Watts (McCall '64)

Most smokejumpers make their first parachute jump after weeks of training and preparation to condition their bodies and minds and to instruct them in proven techniques, such as the Allen Roll and how to steer a parachute. They also have the proper equipment – namely, helmets fitted with facial protection screens, nylon jump suits and White brand boots.

Not me. I had none of these amenities on my first parachute jump.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

During my senior year in high school, I had applied to the United States Air Force Academy. I had taken the requisite College Board examinations and spent two days at Hill Air Force Base in Ogden, Utah, undergoing a battery of rigorous physical testing and interviews.

I was confident that I had performed fairly well on all the tests and was later informed by the academy that I was first alternate and had an outstanding chance of being asked to join the Class of '65 and report at the beginning of the summer.

As my high school graduation neared and my waiting by the mailbox proved fruitless, I started to worry, and my certifiable anal retentive mind began to break down my future into contingency plans.

Plan A was, of course, to go to Colorado Springs with the USAFA Class of '65. Plan B was to spend the summer playing baseball, golf, going fishing and being ready to leave on a moment's notice in case one of the cadets dropped out, got sick, or seriously injured himself.

Plan C was to do the above leisurely activities and,

if not chosen by the academy by September, register for the University of Utah's fall quarter. I had already applied and been accepted.

About two weeks before graduation my best-laid plans took a fatal blow when a letter from the Air Force Academy arrived telling me that, "... upon review of your records, we have determined that you are not physically qualified for acceptance into the United States Air Force Academy due to high frequency hearing loss."

Well, hell!

Seemed to me they could have figured that out about six months earlier. (I later was a Navy fighter pilot for 20 years and never flunked a flight physical, so, naturally, I've always looked upon the Air Force with a jaundiced eye.)

Sour grapes aside, we return to the summer of '61: my plans are in disarray and now I've got to think about getting a job to pay for tuition and books and entertainment for the upcoming fall quarter.

My dad, God bless him – never one to let me enjoy myself when I could be working – got me a job with the Wasatch National Forest, spraying a lodge pole pine beetle infestation in the Uinta Mountains, starting the Monday after graduation.

So much for baseball and golf and fishing.

Upon arrival at the bug camp in the high Uintas, I ran into a friend I knew in high school, Dee Rasband, a short stocky, freckled redhead with a perpetual grin. Dee was the spitting image (except for the beard, brogue and ax) of Gimli the Dwarf from Lord of the Rings.

In fact, after the movie I had to sit through the



Gary Watts (MYC-64), granddaughter Brianna (R) and daughter, Heather (L). (Courtesy G. Watts)

credits to convince myself Dee hadn't played Gimli.

So, being friends among a large group of possibly hostile strangers, Dee and I stuck together, a partnership that would last for two summers.

Our first day on the job was a sort of orientation and administrative check-in: we were given hard hats, filled out forms, received a lecture on procedures and rules, and got our bunk assignments and bedding. Near the end of the day, we were lined up, military style, and introduced to our camp leaders. Then we were asked if any of us wanted to volunteer for night duty on the burning crew.

Dee and I looked at each other, apparently sharing the same thought – that night shift might be a little rough on our sleep patterns, but burning slash piles sounded a hell of a lot better than spraying toxic chemicals into the air and have them come back down in your face. We smiled and simultaneously raised our hands to volunteer.

Thus began my Forest Service firefighting career.

That summer, Dee and I became friends with an older guy, who lived in the same Quonset hut as we did. I don't remember his name – it has been more than 50 years now – but for continuity purposes, I'm going to call him Bill.

Bill was kind of a free spirit, an adventurer and soldier of fortune. He was a very friendly guy, always upbeat and smiling. Dee and I took to him right away, and it wasn't long before he had taken us under his wing.

One day the three of us were discussing our plans for the upcoming weekend, and Bill asked us if we'd ever jumped out of an airplane.

That brought a loud laugh from both of us. I allowed as how the most exciting thing I'd experienced in my young life so far was to cop a feel in a drive-in movie. Dee confessed that was more excitement than he'd ever had.

Bill said it would be his treat. He showed us his pilot's license and offered to rent the plane and provide the parachutes. All we had to do was show up.

Dee was a bit hesitant at first, but a lot of arm-twisting and a few death threats finally brought him around.

It was decided: we'd meet at the Provo, Utah, airport next Sunday morning and experience our first parachute jump.

Dee and I were both going home to Salt Lake City for the weekend, and we decided to travel together on Sunday to Provo, then drive back to bug camp after the jump.

I couldn't wait; the thought of jumping out of an airplane had me so excited it was hard to sleep at night.

Sunday morning dawned warm and cloudless, a perfect day for my first parachute jump. That is, until I picked up Dee; he had done some serious reconsidering about jumping out of a perfectly good airplane and was on the verge of backing out. He reminded me of the old Al Capp comic-strip character, Joe Bflspk, a sorry-looking guy who had a perpetual black rain cloud hanging over his head.

All the way from Salt Lake to Provo, Dee tried to rationalize his way out of what, up to now, would be the most exciting event of his life. I tried to bolster his confidence, but his ever-present grin was nowhere to be seen and his black cloud was beginning to rub off on me. By the time we reached Provo, I had pretty much decided that the whole plan was crazier than my cousin Daryll.

As we pulled into the airport, I spotted Bill, with a big grin on his face, coming over to greet us. My confidence began to slowly return. Dee ... not so much.

Bill began his ground school, so to speak, by introducing us to our equipment: The jump plane was

a high-wing (Cessna 140, I think), single-engine with tricycle landing gear, right-hand door removed, and all seats but the pilot's removed.

The main parachutes consisted of one static-line rig and one rip cord-actuated setup. Two reserve chutes and two pairs of ski goggles topped off the equipment list.

Physical training consisted of a few jumps off of a milk crate with Bill instructing us on the finer points of the military PLF (parachute landing fall, which was really just a half-assed Allen roll), then practicing climbing out of the airplane and onto a step on the right, main landing gear strut and jumping off.

"One last thing," Bill said. "Who's going first and who's jumping the free fall?"

Dee looked at me with big basset hound eyes. I volunteered for both. I figured, "In for a penny, in for a pound."

Dee and I climbed into the parachutes, and Bill went over the procedures again, adding some precautions as he thought of them, such as, "Don't open the parachute in the airplane. You could kill us all!" and "If your chute doesn't open, pull the D-ring on your reserve chute – you'll have to look down at it or you probably won't be able to find it."

He looked me in the eye and said, "Don't forget – count to three and pull the rip cord."

I can't tell you how much confidence these last-minute revelations were instilling in me.

As we taxied out for takeoff, I could tell Dee's black cloud was growing; he sat on the floor of the airplane, refusing to make eye contact with me, an expression of utter doom on his face. I was beginning to feel a black cloud forming above my head.

I knew that if I chickened out and didn't jump first, Dee would use it as an excuse not to jump. If I did jump first, I wouldn't be there to give Dee some much-needed encouragement. My guess was that he was just going along for the ride.

Perhaps he had the right idea; this shoestring operation was beginning to cause me some apprehension.

Then we lifted off.

This was only the third time I'd ever been up in an airplane in my life; the first, that I won as a paper boy selling subscriptions, was a circuit around the Salt Lake Valley in a DC-3. The second was another trip around the Salt Lake area with my uncle in his Cessna 172.

The juices began to flow from my endocrine system as the little plane climbed to altitude. By the time we reached our jump altitude, my body was so saturated with testosterone and adrenaline that I was ready to take on Rocky Marciano.

To hell with Dee. He wants to chicken out – fine.

Bill gave me a signal and I moved out on the plane's strut and got ready to jump. I was so pumped I didn't even notice the wind blast.

Holy cow! What a view!

Bill pulled the throttle back to idle, our pre-arranged signal that it was time for me to jump.

I launched myself into the void. For the first time (of many) in my life, my mind went into that eerie mode where everything seems to happen in slow motion.

One potato ...

Arms and legs extended, knees bent.

I'm stable!

... two potato ...

Oh, my God! I'm flying!

... three potato ...

I'm supposed to pull the rip cord now, but this free fall is too cool!

... four potato ...

Just a little longer!

... five potato ...

WOOHOO!

... six potato ...

What if I try some maneuvers, like a back flip or something?

... seven potato ...

I don't think so. The cars down there are starting to look a little bigger.

... eight potato ...

Let's see ... find the rip cord ...nope, that's the reserve chute. Where is that damned ... ?

... nine potato ...

There it is! Yank! Look at it! Don't drop it – that will cost you \$25!

... ten potato.

WHAM!

Holy cow! Chute's open. I'm just floating. This is way too cool. Back to normal time.

I saw that I was right over the airport. Below, I could see a house-sized building that I guessed was the Provo Airport administration building. It was surrounded by a green lawn and enclosed by a chain-link fence. A willow tree provided shade for the building. This was all set out in the center of the tarmac, with two light, twin-engine aircraft parked within 10 feet of the fence.

Oh, well, I'm still high. I'll probably drift away from it.

It was quiet, a kind of a dreamy, eerie floating serenity. I was really enjoying it.

Looking down again, I could see the administration building between my boots; it was growing larger and my feeling of euphoria was starting to go away.

I looked up at the parachute risers to see if there was some way of guiding the stupid thing. Nope. Bill hadn't mentioned anything about a steerable parachute.

I was heading, it appeared, straight for one of the airplanes.

I realized I was oscillating back and forth like a pendulum when I swung over the willow tree. I was preparing to reach out and grab its branches when I swung back toward the airplane.

I lifted my legs to a horizontal position to avoid hitting the fence and landed unceremoniously on the tarmac, on my butt, about halfway between the fence and the light twin's starboard propeller.

Lying on my back under the shadow of the airplane, I watched my parachute settle into the branches of the willow tree in the yard of the Provo, Utah, administration building.

I sat up and felt myself all over for damages; nothing but a sore butt and a red face.

To add insult to injury, a young boy ran up to me, looked me over carefully and said, "Did you land on your face, mister?"

Eventually, Dee rushed up and helped me get the parachute out of the tree. He had jumped and while descending saw me land, he thought, on an airplane.

Shortly thereafter, Bill taxied up in the jump plane and after checking me, the airplane and fence over for damage, proceeded to ream me a new ass—for delaying my chute opening for way too long, which was, obviously, the reason I was so far off-target and so close to the admin building.

He was extremely relieved there were no injuries and no damage. I suspect he had liability issues on his mind.

All the way on our drive up to the Uinta Mountains, Dee wouldn't shut up about how neat the parachute jump was. I had to agree with him about that, but I pretty much kept it to myself, bummed out as I was about the thorough ass-reaming I'd received from Bill and my near-miss of a three-bladed prop, which, I guess, would have been an ass-reaming of another sort.

Several days later Dee and I, and the rest of the night burning crew, were called out on our first forest fire, near Mirror Lake in the "High Uintas." 🍄

**SUMMARY
STATEMENT OF CONDITION
June 30, 2012
National Smokejumper Association**

ASSETS

Checking and Savings\$461,634.24
Investments 184,594.10

Total Assets \$646,228.34

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Liabilities

Multiyear Prepaid Dues..... \$ 60,617.75
Total Liabilities..... 60,617.75

Equity

Unrealized Investment Gain 20,561.52
Jukkala/McBride Scholarships 17,812.25
Good Samaritan Fund..... 25,740.00
Life Membership Endowment..... 317,296.00
Trail Maintenance 32,874.25
Unrestricted Net Assets 21,681.34
Net Income 149,645.23
Total Equity 585,610.59

Total Liabilities and Equity \$646,228.34



SOUNDING OFF from the Editor



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

Here's An Opportunity You Can't Refuse!

AFTER MANY YEARS of battle with county government and the greatest of odds, the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum is open. Featuring the oldest original Smokejumper buildings in the U.S., the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum is open for business from March 15 to November 15.

Under the leadership of **Gary Buck** (CJ-66) and **Roger Brandt** (Associate), historic buildings dating back to the administration building (1936) and parachute loft (1949) have been restored and saved from destruction.

Oregon Dept. of Transportation signs noting "Smokejumper Museum" have been installed 400 feet before the entrance either way on Hwy 199 (Redwood Hwy).

The messhall has been turned into a visitor's center featuring historic smokejumper photos going back into the early days of the base, which started operations in 1943. From there the visitor can view the 1936 (CCC era) admin. office, restored right down to matching color paint and the old eight-pane windows. A short walk takes you to the 1949 parachute loft where jump suits hang on the rack and parachutes are laid out on the rigging tables. The lawns are green and the bathhouse upgraded and clean. A great stop for the tourists that drive the Redwood Highway.

All of this is the result of thousands of hours put in by volunteer work groups each summer and throughout the year. Given the obstacles faced, it is almost a miracle that this bit of history has been preserved for current generations to see.

Being involved in NSA and base projects for many years, I see the saving and renovation of the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base as being one of the major accomplishments of a group of jumpers and friends. Where else will people get a better feel, the taste of smokejumping?

In 1943 Missoula was in operation and Cave Junction and McCall came into existence. Why such an out-of-the-way place as Cave Junction?

Early in the morning of September 9, 1942, Flying Officer Nobuo Fujita and Flight



Observer Shoji Okuda took off from the deck of the submarine I-25 off the Oregon Coast. Their E-14-Y Yokosuka carried two 170-pound incendiary bombs. They dropped the first on Wheeler Ridge, about eight miles east of Brookings. The second one was dropped a few miles away, and Nobuo quickly headed back to the I-25, which had re-surfaced. The first bomb started a very small fire (50-75 feet across) in the very damp forest, and no trace of the second bomb has ever been found.

Did the threat of firebombs in some of the biggest timber country in the US result in a smokejumper base being placed at Cave Junction? Seems like a pretty reasonable theory.

My wife, K.G., and I hosted for a week in September. There were only about 4-5 visitors a day, but it was a start. Besides hosting we did cleanup and helped make the place look good. There is a residence with kitchen and bedroom in the back of the old messhall, now turned into the "Visitor's Center."

We met some interesting people during the week. There was a young couple from Australia who actually knew what a smokejumper was. We had a Canadian couple making a tour of the U.S. Every now and then you get a person who is not so enjoyable. There was a 40+, overweight, volunteer fireman who kept interrupting and adding bits

and pieces. He came to getting the axe handle.

It was ten minutes to five one evening, and I was loading tools into my pickup, finishing up a weeding project. The bones were weary, my ankle was killing me, and I was looking forward to the Sierra Nevada Pale Ales cooling in the refrigerator. My next step was to put up the "Closed" sign when a lady pulled up in her camper next to me. "Interested in a tour of the base?" I asked. She was and I gave it my best shot. We couldn't sell her a t-shirt at the end, but she dropped a twenty into the donation can next to the cash register.

Another young couple from Arizona was a delight. They had passed the sign, stopped and came back to see a Smokejumper Museum. They had a ton of ques-

tions and bought \$62 worth of merchandise from the gift shop. The guy picked up a soda before they left. My wife asked me if I had change for a ten, as we were low in the register. The young man said forget it and paid \$10 for the soda. I apparently had driven home the point earlier that we were operating on fumes and gifts of love.

We even got people who stopped in to use the restrooms and then took the tour. I'm sure that if we put "Clean Restrooms" under the Smokejumper Museum sign, our business would double.

One group stopped to use the restrooms. The Dad was a student of mine when he was in Junior High School. I connected the name to a skinny 7th grader, not someone standing six foot with a beard and sunglasses.

Keeping the museum staffed for eight months a year will be difficult. Now here's the offer you can't refuse: A chance to spend some time telling people about smokejumping. The residence is provided and there is a kitchen. A chance to vacation in southern Oregon, see the Redwoods, Crater Lake and the rugged Oregon Coast. We can cover for you on days when you might want to be a tourist and see other places. I will have an outline prepared for you so you will know the facts and key points of the base.

If you are interested in a day, a week or more helping us out, please contact me (contact info on page three).

Become a part of a real smokejumper success story. We need you, and your wife or husband, too. 🍌

The Weight Of Desire She Had The Look

by Cameron Chambers (North Cascades '04)

When she came through the door for the first day of smokejumper rookie training, everyone saw she was tiny. When she went to the weigh-in, the foreman rolled the heavy metal fireproof door shut so no one could watch. Outside the door they didn't need the scale to know she was tiny.

