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Smokejumper Magazine, January 2022

National Smokejumper Association

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
JANUARY 2022

SMOKEJUMPER

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Tim Hart's Death Should Matter 47

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Message from the President

by Bob McKean
(Missoula '67)

I am constantly intrigued by the interesting and productive lives led by smokejumpers. Every issue of *Smokejumper* has a few of their stories. In this issue there are several more.

"The Last Day," by **Fred Rohrbach** (MSO-65), is a fascinating account of his business adventures in Southeast Asia and, especially, Vietnam.

"Livin' Off the Land," by **Phil Robertson** (MSO-62), recounts the adventures of Phil's youthful adventure in the Gila and how those experiences led him to smokejumping, then beyond.

"Bad Old Days," by **Art Morrison** (MSO-68) and not of Squad 6, recounts events and many fellow jumpers from his youth and his interesting life thereafter. Clearly, the bad old days were pretty good.

The work by Chuck Sheley to document the lives of so many jumpers in the "Off the List" section makes for excellent reading. Clearly, smokejumping attracted a very high number of unique individuals that had fascinating lives.

Finally, I encourage you to read, "Introducing the 2021 NSA Scholarship Awardees," by Jim Cherry. Each of the scholarship awardees has a unique story. These are individuals who are preparing to make contributions to the future. As part of the smokejumper family, they will become part of its legacy. We are proud of these "family" members and pleased to assist them. We look forward to supporting others in the future through the NSA Scholarship Program.

Reunion 2022

Preparations are well underway for the 2022 reunion in Boise. These events require significant planning. **Lynn Sprague** (MYC-59) and his team deserve our support and thanks as they put this event together.

Of course, safety concerns remain a priority given the potential impact of COVID-19. First, a significant number of us (me too) are in the high-risk age group. Second, even if one only has mild symptoms after being infected, no one wants to come home from such an event and pass the virus on to those close to them, especially those who cannot be vaccinated. It is impossible to predict the status of risk from

COVID-19 nine months from now, and we will be monitoring this situation.

In the meantime, if you are planning to attend the reunion, the NSA Executive Committee and I encourage you to consider getting vaccinated, if you have not already done so. Consider it for yourself, your family, and the sake of your fellow smokejumpers and their loved ones.

SMOKEJUMPER DIGITAL ARCHIVES
https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumpers

Visit this NSA and EWU website to view these collections:

- National Smokejumper Association Meeting Minutes
- Publications on Smokejumping
- Smokejumper & Static Line Magazines
- Smokejumper Base Crew Pictures
  - Redmond • Cave Junction • NCSB • LaGrande • Silver City
- Tom Carlsen Film on Smokejumping (1939)
- Triple Nickle Photographs from the National Archives

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***Smokejumper** base abbreviations:*

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

Get *Smokejumper* One Month Earlier

Many NSA members are switching to the digital version of *Smokejumper* delivered by email instead of the printed edition. It is sent as a PDF identical to the hard copy issue.

Advantages include early delivery (a month ahead of USPS), ease of storage, and NSA postal expense savings.

NSA Director **Fred Cooper** (NCSB-62) says: "I will opt to have my magazines delivered electronically rather than via USPS to save us direct $ in printing and mailing, not to mention your hand labor in processing. I think I mentioned in an earlier message that I'm having other magazines/newsletters delivered electronically.

To request email delivery, contact Editor **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59) *chucksheley@gmail.com*.

The Last Day

by Fred Rohrbach (Missoula '65)

April 29, 1975, was a hot, humid day, and I'm sitting on a rooftop at the Defense Attaché Office billet at 192 Cong Ly Street in Saigon, Vietnam. The rooftop was small and just big enough to hold an Air America Huey helicopter. It was shut down and waiting for the signal to take off and fly out to the US Seventh Fleet, just off Vung Tau, Vietnam. This was to be the largest evacuation of Americans by helicopter ever. In my mind, I wondered how we would even get out of here with Saigon being surrounded by over 100,000 North Vietnamese soldiers, some of whom had shoulder-fired, Russian Strela heat-seeking missiles.

I started jumping out of Missoula 1965-67 while going to the University of Montana. Then, I spent a year in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, where I broke my neck with two weeks to go before discharge. I spent three months in the hospital and many months in rehabilitation. The doctor told me I would never be able to go back to smokejumping.

After going to graduate school, I applied to the BLM for a job jumping out of Fairbanks for the 1973 fire season. I figured Alaska was a safe bet as the landings are usually soft and easy compared to the lower 48 states. After a few fire jumps in Alaska, I was sent on a booster crew to LaGrande, Oregon, and then Missoula. I never did mention my neck injury on the application.

In 1972 my brother, **John** (MSO-67), and I decided to start a business in Vietnam, Asia-America trading Co., exporting ceramics to the U.S. John lived in Seattle and did the sales and marketing. I lived in Vietnam and did the buying and sourcing. We started the business with very little capital and mainly sold to mom and pop stores. We barely made any money, and I lived in a hovel of an apartment near Tan Son Nhut Airport in Saigon. Money was so tight that I rode a bicycle out to the ceramic factories outside of Saigon. Later, I bought a used Honda 90cc motorbike. In 1973, to earn enough money to keep the business afloat, John and I went back to jumping out of Fairbanks.

During the winter of 1973-74, I had to make a decision whether to continue jumping or start a new career in business. This decision would change the course of my life and I choose the business path. I returned to Vietnam and never looked back and, although jumping was the best job ever, it didn't pay worth a damn.

The beginning of the end came in January 1975. The North Vietnamese overran the provincial capitol of Phuoc Long Province, located sixty miles north of Saigon. This was mainly done to see what the reaction of the US would be. Because of the preceding Watergate scandal involving President Nixon and with President Ford in power and the American public's war weariness, there was no reaction. Hanoi made plans to push on.

About middle of March 1975, the communists launched an offensive to take the Central Highlands of Vietnam. In short order the provincial capitals of Buon Ma Thuot, Pleiku, Hue, and Danang were taken.

The communist juggernaut was moving so fast that it was hard to keep it supplied. The Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN), once a force of over one million men trained and equipped by the US, quickly collapsed. The main reason being that the ARVN and the government, led by President Nguyen Van Thieu, exhibited weak leadership, had little support, and was very corrupt.

By beginning of April, the communist forces were bearing down on Saigon. The last major battle was fought from April 9 to April 20 at a town called Xuan Loc, which was east of Saigon. There, the mediocre ARVN 18th Division proved their mettle and withheld the communist advance for about ten days with Xuan Loc falling on April 20, 1975. Now, nothing stood in the way to stop the communist advance. They regrouped and bided their time waiting for the Americans to leave.

From beginning of April, the U.S. Embassy started evacuating Americans and Vietnamese via fixed-wing aircraft, such as C-141s and C-130s. It was a chaotic time with South Vietnamese government

and military officials and their families trying to get out. By the third week of April, many high-ranking civilian govt officials and military had already left.

Saigon looked outwardly calm even though there was a sense of panic just beneath the surface. I thought Vietnam had a few more months to survive. Every day I hustled to get three containers of ceramic elephants shipped out before the fall. I did manage to get one container out April 21st on the SS *Mayaguez,* which was later hijacked by the Khmer Rouge off Cambodia. After Saigon fell, two other containers were left behind on the docks.

About mid-April, I moved from my apartment near the airport to the Peninsula Hotel, now the Saigon Hotel and opposite the present-day Sheraton Hotel. I had dinner with a good friend of mine who was manager of Sea-Land Shipping Co., and he told me about the various helicopter evacuation points throughout Saigon. I didn't want to use the U.S. Embassy as I knew it would be mobbed with people, which it was. He also had a spare .38 cal. pistol which he gave me, and I tucked in my waistband.

During the night of April 26, the communists lobbed a few 122 mm rockets into downtown Saigon which hit the Majestic Hotel, a few blocks away, and killed some of the staff. I slept right through it and didn't find out till the next day.

About 5:30 pm on Monday, April 28, I was having a drink with a friend of mine at the Caravelle Hotel when I heard a loud clap of thunder outside and then a lot of shooting. I looked out the window and saw the police shooting up into the air. What had precipitated this event was a flight of jets, one flown by a recently defected South Vietnamese pilot, and they bombed Tan Son Nhut Airport a few miles away.

At that time, I knew that the end was near. I walked a few blocks to the Brinks Billet, the officers billets during the war and still run by the U.S. It is now the five-star Hyatt Hotel. I walked by the solitary guard and took the elevator to the top floor, which was a posh restaurant and bar, and had dinner with another American and watched a firefight at the Newport Bridge about a mile away. You could see the red tracers of the South Vietnamese Army and the green tracers of the North Vietnamese going back and forth. After dinner we continued to watch the ensuing firefight drinking cognac.

That night there were only six of us in the whole building, and I went to bed knowing this would be my last night in Vietnam.

Around 4:00 a.m. on April 29, 1975, the North Vietnamese shelled Tan Son Nhut Airport with long range 130 mm artillery. This made the runways unusable for fixed-wing aircraft, and from now on the evacuation would have to be done by helicopter.

I woke up with the rising sun and had breakfast in a deserted dining room. About mid-day, I hopped on my Honda 90cc motorbike and drove to one of the evacuation points my friend had told me about. By this time there was a 24-hour curfew in place and the streets were deserted.

Keep in mind that during the past few weeks, with many high-ranking South Vietnamese officials leaving courtesy of the U.S. Air Force, there was an undercurrent of anger by many south Vietnamese against Americans. They felt we were deserting them after many years of supporting them. We didn't know if they would attack us or what.

I drove down a deserted boulevard next to the presidential palace and went by a company of red beret paratroopers setting up defensive positions around the palace. I didn't look left or right, didn't make eye contact, and just drove straight ahead, made a right turn at Cong Ly St., and went up that street until I came to the DAO billets.

I got off my Honda, banged on the big iron gate until a guard opened it and walked up the stairs to the roof of the six-story building. When I got to the top, there were eight Americans there and a few South Korean diplomats. One of the Americans handed me a 12 gauge shotgun.

After a while, a crowd of about a hundred Vietnamese had gathered outside the gate on the street. We were concerned that when the pilots cranked up the chopper, the Vietnamese would break down the gate and come up the stairs and rush the helicopter. With this in mind, we started dragging furniture out of the rooms, throwing it down the stairwells to block access to the roof.

Later in the afternoon, the pilots got the signal to fly out to the Seventh Fleet in the South China Sea. We loaded into the Huey, packed like sardines, and lifted off the roof top with the turbine engine straining. We had to lift straight up about forty feet to clear these big trees and the building. When we got about 20 ft above the roof, the pilots set the chopper back down as we were too heavy. We

offloaded two South Korean diplomats, who were later picked up, and took off.

The pucker factor was high knowing that Saigon was encircled with NVA troops, and a pistol and a shotgun weren't going to make a difference. We encountered no resistance as the North Vietnamese wanted us all out anyway, but we didn't know it at the time. Most helicopters leaving that day and night encountered no ground fire, although a few did, and it was thought to be from disgruntled South Vietnamese soldiers.

We gained altitude and headed for the coast and the South China Sea. After crossing land and over the ocean, we were flying in and out of clouds and, when I could see, it was just a vast empty ocean and no sign of ships. I got to thinking what if we ran out fuel? After a while the pilot banked as we were coming out of a cloud and beneath us were the ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet.

We landed on the fantail of the USS Blue Ridge, the command ship of the fleet. As soon as we set down and unloaded, the sailors put us all up against the wall and frisked us, as they wanted no weapons on board. My pistol and shotgun were thrown into the sea along with my good Buck pocket knife. Within five minutes, the Huey I flew out on was thrown over the side to a watery grave. There were other choppers orbiting our ship and we could take only one chopper at a time.

Later, a South Vietnamese Chinook helicopter came in to land. A sailor on a .50 caliber machine gun fired a burst of red tracers across its nose and redirected it to an aircraft carrier nearby.

I literally got out with the clothes on my back and a small camera. I watched a Huey with just one pilot on board ditch at sea right near the bow of our ship. He banked the Huey right into the side of our bow and the rotor blades disintegrated while he jumped out the other side. He was rescued.

That evening as I was sitting on the deck of the ship looking out to sea, I shed a few tears and thought to myself what a waste of lives, over 58,000 killed, billions of dollars spent, and what did it get us?

The next morning, I got up early and walked around the deck and was greeted by one of the fleet marines walking Ambassador Graham Martin's French poodle around.

Later in the day, former South Vietnamese Air Force General, and later prime minister, Nguyen Cao Ky got transferred to our ship. I remember he was very angry because the sailors had confiscated his pearl handled .45 cal. pistol, the one that President Johnson had given him.

I spent a week on the USS Blue Ridge. During that time, the Navy was picking up South Vietnamese refugees fleeing out to sea in anything that would float. The sea was calm and like glass that week. Some of the refugee boats, in their desperation to get rescued first, would set their boats on fire.

After a week, we sailed to Subic Bay in the Philippines, and then I flew back to the states and Seattle. Being forced to leave Vietnam was the major event that redirected my life and business to where I am today. Had Saigon not fallen, we would have continued in ceramics, which had no future, and I can only guess where I'd be today.

During my first month back, my brother and I had to assess what to do as our source of ceramics was lost, plus we left two containers on the dock in Saigon. We had to scramble as we only had a six-month supply of ceramics on hand.

We decided to get into antique reproductions, such as oak tables with press back chairs, copies of western style brass lamps, copies of cast iron toys, etc., and for that we went to Taiwan. Many was the night for four years that I went to bed wondering if we would ever make it as nine out of ten small businesses fail. In those days the banks wouldn't touch us as we had no collateral to borrow against. We borrowed money privately, at the rate of 10% per invoice, to finance our inventory.

By the late 1970s, we finally started to turn a profit. By the late 1980s to mid-nineties, we transitioned to mainly dinning room and bedroom furniture sourced out of Taiwan, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, and from early 2000 to present day, Vietnam. We changed the name of our company to A-America. We design, import, and distribute furniture nationwide from a warehouse in Algona, Washington, and High Point, North Carolina, with permanent showrooms in Las Vegas, Nevada, and High point, North Carolina.

My first trip back to Vietnam after the war was in spring 1979, and I found Hanoi and Saigon very poor and destitute. The secret police would follow your every move. There was barely working air-con in the hotels, and many were Russian made, which

were noisy. At that time, and for many years, it was difficult for Americans to get a Visa to Vietnam as there were no relations with the U.S. and one had to have good connections.

I go back to Asia four times a year, and since 1979 I've taken about 150 trips to Vietnam and traveled the country extensively. Every time I take a taxi from the airport to my hotel in downtown Saigon, I pass by the rooftop I left in 1975, still looking for my motorbike I left behind. Sometimes, I wonder if I left more of me in Vietnam or took more of Vietnam with me.

In 1986, I called a friend of mine, Rick Graetz of Montana Publishing, about doing a picture book on Vietnam. Rick is a well-known outdoor photographer in Montana. He agreed, and after many contacts with the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry, we got permission to go in as journalists and got the VIP treatment and unlimited access to the entire country from the Chinese border to the coast, Central Highlands, and Mekong Delta. We made three trips back in 1987 and 1988 and met many high-ranking officials. One of them told me that we won the war but lost the peace. At that time, Vietnam had fought a costly border war with China in 1979 and invaded Cambodia. Russia was weak and would break up soon and Hanoi knew they had to start making overtures to the West to get their economy going, which happened when the trade embargo was lifted, followed by full diplomatic relations in 1995. Today, Vietnam is an economic success story and a mini-China. The book was published in 1988 and is called *Vietnam, Opening doors to the World*.

In late 1992, I got a call from the late Lt. Gen. Hal Moore, Ret. about going into Vietnam, specifically to the Ia Drang Valley and LZ X-Ray, which was the site of the first big battle between North Vietnamese regulars and Hal Moore's 1st Battalion of the 7th Air Cavalry Regiment. Hal at the time was a Lt. Col. and battalion commander.

Weeks later, Hal asked me if Hanoi would allow him to spend a night on LZ X-Ray with the souls of the 79 men he lost there. I replied, "Not a chance," as Hal was a famous three-star general, retired, and if anything should ever happen, Hanoi would have to answer for it. The old battlefield was close to the Cambodian border, and there were still elements of the dreaded Khmer Rouge and FULRO in the area.

Turned out Hal's dream came true when on the first day of filming, thunderstorms came up about 3:00 pm and we had to make two lifts by helicopter to get everyone back to Pleiku. After the first lift landed at Pleiku, the pilot shut it down because of thunderstorms. Hal was on 2nd lift and spent a sleepless, uneasy night with the souls of his dead troopers. He was tired, but happy the next morning when we picked him up.

ABC TV Day One program with Forrest Sawyer wanted to do a documentary of the veterans from each side returning to the battlefield. Hal asked me for assistance in getting permission from Hanoi and to help set this project up, which I did.

Prior to the Ia Drang trip, Hal Moore and Joe Galloway had authored the best-selling book, *We Were Soldiers Once and Young*, which was about the battle in the Ia Drang Valley in November 1965. Hal's battalion lost 79 killed in three days of heavy combat completely surrounded by NVA troops. His unit was "the 1/7" which was the same unit as Custers at the Little Bighorn, and the thought went through his mind that he would suffer the same fate. Artillery and air support provided a ring of steel for three days and saved his unit.

We went back in October 1993, and ABC filmed the Vets from each side meeting on the old battlefield, and the program aired early 1994.

