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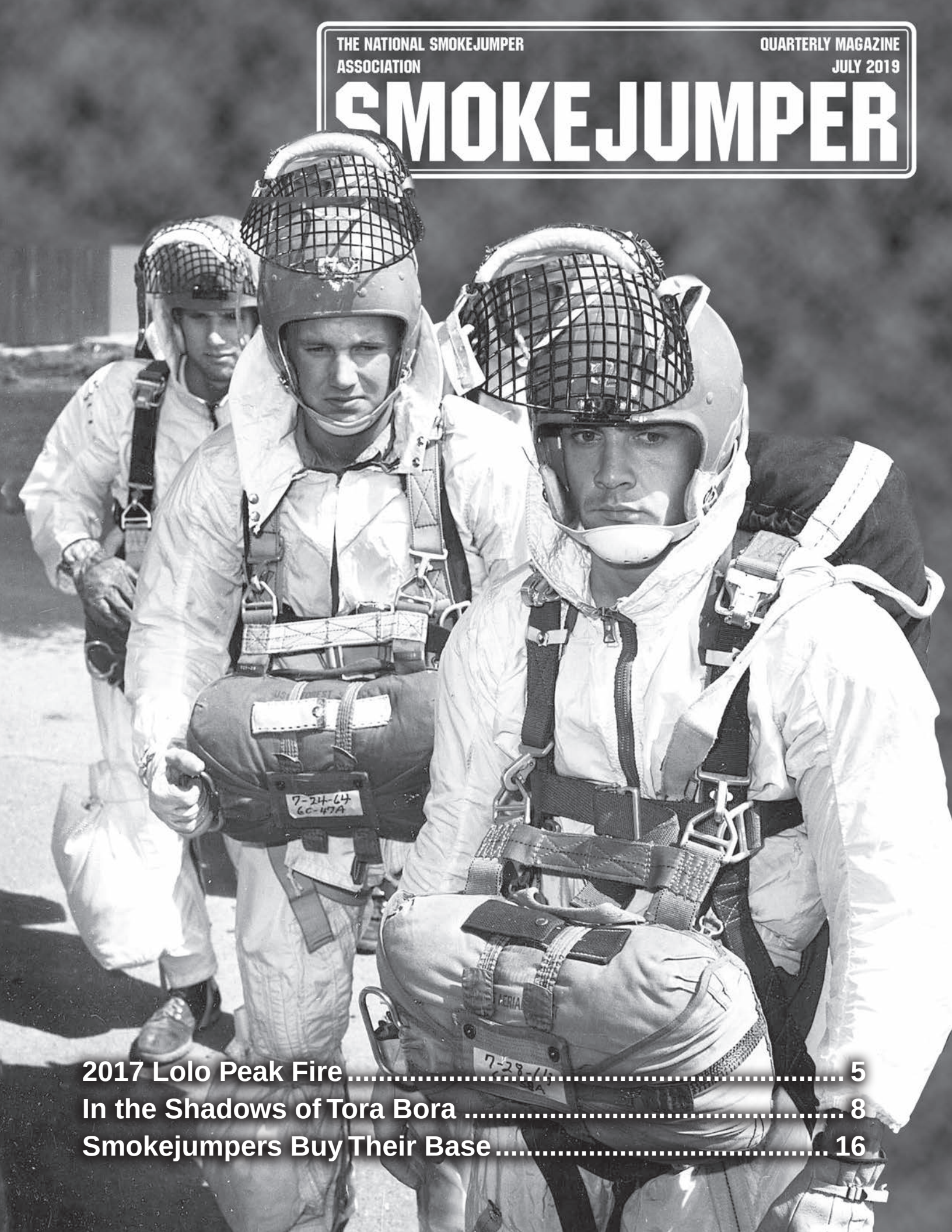
THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
JULY 2019

SMOKEJUMPER



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NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION

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Message from the President

by Bob McKean
(Missoula '67)
President

Editor **Chuck Sheley's** (CJ-59) chronicle of the Camp Fire in the last issue of *Smokejumper* (April 2019) was chilling and insightful. Imagine the panic and fear felt by so many as the Camp Fire roared through Paradise and surrounding foothills, leveling everything in its path: Eighty-six (86) people killed, almost 19,000 structures reduced to cinder, and over 153,000 acres (240 square miles) scorched!

The title of Chuck's article contained an important question that must be considered: "Camp Fire—Future of America's Wildfires?"

In the last two decades, wildfires have grown in size and intensity that few could have imagined. They are immense, devastating and deadly! Millions more acres are burned on average now than ten and, especially, 20 years ago. The human and financial tolls are commensurate. One can only wonder where it will all go from here and how it will affect our children and theirs.

More personally, each spring the NSA Board meets in Boise at the Wildland Firefighters Foundation, where individual photographs of fallen firefighters line the building's walls. I am compelled by the youthful faces of lives cut so short. I wonder what these young people could have been, what contributions they could have made, and about the enduring pain born by loved ones left behind. The number killed in the last two decades is particularly striking.

The smokejumper community is a tight knit group! We share common bonds of friendship based upon a unique, shared experience. We have been or are currently extremely effective firefighters. We love the wild country we chose to protect!

To question is in our smokejumper DNA! As mega fires burn and fire-related tragedies occur, we should question!

Here are the kinds of questions I believe we should be asking. (The following questions do not represent an official NSA position; they evolved from informal conversations with others.)

Climate Change

How is climate change affecting the frequency and size

of wildfires?

What effect do mega fires have on climate change?

Forests/Fuels Management

How can forest management practices be altered to improve forest resilience in the face of climate change?

How can forests and fuels be managed to reduce the intensity and/or rate of spread of wildfire?

When, where, and under what conditions should fires be allowed to burn?

When, where, and under what conditions should control burns be used?

Fire Suppression

Should organizational structures and protocols be adjusted to improve fire management decision-making quality and speed? If so, how? (Are decisions about when, where, and how to fight fires unduly impeded by bureaucracy and competing agencies?)

What can be done to make firefighting, especially initial attack, more effective?

Are the perceived risks of initial attack less or greater than the risks (life and property) of large fires?

Is an increased use of indirect attack (burn out, back firing, monitoring, point protection) contributing to larger fires?

How can smokejumpers and other initial attack crews be used more effectively (dispatch, prepositioning, satellite bases)? Is there a cost benefit to increasing the size of smokejumper and other initial attack programs?

What are the comparable risks/costs of aggressive suppression versus monitoring unplanned fires (let burn) versus large, mega fire containment?

How effective is widespread use of retardant without on-the-ground suppression forces?

Is the use and cost of retardant being evaluated?

Are wildland managers (Forest Service, BLM, National Parks, State and Private) being held appropriately accountable for the costs and impacts of fires that escape initial attack and become mega fires?

Wildland-Urban Interface

What role/responsibility do home owners and communities have to prevent and protect themselves from wildfire?

What role/responsibility do insurance companies have to reduce risk and loss due to wildfire?

What kinds of zoning and land use planning/restrictions would be effective to reduce wildfire and protect structures?

These issues are complex, and NSA has taken no position on them. However, the NSA and/or individual members can and should pose such questions and seek answers. In fact, I believe it is our obligation to do so. In that vein, *Smokejumper* is one venue that can serve as a forum where such issues may be explored. And our readership and influence is not limited to smokejumpers.

Therefore, I challenge those who have the

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***Smokejumper** base abbreviations:*

Anchorage ANC	**Grangeville** GAC	**Redding** RDD
Boise NIFC	**Idaho City** IDC	**Redmond** RAC
Cave Junction CJ	**La Grande** LGD	**West Yellowstone** WYS
Fairbanks FBX	**McCall** MYC	**Whitehorse Yukon** YXY
Fort St. John YXJ	**Missoula** MSO	**Winthrop** NCSB

expertise on these issues to share their perspectives in upcoming issues of *Smokejumper*. It is my hope that a rich, thoughtful dialogue will ensue that will improve understanding and, in so doing, be a positive influence for the future. If you or someone you know is a good candidate to step up to this task, please contact us!

Finally, on behalf of all of us in the NSA, I want to thank Chuck Sheley for his article on the Camp Fire and, most especially, for locating and offering NSA assistance to our smokejumper brothers and sisters affected by the fire.

Incoming NSA President Bob McKean (R), thanks Jim Cherry for his service as President these last seven years. (Courtesy Mike McMillan)

Smokejumper Defines a Smokejumper

by Mike Bina (Missoula '68)

Smokejumper magazine arrived three days ago via US Postal Service. I was across the yard spreading mulch when my wife, Mary, who was checking the mailbox, excitedly yelled and waved the magazine in the air, "Smokejumper!" Later that night I inquired as to where the coveted publication was—eager to read it. Mary stalled me saying, "When I'm done reading about 'The Camp Fire,' I will give it to you. I promise."

Today, finally, I was granted access to the treasure. What typically arrives in the mail are bills and other unwanted garbage, but here in our zip code, the NSA magazine is a rare exception to the rule.

Tonight before dinner, happy hour time—after Mary's thorough read—she asked me a thousand questions about the Smokejumper experience. I was surprised about all her new found interest in my "long ago" summer job.

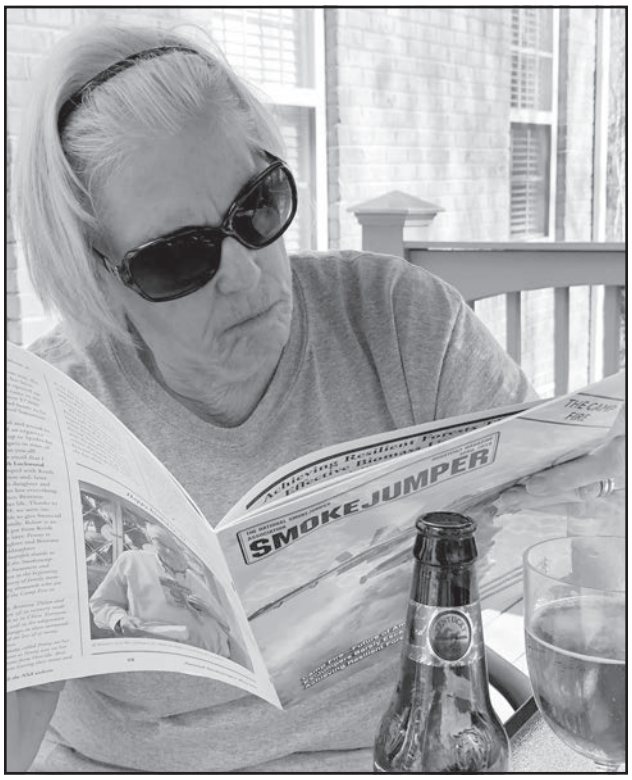
She knew that I was a Smokejumper, but it was your work—the magazine—that brought to three-dimensional life what a Smokejumper *does* and the positive impact "the force" contributes.

Like all of us, we haven't and don't say much

about what we did or regale our friends or family with detail. I think we all fear that if we tell our story, that some will see our tales as being braggadocios. That is one thing I noticed while I jumped back in the late 1960s and now meeting veteran smokejumpers at our reunions—there is a quiet pride and humility among the ranks. Kind of like the rare wide receiver who hands the ball back to the ref in the end zone after scoring without doing the "over the top" after-TD celebration. Act like you have been there before and what you did was the job you were paid to do.

Chuck, I am hopeful you can solve my domestic dispute and competition that has arisen in my family over the magazine. Is it possible that you can please alert me in advance of the pending arrival of the next issue of *Smokejumper* so I can beat Mary to the mailbox? I prefer to have the first read.

Long story short—another great magazine! Attached is a picture of Mary with her nose buried in the publication.



Mary Bina enjoys the April issue of Smokejumper *with a cool one. (Courtesy Mike Bina)*

The 2017 Lolo Peak Fire—And Others—They Didn't Have To Happen

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

It all started with the Whetstone Ridge Fire article by **Ben Smith** (MSO-64) in the April 2018 issue of *Smokejumper*. In this article you can see the frustrations a person has with the USFS when the lands around them are burning. First, it is evident that someone with legitimate questions and knowledge of wildfire is a dangerous person. All of Ben's work has gone into a deep black hole.

I had little knowledge of the Lolo Peak Fire until one of our members called it to my attention. I looked into all of the reports on the USFS websites and gained a lot of information. There was a fatality on this fire. Could this have been avoided?

Then Ben Smith emailed me: "Here is what is even worse about the Lolo Peak Fire—I heard from two reliable sources that a planeload of jumpers was on the way back to MSO because they couldn't jump the fire they were dispatched to. They circled the Lolo Peak Fire, and the spotter radioed that he could jump that fire. He was told to stand down and return to MSO. I wonder if the parents of the kid that died know about that?"

This didn't surprise me at all. I'm still very disturbed about the Biscuit Fire back in 2002 that destroyed 500,000 acres at a base expense of $150 million. The USFS line was that there were not available resources. Total BS!

When that fire started, I immediately went to an NIFC source who gave me the daily reports listing the availability of resources, their location etc. There were over 100 jumpers available plus a lot of crews, mostly Type II. Before you put down

Type II Crews, remember that one of them hiked in and put out one of the fires that started at the same time and in the same area as the Biscuit Fire.

The Start

Lightning July 15, 2017, in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, started the Lolo Peak Fire. Fire management was the responsibility of the Lolo N.F. It was contained on Oct. 31, 2017, at 53,902 acres and a cost of $48.4 million. There was one fatality as a tree he was falling killed Hotshot Brent Witham. Two homes were destroyed, 3,000 people evacuated, and 1,150 residences threatened. (Wikipedia)

Due to the remote location of the fire—steep, rugged terrain,——the decision to go indirect was made. Higher priority fires on the Forest that were imminently threatening communities ***required all available air resources, leaving the Lolo Peak Fire unstaffed for the first two days.*** (*Bold and italics added*-Ed.) (USFS Learning Review Narrative)

Sources confirm that there were smokejumpers available as close as Missoula that day and for the next few days.

On August 17, two homes were burned in a backburning operation by firecrews. Public Information Officer Mike Cole said, "If we had not put, essentially, a giant catcher's mitt of black between the control line and where the fire is coming from, you'd have a whole different scenario of what the Lolo area looks like right now." (KPAX News)

The Incident Management Team (IMT) proposed using chain saws…. Both the Bitterroot NF Forest Supervisor and the Lolo NF Agency Representative, as well as the IMT, were unsure of where the decision authority rested to approve these operations.

(Relating to getting approval to use chain saws) This appeared to be a cumbersome and somewhat confusing web of authorities to track down, which increased both unnecessary communication complexity and the length of the decision-making process. While utilizing mechanized equipment in a specially designated area is not an impossible task, obtaining the required approvals can be viewed as a monumental one. (USFS Learning Review Narrative)

Is this a well-oiled machine that was prepared for the fire season? Are these questions and procedures that could have been done in advance of the fire season?

Isn't Smaller Safer?

Again, time after time, the question is: Wouldn't it be better to contain a fire when it is a tenth of an acre than to respond slowly and let it turn into a major fire?

The more phone calls I made on this fire, the more discouraging information I received. This fire could have been stopped by smokejumpers in the early stage. Early photos show a single column of smoke coming up from a snag on fire. It looked almost identical to the Whetstone Ridge Fire—a two-manner in the old days.

More from Ben Smith

"I sat down last May (2018) with the FMO of the Pintler District for about an hour at his invitation. Actually, I think it was at the direction of BDNF Sup. Melany Glossa. The purpose of the meeting was to give me the reasons why the Whetstone Ridge Fire was allowed to grow from a burning snag to 60,000+ acres. I got the same runaround as I have before, with no good answers. At least I got the feeling that his heart is in the right spot and he is, at many times, frustrated with the direction and orders that he receives from his superiors. I understand that he has a family to feed and can't be candid with a civilian. During our conversation, when we were talking about smokejumper assets, I mentioned that I had heard that a planeload of jumpers returning to MSO circled the Lolo Peak Fire in its infancy and radioed that they could jump it, but were ordered not to. *To my surprise, he confirmed the story!"*

Suicide Mission

A fire information officer for the Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation said in a news release in the *Missoulian,* Oct. 2017, "sending in firefighters to try to stop the Lolo Peak Fire while it was relatively small would have been 'almost a suicide mission.' When it comes to conditions like that, it's super steep and rocky terrain."

He then said, "We were tapped out on the resources as it was because we were having so many

fires in the area—-. It's really hard for fire agencies or the Forest Service to even get up in that area. Resources were already stretched thin, and fire managers have to make tough decisions."

Repeat—Sources confirm that there were smokejumpers available as close as Missoula that day and for the next few days.

Jumpers Who Survived Prior "Suicide Missions"

After the description above, I went to **Roger Savage** (MSO-57) and asked him to check his records for fire jumps made in this "super steep and rocky terrain." The list started with **Ed Courtney** (MSO-58) and **Robert Wilson** (MSO-57), who jumped a fire (August 1961) surprisingly named Lolo Peak. Then **Dan Roberson** (MSO-75) and **Steve Straley** (MSO-77) jumped another fire, same name, same place, September 1979.

Congratulations guys. I know for sure that three of the above are still alive as they get this magazine—you survived a "suicide mission."

There are ten more jumpers on Roger's list. Will not list all due to space limitations, but it is obvious that this area can be reached in a reasonable, short period of time by smokejumpers and is not a uicide mission."

Here we go again as per the narrative on the Chetco Bar Fire covered in the October issue of Smokejumper—too steep, big trees, etc.—no can do.

It goes on and on. Six jumpers could have stopped this fire and saved a tremendous amount of resources and money. Where is the accountability? Doesn't anyone see through this wall of smoke? All of you living in Montana need to demand a change.