She had the look. Most rookies show up like sheep. Wide-eyed, they flock closely, waiting in jumpy anticipation to run. Not her. She had the look. A combination of knowledge and determination – that's what makes a good one. That's why they let her stick around.

She had the look, even though she was tiny. She had a smile, too. The smile belied her innocence and good nature. The look and the smile made it easier to keep her around. They should have taken one look and sent her packing.

There were six who showed up for training that

year. All women. The regional office decided the base needed more women, so there were six of them. No men. Only women.

Everyone turned up to watch. They would have shown up anyway because they were rookies, and it was spring so there wasn't much work. Guys made a point of hanging around to watch. They watched like they waited for a car wreck or the tiger to take a swipe at the trainer.

The first day they did the physical testing. Sit-ups, pull-ups, and push-ups, a run, and a weighted pack test. Two of them failed on the pull-ups. Then there were four.

She just flew right through the tests. She was tiny so she pumped right through the tests with her little arms blasting her little body along. Looked like she could have done twenty pull-ups.

She trained hard. That was the look. You don't get the look if you just show up. The pull-ups – that's

where the women have problems. Upper-body strength isn't the same as men's; that's what they say, anyway. Not her; she ripped right through them. Then, she'd been training – and she was tiny.

She was going good. You can tell that first day who's going to make it, who's not, and who's going to be a superstar. She was going good. They said her father was some forester in Idaho, a real big shot. Worked her a—off all winter to get in shape. Wanted to prove to the guys that she didn't get in on her old man's tab.

But she was going good, that and the look. Nobody said much about her father like they would have if she failed on the pull-ups.

She was going good. Even the old timers, the real a—holes who stood along the walls and commented in hushed voices, saw she had the look. They saw how tiny she was and they knew what was coming. They wanted her to make it because the ones with the look always work out in the end.

The sheep, they knew from experience, become whiners and wastes. They leered from the wall to run off every sheep they could. Keep the ones with the look, though. They pulled for her with their eyes, but she was tiny and they knew she'd never make it.

There were only four in the afternoon. The two on the pull-ups – they were sheep. They didn't have the look. They didn't train and nobody cared they were out.

In the afternoon the four got their packs ready. They were the big packout bags. Top loaders for hiking off fires like big 55-gallon drums with backpack straps.

The rookies make their own packs. Forty-five pound cubies of water, iron plates from the weight room, sleeping bags, cargo parachutes – a pile of stuff lay on the floor for them to push into their huge bags. When they thought they were done, they dragged their bags across the floor to the scale. They needed a hundred and twenty pounds of weight.

It's amusing watching them stuff a packout bag the first time. The seasoned guys get good. With parachutes, jumpsuits, chainsaws, Pulaskis – there's a lot of gear to fit into a pack to get it off a fire. It might be seven miles to a road with all that weight.

Don't pack it well and it rubs sores into the back like pack sores on a government mule. Pack it well and it's liable to give sores like a government mule. They're the kind of raw, pussy abrasions that don't heal up. By the time they do start to heal, it's time to pack off again.

The scabs are torn off in a cycle of increasing pain. They get good quick. It doesn't take many sores to get the packing down. Can't make it comfortable. One hundred twenty pounds is just too damned heavy; no

way to make it comfortable.

Get it so it doesn't make you bleed – that's the best one can do. The first time, they don't know any of that. They just see the eyes following them and the hushed jeering. Makes them throw a bunch of that heavy s— in the pack to make weight – no planning.

You can see the hard edges sticking out where it will meet the soft flesh of the lower back. If they make it, they'll learn. Now it's the first time; they'll bleed for sure.

The packs are huge. Fifty-five-gallon drum size and heavy. She was tiny. The foreman had closed the big sliding metal door, but they knew the pack outweighed her. It was damned near as tall as she was and three times as thick. Took two of the regulars to heave it up into the back of the truck. Everyone saw it coming. She was tiny.

On the road they unloaded the four big sloppy packs. Three miles on the pavement. A mile and a half down and a mile and a half back in three hours. All flat, but with those packs a hundred yards is hell.

She kept on with the look and the smile. Standing next to her pack with those eyes and the unflinching smile, she welled the empathy of the onlookers. The old guys stood afar and cheered with their eyes.

She was so small next to the mountain of pack. They could all see it coming, but they couldn't do anything but watch. It was the foreman's call and he had closed the big metal door. Everyone wanted to scream, "stop." No one could, so they just hoped. She had the look, so when she stood next to the pack the hearts said "maybe," but their brains knew more than their hearts; they'd carried the pack enough times.

Two guys lifted her pack so she could slip her shoulders into the straps and tighten it up. It stuck out a foot and a half above her head. From behind two little legs sprouted out the big orange pack. She was tiny. They should have sent her home.

The supervisor's office wanted more women, so the foreman closed the big metal door. Everyone saw what would happen.

When the guys let the weight of the pack settle onto her shoulders she staggered and the guys grabbed the pack again. She tried again and found her feet. One of the foremen asked if she wanted to go through with it. She had her smile and the look.

She trained all winter to get there – maybe all the previous summer as well. She'd trained hard enough to get the look and the look doesn't come easily.

They could have put 200 pounds on her back and she'd have smiled and said, "go." They could have saddled her with 300 pounds and she'd have tipped right over and looked up from the ground smiling and

said, “go.” She had the look. That’s why they should have sent her home. Too damned tiny to have the look.

A group of the regulars stayed with her. A few cheered. No one told them to shut up. After a half-hour she went too slowly. The foreman with the watch knew the minimum pace and he said she was too slow. She smiled and said she’d go faster.

From behind, little toothpick legs stuck out from the pack. They didn’t move faster. The pack was too big and she was too tiny. They could see it coming. She kept moving. Maybe.

She was too tiny and the pack was too big. When she went, it pulled her over like a heavyweight cross. Her ankle buckled, folded in half, taco-like, sideways to the right. The pack just dragged her over in to the dirt and gravel of the road’s shoulder. The group ran over and she was smiling. Embarrassed, but smiling.

Didn’t even mention the ankle. When she went, it should have snapped in two. Bent so far over like a taco, you’d have thought the foot would be flopping loose of the leg. Didn’t even mention the ankle – just smiled and apologized and tried to get back up.

That’s the problem when they got the look. Can’t stay down.

The foreman came over to take a look. She wanted to go again. Don’t know how she stood up. And she wanted to go. Don’t know if it was the region wanting more women, the look, or that smile, but the foreman let her go.

Most expected her to go down right off. She managed a limp, but managed. Tough one; should have been in a cast. Instead trudging again with that mountain of a pack and smiling through the sweat.

Everyone saw it coming when she showed up. Too tiny. Then it happened right there on the road into the dirt and the gravel. Now the foreman was letting her go again and everyone saw it coming. They wanted to say “stop,” but they didn’t have the authority. Only the foreman called “stop,” and he’d closed the big metal door. The region wanted more women.

She wouldn’t stop. She had the look. She had it bad, would’ve crawled to the finish. Smiled the whole time. Wasn’t a man there wouldn’t have taken the pack himself. Had to do it on her own. With the look there’s no other way.

The second time was just like the first. Same side. Legs tired. Weakest link went out. Fortunate it wasn’t the knee. Bitch to repair knees. Ankle bent in half again. Calf about touched the asphalt before the big pack pulled her off her feet. Did the smart thing. Didn’t fight it. Just toppled.

Might have been too tired to fight it. Good thing. Might still be able to walk. Lots of ways to get to a fire.

All of them require walking once you get there. Ruin her ankle and she can’t work. That’s all there is to it.

Everyone saw it coming. Too tiny. Should have sent her home from the get go.

Tried to go a third time even. That’s what you get with the look. That’s why the old guys want them to make it. Foreman’s got to be the one to say “quit.” Clock man came back. Said she was way behind pace. She said she’d go faster. She was getting hysterical. She couldn’t go faster. Her body couldn’t even keep her upright any longer with that mountain of a pack.

Most of the regulars left. They saw it coming. They saw it the whole time. Didn’t want to have to watch it happen again. Left. Went back to the truck.

The other three with the big packs were at the trucks. They didn’t have the look. They were bigger and they had made it. Nobody cared about them.

The foreman called it after two and a half hours. She had just under a mile to go. She wouldn’t stop on her own. Two guys had to take the pack off her back. No way she could have made it. Lucky to be walking. Still smiled. Started crying and mumbled about keeping going. The tears and the sweat mixed and ran in a stream right over the smile. Those who were left turned away. They could see it coming. 🙄



John McDaniel (CJ-57) and Richard Trinity (MSO-66) working on Trail Project on Superior N.F. 2012. (Courtesy Lisa Loncar)



NSA Trail Crew



Reporting From MN On The USFS/BWCAW/ WCB/GTHS Project Complex

by **Jim Cherry** (Missoula '57)

DON'T WORRY. I'M not going to leave you puzzling over the alphabet soup of abbreviations printed above. Just thought I'd start by having a little fun with something that usually leaves me frustrated when I have to make my way through the soup. So to begin ...

Our MN (Minnesota) project was the last officially scheduled operation of the 2012 trails projects, taking place Sept. 2-8 in northeast Minnesota's BW-CAW (Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness). It truly was a complex of projects that involved a lot of cooperation between the four participating entities:

- **The GTHS** (Gunflint Trail Historical Society) – under the direction of Kathy Lande and with the scouting help of Jim Wiinanen, both local residents of the Grand Marais/Gunflint Trail area – put together a two-day project of clearing a Gneiss/Blueberry Hill hiking trail on federal land. This trail provides an excellent scenic view of Sea Gull and Saganaga Lakes and the channel that connects them. The trail is through the area consumed in the 2007 Ham Lake Fire and gives access to outstanding blueberry picking. It will

provide a valuable history and ecology resource for visitors to the Chik-Wauk Museum that sits at the beginning point of the trail. The GTHS also provided us with funding for some of our food needs.

- **The USFS** (U.S. Forest Service – Gunflint Ranger District), under the direction of Tom Kaffine, set us up with an extension of work we had done several years earlier when our crew had built the Centennial Hiking Trail (also in the area of the 2007 Ham Lake Fire). This time, Tom asked us to do a couple of extension spurs off of the Centennial Trail to open up access to some features of historical importance. We provided Tom with a crew for one day of work and, as per our reputation, we got the job done.
- **WCB** (Wilderness Canoe Base) is located on Sea Gull Lake at the end of the Gunflint Trail. The camp provided us with meals and lodging as their in-kind contribution to the work of the GTHS and the USFS in the trail development, and in lieu of work that we would be doing for the camp. Will Tanner had a great list of projects set up for us to work on, and I know he took me seriously when I had told him that oftentimes our work output is underestimated. Will had more jobs listed than we were able to accomplish on this project.
- **Our crew**, numbering 17 in total ... a good mix of former jumpers and associates. (When funding sources are tight,

it takes some creativity and cooperation to get a project to function for the benefit of all.)

Our crew was made up of **Jim Cherry** (MSO-57), Judy Cherry, **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59), KG Sheley, **John McDaniel** (CJ-57), Marceil McDaniel, **Dan Hensley** (MSO-57), Gayle Hensley, **Jack Atkins** (MSO-68), Elaine Atkins, **John Culbertson** (FBX-69), Kathy Culbertson, **Richard Trinity** (MSO-66), **Jon Klingel** (CJ-65), **Don Havel** (FBX-66), Bob Aldrich and Lisa Loncar (USFS). The spouses named above are all associates.

Bob, an associate, is a former WCB staff member who answered my challenge to join us. Lisa, also an associate, is with the USFS and joined us on this project and also the June project in the Monongahela NF.

This was an excellent crew ... hardworking, down-to-earth and fun-loving. As has become custom with the ladies, they disappear for a day of sightseeing and shopping. It happened this year, too, along with the 1,000-piece community puzzle that everyone worked on at one time or another.

The weather was good to us – with no mosquitoes to speak of, warm days filled with plenty of sunshine, and cool nights for good sleeping. There was a chance for some canoeing and hiking and, of course, the happy hour between end of work and dinner.

Conversations went well into the evening so flashlights were needed to make it back to the cabin assignments. Soothing, warm showers were also worked into



2012 Trails Project at Wilderness Canoe Base Minnesota. Top L-R Standing: Bob Aldrich (Assoc), John Culbertson (FBX-69), Don Havel (FBX-66), John McDaniel (CJ-57), Dan Hensley (MSO-57). Kneeling: Chuck Sheley (CJ-59). 2nd Row: Gayle Hensley, John Klingel (CJ-65). 3rd Row: Jack Atkins (MSO-68), Elaine Atkins, Marceil McDaniel, Judy Cherry. Bottom: Richard Trinity (MSO-66), Lisa Loncar (USFS), K.G. Sheley, Kathy Culbertson, Jim Cherry (standing). (Courtesy Lisa Loncar)

personal schedules – a comfort to stiff joints and aging bones.

Here's a tally sheet of what was accomplished:

- 4.5 total miles of trail cleared or created along three trail systems and a sledding trail
- 0.2 miles of trail created
- 0.1 miles of sledding hill created
- three overlooks created
- more than 40 trees dropped and bucked along trails
- more than 50 trees bucked and cleared from trails
- five hazard trees (ranging from 40 to more than 75 feet in height) overhanging trails dropped and bucked
- 7,287 dirty pots and pans washed, and kitchen drain cleared twice by kitchen “Super Crew” with Chuck Sheley providing “sweep”
- 10 screen doors repaired
- cabin deck repaired and steps replaced
- volunteer assistance provided where needed to the GTHS Chik-Wauk Museum
- cleaning and organizing of the WCB trail equipment building along with repair of canoe packs
- scraping off and repainting names on canoes (no, sorry gals, but it’s not okay to change the canoe names by putting your names or my name on them. Nice try, anyway.)

We are already making plans for the September 2013 WCB/USFS/GTHS/BWCAW project. Consider joining us in the fellowship. 🍷

Rocky Mountain High: Renovation Of The Turkey Springs Guard Station

by **Richard Hilderbrand**
(Missoula '66)

JUNE OF 2012 was the beginning of another project for the NSA members in Colorado.

Three years had been committed to the renovation of the Glade Guard Station – successfully completed in 2011. The San Juan National Forest and Julie Coleman, the forest's archaeologist, had been very supportive of the previous work and identified the Turkey Springs Guard Station as a potential new project.

The station was built in 1907, but was severely damaged by a

fire in 1917. It was rebuilt in 1920 and used for many years, but had received little attention or maintenance.

The station is now on the register of Colorado Historic Properties. It is located at an elevation of 7,350 feet and about eight miles west of Pagosa Springs, Colo. The station is a single building set among large, old, yellow-bark ponderosa pines with a large meadow close by.

Following the identification of funds to complete the work, that project was selected by the local NSA members and planning

began in earnest for the summer of 2012. The grants Coleman received for the project in 2012 came from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Dominguez Archaeological Research Group.

In addition, the San Juan National Forest continued their tradition of exceptional support for the project.

The NSA crew began to arrive June 10 for the restoration project. The objectives were rather similar to the previous years of work on Glade, including replacing the aging cedar



*Back L-R: Bill Kopplin (Assoc), Ron Siple (MYC-53), Julie Coleman (San Juan Public Lands Center), Russell Heaton (Assoc), Warren Pierce (CJ-64), Skinny Everett and Melissa Childs (Elevated Fine Foods) Seated in Center: David Singer (Silverton Restoration)
Front L-R: Jimmie Hickman (MSO-51), Doug Wamsley (MSO-65), Bill Ruskin (CJ-58), Steve Vittum (MSO-71), Ray Carter (MSO-54), Richard Hilderbrand (MSO-66). (Courtesy R. Hilderbrand)*

shingles, preparing and painting the exterior of the building, repairing the brick chimney, and a major carpentry task of reattaching the porch that had settled and separated from the building.

Other tasks, such as repair of the foundation and screens and grading around the building, also had to be completed. Each day was started in the traditional way: **Bill Ruskin** (CJ-58) yodeled reveille about 5:45 a.m. (He had been heard practicing the yodel in off hours some distance away from camp in the ponderosas so that the morning reveille was completed to perfection.)