During the 1990s and 2000s, I took some veterans groups back to Vietnam along with Steve Smith (NSA Associate Life Member) and two NSA trips both to Saigon and Hanoi. Steve Smith has made some award winning documentaries about Vietnam Veterans.

Along with my late wife, Polly, I have three sons and six grandchildren. My oldest son, Christian, works with me in charge of sales, Kurt (NSA Life Member) will be going on his 19th season as a jumper out of Missoula, and Matthew is city planner in Hamilton, Montana..

National Smokejumper Reunion

August 12–14, 2022

Boise, Idaho

Fred Rohrbach

Photos Courtesy Fred Rohrbach

Air America On Deck USS Blue Ridge
April 29,1975

Chinook Being Waved Off

Front Office A-America Furniture

Loading Dock A-America Furniture

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

ODDS AND ENDS

Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

Congratulations and thanks to **Jim Hickman** (MSO-52), **Roger Siemens** (MSO-59), **John Blackwell** (MYC-64), **Curtis Marshall** (RDD-68), and **Ben Sheldon** (NCSB-74) who just became our latest Life Members.

At the end of July, **Kurt Rohrbach** (MSO-03) and a crew jumped in to protectively wrap the historic Mallard Peak Lookout on the St. Joe N.F. to shield it from fires in the area. In 1990 **Fred Rohrbach** (MSO-65) took his late wife, Polly, and their three sons, Christian, Kurt and Mathew, on a hike to this lookout. During the wrapping of the lookout, Kurt checked the guest logbook and found the July 27, 1990, entry that his mother had made 31 years ago. In an email Fred said, "It's funny the way life is and who would have thought that Kurt would come back here about 31 years later to wrap the lookout. Kurt was only nine at that time."

David Owen (RAC-66): "I started with the USFS on an engine crew in 1965 a week out of high school and finished up halfway through the 1970 season. It was 100% about hitting a fire, any fire, as fast and as hard as possible. During those five and a half seasons, I never saw a fire get away from us during our initial attack. In 1966 as a Redmond rookie, we pretty much jumped the entire base at the head of a 10,000-acre fire on the Fremont NF and stopped it along a several-mile line.

Our forests need some help. That fuel load must be dealt with, but maybe there's a better approach to fire management than watching fires go over the hill while you stand there.

It's a bit criminal to sit on and not use jumpers if they are available at the early phase of a fire. If you were a general in a war along WWII lines and you failed to get results, you would be quickly relieved of command and moved to a desk or retired, and someone else would take over until it got done."

Roger Siemens (MSO-59): "A lot of us Rangers and Fire Dogs are very upset with current Fire Mgt. Basic principals have been lost or purposely not being followed. As a former jumper, District FMO, Dist. Ranger, and Fire Team member, I know a little bit about what it takes to manages fires. Major policy changes are required from the top down."

Journal *Science Advances* (Aug. 2021) Harvard School of Public Health study found that across California, Washington, and Oregon, that nearly 19,700 COVID-19 cases and 750 deaths were attributable to daily increases in fine particulate air pollution from wildfires. "That small particle is small enough to burrow into the lung in a way that sets it up for any respiratory disease," said Dr. Len Horovitz, a pulmonary specialist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. "It can burrow past the epithelium and create inflammation. It's a setting for any respiratory disease, including COVID, to exacerbate."

Feedback Oct. issue of magazine:

"*Smokejumper* just arrived. I thumbed through to stop at the center picture of Ben and family. It took my breath away. I went outside to show my wife. She, too, was awestruck. We counted seven brothers to Ben. What a beautiful family. I then went back and read his first article. What a wonderful testimony to you and the smokejumper brotherhood and the work that goes into the magazine.

Then I read Ben's second story. Amazed and inspired again. What a class man. Thank you for printing—a wonderful testimony to a great man and family and to you as our editor."

"The latest *Smokejumper* arrived today. You have again hit the ball out of the park."

"I just wanted to say to you—THANKS for the issue

honoring the vets. It was very cool to read a bit about the background of a lot of these jumpers. There are some great guys in this group. It feels a bit like I'm getting to know them through the magazine."

"I just received the latest issue of *Smokejumper* and was just awestruck by the amazing story of M/Sgt Ben Musquez. When I saw the family tree in the center of the magazine, I was taken aback by the total dedication to service to this country by the entire family."

"In my extended family, there are only three service members (WW 1, Korea, Vietnam), but his family is awesome. If you have any way of contacting him, please tell him of my total appreciation to him and his family to which I have total respect and admiration for. We need about another million like him and his family (maybe more)."

"Just received my *Smokejumper* issue, HONORING OUR VETS and what a great issue. Amazing, the **Ben Musquez** story and his relatives that served. I especially zeroed in on the 1946 Rookies—The Post WWII Era. What a great list of heroes to all of us and how they returned to the homeland to become model citizens in all walks of life. We, the present crop of smokejumpers, walk in their shadows."

Bill Bickers (NCSB-72): "In the latest issue of *Smokejumper* the passing of **Tom Milligan** (MSO-51) is noted. It mentions his surviving a Grizzley bear attack and that his son Tim jumped out of McCall and Redmond in 1983-89. I jumped with Tim and remember him well. An awesome jumper you would have loved to have had as a JP. No fear of work and he volunteered to help jumper bros on their homes."

Dr. Barrie Gilbert in response to "Gallatin Lake Rescue Jump" by **Roger Cox** (MSO-69) in the Oct. issue of *Smokejumper*: "Roger wrote a terrific account. I might well have dedicated my book to all those Smokejumpers. Words can't express my gratitude for their risks, skill, and dedication."

Glenn "Kipp" Morrill (BLM State Aviation Manager Oregon and Washington): "Hello Mr. Sheley. Just wanted to thank you again for providing such a strong fire program. The Chico Crew program really set me up for success in the wildland fire profession. There was such a high level of expectation, and I carried that with me throughout my career. I'll be hanging my boots up after 31 fire seasons on 10/09. I want to make it a point to thank people who made a difference in my career, and you are the first one. I hope to keep in touch and would love to meet for a cup of coffee at some point."

John Blackwell (MYC-64): "Each fire season I dust off my old smokejumper boots on the unlikely premise that I might be called back into action. Fact is my redeployment would be more effective than current USFS firefighting policy.

"In 2021 ambivalence, inaction, a leadership vacuum combined to neuter the formerly great USFS. The smokejumpers could control a lightning-caused fire in hours, precluding a mega-million-dollar holocaust. Mega-fires and the let-burn are the default options.

"Taking a more aggressive stance against fire threatens the careers of USFS leaders who are subject to political pressures from Presidents to grass roots environmental groups. So back to smokejumpers, let's use them for initial attack to suppress fires while they are small."

A tradition is carried forward at McCall. This past season, **Collin Hessel** of Wallowa, Oregon, continued a tradition at the McCall Smokejumper base. Collin, grandson of **Ken Hessel** (MYC-58) and nephew of great uncles **John Lewis** (MYC-53) and **Del Hessel** (MYC-59), successfully completed his first fire season with the McCall jumpers with 32 training jumps and 5 fire jumps—four in Idaho and one in California.

Listing Native American Smokejumpers

I'm working with **Keith Beartusk** (MSO-69) to establish a list of Native American Smokejumpers for the NSA History Preservation Program. Besides names, we would like to record their tribe. If you have any additions to the following list, please send to me *(Ed.)*.

Barber, Beartusk, Boyd, Clairmont (J/S), Clark (C), Clark, (Don), Cooper, Courville, Dupuis, Ewing, Francis, Limberhand, McCrea (B/R), Normandeau, Onebear, Pitts, Redfox, Robinson, Smee, Yount.

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A Few Snippets from A Questionable Memory

by Bill Duffey (Missoula '71)

During our 1971 training jumps, I recall jumping into the meadow near our field training camp. We were told during our training that once we were safely on the ground, to shout out our last name and "OKAY!" I was safely on the ground and chaining up the lines on my parachute. Most were landing in the meadow, one in the stream running through it, some near the tree line of the meadow, and a few on the slope to the right. We would stop packing up our gear to watch each stick as they made the last part of their descent into the jump spot and their landing.

One jumper crashed into the top of a tree on the right side of the meadow. We all started running towards that spot because we expected a bad result and perhaps an injured jumper. However, the jumper's foot got caught in the crook of some branches and was stopped in his free-fall towards the ground, eventually hanging upside down. After a brief moment, the jumper shouted out, "Chandler, OKAY." One of the squadleaders shouted back, "Chandler, take a look at where you are at and then tell me you are OKAY." There was a bit of laughter, and that is how **Joey Chandler** (MSO-71) got his nickname, "Joe Death." At least that is how my 50-year old memory recalls that scene. Joe Chandler and the others present might have different memories of it though.

On a call to early fires down in Georgia and Florida, we had the experience of fighting fires in the Okefenokee and Everglades swamps. The water levels were very low and there were fires in the cane breaks, which were a challenge to fight due to the dense vegetation and concentration of alligators and snakes around the shrinking water holes. I believe **Larry Nelsen** (MSO-56) and **Larry Fite** (MSO-60) were our Crew Foremen. One of the vivid experiences was trying to see the fire through the smoke, vegetation, and swarming mosquitoes so we could dig the fireline as close as possible. We would get our heads close to the ground to clearly determine where to dig so we wouldn't pull burning embers across the fireline. As we were working our way over some fallen logs, one of the guys yelled and quickly scrambled over the logs with total abandonment to self-injury. "There is a big snake in there!" he shouted. We walked on top of the logs back to the location. With the dense smoke, vegetation, and swarming mosquitoes, we were a bit tense as we started looking for the snake. Between the downed logs we saw the snake with its white mouth wide open, waving back and forth. I said, "It's a Cottonmouth feeling for heat to strike. Let's heat up a shovel and see if it will hit it." As we passed the fire-heated shovel head past the snake, it made a lightning-fast strike and hit the shovel head making it ring out like a bell. We all thought that was really great and tried to get it to ring the shovel again but apparently ringing its fangs against the shovel one time was all it wanted to do to entertain us. Later in the day when we tied our fireline into a road, we told some local firefighters the fun we had with the snake. They said, "You killed it right?" "No, we thought it should continue hunting mice and rats."

I believe it was on a large, late fall fire near Estes Park, Colorado when we eventually ended up on the night crew. As we walked up the fireline in the gathering darkness, we took several breaks as **Joseph John Janus** (MSO-56), "Triple J," was having difficulty keeping up the pace. Joe finally told everyone to just keep going on without him and he would eventually catch up.

Being an EMT on the crew, I decided that I needed to stay with "Triple J" since he was having difficulty walking and catching his breath as we

made our way up the slope. As we rested together, Joe said, "I don't know what's wrong. I just don't have the stamina to keep up right now." I said, "Maybe you should see a doctor when we get back to Missoula." "Yea, I am going to."

Joe and I took short hikes up the fireline until he said, "I can't go any further." We sat with our backs against a large Ponderosa looking out at the blackness of the burn and the night through the light of our headlamps, which we eventually turned off. After a while, I told Joe that I was going to go up and see where the last person on the crew was. I started walking up the slope through the burn. After a few yards, I turned abound to see how Joe was doing. Each of my footsteps through the burned duff was now glowing red. I returned to Joe and we both used our Pulaski and shovel to rake through that area of blackened duff, and soon we had the whole slope glowing red. We sat next to the Ponderosa letting the glowing slope turn black again, and then we would stir it into a glowing field of red until finally there were no more glowing embers on the slope.

In the morning, we walked back to the fire camp with the rest of the jumper crew. Joseph John Janus died of cancer the next spring on May 14,1979, in Missoula.

Civilian Public Service—Smokejumpers During the War Years

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

The smokejumper program was in danger of being shut down due to lack of men after the end of the 1942 season. In Oct. 1942, ***Phil Stanley*** *(MSO-43), a Quaker assignee to the Civilian Public Service (CPS-Conscientious Objectors), wrote a letter to Axel Lindh (head of Fire Control R-1) suggesting that the CPS had men who would fill that need. The following is a shorten history of what followed.*

In a February 1943 meeting between CPS Camp Directors and the Dept. of Agriculture, an agreement was established whereby the CPS would provide 60 men for smokejumper training. The Brethren, Friends (Quakers) and Mennonite provided 35 names from each organization. Twenty would be selected from each church group.

A director and his wife (Roy/Florence Wenger), an assistant, a nurse (Matie Ediger Widmer) and six cooks (as there were several camps) were assigned. The Forest Service would provide food and lodging, cots, blankets and sleeping bags. From other documents, it was said that the pay of $5.00 a month was provided by the church groups.

One hundred and eighteen men applied and 60 were selected. The Forest Service said that all 118 would have been used if equipment would have been available. Five men from each group (Brethren, Quakers, Mennonites) were selected to report early for training in parachute rigging and repair before the larger group would report on May 17, 1943. "These men were assembled at Camp Paxson on Seeley Lake, about sixty miles north of Missoula."

The trainees were divided into two groups. While the first group trained as smokejumpers, the second group did construction work. After the second group was trained, Nine Mile camp at Huson, "about 30 miles from Missoula," was made the headquarters for CPS-103.

In 1943 jumpers were used on 31 fires, 1944 more than 70 fires. Smokejumper use increased each year. More than 180 fires were jumped by R-1 jumpers alone in 1945. This did not count those jumped by McCall and Cave Junction jumpers. The CPS smokejumper program was terminated January 15, 1946. "Fewer than 240 men will ever be able to say, 'I was a member of the CPS Smokejumper Unit,' declared the camp newspaper."

Idaho City Smokejumper—A Bit of History

by Harvey Harden (Idaho City '59)

Idaho City was founded on October 7,1862, by J. Marion More. It was called Bannock City, but the name was changed to Idaho City by the Idaho Territory Legislature in 1863 to avoid confusion with another Bannock, which was in Montana. Gold was discovered in the Boise Basin in August of 1862 by George Grimes and Moses Splawn. Grimes was killed a few days later by either a greedy partner or Indians, but the Indians were blamed. Marion More, the founder, became very wealthy and owned several mines but was shot down in Silver City, Idaho, in 1868 during the mine wars. Early Indian reports of the Idaho City area were that gold was so plentiful it could be picked up by the bucketful. Those reports were not wrong and in eight months Idaho City became the largest town between Saint Louis and San Francisco, eclipsing Portland. Idaho City grew to 7,000 in eight months, during the largest gold rush since the California gold rush. The Civil War was raging and the Idaho City residents were divided. Different political views, fueled by alcohol, caused many fist, knife and gun fights. Idaho City burned four times before 1900. Considering the fires, there are quite a few surviving buildings. A miner working a good claim could make $2000 per week in the early days. When the gold started to get depleted, the Boise Basin was dredged, which resulted in piles of rock tailings. It was because of those tailings that the Idaho City Smokejumper Base came to be known as the "Rock Pile."

The Idaho City Smokejumper Base was founded in 1954. While staffing varied, the original plan was to have a foreman, two squadleaders and 17 jumpers. The Forest Service had two qualified candidates for foreman, Wayne Webb and Smokey Stover, but neither one wanted the job. Since neither wanted to go to the "Rock Pile," it was decided that the decision would be made by the flip of a coin. The coin was flipped and Smokey Stover lost and, thus, he became the Idaho City Smokejumper Base Foreman. During the late 50s and early 60s, the squadleaders were Ken Smith, Clarence Teichert, and Lamont Christensen. There were several things that Idaho City jumpers would never forget. You would never forget a "Flaming Maiming Party," the staple of which was Mexican Tequila. This party was in honor of the Neds (rookies). You would never forget the Idaho City Smokejumper Ball. Ken Smith would print the flyers for the Smokejumper Ball on the original printing equipment used by the Idaho World newspaper, which was still operational and in a survivor building. The "Ball" was held in the Community Center, which was also in a survivor building. If you survived the Smokejumper Ball in working condition, you were lucky. You would never forget two excellent cooks who fed us like kings. You would never forget the C45 and the Super 18, which had JATO, which was jet assistance if needed in an emergency. You would never forget Smokey Stover and Jim Larkin, a world-class pilot.

In the summer of 1959, my transportation sucked but provided lots of laughs and entertainment. That transportation was a unicycle, which was better than walking, but not by much. Most of the jumpers tried riding it, and the result was usually a crash, followed by laughter from the onlookers. The concrete steps leading to the bunkhouse were an excellent starting place for the unicycle. Simply place the tire against the bottom step, stand on the back pedal, get on the seat, lean forward, and start pedaling. By the end of the summer, Toby Scott was the only jumper that I would consider proficient on the unicycle. Toby had excellent balance, which he put to use later on when he tried his hand at bull riding. The fire season of 1959 was slow with only four fire jumps.

The summer of 1960 was enjoyable—seeing old friends, softball games, revelry in McCall

during the evening hours, and practice jumps in the meadow. My transportation had been upgraded and life was good. The only bobble was a "May West" on one of the practice jumps which could not be worked off. Reserve deployment was necessary and was good practice for things to come. There was the usual reshuffling of manpower, with some Idaho City Jumpers staying in McCall instead of returning to Idaho City. Off-hours in Idaho City were spent playing horseshoes, tether ball, volleyball, and swimming at the hot springs a couple of miles out of town. Weekends were frequently spent in Boise, depending on your jump list position. There were two watering holes in Idaho City and lots of local interaction, most of which was positive. The fire season was busy with nine fire jumps and considerable overtime back in the days when you could log 24 hours in a 24 hour period, and overtime pay during a two-week period would sometimes exceed normal pay. Evening hours were often spent playing poker, and I quickly learned that I was not the best poker player. Most of the jumpers would have an occasional good evening, but Bruce Moulton, a math major from the University of Nevada, was a fairly consistent winner. He was paying his way through college by smokejumping and playing poker.