Higher Priority Fires Required All Available Air Resources

From **George Buker** (MSO-77): "Last weekend (September 2017), the rookie class of MSO-77 had a small group gathering. About 28 of us made it, and the Lolo Peak Fire was discussed with current jumpers in the loft. Their eyes rolled when the statement that was repeated was that the fire was in 'rugged, inaccessible terrain.' We didn't know it was on Mars!

"I did not hear that there were jumpers in the air, but I am certain I heard there were plenty at the base that day. Initial Attack could have nipped it. We discussed in detail the need for a fire policy, at least in R1, that aggressively attacks all new starts as quick as possible up until about Labor Day. It then transitions to let it burn and prescribed burns in October until snowfall.

"Sure our grandfathers did too good of a job and overreacted to the 1910 burn. We understand the science that fire is good, but the public can't stand 100 years of catching up in just a decade or two.

"Last summer, besides the Lolo Fire, the Bitterroot valley was smothered in smoke for months from a wilderness burn ten miles west that started in July and was never manned, and others. Why let wilderness fires go so early in the season, especially with this drought and higher temps?"

Too Steep—Too Rugged—No Resources?

What does a tax-paying citizen do when you hear this type of hype? Ninety-nine point nine percent of the public drinks the Kool-Aid. After all, the professionals know what they are doing!

From **Roger Savage** (MSO-57): "Last March I contacted the Lolo Forest and talked with public affairs spokesman Boyd Hartwig, who was a great help on providing information on the Lolo Peak fire.

"Early on I heard from a recent retiree who had a nephew working in fires for the Lolo forest. He told her that the ranger had decided to let this fire burn since it had started in the wilderness, and the area hadn't been burned over in over a hundred years. I never heard that story again, but I'm thinking that there's a fifty percent chance that it is true. In any case they didn't put boots on the ground for the first week.

"FS spokespersons on the evening news kept referring to the lack of placing ground troops on the fire as it was too steep, too rugged, too dangerous, and no jump spot available. Same old BS! As you well know, in looking back at old newspaper clippings on fires from back in the 40s, 50s and 60s, you never find these excuses used. And if these articles do talk about steep country, they are probably talking about the Salmon River country and those fires were always fought."

In The Shadows Of Tora Bora

by Michael Scott Hill (West Yellowstone '95)

During my generation of smokejumping, there was always lots of talk around our campfires of how a previous generation of smokejumpers had left the fire seasons of the late 1950s to early 1970s to use their hard-won skills on overseas military operations.

Using helicopters to resupply military outposts in Afghanistan. (Courtesy Mike Hill)

I listened closely to those stories, and in the mid-2000s, when my chance arrived to do the same, I leaped at the opportunity.

I arrived in Afghanistan in 2007 as the Country Air operations manager, overseeing the United States Agency for International Developments (USAID) armed Huey program. I later moved to program manager of a Russian heavy-lift helicopter contract, flying from 2007 to 2010 as part of—and in support of—NATO military operations.

NATO partner countries began to withdraw from the conflict in 2010 as the American troops came surging in, so I switched contracts to become flight crew on both American and former Russian helicopters operating across the volatile southern areas of the war.

The American troop surge declined in 2012, and with it, I left the war for a break that lasted until the next U.S. troop surge of 2018.

I returned at that time as part of a helicopter sling-load mission that has me working here in this blistering hot, summertime desert heat, in the shadows of the Tora Bora mountains made famous by Osama bin Laden's escape through its maze of tunnels.

One of our many missions is the slinging of a group of large, white shipping cardboard kicker boxes, racks of 155 shells, along with a 155-howitzer artillery piece from our helicopter landing zone.

Allied troops and civilians frequently had to suffer through enemy rocket attacks earlier in the war, but now they have become rare due to the responses of guns like these and their crews. These guns and their crews are frequently airlifted to provide fire support where needed.

Artillery packages being slung beneath helicopters are no longer rare sights across the skies of Afghanistan. Many other types of loads are being slung to save the lives of soldiers who, before, would have had to drive equipment in convoys across dangerous road systems from one fortified American post to the next.

Slinging gear under helicopters, as I have witnessed, isn't much different than how we do it on fires. There are differences, however. Army equipment being slung is usually much bigger—vehicles or generators. The helicopters we use are also much larger. Routinely we are hooking our loads onto long lines or belly hooks of Chinooks, CH-46s or Blackhawks.

These large aircraft build up static electricity quickly. As a result, we use a static wand to dissipate the electrical buildups during flights that would otherwise shock us when we grab the helicopter-mounted hooks to clip on our loads.

For this mission, my job is to serve as the static wand holder. My two teammates will be the ones actually hooking the metal apex clip onto each of two large, 10,000-pound nets we've loaded with artillery equipment.

A military Chinook has belly hooks located beneath its front, middle and back sections. The Chinook will hover directly over these two bundled up nets and us.

We will hook each net to the aircraft's center and forward hooks. I will use my static wand to touch it against its rear belly hook to ground out the aircraft, so my guys won't get shocked.

Soon I can hear the slapping of a Chinook's heavy blades beginning to echo across this mountain valley. It won't be long before it's here.

I watch as my two guys climb up on top of the net loads high enough to reach the belly of the big green helicopter. Once that first helicopter is gone, its partner will come in and we'll hook on the heavy artillery piece to that Chinook.

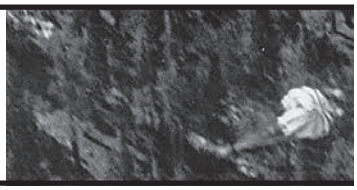
This is actually a fun job working in the searing desert sun. It's not long before I am able to see our first Chinook sinking in across the thick treetops outside our military compound.

It is on final and soon begins to settle down toward us. It's now time for me to get ready to hook this big ol' girl.

What's it like to be a part of military aviation contracting over here in the shadows of Tora Bora? It's a business in which many people frequently don't last very long, but there are some of us who do.

The key to surviving and thriving over here in Afghanistan is the ability to stay flexible with this war's ever-changing tactics and strategies. Afghanistan is a deeply rich, exotic land, but as on all frontiers, it can be just the same: a rugged, deeply competitive and very unforgiving place, where your own personal survival can't ever be taken for granted.

THE JUMP LIST



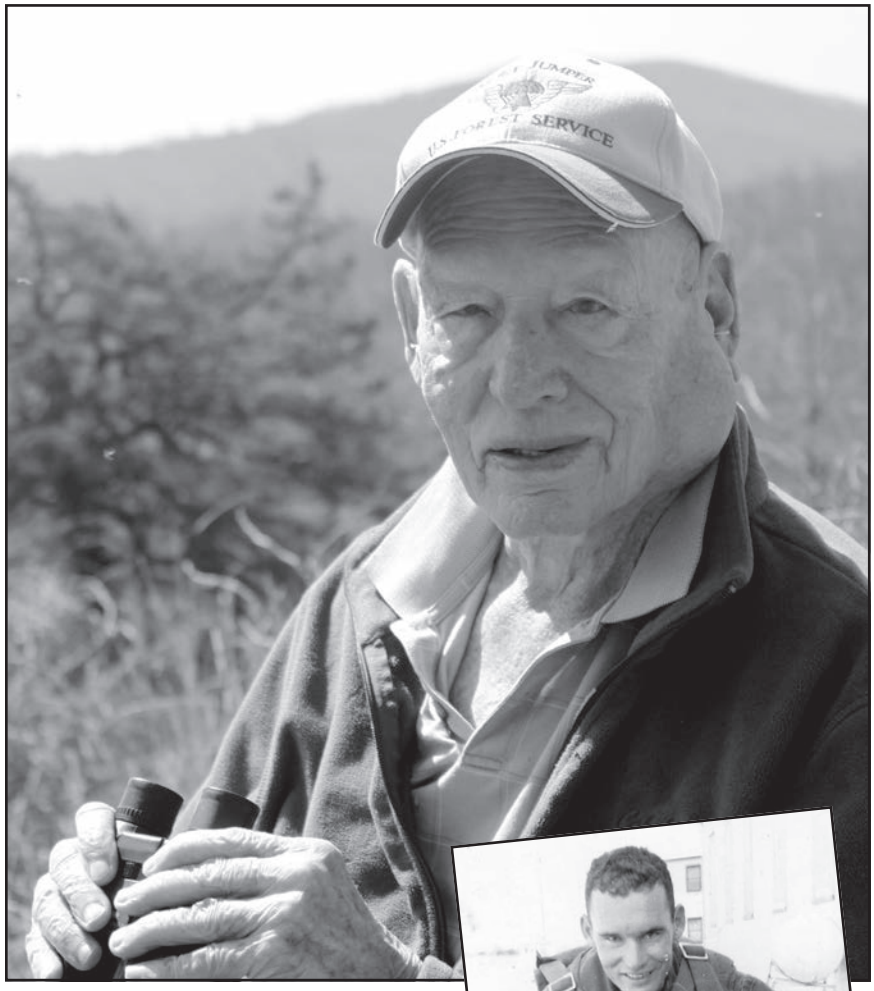
The "Jump List" is intended to bring you up-to-date on your fellow NSA members. Send your information to Chuck Sheley; see his contact information on page 3 of this magazine.

BEN "BENNY" MUSQUEZ (Missoula '56)
Bases jumped: MSO 56-57
Now living in: Iredell, Texas
Since jumping: While jumping at Missoula, served with the Army Reserves at Ft. Missoula, then moved to Texas to get back to the active Army, where I started my career in 1949 … volunteered for Airborne training in 1952, assigned to 82nd Division at Ft. Bragg, N.C. … saw the movie "Red Skies of Montana" and told my wife, Mary, I just have to do that … I call it "the long journey" because I tried many ways, though it wasn't until I moved to California and found work with the Arroyo Seco Hotshots that I received the on-the-job training necessary before applying with the Missoula Smokejumpers … after jumping became a senior drill instructor at the Ft. Polk Army Training Center … volunteered for duty in Vietnam as a platoon sergeant, serving for two tours … operated from the tip of South Vietnam in the Delta, with no loss of soldiers during my watch … retired with 26 years of military service … as paratrooper, smokejumper and skydiver, I've made 300 jumps, with my last at age 82.
Benny says: "Between the years of my military service, and smokejumping, I would say I had more bonding with my smokejumping bros—though in the military combat, it is especially bonding! Now I'm retired and living in central Texas."

JACK PRICE (IDAHO CITY '50) FEATURE MEMBER

Jack was born in Phoenix, AZ, on December 24, 1928. In 1948, Jack began studies in Forestry at Utah State at Logan. In 1950, while participating in a Forestry camp, he met some smokejumpers and knew he wanted to join them. He was trained in McCall and spent the summer of 1950 working out of Idaho City. He recalls how excited he was as a new smokejumper-in-training, jumping out of an airplane. While waiting to be called on to fight a fire, he remembers doing plenty of camp chores, like picking up rocks off the runway and stacking hay in barns. Jack fought two fires in August of that summer, the Big Owl Creek and Fly Trip. He said they stayed out a few nights digging control lines around the fires and would rendezvous with the team who came in with pack mules carrying supplies.

The fires he fought were small that summer, but the impact of that experience has lasted his whole life. After Jack graduated in 1951, he joined the Air Force and was trained in Pararescue, working out of West Palm Beach, FL and Great Falls, MT. In 1953, he moved to Seattle and began working for Boeing, taking night classes in Aerospace Engineering. Jack would work on the Apollo Program for the next several years, serving as part of the design configuration team for the original Lunar Rover and performing stress analyses on the various Apollo rockets. Jack continued working on NASA projects until retiring in 1993.



J Jack Price 2018 (Courtesy Kelley Wesley)

Jack Price 1950 (Courtesy Kelley Wesley)

After retirement he and his wife, Liz, did quite a bit of traveling and after 48 years, returned to McCall, ID, for the 1998 Smokejumper Reunion. Now at 90 years of age, he lives in Virginia with his daughter and son-in-law, Kelley and Paul, and near his two sons, Mark and Gordon. Jack appreciates the important and increasing responsibilities of a smokejumper. He continues as a member of the National Smokejumper Association, enjoying reading the *Smokejumper* Quarterly magazine and wearing his smokejumper hat, t-shirt, and fleece.

Forest Fire Mitigation And The Potential Profits Involved

by George B. Harpole (Missoula '49)

2018 has been a disastrous fire year—not only with the destruction of thousands of acres of forestland, but also because fires have overrun many residential and commercial structures.

At the same time, the number of acres burned each year has more than doubled since the 1980s, with firefighting costs now above $3 billion annually.

We know the best way to stop a wildfire is to put it out in its infancy. That's what smokejumpers and Hotshot crews do. They do an excellent job, but fall short when there are more fires than there are firefighters. As Clint Eastwood said, "A man has got to know his limitations."

Yes, we need help. We know we can reduce the number of forest fires by reducing the fuels in the forest, as well as those around properties that can support a forest or residential firestorm. We need to remove flash fuels from our forests and create defensible perimeters around our residential and commercial properties.

We can't go wrong by extending more opportunities for stewardships aimed at wildfire prevention through forest fire fuel-reduction programs and to encourage fire-preventive landscaping for residential and commercial properties.

Many of the forested areas in the western United States are largely of mixed conifer—e.g., Douglas fir, white fir, cedar, ponderosa pine, etc.

These mixed conifer stands also typically contain a wide range of diameter sizes. The most obvious need for fuel reduction in these stands is along the heavily used roads.

The 2018 Carr and Lake County Fires in California have demonstrated that felling roadside trees can establish firelines that can effectively be patrolled and most effectively stop fires. This kind of fuel reduction can be done before a wildfire gets started.

Such landscaping can also be used to establish fire-safety zones as well as to improve forest health and attractiveness of our forests. Previous studies have indicated that the removal of small-diameter and flash-fuels typically run from 3,000 to 4,000 board feet per acre.

What is the cost for the removal of these fuels? A good example can be found with the USFS's White Mountain NF stewardship program in Arizona where stewardship programs have paid their way since the early 2000s.

Stewardships

I'll illustrate the economics of a typical forest fire mitigation stewardship using the Watershed Center in Hayfork, Calif. The Watershed's early 90s system could be updated with attention to the harvest and processing of flash-fuel materials and small size trees under 10 inches.

From the early work done at the center, I developed an economic model using an "integrated utilization" (IU) approach to create a system that would include a small-log logging system (logs less than 10 inches in diameter). The idea of this kind of a utilization system was subsequently adopted for forest management stewardship programs in other states.

To demonstrate the economics, I've assumed such an IU operation should be able to realize from $350 to $500 per thousand board feet (Mbf) for sawed lumber and post production. We assume such an operation covers everything from harvesting through to the production of a variety of commodity products.

Say an IU operation would require a total of 21 workers and would have an operational life of six years, receive profits of 20 percent and produce from 5 million to 6 million board feet of commodity products each year. The six million board feet IU Stewardship system should be able to clean up some 1,715 acres of forest per year.

The economics of these IU stewardship ven-

tures do not end with their profitability. The economic benefits create the taxes on the associated wages and sales, and reductions in firefighting costs.

Assuming these IU harvested areas would be fireproofed, even more money would be saved with the variable cost per acre avoided by not being a part of a forest fire.

Landscaping

Looking at the billions of dollars of fire costs due to the destruction of both residential and commercial properties, it seems an urban location might be okay for an IU system. But, in any case, most residential and commercial properties can probably establish their 100-foot fire safe boundaries by simply calling one of their local landscaping companies.

The task might only require two or three workers, a chipping machine, and a truck to haul the wood debris away. These urban operations can run into the thousands of dollars, but are still cheap when looking at the long-term chances for a negative consequence.

As John Wayne said: "There's only two things a man can do—the right thing or the wrong thing."

"Rosie"

by Pat Harbine (Missoula '51)

The sky was bright blue and the cumulus clouds changed shapes as they drifted above us. Lying on the rocks along the Salmon River after a fast hike from a fire, we waited for our ride back to the base. To occupy our time, we watched the clouds take imaginary shapes. The hours passed slowly and we were eager to get back and garner overtime on our next fire jump.

Down at the river, we heard the voices of a rafting group in a WWII surplus craft. "All women," exclaimed one of our group. He was wrong. A sunburned guy with long hair was steering. Startled by our appearance, not unlike the unwashed locals he had seen before, he asked who we were. We answered, "Smokejumpers," proud of our identity.

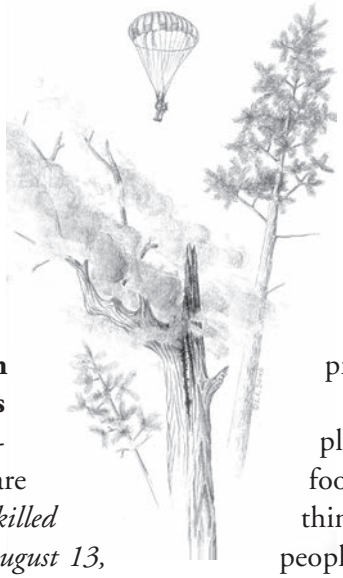
Our truck arrived an hour later. It seemed like a horse had been higher priority than four smokejumpers. The truck bed was littered with road apples and urine that had not seeped through the flooring. "This is worse than the men's room at the Northern Bar in Missoula on a Saturday night," remarked one of the crew. I stood on the lower boards on the end gate of the stock rack to get away from the mess and to get fresh air to avoid the motion sickness that plagued my jumping days.

It was then that the rest of the group noticed what I had not. The fabric of my well-worn Levis had failed, revealing my buttocks that had become inflamed from sitting on the rocks during the wait. My immediate moniker became "Rosie Cheeks."

There was no road between Grangeville and Missoula in 1953 and all aircraft were busy, so we continued to Orofino where we would be picked up later in the afternoon. Our ride continued down the curves to the Clearwater River, and I clung to the end gate hiding my face but revealing other parts. When I turned to hide my rear end against the sideboards, I discovered you can't cling to the boards of a stock rack when you are wearing White boots with woodsman heels. I was forced to stand directly on the floor of the truck facing the others until the laugher ceased.