Reveille was followed by coffee and pastries, start of work at 6:30 a.m., a break for breakfast at 8 a.m., and continuation of work for the day – a schedule designed to allow work in the cool of the morning. The catered meals were exceptional and were provided by Melissa and Skinny of Elevated Fine Foods. Evening meals were followed by time around the campfire and sharing of experiences – smokejumping and other.

Replacement of the cedar shingles began immediately. Scaffolding was placed and **Steve Vittum** (MSO-71) and **Doug Wamsley** (MSO-65) took on the task of removal of the old shingles. This task was hampered by the steep 45-degree pitch of the roof and the absence of footholds, but went rather well and was completed by noon Monday.

Tarpaper was placed on the roof, and the tedious task of nailing the rows of shingles began. Steve and Doug worked on the west side while Bill Ruskin and I worked the east side of the roof. **Ray Carter** (MSO-54) provided exquisite ground support by passing materials and tools.

The second objective was to prepare and paint the guard

station. The building had been painted a light yellow some years in the past; the NSA master paint crew, comprised of **Warren Pierce** (CJ-64) and **Bill Kopplin** (Associate), began the cleaning and scraping of the siding.

The painting crew was hampered at every brush stroke by the presence of scaffolds, ladders, construction, falling shingles, and frequent requests for assistance from the crews working above. Despite the many impediments and the absence of **Herm Ball** (MSO-50), paint meister from previous projects, two coats of paint were successfully applied, and the appearance of the station significantly enhanced.

The carpentry crew, consisting of **Russell Heaton** (Associate), **Ron Siple** (MYC-53), Carter and David Singer (working consultant), had their work cut out for them. The front porch had settled severely, so much that it had pulled away from the front gable of the guard station building. Flooring had rotted away and the deck had to be completely replaced.

The crew initiated work with great enthusiasm. The two porch posts were plumbed and bolted together with a 2-inch-by-12-inch timber, with the ends extending beyond the width of the porch to provide a purchase point for a floor jack on each side. The floor jacks were used to raise the porch posts, level the porch roof, and force the porch against the station gable, where it was lagged in place.

With the posts and roof raised and out of the way, all remaining old decking, joists and piers were removed and discarded.

Excavation was completed and new concrete piers were poured, pressure treated joists placed, and cedar decking installed. All were pleased, if not surprised, when

the porch roof and support posts were lowered and all was square and plumb.

The final step, when carpentry was completed, was for the roofing crew to apply new cedar shingles to complete the porch repair.

Carter also took on the repair and painting of the rail fence surrounding the site and finished with a much-improved fence. The gateposts were plumbed and aligned, and a new gate constructed and hung with original hardware. Ray painted this item as well.

Screens were repaired and replaced in all windows and the door by **Jim Hickman** (MSO-52), under the direction of Singer and Heaton. Ruskin and Singer completed repairs on the chimney by replacement of a few bricks and tuck pointing, and repaired the foundation by removal and replacement of broken concrete in the stone/concrete foundation.

All contributed to the grading of the area around the main structure to allow water to drain.

One of the final tasks to be completed was the performance of a reconnaissance mission to determine the possibility of recovery of the old latrine. That was completed to the unsurpassed standards of a U-2 pilot – Pierce – and the final decision reached that the mission was not achievable and should not be attempted.

We feel the work here has given the guard station new life and resulted in the preservation of another structure of historical significance to the U.S. Forest Service. The Pagosa District has used the Turkey Springs Guard Station as a location for outdoor education and interpretive programs in the past, and envisions continuing to use the facility for these purposes.

Another NSA job “well-done.” 🍷



Redmond Base Report



by **Josh Voshall** (Redding '03)

Hello, fellow jumpers. As of late September 2012, jumpers are still jumping and fires are still burning here in the Pacific Northwest.

Redmond employed 35 smokejumpers this year and has currently jumped 25 fires with a total of 148 jumpers out of the door. Jumping fires here at RAC got off to a slow start, but with the other regions having a steady year, most of the jumpers were able to boost those other bases needing help. Actually, we have boosted every base this year at least once or even twice. **Tony Johnson** (RAC-97) is our current jump hog with nine fire jumps for the season.

The beginning of the season was met with a loss of our own. **Mark Hentze** (RAC-00), who was an avid kayaker in Colombia, lost his life on that country's Rio Santo Domingo. Mark had been traveling to Colombia for several years, taking kayak trips on rivers that nobody had kayaked before.

During his time in Colombia, Mark started a nonprofit organization called "Colombia Whitewater," whose stated purpose, according to the group's website, was "to help conserve and protect the wild and scenic rivers of Colombia by exploring and documenting their watersheds, and by promoting responsible ecotourism in Colombia."

Mark wrote a 126-page book, also called *Colombia Whitewater*. Most of Mark's free time was dedicated to going back down to Colombia and kayaking more rivers.

Climbing trees with Mark in Massachusetts and being his roommate the last few times were inspiring to me. All he could talk about was his love for the water, the people, and the country he visited every off-season.

I would like to think Mark went the way he wanted to go, loving every minute of his life and where he was. He was truly an amazing and awe-inspiring individual. We'll always miss the "Darkhorse."

We also had a significant event earlier in the season: the retirement of **Tony Loughton** (RDD-83). His party will go down as one of the best and funniest I've attended in a long time.

Special appearances were made by Tony's rookie bro, **Ken Mally** (RDD-83), former Redding loft supervisor **Bob Harris** (RDD-75), current Redding loft supervisor **Tim Quigley** (RDD-79), and Tony's son, Michael, who came up from Arizona.

The night was filled with festivities that included games for the kids and adults alike, a roast by **Tony Johnson** (RAC-97), stories from Loughton himself, gift presentations – and what's a party without a flip at the end of it? The big winner was **Shane Orser** (RDD-08) with \$900 to his name, all tax-free!

Tony has played and will always play a pivotal role at RAC. He set his standards high – not only for himself, but for the crew as well. Tony was "the man" in the loft. Anything you needed help with or had a question about in the loft, he was there to guide you.

He was a great mentor, someone to whom everyone could look for advice no matter what subject it was. Even if you didn't ask him, he would still have something to say about it.

There were a couple of sightings of Tony this summer demobing jumpers off of a few fires.

After his retirement, Tony has had a few surgeries on his knee and is still doing what he does best, "living the dream and keeping the passion." Thanks, Tony, for being a great role model to each and every one of us who follows in your footsteps.

Another retirement happened this past off-season. Dan Torrence, who was the air center manager, retired in January. Dan had been at the helm since 1999. He was replaced by Maurice "Mo" Evans. Mo comes from the Deschutes National Forest and for the past several years has been part of the forest's fuels program.

There have been some significant changes around the base in the past few months here at RAC. **Gary Atteberry** (RAC-97) was selected as operations supervisor. **Ray Rubio** (RAC-95) was selected as the assistant operations manager, while **Josh Cantrell** (MSO-97) is the new assistant training guru.

Brandon Coville (RAC-00) in training, **Howard McGuire** (RAC-07) in the loft, and **Ralph Sweeney** (RAC-01) in operations are our new spotters. Filling vacant squad leader positions are **Geoff Schultz** (RDD-01) and **Gabe Cortez** (GAC-02).

Dustin Underhill (RAC-10) accepted a permanent position at the base and **Gabe Wishart** (MYC-07) detailed here to be closer to his family. **Tony Sleznick** (RDD-92) recently took a detail to Region 4 with the infrared aircraft out of Ogden, Utah. Looks like Tony has his sights set on becoming a full-blown pilot after all.

Some departures also occurred this last season as

well. **Erin Springer** (RAC-08) accepted a position with the Missoula Smokejumpers while pursuing a master's degree at the University of Montana. **Dave Keller** (RAC-04) is currently employed as a firefighter/paramedic with the Sisters Fire Department in Sisters, Ore. **Nick Mackenzie** (NCSB-09) pursued a career with the Springfield Fire Department in Springfield, Ore.

As we are nearing the end of the fire season, there have been some jump milestones worth noting. **Sean Wishart** (RAC-04) and **Jason Barber** (RAC-05) each recently received his 150th jump pin. **Ryan Koch** (RAC-01) got his 250th, **Marcel Potvin** (RAC-07) received his 100th, **Jeff Robinson** (RAC-86) racked up his 500th, and **Justin Wood** (RAC-01) made his 200th jump.

David Ortlund (RAC-10) received his 50th jump

pin and **Gabe Wishart** (MYC-07) made his 100th jump out of a somewhat perfectly good airplane. Congratulations to those who have hit those great milestones.

The latest word for the Redmond Smokejumper Reunion is that it was canceled due to the smoke that the Pole Creek Fire is producing near Sisters, Ore. So no reunion barbecues or old jumpers telling good-time jump stories.

So there you have it. The fire season continues, jumpers are still out on fires, stories are being told about the best jump ever, and the dream lives on with every jumper you meet. I hope every jumper out there had a safe and productive season and until the next time, good jumpin'! 🍷

Atkinson Awarded A 2012 Jukkala-McBride Scholarship

Tyson Atkinson (MSO-2011) was formally awarded the Art Jukkala-Jon McBride Scholarship at the University of Montana campus on September 24, 2012, by **Roger Savage** (MSO-57) and **Fred Cooper** (NCSB-62). In 2009, Tyson graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Forestry and minor degrees in Wildlife Biology and Wildland Restoration. In the fall of 2011, he began pursuing a master's degree in forestry with an emphasis in fire. He enrolled full time in the fall of 2012.

Tyson grew up in the western Montana community of Charlo, working with livestock on a daily basis. He spent four seasons as a guide and packer in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and began his firefighter career on a local contract engine crew and later on the Flathead Interagency Hotshots before smokejumping.

As part of his master's program, Tyson is in the National Center for Landscape Fire Analysis at the U of M, and he said that he is lucky to

have someone with smokejumping experience as his advisor, **Dr. Carl Seielstad** (MYC-93). Although his thesis project is not yet decided, he and Carl are exploring many options that include fire behavior in Mountain Pine Beetle killed stands and jumper fire history, including fuel type, distance from roads, etc., in an attempt to determine if there is a trend on how smokejump-

ers are used. Tyson stated that he "hopes in his academic pursuits and beyond to promote the smoke-jumper program and its efficacy in order to see that it remains as the most adequate initial attack resource in the agency arsenal." It is his career goal to obtain a management position in the US Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management. 🍷



L-R: Carl Seielstad (MYC-93), Tyson Atkinson (MSO-11), Fred Cooper (NCSB-62)



L-R: Doug Hopkins (CJ-62), Cliff Hamilton (CJ-62), John Manley (CJ-62), Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)



L-R: Butch Hill (CJ-63) Chuck Mansfield (CJ-59) & Pete Landis (CJ-62)



Shock Tower Training



Siskiyou Aerial Project,
Photo's Courtesy: Johnny Kirkley



L-R: Mike Johnson (CJ-64) & Garry



L-R: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64) Doug Hopkins (CJ-62) & Chuck Sheley CJ-59)



Paul Boyer (CJ-61)



Jerry John (CJ-62)



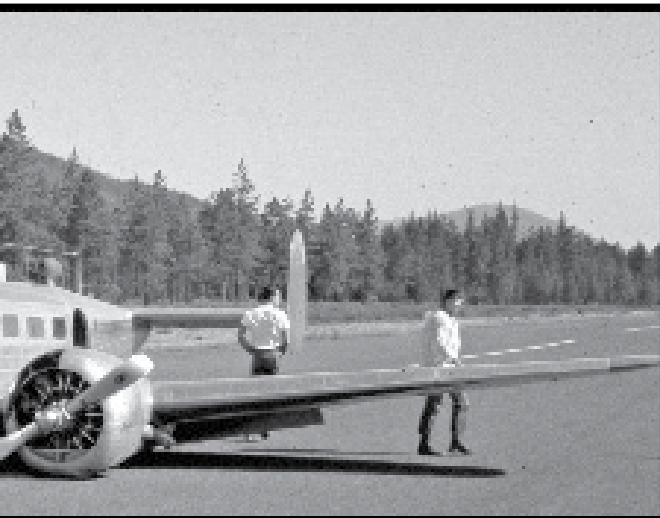
Chuck Mansfield (CJ-59)



Let Down Training

Cave Junction 1964-65

, Cliff Hamilton & John Manley



Peters (CJ-63), Visit Crash Landing



Ed Jones (CJ-64)

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)



Practice Jump



L-R: Charley Moseley (CJ-62), Steve Johnson (CJ-62) & Hal Ward (CJ-62)

Sierra Nevada Lightning Storm Stokes Smokejumper Memories

by Gus Thomson

(Copyright 2012, the Auburn Journal.)

AUBURN, Calif. – With lightning in the forecast and forest-fire smoke in the morning air, a group of veteran smokejumpers assembled Aug. 15 near Foresthill was quite content to let their younger counterparts battle a spate of blazes in the Tahoe National Forest.

Fifty or so years ago, it would have been their boots dropping into a smoke-filled fire scene from as low as 1,800 feet and their chutes opening as they swooped in to tackle lightning-strike fires before they spread out of control.

Nine members of the National Smokejumper Association, from as far away as Montana, set off Aug. 15 on a five-day work camp to rehabilitate trails near China Wall, 10 miles east of Foresthill.

In their 60s, 70s and 80s, the group assembled chain saws as well as old-school crosscut saws for a hike into the wilderness to set up a camp that would serve as their base through Aug. 21, when they would hike out again.

Members demonstrated patience and understanding that came with experience when they learned that a Forest Service-contracted copter due to fly much of their supplies in would be delayed.

The delay was necessitated because of the helicopter's use on a series of new fires being caused by a round of lightning-caused fires in the area.

"They've got fires everywhere," said **Bill Bowles** (RDD-57), 74, of Foresthill.

The Tahoe National Forest reported thunderstorm activity continuing Aug. 15, with 206 new strikes in the 24-hour period ending at 6 a.m. Three new fires were spotted. All fires remained less than an acre. Of the 17 burning, nine were being judged contained or controlled, Forest Service spokeswoman Ann Westling said.

Bowles said he made his first jump in 1957 and ended up making more than 200 over the years as a smokejumper before letting younger jumpers take over.

Bowles recalled one fire near Redding with switching winds that roared over the gear he had jumped in with, but he was able to escape from the flames. The small fire erupted into 1958's Lava Fire, covering 13,000 acres.

Manny Haiges (MSO-58) worked summers out of

Missoula starting in 1958, jumping from now-vintage aircraft like the 1930s-vintage Ford Trimotor and DC-3.

Haiges, who has family in Rocklin, said smoke-jumping was a good way to make money during the summer for school. But there was an added inducement to be part of an elite firefighting crew.

"It was just exciting," Haiges said.

Auburn's **Monroe "Spud" DeJarnette** (MSO-49), 83, jumped between 1949 to 1955 from Missoula before embarking on a teaching career. That period included two years off to serve in the U.S. Army during the Korean War.

The work was exciting but also dangerous. DeJarnette was smokejumping in the same area when 12 smokejumpers and one "walk-in" firefighter were killed during the 1949 Mann Gulch Fire outside Helena, Mont.

DeJarnette gathered to work and share memories during a work party for an association that counts about 1,700 members nationwide.

"My ankles are still complaining, but I had no injuries," DeJarnette said. 🍷

New NSA Life Members since January 2012

Thanks for your support!