The fire season of 1961 was another busy season with a total of thirteen fire jumps consisting of a one-man jump, five two-man jumps and seven jumps with multiple jumpers. The fire jump that is still fresh in my mind is the Middle Fork jump on August 15. The camp was empty, there were three jumpers left in the plane, and two fires which needed to be manned. It was decided that I would jump alone and, if the jump was safely executed, the remaining two jumpers in the plane would jump the last fire. I jumped and landed safely. My pack was then dropped and the plane was on its way to the next fire. The fire consisted of a snag which had been hit by lightning. I used a backpack water pump to put out the fire. The jump and fire were fine, but there are a lot of good reasons for always having a jump partner. The evening was long and, after a sleepless night, I was glad for daybreak. During the five summers that I jumped, I do not recall any other single jumper fires.

I remember being lucky and thinking, "What are the odds." I had used the same jump posture for a long time—slide out the door, lay out, tip my head back, watch things unfold, and watch the plane fly away. Out of eight fire jumps in 1962, I had five consecutive malfunctions.

Two of the malfunctions were "May West's," which slipped off on their own. Next came an inversion with all functions backwards—turn left, go right, turn right, go left, all with a backward speed. The rocky ridge landing was safe but weird. The next and final malfunction of my career was the mother of all malfunctions. Things strung out, but the chute was just a tangled ball about the size of a washing machine lid. This was the second time that I deployed my emergency chute and I wasted no time. I was dropping fast, so my reserve opened immediately. The landing was brisk and uncontrolled but safe. I put out the "L" and looked up to see Clarence Teichert running down the ridge toward me faster than I had ever seen the short man run. Initially, I thought what the hell is wrong with him. I was too busy to be scared, but Clarence had watched the whole thing unfold and may have been thinking "Hope I did not pack that chute," since he was one of the regular packers. Smokey was the spotter, and when we returned to camp, he informed me that I would be learning to pack and that I would be jumping my own chutes. I was trained to pack and I did jump my own chutes, and I was scared to death. Our regular packers were the best and I trusted them fully. When Smokey realized that I had a lot more confidence in the regular packers than in myself, he let me off the hook. I never knew and had no interest in finding out who packed the chutes for any of the malfunctions. I never had another malfunction and did not change my jump posture since it never occurred to me that I might be contributing to the problem. I never talked about any of the malfunctions and no one said a word about them to me. They were never mentioned.

1963 was my final summer jumping fires. The fire season was slow, the jumps were normal, and I was in love with a pretty lady from Walla Walla. Friday evening, I would drive to Walla Walla and return to Idaho City Sunday evening. The summer ended with four fire jumps and a wedding.

Smokejumpers and The Olympics

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

Twenty-twenty was an Olympic year, but the event was postponed due to COVID and rescheduled for July 2021. In the July 2011 issue of *Smokejumper*, Associate Editor Ed Booth did a great article recording Olympic connections to the smokejumper community. After Ed's initial article, more important information was added, and we ran that in the October issue. I'm going to combine both of Ed's articles and try to add some updates.

Athletic Excellence – Olympic Gold

by Ed Booth (July 2011)

You're already aware that smokejumpers possess the physical abilities and stamina that few people can match. However, while no smokejumper of whom we're aware of has been an Olympic athlete, three of them have had children who have not only competed at the Olympic level but have excelled.

Eric Heiden and his sister, Beth, are children of **Jack Heiden** (CJ-54). Both were speed skaters at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, N.Y., with Eric setting records with his haul of gold medals and Beth claiming a bronze.

Tommy Moe, son of **Thomas Moe** (MSO-63), became the first American male skier to collect two medals at the same Olympics in 1994 at Lillehammer, Norway.

And in a sport, that's more obscure but no less demanding, Launi Meili, daughter of **Hal Meili** (CJ-52), brought home a gold medal from the rifle competition at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Here's a summary of each athlete's accomplishments:

Eric Heiden—Won all the men's speed skating races and set four Olympic records and one world record at the 1980 Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid. He is the only athlete in the history of speed skating to have won all five events in a single Olympics and the only one to have won a gold medal in all events. He is considered by some to be the best overall speedskater (short and long distances) in the sport's history.

Update: Eric followed his Dad in the medical field graduating from Stanford University with his MD in 1991. He is an orthopedic surgeon and served as team physician for the NBA's Sacramento Kings and opened an Orthopedic Specialty Hospital in Murray, Utah.

Beth Heiden—Won a bronze medal in the 3,000-meter skating at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, won the U.S. Road Cycle Racing Championship, and the world road championship in 1980. Was the NCAA National Champion in cross country skiing at the University of Vermont in 1983 and an All-American in the same sport, as a walk-on in her first year of the sport. In that same year she became the U.S. National Champion in one of the skiing distance events.

Update: Beth lives in California where she continues cross country skiing and has won races at the World's Master's Championships. She was inducted into the US Bicycling Hall of Fame.

Tommy Moe—Joined the U.S. Ski Team in 1986 at age 16. Became the first American male skier to win two medals in a single Olympics, winning gold in the downhill and silver in the super-G at the 1994 Games in Lillehammer. Was inducted into the National Ski Hall of Fame in 2003.

Update: Moe relocated to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in 1994 and is currently (2016) employed as a mountain ambassador at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, giving private lessons into the accessible backcountry. He splits his time between the Tetons and the Tordrillos in Alaska, where he also co-owns, operates, and guides at his heli-ski lodge, the Tordrillo Mountain Lodge.

Launi Meili—Won the gold medal in the 50-meter small bore rifle, three positions, at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992. During her career,

Missoula 1958 rookies and the Oklahoma luggage rack. L-R: Pat Scheid, Doug Bell, Brad Willard, and Dick Baumgartner. (Courtesy Brad Willard)

she produced three world records, three Olympic records, a world team championship, and the Olympic Gold medal, becoming the first American woman to ever win gold in small bore. She was seventh in the same event at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Coached the all-woman University of Nebraska rifle team to the co-ed NCAA National Championship. Became rifle coach at the U.S. Air Force Academy in 2007.

Update: Launi is the Head Rifle Coach at the USAF Academy, has authored several books, won President's Trophy title against other service academies four out of five years (2017), developed, and coached nine cadets to All-American honors.

After the July 2011 issue of *Smokejumper* was published, we got more input from our readers. As Ed wrote in the October issue: "Despite the fact we said we knew of no smokejumpers who'd become Olympians – there indeed has been at least one. **Jack Daniels** (MSO-54) earned a silver and a bronze medal in the modern pentathlon. That competition comprises riding, shooting, fencing, and running. Daniels competed in the Olympics in Melbourne (1956) and Rome (1960).

"Jack is the older brother of **Jerry 'Hog' Daniels** (MSO-58). Jack earned a silver medal in Melbourne. Then he came in eighth overall as an individual in Rome where his team earned the bronze medal."

Erik Hansen (MSO-62) sent us a note to mention his son, Kevin, a setter on the U.S. Men's Volleyball National Team, helped the United States win the gold medal in Beijing in 2008. Kevin had completed an impressive four-year run at Stanford, finishing third on Stanford's list of career leaders with 5,036 assists.

Craig Lindh's (MSO-59) daughter, Hilary, won a silver medal in the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, France, to augment five U.S. championships, three World Cup victories, and a World Championship title. She was also a member of the 1994 Olympic Team at Lillehammer, Norway, competing in the downhill skiing event. At the 1996 World Championships in Spain, Lindh won a bronze medal in downhill and was fifth in Super G. At the 1997 World Championships in Italy, Lindh was the only American to medal, winning gold in the downhill.

More footnotes to smokejumper history.

1943 Rookies—The Civilian Public Service Years

NSA History Preservation Project

There was a major change in the smokejumper program in 1943. Read "Civilian Public Service—Smokejumpers During the War Years" found in this issue. Since the numbers run close to 70 individuals in the 1943 class, I've selected random individuals for this issue even though we have bios on all that rookie class. Not all of the men below were part of the CPS program. I'm up to over one thousand smokejumper bios currently. I'm going to change the plan and print thumb-nail bios to cover more individuals. All are MSO unless otherwise noted. (Ed.)

John L. Ainsworth—Univ. Southern California graduate, electrical engineer, jumped all three years of CPS program, built his own electric car in the 1970s.

Delbert S. Barley—Jumped all three seasons, university teacher, earned his Ph.D., lived in Germany many years. *(His bio was written in German, so this was the best I could do for Del. Ed.)*

Leonard Bartel—Was one of the few CPS jumpers that came back into smokejumping after the war and jumped at NCSB during the 1947 season. Leonard was also Loft Foreman 1947-50 before David "Skinny" Beals (MYC-45) took over that position. He was a member of the Zion Mennonite Church.

Harry B. Burks Jr.—Lived in Columbia, Tennessee, and was a graduate of Vanderbilt University in 1940 with a degree in Engineering.

He was discharged in 1946 and worked for the American Friends Service Committee.

Wilmer "Bill" Carlsen—Bill reported to Seeley Lake in May 1943. The assemblage was so large that jump training was staggered throughout the summer. Bill was in the second group of 30, starting in mid-June. He had only one fire jump that year. Bill jumped two more years. Later, he joined the carpenters union, working at that trade until retirement.

Addison Reynold Carlson—In March 1942, Add and his brother, Clarence, both members of the Jehovah's Witnesses, appealed to the draft board that they be exempted based on their religious belief from induction into the military service. Clarence contended that he was exempt because he was a minister. However, a federal court jury sentenced Clarence to four years in prison and Addison was certified exempt if he would appear for assignment to a Civilian Public Service work camp. In lieu of serving in prison, Addison reported to Camp Number 31 operated by the Mennonite Central Committee. Add jumped all three years of the program.

Edward M. Clark—Born in Scotland, member of the Congregational Christian Church, received degrees up to and including his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and was an Associate Professor of Botany at Auburn University in Alabama.

Albert Wiltse Cramer—Jumped at Missoula 1943-45, McCall in '46, back to Missoula '47-50 and '52-60. Al then went to the BLM jumper program in Fairbanks 1966-67, one of the few jumpers to handle a one-jumper fire. In 1947 he made the first fire jump in New Mexico, as the Forest Service was experimenting with the **possibility of using jumpers in a part of the country with high winds and high-altitude landing spots**. Al had to stop jumping at age 40. When he transferred to the BLM in Fairbanks, he wrote a BLM policy changing that rule. The Forest Service followed. Al was not part of the CPS group.

Herbert F. Crocker—Active in the Congregational Church and peace movement, jumped all three years of the program. One of his sons spent 18 months in a Federal prison for refusing induction into the service during the Vietnam War. "We both believed that our lives did make a difference in the community, in that we tried to lead our

lives consistent to the teaching of Jesus."

Daniel A. Deal—Family spoke Pennsylvania Dutch, attended the Church of the Brethren and were a farming family. Dan was President of the Brethren Young People's group in high school and went to work for a farming complex upon graduation. After his discharge in 1946, he and his brother moved to Onekama, Michigan, where they bought and operated a feed store until 1975. Dan and his family were active in the Onekama Church of the Brethren and Youth For Christ.

Robert L. Derry—The youngest of the Derry brothers, he rookied in 1943 before enlisting in the Navy and serving in the Seabees until the end of the war. Bob was involved in landings in the Marshall Islands and spent eleven "miserable months" on Kwajalein. He was a heavy equipment operator in Spokane 1946-49 before joining the Douglas Co. Fire Department for a 30-year stint as Fire Chief. Bob was approximately 17 years and a month old when he rookied in 1943.

Kenneth A. Diller (CJ)—Parents killed in an auto accident when he was in the 8th grade. With his Mennonite background, Ken joined the Civilian Public Service in 1942, after training he went to Cave Junction, Oregon, where "ten of us started the first smokejumper base in Oregon." Ken jumped for two seasons at Cave Junction. He then jumped his third season at Winthrop. "I loved the scenery in Washington, the trees were shorter than the 225 footers in Oregon, and there seemed to be more alpine meadows."

John Pershing Ferguson (MYC)—CCC worker in 1940, started work with USFS in 1941. When the smokejumper program was established in Region Four in 1943, John and Stewart "Lloyd" Johnson and three CPS enrollees were trained as smokejumpers. After their training, they were stationed at McCall, Idaho. John and Lloyd were trained to be riggers and spotters. Lloyd was appointed foreman of the program. John and CPS enrollee Lester Gahler were the first two smokejumpers to jump a fire in R-4, jumping 30-foot Eagle parachutes on the Captain John Creek Fire on August 14,1943. John returned to smokejumping in 1944 but entered the U.S. Army that summer. He served as a crewmember on a B-29 aircraft until his discharge on November 28, 1945. He returned to smokejumping from 1946 through 1948. After smokejumping, John continued with a career in the Forest Service in R-4 until the late 1970s.

David P. Flaccus—Went to Quaker schools outside of Philadelphia and graduated from Haverford College in 1940. David, Phil Stanley, and Loren Zimmerman were the first CPS jumpers to make a fire jump on July 29, 1943. David settled in Missoula upon his release and started a printing business. The Mountain Press Publishing Company became very successful and known worldwide. He is also one of the founders of the Snow Bowl Ski Area near Missoula.

Emory Lytton Garber—Emory, a farmer at the time, was drafted into Civilian Public Service in February 1942. He served as a minister of the Foursquare Churches in Red Bluff and Myers Flat, CA. He also served as Chaplain at the Ft. Bullion Men's Correctional Facility and served as a board member of Child Evangelism with his church.

Arthur Fred Geisler—For many years Art farmed the family farm. He was a very active member of Peace United Church of Christ in Alma and held several church positions. He and Henrietta were also very involved in the Schmitz Friedens Haus and the Camp White.

Louis Goossen—Louis, 100, of Beatrice, NE, died June 25, 2019. He spent the majority of his career expanding the dairy industry in Nebraska and Kansas. His business developed and manufactured equipment used in the dairy industry, construction projects, and lawn care equipment. He later formed Goossen Construction building single family homes. Louis was a lifelong member of the Mennonite Church.

Bryn Hammarstrom—Graduated from Wesleyan University in 1939 with a degree in chemistry. After smokejumping, he spent two years as a medic in Puerto Rico and, after being discharged, went to work as a chemist developing floor coverings.

Jack G. Heintzelman (CJ)—Was the foreman at Cave Junction 1943–'45. From the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base history: "Jack Heintzelman, a young forester, experienced as a lookout, administrative guard, member of a 40-man suppression crew, and protective assistant with no experience at smokejumping, headed the 1943 Smokejumper Project at Cave Junction." This

was the first year of smokejumpers at Cave Junction, and the Siskiyou Base was the 2nd or 3rd smokejumper base established in the U.S. Upon acceptance of the position,

Heintzelman was sent to Seeley Lake for training as a rigger, spotter, and jumper. "At Seeley Lake, I was assigned 10 men from the CPS (conscientious objectors) crew. The crew was of very high quality with a variety of skills." Jack commented about the good quality of the CPS jumpers in his end-of-season report.

Calvin A. Hilty (CJ)—The son of a Mennonite minister, was one of the original CPS-103 smokejumpers, spent two years at Cave Junction, Oregon, making 26 jumps. He went to Central California in 1946, bought 60 acres and went into cotton farming for 50 years. When he retired from farming, Calvin started Calvin's Cap Rack business which was successful enough for him to employ ten people.

Charles Raymond "Ray" Hudson (CJ)—Born in Madras, India, where his parents were missionaries, graduate of U.C. Berkeley, licensed architect, very active in community affairs and work with the Developmentally Disabled.

Gus Irwin Janzen (CJ)—Mennonite farmer, jumped the 1943-44 seasons as part of the small crew at Cave Junction, Oregon. He made a total of 23 training and fire jumps. After the war, Gus went into the custom wheat harvesting business in the Okeene area that took him from Oklahoma to Montana. Gus was a member of the Okeene Mennonite Brethren Church and was active in Mennonite charitable efforts. He was inducted in the Blaine County Hall of Fame in 1998.

Howard Paul Jernigan—Graduated from Guiford College in Greensboro, NC, and earned his master's from Appalachian State University. He was a school Principal in the Mecklenburg School District for 33 years, retiring in 1982.

Stewart S. "Lloyd" Johnson (MYC)—Lloyd, 101, died September 19, 2017, in Fruitland, Idaho. He was an avid outdoorsman and, at age seven, was proclaimed the "World's Smallest Ski Jumper" at the McCall Winter Carnival. He was active in skiing until age 90 and was instrumental in promoting Sun Valley and skiing in Idaho. Lloyd worked for the USFS for many years and was one of the original smokejumpers at McCall when the base was established in 1943. He jumped at McCall 1943-53 and has been recognized nationally as the oldest living smokejumper until his passing. Of smokejumping, he said, "We never lost a fire because we got on them early." Lloyd was a Pioneer Smokejumper and one of the founding fathers of the profession.

Norman F. Kriebel Jr.—Bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania, recruited 1945 by the Federal Communications Commission in Washington. Two years later, he joined the newly created Central Intelligence Agency as a technical information specialist. Later in his career, he served as an agency bureau chief in Tokyo, Cyprus, and then in London.