We boarded a Trimotor late that day and landed in Missoula after dark. Not a chance of getting on the jump list that day. We returned to the barracks at Fort Missoula where a new pair of Levis awaited. Gradually the story surrounding my wardrobe dysfunction was forgotten but, for a while, I was the guy called "Rosie."

ODDS AND ENDS



by Chuck Sheley

Congratulations and thanks to **Jim Lafferty** (IDC-63) and **Fred Ebel** (MSO-57) who just became our latest Life Members.

Ken Hessel (MYC-58): **"**A bit of news from Lampasas, Texas—The American Legion there is planning to dedicate a permanent memorial to **John Lewis** (MYC-53) and **Darrell Eubanks** (IDC-54) at the town's Oak Hill Cemetery on Memorial Day. Leah and I are planning to be there." *Both men were killed in crash of Air America C-46 in Laos August 13, 1961. (Ed.)*

Jack Deinema (MYC-50): "I am currently 95 years young living in a excellent elderly care facility in Tigard, Oregon. My two wonderful daughters live close by and take care of my every need. Am looking back on a full rewarding career as a US Marine, Smokejumper, Forest Ranger, Forest Supervisor, Regional Forester, Job Corps National Director of Conservation Centers, and retiring as Deputy Chief for administration in Washington D.C."

Davis Perkins' (NCSB-72) painting "Morning on the Little Elk" was chosen "Virtuosos of the Oil Painters of America" exhibit that was held at an exhibition in St. Augustine, FL, at the end of March.

Wally Humphries (FBX-90)**:** His narrative nonfiction travel piece about two Americans having dinner with a Cuban family in Havana was published in A*ll Rights Reserved Literacy Journal*, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Shortly after that, "Anvik Staging for Fire 546" won honorable mention in *Thoreau's Rooster*, Assumption College; award writer Bill Roorbach was the judge. "Trip Back from the Fires," was published in *SWAMP*, a post-graduate publication, University of New Castle, Australia.

Anyone interested in Air America: This book is available on Amazon—*An Air America Pilot's Story of Adventure, Descent and Redemption* by Neil Graham Hansen and Luann Grosscup (History Publishing Company, 2019).

Judy Meyer (Assoc), daughter of **Lloyd Johnson** (MYC-43): " Hi Chuck—Wayne (husband) and I drive up from Yuba City six days a week to volunteer at the Camp Fire Survivors Disaster Recovery Center located at 13700 Skyway, Magalia. It is located on the property of Magalia Community Church.

"We have a meal tent. We try to supply the fire survivors with everything from food distribution to survival gear and everything in between. The needs are huge. Many people are still living in tents and their cars. We are open every day, except Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm. Everyone is a volunteer with no agency or funding—Just people with big hearts trying to help the forgotten survive. It is a devastating situation. We need donations and volunteers. Most resources have shut down, but we are in for the long haul.

"Come up for a visit sometime. Let me know so we will be sure and be there."

We are still in a devastating situation months after the end of the Camp Fire. It is people like Judy and Wayne who make things work. No government money or assistance—just hard work and a good heart. Thanks to Judy and Wayne for their work—much appreciated but little known to the public. (Ed.)

Smokejumpers have had significant impacts in many areas of our society. I want to give some "kudos" to **Bill Ruskin** (CJ-58) for some work he has done with a trails program that started many years before the NSA TRAMPS program.

From a news story: "The American Society's Volunteer Vacations program recognizes an import milestone in 2014—the 40th anniversary of our first organized volunteer project on federal land. In 1972, Congress passed a bill to give those interested in environmental preservation an opportunity to provide volunteer conservation work on Forest Service lands.

"In 1974, this legislative act caught the eye of **Bill Ruskin.** Mr. Ruskin created the Volunteer Conservation Corps (VCC) to assist land management agencies with their trail maintenance and building needs.

"On July 28, 1974, 58 volunteers set out on VCC's pilot trail stewardship project in the Pike N.F. in Colorado. The 1974 VCC Program was the **FIRST** national recruitment of volunteers under this act. Forty years later, the VCC program annually offers more than 60 trail stewardship trips across the nation."

The forward-looking insight of Bill is significant. He recognized a need and took action. Not unusual, as Bill was a Smokejumper.

The theme and feature of the October 2011 issue of *Smokejumper* was an issue titled: "Honoring Our Veterans." In that issue we had two fine articles by **Carl Gidlund** (MSO-58). One honored Capt. Michael MacKinnon, son of **John MacKinnon** (MSO-57). Capt. MacKinnon was killed near Baghdad in October 2005.

The second article honored Staff Sgt. Travis Atkins, son of Elaine and **Jack Atkins** (MSO-68). Sgt. Atkins was killed in June 2007 in Iraq. The following news came out today (3/27/19):

"An Army staff sergeant who saved three soldiers from the blast of an Iraqi suicide bomber by turning himself into a human shield will be memorialized when President Donald Trump presents the service member's family with the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award for bravery against an enemy.

"Staff Sgt. Travis Atkins, 31, of Bozeman, Montana, was trying to subdue the suspected insurgent in June 2007 when he realized the man was attempting to detonate a bomb strapped to his body. Atkins then covered the bomber's body with his in a selfless act that officials said spared three soldiers. He was on his second tour of duty in Iraq and overseeing a 15-soldier squad at the time of his death, one month after he was promoted to staff sergeant.

"Atkins' initial award, the Distinguished Service Cross, was upgraded to the Medal of Honor after a Defense Department review. His son, Trevor, and parents will represent him at a White House ceremony Wednesday afternoon."

I got an interesting letter and sizeable check from **Chris Young** (WYS-18): "I got this money during a flip in Redmond last year. It was supposed to be used to fund a trip to Normandy to jump in the 75th anniversary reenactment. I was unable to get in. In the spirit of the flip, I am donating the money to the NSA."

I thanked Chris for the gift and replied: "Also in the spirit of the gift, I will put this donation into our Good Samaritan Fund where it can be used to help all jumpers and their families in times of need. That way it is going directly back to give the bros a helping hand during hard times. The NSA has aided jumpers and their families with over $174,000 worth of assistance."

From Life Member **Doug Bernhard** (NCSB-58) along with a sizeable gift to the GSF 'Camp Fire Relief': "The April issue (Camp Fire) was great. I knew five families who lived in Paradise. Four of them lost everything, including my sister—was a close call for them. I could see the heavy black smoke clear up to Adin, CA."

George Harpole (MSO-49): "I think the current *Smokejumper* magazine issues should perhaps be required reading for all those connected to Federal, state and private forest management operations."

Jim Linville (MSO-69): "Well done article on the timeline events of the Camp Fire. I told my wife that morning, when I saw the morning news, that this fire was going to be really bad. Sometimes, being right is not always pleasant."

I sent out an email to some of our members stating the hiring problem we have now with hires made in Albuquerque, NM. Local hires who contributed to the positive connection to the USFS are no longer able to work locally. Some responses:

Denis Breslin (NCSB-69) (President Gillespie Pilots Association):

"Human Resources (HR) seems to have taken over hiring in all major industry. It centralizes hiring away from local or regional control and is limited by regulations that have no basis in common sense.

"It changed the airline industry in the 80s. It used to be that one could get an interview based on the recommendation of a captain and the local chief pilot could hire you. Then 'Recruiting' departments were formed and Human Resources became an 'industry' with 'employee Relations' not far behind to negotiate, enforce – and even

abrogate contracts.

"It is also similar to how they select, hire and train air traffic controllers. FAA used to hire candidates from local college programs featuring ATC training and degrees. Then they decided they needed to be 'fair' to minorities so they 'centralized' hiring, locking out those who had the aptitude, desire, education, and training to become controllers. The results were disastrous as you can imagine.

"So, it is not surprising that the Feds decide to centralize hiring, creating great inefficiencies. It also shows a deep, systemic affection for centralization in federal and state governments. That only exacerbates the problem because the thought process is now 'deep state,' and probably very difficult to address.

"Thanks again for an excellent report/update Chuck."

Dick Rath (MSO-73): "I have given a lot of thought to your observation. The portion personnel running the FS are now those that were hired in accelerated positions. They were not privy to working their way up the ladder, dealing with projects gone wrong, complex personnel issues and the like. We, my age group, were the implementers that created this issue. Reversing it is almost 'like going back into the airplane' after you have left the door."

Scott "Mouse" Warner (RDD-69): "I have been following Mike's excellent, insightful commentary (*Achieving Resilient Forests Through Effective Biomass Uses*) for several years now in our publication *Smokejumper*, Evergreen, and Wildfire Today.

"If not for my extensive international forestry endeavors to complement American West forestry, I would be negative for the long term. Yet, there is hope given there are so many flourishing managed forests throughout the world risen from devastated landscapes long occupied by humankind, exploited to the extreme, then restored. What has transpired the last three decades in the American West regarding wildfire is disturbingly extraordinary in history, with Mike more than correct in that 'We know what to do.'

"A dedicated environmentalist from the long-forgotten California timber wars (long ago we became friends and have outlasted them all - both sides!) worked tirelessly, ultimately with the forestry side, for agreement. There are more like her and on my forestry side too. Like the trees it will take some time. Our 'voice of reason' just needs to employ 'people power' which took down active forestry management since the mid 1980s."

Early Redding Smokejumper Days

by Lee Gossett (Redding '57)

In early 1957, **Bill Bowles** (RDD-57), **Dennis Bradley** (RDD-57), and I drove to Cave Junction and met with **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46), project officer with the smokejumpers. All three of us wanted to join the smokejumper ranks, and Jim hired all of us on the spot, as he needed to double the usual rookie crew to train for the 1957 season – the first year of the Redding smokejumpers.

By my count, there were 15 rookie jumpers who trained at Cave Junction in 1957 for the Redding crew.

After our training and practice jumps were completed, we reported to Redding and joined six former Cave Junction jumpers and two squad leaders. Our ranks were now at 21 jumpers. **Fred Barnowsky** (MSO-42) was the project officer, **Orv Looper** (CJ-49) was the foreman, and **Bob Kersh** was the loft foreman. I gleaned the head count from a crew photo taken in 1957.

The jumpers were housed in a warehouse in downtown Redding, which we shared with the loft, supply storage and mess hall. Living conditions were minimal, to say the least, and we all bunked together in one large, air-conditioned room.

Much of our summer was spent building our training facility at the Redding airport and when we returned in 1958, we reported directly to the Redding base and bypassed training at Cave Junction.

Our jump aircraft during those startup years was a DC-3 Lockheed Loadstar and a Twin Beech.

The Twin Beech was owned and flown by Burt Train. We jumped out of all the aircraft, but the one airplane we did not like to jump out of was the Lockheed Loadstar, perhaps due to the high drop airspeed. The pilot may have had something to do with this as we nicknamed him "Throttles Ferris."

My very first fire jump was in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest along with Bill Bowles and **Chuck Engstrom** (MSO-55). Chuck had been a former Missoula jumper for one season but went through the complete training program with us.

We were helicoptered out of this fire in an old Bell 47, and this was the first time any of us had ridden in a helicopter. Several years later, I learned that a Bell 47 helicopter had no business operating in this high-altitude, hot terrain.

As luck would have it, I had six fire jumps my first year and 12 in 1958. I later learned that some of the Cave Junction rookies didn't make a fire jump in 1957, so going to Redding was a good choice.

We were transported from the warehouse to the Redding airport in what we called the "cattle truck." This was an open, stake-bed truck with a step on the back. When the fire danger was high, we would be taken to the Redding airport and would hunker in an open hangar, lying on a hot concrete floor in 115-degree temps. Needless to say, we prayed for a fire call to get out of that hot box.

For the first part of the 1957 fire season, we were dropped World War II rations that were sorry meals, to say the least. Another jumper and I, on another fire, got very sick eating these rations, and the entire lot was tossed in the trash. From then on, we could select food from our newly created, canned food supply.

Helicopters were just beginning to make the fire scene and packouts were very common. We didn't have two-way radios then and used our signal streamers to signal the drop aircraft that we were OK. Every jumper would put out an "L" signal with the streamer he carried in his jump suit; the squad leader in charge of the fire would put out a "double L." This told the pilot that all jumpers were OK.

If the returning jump aircraft wanted to contact us, they would drop a streamer with a note container attached and advise us as to when and how we would exit the fire when it was out.

Chain saws were not issued in those days, and if we had a snag fire, the spotter would drop a "misery whip," our name for a six-foot crosscut saw. If we jumped on a snag fire, we always dropped a minimum of three jumpers. Two jumpers would saw and one jumper would constantly look up and call out if there was a "widow maker" branch breaking loose.

End Of An Era—Not So Fast Partner Smokejumpers Buy Their Base!

By Tommy Albert (Cave Junction' 64)

This is a first—Smokejumpers buying their base! Yes, you read it right. To make a long story short (well, semi-short), the Siskiyou Aerial Project was one of the first bases, being established in 1943. It evolved into the smallest of the major Smokejumper bases. The base later was named the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base, but was better known as Cave Junction, CJ, and the Gobi. The terrain, brush, and big trees—oh, let's not forget the poison oak—made it one of the less popular places to partake in the highlights of our trade, fire jumps.

The camaraderie was unarguably the most rewarding aspect of jumping out of Cave Junction. CJ was a small, stand-alone base geographically located 50 miles from the Supervisor's Office. There weren't any Forest or Regional dispatch offices, Hotshots, or

forest warehouses at the base, only jumpers. Because of this, not many bigwigs visited, so we were exempt from "putting on a show," resulting in a more relaxed atmosphere.

We were also very lucky to have had some great Project Air Officers (Base Managers) running the base. They set strict rules pertaining to on-the-job conduct and performance but stood back, allowing the crew to set competitive standards on other aspects of the job. This resulted in an atmosphere that promoted pride in our firefighting skills. We were never outperformed on a fire. The crew's high morale was evident in every aspect of work and play on the Gobi. It was a stimulating and rewarding place to work.

Time spent at the Gobi became one of the high-points in life for those who jumped out of the base. Friendships continued long after those who jumped there graduated from college and got a real job. Those who were lucky enough to have a real job that allowed them to continue jumping in the summer became some of the mainstays of the base. Then the Forest Service unexplainably decided to close the base in 1981, bureaucratically citing centralization and cost savings as the reason. Many of the jumpers openly challenged the decision, earning a position on the unofficial Black List.

History has already shown that the decision to close the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base was a very costly decision for the taxpayers. There have since been numbers of large fires in southern Oregon/northern California, some amongst the costliest fires in the history of this nation. These fires would have been two or four man jump fires that would have simply added to some jump stories and ended with the two-page fire reports stuffed into a file drawer at the end of the season.

The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management deeded the structures and land over to Josephine County, where the buildings sat vacant and unmaintained for a quarter of a century. It was not until a plan to bulldoze the dilapidated buildings that some of the local ex-jumpers came up with a counter plan to restore the buildings and turn the base into a museum, at no cost to the County. A workweek was scheduled. Old jumpers, some accompanied by their spouses and other family members, came from near and far—mostly CJ jumpers, but also jumpers from other bases. There were even some locals participating. It was quite a sight to watch what were once vibrant, athletic young men hobble from building to building, skillfully refurbishing each. Through their labor, the transformation completely surprised the County Commissioners as well as the community.

We were then able to trade sweat equity for dollars to "rent" the buildings for the museum. This proved to be an unstable arrangement as Commissioners and Airport Managers come and go, making our position shaky. The only way to alleviate this was to somehow purchase the base from the county. Easier said than done.

The Gobi fielded some unique individuals who have added to the folklore of the base—some known nationally and even internationally, others known but to us and those who interfaced with "us." Amongst this latter set are the Welch brothers from west Texas: Bernie, Gary and Larry. Of the three, Larry, having been a teacher, jumped the longest. As with most of us, smokejumping was an important part of their lives and as Larry put it, got him out of the oil fields with all his fingers still attached.

As a rule, Texans are a slightly different breed, especially the west Texas rancher types. They like things laid out straight forward and expect one's word to be kept. This wasn't happening relating to the base, and I guess this, and the thought of the base with all its history and traditions being bulldozed into the ground, was more than Larry could stomach. Larry proposed putting up the funds to purchase the Gobi.

Larry teamed up with Linda and **Harold Hartman** (CJ-65), **Gary Buck** (CJ-66) and **David Atkin** (CJ-70). Together they formulated a plan to purchase the buildings. They were greatly assisted by Josephine County Commissioner Simon Hare, who saw the Smokejumper Base Museum as an asset to the County. Negotiations were difficult and often frustrating but, through the tenacity of those mentioned above, finally concluded. The purchase agreement was finalized, which includes the major structures that comprise the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base, nine structures in all, and a 100-year lease on the land.

Though Larry Welch donated the purchase funds in total, he is dedicating it to his brothers Bernie (CJ-61) and Gary (CJ-60), as well as to all who were involved with the Gobi (including jumpers' wives and kids) and to all who participated in workweeks over the past fifteen years. This, he says, is just the beginning. It will provide a more presentable platform for obtaining grants and give incentive to those who wish

to participate in future workweeks and hosting. Additionally, it will encourage financial contributions for a perpetual fund that will ensure the longevity of the Museum after all of us are gone. For all of this, we salute you, Mr. Welch.

This brings us to Phase Two of the development of the Smokejumper Museum. We can now put to rest the time and efforts devoted to surviving and concentrate on better presenting the story of Smokejumping.