#	Life Member	Base	Year
265...	BILL SELBY.....	REDMOND	1991
266...	MIKE OVERBY	MISSOULA.....	1967
267...	SHAWN MCKENNA	FAIRBANKS	1979
268...	JOHN BERRY.....	REDMOND	1970
269...	GILBERT BOUNDY.....	CAVE JUNCTION .	1962
270...	JIM FRITZ	CAVE JUNCTION .	1959
271...	CAMERON LAWRENCE..	GRANGEVILLE ..	1991



Off The List

Remember and honor fellow jumpers with a gift to the NSA Good Samaritan Fund in their name. Hard times can fall on many of us at any time. The NSA is here to support our fellow jumpers and their families through the Good Samaritan Fund. Mail your contribution to:

Chuck Sheley
10 Judy Lane
Chico, CA 95926

Leon H. “Lee” Ratzlaff (Missoula ’43)

Lee, 78, died May 20, 1998, in Henderson, Nebraska. He attended York College in Nebraska for a year and then taught 15 months before he was drafted for service in World War II. As a conscientious objector, Lee served in the CPS-103 program and jumped from Missoula during the 1943-45 seasons. Lee was worried about not qualifying for jumping due to his weight, which was close to the 135-pound minimum. Not taking any chances, he bought all the available rationed bananas – approximately five pounds of them – at a local grocery store and ate them before his final physical. After the war Lee returned to farming until 1954. He later became partially paralyzed, being injured on the job as a truck driver. *(Obit added as result of information obtained from contact via NSA website. Ed.)*

Richard “Dick” Bassett (Pilot)

Dick, 89, died July 24, 2012, in Redmond, Oregon. He joined the Army Air Corps – which became the U.S. Air Force – in August 1941, having already learned to fly airplanes as large as the DC-3, thanks to the fact his father was chief draftsman at the Douglas Aircraft Company. Dick was flying for the predecessor to the CIA in Southeast Asia prior to World War II, piloting a PBY – a flying boat – with Shell Oil Company markings, keeping tabs on the Japanese fleet movements. He spent most of the war flying photo reconnaissance missions, earning several commendations for courage. Even though Dick was in the Army, Adm. William Halsey of the Navy recommended that

he be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Following the war, Dick was an operative in China carrying a French passport. He worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but returned to the Air Force as a communications specialist. He retired in 1965 and began flying smokejumpers from Cave Junction in 1967, later moving to Redmond. Dick, who also served on the Redmond Airport Commission, owned and flew a Cessna 310 until age 83.

Theodore “Ted” Smith (Missoula ’62)

Ted, 71, died Sept. 1, 2012, during a hike in the Mission Mountains near St. Ignatius, Montana. He earned a degree with honors from Pomona College, and got his master’s and doctorate degrees in Political Science from the University of California. As a graduate student and contract employee of the U.S. State Department, Ted served in Vietnam in 1965. He jumped from Missoula in the 1962-64 seasons before embarking on a 12-year career with the Ford Foundation, which included service in Indonesia, as well as a two-year stint preparing the organization’s \$175 million budget. Ted then served six years as president of John D. Rockefeller III’s Agricultural Development Council, focused on agricultural and resource policies in Asia and Africa. Ted became the founding director of the Consultative Group on Biological Diversity, and during the 1980s and 1990s he served as consultant to the World Bank (Indonesia and Bhutan), USAID (Indonesia) and the Rockefeller Foundation (International Program). He ran the Boston-based Kendall

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Foundation (1993-2009) where he developed American and Canadian programs in ocean fisheries policies, landscape conservation, watershed management and climate change-energy conservation. Ted worked with land trust organizations to conserve 2 million acres of wildlife habitat in Montana. He co-founded the Heart of the Rockies Initiative. At the time of his death, Ted was serving on the boards of Earthjustice, the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, and ACLU Montana. He was senior fellow with the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy at the University of Montana.

Lyle Haugsven (North Cascades '60)

Lyle died Oct. 2, 2012, in Eagle River, Alaska. He joined the Army after graduating from high school and was stationed in Europe. Lyle studied in Spain before jumping from North Cascades during the 1960-62 seasons; he jumped from Fairbanks in the 1964-66 seasons and again in 1968-69. He earned degrees in Spanish and Philosophy from the University of the Americas in Mexico City, which he attended between fire seasons. Lyle joined the Alaska State Troopers in 1970 and had a 24-year career with that organization. 🇺🇸

The 1988 Alaska Paracargo Season

by **Mel Tenneson** (Fairbanks '86)

Air Operations Manager, Great Basin Smokejumpers

The Rolls Royce Dart turboprop engines made a very distinct whine as we were approaching the drop zone – a high-pitched whine that was so familiar, it seemed like I would even hear it in my sleep.

Each Alaska Smokejumper paracargo (PC) shift had been flying two missions a day in the former Royal Air Force cargo aircraft and, when we were not flying, we were frantically rigging cargo and cargo chutes until our 16-hour shift was over. The Argosy that we were flying in was one of two that the Alaska Fire Service had on contract with Duncan Aviation, and these were the true elite workhorses for the AFS in the 1980s.

The Armstrong Whitworth Argosy was a British postwar military cargo aircraft made for the Royal Air Force, and these were the last two operational aircraft in the world of that type. **Richard Fort** (FBX-80) was the head kicker on this particular mission, our second mission of the day, with **Scott Dewitz** (FBX-82) and **John Gould** (FBX-81) as assistant kickers.

I was working as a loadmaster on this mission, and the rest of our day shift had been extremely busy rigging cargo back at Ft. Wainwright. It was July 11, 1988, and we had been busy for a number of days flying multiple missions to the same fire in the midst of a record-setting paracargo season.

We were en route to Fire A-119, a large project fire in the Warring Mountains in western Alaska, which we had been supporting for some time now.

Lee Svoboda, our seasoned pilot, let Richard know we were a few miles out, and Richard told us the aft

door would soon be coming open. Each of us made sure our tethers were attached to the overhead cable, and our pins were seated on our Para cushion parachutes.

The large clamshell door creaked and groaned as it opened up to the gray, hazy, smoky sky behind it; the tenacious wind swept furiously inside like a vacuum, bringing warmth and the smell of the ongoing tundra-and-spruce fire a few hundred feet below us.

Scott and John picked up the 10-foot sections of the rusted, heavy-duty roller track and locked them in place on the aircraft ramp. Once the roller track was in place, **Don Bell** (IDC- 69) and I moved two 1,250-pound pallets of MREs – prepackaged meals not requiring cooking – aft on the tailgate and released our sky genies (rappel devices used to control the cargo as we moved it back).

The MREs had already been hooked up to the two-ring release system that we now used and which were designed by **Mitch Decoteau** (GAC-78). Scott and John meticulously hooked up the eight parachutes to the overhead cable. Lee banked the aging Argosy on a long final, and Richard shouted the commands relayed from the pilot: “On final” ... “standby” ... “kick.”

As the “kick” command was shouted, we could feel the nose of the Argosy come up. Scott and John pulled their releases simultaneously, and the bundles exited the aft of the aircraft. The plane lurched downward suddenly, due to the loss of weight of the cargo on the tailgate, and the bundles cleared the aircraft without incident as they had so many times before.

Don and I already moved forward and had the sky genies attached to the next load, two 500-gallon rollagons – two fuel bladders that, fully rigged with two 64-foot canopies on each, weighed 3,800 pounds apiece. Richard gave us the signal to move the rollagons back to the aft of the aircraft.

Once Don and I moved the heavy load into place, Scott and John hooked up the two-ring release to the weak links and we moved the load aft. Scott and John blocked the rollagons on the forward end as Don and I unhooked the sky genies.

The plane began turning base and suddenly arched into a sharp bank when I heard the distinct *ting-ting* of the weak links breaking just before Scott and John could get the parachutes hooked up. The rollagons exited the aircraft one after another, and we could feel the Argosy nose come up as the heavy load went out.

Everyone was stunned and aghast as we rushed to the tailgate, wild-eyed, to observe the action. The 64-foot parachute (G-12-E) is pilot-chute deployed and the pilot chute is static-line deployed. The pilot chutes were tucked under the top flap of the 64-foot chute prior to hook up, and that was where they were when the rollagons exited the aircraft.

I looked at Scott and said, “This ought to be good!” But just in time, all four pilot chutes came out of the flaps and then, miraculously, all four 64-foot parachutes deployed. Both 500-gallon rollagons landed intact, about two miles away from the intended drop zone.

Needless to say, we were shocked at what we had just witnessed. Back in the 1980s they moved the fuel rollagons around with a Bell 205. The Bell 205 assigned to A-119 flew over to where the rollagons landed, hooked them up to a clevis off the long-line, and moved them to the intended drop zone.

Everyone onboard the Argosy was relieved that the

parachutes opened even without them being hooked up. After this incident we increased the strength of our “weak links” from 500 pounds to 1,000 pounds, and we never experienced that problem again.

On another mission out to A-119 – our bread and butter of the summer for Paracargo – **Al Seiler** (FBX-85) and I had just hooked up two rollagons in the back of the Argosy and we were heading forward when both of the 64-foot parachutes on the aft rollagon fell off and onto the back tailgate.

Al’s eyes got really wide as he looked at me – I’m sure mine looked the same – and we both quickly ran to the back of the plane on the edge of the tailgate and hoisted a 130-pound parachute back on the rollagon. We quickly ran forward and grabbed the two-ring release in time to hear **Dalan Romero** (FBX-83) say “kick.”

We each frantically pulled our two-ring releases and both 500-gallon rollagons went out of the aircraft. That night in the debriefing, we found that the night crew had tried to save break tape and decided to use a single wrap of 80-pound break tape to hold on the 130-pound parachutes. Standard operating procedures called for a double wrap of break tape.

During the debriefing, it was determined that changing procedures on a “whim” wasn’t a very good idea, and these things should be discussed prior to implementation.

In 1988, we increased the drop altitude for rollagons to 800 feet AGL to give time for the pilot chutes to deploy the 64-foot parachutes. The A-22s were still dropped from 400-foot AGL, which was standard from years before.

The “M-1” military release was discontinued in the 1988 season, along with the “vent pull-down,” the reefing device which pulled the apex down that – in theory – allowed the canopy to open at a lower alti-



Argosy on final leg of flight from Lincoln, Nebraska, to the Museum of Flight in Santa Monica, California, December, 1991. (Courtesy Lee Svoboda)

tude. There were many problems with the “M-1” prior to 1988, and it was therefore discontinued.

We were rigging another bunch of rollagons and A-22s on the Ft. Wainwright ramp on a very hot July day. We had been doing this for days on end, and we were very tired, but one of the guys sneaked into the office of **Rodger Vorce** (FBX-82) and removed his radio from his desk. We were ecstatic when we saw the radio and promptly plugged it in to the nearest outlet and listened to Fairbanks’ finest rock-n-roll station.

With the jumpstart of the rock-n-roll music, everyone was in “high gear,” rigging away, thinking we were living the dream. Rodger had been out of his office, and we knew borrowing the base manager’s radio was something we just didn’t do, but it seemed like a good idea at the time.

Scott Dewitz, our PC shift supervisor, was upset because we were behind schedule and thought we were not rigging fast enough to load the next mission on time. I observed him driving our aging forklift as fast as it would go toward our location, screaming something that we couldn’t make out.

He proceeded to whip the machine around the corner of the last rollagon in our lineup as fast as a 1979 forklift on steroids could go.

As he flew around our corner, we could hardly see the forks, bouncing approximately one foot off the ground, heading toward us. I was wondering how he could stay on two wheels while navigating the corner, when I heard the crash of the base manager’s boom box being impaled by the fork of the forklift.

Scott had just shouted something to us, something I won’t repeat here. At that time nothing else had to be said, and everyone on the ramp shouted in unison, “Rodger! Rodger!”

Scott turned bright red, maybe even habañero red, and proceeded to yell at us twice more, then took off on the forklift headed in the opposite direction. We didn’t see him for a couple of hours, but we figured he probably made a quick run down to the local electronics store to replace Rodger’s radio. There was never a dull moment in PC that year.

There came a brief lull in the season in late July, and our boss, **C.R. Holder** (MSO-70), said some of us could go jump a fire. **Trooper Tom Emonds** (CJ-66) was itching to get a fire jump as he was the fire jump leader at that time. He jumped Fire A-043, which **Rod Dow** (MYC-68) and **John Dube** (RAC-70) were running, and we didn’t see him the rest of the summer.

A-043 was the largest fire that summer in Alaska, and it burned into another one for a combined total of 1.2 million acres.

The other group of us jumped fire A-205, where

Paul Naman (FBX-83) was the incident commander. We pulled a long, hard shift beating flames with spruce boughs and finally got around it. The tundra was burning deeply, so we knew we couldn’t hold the fire without some more help.

Paul had ordered up a bunch of crews, helicopters and other resources and told a few of us to get a few hours of sleep, as the crews would be arriving soon, and he would need us back up before the fire became really active. I quickly pitched a tent on the edge of a large meadow and drifted off to sleep.

While I was sleeping, I could hear the whine of the Rolls Royce Dart engines of the Argosy in my dream. It seemed like I had just drifted off to sleep when I heard this very calm voice say, “Excuse me, but you are about to be burned over in a minute.”

I sat up in my tent, pondered what I just thought I had heard, my head pounding with a dehydration headache and the sound of a helicopter in the background. I lifted my tent flap and the first thing I saw was a pallet – 48 cases of MREs, 1,250 pounds – approximately 20 feet from my tent that wasn’t there when I pitched my tent.

I then realized that the Argosy whine of the props in my dream was more than just a dream and that the real DZ turned out to be our camping spot!

Behind the pallet of MREs just outside of my tent, I could see a huge wall of flames racing towards the meadow, one tent on fire, and a helicopter turning rotors with frantic people scrambling to get in. Needless to say we had our hands full on the fire for a while.

I later talked to John Gould, the head kicker on that PC mission, and heard his story. They were told that the meadow was the DZ, and on the first pass they came around and dropped two pallets of MREs without incident. On the second pass they were preparing to drop an A-22 of fuel and a crew kit, and just before the pilot said “kick,” John had seen some tents in the DZ.

He gave the command to kick late, and the cargo landed long, outside of the meadow.

On the next pass they changed the DZ to a different meadow, far away from the one in which we were camping. I remember that the A-22 comprising fuel cans landed in the creek, but the fuel was intact. When **Bruce Nelson** (FBX-81) was pulling the canopies out of the creek, he retrieved two salmon that were trapped inside the parachutes. Dinner tasted great that night!

1988 was a record-setting fire season in Alaska and a record season for the Alaska Smokejumper Paracargo program. C.R. Holder was in charge of the Paracargo department at that time, and we had 13 smokejumpers who spent most of the ’88 season kicking paracargo.

We started out that record season working 18 hours a day for the first week or so; then we converted to a day/night shift after that.

A typical flight out and back to Fire A-119 was four hours, so a lot of days we spent eight hours in the aircraft and the rest of the day rigging. The Ft. Wainwright ramp was filled with A-22s of water, pallets of MREs, A-22s of miscellaneous items, rollagons, etc. There were two days that year where we delivered over 100,000 pounds in one day, an amazing feat by any standards.

By time the season was finally over, we had delivered 151 rollagons and 1,552,360 pounds of cargo by parachute. We had a few missions that were just water where we put on 11 pallets of 36 five-gallon cubies on one load.

Both Argosy aircraft flew an enormous amount of hours that summer. N1430Z had the vertical opening clamshell door, which was used for paracargo and N896U had the horizontal opening door, which was used for point-to-point missions. The Argosy had 44 feet of roller track inside of the aircraft, not counting the 10-foot section that we would install on the ramp.

We delivered just about everything you could imagine by parachute that season including MREs, fresh food, water, fuel, Zodiacs, outboards, Xerox machines, pumps, saws, etc. We flew a total of 56 missions to A-119 alone, delivering 963,673 pounds of cargo, including 122 rollagons.

On one mission we lost an engine in 30Z, so we returned to Fairbanks so it could be worked on. We turned T-84, the old KC-97 Stratotanker (refueling tanker turned retardant tanker owned by Hawkins & Powers), into our new paracargo aircraft, N1365N. The chief pilot was Bob West, and we used this aircraft for a while in place of the Argosy.

It had a payload of approximately 32,000 pounds with three hours of fuel, so it increased our capacity over the Argosy – approximately 22,000 pounds. We flew one mission where we had eight rollagons on board, delivering 4,000 gallons of fuel in a single mission. We also used the Casa 212s on PC missions, along with the Skyvan and Volpars.

Following is the list of jumpers who worked in the Alaska Smokejumpers paracargo section during that record season: **C.R. Holder** (MSO-70), **Scott Dewitz** (FBX-82), **John Gould** (FBX-81), **Dalan Romero** (FBX- 83), **Richard Fort** (FBX-80), **Mel Tenneson** (FBX-86), **Mike Tupper** (FBX-85), **Al Seiler** (FBX-85), **Mickie Nelson** (FBX-83), **Jeff Nelson** (FBX-85), **Mitch Decoteau** (GAC-78), **Leonard Wehking** (FBK-85), and **Troop Edmonds** (CJ-66).