William S. Laughlin (CJ)—Graduated from Willamette University and continued graduate studies at Bryn Mawr College. Graduate work at Harvard, spent much time in the Aleutians doing anthropometric measurements for his Ph.D. thesis. After graduation from Harvard, he taught at the University of Oregon (1949-55), Univ. of Wisconsin (1955–'69), and the Univ. of Connecticut (1969-90).

Tedford P. Lewis—Taught at the American University of Beirut in 1947-48 and traveled extensively in the Middle East, leader in local chapters of international peace organizations, including the American Friends Service Committee, War Resisters League, and Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Dr. Amos R. Little—Dr. Little received his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth and his medical degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1942. Bud served with the US Army Air Force, Air Rescue Service, and received his parachute training at Missoula in 1943. In 1944 he parachuted to the 11,000-foot crash site of a B-17 and provided medical attention to four surviving crewmembers. At the time, it was listed as the highest parachute landing on record. After the war Bud settled in Helena and practiced medicine there from 1946-78. He was active in International Skiing and served as the vice president of the International Ski Federation from 1970-88.

James Asa Mundell—Son of an itinerant minister, finished his degree at Kansas Wesleyan

and then graduated from the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, pastored many churches in Oregon, worked for the headquarter office of United Methodist Churches and retired from the ministry in 1987. In 1993 Asa wrote and published "Static Lines and Canopies," a collection of remembrances of the CPS-103 Smokejumpers who kept the project alive during WWII.

Clarence Elwood Quay—Graduated and went to Bethany Bible Seminary where he earned his master's degree. Over the next 24 years, Clarence served four churches before retirement in 1981.

David Gordon Ratigan—Started smokejumping in Missoula in 1943, five months before turning 18 years of age. The smokejumper program had difficulty hiring men in 1943 because those that were physically qualified and were 18 or older were recruited or drafted for military duty during WWII. Only five of the 59 experienced smokejumpers from 1940, 1941, and 1942 fire seasons returned for 1943. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps on October 18, 1943, in an infantry battalion at Camp Elliott, San Diego, California. On May 13, 1945, he was wounded in action and discharged in January 1946. David returned to smokejumping at Missoula in 1946 and 1947.

D. Ellis Roberts—Graduated from Oregon State University in 1951 with a degree in physics, physicist at the National Institute of Standards and Technology whose work in material testing helped develop the windows used on the space shuttle.

Philip B. Stanley—Born April 19, 1919, in Kiafeng, Honan Province, China to missionary parents. He fought fire and maintained trails in forests on the west coast. It was during this time he heard that the fledgling smokejumper program was having trouble getting and keeping able-bodied firefighters due to the demands of WWII. In October 1942 Phil wrote a letter to Axel Lindh, the head of Fire Control in Region One: "It occurred to me some three months ago that you might need men for your parachute firefighting corps, either for experimental purposes or to do the actual firefighting." As a result of his letter writing campaign to Region 1 and Washington, D.C., the CPS-103 smokejumper unit was started in May 1943. Some 225 conscientious objectors kept the smokejumper program going from 1943-45.

Francis Keith Utterback (MYC)—After training he was sent to McCall for the initial season of that base where he made three fire jumps. In an unusual move for a CPS jumper, he left public service in 1944 and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. Keith was discharged in 1945.

Williams Clayton "Bill" Wood—Deferred from military service, started working for the Forest Service and in 1943 was promoted to squadleader to train conscientious objector smokejumper recruits in the techniques of firefighting and serving as a spotter for their jumps. Bill continued smokejumping through 1953 and was one of the primary Missoula smokejumpers making rescue jumps. Bill was the "Rescue Foreman" at Missoula. During his 11 years as a smokejumper, he made nine documented rescue jumps, rescuing and rendering first aid to people who had been injured, usually hunters, in the back country.

In 1954, Bill began a career as an Equipment Development Specialist, developing and improving firefighter equipment for the Forest Service and other wildland firefighting organizations.

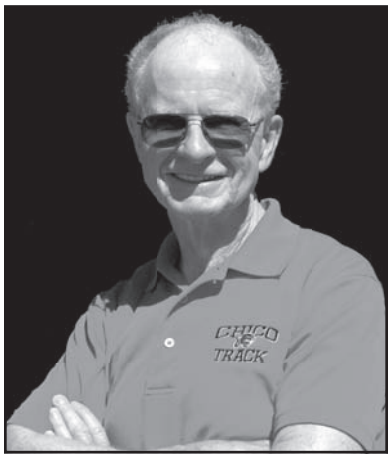
Having Your Correct Email Addresses Is Very Important

In order to save the NSA time and money, I'm sending renewals and the merchandise flyer via email. The National Reunion has been **postponed until August 12–14, 2022**, in Boise. I will be sending information on that event via email whenever possible. Sending via email is a good cost-efficient move.

To see if we have your correct email address, go to the NSA website at *www.smokejumpers.com*. Click on "**News and Events**" at the top of the page. Click on "**Jump List**" on the pulldown, type in your ***last*** name.

Please contact me if we need to update your email. My contact information is on page 3 of this issue. *(Ed.)*

SOUNDING OFF from the Editor



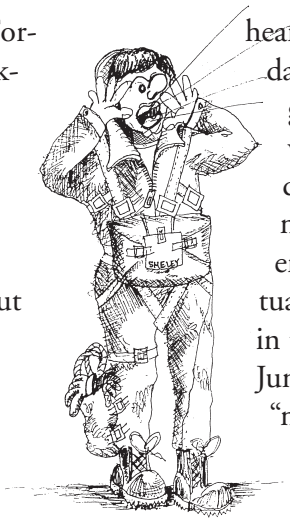
by Chuck Sheley
(Cave Junction '59)
Managing Editor

Let's Look at the 1940–1947 Smokejumpers and Who They Were

I'm working my way through the 1,000 plus obits and bios that we have on file in the NSA History Preservation Program. Thanks to all of you who have sent me your bio information as requested in the Special May 2021 issue of *Smokejumper*.

I give a number of presentations on smokejumper history to civic groups and am privileged to do one for the Redding rookies each year. The smokejumper program can be divided into eras characterized by the men who were the participants. I say "men" because my statistical review has not gotten to 1981 even though we have bios up to 2007 and obits to 2016. These dates indicate rookie year.

The 1940-42 group were usually men with Forest Service or "working in the woods" experience. A big change came in 1943 when the demand for manpower for WWII cut the smokejumper program to a small number of individuals. That is when **Phil Stanley** (MSO-43) took the initiative to tell the USFS that there were plenty of good men in the Civilian Public Service Program (CPS), conscientious objectors, that would and could do the job. These men filled the ranks of smokejumpers 1943-45.



I've been doing some thumbnail sketches of these years in each issue of *Smokejumper*. At first the bios were long and detailed. That is good. However, if I am ever able to get through all the information that I have, I need to shorten the information. Bios/obits in detail have been preserved on our website and at Eastern Washington University.

The 1943-45 jumpers were, for the great majority, members of the CPS group made up of Peace Churches (Mennonites, Brethren, and Quakers). Many were farmers from Mennonite communities in the mid-west who never heard of an eight-hour workday. However, there were a good number of academics with advanced university degrees. Recorded comments that I have from that era talk about the intellectual discussions that went on in the evening at the bases. Jumpers say these days were "mind opening." These men were discharged at the end of the 1945 season and went home.

The CPS jumpers brought a lot of practical skills to the program. For men who built houses, barns, repaired farm equipment, building a smokejumper base was something they could do blindfolded. Cave Junction and McCall were started in 1943. I'm guessing the person in charge just told the men what was needed and got out of the way.

In 1946 only three of the CPS jumpers were hired back and it was done by pioneer smokejumper **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40) at the Winthrop base.

Winthrop opened in 1940, shut down, and re-opened in 1945. It was the first smokejumper base in the U.S. As tough as Francis was, he was fair and was the only base manager to hire the CPS holdovers. He hired **Elmer Neufeld** (CJ-44) who went on to a long career with the smokejumpers and the USFS, **David "Skinny"**

Beals (MYC-45) who did the same and retired as Loft Foreman at Redmond, and **Wallace "Pic" Littell** (MSO-44) who went into a career with the US Foreign Service as our expert on the Soviet Union.

The 1946 season found a complete change in the smokejumper program. I sketched that crew in the October issue of *Smokejumper*. There were 197 rookies in 1946, the great majority of them WWII veterans. When I did these bios, I could not imagine the mental makeup of these men. B-17 pilots at age 22, tail gunners, 17-year-old Marines on Iwo Jima, many Airborne, D-Day, POWs, Market Garden, Battle of the Bulge. **Bruce Egger** (MYC-46) was described by Stephen Ambrose in his book *Citizen Soldiers* "as among the best examples" of the Citizen Soldier. There was **Loren Fessler** (MSO-46), one of the first OSS members, Harvard Ph.D., and *Time-Life* expert on China. **Hank Florin** (MSO-46), B-17 pilot, when asked which 15 minutes he'd like to live over, it was the bomb run over Berlin. That was the most intense year of his life and remained riveted in his memory ever after.

If there is anything good that happens because of war, it is hard to measure. The thing that changed our society, in my opinion, was the GI Bill for WWII veterans. Men who had no chance at a higher education came home and went to college. They completely changed the landscape of the United States. As a teacher, I know that education is the key to success. Educate a person and you will have a balance in our society.

I'm going to summarize my statistics through the 1948 rookies. Bachelor's degrees-259, Master's-83, Ph.D.-29, M.D.-12, Law-9.

Military Service: Army-107 (Airborne-44), Navy-71, Air Force-64, Marines-25. I stopped counting medals awarded as there were too many.

Rank: Sergant-14, Sgt. Major-1, Lt.-10, Capt.-10, Major-7, Lt. Colonel-2, Colonel-5, Lt. Commander-1, Commander-1, Major General-1. Killed in action-4, POWs-3.

Occupation after WWII: Business/self-employed/private industry-127, career USFS-82, education/teachers-69, ranchers/farmers-52, Govt./State Agencies-44, logging/private forestry-31, military-13, aviation-7.

The high numbers of ranchers/farmers come from the CPS group as that is what they did before being drafted. The number of jumpers who went into private business is overwhelming. You will have to read the sketches to see the success they had in starting businesses and becoming the directors of large companies.

The major factor here, in my opinion, is the number who went into a career in the USFS. Their achievements are hard to summarize. District Rangers, Forest Supervisors, and on and on. They were a backbone of the USFS for many years. Wish we could reincarnate them for a 2nd run.

Last part of my summary deals with miscellaneous information. NCAA Championship Wrestling Team 1947-2, World Ranking Javelin Thrower-1.

I'm going to continue to update these stats in future issues of *Smokejumper* as I complete the "veteran years." Next to come: The Student Years.

When I look at the number of smokejumpers in the history of the U.S., it totals a little over 6,000 since 1940. When I look at the history of the U.S. since 1940, I would have to research very hard to find a group of individuals who have contributed more to this country. These bios could be a Who's Who of the United States. And there is more to come!

Still Looking For Your Biography

The response has been good for the bio request. I've got close to 1,500 done. If you have not taken the time to send me one, please sit down and do so. Information in this order:
Born: Month, day, year, city, state. **Grew Up:** City, state, graduated from H.S. including location. **Further Education:** Location, degree(s).
Career: Chronological order **Military service/Honors/Awards?**
Your Life: Have been getting good extra information—go for it!
If you can send in an email or Word document, it saves me a lot of typing. Please do not send in pdf. Otherwise, I'll take it written longhand. *(Ed.)*

The Bad Old Days

by Art Morrison (Missoula '68)

Run a chainsaw, government cookhouse grub, fly fish the Yaak River, Upper Ford, Sylvanite R.D, Kootenai N.F.—1967. Hard work, volunteer for bad deals, chat with Pennsylvania jumper/teacher **Joe Janus** (MSO-56) on jumper fire toward end of season. Ranger Magnuson calls while at Penn State winter 1968. Says he gets two jumper slots a year and wants me and **Claire Olson** (MSO-68) from his 30 or more seasonals to apply.

Marty Litvin (MSO-65) was honcho for illustrious squad 4, blessed with Bill Mast, Ron McGinnis, Dave Melby, Chuck Mungas, Ron McCrea, Bill Neumeister, Claire Olson and me. We bested noisy Squad 6 in every event with them kicking and screaming all the way with Burt Tanner, Willie Von Bracht, Steve Walker, Bill Woolworth and the rest of the sore losers.

First three jumps in Alaska, two more with one Salmon River two-manner with **Jack Gordon** (MSO-64), that turned into largest project fire of the season. More jumpers and **Hal Samsel** (MSO-49) broke an ankle. Worried about losing my job but back again for each season through 1977. Then into Public Information/Legislative Affairs desk jobs in Montana, New Mexico, etc. Lose line quals through Division Boss while doing five years hard time in Washington, D.C.

My rookie Alaska dispatch was quite an experience. No alcohol then but went with **Phil Difani** (MSO-67) and others to Telon's topless in Anchorage. A buck in the thong and tassels going opposite directions. **Frank Sanders** (MSO-62) had a special way with the street ladies which was also a shock to my virgin 19-year-old eyes.

Larry Fite (MSO-60) led a late season pounder crew to Southern California in 1968. Still being gung-ho at that time, **Jon Foland** (MSO-68) and I took turns as lead cutting through the nasty chaparral brush. Scratches, tears, and poison oak made the OT well earned. A junior forester Sector Boss from back east told us to go down a chute building line along the way. Larry in his polite, mild manner refused. After a little ruckus with the Division Boss, the fire soon raced up to the crest of the ridge and defused his wise insubordination.

As a non-drinker until '69 hung out most with **John Driscoll** (MSO-68), Mennonite **Menno Troyer** (MSO-68) and LDS **Tom Coleman** (MSO-67). Jon Foland's station wagon drove me to Penn State, Driscoll to Columbia and Cornell for Jon in '68 or '69. Did play some poker with the maestro **Lee Peppard** (MSO-62) who did not understand why I quit while ahead or lost my $ limit for the day.

I see **Murry Taylor** (RDD-65) and **Gary Shade** (MSO-69) write stories. Gary was a Penn Stater and, as I recall, a male model on the side or maybe more. On a bad deal in Alaska, we packed to a lake for a Goose pickup, got socked in and ran low on grub. I tied cloth onto the end of light fishing line. I always jumped with a fishing pole and gear, and Murry wacked northern pike as they chased alongside a hammock with his Woodsman's Pal. Menno Troyer cooked pike on a shovel rather than hike to the fire for C-Rats.

Nels Jensen (MSO-62) taught me to fly in 1969 while in Grangeville. Cessna 172 cost $15 an hour as I recall. **Rodney Lay** (MSO-67) liked going to town and getting into physical disagreements with the locals after being sent to Grangeville for swinging from chandeliers in Missoula.

Several Alaska Fires with **Skip "Mountain Man" Scott** (FBX-72) who I learned was cousin to my first true love, Judy. The New Man party was too much, so Judy and I left early for some private time. Bought a '54 Ford flathead 6 coup for $35 and sold it to Judy's dad. **Herb Oertli** (MSO-48) and I would buy it back every summer. On **Gary Benavidez's** (MYC-72), first fire jump in Alaska—he was likely the most "talkative" jumper I ever knew. Jumped in Alaska with **Gene Bartel** (MSO-67) and **Jim Veitch** (MSO-67). Jim used to hoard money by doing a Southeast Asia hunker and eating cold C-rats in

a corner at the base rather than buying a meal in Anchorage.

Homer Courville (MSO-61) was Grangeville Foreman in 1970, and that year Bill Craig (MSO-66) taught me how to drink. I got good enough to pay $25 to last 2.2 seconds on a horse named Horse at a local rodeo and **Mark Sweeters** (MSO-68) lasted a little longer. Never saw bigger eyes than Homer looking at jump spot near Lake Iliamna, Alaska, with several Grizz milling around. Went back later and the BLM'ers jumped with bear artillery. Initiation in Grangeville included hitching on to **Dean Peterson's** (MSO-67) Dodge Charger in full jump gear and "crashing" back to the runway when latest cut of the loft parasail project was not perfected.

Did 1971 at the alleged playboy base in West Yellowstone with Foreman **Larry "Mushy" Nelson** (MSO-56). It was all it was cracked up to be for me that season. Most of the crew pitched in and rented a cabin on Lake Hebgen, which is where I really learned to party. Quite a feeling behind **Jerry Smith** (MSO-62) on his BMW motorcycle weaving around a sow and two cubs on the road into the base at night. Also helped game and fish handle trapped grizz at the local Forest Service Campground which was closed due to "water" problems. Learned welding from Professor "Jigs" Parker, **Cole Parker's** dad (MSO-94), and a partner in driving the borrowed forklift to his motel.

Volunteered to buck bales at Nine Mile behind driver **Leonard Krout** (MSO-46), thought he never much liked me. He and **Larry Eisenman** (MSO-58) cornered me in the basement one year after girl firefighters became more common. Leonard could not understand why a jumper wife would let him go on a two-man fire with a girl jumper. Larry said he'd retire/quit if Missoula hired a female jumper. A few years later, a lady came on board. He did not retire nor did I seek him out to remind him.

Yellowstone Park had extra dough for the 1972 Centennial year, so I was able to stay on with them until nearly Christmas. Me, **John Walden** (MSO-65), **Ron Pierce** (MSO-65), and **Dave Grendahl** (MSO-66) had fun falling and bucking road snags and placing road snow stakes out. We figured it was good public relations and drinks on the house were ok, too. The truck went off the road while I was driving very slowly and reading rapidly at the same time, so got busted to doing stakes.