We also will be addressing the issue of longevity. The last rookie class on the Gobi was 1979, four decades ago. Our bunch is aging. We must inspire others, younger others, to become involved. Hopefully, the current generation of jumpers and those recently retired will step forward. If not them, then we need to develop interest outside of the jumper community. It will be a shame if this becomes necessary. The history of Smokejumping deserves to be preserved, and visitors thoroughly enjoy the story regardless of who is the orator, but they especially enjoy the story when presented by those who have smokejumped.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

by Jack Demmons (Missoula '50)
Seeley Swan Pathfinder
March 1993

Demmons Recalls Close Call

After our graduation jump in June of 1950, we new jumpers were placed on project work until the fire season developed. I was given a crew of jumpers to sift sand for a lookout that was being rebuilt. Our camp was 11 miles from the Powell Ranger Station.

Two lovely gals worked at Erickson's Lodge above the Ranger Station. Several times during a two-week period, we walked that 22-mile round trip to listen to them and drink beer.

Later in July, we were taken to the loft at Hale Field. Within several days, six of us were airborne headed to a fire southeast of Grangeville. The Trimotor developed engine trouble, and we returned to

Missoula and switched to a C-47 that was waiting for us.

Since there was a lake in the area of the fire, we dropped two at a time. **Les Grenlin** (MSO-46) and I were the last two to jump. I checked his position once and then checked the location of the lake. Then, as I turned around, I found Les right in front of me. We collided and my right foot became entangled in his lines.

I was hanging head down and my parachute was collapsed against his lines. It was impossible to pull the emergency chute. I had my knife out and was trying to reach up and cut the lines holding me. Les quickly "climbed" his lines and cut me free.

As I fell free, my chute popped open. I oscillated wildly and then slammed into the ground face first. Les hit about the same time and right next to me. We laughed—we were young and thought we would live forever.

We had the fire out within a day and walked to the Sourdough Lookout where a Forest Service truck picked us up.

I went on to make more jumps during the ensuing seasons and as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division. I never had another parachute problem after that jump at Sourdough Lookout. I must say that the night jumps in the military, with more than 500 troopers in the air at one time, could be rather interesting with helmets, weapons, and other equipment falling from the sky as a result of severe opening shocks.

Some Of A Smokejumper's Stories

by Don Maypole (Idaho City '54)

Fighting forest fires in the Rocky Mountains had many interesting moments, but so did the parachuting to reach them.

At our training base in McCall, Idaho, on my first training jump – from a 1927 Travelair airplane – the other three trainees jumped out of the plane before me. Unbeknownst to me, my boots became entangled in their remaining static lines on the floor. I was two-thirds out the door when the spotter grabbed my jumpsuit collar and pulled me back in. He untangled my boots, and I jumped out the door when we returned to the jump spot.

On my second jump, I missed the landing spot and planted both boots into the trunk of a pine tree. My parachute collapsed, and I fell head first down the tree trunk, striking branches all the way.

Just before I hit the ground, the chute caught on the very top of the tree, and I was righted with my boots lightly touching the ground, without a scratch. Our protective gear worked well.

On my fourth training jump – from a 1929 Ford Trimotor – a few seconds before landing in a huge meadow, the wind blew me parallel to the ground and forcefully flung me to the ground on my back. I landed squarely on a two-foot-wide, two-inch-deep stream.

Parachutes are packed against a quarter-inch plywood board. Mine was completely split into two pieces lengthwise – and I had an unknown compression fracture in my back. I didn't drop out of jump training; the plywood board had saved me from worse injury. Other jumps went better.

The next summer, 1955, I had a similar experience with wind on a fire jump from a 1939 Nordyne near the top of a mountain in the Sawtooth Range of the Rockies. There was a small lake below the peak, and we jumped out exactly over that lake, because of the expected wind drift.

We had no life preservers, so I, for sure, didn't want to land in the water. As I was coming down on the beach, a gust of wind caught me and sent me parallel to the ground for 15 or so feet. I slammed full-body, sideways into a 15-foot-tall pine tree. Needless to say, the tree was not pleased ... it bent way over ... and then launched me back toward the lake. I stopped short of the water!

During the summer of 1955, an important lesson was reinforced. On a fire jump from a 1937 Twin Tail Beech, I missed the small landing spot and hung up in a tall, yellow pine tree. As I looked down, and the chute fell to a lower limb, the thought came to mind that I would just unhook from the chute's harness and drop to the ground.

But then the training at our McCall training base took over. First of all, you must drop your helmet to see how long it takes to hit the ground. I did this and it seemed like an eternity transpired before the helmet hit the ground. Needless to say, I did as I had been told and used the letdown rope stored in my right leg pocket.

During the summers of 1955-56, there were four Idaho State College Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity brothers stationed at the ranger station/smokejumper unit in Idaho City. At Idaho State College in Pocatello, I lived in the same fraternity house with **Gene Lewton** (IDC-52), **Joel Chase** (IDC-55) and **LaMonte Christensen** (IDC-55). **Clyde Hawley** (IDC-48) was a TKE from a different university.

An experience with Lewton in 1955 was notable. We were sent to put out a two-man fire on the top of a ridge in the Sawtooth Range, in the Rocky Mountains. We jumped at an altitude of 10,000 feet onto a ridge that was 9,200 feet.

Gene went out first, and the spotter and I saw that he was in some trouble. One of the parachute lines had crossed over the top of the parachute canopy, which we called a "Mae West." He was spinning down in a corkscrew fashion.

When he landed, he did not put out his two orange streamers to indicate if he was OK.

I jumped and chose to land a short distance down the 60-degree slope to avoid the snags – dead trees with lethal branches. I quickly struggled up the slope with my gear to find Gene sitting on a snow bank, with his back against a snag, smoking a

cigarette. He had missed the dead snags and landed in a six-foot-deep snow bank … without a scratch!

The top of the ridge was only 20-25 feet wide. We put out the fire with snow.

Toward the end of the summer in 1956, my back was injured in a "gravy" (practice) jump out of a 1930s Cunningham-Hall biplane.

Two years before, four of us were flown to the Yellowstone National Park area in a 1930s stagger-wing Beech biplane to fight a fire, but the wind was too strong and we were returned to Idaho City. Our base foreman, **James B. "Smokey" Stover** (MYC-46), sent me to medical care in Boise for a week.

I worked the week at the Boise Fire Center in the afternoons packing food for cargo drops, locating fires on a map, and odd jobs under Spike Baker. I returned to Idaho City to make another fire jump, but my back was re-injured, so I made no more jumps in the Forest Service. Eventually, my back healed well.

Seven years ago, in 2011, I made a free-fall jump tethered to the instructor, from 14,000 feet. It went fine, but the instructor made a poor landing – on top of me – which injured both my knees. I had to have an operation on one knee. I won't be making any more jumps.

First Fire Jump

by "Swede" Troedsson (Missoula '59)

Many of us may vaguely recall the fires we jumped many years ago, but I suspect some of us remember more vividly our first fire jump.

In late July 1959, myself and 16 others "boosted" to Redding, Calif., to assist in a rash of fires. All 17 of us were dispatched to the Ramshorn Creek Fire on the Shasta-Trinity N.F. July 25, 1959, under the leadership of foreman **Al Cramer** (MSO-43). Besides me, there were six in the crew who had never jumped on a fire. As we suited up, the temperature was a scorching 108 degrees.

Carl Gidlund (MSO-58) recalls that the fire was in a well-roaded area not too far from Redding. But, because it was boiling, jumpers were called to get men on the ground as soon as possible.

Carl also recalls: "It was an extremely bumpy flight, and we circled the fire many times. My recollection is that the jumper seated next to the cockpit got sick. No burp bags were available in those days, so he vomited into a seamless sack then passed it dripping to the door to be tossed out.

"As the bag was passed from hand to hand, several of those who got a whiff of it also threw up. I wasn't the guilty party, but I was beginning to feel the urge, too, so I dashed to the door and made sure I was one of the first sticks to exit."

We finally started jumping. The jump spot was a fenced field surrounded by trees. Carl also recalls: "A high-voltage transmission line bisected the jump spot. Jumper **Eddy Noel** (MSO-59) was blown into it and his parachute was draped over a pair of lines, causing an arc. A few of us on the ground counseled Eddy to release his capewells simultaneously.

"If he released only a single one and his body hit the ground while the chute was still tangled in the line, he would have completed the circuit and probably would have been electrocuted. He did release both and fell safely to the ground."

When it was my turn to jump, **Duane Ferdinand** (MSO-59) and I jumped in the same stick. As we descended, we shouted to one another in an effort to avoid colliding with each other. Much to our surprise, several horses ran out from under the tree shade. They appeared to be in a panic, running back and forth.

We assumed it was because they could hear voices but could not see where they came from. I was so concerned about possibly colliding with a horse—or having one tangle in my chute—that I made a sloppy landing. I took the brunt of the landing shock on my wallet, which was located in my left hip pocket.

I lay there, thinking I'd broken my hip. Duane

heard my groaning and ran over to check on me and helped me to my feet.

We all were trucked up to the fireline, but by 2 o'clock in the morning, my "glute" had stiffened so badly that I had to go to camp. By this time, the fire was 3,000 acres.

The next day we were released from the fire and returned to Redding. We later heard that by the second night, the fire had grown to more than 10,000 acres, after having burned through camp.

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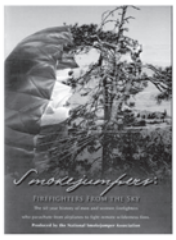

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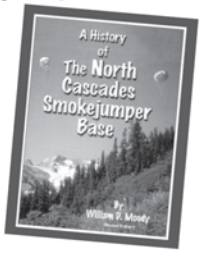


Snapshots from the Past

by Jeff R. Davis
(Missoula '57)

Razor Ridge

1958 was a busy fire season for this smokejumper. By August 27, I'd made seventeen fire jumps and I still had two more to go before the summer ended.

I'd spent most of the season in Silver City, where I'd made sixteen fire jumps on the Gila Forest. Back in R-1, I made another fire jump on the Kootenai Forest on August 12. At 0430 on August 27, I got another fire call. This one surprised me. It came from the Park Service up in Glacier National Park. Glacier was considered one of the "asbestos forests" because it rarely burned, and the Park Service hardly ever called for jumpers.

In less than an hour, sixteen of us were airborne in a Johnson DC-3 for the Razor Ridge Fire in the far northern reaches of the Park, where visitors rarely traveled. We arrived over the fire at 0600. We could have used sixty jumpers. The fire was located in steep country, as the fire name implied, and burning hot. We jumped on top of the ridge at 0630, and by 0800 we were on the fire, digging control lines around the running front, working without a break until 0500 the following morning.

Sometime during the next day, the firefighters on foot began to arrive, over a hundred of them. But these "pounders" never bothered to hike up the ridge to the firelines. Instead they milled around the valley below, where the Park Rangers had built a small guard station, doing God-knows what. We built all the lines around the fire, controlled it, and began the tedious job of mopping up.

Along about the third day it began to rain. The fire was situated above 8000 feet and in late August that rain was cold. To add to our misery we were issued paper sleeping bags. Yes, *paper!* After sleeping in those suckers in a pouring rain, I awoke the morning of the third day and peeled the bag away from my body like so much soggy Kleenex. The ground troops far below were issued kapok bags.

Within a couple more days, we were released from the front lines and allowed to hike down the ridge in the pouring rain to the cabin below for a hot meal and a night's rest in the kapok sleeping bags we'd heard so much about. When we arrived we were due for a surprise. Our longed-for kapoks were all piled in a huge, soggy heap in front of the small cabin so the "foot soldiers" could sleep inside, warm and dry.

… in late August that rain was cold. To add to our misery we were issued paper sleeping bags.

Jeez! We were one pissed crew of jumpers! It got worse. The Park Rangers, in full uniforms right down to their cute little Smokey Bear hats, led us around in small groups to individual areas where they told us we could build small warming fires. I'd had it. I said, "Screw this," and headed back to the pile of kapoks lying sodden in the rain, where I grabbed as many as I could carry and a can of kerosene I found there. I lugged it all back to our designated hunker-spot and piled all the sleeping bags into one large lump, soaked 'em in kerosene, and with one stroke of a match I had me a grand warming fire that was "drying out" those sodden bags right along with

warming my soul. Some of the "Smokey Bears" clucked their way over to our flaming hunker-spot, took one look at the faces of some of our pissed-off crew, and decided to take their business elsewhere.

It was now the beginning of September, and most of the firefighters, including the jumpers, were attending college which was due to begin shortly. There was no further need for all that manpower on the fire, anyhow, because the jumpers had taken care of that. They de-mobbed the fire, asking for volunteers to remain until the snows fell, for the final stages of mop-up. I raised my hand as I wasn't returning to college as long as I could stay working as a jumper. Two other jumpers also raised their hands.

For the next half-month, the three of us would remain together mopping up the fire and playing jumper-style pranks on one another. The Park officials told us they were leaving us a cook as well, and that was fine with us. As time passed, they even flew in newspapers and fresh fruit. I requested a couple of beer-drops, but that was pushing my luck too far.

There were a couple of problems for us by then. We'd jumped the fire in the clothes on our backs and that was all. As the days wore on, our clothes began to wear thin and rot off our bodies. Even our boots were showing the signs of early disintegration. There was little to do on the fire, so we started playing pranks on each other to the point none of us believed anything the others had to say. There were too many days and too little work to do, and too much tomfoolery between the three of us to tell all the tales we wove up there. One such tale will suffice.

On the trail up the ridge, we'd all seen the tracks of one huge bear. We certainly did not want to meet the owner of those tracks. We had made the trip up the ridge to the fire every other day to complete the little mop-up required. The off-days we spent doing chores around the cabin. One warm day we dumped our coats and jackets partway up the slope to the fire and hiked the rest of the way up in stages.

By mid-day the three of us were taking a smoke break on the fire lines, the two other guys sitting facing me. Suddenly, one of them shouted, "Oh look! Here comes a couple of bear cubs up the trail!" I thought, sure, bullshit. Then the other guy yelled, "Oh shit! Here comes the mama bear right after them!" I thought those bastards have ganged up on me with this gag. I shrugged 'em both off. Then, all of a sudden both, jumpers sprang to their feet and began running like crazy down the trail toward the nearest timber.

At about the same time, I saw two bear cubs run right past me. "Oh, f—-!" I said to myself. "This is no joke, this is not a drill!" as I belatedly jumped to my feet and started running after the other two. By this time they'd treed up in the only tall timber within reach, and they clung there hooting me loudly as I dug a hole in the ground spinning out, trying to run before I even got to my feet. It was a ragged race. I was smack in between the two cubs and the mama bear, and that was no place to be. I found a smaller pecker-pole within my frantic reach, and I shinnied up that sucker as fast as I could, mama bear snapping at my heels.

I climbed as far as the small lodgepole pine would allow and began using my White's to kick mama in the chops as she continued to snap at my ass, the others roaring uncontrollably all the while. Mama bear finally left with her kids in tow, but not until she'd kept the three of us treed for a good hour. All the way back down the trail, I endured the hoots and snorts of my two "buddies" as they relived the episode over and over again. But he who laughs last, laughs best. When we got back down to the spot where we'd dumped our jackets that morning, the guy who laughed the hardest at me had left his Eddie Bauer down jacket there. Before the bears came up the ridge to make my day, they had played tug-of-war with his precious jacket leaving chunks of it hanging in the bushes like a blizzard in a feather factory.

There was more crazy stuff that happened on that fire, but space doesn't permit. The Razor Ridge Fire was not only good for some decent overtime, but it provided some snickers and laughs for many months to come.

Mann Gulch - 7

Photos Courtesy: Life Magazine

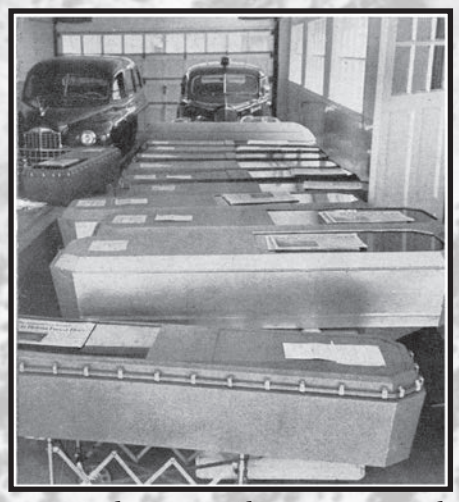
Bodies Transported To Hilger Landing

Pilot Jack Hughes

Johnson Air Service C-47

Rescue Crew

Stretcher Bearer



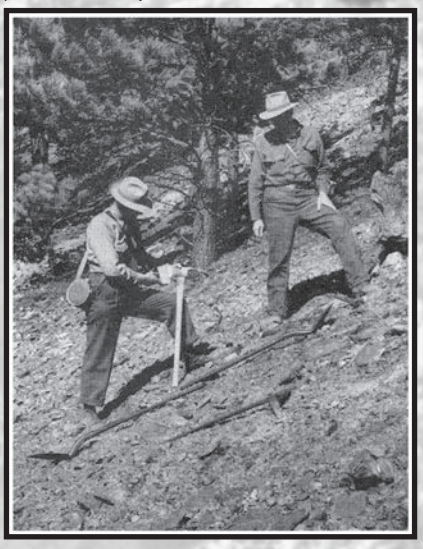
Victims Caskets Await Shipment From Helena

Wagner Dodge (Right) Leaves Funeral

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

0th Anniversary

1949 & Dick Hughes (MSO-64)



Inspecting Tool Drop

USFS Overhead Assessing Fire

Honor Guard Salute For Philip McVey

USFS Management Inspecting Landing Area

Wives, Sisters & Girlfriends Leaving Funeral

Survivors Walter Rumsey & Robert Sallee

Achieving Resilient Forests Through Effective Biomass Uses: Part III

by Michael Rains (Associate)

This is the final of a three-part series about the role of biomass uses in helping achieve healthy, sustainable forests that can be more resilient to disturbances, such as wildland fires. Biomass use is the outcome of restorative actions that represents active forest management.