We also utilized three ex-smokejumpers extensively

as loadmasters for the season. They were **Don Bell** (IDC-69), **George Rainey** (RAC-68) and **Jay Peterson** (ANC-71). Primary pilots for the Argosy were Lee Svoboda and Bill Babcock.

N1430Z was proposed for smokejumper evaluation in 1985. There were serious concerns over the projected drop speed (125-130 mph), because the Smokejumper Screening and Evaluation Board specifications called for a maximum drop speed of 115 mph. At the time the FS-12 had not been tested at these speeds. The FS-12 was tested in the fall of 1985 and it was determined that “the FS-12 canopy possessed an adequate strength and safety margin for repetitive operational deployments Argosy drop speeds.” Field evaluation of the Argosy was not accomplished during the 1986 fire season. The aircraft never made it on the approved smokejumper aircraft list.

The last 500-gallon fuel rollagon delivered by the Alaska Smokejumper Paracargo Program was kicked to me on the Old Crow Fire near Old Crow, Yukon, Canada, in 1990. Both Argosy aircraft were taken out of service in 1991 – they were offered to the Bureau of Land Management for one dollar.

Svoboda and Harry Barr piloted the aircraft with a Spitfire escort to the Museum of Flying at the Santa Monica Airport Dec. 23, 1991. Aircraft N1430Z was located there and every two to three weeks a run-up was done on the aircraft to keep it in top flying condition.

The local community watchdog group complained about the distinct whine that the aircraft made, so Lee and Harry flew the aircraft to the Lancaster County Airport Dec. 31, 1992.

Sometime later the engines were removed from N1430Z, and the aircraft was left parked on the airfield. A friend of mine took some pictures of it a few years later, and it appeared that the local pigeons had made N1430Z their home – a sad ending for a rare historical aircraft. We used to stencil a unique cargo box with two parachutes on the nose of N1430Z every time we did a drop in 1988.

The “nose art” was impressive, given the magnitude of the season, but the sun had taken its toll, and the stencils were hardly visible anymore. You can read more about the Argosy on Wikipedia, and there is a picture of N1430Z (formally XP447).

In 1988, only the U.S. military and the Russian military may have kicked more cargo than the Alaska Smokejumpers, but we did it all in a few short months with only 13 people. It was truly a remarkable year. I would like to thank every smokejumper, pilot, loadmaster and dispatcher involved in making it happen. I truly believe this season cannot be duplicated. 🍷

NSA Participates In Forest Service Reunion In Vail

by Doc Smith (Missoula '59)

Fred Cooper (NCSB-61) and I represented the National Smokejumper Association at the U.S. Forest Service Retirees "Rendezvous in the Rockies" reunion in Vail, Colo., Sept. 16-21. The NSA received welcomed recognition as a sponsor from the retirees; Fred and I made numerous visits with retirees, several of whom were jumpers.

Perhaps the highlight was a demonstration by Matt Galyardt (MYC-02) with his smokejumper gear: including suit, main, reserve, PG pack, let-down rope, etc. Matt brought his gear on the gondola to the top of Vail Mountain where a barbecue was held for more than 400 of the attending retirees.

Matt represented the jumper program and competed very well for the attention of attendees against other celebrity acts: such as the Fiddlin' Foresters; Joe Wiegand, portraying President Theodore Roosevelt; and the Rocky Mountain Pack Train with their horses and mules.

Matt is a current jumper, having made 170 jumps. Wow – what a personable, knowledgeable, friendly and outgoing guy. Many of the retirees visited with him and were impressed. He is a great representative of the jumper program.

Matt suited up Scott Fitzwilliams, forest supervisor



Matt Galyardt (MYC-02), Fred Cooper (NCSB-62), Hiram "Doc" Smith (MSO-59) at USFS Reunion Vale, Colorado, Sept. 2012. (Courtesy Fred Cooper)

of the White River National Forest, and Dale Bosworth, one of the six retired Forest Service chiefs participating in the Reunion. Later, Fred and I suited up and demonstrated PLFs. The suit and gear are twice as heavy as they were back in the "old days." The "suiting up" was a big hit and the crowd took many photos.

Matt is to be recognized by NSA for the great job he did as a smokejumper representative. I talked to Matt about the need for young and active jumpers joining the NSA. He "heard" what I had to say and will carry the message back to McCall. 🍷

Are You Going to Be "Temporarily Away"?

As more of our membership moves with the weather, I am getting an ever-increasing number of *Smokejumper* magazines returned by the post office marked "Temporarily Away." Since we mail the magazine via bulk mail, it is not forwarded, and we are charged first

class postage for its return to me.

If you are leaving your mailing address during the months of March, June, September and/or December, please let me know. I can hold your magazine and mail it upon your return OR mail it to your seasonal address. Please help us save this *triple mailing expense*. My contact information is on page three.

Another option is *join our electronic mailing list*. 🍷

ODDS AND ENDS



by **Chuck Sheley**

Ron Morlan (RAC-69): "I'm writing to let everyone know that I retired from federal service on August 2nd after forty-one years. For twenty-four years, I worked as the Comptroller of U.S. Air Force Non-appropriated Funds on McChord Air Force Base. I left smokejumping to work as a mild-mannered accountant, but my seven fire seasons as a smokejumper were by far my most rewarding years. I became a Life Member several years ago, since I felt that my smokejumping experiences helped form me as a better employee and supervisor."

Carl Gidlund (MSO-58) has been named "Hayden Citizen of the Year" by the community of Haden Lake, Idaho. Carl has lived in Hayden for 16 years and is active in community service. Congratulations Carl. Thanks to **Fred Ebel (MSO-57)** for passing along this information.

Jim Rabideau (NCSB-49): "The actions of **Rod Snider (NCSB-51)** on the Higgins Ridge Fire are not a bit surprising to those of us who knew and worked with him at NCSB. I met him in '52 after my return from another tour of the Navy (50-52). Those who haven't met Rod might be surprised at his small size physically. That was and is no measure of the man. As his actions showed in August 1961, he was the ultimate, dedicated, team player. He became a military-trained pilot shortly after leaving NCSB. If I had to go to war, I'd want Rod along side me, as I know I could always depend on him. Hope he's still in good health and enjoying life."

Ray Honey (NCSB-55): "The October issue of the magazine had an article by **Ross Parry (MSO-58)** titled: "The Longest Walk-Out." He stated that **Ray Honey (NCSB-55)** was one of the jumpers on this incident. I was a firefighter on the Los Angeles City Fire Dept. at that time. I am writing this so that maybe the correct person may get the credit for the actions taken at this incident."

Ron Thoreson (CJ-60): "I've read emails from several folks about the Forest Service's questionable performance on the Pole Creek Fire in Oregon. Unfortunately, poor performance is service wide in the USFS. We vacationed at Lake Almanor in



northern California the last two weeks of August 2012. We had constant soot, ash and smoke from the Chips Fire in the Plumas NF. Like the May 2012 fire on the Lincoln national forest in New Mexico, the Chips Fire had reportedly been containable (at 25 acres), but crews were pulled off because it was rocky and rolling, burning debris could have injured fire crews. The Chips Fire started on July 27 and was contained on August 31 at 74,000 acres. Remember when we used to attack fires in rocky areas to contain them before they got to more valuable forest lands and fiery debris was just part of the job to deal with?

"In addition to their woefully inadequate fire control actions, other aspects of the once proud USFS are equally shabby. Last year a friend and I tried to find an old fishing spot in the Lassen NF. We found most roads unmarked that earlier would have had numbered markers in place. We also came upon an unattended meth van covered with heavy plastic. On an earlier trip I had found the Caribou wilderness jump-off parking lot closed and moved down the hill so the elitists on Silver Lake with their 99-year leases couldn't see it. The campground which had been on the shore of Silver Lake for generations had also been moved down the hill in a dirty, dusty spot. The cabin leasers had also put up no trespassing signs around their cabins to keep fishermen from accessing what was clearly public property in a national forest.

"In the USFS that I knew 50 years ago, none of this could have happened. We used to make about \$2 an hour. I'm told firefighters now can make nearly \$100,000 a year with their overtime. While they flee from burning debris, I hunted a serial arsonist on my own time just for my amusement. I don't know what, if anything, can be done to restore the USFS to its former stature and competency. I suspect it's simply symptomatic of the decreasing effectiveness of all levels of government and their lack of pride. As I heard recently, if the government were put in charge of the Sahara, in two years there would be a shortage of sand! Sad but true. I'm glad we were there when courage and character and competency still mattered."

Major Boddicker (MSO-63): “We had several big fires here in northern Colorado this summer. The High Park Fire burned down to 1.5 miles from my house. It was interesting to study both the tactics used to fight it and the fire behavior created by a *wilderness* designation, an enormous 40-year fuel load, and steep-sided, bowl-shaped configurations of the terrain. It was the perfect firestorm. I have a cabin about five miles southwest of where it started, and I watched it from the moment it started blowing up. Awesome.

“The smoke cloud was shaped and rolled like a tornado laid on its side. We live just under the lower right-hand edge of it as it spiraled to the northeast. For three days there was little anyone could do or did do. It was *get out of the way*. If water was handy, they pumped and stopped buildings along the river from burning. One thing about it was the obvious choices available, get out of the way and watch for your chance. It stopped when the fuel ran out. A quick-response 4-manner would have stopped it before the fire got loose.

“The Cache La Poudre Wilderness, for the most part, has never been logged. The Forest Service kicked the cowboys out about 1982. Too much cow poop on the trails used by 20 hikers per year.

So there was a huge contiguous cover of flash fuels, including several hundred thousand recently beetle-killed lodge pole and ponderosa pines. What a combination. Now it is at ecological Zero—start from cooked gravel and rock towards recovery. Of course, they couldn’t even use chain saws to fight that part of the fire. That resulted in two firestorms that blew across the Poudre River like water out of a high-pressure hose and singed off several mountain subdivisions. Nobody talks about that.”

A big “thanks” to **Mike McMillan (FBX-96)** for all the work that he has done for me as editor of this magazine. Annually we print the “Touching All Bases” column which is a summary of what each base did during the last fire season. Personnel changes are noted and we can see who has moved on and who have been promoted. This column is well read by the current jumpers. It is also the most difficult column to put together as it is a real problem to find someone at each base who will sit down and do the writing.

Since 2004, Mike has been the person “cracking the whip” and going after each bit of information and meeting my deadlines. His excellent wildfire photos have been on our covers many times. Thanks again Mike for doing so much for the NSA and *Smokejumper* magazine. 🍷

Insubordination, Refusing To Get Skin Bubbled – The King Creek Fire, Part II

by Major L. Boddicker (Missoula '63)

The King Creek Fire occurred in July 1969 between Chicken and Eagle, Alaska. In Part I (*Smokejumper*, July 2012), I described the unusual fire jump and preliminary events of the first two days on the fire. Boddicker, the author, brash and not tactful, had managed to piss off the National Park Service fire boss. Part II picks up the story on the morning of the third day.

The next morning at 5, we had another great breakfast at O’Brien’s. Then, I was informed to get my gear for an extended stay; I was to be assigned as a sector boss on the hot, southwest half of the fire front. A pickup crew, originating out of Seattle, was waiting for me to put them to work at the top of the mountain just above the hot front of the fire. It was eight days before I saw my smokejumper buddies again.

The fire boss waved me over to the chopper, and I put

my gear in the side rack and climbed in. The fire layout was simple enough. King Mountain lay north of King Creek and ran west-northwest from the road. The fire had blown up two mornings in a row about 9 o’clock and roared on up the valley on the north side of the creek, the south-facing slope of the mountain.

Some of the fire rolled over the mountain on the north face, but I did not get a view of that and do not remember it as being an issue.

Viewing the fire from the chopper, at that early hour, showed about 1,000 acres from the fire front backward, with hundreds of small smokes drifting up through the green and dead timber. As the sun came up and over the south and eastern ridge, it heated up the fuel from the top of the ridge downward.

The upper part of the fire front was well on its way to heating up. Fire had crept along on the surface, under

the higher fuels all night, and lurked there ready to fire off like a struck match. The conditions around the fire, the terrain angles, sun exposure, abundant fuel, and prevailing wind behavior in a place like that said: **Stinking death trap – Mann Gulch No. 2.** I remember thinking, *Oh, s— . This could be a short day.*

The fire boss didn't speak until we got almost to the helispot; then he pointed to a prominent ridge that ran west-southwest from the mountaintop off into the distance.

"See that ridge? That is where you are to take this crew and make a stand. Got it? Think you can handle that?" he ordered in a loud sneer.

"Ten-four," I said. *No f— way!* I thought. At 9 a.m., that entire 1,000 acres or more would blow up like a match and kill everything inside and in front of it.

So, the chopper landed, the fire boss got out and I followed, grabbed my gear and we walked over to the crew of pounders who were standing ready to meet their new boss. Cripes, these guys were the sorriest group of firefighters I had ever seen. They were filthy, had ragged clothes, droopy eyes with that *I've-been-on-fires-for-a-month* glaze in their eyes. Some were recent Vietnam vets.

I nodded greetings to them. I was pretty rough-looking myself.

The fire boss walked up in front of the crew and addressed them like this, as best I can remember:

"Good morning. I'm fire boss, Bigman Park Service (fictional name). Today you will have the responsibility of defeating this fire by stopping it on the ridge right down there (he pointed to the ridge). Smokejumper Boddicker will be your crew chief.

"I want to warn you that he is on my s— list for being an insubordinate, incompetent employee. In my judgment, I am putting him here because he can't possibly screw this up. When this fire is over, I will be asking you for a report on Smokejumper Boddicker's behavior, so watch him. Now, go put the fire out."

The fire boss spun and walked quickly to the chopper, jumped in and lifted off.

I remember thinking, *Whoopee. Now what?*

I stood there on that bright Alaskan morning thinking, *Wow what a total screw-up this is.* I didn't say anything for a few minutes because I was groping with putting a plan together to get us through the day safely.

"When is the last time you had a chance to clean up?" I asked in a quiet voice. All eyes were on me wondering as to how I would react to the fire boss' dressing down.

"Twelve days ago," was the reply.

"Be sure to pick up a couple of bars of soap from the fire packs. If you have a change of socks and underwear, bring them," I suggested.

I reached for my ditty bag, zipped it open, pulled out

my .44 Magnum Super Blackhawk revolver (my Bigfoot repellent) and buckled my cartridge belt and holster on. Then I looked up, hesitated for a couple of minutes, and then addressed the crew: "The fire boss accurately introduced me. I am insubordinate; I get that way when the boss doesn't have a f— clue what he is doing.

"Look down there – the ridge he ordered us to go and make a stand. Look at the smoke rolling up through the timber and brush. About 9 a.m., everything from the ridge down to the creek will burn up. We are not going to be there. Look down there. See the creek and bright green strip? That will not burn, and that is where we will be. Any questions?" I said in a loud and firm voice. This crew was not wanting a pussy for a boss.

No questions.

"Bring three meals of rations each. Your fire tools have been assigned to you. See the ridge that runs directly down to the creek? Stay on top of it. See the big meadow about half way down? We will take a break when we get to it. Anyone here with firefighter training or military leadership experience?" I asked.

"Yes, I have a little of both," one man (I'll call him "Sarge") stepped forward.

I noticed one man who looked familiar. "Hey cowboy, don't you do rodeo at South Dakota State University?" I asked.

"Yeah, but I don't volunteer," he grinned.

"What the hell are you doing here?" I asked.

"Jesus, I wish I knew," he replied.

"Well, have faith and do what I say and we get out of this just fine. Cowboy, you take the lead; go directly down to the creek on that ridge. Steady pace, but give these guys a break; they are in sorry shape and packing a lot of gear. Sarge, you take the middle; I'll follow up the rear to be sure everyone



Green Safe Area (Courtesy M. Boddicker)

gets down. Talk to each other all the way. We leave in five minutes," I finished up.

"Don't forget, we will be at the creek at 9 a.m.," I emphasized.

We got into the C-ration cartons and picked up three meals each. They collected what personal gear they wanted to take and scrambled to find soap.

The time was about 7:45 a.m., and we had about three miles downhill to hit the creek if we did not run into any bad going.