I rented a trailer from **Stuart Putman's** (MSO-66) in-laws and later bought a $15,500 house in the Rattlesnake in 72; worked at the AFD warehouse all winter with **John Hill** (MSO-71) and **Glen Johnshoy** (MSO-67) after a "bad" low OT fire season.

One fall I was doing fisheries and hydrology work for the Lolo. I got very sick, lost 20 pounds, and finally was diagnosed with Giardia. The Docs figured I picked it up in Alaska, but the next year the City had to place new Giardia-proof filters for the drinking water. I haven't sipped stream water since. I did chug Black Velvet out of a water glass and sip Great Falls Select in a juice glass chaser with a neighbor and his Seeley Lake FS permit cabin neighbor, Norman Maclean. We fly fished the Blackfoot when Norman was in town and me available to tag along. He gave me a first edition of *A River Runs Through It* and inscribed "To the best of the best of men—a Smokejumper (USFS)." I introduced him to **Laird Robinson** (MSO-62) who was a big help in researching for *Young Men and Fire*.

My favorite squad boss for night mop-up was **Bill Allred** (MSO-63). He took nice breaks with a gallon of jumper coffee, talking away while most of us crawled into the brush and got an hour's zzzs. One year he and **Ron Pierce** (MSO-66) joined me, **Doug Maryott** (MSO-71), and **Bill Duffy** (MSO-71) on an elk hunt. I did my job, and going in the next morning, Bill emptied a clip. I fed Bill more ammo until a cow finally fell over. Bill worked in the Albuquerque RO along with **Steve Hall** (MSO-70). Steve and I did our best to cut out a couple hundred acres of P/J at our ranch in New Mexico, but we moved to Arizona long before the job was done.

Vacationed in Sun Valley, skiing high with Difani, Walden, Pierce, and Grendahl and crashing at the "Cave" in Missoula with **Grant Godbolt** (MSO-71), **Kevin Brown** (MSO-66) and others from time to time. Fine dining at the Oxford 24/7 with a great menu, including "He Needs 'em," "Stretch One," with and "Slow Elk." The Missoula Club for good greasy grub

and sports history photos.

Tom Morga (MSO-69) and I did song and dance skits for a crew on a fire whilst we all did Pulaski target practice for six packs. **Chuck Floch** (MSO-68) was called "Turtle" because he was so speedy, and somehow, later, he got the handle "Tuna," I guess for his blazing swimming speed, too.

We used to fly into Marna on the way to elsewhere for fuel, and we'd be sweet-talked by men in dark suits, white shirts and dark glasses. Got invitations to make big bucks with risks doing unidentified covert work for a CIA front called Air America.

The most fussy pilot, Dean Ford, would apologize if he dropped cargo 50 yards off target and for days if he put one in the trees. The WWII TBM pilots were wild. Saying end of the season good byes with drawers dropped, a bunch of us got pink-butted at the end of the runway when they saved enough for one last smallish drop. I even got to steer a B-17 when it needed a servicing in Lewiston, ID. Also, got to know the Bell Bubble pilot in WYS and asking a cute one at Smith and Chandler if she wanted to go for a copter ride—well, it sometimes led to a great date. Jumped from the Travelair, hauled out of Moose Creek in the Ford Trimotor, and even a de-mobed airboat ride on the Salmon River.

I did my 131 jumps and never got a serious injury except going for a **Steve Clairmont** (MSO-62) bullet on the volleyball court. My ankle was wrapped for a couple weeks but stayed on the Jump List. Split the fiberglass on my main chute backpack on a rock pile landing and sore after. Showed Hal Samsel, and he said he'd never seen one split before. Guess I was tough in those days.

After I retired from smokejumping, I bought a Spacesailer sailboat with an orange and white spinnaker. I kept it at the cabin on Flathead Lake I bought from **Pat Cole** (MSO-73). While posted in Albuquerque, took my three daughters to the Lake for a minimum two weeks every July. Regular visitors included **Frank Grover** (MSO-63), **Steve Stutzbach** (MSO-66), **Chuck Underwood** (MSO-61), along with Phil Difani and **Rick McIver** (MSO-64) and their kids. Hal Samsel lived a short boat drive away, so would visit he and young bride.

Good elk hunts with **Frank Grover** (MSO-63), **Jack Kirkendall** (MSO-74), and my dad, Dan (11th Airborne-WWII). Waterfowl hunted with **Jan McLaren** (MSO-71) in the "Root." I now take disabled veterans on elk, deer, and turkey hunts through the Arizona Elk Society and Arizona Game and Fish. It's very rewarding and fun.

I've lost touch with most of the above but last year got called by **Doc Lammers** (MSO-71) about an airplane crash, body bag jump while an EMT jumper. Others on the dispatch were **Luther Lemke** (MSO-69), **Rich Cunningham** (MSO-74), and **Jim Cyr** (MSO-63) was our spotter.

Did PIO for Mt. Saint Helens in 1980, many fire Type I incidents, and BAER teams throughout the nation from 1988-2013. Lead PIO for the Southern Red Team, first team to Katrina in New Orleans at the Louis Armstrong Airport, and later **Barry Hicks** (MSO-64) picked me up at the Airport for Katrina-Rita Mississippi Area Command.

I sent in a short column after the Yarnell Hill Fire in 2013. After hundreds of hours on TV, radio, print, and VIP talks from 1988 through 2013 as Type I Public Information Officer (PIO), I got white-balled by Arizona State Forestry. No more AD status nor assignments—the PIO fall person, so to speak. No due process to explain nor knowledge I'd even been fired until called by dispatch in 2014 for out-of-state assignment. Dispatch had to get OK for out-of-state travel, and via denial, I learned of my fired status. I now volunteer as a Civilian Emergency Response Team (CERT) member with the local fire department but don't get to run a Pulaski nor BS the media.

Many of our colleagues are no longer with us but burn brightly in our memories. I could go on and on as any of us could. Of the 40 years with the Forest Service, my best ones were by far as a Smokejumper.

The "Safety Card"

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

As I write this, we are only halfway through the fire season and the wheels are already starting to fall off. I certainly realize that it is impossible to cover all the bases with limited resources. But, by keeping fires small and putting them out as soon as possible, this cuts down the resources needed when other fires explode. Having more available resources means that there will be fewer major wildfires. It is a domino effect.

When an Oregon newspaper investigated the Beachie Creek Fire in Oregon in September 2020, I was asked for input. I know that for years we jumped that area from Cave Junction and that area was picked up by Redmond in 1964. **Mark Corbet** (LGD-74) sent me a map of the fires that Redmond had jumped in the Opal Creek Wilderness since 1964. There were 42 fires jumped with at least 84 jumpers. Obviously, some of these fires had more than two jumpers on them, so I'm guessing that, conservatively, over 100 jumps were made in that area. Who knows the numbers when we add in Cave Junction 1943-81. In other words, it was an area that had been jumped for close to 80 years.

The Beachie Fire smoldered for 11 days before it exploded into 193,000 acres and destroyed thousands of structures and claimed at least five lives. **Tommy Albert** (CJ-64) lost the beautiful home that he and Kathy had along the MacKenzie River. Tommy wrote a great article in the July issue of *Smokejumper* concerning insurance needs for wildfire. He and Kathy have returned to Texas where they are currently living.

From USFS records: "A Hotshot crew tried to hike to the fire within the first 24 hours. They were unable to **safely** access and engage the fire due to the remote location, steep terrain, thick vegetation, and overhead hazards." Jumpers from RAC were called and said the area where they could **safely** jump was three hours away from the fire. I'm thinking that since the fire smoldered for 11 more days, a three-hour hike is more than reasonable—drop them. I know that it was not unusual for my Type II crews to hike 2-3 hours to a fireline assignment each day. We then put in a full shift, hiked back to camp, and repeated that for days at a time.

The USFS told the Oregon *Statesman Journal*, "Firefighter **safety has been emphasized** since 19 Granite Mountain Hotshots were killed in an Arizona wildfire." I've always had a problem with using this incident as a bookmark for **safety**. Photos taken by the Hotshots show them sitting in an elevated area that had previously been burned—the "black," the primary area we all went to when looking for a **safe zone**. I am looking forward to the book on this event written by John Maclean.

Theoretical Situation—My crew is sitting **safely** in a burned-over black area. There is an approaching flame-front driven wildfire with at least winds of 30 mph coming toward us. My choice—We're in the best possible spot, sit it out. Other choice—Move out of the **safe zone** into an area surrounded with heavy fuels. I can't see how anyone in the USFS can justify this situation as a justification for "emphasizing **firefighter safety**."

Now we have numerous wildfires burning that could have been put out earlier by quick initial attack with a small number of resources. As in the Tamarack Fire, a single tree turns into a multi-million-dollar event and **safety** is used as a reason for not putting it out in its early stages. Four jumpers could have handled the single, lightning-struck tree on July 4. Now there are over 1,000 firefighters involved with additional aircraft daily. What situation is **safer** for firefighters—four smokejumpers, a walk-in hand crew of ten dealing with a single tree, or over 1,000 firefighters handling a 50,000-acre fire?

Dave Nelson (MSO-57) has put in over 32 years in wildland firefighting. He was the Base Manager at Redding, the Head of a Type I Team, and the FMO on the Tahoe N.F. As the saying goes, "He has forgotten more about wildfire than most of us have known."

Concerning safety, Dave said the following:

Where do you think we would be if our ancestor's safety goal was no fatalities? We shoot for that, but things happen. Where would we be if they in-

cluded, "We will continue to implement strategies and tactics that commit responders only to operations where and when they can be successful"? We would still be sitting in Europe as we needed those idiots to venture out and defy sailing off the edge.

I personally take umbrage whenever I hear how we (pre-2000) ignored safety. From my first day on the job as a Fire Guard for the BLM in Alaska (1956), all I have heard was "Safety." In fact, for many years it was "Safety First."

In 1970, after a busy fire season, Regional Forester Doug Leisz initiated a "Safety First Program." It was one of the better programs implemented and followed through. Anyone and everyone were interviewed, and procedures were strengthened and improved. My guess is that anyone involved remembers that emphasis.

If we fight wildfire, there will be accidents and personal mistakes resulting in some level of injury, unfortunately including death. This is true in many endeavors, including day-to-day life. This doesn't mean safety should not be a concern, but I can guarantee that no matter how much we concentrate on safety, we will have failures.

As the Smokejumper Base Manager back in the 1960s, I was on an accident investigation of an injured jumper who had fallen from a tree. It did not get into the report, but I said, "We spend quite a lot of time training our jumpers how to land in trees and how to safely get out of the tree. However, as long as we jump into trees, someone is going to fall out." I still believe that. That doesn't mean we shouldn't do those things unless the accident frequency is too high. And then, maybe only some adjustments are needed. We need good safety rules, regulations, and training, but things will happen.

Quentin Rhoades (MSO-89): I've been burned over in a fire shelter, and I've assisted in recovering the charred remains of friends and acquaintances with whom I'd had lunch just a little earlier in the day. I'm at least as sensitive about safety as any overhead safety officer, if not more so.

That said: If you don't want to put firefighters in harm's way, tell them to just stay in the firehouse. These fires would be smaller if USFS, and its drip torching, Veri pistol-packing, flamethrowing, dragon egg dropping "Type I Teams" did not exist. Just let it burn, and you will put fewer people at risk. Fewer folks would be in the zone of danger if USFS fire managers never showed up with their insistence on putting their own fire on the ground. That's point number 1.

Number 2: the Tamarack Fire, when it was discovered, could have been put out with two sticks of smokejumpers on the first day—one stick to put out the fire, one stick to make camp. Instead, thousands of firefighters and civilians were put at risk by using the fire for "resource management" purposes. Another prime but more tragic example: Lolo Peak fire, which killed a Hotshot. Had USFS put smokejumpers on it when it was found (they had a jump ship hovering over it on day 1), the lad who died might still be alive today.

So, can we please quit lying to ourselves about safety? If you lie to yourself, you'd lie to anyone.

Amazon Purchases Can Generate Donation To The NSA

Peter Carpenter (Redding '59)

Every one of your Amazon purchases can generate a donation to the National Smokejumper Association.

1. Sign in to your Amazon account **via** ***https://smile.amazon.com/***

2. Go to:

https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage?q=National+Smokejumpers+Association&orig=%2F&ie=UTF-8 and press the SELECT button

2. If you are shopping via your laptop, always use ***https://smile.amazon.com/***

4. If using your smart phone and the Amazon app, make sure the **Smile** option is turned on.

5. Remember, only purchases at ***smile.amazon.com*** or through **AmazonSmile** activated in the **Amazon Shopping app** will support your selected charity.

6. Ask every one of your friends to designate the National Smokejumpers Association as their **Amazon Smiles Charity** and then to make all of their purchases at ***smile.amazon.com*** or through **AmazonSmile** activated in the Amazon Shopping app.

Mega Fires—Guest Opinion

by Tim Foley

The news stories and images are gripping: wildfires, or megafires "that are a result of climate change." The narrative, pictures, and video are captivating. They contain everything compelling: devastation, tragedy, suffering, grief, loss, misery, sorrow, death, and destruction. Everything. Everything, that is, except science.

It is important to acknowledge that warmer temperatures contribute to an increase in fire intensities that we have recently experienced. While the correlation exists, to leap to an assumption, without any corroborating data, that the warmer temperatures are the primary cause of increased fire activity is an exercise in inductive logic, not science.

Most people don't realize that the current increase of fire size and intensity over time has been predicted for decades by scientists called fire ecologists. While a warmer temperature accelerates this process, a future of increased fire activity has been assumed for some time.

It comes down to an equation that is found in nature that is part of the vast interior west's ecology: *photosynthesis* > *decomposition*. Or put in another way, in the western wildland stuff grows faster than it rots. An ever-accumulating quantity of flammable plant material, called fuels, is not a sustainable situation. There is a balancing force in nature that helps compensate for this imbalance. Whether it be the infrequent crown fires in lodgepole and piñon/juniper forests, or the frequent low intensity fires in ponderosa stands, fire is the natural stabilizing force in the western forests.

After the 1910 "Big Burn" fires, the USFS and the Department of Interior went on a war footing with wildfire being considered the enemy. Mechanized ground forces, later augmented by aviation resources, were organized, trained, and deployed to attack this new adversary.

For many decades these aggressive policies were very successful. When I received my initial fire training in 1975 the "10 and 10 policy" was in effect. All fires were to be controlled by the next morning by 10:00 am at 10 acres or less. What we failed to realize was that with every successful year of firefighting was also one more year of accumulating fuels. The clock was ticking.

Forest management, in the form of removing fuels through thinning and timber harvest, helped mitigate the fuel accumulation. Selective harvest in ponderosa woodlands and clear-cuts in lodgepole forests mimicked the effects of fire. Many in the environmental movement of the 1970s and 1980s saw timber harvest as an abomination and successfully hobbled any real forest management. The National Environmental Policy Act became a tool used in litigation to prevent any serious forest or fuels management. The informal term for this was "analysis paralysis." The rate of fuel accumulation accelerated.

Prescribed fire is a tool, but the use of fire is a two-edged sword. The mountains are home to an ever-increasing number of people, many of whom build homes in dense stands of trees or brush. Air quality can be impacted. An escaped prescribed fire in 2012 resulted in the Colorado State Forest Service being stripped of its fire responsibilities. Since that event the State of Colorado has not had an effective prescribed fire program.

To understand the effect of fuel accumulation, consider this illustration. You are preparing your fireplace. Every day you add more wood. This continues for months, but you never light the fire. The fuel accumulates filling the fireplace and is now spilling out into your living room. It piles up. If the wood somehow ignites, the temperature setting of the room's thermostat, while having some influence, is not nearly as significant as how much wood is piled in that room. You can stand much closer to a campfire on a hot summer day than a bonfire on a cold winter night.

Our best science, which includes USFS fire behavior computer modeling, shows that while temperatures and moisture content are influences, the ever-increasing quantity of vegetative mate-

rial is the major driver in the propagation of the megafires that we have been experiencing.

This is not to say that efforts to moderate our climate are not warranted. But successful climate mitigation actions, when not conducted in concert with scientifically-based forest management, would only slow the increase of fire activity we have experienced.

You can stand much closer to a campfire on a hot summer day than a bonfire on a cold winter night.

In the short term our hands are tied. There will be continued increasing fire activity in the coming decade or two. It will take a long time to counter the impact that dense vegetation is having in the west. The fires of 2020 will not be the last. We do have an opportunity to increase our hazard reduction programs on both public and private lands. It is a matter of if there is the will to face the issue on at local, State, and National levels. While there are many competing issues for scarce resources, fire seems to always have the final word. If we don't take action to reduce fuels and improve the health of the forests, the design of nature will bring things back to balance in violent dramatic events.

Tim received his bachelor's in Forestry from Colorado State and his MBA from University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. He was on Hotshot crews for 18 years and was Supt. on the Pike Hotshots 1986-98. Tim was a Fire Behavior Analyst for 23 years and served in that position on the Yarnell Hill Fire investigation team.