Michael had written this series before the 2018 fire season. As you have seen, his and the predictions of many of us have come true. (Ed.)

Now is our time

The day was Dec. 1, 2015. I still worked for the U.S. Forest Service and was participating in my last National Leadership Council meeting in Washington, D.C.

The former Forest Service chief, Tom Tidwell, spoke forcefully and eloquently about the need for immediate change in the way wildland fire is managed. That is, about the way risk and exposure for fire responders are assessed and the role of fire in addressing the health and resiliency of forests and landscapes.

"… I do not care what it takes. We will not have another year like we had in 2015," he said.

While Tidwell highlighted first and foremost the tragedy of firefighter fatalities, the notion that aggressive forest management equates to effective fire management was also obvious in his words. Participants at the meeting also talked about the "next hundred years of conservation" and creating more resistant, resilient landscapes as benchmarks of success.

"Now is our time," said Tidwell.

It was an exciting meeting, filled with great promise.

Looking back, not much seems to have changed since that meeting. The 2016 and 2017 wildfire seasons were bad, yet not all that different than many of the fire seasons since 2000. The destruction of property and loss of life due to wildfires seems to becoming what some are suggesting is the "new normal."

I reject this notion because the current situation does not have to be this way.

Catastrophic fires in California in 2017 drew national attention, but soon the impacts of those fires, like so many before, seemed to fade from America's thoughts. Not much changed. All indications are the 2018 season will be one of the most costly and destructive on record.

So far in 2018, 47,668 fires have burned 7,210,876 acres. The fire season is far from over. When do we say, "… enough is enough" and begin to devote more of our time, energy and resources to forest maintenance as opposed to fire suppression?

When I worked for the Forest Service and was asked about the agency, I always easily said, "It is an honor to work for the Department of Agriculture, and I work for the greatest organization in the world."

I love the Forest Service and still think of it as a great organization. But, nonetheless, I am convinced that the organization needs to become much more proactive now and develop and deploy a campaign of "aggressive forest management to ensure effective fire management."

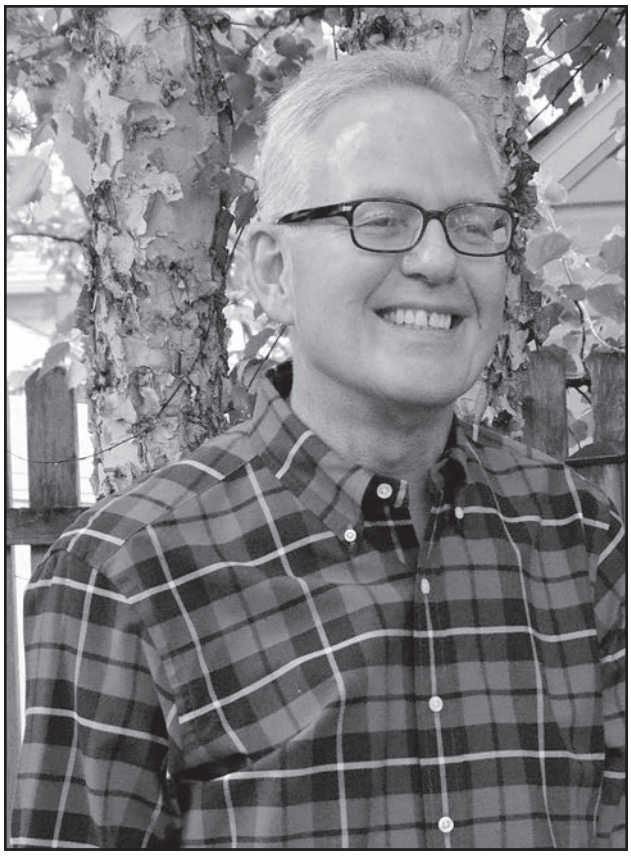
America is facing what I consider to be the greatest conservation issue of our time. Now is our time to make a legacy-type change.

Letter to the president

I wrote a letter to President Donald Trump June 19, 2018. The key point in my letter was:

"The management of America's forestlands, with a concentration on our national forests, needs to be emphasized so wildfires can remain smaller and begin again to be a tool for improved forest health as opposed to destructive events that destroy lives, communities and landscapes."

Attached to the letter was a draft executive order (EO) developed by the National Wildfire Institute under the leadership of Bruce Courtright. While I was not holding out much hope that the adminis-



Michael Rains (Courtesy M. Rains)

tration would run with the draft EO, it did provide the opportunity to organize thoughts about what needs to be done to begin a campaign of effective fire management resulting from aggressive forest management.

Two action items in the draft EO were especially important. They are:

- Convene a "Commission on the Stewardship of America's Forests." This commission will be co-led by the secretaries of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior. "... The commission will fully utilize the collective insight and innovation of a wide range of partners so trees, forests and forest ecosystems across all landscapes can become healthy, sustainable, and more resilient to disturbances such as insects, diseases and wildfire.
- Institute a long-term campaign of "aggressive forest management to ensure effective fire management." This would begin with a "statement of intent." For example, the new USDA undersecretary for the Natural Resources and Environment mission area could talk to all the Forest Service employees and say something like:

Statement of Intent
[hypothetical]

… the Forest Service will become much more promotional in the way it carries out its conservation mission. Simply put, we will be more aggressive in our actions and seek opportunities to make new progress to improve the land we are dedicated to care for and the lives of the people we serve.

The Forest Service will be changing to meet the more contemporary demands of a growing America. The agency will not be reckless in its stance, but will also not be averse to making more-risky choices when these choices hold the potential for important gains.

For example, it is largely accepted that the decline in forest management across the country has greatly contributed to the current wildfire situation and the associated impacts on people's lives and their communities. This is going to change. Immediately, I will be meeting with USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue and Congress to gain adequate funding for the newly released *Toward Shared Stewardship Across Landscapes: An Outcome-Based Investment Strategy.*

This will be the beginning of a long-term campaign to ensure our forests become more resilient to disturbances. I will be counting on your aggressive, promotional leadership to ensure our direct and indirect roles in the stewardship of America's forests are achieved, now and ahead. The Forest Service chief, as America's chief forester, will be relentless in leading the way.

If something like this were communicated, it would constitute a clear and powerful "statement of intent." The *Toward Shared Stewardship Across Landscapes: An Outcome-Based Investment Strategy,* with adequate resources behind it to render the eloquent prose meaningful, could be the foundation for such a "statement of intent."

The power of iconic leaders

Never underestimate the power of really good

promotional leaders. Their words can hold people and make us want to follow their guidance. I can recall the time at an NLC meeting when Dale N. Bosworth was the Forest Service Chief. Bosworth is an iconic leader.

We were discussing the Forest Service Strategic Plan. I think there were nine major items called "executive areas" and about 68 specific actions – clearly, far too many to easily grasp and achieve focus.

Perhaps seeing a bit of exasperation on the faces of more than a few at the meeting, Bosworth stood up and said, "... I think what we are really talking about is four threats," and he listed them:

- Uncontrolled fires;
- Destructive invasive species;
- Irresponsible use of the national forests (with an immediate emphasis of controlling the use of off-highway vehicles); and
- Loss of open space.

Think about this. In one statement, the chief said we are going to begin to deploy an aggressive conservation mission along a rural – i.e., "uncontrolled fires" – to urban – i.e., "loss of open space," land gradient to better care for America's landscapes, using our direct and indirect powers, and improve people's lives. Buckle up!

It was really quite magical in its simplicity. In just a few words, associated with his huge psychological size, Bosworth provided a "statement of intent" for all to embrace. And, we did.

Without the exact words, he was proclaiming, *Now is our time.*

A forest fix for a fire fix

Looking ahead, it is paramount that USDA and Forest Service leaders and a concerned citizenry follow a similar course of action. That is, to shape, clearly communicate, and deploy a "statement of intent." To me, the way forward includes four major steps:

- Convening a commission-type event that would establish the foundation for a cohesive "statement of intent." The focus of the commission would be determining a comprehensive, contemporary strategy for aggressive forest management to ensure effective fire management. Simply put, describe "…a *forest fix* to achieve a *fire fix*."
- From the actions of the commission-type event, the USDA, the Forest Service, and concerned partners shall develop a final "statement of intent." This might be similar to the hypothetical statement presented above. This statement must be simple and direct in its focus. In order to be a "campaign," ambiguity needs to be eliminated. It does not mean this statement is all the Forest Service will be doing – of course not. It simply states "... this will be a top priority campaign now and ahead." Perhaps a key difference from the past: This "statement of intent" should have or actually be the imprimatur of the USDA, under the leadership of the undersecretary, NRE; this position "decides."

I never thought I would say this, but I am not sure anymore that the Forest Service Chief actually "decides" on real program direction. Clearly, this is a function of the power of the individual. But recently, at least in my view, the position has "played" with organizational tactics and left real influencing ("deciding") of the conservation direction for America to others. Perhaps a habit has formed.

The late organizational behavior specialist Dr. Paul Hersey would often say, "… there are those who *play* and those who *decide,*" when talking about influencing. He concluded, "… to be effective, work more with those who *decide*." Congressman Ken Calvert decides. Sen. Lisa Murkowski decides. Congressman Rodney P. Frelinghuysen and Sen. Richard Shelby decide. USDA Secretary Perdue decides. The USDA undersecretary for the NRE mission area decides.

Together, the USDA secretary, the NRE undersecretary and maybe the Forest Service Chief shall meet with key congressional leaders, especially the chairs of the Appropriation Subcommittees, Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, and the Office of Management and Budget director to reconfirm the need for added resources and the amount to effectively deploy *Toward Shared Stewardship Across Landscapes: An Outcome-Based Investment Strategy.* Candidly, at this point, the strategy seems to be filled with eloquent – yet empty – words. There is no ability to effectively deploy the strategy because there is no "juice" (adequate funds) behind the prose.

The Forest Service needs minimally more

than $2.2 billion annually until the gap from shifting resources for the fire effort over decades can be restored and fire suppression costs eventually decline. I thought that might be through 2023, but the funding increase may be needed even longer.

As I stated in Part I of this series, I fully understand that an increase of more than $2.2 billion in the annual appropriation for the Forest Service may seem significant. But, as I also concluded in another letter to the president on Sept. 2, 2018, "… the amount is small when compared to the annual losses America's taxpayers are losing each year in wildfire-related damages to infrastructure, public health, and natural resources – $70 to $350 billion." No doubt, the benefits to costs for aggressive forest management is enormous.

Recently, I was reading the special edition of *Smokejumper* magazine from October 2018. In part, the article states:

"What would happen if we would put a couple billion [dollars] into the management of our forests on an annual basis? Did you know that we have spent over a TRILLION dollars in Afghanistan since 2001? I don't like to delve into politics, but we spent $30.8 billion there in 2016. Someone please show me the results for that expenditure. History has shown that our trillion-dollar war will not achieve any of the expected goals."

Often times, keeping things in context is pretty darned important. More than $2.2 billion per year is quite reasonable for the magnitude of the job ahead.

I will also say this. Experience has shown that aggressive forest management – specifically, expanded hazardous fuel removal, thinning of forests, salvaging dead and dying trees, and innovations in biomass uses – does indeed make a huge difference in improving people's lives, protecting their property, and enhancing the economic vibrancy of their communities. It's a wise investment. Now is our time. We need to "fix the forests" so we can "fix the fires."

- Somehow, get those who "decide" (Murkowski, Calvert, Perdue, Hubbard, Mulvaney, the president, and others) to more fully understand that the current situation is a result of a "... serious and urgent forest land management crisis." It is not "mismanagement," as Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke suggested; it is little or no management. This understanding will be heightened based on the foundations established through items 1-3. Let there be no doubt, the lack of effective fire management due to the current conditions of forestlands is one of the greatest conservation issues we have ever faced. We cannot accept the status quo. Now is our time.

A few final remarks

In my last letter to the president, I said, "… if you want the wildfires to slow and become less destructive, you have to emphasize forest management." And, unlike what Zinke concluded, the issue is not about "gross mismanagement" – it's about little or no management of the forests along a complex rural to urban land gradient.

Yes, as the recent Carr Fire in Northern California shows, the urban forests can be part of the solution.

Since retiring in 2016, I have reflected a lot on the subject of leadership. Clearly, as part of the Forest Service leadership team for many years, I was a piece of the successes *and* failures. When I sort it all out, the thing that is dominant in my mind about the top leaders is the ability to be "promotional" vs. "preventive." I thought I was "promotional." Looking back, I am not so sure.

The "preventive" focus calls for "keeping it between the ditches," as one leader explained to me. For the most part, this leadership style is avoiding risks – seeing goals as opportunities to maintain the status quo and keep things running "smoothly."

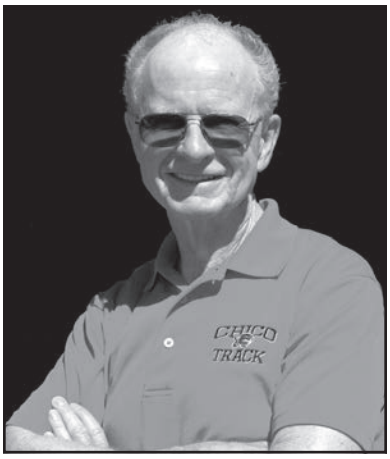
The "promotion focus," on the other hand, suggests leaders see opportunities for gains and a better future. They do not avoid taking risks.

I think most of the top leaders of the Forest Service actually believe they are "promotion focus" leaders. If this is true, then creating a new "statement of intent" as a foundation for "aggressive forest management to ensure effective fire management" – and working with those who decide to secure the required funds – will be much easier.

If it is not true, nothing will change. This will be a huge opportunity lost. Because, now is our time.

References for this article are available upon request.

SOUNDING OFF from the Editor



by Chuck Sheley
(Cave Junction '59)
Managing Editor

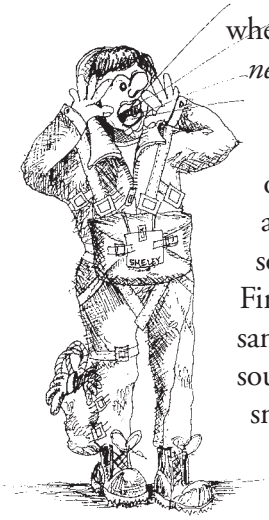
The Revolution

I look at it this way. I just moved into another decade and probably don't have a lot of time left. But, at the same time, I'm not ready to roll over and play dead. Change takes place because people see that it needs to be done. How long will it take—who knows?

What am I talking about? Here it is—we need to allow the USFS back into the job of managing forests. I'm guessing that if you lived anywhere in the Western U.S. last summer, you spent a lot of time breathing smoke.

Billions of dollars are spent each fire season managing wildfire. Our pockets are open and flowing because the general public is thinking that the agencies are doing a good job. Just have a natural disaster and the checkbook is blank, waiting for someone to fill in the numbers.

I hear the USFS say they put out 98% of the wildfires. What I'm concerned about is the 2% that they don't put out. This 2% is costing us billions and increasing each year. Is burning down our forests the best way to reduce the fuel load? Let's see, we want to reduce the fuel load and go back to the way things were 200 years ago.



Fires left to burn in the middle of the fire season, after years of drought and bug kill, will not burn like they did 200 years ago. I've read too many news reports that indicate that fires were "let burn" to correct the great job of suppression that we did over the decades.

However, when these fires escape the "box" or the wilderness, which is predictable, the USFS says there are "no resources available" to do initial attack at the time. Later, it is discovered that the fire was "let-burn" for a few days before any action was taken. After things go to pot, the story is changed to the "lack of available resources."

Bring in Joe Friday on this one: "Just the Facts Ma'am." Everyone working for the USFS is tight-lipped. However, when Detective Friday (*Dragnet* for the younger readers) finally breaks through, we find out there were plenty of smokejumpers available and ready to go. Does this sound familiar to the Biscuit Fire in 2002? The line was the same—lack of available resources. There were over 100 smokejumpers available at the time. Scratch another 500,000 acres.

Detective Friday goes to his dictionary. What is a "lie"? He sees the following: "Untruth, falsehood, fib, invention, etc." Joe is street-wise and cuts right through the B.S. He goes to the smokejumper status report on the NSA website and sees that there was no shortage of smokejumpers on the days these fires were reported. Joe leans over to his partner, Office Bill Gannon, and they conclude that the Forest Service is guilty of telling a lie. They both laugh a bit. "This one was easy, Bill. How about a beer or two before we hit the 405—traffic is heavy this time of day."

Across the Pacific, Detective Steve McGarrett is having one heck of a time holding back a young Detective Danny Williams. Finally, McGarrett shouts out the legendary phrase, "Book 'em Danno."

Has anyone actually proved that the best way to clear our forests and use our resources

is to burn them down? If so, why not start a charcoal industry? Think of the PR the Forest Service could get with their new branded charcoal briquettes—"Your Forest in A Bag." This would be the talk of the town at every tailgate party from Alabama to Montana.

There are better ways to go. Michael Rains has done a three-part series on Biomass for *Smokejumper* magazine. He is showing that we can reduce the fuel load, create jobs, cut smoke, reduce loss of watershed, and cut down the amount of money annually spent on wildfires. It will take money and time. We need to allow the USFS to get back into the management of the forests—let the professional foresters do their job.

How do you as an ex-smokejumper or current smokejumper handle a photo of a single burning snag that, after a couple days of watching, develops into a fire that costs millions and thousands of acres of our forests?

I know you would say, "That's a normal two-manner." At least it used to be when we were off the ground within 10 minutes of the fire call. Not the case any more, folks.

I always go back to equating it to your local fire department pulling up in front of your burning house and asking if they should put it out now or wait a couple days and see what happens. You make the call—your house—your forests—charcoal or trees—time for a change. Speak up or forever hold your peace.