Cowboy took off at my signal, and we started down the mountain. Nobody lagged since I was last; I kept up a loud and steady communication with the 16 guys so they could stay oriented. Cowboy had been a good pick. He knew what he was doing and how to navigate through mountainous timber mazes.

What we hiked through was heavy fuel, heating up with thousands of small smokes drifting up. It was scary, to say the least.

The trip to the meadow was steady and, except for one man needing help with a heavy pump, went off without a hitch.

The big meadow was wet and green and inviting with a beautiful cold-water spring bubbling up in the middle of it. We filled up on water, filled our canteens and relaxed.

The sun was starting to put the heat units to the mountainside. The smokes were steadily growing. As we relaxed, I explained to the crew our strategy for the day. We all watched the mountainside and ridge we were supposed to be on.

"When we get to the creek, we take a break. I want you guys to clean up, wash out your socks and underwear, put new ones on, or wring the washed ones out and put them back on. You guys will start growing mushrooms if you don't clean up soon," I said.

We heard a chopper coming.

Oh, s—! I thought. I am in for a royal ass-chewing.

The chopper landed and out jumped the Bigman Park



The Crew (Courtesy M. Boddicker)



Blowup (Courtesy M. Boddicker)

Service fire boss, sputtering furiously, "God damn you!" he yelled. "You are supposed to be up on that ridge. How did you f— this up?" he bellowed.

The crew all collected around me, enjoying the event sort of like buffalo protecting their calves.

"See the smoke rising up through the timber and brush?" I asked. "That whole f——mountainside is going to blow up in about 20 minutes or sooner." He didn't reply but glared at me.

"I'm not dying for a dumb, f——arrogant, a—hole boss who doesn't know what the Hell he is doing, you got that!" I yelled. "Here, you take any or all of this gear and you go up and get skin-bubbled today. It won't take long. After you get barbecued like a weenie on a grill, we will be assigned to roll you into a body bag so you can be the hero of King Mountain and get your name on a brass plaque. Understand?" I yelled back.

He stood there shaking with rage, swearing under his breath that I would be fired and sent off this fire as quickly as he could arrange it. He turned around and stalked back to the chopper.

I tipped my black cowboy hat to the chopper pilot. He grinned and took off.

"Load up, guys. It's getting hot," I ordered.

When we got to the edge of the meadow, a roar became perceptible, which quickly grew. The entire mountain above us transformed into a gigantic conflagration, all burning at once. It must have been visible to the chopper. I wondered what Bigman thought.

"Move your asses," I ordered, and down the mountain we went; there was no need to say another word. The roaring fire above us was all the motivation they needed.

We reached the creek about 9 a.m. The fire was burning up the creek and down the mountain at us. The lower we got, the cooler the temperature and greener the fuels.

"We made it. We made it," I yelled. "We have about an hour to relax and wash up and eat a bite. Then we walk up the creek ahead of the fire. Be ready to move out in an hour," I ordered.

We all stripped and washed clean. It had been 13 days since some of this crew had bathed. Their socks had rotted off in their boots. We washed our socks and underwear with hand soap, wrung them out, and hung them in the sun. It was a great relief and morale boost for the crew.

From our position on the creek, we had a quick and safe escape route by jumping the creek and hiking out into the green, wet flood plain. We could flank the fire and double back on it. South of King Creek was a wet and green blueberry bog that was one-quarter to one-half-mile wide, with no trees. The fire was not going to burn there.

By 10 a.m., the fuels on the bottom of the north side of King Creek were burning. We could tell by the smoke and noise from the creek below us it was time to move. So, we loaded up the gear and began the hike up King Creek. There was a clear game trail along the creek bottom with only the occasional downed snag across it.

The lead guys cut the snags out with our chain saw, so we made quick progress. This trail served as a fire line and held the fire to the north side of King Creek. The climb up the creek was gradual and not an unpleasant hike. Occasionally, the smoke and heat from the fire behind us would remind us of what we were hiking away from. The fire on the ridge sent a towering smoke cloud into the sky, reminding us that we were damned glad we weren't there.

My plan was simple: hike the men and gear along the fire front at the southwest corner of the fire until the fire did its predictable laydown around 6 p.m., then rest and eat, take a quick nap. At 9 p.m., when the fire was behaving itself, hit it with all we had.

Instead of building a fire trench in front of the fire, we cut the burn line and tossed it back into the ashes. We could cover twice the distance with the same effort. There were three guys on the crew who were great with the chain saw. They were to knock out the downed timber at the fire edge and standing timber near the edge.

The guys got up from their naps, ate a meal of rations, and hiked back one-quarter mile to the fire front on the creek where they started cutting the fire's edge and tossing it back into the ashes.

The night weather was perfect. The crew hauled ass and covered roughly three miles of line in nine hours. By 6 a.m., we hooked up with a crew who came in from the back side of the mountain. I then assigned part of the crew to patrol and improve the line to be sure it would hold for the next day's cycle. The balance of the crew knocked off for rations and a good sleep. I rotated the crew about noon.

As we were working the fire, the chopper had brought in rations, camping gear and pumps for mop-up. That

evening, about half my crew was choppered out to work on a hotter sector of the fire. We settled in, setting up a comfortable camp, patrolling the fire line, and putting out hot spots near the lines for the next six days.

In our sector, the fire was basically out, with very scattered hot spots well back from the fire line. What was left of my crew, including Sarge and Cowboy, stayed busy widening the line and cutting snags and downed timber close to the fire line. It was like a relaxing campout.

The characters I had on the fire in this crew included a survivor of Auschwitz with numbers tattooed on his arms (Julius Kusz) and Alex, a Nazi soldier who had fought all the way to Moscow, just missed being pinched into the Stalingrad disaster, and fought all the way back to Berlin and west to the American lines, where he was captured several days before the war ended.

The discussions between the Polish soldier-Auschwitz survivor and the Nazi soldier were stories I will never forget. We don't know and never will know suffering like that.

There was a British guy who had all three species of human lice: head lice he caught from an Asian Indian maiden, body lice he hosted from a New Guinea black gal, and crab lice he got from a young lady from Vietnam. He would proudly show them off. When anyone gave him crap, he would threaten to sleep in the *crapper's* sleeping bag when the offender was out on the fire line.

There was a French-Canadian alcoholic, who was struggling with his addiction. He tried to make raisin jack on the fire, but the bacteria and yeast from the filthy shorts with which he covered his distilling can brewed up liquor that gave him magnum diarrhea and severe stomach cramps.

Being the boss of that crew was a big challenge. Fortunately, Sarge and Cowboy were great helpers, dependable and supportive. 🍷



L-R: The Brit (louse man), Cowboy, Unknown, Frenchie, Unknown. Foreground: Julius Kusz (Auschwitz survivor)
(Courtesy M. Boddicker)

Book Review

THE TINDER BOX: HOW POLITICALLY CORRECT IDEOLOGY DESTROYED THE U.S. FOREST

The American public has been complaining about the U.S. Forest Service's deterioration for many years. Yet no one seems to have arrived at an answer as to why it is in such decline, other than to blame the environmentalists and the long string of legal suits the agency has lost against them.

Some 10 years back, Christopher Burchfield, author of the above-titled book [and this review], came across a cache of documents filled with directives, letters and court testimony demonstrating that as early as 1979 the Forest Service decided to significantly increase the number of women employed in Region 5 (comprising California's 18 national forests). It did so by entering into the Bernardi Consent Decree.

The step was taken, despite declarations from the Justice Department and a federal judge that the agency was making good progress as it was in its outreach programs. Placing the Forest Service at further risk was the fact that so few women were working toward college degrees in forestry, fire science, and other disciplines essential to natural-resource management.

The program had little initial impact on the employees and the forests they were managing because of terrible planning among Region 5 staffers.

Then in 1982, in collusion with their legal opponents, the Equal Rights Advocates, the Region 5 forester (with the chief forester's assent) signed off on a new attachment to the Bernardi Decree,

pledging that by 1986, 43 percent of employees in all disciplines – and each grade within – would be female. The Forest Service did so without consulting Federal District Judge Samuel Conti, who was presiding over the decree.

Efforts to reconfigure the region's workforce thereafter became enormous – so enormous that by 1984, it had struck California's forests, in the words of one employee, with all the force of "a neutron bomb."

Still, that very year the regional forester realized that he would never reach 43 percent parity in those positions most important to resource management. Thus, he and his consent decree panel decided that 43 percent overall apportionment would suffice.

To achieve that goal, hundreds of indoor positions in the regional and forest supervisor offices were turned over to women. This decision was also made without Conti's assent.

While agency heads accepted that plunging, work-force morale was a hard fact of life, they never understood their backstairs agreements with the ERA had converted Conti into an implacable enemy.

The agency went before Conti in May 1985 and asked that he end the decree. The judge, ignoring the multiple tables and charts demonstrating that great numbers of women were holding high office positions, savagely berated the service for its failure to reach 43 percent in fire, forestry, and numerous other field professions.

He then ruled that Region 5

was not in compliance.

In Burchfield's words, "The Forest Service had stepped into a bear trap of its own setting." In truth, the agency was unable to extract itself from the trap until 1992.

The horror stories told to the author by the employees are thereafter recounted in stark detail; during this period he was able to gather seven additional collections of documents.

Indeed, men who had been working in their positions for years were forced to train women to assume those very positions. Hundreds more, possessing years of experience, saw women with as little as two years experience become their supervisors.

Sophisticated programs were developed to ensure men would never learn of the hundreds of job slots created by the regional office. Scores of listings were composed in the most egregious manner. One of the more preposterous was an announcement by the Six Rivers National Forest for a dispatcher, that led with the following: "Only the Unqualified May Qualify."

Fantastic as it may seem, the agency also launched a "Gender-Hostile Tool Hunt." Smaller, lighter tools replaced tools that were deemed too heavy or required too much torque for female employees to operate.

As the Consent Decree Committee had forecast, from 1984 onward Region 5 began hemorrhaging male employees in great numbers. In many instances experienced old hands were simply bought into re-



tirement to be replaced by “green” employees,” who had little knowledge of forestry operations. Thus did disappear the forest militia and the institutional knowledge, built up over the many years, so essential to forestry management.

The consent panel’s obsession with hiring the unqualified over the qualified resulted in a further backlash.

Many women resented being thrust into positions they were not eligible to fill. Job postings were often so horribly worded that many women residing on the Eastern Seaboard, upon arriving in California, were horrified to learn their jobs bore little resemblance to the ones they had applied for.

The retention of women thus evolved into a dilemma that persists to this day.

Not quite made explicit in *The Tinder Box* is why the Forest Service, upon realizing that it was no longer managing its forests, declined to go back before Judge Conti and make a plea.

Something along these lines: *We apologize for our egregious legal error, and our disrespect for the judicial process. We should have known that 43 percent representation in all fields was an impossibility. May the court*

end the consent decree so that we can return to managing the forests the public has entrusted us to manage. But no one in Washington or San Francisco ever summoned the intestinal fortitude to make such a plea.

Despite the catastrophe that had overtaken Region Five by 1987, the other eight forest regions also began profiling their applicants by gender, as opposed to proficiency. Double standards in dealing with male and female employees were emplaced in hopes of retaining the proper ratio of each.

These measures took place despite the fact there was no counterfeit consent decree for the other regions to abide by. Though the emphasis continued to be on women, a great effort was made to recruit minorities. Through the 1990s and into the new millennium, forests across the country recruited inner-city Hispanic and African Americans for seasonal work in fire, recreation and resources, even though aware both groups possessed a strong aversion to rural life.

Fire crews suffered such rates of attrition that by season’s end, many positions had to be backfilled two and three times over. This profiling by group – least likely to succeed – incurred extraordinary budgetary losses, while bringing controlled burns, slash cutting, and other fire-control measures to a near standstill.

There was a similar toll on resources and recreation. Today, the impressive trail systems that once characterized so many of America’s forests are all but a memory.

The blows the agency directed at its once-robust work force and its forests were accompanied by yet another. From the time of its founding, Gifford Pinchot intended that local youths, those living near the forests – some who knew the forest terrain as well as the employees who managed

them – would be hired as seasonals. Within six years those who proved most capable were granted permanent employee status.

In turn they became fire captains, trail crew bosses and recreation specialists. In Pinchot’s view, this was far and away the best means of developing strong ties to local communities. Yet as the 1980s advanced into the 1990s, postmodern forestry dissolved this venerable connection with small-town America.

Of particular interest in *The Tinder Box* are the chapters on “gender studies” – extensively backed up in the notes section. The physical and psychological differences between men and women are not marginal as is often imagined, but in multiple respects significant.

Also covered in detail is the Male Class Complaint, which arose after forest service employees learned that allotting jobs by 43 percent was illegal and not even a part of the Consent Decree. Almost every suit filed by the Male Class Complaint was settled in favor of the plaintiff.

Burchfield worked for the U.S. Forest Service on both the Mendocino and Plumas Forests in the late 1990s and early 2000s as a recreation specialist. He appears to have had no contact with those individuals highlighted in this book and, thus, has no personal ax to grind. Much as in private industry (from which he came), he believes that only those most proficient in background should be hired and the most competent advanced.

Though of conservative persuasion, the author is not an anti-government zealot. He simply believes in the rights of individuals, as opposed to special rights granted to groups of people. His major point is that the forests must be managed under the pre-1968 Civil Service System of *merit*, as practiced by

Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot.

Portions of *The Tinder Box* are not as easy to read as others. While the presence of figures and tables are absolutely necessary in detailing the Forest Service's decline, they could have been presented in a more concise manner. There are also errors pertaining to what individual was occupying what position at which time.

Regardless, a book is now in circulation that conveys to the public the reasons the Forest Service has come to such grief. A door has now been opened to a room that has not

seen the light of day in 30 years.

In truth, *The Tinder Box* suggests that doors to additional dark rooms will be opened. There still exist several substantial collections of documents the author was never able to access. Once examined, perhaps they will shed light as to how policy panels in Washington brow-beat the other eight regions into submitting to multicultural rule.

Unlike *The Tinder Box*, where all the heroes are "ground pounders" (GS-13 and below), there may emerge a volume with heroes at the forest supervisor or possibly regional office level. That is, those

who under pain of dismissal drew a line in the sand to defend the careers of their employees and the forests they managed from the grasp of the Washington Office.

The Bernardi Consent Decree Case No. C73-1110-SC Accession #21-95-0050, Location #445697

Federal Records Center, San Bruno, Calif. ☐

The *Tinder Box* can be ordered through the Stairway Press website – www.stairwaypress.com – or by mail at 1500-A East College Way, #554, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.

ANNOUNCEMENT: R510-026-90 OPENING DATE: 11-20-89 CLOSING DATE: 12-18-89
SERIES/GRADE: GS-462-5/6 (TARGET GS-7)
TITLE: FORESTRY TECHNICIAN
LOCATION: SIX RIVERS N.F. CITY/ST: EUREKA, CA.

THIS POSITION IS INTERCHANGEABLE WITH R510-122-89, GS-462-5/6 (TARGET GS-7)

PROMOTION POTENTIAL: THIS IS AN UPWARD MOBILITY POSITION WITH A TARGET GRADE OF GS-7. ENTRY LEVEL IS AT THE GS-5 LEVEL. ~~ONLY UNQUALIFIED APPLICANTS FOR GS-5 WILL BE CONSIDERED. THE SELECTED EMPLOYEE MAY BE PROGRESSIVELY PROMOTED TO THE GS-7 LEVEL WITHOUT COMPETITION UPON MEETING QUALIFICATIONS, TIME-IN-GRADE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE. SELECTION WILL BE BASED UPON POTENTIAL TO PERFORM THE TARGET JOB.~~

AREA AND LEVEL OF CONSIDERATION: Region-wide. This announcement is open to all Forest Service employees having competitive status. ~~Applications will be accepted from UNQUALIFIED applicants only.~~ Applications must be received by the closing date of the announcement to be considered. Applications must be submitted whether or not a voluntary application was previously on file.

DUTIES: Serves as Assistant Dispatcher and performs related administrative duties.

TOUR OF DUTY: Permanent Full Time.

QUALIFICATIONS: ~~ONLY UNQUALIFIED APPLICANTS MAY APPLY.~~ Applicants will be rated against the OPM X-118 qualification standards to determine what is needed to qualify for the target position. A training agreement will be developed for the selectee to provide the necessary training in order for the individual to train towards and be promoted into the target position upon meeting all requirements.