Feedback From Current Fire Situation in Northern California

by Murry Taylor (Redding '65)

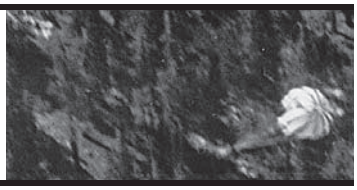
I often talk with teams (IC's and Ops Chiefs) and had a good talk with a Central California team the other day. So many of the people on these teams say the same thing: The Forest Service is not fighting fire like they could simply because they are too risk averse. I hear it over and over, from members of teams, hotshots, jumpers, and some contractors. Unless people take seriously some of the initial attack issues mentioned in the "Call to Action" (Michael Rains), I don't think they'll have much success affecting what needs to change NOW. What needs to happen is for people currently working fire to come out and publicly say what they're saying in private. This has been true for years. I hear complaints about teams from SE U.S. areas who aren't familiar enough with the fuels and fire behavior out west to deal with our fires. So, they hardly do anything at all.

Time after time, I hear that good work could have been done but was not done. Crews are held in camp for days and denied taking action. These Type I and Type II teams need to meet and get these views out in the open and on record. In the past couple years, they weren't allowed to have their after-action meetings due to Covid. The leadership needs to change this back off and slack off, risk-averse nonsense on fires. These changes will have to come from the forests and team people. I don't see it happening otherwise.

Bottom line: There are a bunch of people out there that want to get back to strong initial and extended attack. They absolutely must come forward and push for change.

Murry spent over 25 years as a jumper and has worked for Cal Fire as a Lookout for the past 20 years in Northern California. He deals with fire personnel on a regular basis. (Ed.)

THE JUMP LIST
MEN OF THE '50s



This column is part of the NSA History Preservation Project. All information will be kept in the Smokejumper Archives at Eastern Washington University. (Ed.)

HOWARD W. CHADWICK
(McCall '52)

Howard was born in Cleveland in 1931 and went through his primary education in Nova Scotia and Massachusetts. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in Forestry from the University of Idaho, where he was a classmate of **Bob Sallee** (MSO-49).

Howard spent 1953-57 on active duty with the Army as an explosive and ordnance disposal officer. Prior to that, he jumped at McCall for the 1952 season and worked as a Fire Lookout before jumping.

He worked 1960-62 as a Range Analyst on the Rio Grande NF, 1962-65 in Range Research, USFS, Tempe, AZ, and 1965-85 in Natural Resource Studies, Dept. of Interior in Seattle. Howard lives in Sequim, WA.

DAVID L. CHRISTENSEN
(McCall '52)

Dave graduated in 1948 from Fremont, Nebraska, High School, attended Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa, and graduated from Idaho University with a bachelor's in Forestry in 1953. He served in the Army 1953-55. "Received my draft notice the day I was to report to McCall for the 1953 fire season."

Dave married the love of his life, a Fremont girl, while in the service in 1954. He returned to Fremont in 1955 and entered business with his father in a small lumber yard. He acquired the business in 1972, sold it, and retired in 2019.

"After high school, I worked summers in various jobs with the USFS, culminating with my rookie season in McCall. It was the best job I ever held. I always intended for a future in forestry, but life's events make for changes." Dave is an NSA Life Member.

RICHARD V. CLEARMAN
(Missoula '52)

Richard was born in Choteau, Montana, grew up in Wilburn and Helena, and graduated from Helena H.S. He received his bachelor's in History from the University of Montana and his master's from Boston University.

Richard was in the Army as an Artillery Officer for 20 years and retired as a Lt. Colonel. "My best job was being the Executive and Commanding Officer of a 155mm, 600-man Artillery Battalion in Vietnam." He taught ROTC at the University of Montana for three years. Richard worked as a New York Life agent for 20 years and is currently living in Missoula, Montana. He jumped at Missoula during the 1952-54 seasons.

JIMMIE F. DOLLARD
(Cave Junction '52)

Jimmie was born December 27,1933, in Claremore, Oklahoma, in the middle of the Great Depression. After graduation from Claremore High in 1951, he spent the summer in the USFS Blister Rust Control program with his high school buddy, future college roommate, smokejumper bro, and Apollo Astronaut, Stuart Roosa (CJ-53). They worked many fires in northern Idaho that summer where they saw smokejumpers in action. Jimmie became so impressed that he jumped at CJ 1952-54 while earning a bachelor's in General Engineering from Oklahoma A&M (later OK State). In 1957-58, he taught engineering at Purdue while earning a master's in Engineering Sciences.

In 1958, he joined the Boeing Space program and in 1963 moved to Huntsville, Alabama, to work on the lunar program. The highlight of this tour was evaluating (along with many others) performance improvements to the Saturn V where he had the privilege of working with Dr. Braun, rocket pioneer and

father of the Saturn V. The improvements increased the payload of the Saturn V from the initial 86K lbs. target to 107K lbs. when the Saturn V, launched smokejumper bro Roosa to the moon. In 1972 he founded and served as Chief Operations Officer of PRC-SSc, an engineering company which he grew to 1700 employees supporting the army missile and the NASA space programs.

In 1977 he joined U.S. Dept. of Energy valuating alternative energy concepts. In 1981 he left DOE and founded and served as CEO of Sunbelt, a solar company which became the second largest in the country until the tax credits were terminated and the company closed. In 1986, Jimmie started and served as CEO of Mactec, an environmental firm specializing in nuclear, hazardous, and toxic waste. The company grew to 5000 employees in 2001 when it was sold as an employee-owned company, and Jimmie retired.

After retiring he golfed, fished, hunted, and traveled with his wife, Arrie. They also shared their hobby of wildlife photography, and he worked on several NSA trail projects. He now lives with his wife in Wind Crest, a retirement home in Highlands Ranch, Colorado.

ROBERT L. "BOB" DONNELLEY (McCall '52)

Bob graduated from Boise H.S. in 1952, went to Boise Jr. College, and graduated from the Univ. of Idaho with a degree in Education in 1957. He jumped at McCall 1952-57, and was a squadleader and trained new jumpers 1959-62. "Loved every minute of it."

Bob taught in Boise at South Jr. H.S. 1958-66, and moved to Capitol H.S. 1966-68 where he taught P.E. and was a football, wrestling, and golf coach. In 1968, he took over the Athletic Director's job for the Twin Falls School District, completed his master's degree, and resigned in 1975.

He started his own business, Donnelly Sports, and worked it until retirement in 2000. Bob was in the Navy Reserve for eight years.

"Working as a smokejumper was the most satisfying segment of my working career. After retirement, I accepted a job on the Sawtooth N.F. working for Air Resources Helicopter Co. for four summers.

"The highlight after the fire business was my association with the NSA Trail Crew for several summers. Very rewarding."

Bob lives in Twin Falls, Idaho.

JAMES "JIM" EMERSON (Idaho City '52)

Jim was born December 30, 1933, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. He graduated from high school in St Maries, Idaho in 1951, and jumped at IDC during the 1952 season. He then went into Army and served in Korea on the DMZ, being discharged in 1954. Jim graduated from the Univ. of Montana with a degree in Forestry in 1960 and started a career with the USFS working in Montana, Idaho, and Washington, D.C. before retiring in 1982. Jim then owned and operated a print shop for five years in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, where he currently lives.

THOMAS A. ELWOOD (Cave Junction '52)

Tom graduated from Van Nuys H.S. and Valley Junior College in the San Fernando Valley (CA), and was drafted into the Army. After the Army, he went to UCLA and Univ. of the Americas in Mexico City, where he earned his master's degree.

In Mexico he worked as factory manager of Knoll International, a furniture company, then started his own business of auto body shops (collision repair and paint) which was a big success because "I was the first paint shop in Mexico City to use the oven-baked enamel paint finish which I copied from the California body shops." Tom expanded the business into a chain of eleven shops and 144 workers. He is now living in a suburb of Mexico City.

"My three years (1952, 54-55) jumping out of Cave Junction, Oregon, into forest fires in the Cascade Mountains were summertime jobs only—but the best and most exciting job you could ever have."

FRANK FOWLER (Missoula '52)

Frank jumped at Missoula 1952-54 while attending the

Univ. of Montana, where he graduated with a degree in Forestry. He went to work for the USFS in Asheville, NC, before being drafted into the Army, where he served 1955-57 part of which was in Germany with the 11th Airborne.

After his discharge, he returned to Colville NF and then took District Ranger position on the Sullivan Lake RD, Clearwater NF. After six years, Frank moved to the Flathead NF where he led a study of the Jewel Basin that resulted in it becoming a recreation area. He also led the study to bring the Flathead Rivers into the Wild and Scenic River System.

Frank worked in land management planning on the Idaho Panhandle NF and retired in 1984. In retirement he worked for Stoltz Lumber Company for several years. He authored *High-Mountain Two-Manner* and felt it was significant that two from the 1952 rookie class jumped on fires as a single jumper.

Frank was involved in the NSA Trails Program and was a volunteer host at the Lochsa Historic Ranger Station for many years.

WILLIAM "BILL" JOSEPH FREDEKING (Missoula '52)

Bill was born May 12, 1930, in Alleghany County, Virginia. He attended school in Clifton Forge and Alexandria, Virginia, graduating from George Washington H.S. in 1948.

During the summers of 1949 and 1950, Bill worked in the Coeur d'Alene NF on the blister rust program and served on a fire lookout tower. In the spring of 1952, he received a bachelor's degree in Forestry and Wildlife from Virginia Polytechnic Institution. After graduation, he was a smokejumper in Missoula, Montana, during the 1952 fire season.

In July 1953, he received a permanent appointment as a forester on the Coeur d'Alene NF. In 1954, Bill earned a master's degree of Forestry from Montana State University. He entered the US Army and served 1954-56.

Bill returned to Montana and continued his career with the USFS as District Ranger on the Libby RD, Kootenai NF in 1961. In 1965, he was promoted and transferred to the Lewis & Clark NF as the timber management and fire staff officer. In 1967, he was transferred to the Forest Service Chief's Office in Washington. D.C. as an Employee Development Specialist. He served in that position until 1970 when he became the Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Stanislaus NF in Sonora, California.

In 1980 he was transferred to the Forest Service Region Five Regional Office in San Francisco, California, as the Computer Science User Support Branch Chief for Region Five. Bill continued in this role until he retired in 1985.

ROBERT L. "BOB" GRAHAM (Missoula '52)

Bob was born February 10, 1933, in Waukesha, Wisconsin. He grew up on south side of Chicago and graduated from St. Ignatius H.S. in 1951. Bob went into the Army 1953-54 before attending Washington State University, where he graduated with a degree in Forestry in 1958. In his long career with the USFS, Bob worked on the Clearwater N.F., Nez Perce N.F., Bitterroot N.F., Kaniksu N.F., and the Panhandle N.F. His positions included Assistant Ranger, Ranger, and Fire Staff Officer. Bob was a Class I Incident Commander from 1971-83 with his last fire being the Yellowstone Fire in 1988. He currently lives in Bonners Ferry, Idaho. Bob jumped at Missoula 1952-53.

BERNARD CARTER HEARN (Grangeville '52)

Bernard was born February 8, 1933, in Baltimore, Maryland, and grew up in Chevy Chase, Maryland, where he graduated from high school. He received his bachelor's in Chemistry from Wesleyan University in 1954 and his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins in 1959.

Bernard worked for the USFS on the Nez Perce in 1951 and jumped at Grangeville during the 1952 season. "In the summer of 1952, I drove to Montana in my 1932 Plymouth 4-cyl. sedan, trained west of Missoula, and was assigned Grangeville." He remembers a 32-mile hike out after one fire

He started his career with the U.S. Geological Survey (Geologist) in Reston, Vir-

ginia, 1957-1995. Bernard has worked as a volunteer (Scientist Emeritus) in Reston 1996 to the present. He has also worked at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History as a contractor 1996 to the present. Bernard is currently living in McLean, Virginia.

"For the past 40 years, my wife and I have been heavily into running whitewater rivers in solo kayaks and decked canoes on rivers in the eastern US, Colorado, Montana, and Idaho.

"Forest Service work and smokejumping really guided my career choice, and the principles learned were invaluable in my work over the years. A smokejumper never quits until the job is done, always stays aware of the escape routes for safety, and always looks out for the welfare of co-workers and the public."

JIMMIE L. "JIM" HICKMAN (Missoula '52)

Jim was born 1931 in Missouri and graduated from high school in La Junta, CO, in 1948. He graduated from Oklahoma Baptist Univ. in 1952 with a bachelor's in Chemistry and worked as a logger 1947-51 to pay for his education. In the spring of 1952, he took the Navy Exam for OCS, was accepted for Fall session. "Also, in the spring 1952, and I was accepted for a position with the Missoula Smokejumpers. After training, I was assigned to projects but was called up by the Navy and was gone without ever getting to jump on a fire."

Jimmie was a commissioned Officer in USN and volunteered for Underwater Demolition Training. "Swam a lot and blew up a lot of things, though did not set foot on Korean soil." He was released from duty in 1955 and reported to Forestry School at Utah State Univ. He jumped at Missoula during the 1956 season, graduated from Forestry School in 1958, and took a job as Forester on the Lolo NF.

His USFS career included stints on the Bitterroot, Kootenai, Tongass, Sequoia National Forests and the D.C. office. Jimmie's last assignment in 1980 was Director of Fire and Aviation in the Southwestern Region, Albuquerque, NM. He traveled and worked officially in Mexico, then assisted in a research program extensively in Brazil, making four working trips there. Jim retired from the USFS in 1993.

RICHARD A. KREITZBERG (Missoula '52)

Rich graduated from Missoula County H.S. in 1952 and applied for smokejumpers even though he was only 17 at the time. "Fred Brauer said to put my age at 18, since I'd be that age when training started. I jumped a full season in 1952-53. Since I won an NROTC scholarship that required one month 'summer cruises,' the next three years I'd take my two practice jumps, go on the cruise, and then return to jump until school started. Talk about the good times."

He graduated from the Univ. Washington with a bachelor's in Aeronautical Engineering in 1956 and from Stanford with a master's in Industrial Engineering in 1957. "I served in the Navy for four years as a submarine officer on a diesel submarine based out of Pearl Harbor, USS Cusk.

"After I left the Navy, I went into business with my two brothers in Salem, Oregon. Our company, Microflect Co., designed and manufactured microwave towers and passive repeaters for terrestrial microwave networks. We sold the Company in 1995 and I retired. We spend summers at our home on Placid Lake in Montana and winters in Salem, Oregon. If anyone has had more fun in his life than me, I'd like to meet him."

ROBERT H. "BOB" NICOL (Missoula '52)

Bob graduated from Hamilton H.S. in 1952 and reported for smokejumper training at Nine Mile two weeks later. He enrolled at the Univ. of Montana in the fall and returned to the smokejumpers for the 1953 season. He then enlisted in the Marine Corps and served in Korea and Japan before being released in 1956.

Bob returned to Missoula where he jumped 1956-61. At the same time, he enrolled at the Univ. of Montana and took flying lessons and got his pilot's license in December 1956. He continued to jump and take further flying lessons under the GI Bill. In 1962, he

went to work for Intermountain Aviation in Marana, Arizona, and began his extensive 42-year flying career which lasted until 2004.

Bob was very short in describing a legendary flying career. He is mentioned many times in Richard Holm's "Bound For The Backcountry," a history of Idaho's remote airstrips. He dropped smokejumpers and flew cargo and firefighting supplies into some of the most primitive airstrips in the U.S. There needs to be a book about Bob Nicol. His flying career would make a movie. "CIA Project Coldfeet"—read it in Smokejumpers and the CIA. (Ed.)

HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY, LUKE

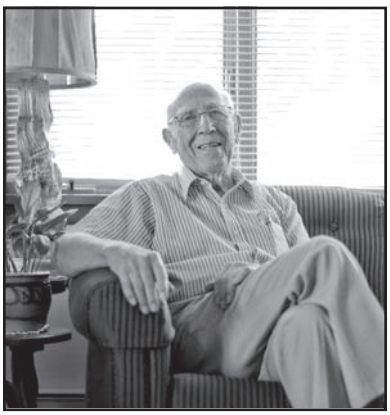
LUKE AMON BIRKY (MISSOULA '45)

Luke is still alive and living in Goshen, Indiana. He was born January 8, 1922, on a farm near Airlie, Oregon. Luke is the descendent of Swiss and German Mennonite grandparents who came to the U.S. in the 1700s. He remembers being beaten up several times during school by bullies testing his faith and belief of "non-resistance."

He worked on the family farm until he was drafted in the CPS in 1943. He started out in La Pine, Oregon, before joining the smokejumpers in 1945. Luke made seven practice, seven fire, and two rescue jumps.

Luke was discharged in 1946 and returned to Oregon where he worked as a mechanic/welder before enrolling in Goshen College in Indiana. He married in 1947 and he and his wife went to Puerto Rico at the request of the Mennonite Central Committee to do work for the needy.

They returned to the states in 1954 and moved to Colorado where Luke became a hospital administrator at LaJunta. In 1966 they moved to Elkhart, Indiana, where he was Secretary of Health and Welfare for the Mennonite Board of Missions. Then back to Albany, Oregon, in 1979 where Luke assumed directorship of a Mennonite retirement program. He retired in 1987 while working for another program in Costa Rica.



Luke Birky from January 2011 issue of Smokejumper

"Smokejumping—I'd do it all again. Living with people of conviction but from varied backgrounds and perspectives became a time of evaluation and maturing. It was a time to increase vision of what it meant to be a follower of the Prince of Peace and become more socially responsible."