Cuisine Of An Idaho Fire Lookout

by Howard Chadwick (McCall '52)

I wouldn't have thought to shoot a deer out of season while working for the Forest Service if Joe Denny hadn't suggested it. Why wouldn't I listen to him? He was assistant district ranger. No college-trained, by-the-book man. He'd been a cowboy, a trapper, had met Charlie Russell back in the twenties, in Montana.

Now a seasonal Forest Service man. Winters, he played poker in the back room of the Smokehouse in Salmon while his wife taught school.

Too many deer, Joe said. There'll be a big die-off this winter. Take some Morton's Tenderquick up on lookout with you. Knock off a dry doe, bone out the meat, put it in a Tenderquick solution. There's a galvanized wash tub up there—use that.

So when a big doe came to the salt lick one morning, no fawns in sight, it seemed right that I slip out to the porch, rest the nine-millimeter Luger with its ten-inch barrel on the wood pile, squeeze the trigger. A quicker death than starvation.

My first deer. It did not come with instructions, but I had once helped my uncle butcher a calf. Within two days, the deer was de-boned, submerged in an opaque briny soup of Tenderquick and water. Water from a spring a steep half-mile down the mountain.

The meat took on a reddish hue, became stringy and salty. There was a distinctive odor, not one of decay, but one I can still reproduce in my mind. A water soak removed some of the salt, but not all.

Slabs of meat resembling steaks, I fried in butter. Chunks, I boiled in stews. For the thin sheets over the ribs, I remembered my mother's rolled roasts, tied in string. My mother was Nova Scotia English, not French, but she believed in tri-colored vegetables to accompany meat dishes. Here, this translated to cans of carrots, peas and corn. All cooking done on or in my wood stove. No electricity.

Groceries restocked from Casey Mercantile in North Fork were ferried up the seven-mile trail every two weeks on horseback by Rowler O'Connor, the packer. On his first trip, I invited him to lunch. Plopped down a steak that nearly covered his plate. He ate most of it, brought his own lunch next trip. I sent ten pounds of deer meat with him down to the trail crew. Never heard back.

My only non-Forest Service visitors were two young guys on horseback, looking to poach deer.

They stayed overnight, did not complain about my cooking. In fact, showed interest in the effect of Morton's Tenderquick on deer flesh.

My appetite stayed equal to the steady consumption of the transformed deer, due to my job list. Jobs to fill spaces between frequent trips up the sixty-foot tower to look for smoke: Rebuild the corral, with posts and poles cut from lodgepole pines a hundred yards down the mountain and toted uphill on my shoulder. Cut, split and stack a cord of stove wood. With ax and an old bucksaw – no chainsaw here. Paint the outhouse. Dig a garbage pit. Which held the tub of deer meat, garbage being burned or stuffed down rabbit holes.

With August came ripening of dwarf huckleberries that had colonized much of the cleared space around the cabin and tower. Then came grouse, in pursuit of berries. A tasty alternative to red stringy deer meat. I lay on a landing of my tower with my .22, aiming for their heads. Conscience dictated that grouse with garnish of berries not completely replace deer in my diet – I ate the last of it before leaving.

On a Sunday morning late in summer, I came down from the tower and here was Mel Hyatt, district ranger. A college man. For all I knew, a by-the-book man. He'd walked up to see how Chadwick was getting along on Ulysses Lookout. "Let's see how you've done with your job list," he said. Rebuild corral – check. Woodpile – check. Paint outhouse – check. Put up sign – check.

Last item – the garbage pit – and the wash tub with what was left of the deer meat. As he lifted the wooden cover, I thought, God, help me out here. I'm going to lose my job. Maybe go to jail. But Mel only said, this where you keep your fresh meat? He lowered the lid.

We moved on to the cabin. Mel took in the dirty breakfast dishes in the sink, can of grouse bones on the window sill. He wrote for a minute on his clipboard, then turned and said, "Howard, you're doing a pretty good job here. But – I have to mark you down for poor housekeeping."

—Indianola Ranger District, Salmon National Forest, 1950.

Deb Yoder (RDD-00) clearing debris around her property in Paradise. She lost her house in the Camp Fire. The Good Samaritan Fund and the Wildland Firefighter Foundation supported her with financial aid. (Courtesy of D. Yoder)

SMOKEJUMPERS HONORED, RECOGNIZED BY PEERS

Mitch Hokanson (RDD-00) and **Daniel Staab** (NIFC-11) have been named as this year's recipients of the *Al Dunton Smokejumper Leadership Award.*

The award is presented annually to one Bureau of Land Management and one U.S. Forest Service smokejumper, each of whom goes beyond the requirements of the job and demonstrates excellence in leadership in one or more of the Wildland Fire Leadership Principles:

1. Proficient in his/her job, both technically and as a leader.
2. Makes sound and timely decisions.
3. Ensures tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished.
4. Develops subordinates for the future.
5. Knows his/her subordinates and looks out for their well-being.
6. Keeps his/her subordinates informed.
7. Builds the team.
8. Employs his/her subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.
9. Knows him/herself and seeks improvement.
10. Seeks responsibility and accepts responsibility for all actions.
11. Sets the example.

One USFS base manager, one BLM base manager and one NSA board member make up the selection committee. This panel had a very difficult task in selecting the 2018 recipients.

Congratulations to all the individuals have been honored by their peers by being nominated for the 2018 award, including Hokanson, Staab, **Todd Haynes** (MYC-02), **Darby Thompson** (RDD-04) and **Benjamin Dobrovolny** (FBX-04).

The award honors the memory and service of **Alan J. "Al" Dunton** (FBX-67), longtime base manager in Fairbanks.

Hokanson has jumped all 19 seasons of his career in Redding. From the Redding base's nomination, submitted by **Josh Mathiesen** (RDD-94):

Throughout his career, Mitch has been an outstanding asset to the smokejumper program. He has a terrific attitude, a great work ethic, and a selfless desire to help others. Below is a summary of the contributions Mitch has made above and beyond his normal duties:

Mitch is a member of the Safety First program for Region 5. He has been an outstanding voice for the smokejumper program in these meetings. He takes our safety concerns to the program and keeps us informed on some of the safety trends that the Forest Service is seeing.

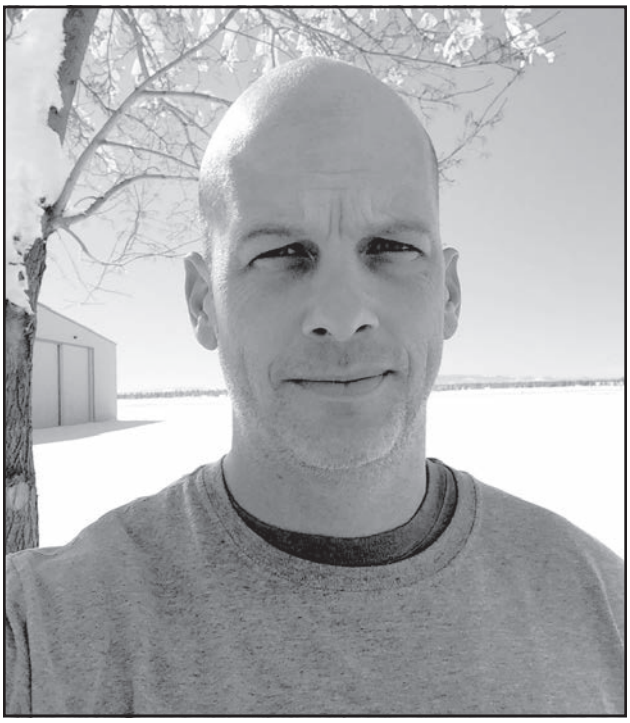
He has been the technical specialist for some of these safety concerns, especially when they are chainsaw-related, and he has been tasked with addressing many of those safety-related issues. He has been involved in several facilitated learning analysis events and has done a fantastic job while participating in them. Mitch has a cool and calm demeanor that really allows people to open up to him while interviewing with him.

Mitch is an expert with a chainsaw and has moved full steam ahead with it. Mitch first became the Region 5 crosscut saw coordinator. He was very involved in keeping the crosscut program alive in Region 5, not just for smokejumpers, but for all firefighters.

He constantly traveled with the group to learn new ideas on training people with saws. Again he was the technical expert for much of the development of new saw curriculum, as well as certification processes. Mitch has recently taken over as the Region 5 Saw Program manager. We are confident that Mitch will continue to leave his mark on the saw program and continue to improve the program as a whole.

Mitch has been taking on the Redding Smokejumper tour program for many years. He is constantly working with local groups and arranging for them to come out to the base to get a top-notch tour on the history

Mitch Hokanson (Courtesy M. Hokanson)



Dan Staab (Courtesy NIFC)

and evolution of the program.

Mitch tailors his presentations for his audience and is always very professional and informative. He works with schools, churches, special-needs groups, other fire groups and anyone who "just stops by." He will always make himself available, even on his weekends, to meet the schedules of these groups.

Mitch also has tremendous skill in his chainsaw art. For many years Mitch has been improving the Redding Smokejumper Base with his carvings, working many long hours to turn stumps and dead trees into masterpieces.

Mitch creates many of the carvings as gifts for people who have moved on or retired and who were instrumental to the smokejumper program. He often does this on his own time and at some of his own expense.

Mitch has donated many of his carvings for raffles that benefit organizations like the Wildland Firefighter Foundation or to families of firefighters who have suffered traumatic events, or just to raise money for an event or cause that he feels is important to the community.

This is a short list of some of the things that Mitch has done for the Smokejumper community, and it displays some of his contributions to the greater wildland fire organization and society. He is a great role model for others, a tremendous teacher, and he always leads by example, works hard and creates a positive image for the smokejumper program.

Staab has been in Boise his entire jumping career. From that base's nomination letter:

The BLM smokejumper program would like to honor Dan Staab with the 2019 Al Dunton Award. Dan has consistently demonstrated the leadership principles of strength and integrity throughout his career.

As a smokejumper, Dan is in a league of his own. His strength on the fireline is unmatched. He provides clear intent and purpose. He applies attention to detail to his duties as senior parachute rigger. He is solution-driven with a solid safety record. He is a man of action who leads from the front.

Dan has represented our program as a division/group supervisor on a national

Type I incident management team. He has demonstrated his ability to adapt and overcome with superior performance in the role of incident commander Type III. His efforts have furthered the BLM fire mission of aggressive initial attack and fostered interagency cooperation.

Dan served as a rookie trainer for five years, three of them as the lead trainer. His contribution to the Boise smokejumper rookie training will have a positive impact for years to come. His instruction and mentorship has helped develop some of the strongest smokejumper crewmembers since the inception of the program.

Dan has risen to every challenge put before him. He has mentored ram-air transition candidates and has served as an instructor for multiple courses. As a subject matter expert for a serious accident investigation, his service benefits the entire fire community. Dan upholds the fundamental purpose of the Boise smokejumper program – to provide the future leaders of the BLM.

A Short Story About Margarita Phillips

by Andy Hayes (Missoula '79)

I considered Margarita (MSO-88) one of my best friends and did a lot of things with her, including running Marathons, half Marathons, and lots of 10Ks. I skied with her, I helped her train the Great Northern Fire Crew, but most of all, I was a Smokejumper with her.

Early in her career, we jumped a fire together in the Kootenai N.F. It was 1991 and Margarita's fourth season. It was a long, busy fire season starting in Alaska in mid-June. I jumped 15 fires that year. It was October 17 when we jumped the Spruce Mountain Fire. It was always later referred to as the shit fire by both of us.

The jump spot was high on a ridge top. Eight of us jumped and the fire looked like a couple acres. It had been an extraordinarily dry fall and was still hot and windy when we jumped. Everyone was pretty tired of the fire season by then and ready to get back to our "ordinary lives." We geared up for the shift and walked down the long, steep ridge to the fire.

When we got down to the fire, the wind had picked up. It was typical Kootenai fire, brushy steep, and it had several ridges and small chimneys involved. We definitely would have our hands full. We started digging line from the bottom and made pretty good progress up, until we had to cross the top of one of these chimneys. The fire was intense and the smoke was hard to deal with. With eight of us, we were able to get through it, but we all realized this could be a problem later.

We continued down the other side and back up the next ridge, following the edge of the fire as closely as possible. The next chimney was as equally intense, but we also got through that one. As we started back down the other side, we realized we might be able to hook the fire, but holding it was going to be a problem. Margarita and I got sent back to check the line. As we feared, it had jumped the line in the first chimney. Well, I looked at her and said, "This is going to be one shit fire." We put our heads down and dug until we couldn't stand the smoke any longer.

We decided it would be best if we traded off digging in the smoke. One of us jumped in for as long as we could stand and coming out blowing snot and gasping for air. We kept doing this and it was not pretty. We were both puking, eyes watering, and snot running out our noses. We finally tied back in and, by then the rest of the crew had come back to us. At this point it was well after midnight and we all realized we were going to be in for an all-nighter.

The crew boss explained the situation and had been asking for reinforcements. Nothing was available, and the fire really wasn't very accessible for ground crews. Plus, most of the local fire crew had gone back to school. None of us were in a good mood. I was sitting in the fireline, head down, trying to recover, when I heard the crew boss say, "We

need a couple of volunteers to hike up to the jump spot and bring down more water and food for the night." It was silent and I was staring at the ground

… we realized we might be able to hook the fire, but holding it was going to be a problem.

sitting next to Margarita. She elbowed me and said, "Let's do it. It'll be a good workout."

That is just the way she was. When everyone was down and out, she was ready to pick up the slack to help everyone. It was over 2,000 vertical feet back to the jump spot, and I remember how hard it was to keep putting one foot in front of the other. We made it, and it was "a good workout."

The next day the fire jumped our fireline again and we called a team in to manage it. They took three days to actually build a road to the bottom of the fire. By the time they got there, we had held it for the last 24 hours. We were released and 80 firefighters took over. This is no shit and ended the fire season.

Continued Hiring Problems

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

In the October 2018 issue of *Smokejumper,* we dealt with USFS hiring problems. No longer does the agency have the ability to hire local residents. The community feeling achieved when the local youth were able to apply and get Forest Service jobs has been lost. All applications now go to Albuquerque where they are evaluated. Smokejumper bases receive applications from people who do not want to be smokejumpers.

I know of one individual who was told he did not qualify to be a smokejumper. He had five seasons of fire experience—two Type II Crews and three Hotshots, plus a degree from the University of Oregon. When he asked for his application to be reevaluated, he was told that he actually did qualify. However, since the application period had closed, his name was not on the hiring list.

Last week I had the opportunity to sit down with a Fire Management Officer from a forest north of here. I was impressed with his attitude and desire for quick Initial Attack. He was a throwback to 30 years ago. We talked about the lack of ability to make local hires. He said that is one of his problems. The local people live in the area, have community ties and know the country.

The current system gives him hires from out of state while the local applicants go to another state. For instance, the hires coming from New Mexico to Oregon pass the hires going to New Mexico from Oregon. This would not make sense to anyone except those in the USFS Human Resources Department.

As a person with many years in many phases of fire, I asked John Culbertson (FBX-69) to comment:

> If I could change one thing for USFS fire, it would be to return to local personnel officers and letting District Rangers and program managers do their own hiring.
>
> Watching local kids try to figure out the hiring maze is sad. Again, the only real solution to this fire mess is to eliminate the Forest Service and give all National Forest management over to the states. A single Federal fire agency under BLM could continue the coordination of resources as is done in Canada and Australia.
>
> The Forest Service is too broken to fix and now that the BLM is loosing local hire and going into the tailspin of political correctness, I think it will soon follow. The use of full-time positions for what should be seasonal jobs is ruining the work ethic in both agencies. The energy level of seasonal workers and full-timers working together is a missing element in today's federal forestry programs. One need only listen to the folks involved to know it is over. You just can't fix stuff like that.
>
> Local agencies lead the way. The FIRE-

SCOPE agencies, with the exception of the federal folks, already have local hire. When formed, Federal agencies were vital to the running of a country, in a mostly rural country such as ours, and played a bigger role out of practicality. But, I do think our country has become so big that it would be better to break up many Federal lands and put them under the authority of the states. Many solutions have a greater probability of success.

I thought I was done with this article until my trip to the California Smokejumper base in Redding yesterday (April 16). When I got home, I sent the following information to the NSA Board:

Today, after a two-week delay, I did my annual Smokejumper History presentation to the RDD 2019 rookie class. Due to the many hiring problems from HR, they were two weeks late in starting their rookie training. There were supposed to be 12 rookies. Finally, today, there were 10 approved rookies, plus one still waiting approval, sitting in front of me. The last rookie still is undergoing background checks. They are delaying the start of rookie training with hope that #12 will get approval soon.

The system is broken. The key to establishing a working relationship with the towns, community, etc. is to hire local people. That was a key factor in the past when people were proud to work for the USFS and that reflected on the communities' perception of the Forest Service.

Our President, Bob McKean, has done an excellent President's Message for the this Issue of Smokejumper. He asks the questions that should be asked. Will anyone ever be able to answer these questions?

After today's session at Redding, I know that the young people who sat in front of me will be able to do the job. But, is the system so broken that, regardless of the talent, they will not be able to do that job?

Remembering Rich Farmer (Redding '64)

by Murry Taylor (Redding '65)

I made my first jump as a rookie in 1965 with Rich. Rich rookied in '64, so he was a Snookie. He was first in the door, and I was second on a two-man stick. While on final, Rich turned to me and yelled, "Hey, you Rookie, just don't get between me and the spot."

Well, we both had a bunch of twists and by the time we untwisted, it was time to prepare for our equally crappy landings on good ole Mother Earth. Turns out I got closer to the spot than Rich. I used to bring that up to him now and then for a good laugh.