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION, REFER TO THE OPM X-118 HANDBOOK IN YOUR PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT. APPLICANTS MUST MEET X-118 AND TIME-IN-GRADE REQUIREMENTS WITHIN 60 DAYS AFTER THE VACANCY CLOSES.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Ability to learn dispatching procedures for numerous and varied "First Responder" resources to Emergency situations.
2. Ability to acquire knowledge of Computer Systems used in the support of the Aviation and Fire Management program.
3. Ability to acquire knowledge of fire fighting techniques and terminology, fire behavior, air craft and related equipment utilized in the suppression of wildfires.
4. Ability to learn to communicate verbally.

1990 job announcement for GS-5 Forestry Tech. Note that "Only Unqualified Applicants May Apply."

The Legacy And Retirement Of Tony Loughton

by Josh Voshall (Redding '03)

This past spring, Tony Loughton (RDD-83) retired at the ripe old age of 57. This was an end of an era for the Redmond Smokejumpers and a beginning of a new era as well.

Tony first applied to smokejumping in 1982 and was picked up by the Missoula Smokejumpers that year. Unfortunately for Tony, though, he was injured in a logging accident which took place on a log landing. By Tony's account, he was crushed by a log which ruptured some internal organs. So he had to forego his rookie training in Missoula.

Tony was offered a rookie spot the following year, but this time in Redding. Fortunately for Tony, he was in tip-top shape. From 1983 to 1987, Tony was a Redding smokejumper and a damned good one for sure. The base manager at that time was Dave Nani (RDD-63).

Tony transferred to Redmond in 1988 and thus the "TL" era started at RAC.

Tony has always instilled hard work and ethical practices around the base for the short period of time I've known him. His "let your conscience be your guide" quotes always made you think twice before you did something ridiculous and made yourself look stupid.

His other quote was "keep the passion," which exemplifies the love for the job and the hard work you put into it. These quotes are always with us to become better at what we do and what we hope to achieve in our lives.

Tony was always the first one to get up in the morning and start a cooking fire while on a jumper fire, and he never gave you any grief about it; doing it just made you want to get up earlier than him. That's the type of person he was and still is – leading by example.

I personally have only jumped a few fires with Tony but they were sure memorable ones. The first one that I had jumped with him was in 2003 where a load of jumpers reinforced a load from the basin, and it was a mixed bag of Redding, Redmond and Boise bros.

The fire was called the Hat Fire on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, and it was the 500th jump for Ron Omont (RDD-78). This was a memorable fire for me because we were jumping out of the DC-3, our jump



Tony Loughton (RDD-83) (Courtesy Josh Voshall)

spot was essentially the road, it was Omont's 500th jump before retiring, and I was able to work with legends like Loughton, Ron Rucker (RAC-76), Tony Johnson (RAC-97), Dirk Stevens (RAC-91) and Rico Gonzalez (RDD-99), to name just a few.

If memory serves me well, the fire was around eight acres, not too steep, and a bit of mopping up to do. Tony, whom I really didn't know at the time, has a knack of waking up really early in the morning, so by the time we all went to the fire the next day, there was Tony, mopping up the interior of the fire, just making himself at home in the great outdoors.

Then I believe we ended up demobbing the fire on the third day, on one of those Blue Bird buses headed back down to Redding.

Tony's second home was the loft. If you had a question about parachutes or materials, he knew what it was and if you couldn't find something around the



Josh Voshall (RDD-03) presents retirement gift to Tony Loughton (RDD-83) as Tim Quigley (RDD-79) looks on. The crosscut saw was painted by Gabe Wishart (MYC-07) and the plaque designed by the Voshall family. (Courtesy J. Voshall)

base, he found it for you – sometimes in the not-so-obvious places. He knew RAC, and the people who worked there, like the back of his hand.

He was always well received and well liked to those who knew him. He was always willing to go that “extra mile” to get things done – not only right, but his way.

Speaking of people he knew, it was amazing the people who knew him too! I would go on project work with Tony on the Deschutes National Forest and boy, they knew him or knew of him. Even though he had worked around Central Oregon for many years, he had made a great name for himself and also for the bros.

He also had a lot of friends in the Southeast, or Region 8. If the word “networking” was in use in the '90s, Tony was doing it with **Mark Gibbons** (RAC-87) and Rucker. From the stories that I've heard, the Francis Marion National Forest in South Carolina was the place to be back then.

When the RAC crew went back to Region 8, they worked with some of the local forest employees, one of whom was **Mike Leslie** (RAC-97). Mike, soon after meeting with Tony, Mark and Ron, went into rookie training in 1997. The relationship that the Francis Marion had with the guys from RAC made a lasting impression and was invited back to the forest for many years to come.

Tony had accomplished a lot as a smokejumper. He was a squad leader, spotter, loft foreman and assistant loft foreman. As a spotter, he was probably the best at his job, always accurate and safe. He gave a thorough briefing in the door and hit you hard to get you outta the door. You definitely knew when to get out of the door when Tony was spotting!

He was a great firefighter, but more so, a better

mentor. He had a special way of explaining things, straight to the point!

Since retiring, Tony has since had a couple of surgeries on his anterior cruciate ligament, which he had injured on the last fire jump of his career.

Tony's retirement was mandatory. He came up on the age of 57. He finished his career with 510 total jumps, 259 practice jumps, 241 fire jumps and 10 “other” jumps. Also since retiring, Tony has been seen picking up jumpers on the Three Sisters Wilderness on the Willamette National Forest and as a road guard for the Pole Creek Fire on the Deschutes National Forest. So, we hope Tony is keeping out of trouble, or at least not getting into too much!

I wrote this article on Tony because I have seen articles in the Smokejumper magazine written by authors who have only met these individuals once for an interview. I wanted to do something a bit more realistic and memorable for a man who meant a lot to us on a day-to-day basis. I hope you enjoyed it and if you see Tony around, give him a high-five! 🍷

Get Smokejumper Magazine One Month Ahead Of The Rest

NSA members are signing up for the electronic version of *Smokejumper* that is delivered via email. It is sent in a PDF file that contains everything that is in the hardcopy issue.

The advantages are: early delivery (a month ahead of USPS), ease of storage, and NSA postal expense savings. If you like the hardcopy, you can download and print it at home.

NSA Director **Fred Cooper** (NCSB-62) says: “I will opt to have my magazines delivered electronically rather than via USPS to save us direct \$ in printing and mailing, not to mention your hand labor in processing. I think I mentioned in an earlier message that I'm having other magazines/newsletters delivered electronically. It takes less space to store them electronically and if I do want a hard copy, it is easy to print using the *Fast Draft printer option* which allows printing 48 pages in less than two minutes on my printer and uses a lot less ink.”

If you want to be added to the electronic mailing, contact Editor **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59): cnkgsheley@earthlink.net. 🍷

Cook Named Recipient Of NSA Scholarship

Applying many of the same attributes from smoke-jumping to teaching physical education, **Justin Cook** (NCSB-10) clearly knows the path to his career.

“I consider leading by example as a foundational element to teaching. Smokejumping emphasizes many of the points I hope to pass on to my students – mainly, physical fitness, mental strength, problem solving and teamwork,” said Cook, recently named the recipient of the Art Jukkala-Jon McBride Scholarship.

Cook is pursuing his master’s degree in Physical Education Pedagogy at the University of Idaho. He’s enrolled in his third semester of a five-semester program and notched a 3.71 grade-point average during the first

two semesters.

He’s hoping that a master’s will make him more attractive as a job applicant once he’s done. Unfortunately, he’s paying close to \$17,000 in annual tuition.

Cook has certainly overcome some adversity as a jumper. He burned out of a tree on his 15th and final practice jump during rookie training in 2010; he fell and fractured a lumbar vertebra. That ended any hopes of jumping that year.

However, he rebounded nicely to jump in 2011 and hopes to keep doing it, working nine months as a teacher and three as a smokejumper once employed in education.

“Becoming a part of the smokejumper community has been the proudest accomplishment of my life to date,” Cook explained. “I had the chance to realize a dream, and now I get to live that dream for 4-5 months every summer. I hope to continue to jump even after I start teaching.” 📌

Words From Willi Unsoeld

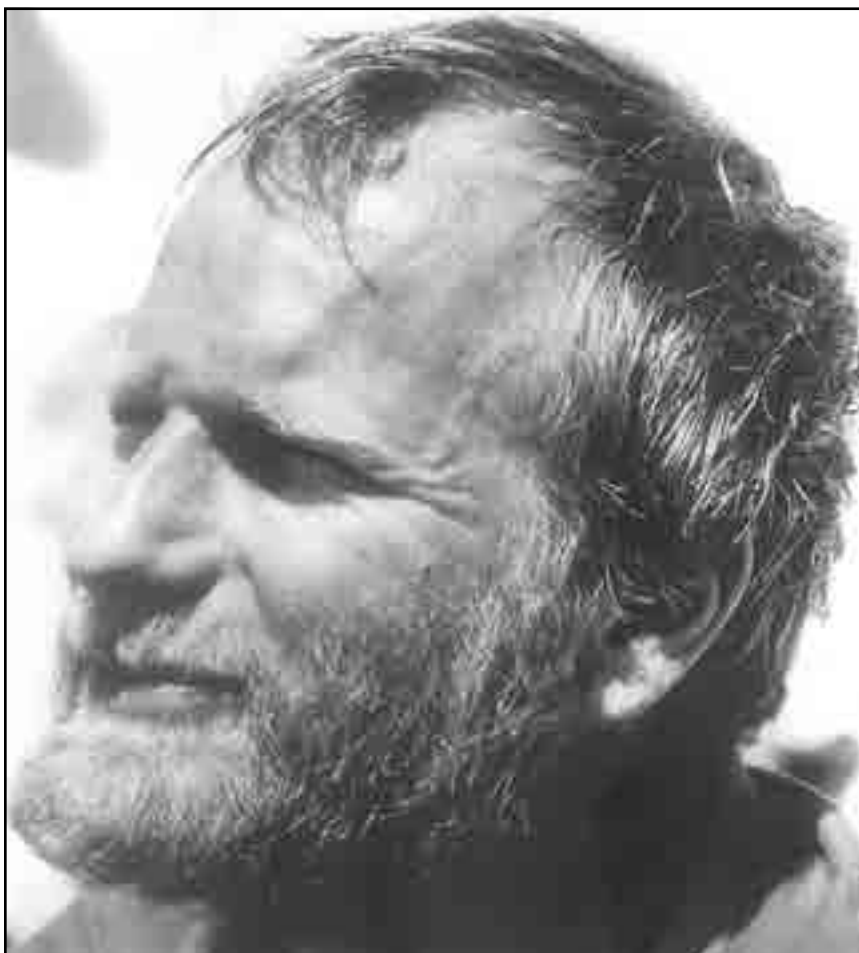
(Cave Junction '50)

WHY DON'T YOU STAY IN THE WILDERNESS?

Because that isn't where it is at. It's back in the city, back in downtown St. Louis, back in Los Angeles. The final test is whether your experience of the sacred in nature enables you to cope more effectively with the problems of people. If it does not enable you to cope more effectively with the problems - and sometimes it doesn't, it sometimes sucks you right out into the wilderness and you stay there the rest of your Life - then when that happens, by my scale of value, it's failed.

You go to nature for an experience of the sacred...to re-establish your contact with the core of things, where it's really at, in order to enable you to come back to the world of people and operate more effectively.

Seek ye first the kingdom of nature, that the kingdom of people might be realized.



Willi Unsoeld (Courtesy Jolene Unsoeld)

(From *The Spiritual Values of the Wilderness*, Unsoeld's keynote presentation at the 3rd AEE Conference in Estes Park, CO, 1978.) 📌

Willi and partner Thomas Hornbein were the first two to ever climb Mount Everest by the West Ridge route (1963).



THE JUMP LIST



The Jump List is intended to bring you up-to-date on your fellow NSA members. Send your information to Chuck Sheley; see his contact information on page three of this magazine.

JEFF R. DAVIS (Missoula '57)
Now living in: Silver City, N.M.
Jumped: MSO 57-66, 78

Since jumping: After busting up on final jump in 1978, tried "flying a desk" at MEDC for a couple of years, but it didn't work; retired on disability and returned to Silver City; have lived there ever since; at first could still hump a pack, so spent a lot of time back in the Gila Forest doing usual solo camping up in the Wilderness District; but at 75, some wheels have started falling off, and was forced to retire my pack and stay closer to the "neon, plastic valleys," and stick with running 6-10 miles a day, a favorite thing of mine to do for years; enjoy the company of my closest son, who lives in nearby Las Cruces, and write up my other son in Seattle every chance I get, using snail mail, because I'm old, you see; write about stuff I'm up to, or about memories of the best years of my life – jumping smoke and falling out of perfectly good airplanes for about 22 years.

Jeff says: "I've been married twice, for a total of 35 years, but they're both dead now and I live alone. My sons are 51 and 46, respectively, and I have a daughter now 43 years old, living and teaching her doctorate stuff in Seattle. My only granddaughter lives in Albuquerque and is studying for her master's at some Center of Magnificent Learning there. Since I have a whole committee of folks living in my mind, to occupy time I often go into a closet and hold serious discussions there."

WALT VENNUM (Fairbanks '62)
Now living in: Sebastopol, Calif.
Jumped: FBX 62-63, 65-66

Since jumping: After finishing a dissertation on the igneous rocks of Castle Crags Wilderness Area in Northern California, was awarded a Ph.D. in Geology by Stanford University, 1971; then worked for the U.S. Geological Survey in southeast Alaska, Antarctica and Saudi Arabia before becoming a geology professor at Sonoma State University near Santa Rosa, Calif.; an Antarctic mountain peak is named after me; was

awarded Antarctic Service Medal by Congress; conducted oceanographic research cruises on the Glomar Challenger, the ship whose scientific work confirmed the theories of plate tectonics and continental drift; much to the chagrin of several former girlfriends I spent seven Christmas/New Year holiday seasons working as a Ph.D. boat boy, giving geology lectures and driving Zodiacs for cruise ships visiting Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic islands; in 2005 married Lois Rice, a former national-class ski racer, whom I'd known for almost 30 years; she has a daughter who is now in her early 30s; Lois and I are both retired and live on an acre of land in a semi-rural setting in California's Wine Country.

Walt says: "We spend most of our time skiing, caving, mountain climbing, river running, going on overseas trekking trips and soaking in hot tubs."

BARRY REED (Missoula '60)
Now living in: Missoula, Mont.
Jumped: MSO 60-61, FBX 66

Since jumping: Earned Bachelor's degree in Forest Management from University of Montana in 1963; served in U.S. Army 1963-65; served Air America in Laos and Thailand 1966-74 as a load master on C-46, C-47, Caribou, C-123 and C-130; attended University of Montana for Business degree 1975-77; worked as auditor for State of Montana 1979-2004; worked as dishwasher at Pizza Hut 2006-09 to get out of the house.

Barry says: "I've worked for Meals on Wheels from 2005 to the present, and volunteered on NSA trail projects 2005-09 for a total of seven weeks, which I enjoyed very much. I've volunteered at MSO's smoke-jumper gift shop Tuesday afternoons from 2005 to the present."

ERNEST O. "DOC" REESING, DVM (Missoula '61)
Now living in: Alpine, Texas
Jumped: MSO 61-62, 65

Since jumping: Practiced veterinary medicine; professor at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas; director of Veterinary Technology program, 25 years, retiring in December 2000; firefighter/assistant chief, Trinity (Texas) and Alpine (Texas) fire departments; president, State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas, 1987-88; guest instructor, Texas A&M

University Municipal Fire School, 36 years; guest instructor, New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy, 21 years; instructor at numerous other fire schools; instructor for TEEX/ESTI at Texas A&M.

Doc says: "I enjoy reading the magazine and really enjoyed the reunion in Missoula in 2004."

TOM BUTLER (Missoula '61)

Now living in: Pottsboro, Texas

Jumped: MSO 61-62, FBX 63-65

Since jumping: Quit second year of teaching school in Nov. 1965 and went to Laos with Air America as an air freight specialist; except for 20 months when drafted into the U.S. Army, stayed until June 1974 as the communists were about to take over; worked later as a school counselor in Oklahoma and some in Texas for 26 years, retiring in 2004.