Eric The Blak's Magnetic Declination and Water Scoopers

By Wally Humphries (Fairbanks '90)

I enjoyed reading stories about **Eric "The Blak's"** (CJ-64) Celebration of Life in the July issue (2021). Blak was a huge fan of magnetic declination, and how you were always good if you set the compass declination to 27° E for the majority of wildfires in Alaska. That advice saved me from getting turned around in the dog-haired spruce. The declination was higher and lower in other geographical areas, but we rarely fought fires there.

Blak mapped and listed coordinates to practically

every Alaska lake where water scoopers could scoop out safely, eons before the Alaska Fire Service (AFS) used scoopers on a regular basis.

There were old photos and slides at the smokejumper shack of the PB-Ys dropping water on fires. Alaska's Bureau of Land Management contracted PB-Ys from Bob Schlafly in the '70s, according to **Ron Lund** (FBX '64).

Eric The Blak often voiced that AFS should use CL 215s and 415s water scoopers from the Yukon Territory, or elsewhere. He liked the scoopers short load and return times from dipping out of lakes near the fire, compared to retardant ships, often having to go to an outstation for retardant. He seemed more enthusiastic for 415s than 215s.

If The Blak were jumping today, I think he would welcome a jet airliner dropping retardant on a critical fire near a village, but I would bet that Eric preferred water scoopers over retardant bombers for most of his wildfires.

Livin' Off The Land

Philip A. Robertson (Missoula '62)

It was August 1956 and the monsoonal rains had begun. The work on the Frank's Ranch had slowed, so **Michael Steppe** (IDC-61) and I decided to take a pack trip into the Gila Wilderness.

We decided to take only our riding horses with a few staples in our saddle bags and bedrolls tied on behind. Our goal was to stay out there as long as we could and "live off the land"! It was one of the few times in my life when I did not have an immediate deadline or schedule, although we both had school facing us in September.

We figured we could be gone for two weeks or so. We told our folks that we were riding in from Sapillo Creek and did not know when or where we would come out of the wilderness.

To live off the land, we took our .22 pistols, Michael's single-shot .22 rifle, and my .30-30 saddle gun. We had in our saddle bags some prunes, kippered herring, and probably some dried beans. I guess we really expected a bounty from the land.

We had some buddies take us and our horses up to the Sapillo—in the horse trailer I built in high school machine shop—where we were to begin this journey. We were dropped off where the road from Pinos Altos to Gila Hot Springs meets the Sapillo. We said our good-byes and readied our tack and off we went.

We took the trail around the Sapillo box, and nothing eventful happened for an hour or so. A fox jumped up and I considered shooting it then decided fox would not be a good supper, so that ended that idea.

We were riding along and Michael was enjoying the aroma of a Hav-a-Tampa cigar which I was smoking. We occasionally enjoyed those cigars on our camping trips. We finally made it down to the Gila River and poked around the old line camp cabin at the mouth of the Sapillo.

Not much grub there. In the old days, the law of the land was that those cabins were available for shelter and food, and if you took something, you left something. If you burned firewood, you cut some to replace it.

As time went on, people abused and ransacked those cabins and soon there was nothing left in them for folks to use. Most ranches abandoned them. Sad how we have degenerated as a society. Today there is nothing left of that cabin and its corrals except some foundation stones and some corral posts.

We headed up the Gila to the place where the Granny Mountain Trail #160 took off on the left. It was a long, hard climb out of the river bottom to near the top of Granny Mountain, and the view from up there was spectacular.

It was getting late and we began to hear the rumble of our stomachs. The thought of where we might camp was becoming preeminent on our minds. We rode on toward Miller Springs where we thought we might camp that first night.

Near Miller Springs, we found an old fire cache which a bear had dug up. Keep in mind, in those days when smokejumpers or ground crews went to a fire, they did not pack out their food and paper bedrolls, etc. That stuff was simply buried.

Well, the good Lord was on our side that day! This bear had dug up all kinds of unopened cans of food. We packed a bunch of those cans in our saddlebags and headed on to Miller Springs where we camped that night. What I mean to tell you – we ate a far better fare that night than had I shot that fox! Those canned peas and peaches were awesome. Didn't miss the fox roast a bit.

So, we crawled into our sleeping bags after a wonderful dinner and slept soundly. When we took these trips, we never had a tent, just a ground cloth and bedroll and went to sleep looking at the stars.

The next morning, we headed for Little Creek where we thought we might camp the night. There was a Forest Service guard cabin there and some good water with good grass for the horses.

We got to Little Creek in late afternoon and had some more of the buried fire cache bounty. We bedded down on some pine needles under some towering Ponderosa Pine trees. When we awoke the next morning, a tassel-eared squirrel was running around the branches above us, scolding us for invading his domain.

Hmm, I thought. Tassel-eared squirrels are good eating. So, we commenced to shoot our breakfast. I think we used a half-box of .22 shells in Michael's single shot rifle and never could bring that squirrel down. Think we hit it though, because some blood was on the ground below.

Dang … damned poor shots we were, so we had more canned food and prunes. That pretty well used up our fire cache bounty, and I began to worry about where our next meal was coming from. No worry, however. We saddled up and headed over the Diablo Divide into McKenna Park, a place I always wanted to see. I always loved those open park-like Ponderosa stands with huge, majestic trees and open grassy areas in between, and McKenna Park was just such a place.

We were pulling up to near the top of the divide when we looked out across the forest and there were all kinds of smokes from forest fires. That was not right, I thought, as the rains had started and most of the fire crews had been let go.

I was kinda worried when I saw all those smokes, especially one back toward Granny Mountain where we had camped the first night. We rode on, and before we reached the top of the divide, down the trail at a gallop came a rider, hell-bent for leather. It was Johnny Lewis from Cliff, and he was in an awful hurry, but he pulled up to talk.

We asked what was going on with all the fires. He replied that lightning had started a bunch and they had no crews to man them. He asked if we wanted work and we told him that we weren't old enough. Michael was 15 and I was 17. You had to be 18 to fight fire for the U.S. Forest Service.

He said, "No matter. We need help."

We told him that we would help. He told us to ride to White Creek, where the Wilderness ranger station was located, get some horse feed and grub and ride up the Jerky Mountain Trail to Lilly Park.

He then gave us directions to a fire which had one man on it, Delbert George. We were told to tell Delbert that we were to stay with him as long as needed and help him with the fires. Neither one of us had fought forest fires before but that didn't bother Johnny. He loped off down the trail with a shovel tied to his horse, heading for a fire behind us. We never saw him again in the mountains.

We rode through majestic McKenna Park and dropped into White Creek. Here was a beautiful log building with some corrals and out buildings nestled down in the valley bottom of White Creek. An idyllic setting for such a place.

Incidentally, these buildings have all been torn down and burned – part of the "streamlining of the forest management." A significant piece of early history in the Gila Wilderness was lost when this happened. We got some grub, grained our horses, let them rest a bit, then headed out of White Creek on the trail to Lilly Park.

We rode for several hours and began to smell smoke. We followed that to a fire up on the side of a gentle ridge. When we located the fire camp, we noticed that all of the grub and supplies were hanging from tree limbs up high. Guess a bear had been a problem.

In the camp was this grizzled old man, not very tall and sizing us up with a great deal of skepticism. We explained our conversation with Johnny. He told us to unpack and he would show us how to fight fire. After a while, I guess he thought we could do some work and he warmed up to us.

We worked on that fire and spent the night after having the best meal of the trip so far. Frankly, I am not sure how long we could have made it "living off the land."

Once that fire was out, we headed back to White Creek to shower and sleep in a real bed and have some really good food. The ranger station there had a most interesting water system. Up a side creek was a pond where a ram-jet system would pump water into the cistern at the ranger station. This thing would hammer and clank all the time and had, in a way, a wonderful sound to it, as long as you didn't have to listen to it all the time. It was a wonderful place and, in a way, I hated to leave it.

After a good rest, some good food, shower and all, we headed up to some other fires to the southwest of White Creek. As we would ride along, Delbert, who liked the bottle, would turn around and say, "I would like about this much whiskey," showing his thumb and forefinger about an inch apart, "in a glass this big around," making a circle with his arms about a foot or more in diameter.

He would often tease us about the girls and other things that are best not mentioned in this story. Periodically, he would burst into song, singing, "That's where my money goes, to buy my baby clothes," and other assorted parts of songs. He was a character!

I don't remember where all the fires were, but they were up in higher country. We went to one and worked quite a while on it to get a line around it and get it where it would not spread. Then we headed for another one and did the same.

After a few days of this, we were getting low on grub, so we finished up lining a fire. Delbert said he would take us to another fire and we could line it while he went back to White Creek for supplies.

We got started on the line and he left us ... kind of a funny feeling to be out in who-knows-where with damned little water and no food or bed rolls, for we had left all those supplies at the previous fire to which we would return when Delbert got back from his supply run. All we were left with was our tools, horses, and the rather large responsibility of controlling that fire.

We worked on the fire into the night, got a line around it and wondered why Delbert was not back. He told us that he might not make it back until the next morning, so our worry level was not that high.

It started to get cold and with no bedroll, we were left to hunker near the fire. There were two rather large logs in the middle of the fire, each burning rather nicely. They were about 10 feet apart and we thought that if we stretched out between them with our chaps on, we could keep warm. So, we did. Long in the night, Michael scrunched a little too close to one of the logs and the heat burned a welt on his butt. He rode a little "cattywampus" for a day or two after that.

We survived the night and when dawn came, we got back to work mopping up the fire. Still no Delbert. We were hungry and thirsty and very dirty. Finally, about 11 o'clock in the morning, Delbert came up the trail with a sheepish look on his face.

"What happened?" we asked. He began a cursing tirade against his pack mule. Apparently, several miles up the trail from White Creek, the mule decided she had enough of this misery and threw a hissy, broke loose from the lead mule and headed back to White Creek, bucking and sunfishing all the way. The pack came loose and groceries were scattered for a mile or more down the trail.

Delbert had to retrieve the mule and gather up all those groceries and head back up to the fire. He was embarrassed, to say the least, and most apologetic. We filled our hungry bellies, finished the fire mop-up, and headed back to the fire where our bedrolls were.

As we rode along, we heard the not-so-melodious refrain, "That's where my money goes, to buy my baby clothes."

We were on several more fires after that one, but none sticks in my mind like those do. Finally, the fire situation was under control and we left to return to our escapade of "living off the land."

We were very dirty, tired and had been at this about two weeks. We decided to head out to Cliff, where we would call Allan Davis. He and Herby Toy would come and pick us up with my Dad's jeep and my horse trailer. We called from one of the ranches on Mogollon Creek and told them when we would be in Cliff by early evening.

When we rode up to the jeep and trailer, Allan said that we stunk to high heaven and we could not ride up front. That was insulting, but understandable, since we had not had a bath since that night at White Creek.

We loaded our horses and gear and headed back to Silver City. When I took a shower that night, I scrubbed and scrubbed and could not get the black fire dirt completely off my face and hands. I went to a dance that night at the Elks Club and had a lot to tell my friends.

"Living off the land" became living off the Forest Service. That experience began careers of fighting fires, doing trail work, working as lookout/firemen, packers and ultimately smokejumping for both of us. I did pursue a college major of Forestry and Range Management while Michael went into Veterinary Medicine. Our "living off the land" experience was one of many that became an Outward Bound program for us.

If we had not run into Johnny Lewis, that trip would likely have been short-lived because we would have starved to death. The fact of the matter is, we knew precious little about living off the land. "Almost" roast fox does not cut it! We came out of that experience wiser and full of stories and experiences. We each had about $300 for our efforts, more money than either of us had ever had!

As an aside, some years after our time in the Gila, Johnny was driving a semi into Silver from Cliff down the Market Street hill when his brakes went out. He was getting close to downtown when he realized he had to do something. At the corner of Black Street and Market, there was a playground, with children from the Sixth Street School at play.

To avoid that, he ran the truck into the lumber yard just east of the playground thus saving some young lives. That basically was his last chance to ditch the semi safely as east of Black Street, Market Street was quite populated with houses and businesses. He was about five or six blocks from the center of town when he ditched the rig. He was not seriously injured nor was anyone in the lumber yard. From what I gather, Johnny went into law enforcement and left the area.

When back from school, we would often stop in and visit Delbert at the Bullard Hotel on the south end of the main street in Silver City. Delbert, who spent alot of his summer time working ranches and for the Forest Service out of the Gila Hot Springs area, would spend his winters in town coddling the bottle. Eventually, I suspect that he died from too much alcohol abuse.

The privilege of "living off the land" and working with Delbert during one of the few times in our young lives, when we were unencumbered by schedules and deadlines, was a real experience and treat.

What we didn't know at the time was that we were working with a real character of the Gila area. In the book *Triumph and Tragedy, A History of the Thomas Lyons and the LCs* by Ida Foster Campbell and Alice Foster Hill, they refer (page 214) to the generosity of Thomas Lyons to the George family.

"A year past the turn of the century, Edgar and Emma George with their four boys and two girls came from Texas in several loaded wagons to settle at Mule Creek. In short order there was a fifth boy added to the family. Tom, hearing of the arrival of the family, took them a side of beef."

Tom went on to tell Edgar that he could kill an LC steer for food if they let him know they were doing so. Edgar and most of the George boys worked for the LCs through the years.

Note that the XSX referred to in Delbert's obituary below is, I believe, just up the East Fork of the Gila River from the original Lyons Hunting Lodge.

Hill and Campbell go on to say, "There was a time when Emma George grew so homesick for Texas that she gathered her two youngest, Marion and Delbert, took a team and wagon, and was off to Texas for a visit. A year later she and the two boys returned home to Mule Creek."

Clearly, Delbert had a history that touched one of the great ranching empires of the southwest New Mexico Territory. I do not know when Delbert and Marion moved from Mule Creek to the upper Gila River Country. Had we known all this about Delbert, we would have picked his brain for all the information we could have gotten from it.

A quote from Carolyn O'Bagy Davis's book *Mogollon Mountain Man,* Nat Straw (2003) gives some additional insight into the nature of Delbert George.

"Nat's money soon ran out, and when he was put out of the hotel, he was taken in by two brothers, Delbert and Marion George, who had known Nat from years of living near the Gila Hot Springs. The Georges lived down the main Gila at Alum Camp, and they worked for Hugh Hodge at the XSX ranch. There were four George brothers and their rowdy exploits were well known in the Gila country.

"The George brothers did not have any aversion to drink at all: in fact, stories about their drinking exploits are somewhat legendary. It was often said that they were drunk about three-fourths of the time, and if one brother was sober, it was only to be able to bail the other one out of trouble."

O'Bagy refers to a time when Delbert and Marion were working cattle between the West and Middle forks of the Gila. After a night of drinking,

they, in a bleary-eyed state, went out to work cattle. Another rancher then moved their entire camp several drainages to the west. He moved the entire camp, including ashes, fire pit and gear. It took Delbert and Marion quite some time to "find" their camp (O'Bagy 2003). I am sure that story was told more than once in the Gila Country!

Below is the obituary for Delbert and thus our momentary link to the colorful history of the upper Gila River country came to an end.

George: Delbert R. George, 68, died at his ranch at Alum Camp, Friday evening (10/23/1969). Mr. George was a lifelong resident of this community and is survived by three brothers, Marion of Gila Hot Springs, Oscar of Salt Lake City, and John of Duncan, Ariz.; one sister, Mrs. Ira McDonald of Morenci, Ariz.; a son, Richard R. Blakey of Lordsburg; and a daughter, Mrs. Geraldine Chambers of Lovington, N.M. Graveside services were held at 2 p.m. Wednesday and burial at the X.S.X. Ranch on the East Fork of the Gila River, with Robert Clark officiating. The Curtis Mortuary was in charge of arrangements.

The Coming Firestorms—Opinion Piece

by Dr. Bob Zybach

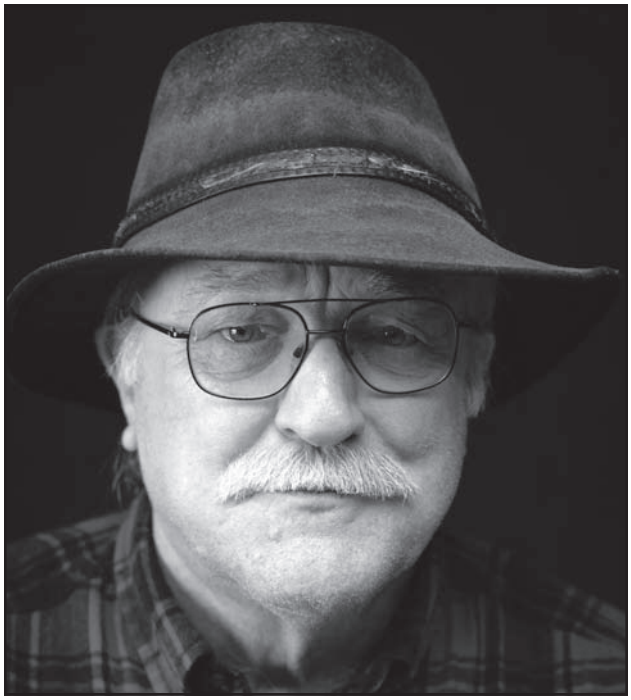
The most deadly, destructive, and widespread catastrophic wildfires in Oregon's history erupted on Labor Day 2020, driven by strong east winds. But unless we change how our national and state forests are managed, these events will be just another chapter in this age of predictable, increasing, and ever-greater firestorms.