Rich was a really good FMO, good fireman and guy. He was always working, keeping busy planting trees, burning timber blocks, burning piles, whatever he could to keep out of the office. He was also the main reason that the Hotshot crews from Alaska (the Chena and the Midnight Suns) were brought down to the Lower 48, beginning with the Klamath National Forest. They stayed in the barracks at Callahan and were considered by the locals to be the best to ever work there. These days they routinely come south for all kinds of fire assignments. Towards the end of his career, Rich was a Type 1 Ops Chief—quite a legacy.

Up until about seven years ago, the FS used to hire Rich on AD (emergency type hire). I'd be on Duzel Rock Lookout and hear him huffing and puffing up the hill on some fire, getting to the top, giving them a size-up, and then, sometimes, directing retardant. Rich was a good man, solid fireman, and a lot of fun. Glad I got time with him.

The Story of Frank Derry, Inventor of the "Derry Slot"

by Jack Nash (Missoula '42)

The following is from an article in ***Dave Burt's*** *(MSO-47) scrapbook saved and forwarded to me by* ***Karl Brauneis*** *(MSO-77).* (Ed.)

When the notice of **Frank Derry's** (MSO-40) death appeared, I was somewhat surprised, for he had appeared to be in good health shortly before. I had to remember though, that it had been 26 years since I first met Frank, when the USFS Smokejumpers assembled at the Nine Mile Ranger Station, some 25 miles west of Missoula, Montana, for the start of the 1942 training season.

I believe this letter from **Glenn Smith** (NCSB-40) gives a good background of Frank's early activities:

> Dear Jack,
>
> Received your letter and Rufe's (**Rufus Robinson** MSO-40). Good to hear from both of you again. About Frank, was sure sorry to hear of his death (8/2/68). As you know, I ran his loft for a few years before we went on the experiments, so will bring you guys up to 1940-41 from 1934.
>
> Frank spotted me on my first jump in September 1934 at Gardena Valley Airport, which was located in south Los Angeles. We used an old "Commander," three-place Biplane. Pilot sat in back and Frank and I side by side in the front seat. It took about five minutes to get to 2,000 feet. Frank got me out on the wing, whacked me on the shoulder and away I went. I think he and the pilot both looked whiter than I did. After I had made a few jumps, I started jumping air shows with him. He had his loft at old Mines Field, which is now Los Angeles International Airport.
>
> I jumped air shows from Calexico-Mexicali to Boulder Dam with him. After I got my rigger's license, I went to work for him and ran a pickup and delivery service from Seal Beach to Clover Field in Santa Monica.
>
> Frank was the West Coast distributor for Eagle Parachutes, so when Eagle tried out for the experiments (smokejumper experimental program) in 1939, Frank got the job to perform the jumps.
>
> Frank and I met **Chet** and **Virgil** "**Bus**" **Derry** in Winthrop, Washington. After we started jumping, **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40) jumped with us.
>
> **In 1940, Frank and I came back to Winthrop, trained one squad of jumpers, then went over to Missoula and trained three squads.** You know who those guys were, so you, Jim and **Cooley** (MSO-40) ought to be able to take it from there. Well, Jack, say Hi to Earl, **Krout** (**Leonard**/MSO-46), and anyone else left around there that I know.

Of the squads that trained in 1940 at Seeley Lake Ranger Station, 55 miles northeast of Missoula, Rufe Robinson and Earl Cooley made the first fire jump for the USFS on July 12, 1940. Rufe is at Lenore, Idaho, and Earl is the Supt. of the Parachute Project at Missoula. Earl's comments on the first year of training are as follows:

> One key smokechaser was selected from each of seven forests in R-1 to carry on the experimental smokejumper program. Each of these men were to be single and between the ages of 21 and 25.
>
> Rufus Robinson was selected from the Nez Perce, **Jim Alexander** from the old Cabinet, **Jim Waite** from the Clearwater, **Dick Lynch** from the Flathead, Earl Cooley from the Bitterroot, **Leonard Hamilton** from the Lolo and **Bill Bolen** from the Kootenai. These men were to take the smoke-

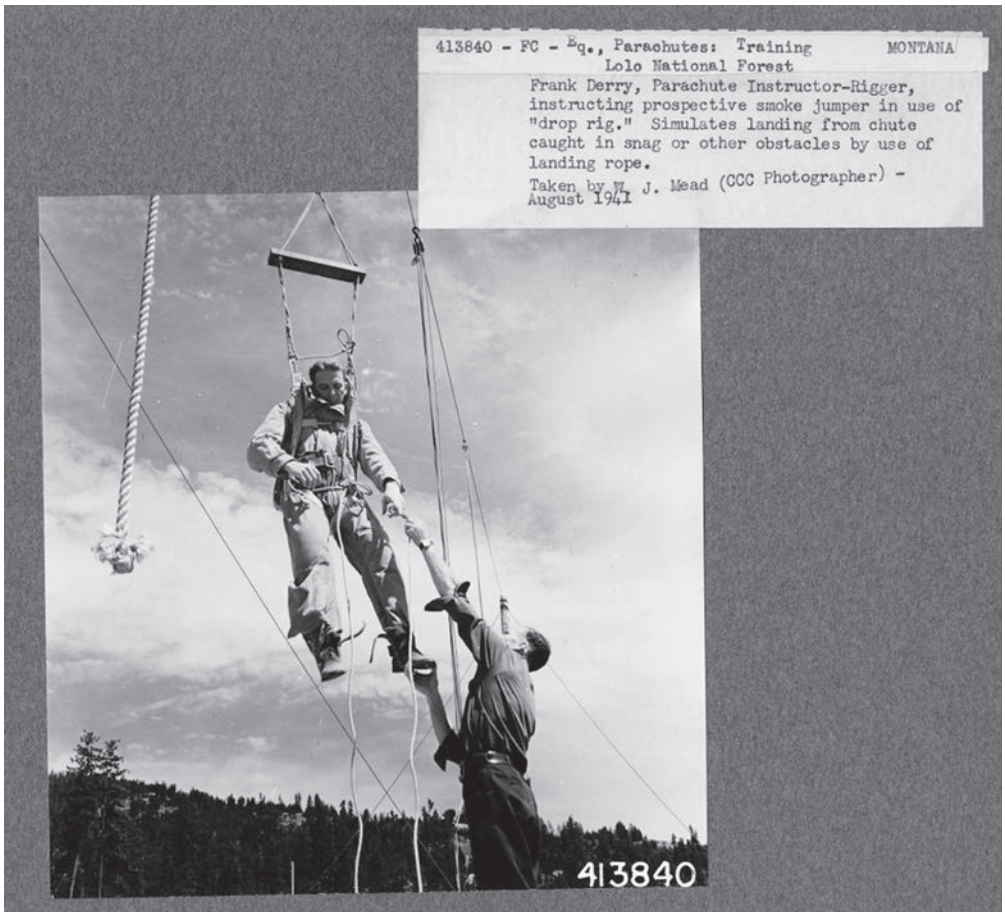
jumper training at the Seeley Lake Ranger Station. Leonard Hamilton, unfortunately, did not pass the rigid physical examination and had to be dropped. Bill Bolen dropped out after his third jump for personal reasons, and this left five trainees with Chet and Frank Derry to carry on the experiment in 1940 in Region-1.

In contrast to the training our jumpers receive today, we had just finished putting up two 14x16 tents, butted end to end, for a loft and had set up three tent frames for sleeping quarters. Frank Derry, our instructor, hung up an Eagle Parachute in a tree and gathered the crew around him. He said, "This is the apex of the chute, these are the load lines and tomorrow we jump" and tomorrow we jumped! This was the extent of our conditioning. However, we had all been working on trail crews and were in good shape.

Jim Waite and I got 10 practice jumps before we went to Moose Creek for our summer assignment. The rest of the crew varied from two to five practice jumps, depending on the extent of injuries they had received in training. I recall getting some training jumps in Moose Creek after we were located. We went to Moose Creek on July 10th. Rufus and I were to jump on the first actual forest fire jump on July 12th of that year.

From the year 1940, when the first fire jump was made, we have made over 75,000 parachute jumps in the USFS Smokejumper Program without a fatality.

The closest thing I can remember to a fatality was in 1944 when I was spotting from the Trimotor and dropping two men to a stick. Both men were hooked up on the approach, but when the first man jumped, his static line hit the tongue of the snap on the second man's static line, and as the man left the door, his static line fell from behind



"A Derry Slot is a gap between the two adjacent gores on a conventional round parachute, since both sides of the gap or slot are of equal length and subject to the same forces, the gap is normally closed though of course air escapes through it. A steering line is attached to the centre of each side of the gap, if one steering line is pulled down, the slot opens and the escaping air is directed towards the side on which the line was pulled, thus making the canopy turn." —*The Sport Parachutist*

Historic photo of Frank Derry training a prospective smokejumper in simulated landing was taken by W. J. Mead, CCC photographer, 1941. (The Internet Archive)

him. I reached for the snap as it went out the door, but missed it by inches.

As we were coming over the ridge and spotting back into the side hill, it left considerable elevation for the jumper to play with. When the jumper left the plane, he went into a big swan dive in the direction the plane was going, as we had the motors cut for jumping. It permitted me to holler for the man to pull his rip cord, which I did repeatedly. He said he could hear me okay, but it just didn't dawn on him what to do for some time. He drifted down beyond the fire camp location, a distance of around 600 yards from the original jump spot where his partner had landed. He got about 200 feet from the ground before he pulled his emergency—he oscillated twice and hit the ground without a scratch. Everyone in the fire camp presumed he had augered in and came running to pick up the remains. We were surprised to see him standing up, laughing and joking with people saying, "Well, I guess I fooled you that time."

The 1941 group increased to 24 men, the 1942 group to 37. **Merle Lundrigan** (MSO-41) was the project superintendent for fire training and instructed us in the use of fire tools and fire control methods. Frank directed us in all phases of parachute training. The first introduction of the 1942 class to parachutes and parachuting was a lecture given by Frank on parachute history from the time of DaVinci and a display of the parachute equipment we would use. Frank certainly had a relaxed way of instructing. Never talking loud, but to those of us who had never seen a parachute or ridden in a plane, his manner was reassuring. By the time he had us ready for our first jump, we had confidence in him, the equipment, and in ourselves.

The jumping equipment used at that time, in addition to the heavy padded canvas suit with the high collar, included what we called a "belly-band" which kept pressure on the areas most susceptible to rupture and leather anklets which laced snugly over our heavy logger type boots. The use of these two items has long been discontinued. The padded jump suit, now made of nomex cloth, the helmet, leather gloves, and heavy boots are still required.

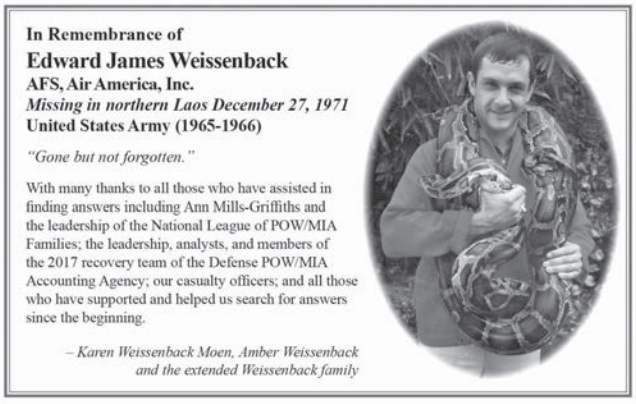
FINAL CHAPTER—EDWARD J. WEISSENBACK (CJ-64) SEPTEMBER 7, 1942—DECEMBER 27,1971

The following was from an email from Karen Moen last December.

Last Friday, 46 years, 360 days after Air America flight #293 was shot down in north western Laos by a Chinese artillery crew, I received a telephone call from the Director of the Defense POW/MIA Agency with information that remains of my husband and Amber's father have been positively identified using DNA samples contributed by Edward's mother and sister in 1998.

Edward left our home in Vientiane the morning of December 26th, 1971, for a routine, three-day work assignment—except during that time of year, when fighting was the heaviest, no flight assignment could ever really be considered routine.

Edward had been home unexpectedly for Christmas when another plane, on which he was working, came under fire at one of Lao bases on December 24th. That crew was given December



(Courtesy Karen Moen)

25th off while they waited to be re-assigned to their next planes. In the early afternoon of December 27th, we learned that flight #293, with a load of seven tons of ammunition, had been missing for several hours. In that place during that time, this could mean only one thing. The plane remained lost until the summer of 1998 when the crash site was found.

Three Americans and one Lao died that December day. Captain George Ritter, First Officer Roy Townley, and Air Freight Specialist Edward Weissenback have now all been identified from bone fragments found during recent excavations of the crash site. I visited the site while the first of three excavations was in progress.

Edward was a glorious young man of twenty-nine when he died. He was the most vitally alive person I've ever met and, when it appeared he might be dead, it seemed as though there should be a hole in the universe. He loved life, he loved his family, and he loved his friends. With the news we received, past and present seemed to collide momentarily as we all had a chance to remember and mourn the young man who missed so much, but had lived his life to its fullest in the time he was given. May they all continue to rest in peace, and may their memories continue to be a blessing for us all.

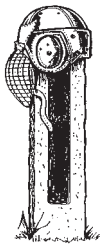
NSA Good Samaritan Fund Contributions

Donor	In Memory Of/Honor of
Dave Blakely (MSO-57)	Dave Poncin (MSO-58)
Gary Shade (MSO-69)	GSF Camp Fire Relief
Gary Hannon (MSO-60)	Roland Andersen (MSO-52)
Doc Lammers (MSO-71)	Steve Clairmont (MSO-62)
	Curt McChesney (MSO-75)
	Jim Phillips (MSO-67)
John Lively (RDD-57)	Mick Swift (CJ-56)
	Roary Murchison (RDD-57)
Guy Hurlbutt (IDC-62)	Steve Carlson (IDC-62)
Steve Wilson (IDC-62)	from his 1962 Idaho City
Bob Montoya (IDC-62)	Ned buddies.
Pat Burtch (IDC-62)	
Don Havel (FBX-66)	Gary Dunning (FBX-66)
Adam Lauber (RDD-99)	Chris Gunter (RDD-01)
Margaret/Tom Callahan	Steve Carlson (IDC-62)
Tom Kovalicky (MSO-61)	Fritz Wolfrum (MSO-53)
	Bill Hale (MSO-53)
	Jim Manion (MSO-54)
Pat/Joan Kelly	Dave Bohning (RAC-68)

Donor	In Memory Of/Honor of
Fred Ebel (MSO-57)	Craig Smith (MSO-57)
	John MacKinnon (MSO-57)
Ron Thoreson (CJ-60)	GSF Camp Fire Victims
Bob McKean (MSO-67	GSF
Milt Knuckles (MSO-61)	Steve Clairmont (MSO-62)
Greg Herbold	GSF
Don Stevenson (MSO-55)	GSF/Scholarships
Doug Bernhard (NCSB-58)	GSF Camp Fire Relief
Freddie Sittner (RAC-76)	GSF Camp Fire Relief
Chris Young (WYS-18)	GSF
Murray Lawson (NCSB-73)	GSF Camp Fire Relief
Major Boddicker (MSO-63)	Steve Clairmont (MSO-62)
	Dennis Parker (MSO-67)
	GSF Camp Fire Relief
Bill Ruskin (CJ-58)	GSF Camp Fire Relief
Howard Chadwick (MYC-52)	GSF Camp Fire Relief
Frank Just (MYC-54)	GSF Camp Fire Relief
Les Domingos (NCSB-64)	GSF Camp Fire Relief

Contributions since the previous publication of donors April 2019
Total funds disbursed to smokejumpers and families since 2004-$181,240

Mail your Good Samaritan Fund contributions to:
Chuck Sheley, 10 Judy Ln., Chico CA 95926



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

William H. Covey (Missoula '47)

Bill, 90, died on January 13, 2019, in Kalispell, MT. He grew up in Missoula and joined the USFS in 1944 at age 16 and worked three seasons before joining the Army. Upon discharge, he worked as a smokejumper from 1947-52. Bill went to the University of Montana on the GI Bill and graduated with a degree in forestry in 1952 and rejoined the Army as a counter intelligence officer in D.C. until his discharge in 1955. After his discharge, he completed his master's degree in forestry and went to work for Bob Helan Logging before joining the USFS in 1959.

Bill's 25-year career with the Forest Service included positions as District Ranger, Forest Supervisor, and Director of Timber Management for the Northern Region.

Upon retirement, Bill lived in Flathead Lake and spent the last 20 years in Kalispell, where he was a passionate hunter, fisherman and outdoorsman.

Richard A. Farmer (Redding '64)

Rich died March 4, 2019. He started his career with the USFS on the Shasta Trinity N.F. as a fire crewman. Rich rookied at Redding and was part of the "retread" program every year through 1974.

He was an Operations Section Chief on a Type 1 team for eight years while being Fire Management Officer on the Scott River RD in the Klamath N.F. Rich retired in 1997.

Albert J. "Jack" King (Missoula '47)

Jack died February 13, 2019. He graduated from the University of Montana in 1950 with a degree in business administration and played safety and backup quarterback for the Grizzlies. Jack then began a 60-plus-year career in banking during which he chartered two banks and became president of the Montana Independent Bankers.

In 1984 he became Chairman of the Independent Bankers of America and was appointed to the Consumer Advisory Council in 1998. Jack was involved in many community and state organizations throughout his life. He was the founder of the Highlander Track Club that, over a 44-year span, provided a track program for over 14,000 grade school kids. Jack jumped at Missoula for the 1947-48 seasons.

Stephen M. Carlson (Idaho City '62)

Steve died December 29, 2018, at his home in Gig Harbor, WA. He was a graduate of Oregon State University and joined the Marine Corps and was among the first troops to serve in Vietnam. Steve taught middle school in Grants Pass, Oregon, before a smokejumping injury ended both careers. Steve then went to work for Weyerhaeuser and retired in 2000.