Tom says: "I have 27 acres in the hills of northeast Oklahoma where I enjoy hunting and relaxing. I've worn out two chain saws on it, so some trail maintenance in the Northwest sounds good. I plan to spend more time in the Northwest and a lot less in Oklahoma and Texas."

ED J. KUROWSKI (Missoula '61)

Now living in: Buena Vista area, Colo.

Jumped: MSO 61-63, 82-84, 85

Since jumping: Professor of Physics in north Idaho until 2006; owner and operator of Wolfridge Timber Farm (forest management), 1973-2006; in summers, U.S. Forest Service fernanfire, 1974-81; returned to smokejumping with start-up of Coeur d'Alene sub base, 1982-87, when jump contract ended; assistant ATBM of tanker base ATCDA, 1988-2006.

Ed says: "I've built several homes or modified them. I'm currently living at Trout Creek Pass on government mining claims, off the grid, at 10,000 feet. I'm also writing an anthology of USFS stories of my experiences as a timber scaler, timber cruiser, smokechase, smokejumper and tanker base manager."

BOB W. "ROBERT" WEBBER (Missoula '62)

Now living in: Hamilton, Mont.

Jumped: MSO 62-64, FBX 65-72

Since jumping: Worked at National Fire Center in Boise, 1973-95, as BLM fire operations officer, national tactical suppression officer, Class 1 incident commander and GHQ commander; served as event photographer at Boise State University, 2000-07; own an event photography and videography business called "Defining Moments" in Hamilton, Mont., since 2008.

Bob says: "Hamilton is perfect for my wife Leona

and me – mountains, wilderness, fly fishing, photography, smokejumper friends nearby – but not in Missoula."

STEVE CARLSON (Idaho City '62)

Now living in: Gig Harbor, Wash.

Jumped: IDC 62-64, 67-69, BOI 70, CJ 71

Since jumping: Worked for Weyerhaeuser Co., 1972-2001 and for EDS, 2001-04; spent six years in Klamath Falls, Ore. and the rest in Tacoma, Wash., in the Information Technology Department.

Steve says: "I've been doing trail crews since 2003. Too much fun."

ERNEST HARTLEY (Missoula '62)

Now living in: El Dorado County, Calif.

Jumped: MSO 62-63, 65

Since jumping: Earned degree from University of Montana; Ph.D. in Plant Ecology from Duke University; teaching at Olney Friends School and University of Colorado; ecological studies in Glacier National Park, 40 years; museum director at Towe Ford Museum, Deer Lodge, Mont. and Sacramento, Calif., 22 years; now retired on ranch near Placerville, Calif.; served on board of trustees at Olney Friends School, Barnesville, Ohio, and Music on the Divide, Georgetown, Calif.

BILL LANEY (Missoula '63)

Now living in: Cliff, N.M.

Jumped: MSO 63-64

Since jumping: Worked for Pacific Western, owned by Phelps Dodge; retired in 2000.

BILL HEACOX (Missoula '63)

Now living in: Hilo, Hawaii

Jumped: MSO 63-64

Since jumping: Following the 1964 season, enlisted in the Navy for pilot training and wound up flying more than 250 combat missions in Vietnam; resigned commission in 1969 and enrolled in graduate school at University of Hawaii, receiving a Ph.D. in Astronomy; spent a few weeks interviewing for space shuttle astronaut job in late 1977 before withdrawing application in favor of research position at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center; eventually wound up back in Hawaii, first as astronomy observatory manager and finally as professor of Astronomy at University of Hawaii-Hilo.

Bill says: "Being a professor is a lot less strenuous than being a smokejumper, but my jumper experience has given me a useful perspective on life that is not available to purely academic types."

JIM SWARTLEY (McCall '63)

Now living in: Boise, Idaho

Jumped: MYC 63-65

Since jumping: Graduated from University of Oregon Medical School in 1970; served as Air Force general medical officer at RAF Lakenheath, 1971-74; resident in ophthalmology at University of Washington, 1974-77; have private ophthalmology practice in Boise since 1977, with retirement planned for May 2011; married to Rhoby 45 years with two sons, David and Bill, both of whom live in Boise with their wives and two daughters each.

STEVE CULBERTSON (North Cascades '63)

Now living in: Billings, Mont.

Jumped: NCSB 63

Since jumping: Currently working as regional sales manager for Employee Benefit Management Services, a claims administrator for self-funded health plans for larger employers (with more than 100 employees); married to Sharon 34 years, the second marriage for both of us; we have four living children – one dead – and 14 grandchildren; also own and operate The Copper Colander, a retail kitchen store in Billings, Mont., where we sell pots, pans, knives, coffee, tea, kitchen gadgets, etc.

Steve says: "Sharon and I are both practicing Christians, active in our church. I like to fish, backpack, golf and hunt."

LARRY PETERS (Cave Junction '63)

Now living in: Pleasanton, Calif.

Jumped: CJ 63-64, FBX 65-68

Since jumping: Earned Bachelor's degree from Oregon State University, 1966; flight instructor in Livermore, Calif., 1968-73; pilot examiner, giving final flight checks for Private through Airline Transport Ratings, 1971-2003; flew for a commuter airline, 1971-74; went back to Alaska and dropped retardant on forest fires, and flew supplies to the North Slope during construction of the Alaska Pipeline, 1974; became chief pilot for a company called CP National, 1975-77; began flying career with Bechtel Corporation, flying its aircraft throughout the world, 1977; became chief pilot at Bechtel, 1990.

Larry says: "I retired from Bechtel June 22, 2007, and I'm now renting myself out as a contract pilot for Bechtel and a few other companies."

JAKE JACOBSEN (Missoula '63)

Now living in: Missoula, Mont.

Jumped: MSO 63, GAC 64, MSO 65-67

Since jumping: Worked as national forest and R-1 regional personnel and firefighter retirement specialist; served as operations chief on three type-1 teams until retiring in 1998 from the R-1 regional office.

JAMES R. "JIM" THOMPSON (Missoula '63)

Now living in: Sandpoint, Idaho

Jumped: MSO 63-64, WYS 65

Since jumping: After years as an engineer and contractor, retired to the family farm in north Idaho; now have own pack mules and no freeways or traffic jams to contend with.

Jim says: "I've been enjoying retirement and have had the opportunity to participate in the trails projects the last few years – great fun."

RAYLAND SCHOLL (Missoula '63)

Now living in: Grandin, N.D.

Jumped: MSO 63, FBX 64

Since jumping: United States Air Force navigator training, 1964; North Dakota Air National Guard Happy Hooligans, radar observer (F-89), 1965-66; U.S. Air Force pilot training (T-37 and T-38), 1967; NDANG (F-102), 1969; NDANG pilot (F-101 Voodoo), 1970-77; NDANG pilot (F-4 Phantom), 4,000 hours, jet fighters, 1977-85; retired from military, 1985; married 44 years to Bonnie; son Randolph died in 2005 at age 37 from an industrial accident; son Jeffrey, 42, lives in Whitefish, Montana, and owns Gravity Shots, piloting remote-control helicopters; daughter Michelle, 41, lives in Fargo, North Dakota, and works for Microsoft; four grandchildren, Henry Randolph (6), Charles (5), Hannah (3) and Hunter (1); retired six years ago, but am a part-time farmer for the renter of my farm; I'm 68 years young.

Rayland says: "I was a sugar beet farmer in the Red River Valley for 40 years (1965-2005), and I've been an elk hunter with my wife in Steamboat Springs, Colo., and in Montana for 38 years (1974 to the present)."

GREG WEST (Fairbanks '64)

Now living in: Saddle Brooke, Ariz.

Jumped: FBX 64-69

Since jumping: Attended law school; became a lawyer; served as judge 23 years; retired from Circuit Court, Salem, Ore.; moved to southern Arizona, 2003; married to Norma since 2006; first wife, Susan, died from breast cancer, 2004; two children, Mark (28), of the Midnight Sun Hotshots, and Jocelyn (32), who has three children. 🍌



Alaska Fire Season 2012
Photo's Courtesy Mike McMillan

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

Retired Smokejumpers Help Buddy Replant After Fire

by Ryan Maye Handy

(Copyright 2012, the Colorado Springs Gazette.)

The ribie goons were young, crammed together in four-wall tents, with usually only a sheepherder's stove to warm them in the wilderness. They spent their days walking string-lines in the northwestern woods, picking ribes associated with blister rust off white pines and waiting for wildfire sirens to sound.

It sounds like a fairy tale.

"How can you tell the difference between fairy tales and smokejumper stories?" asked **Jimmie Dollard** (CJ-52), a former ribie goon-turned-smokejumper. "Fairy tales begin with, 'Once upon a time.' Smokejumper stories begin with, 'now, this ain't no s—.'" "

Dollard worked as a goon during the summer of 1951, between fighting wildfires and before he became a smokejumper.

"We lived in these wonderful camps out in the woods, and had these grandmotherly cooks who fed us like you wouldn't believe," Dollard said.

Dollard spent the next summer in the skies, swaddled in a canvas coat, wearing a leather helmet, and clutching a primitive parachute, at the mercy of a spotter who directed Dollard and other smokejumpers to fires below.

Over a half-century later, it was those two summers as a forest service weed picker and an adrenaline junkie that brought the now-elderly Dollard and other retired smokejumpers to Colorado Springs on Thursday. The Waldo Canyon Fire gave them a chance to reconnect.

The group of retired smokejumpers reunited at the home of **Warren Pierce** (CJ-64), whose Blodgett Peak backyard was ravaged by the Waldo Canyon Fire in June. Pierce's stucco home survived the blaze that ultimately claimed 346 homes.

After he took down dead trees and used straw rolls to block water flows, he was ready to replant. The replanting of his backyard turned into a smokejumper project, one of many over the years undertaken by the group of 13.

"This is the group that has pretty much stayed together for the years," Pierce said Thursday. Pierce was a ribie goon in the 1960s, before he fought fires for four years and flew fuel planes over east Asia. **Bill Ruskin** (CJ-58) was a goon, too. And so was **Ron Siple** (MYC-53), before he took his first jumps in the explosively hot Idaho summer of 1953.

When together, they swap old jumper tales and reminisce about planes with corrugated iron sides, parachutes trapped in trees, and two-day hikes with 80-pound packs.

Despite the cold and the eerily fog-filled charred forests of Blodgett Peak on Thursday, they ribbed each other constantly as they slipped on mud, tripped on stumps, and hefted six-foot pines up the hillside.

Doug Wamsley (MSO-65) scratched his head over the mechanics of the project—the team tried wheelbarrows, all-terrain vehicles and ropes to get saplings up the hill and planted.

"We're the high-tech part of the operation," he explained, while Ruskin and naval veteran **Rich Hilderbrand** (MSO-66) puzzled over a rope-pulley system. "We're gonna harness the mules."

But Ruskin eyed Hilderbrand's rope knots with derision. "You're trying to put a bowline, aren't you?"

Wamsley shook his head. "These Navy guys."

"When two half-hitches would do just as well," Ruskin joked.

Ultimately, the working system was a mixed-method one: Hilderbrand rode the ATV, which pulled the ropes, which were tied to the wheelbarrow, which carried the trees. At one point, Pierce became a part of the equation when he sat on the ATV.

"The safety officer's gonna have a stroke!" Hilderbrand exclaimed, as he revved the engine.

Ruskin's pants were soiled at the knees as he struggled, chuckling, to roll a pine sapling into a hole. Wamsley couldn't keep from laughing himself.

"The three stooges playing in the forest," he said, as he went to grab another tree. ■

Very Important All Members

The NSA would like your feedback. We will be doing some work on the Website in 2013 and want to know what is important to you. Please visit <http://smokejumpers.com/main/websurvey2012.php> between Dec 15, 2012 and January 1st, 2013 to have your say!

Some Random Thoughts

by Troy Kurth (Fairbanks '62)

As I sit here (cough) in Missoula, Mont., Sept. 9, 2012, under the thick unhealthy smoke generated by numerous fires burning in the Bitterroots, I wonder what impact the red-flag wind event will have upon these fires. I have concern for the people assigned to either monitor them or engage in a firefight in an attempt to save property, homes and maybe gain some control. Did we have to put these folks in this most unsafe of work environments?

I wonder what will become of the forests themselves. When will we again benefit from the removal of forest products from the black landscape? Will the fisheries survive? Will the soils be burned to brick or lost in flood? And the people who live and are trying to work in the forest – will they survive yet another economic setback? Why are these events occurring? Why are the people of North Fork and Gibbonsville, Idaho, evacuating their homes, their livestock, and their property? Will they return to their homes? Will the forest survive? Will the wind be without rain or

will a thousand prayers be heard?

Some say fire exclusion has resulted in unhealthy forests; fires must be allowed to burn. There are examples where this can be validated; especially where we did not remove biomass and apply prescribed fire. Nationally, we have adopted fire policy to allow for a fire to be suppressed or not suppressed. On numerous occasions, we have been unable to perform either decision to a satisfactory conclusion. All too frequently, the “line officer” signs the decision document that directs a fire toward “restoring the forest” without consideration for what the restored forest will be, or when restoration will take place. All too often this same “line officer” has a nearly complete lack of professional expertise or understanding sufficient to determine if, in fact, the best alternative is the best alternative to attain long-range forest goals.

Some of us are strong advocates of allowing fires to burn because fire is a natural-change agent. So is the plague. But, we have determined that this change agent should be excluded from our environment



Close to 4,000 jumps standing here in September 2012 photo. L-R: Dan Pierson (BOI-76), Neal Davis (MYC-69), Dennis McCoy (MYC-83), Jerry Ogawa (MYC-67), Rick Hudson (BOI-73), Kevin Labella (NCSB-91), Eric Brundige (MYC-77), Michael Cooper (MYC-86). (Courtesy J. Ogawa)

because the results are unacceptable, even though it could reduce world populations.

Natural-cause agents are continuously changing the forest. The change process in response to basic ecological events are driven by species longevity and inter-action with other species. Some change agents are more apparent than others. The classical relationships between lodge pole pine, pine beetles and fire is one well-understood example.

The Rocky Mountain flora is undergoing a natural adjustment brought about by several natural change agents. This periodic adjustment takes place every 100 to 300 years, depending upon species present and the environment in which they live. This re-occurring change-oriented process has periodically recurred for the past 11,000 years. In the face of climate change,

natural-change agents and the national need for productive forests, it occurs to me that we are focusing completely on the wrong problem and implementing the wrong solution.

We don't have a fire problem or a bug problem ... we have a fuel problem. The argument to let fire burn or not is not the problem or the solution. Fire does not "restore the forest." Fire burns fuel. Living organisms – themselves change agents – restore the forest. And, the several, measurable effects of fire upon the land determines the rate of "restoration" and determines what the "new forest" will be. We are faced with the urgent need to determine what kind of forest we want after the bugs and wildfires take their toll. Then develop and implement policy that result in the forest our nation will need for the next 100 to 300 years. ♣

Monongahela Trail Program Enters 3rd Year—Potential Kentucky Project

John McDaniel (CJ-57) will head up the trail program June 2013 on the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia. Mark June 9th thru the 15th on your calendars for work on the Greenbrier/Marlington District. The crew will be billeted at a local 4-H camp in cabins with showers and eat in the mess hall at the camp. John is inviting all jumpers AND THEIR FRIENDS to join him in this beautiful country. Members and non-

members are invited. A minimum age of sixteen is required. For more information, contact John at: jumpercj57@hotmail.com.

A project on the Daniel Boone NF, Whitley City, Kentucky, is in the works June 16-21. A picnic shelter needs to be built. Food and lodging will be provided. Carpenter skills needed but numbers are important. Contact John on this one also. ♣



2012 Monongahela Trail Project Crew: Back L-R: Steve Anderson (MSO-63), Denis Symes (MYC-63), Hank Brodersen (MSO-54), Rick Blackwood (CJ-79), Dan Mitchell (RAC-78). Front L-R: Bob Miller (MSO-61), John McDaniel (CJ-57), Allen Biller (FBX-82), Tom Oswald (MSO-58), Jack Atkins (MSO-68). (Courtesy John McDaniel)