Steve worked with the Boy Scouts for over thirty years and was very active in the NSA Trails Program. He was the editor of the annual Trails Program Report. Steve jumped at Idaho City 1962-64, 1967-69, Boise 1970, and Cave Junction 1971.

David C. Bohning (Redmond '68)

Dave died December 21, 2018. He jumped at Redmond 1968-70, 72-76, 78-79, and 1992.

H. Curtis McChesney (Missoula '75)

Curt, 66, died January 31, 2019. He became a wildland firefighter on his 18th birthday and worked his way up through the ranks of the Forest Service until he retired after 35 years in 2005 as a Fire Management Officer on the West Fork

District of the Bitterroot N.F.

In addition to his career in the Forest Service, he brought his passion for the outdoors to his work as a ski instructor, patroller and fly fishing guide. Curt rose to the ranks of a level three professional ski instructor and shared his passion for the sport through coaching and instructing children and adults alike. Many of his students went on to excel as alpine and freestyle competitors. Curt jumped at Missoula 1975-88.

George N. Sedlmayer (McCall '55)

George, 84, died March 8, 2019, following an extended illness. He got his degree in Pharmacy from Idaho State University. George worked as a Pharmacist and was adjunct faculty to the College of Pharmacy at Idaho State. He jumped at McCall 1955, 58 and 1961 and served as a medic in the Army.

Rich Petaja (Missoula '65)

Rich died March 2019. He graduated from the University of Montana before entering the Army where he was a Captain during the Vietnam War. Rich and his family moved several times during his time in the service before coming back to Missoula, where he obtained a Master's Degree.

The family moved to Helena where Rich began a 30-year career with the Department of Corrections. After retirement he did volunteer work with the Red Cross and worked for FEMA in hurricane recovery. Rich jumped at Missoula 1965-66.

Get a life membership? I probably won't live long enough to make it pay off.

by Jim Cherry (Missoula '57)

How many times have I heard that reply to my suggestion that someone consider investing in a National Smokejumper Association Life Membership? Too many to remember. Yet, to date there are more than 370 individuals who had made the decision that the investment is worth it—even if they might not live long enough to "make it pay off."

Unfortunately, there are some misunderstandings about the difference between an NSA membership and an NSA life membership. Let me explain.

The NSA membership is time-limited and can be purchased for a specific time period—one year for $30, two years for $50, five years for $100, and 10 years for $120. At the end of these time periods, an individual will need to renew his or her membership.

That membership basically provides the funds necessary for the production and mailing of the *Smokejumper* magazine and for keeping the NSA website up and operating and current for your use for the duration of the membership.

I hope you all realize what a bargain you're getting in receiving the magazine four times a year and having the website with all its resources available "only a mouse click away."

The membership also allows the NSA to know where you are, and provides a way to keep you informed about smokejumper reunions and "in the know" about events that affect the lives of the smokejumper community.

Of course, if you want to crawl under a rock and simply disappear and become unknown to those who shared this life-shaping smokejumper life with you, then the best way to do that is to not purchase an NSA membership—regardless of the length of time. The NSA and members of the smokejumper community soon won't know if you're dead or alive.

As you can see, there is an advantage in going with the multiple-year membership. Do the math and you'll see that

the longer memberships are real money savers. The longer memberships save the NSA time and money from having to constantly be in a membership-renewal mode.

So, are you trying to gauge how long you might live and then match your membership to your guessed-at life expectancy? Fair enough. You might hit it right—but then again, maybe not. Are you good at guessing the stock market, or do you end up buying high and selling low?

The NSA life membership is a "horse of a different color." It is NOT a time-limited purchased membership. It is a donation to an NSA Life Member restricted fund. That fund preserves the $1,000 gift donation and treats it as though it was an endowment. Only the earnings from that fund are used while the principal remains intact.

In appreciation for the Life Member donation, the NSA provides the *Smokejumper* magazine to the donor through the donor's lifetime and then, if desired, to the donor's spouse through his/her lifetime. The donor also receives a gift of an NSA Life Member cap and a plaque suitable for home or office with name engraved.

Since these "gifts of appreciation" have very limited value in comparison to the size of the donation, a significant portion of the gift may qualify as a charitable tax deduction. The NSA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. A donor should consult a tax advisor.

Again, do the math. If your vision is only to go the least-costly way, you will quickly see that a cap and a plaque and a lifetime of receiving the magazine will not satisfy your goal. If, however, you have a larger vision that includes an appreciation for and a desire to support the NSA's Mission Statement—then an NSA life membership begins to make a lot of sense.

The National Smokejumper Association,

through a cadre of volunteers and partnerships,

is dedicated to preserving the history and lore of smokejumping,

maintaining and restoring our nation's forest and rangeland resources and

responding to special needs of smokejumpers and their families.

The NSA life membership donation undergirds the financial soundness of the NSA. The earnings from that restricted fund—together with other donations from the NSA membership—support the NSA Scholarship Program, the Good Samaritan Fund, the preservation of smokejumper history and lore, the Trails Program and the NSA traveling museum displays. In short, the NSA life membership creates and supports a legacy for smokejumpers—for you and for me and for everyone who has ever had the privilege of being a part of this "band of brothers."

So, how big is your vision? Can you see a path to an NSA life membership in your life's journey?

If you already have a multi-year membership—let's say a 10-year membership at $120, and you are in the second year of that membership—the NSA will credit your remaining years toward your life membership donation. That is, 10 years less two years equals eight years of credit.

That would mean $12 times eight years equals a $96 credit toward a $1,000 life membership donation.

If a Life Member donation is too big a jump for your budget, the NSA is willing to set up a donation plan with you that will extend over several years.

Don't count yourself out. We can help you make it happen.

Questions? Contact me at jimcherry@wctatel.net.

Joe Kroeber Selected As 2018 TRAMPS Volunteer Of The Year

by Bob Whaley (Missoula '56)

The National Smokejumper Association Trail Crew Committee—TRAMPS—has selected **Joe Kroeber** (MSO-62) as its 2018 Volunteer of the Year.

Prior to his rookie year as a jumper, Joe worked for the USFS in 1961 on the St. Joe Forest on blister rust control.

His crew was on seven fires that summer, which served to whet his appetite for a future wildland fire endeavor. As a result, Joe worked in the jumper program for 12 years, accumulating 125 jumps and battling fires in eight states.

He jumped in Grangeville in 1963 and Silver City in 1964, but his best year was in Alaska in 1968 with 19 fire jumps. Joe was squadleader in Missoula from 1966 through 1970 and again in 1972. He didn't jump in 1971, but was engaged in the parachute loft, "tolerating" the tutelage of **Hal Samsel** (MSO-49) and **Jack Nash** (MSO-42) as he pursued and obtained his Master Rigger Certificate.

Joe had what many of us dreamed of when he was selected to participate in the Retread Program, when asked to come back in 1985 and 1986 with **Larry Eisenman** (MSO-58) to train and return home to await a call for those fire seasons. This resulted in two fire jumps each year.

Joe had an interesting career. He's from Jamestown, N.D., graduating from Valley City State College in 1965 with double majors—Biology, and Health and Recreation—and earned a Master's degree in Education from North Dakota State University in 1969.

He earned certifications with the National Athletic Trainers' Association and National Registry of EMTs and certification for CPR. He coached and taught at Jamestown High School from 1970 through 1991, and taught anatomy/physiology part-time at Jamestown College during 2002-11.

He holds credentials for secondary school principal-level instruction.

He served as a state representative in the North Dakota House of Representatives for 20 years, retiring in 2012. I mentioned at one time to him that he had to retire, since most of his friends or relatives either died or moved out of his district!

Joe Krober (Courtesy J. Kroeber)

Joe's been a busy boy and a standout in the NSA Trails Program, having participated every year since the inaugural season in 1999. That was the year **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56) and **Jon McBride** (MSO-54) launched the first two projects in the Blackfoot Divide area of the southern Bob Marshall Wilderness and the Spotted Bear Ranger District up north—both in Montana.

That's 20 years, folks, and Joe has made every one of them having served as cook and "doc" on nearly all. His training and medical awareness was of note on the very first project with Art, when we embarked out of Monture Guard Station on a glorious morning in July 1999. A tragedy occurred at the end of the first day when Art collapsed with a massive heart attack in camp.

Joe ran to Art's aid, and he and I began CPR but to no avail.

After putting a game plan together for a helicopter retrieval, the two of us hightailed it back to the trailhead—which took about two hours, compared to the six or so going in—and back to the guard station. There, Joe organized official contacts and administrative details for Art's recovery with the Powell County sheriff and coroner, which was satisfactorily completed that afternoon.

Joe has been an outstanding stalwart throughout the 20 years of this highly successful program. It is with great pleasure that he has been selected as the recipient of this special Volunteer of the Year award, and we anticipate many more years with Joe as we move into our third decade of the program. Congratulations, Joe.

NSA Trails Project New Mexico—August 2018

by Mike Overby (Missoula '67)

The New Mexico TRAMPS had its second trail project in the San Pedro Parks Wilderness in New Mexico's Santa Fe National Forest in August 2018. The group had been asked again by the Santa Fe Chapter of Back Country Horsemen to return after they saw the great work done in 2017.

Team members for the project included Mike Overby, **Jon Klingel** (CJ-65), **Doug Wamsley** (MSO-65), **Allison Stout** (MYC-80), **Java Bradley** (MSO-74), and associate members **Alan Wonders** of Dallas and **Mark Rivera** of Angel Fire, N.M.

During five full days of trail work, the team cleared 6.25 miles and cut 307 trees. The result was a nice loop to and from Vega Rodonda, where camp was located.

Members of Back Country Horsemen – including the owner/editor of *Horse Around New Mexico* magazine, Cecilia Kayano – visited us on the last day of the project. Here is Kayano's account of the group's interaction with the TRAMPS crew:

Retired smokejumpers return to the wilderness they love, not to contain wildland fires this time around, but to keep trails clear for riders, ranchers and hikers.

Seven men were hunkered down in the middle of the San Pedro Parks Wilderness, some assuming the anti-lightning position of knees to chest, arms crossed over heart. There had been a sudden boom of thunder, followed by rain, hail, wind, and lightning. The men, members of an elite trail-clearing group, were working on a six-mile loop trail when they were hit by this unexpected storm.

When you hear how these men, ages 61-78, volunteer for several weeks each year to clear trails for horseback riders, ranchers and hikers, you will never look at a cut log from the trail in the same way.

Need for horses

Each year TRAMPS teams in eight states take on about two projects each. The project for this particular team was to clear trails in the San Pedro Parks Wilderness of the Santa Fe National Forest.

Some TRAMPS projects are near drive-in campgrounds, offering the luxury of overnighting in trailers or campers and walking short distances to the project site. But this team was going to clear trail five miles from the nearest drive-in campground.

They coordinated with the U.S. Forest Service and the Santa Fe Chapter of Back Country Horsemen to pack in their gear: a 40-foot-by-40-foot heavy vinyl tarp, tables, chairs, cook stoves, coolers, food, and professional sawyer crosscut saws, Pulaskis and peavies.

Having the horsepower was critical. "We couldn't pack all this gear up here," said TRAMPS member Jon Klingel. "We couldn't do this without the help of Back Country Horsemen."

The men carried their personal gear from the

trailhead five miles uphill to a campsite on the edge of the Vega Redonda. Seven BCH members and pack animals, including horses, mules and one burro, followed them. At the end of the day, there was enough gear and food at the site for six days in the wilderness.

Trail-clearing machines

Although BCH members are good at clearing trail, the TRAMPS teams are expert.

"They are true professionals," said Joan Lattner, President of the Santa Fe Chapter of Back Country Horsemen. "When they go out, they are like a team of finely tuned log-cutting machines. They have the knowledge and the tools."

Joan witnessed the team clearing part of the six-mile loop out of the Vega Redonda. There was very little need for words as the men walked from log blockage to blockage. Each one had a responsibility, to man a specific saw, to lubricate blades, to move the cut logs, to saw branches.

When the thunderstorm came in, they set down all metal tools, took cover and protected themselves against lightning strikes. It took them five days to clear the loop, which included a half-mile section of crisscrossed blowdown.

For years it had been impossible for horseback riders to pass. Even hikers had a difficult time walking around and climbing over the mess of downed trees.

Their reasons for doing it

"That's why we all clear trails, for hikers, horseback riders and ranchers," Lattner said. "Imagine if there was a forest fire. How would the firefighters get in here if the trails were blocked?"

Both Lattner and the TRAMPS members know that the Forest Service does not have funds to clear many of the trails in national forests and wildernesses, and that by volunteering to do it, they are keeping access open to the backcountry for all.

A precious gift of a clear trail

On their final morning, TRAMPS had cleared the six-mile loop, making passable some of the messiest sections of trail in the San Pedro Parks Wilderness. They packed up their gear so that when six BCH members and their horses, mules and burro arrived, they were ready to tie the gear on the stock and head back down to the Resumidero Campground.

Their timing was perfect: Four nights later, 54 BCH members from chapters around the state gathered at Resumidero for their yearly celebration. Many rode the loop that the smokejumpers had cleared, plus other main trails that had been recently cleared by BCH members.

There were no worries, no high logs to step over, no tangles of blow down to try to bypass. There were only sawed logs, whitish yellow from their recent cuts, and small damp piles of sawdust still there.

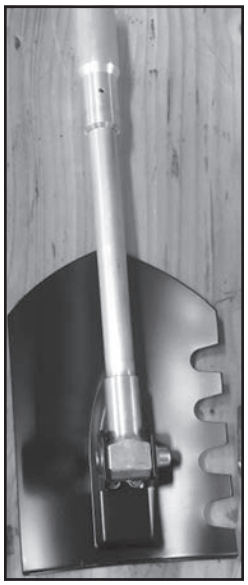
Before he left for his home in Farmington, N.M., TRAMPS member Watson "Java" Bradley wished the BCH members a good time. "You guys are going to be amazed by what we did. You guys will ride a damned good trail."

Thank you Trooper Tom

by Mel Tenneson (Fairbanks '86)

Smokejumpers are quite a different breed: hard-working, resourceful, innovative, somewhat crazy, and a little bit on the thrill-seeking side. Throughout my smokejumping career, I have had the pleasure of working with many great people, and I continue to enjoy it immensely. Smokejumpers have come up with some great ideas throughout the years, but it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to turn a great idea into reality. **Tom Emonds** (CJ-66) has done just that by creating, developing, and constantly improving his Dragon Slayer firefighting tool.

On May 26, 2018, I found myself jumping a fire at 8500' on the White River N.F. out of



Troop Tool with handle

Grand Junction, Colorado. **Ben Agol** (NIFC-17), **Slay Windham** (NIFC-17), **Ben Faust** (NCSB-15), and myself jumped a scenic meadow surrounded by fir and spruce approximately 300 yards from the fire. We were surprised to be headed to a fire at this elevation so early in the year (normally there would still be snow at this elevation). We gathered up our jump gear, retrieved cargo, and prepared to head to the fire.

I grabbed the Troop tool with the Pulaski head and the shovelhead attachment. We proceeded to the fire and started to cut sawline and line the fire. We tied in with a few ground resources (engine crew), including **Tim Nix** (NIFC-15) who had hiked into the fire. It became apparent that it was very dry for this time of year and the 1000-hour fuels were actually burning. The line digging reminded me of Region 6, as there was a huge amount of duff around the spruce and fir. In fact the duff was so deep, that with the ordinary Pulaski (we have one Pulaski in each fire pack and one Troop tool with the Pulaski and shovel head), the duff kept falling back into the trench. I swapped out the Pulaski head and started to use the shovelhead at the 90-degree angle to clean out the trench. After a few hours of digging, I got to thinking about my friend Trooper Tom who had developed the tool.

I remember Troop always coming up with ideas either on fires or around the jump shack in Fairbanks. He wanted to make a better tool than the Pulaski, and one that was multi-purpose and would work in many different fuel types. He also was involved in making foam nozzles etc. when foam was first introduced to us. Troop's first attempt at making the tool was a little rough, as he was trying different ideas and different materials trying to incorporate them into one tool. Troop never gave up, and he continued to refine and develop his tool. Over the years, the Dragon Slayer tool has evolved into a great firefighting tool for the fire community.

Every time I jump a fire, I reach for the Troop tool, either to carry as a Pulaski, or as a shovel, or to carry both heads. In the Pinyon/Juniper fuel type in the Great Basin, the shovel head (locked in at the 90 degree angle) is great for scraping and also great for reaching under the pinyon/juniper and spreading out the needle cast. I have banged on rocks for hours with the shovelhead digging line, and have never broken the head or the handle. The long handle with the shovelhead lets you reach way under the branches to reach the needle cast near the base.

I also prefer the Troop tool Pulaski head to the standard Pulaski. The head is like a "super P" and digs a wider line than the standard Pulaski, more line dug with the same swing. The Pulaski cuts well and has riveted blades that can be replaced over time if needed. The handle is well designed, fits in the hand well, and keeps you a little more upright when digging. We do have some "swatter" head attachments for the Troop tool also, but they are tied onto the fire pack in a separate bag if desired by the jumpers.

I just wanted to say "Thank you" to Trooper Tom who had a great idea, and took the time, effort, and fortitude, to produce, refine, and market a quality product. Like I said before, a lot of good ideas have been thought of, but to follow through on something like this to what it has evolved into today is truly remarkable. I am surprised that this tool is not used more throughout the firefighting community. Other jumpers have followed through with great ideas over the years, like **Mike McMillian** (FBX-96) and his Pulaski sheath. So continue to keep up the great work. We thank you for taking the time and effort to help out the firefighting community.

National Smokejumper Reunion
June 26–28, 2020
in Boise, Idaho

Prepare to Prepare!