I spent my career studying forest fires and forest health. For example, my doctoral dissertation from the OSU College of Forestry was titled, *The Great Fires: Indian burning and catastrophic forest fire patterns of the Oregon Coast Range, 1491-1951.*

In a 2018 interview, just before the California Camp Fire destroyed the town of Paradise, I said: "You take away logging, grazing and maintenance, and you get firebombs." Then someone took my quote, pasted it on a forest fire photo, and the resulting meme quickly went viral on Facebook.

Last September, Facebook began flagging this post as "partly false" because my quote, and related interview, doesn't mention climate change. Evidently Facebook's executives feel their newfound forestry judgment is better than my lifetime of scientific research and hands-on forestry experience.

The broad arc of Oregon's fire history explains why last year's catastrophic wildfires have converted our public forests into unprecedented firebombs. What were once green trees filled with water, have now become massive stands of pitchy, air-dried firewood.



Bob Zybach (Courtesy B. Zybach)

For thousands of years, ancestral Oregon Indian families kept ridgeline and riparian areas open for travel, hunting, fishing, and harvesting purposes. They cleared ground fuels by firewood gathering and seasonal fires. This created systematic firebreaks in a landscape characterized by southern balds, huckleberry fields, camas meadows, oak woodlands, and islands of mostly

even-aged conifers.

Following the 1910 firestorms, the US Forest Service established a nationwide system of fire lookouts and pack trails backed up by rapid response fire suppression. This system became remarkably effective over time. From 1952 until 1987, only one forest fire in all western Oregon was greater than 10,000 acres.

But since 1987, Oregon has had more than 30 such fires, with several larger than 100,000 acres. The 2020 Labor Day Fires alone covered more than one million acres, destroyed over 4,000 homes, caused 40,000 emergency evacuations, killed millions of wild animals, and blanketed the state with a thick, acrid smoke that obscured the sun for days. What changed to cause this dramatic increase in catastrophic wildfire frequency and severity?

The problems began in the 1960s, with apparently well-intentioned national efforts to create large untouchable wilderness areas and cleaner air and water on our public lands.

The single biggest turning point in how public forests are managed happened on December 22, 1969: About 50 lawyers in Washington, DC created the Environmental Law Institute, and a short distance away congress passed the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA).

Next, the 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the 1980 Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA) provided the growing environmental law industry with a way to be paid by the government for challenging nearly every attempt to log or otherwise actively manage public forests.

By the 1980s, the artificial creation of Habitat Conservation Plans ("HCPs") and the listing of spotted owls as an Endangered Species laid the groundwork for today's fires.

The 1994 Northwest Forest Plan might have been the final nail in the coffin. The subsequent never-ending environmental lawsuits, new Wilderness and HCP creations, access road decommissionings, and fruitless public planning exercises have created tens of millions of acres of massive fuel build-ups and "let it burn" policies that have decimated our forests.

The predicted result has been ever larger western Oregon forest fires. More than 90% of these large, and catastrophic-scale, fires have taken place in federal forestlands, which only represent 50% of Oregon's forested areas.

Lessons from the 1933-1951 "Six-Year Jinx" Tillamook Fires and the 1987-2018 Kalmiopsis Wilderness Fires are clear: unless removed, the dead trees resulting from these fires will fuel even greater and more severe future fires.

Forests of dead trees are far more flammable, dangerous, and unsightly than those with living trees. Dead trees dry out, and dead forests become firebombs that almost certainly will burn again and again, unless something is done.

The 2020 fire-killed trees should be mapped, sold, and harvested ASAP. Prices for Douglas fir logs are at a record high, and there is a great need for good-paying rural jobs. The initial focus should be on the dead trees east of Portland, Salem, Eugene, Ashland, and the rural towns directly affected by this year's fires.

Salvage logging must be done soon to be economical: dead trees deteriorate rapidly.

The 1962 Columbus Day windstorm downed 9 billion board feet on a Friday, and by the following Monday salvage logging on public lands had already started. But the 2002 Biscuit Fire burned a roughly equivalent amount of timber, and it took years to develop salvage logging plans and deal with court challenges.

All the delays meant salvage logging lost the USFS money. Very little needed logging was ever completed, and the 2017 Chetco Bar Fire resulted, burned hotter, and spread wider.

Last year's fires killed at least twice as much timber as the 2002 Biscuit Fire, and it greatly damaged and affected urban areas near major cities. So, it will be interesting to see if we can learn from Oregon's fire history and take the prompt, decisive actions needed to avoid the clearly predictable coming firestorms.

Bob Zybach is an independent forest scientist based in western Oregon. His PhD in environmental sciences is from Oregon State University (2003). Research interests include fire history, reforestation planning, forest management, Oregon Indian history, and forest history. Prior to obtaining his PHD, Dr. Zybach operated a forestry business for nearly 25 years that reforested more than 85,000 acres of burned and logged lands—none of which have subsequently been affected by wildfire

LETTER FROM A SCHOLARSHIP WINNER—DAN LEININGER

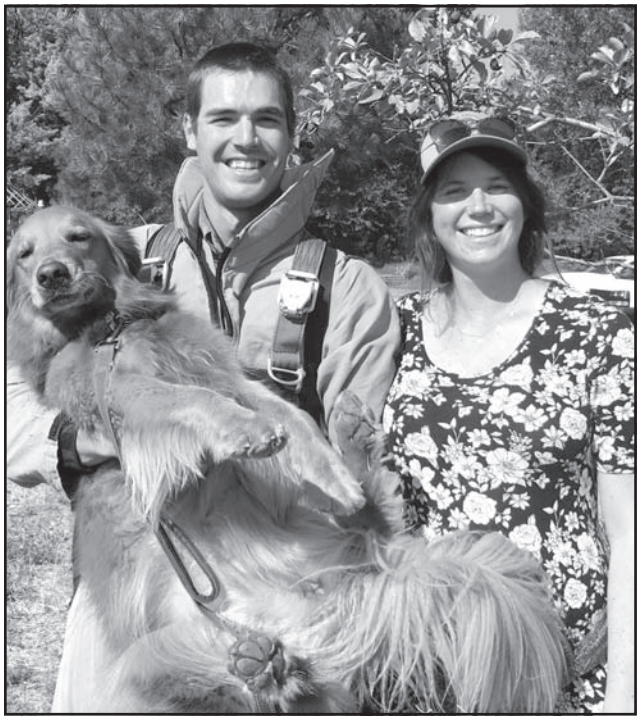
(NORTH CASCADES '17)

I am deeply HONORED by your decision to award me a 2021 NSA Scholarship. As the 2021 fire season starts to get busy, for the first time, I am watching the fires unfold from the sideline. Like each one of us who has closed the chapter on their smokejumping career, I write with strong emotions and mixed feelings. Going forward into a law career, it is special to know the smokejumping community has my back, just like it did on the fireline.

Like so many of us, I never expected to become a smokejumper. In a way, my experience reflects an older generation of Bros, rather than the modern-day "career" jumpers. Having only jumped for four seasons, I experienced the best of the job without being broken down by the very genuine and very urgent systemic problems facing today's career wildland firefighters. I have more or less known that I would only be a visitor to this special vocation. What a privilege it has been to call myself a smokejumper and be molded by the best in the business. In trying to process what it means to *have been* a smokejumper, rather than to *be* a smokejumper, I am comforted by a familiar passage from Norman Maclean when describing our tribe. He writes … "(smokejumping) is more something that is necessary for them to pass through and not around and, once it is unmistakably done, does not have to be done again. The 'it' is within, and is the need to settle some things with the universe and ourselves before taking on the 'business of the world …'"

It is time for me to move on. By enrolling in a top environmental law school, I hope I too may take on the business of the world and dive headlong into new challenges. I, for one, am grateful for the opportunity to jump and grateful that the community of jumpers has seen to invest in my education.

Thank you.



Dan Leininger and wife Catherine Means. (Courtesy D. Leininger)

NSA Scholarship Winner, Maddy Thomas, *granddaughter of* ***Don Thomas*** *(CJ-57). Maddy is catcher for the Whitworth University softball team: batted .385 in shortened 2020 season following a great 2019 freshman season where she had 29 RBIs. She worked on a USFS firecrew out of La Grande, Oregon, during the 2021 season. (Courtesy D. Thomas)*

NSA Scholarships 2021

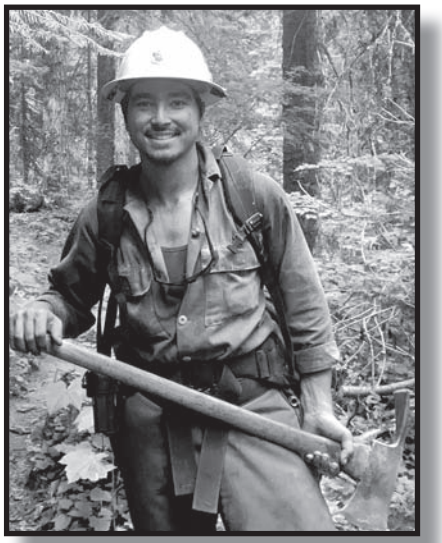
Photos Courtesy Recipients

Kate Harrison

Jon Joiner

Magali Gray

Dan Leininger



Andy Fujii

Kaylin Sheley

Theron Gray

Lilly Brusdeilins

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

Introducing the 2021 NSA Scholarship Awardees

by Jim Cherry (Missoula '57)

The NSA Scholarship Committee and Board of Directors would like you to meet the 2021 awardees of scholarships and education/training grants. Once again, we had an excellent group of applicants. We were able to offer seven scholarships and one education/training grant.

Meet the scholarship awardees in their own words…

Jon Joiner… *After receiving my associate degree in 2013, I decided to take a break from academia. At that point in my life, I was quite tired of school and wanted to work the entirety of the fire season. However, I always planned on returning to school one day to earn my bachelor's degree. In 2018 I decided I was at a good point in my life to return to school and achieve my goal of earning my bachelor's degree. I enrolled at the University of Idaho for the 2019-2020 school year with a major in fishery resources and a minor in aquaculture. I will graduate in the spring of 2022 and, as of now, I can see myself using my degree in a few different ways. I can see myself either continuing to jump and using my degree to promote to a higher level. I can also see myself using my degree to join the military, possibly as an officer. And lastly, I could see myself getting a job in the fisheries industry and working as a biologist. While I am not exactly sure which way my life will go, I know that any of those career paths will challenge me and help me grow as a person.*

Kaylin Sheley… *I have just completed my junior year at Eastern Washington University. I have already obtained a minor in Spanish, and I am currently working towards my undergraduate degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders. With this major, I plan to pursue a career as a Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP). I choose this field because I have always been drawn to helping others and have a passion to work in the medical field.*

Lilly Brusdeilins… *After receiving my bachelor's degrees from the University of Oklahoma in the spring of 2022, I will attend dental school in the fall and work toward earning my Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry Degree. My long-term goal is to not only improve the health of those within my community but also of those in need outside of my community through volunteering in free dental clinics. "Paying it Forward" is a mantra that I am deeply committed to in my daily life and my professional life.*

Andrew Fujii… *This year I started my sophomore year at Lewis-Clark State College to pursue an Associates in Fire Service & Technology, with a bachelor's in Applied Science and Business. Having a degree from a four-year accredited college offers a higher chance of employment, promotion, and success within the fire service. I intend to use my scholarship to help pay for my college tuition so I can pursue my fire career without a heavy financial burden.*

Magali Gray… *I am currently attending school in Beloit, Wisconsin, and majoring in Education and Chinese in the pursuit of a teaching degree and the opportunity to teach abroad one day. My interest in international careers came from an exchange year abroad I spent in Colombia, where I picked up Spanish and met a few native English speakers teaching English and running volunteer programs in my host city. I am currently on an advanced track to get a teacher's certification in teaching Chinese as a second language from the Wisconsin teaching board, which is accepted in forty states and will help in pursuing foreign education as well.*

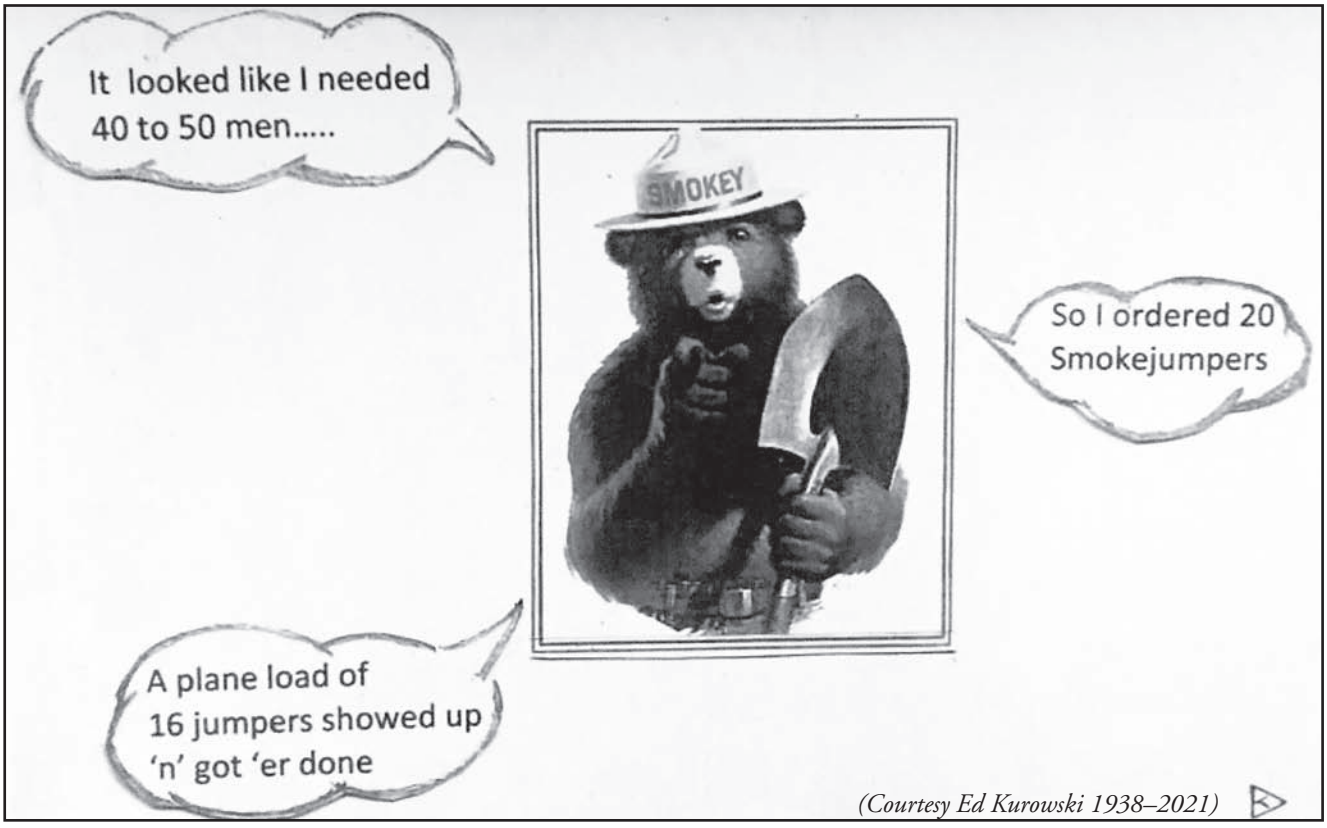
Dan Leininger… *I am deeply honored by your decision to award me the 2021 NSA scholarship. As the 2021 fire season starts to get busy, for the first*

time I am watching fires unfold from the sideline. Like each one of us who has closed the chapter of their smokejumping career, I write today with strong emotions and mixed feelings. Going forward into a law career, it is special to know the smokejumping community has my back, just like it did on the fireline. It is time for me to move on. By enrolling in a top environmental law school, I hope I too may take on the business of the world and dive headlong into new challenges. I, for one, am grateful for the opportunity to jump, and grateful that the community of jumpers has seen fit to invest in my education. Thank you!

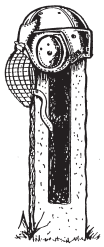
Theron Gray… *I am attending Oregon Institute of Technology, and my sophomore year starts this Fall, 2021. I am in school to get my bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Once I've obtained my bachelor's degree, my goal is to get a job at Boeing, or Raytheon, or similar company. After I've earned enough money and gained some experience, I plan to go back to school to get my master's degree in mechanical engineering. My dream job, then, is to work at NASA as a rocket engineer, and maybe be the first person on Mars.*

Meet the education/training grant awardee in her own words…

Kate Harrison… *I want to share my deep gratitude for your generous grant to assist me with paying for college. I am attending Oregon State University with the intention of getting my Masters of Natural Resources with an emphasis in GIS. I feel incredibly fortunate to not only receive this grant, but to be a part of such an incredible community. As you know, this year we have been hit with some extremely tragic events. I had the honor of being part of the procession to bring Tim Hart back home to Cody, Wyoming, from El Paso, Texas. It was one of the most powerful moments of my life. Being able to see the support of the smokejumper community rallying around the close friends, family and wife of Tim was incredibly moving. It gave me a much deeper appreciation for the bond and camaraderie that exists within the jump community. Being in this world and having this legacy is something that I will absolutely carry with me for the rest of my life. The work you all do here and the amount you are willing to give to assist smokejumpers and their families is amazing, and it is a reminder of exactly what makes this community so special.*



(Courtesy Ed Kurowski 1938–2021)



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

Phillip M. "Mike" Hodge
(Cave Junction '54)

Mike died September 3, 2001, in Jefferson City, Missouri. He was born April 13, 1935, in Jefferson City where he grew up and graduated from high school in 1953. Mike served in the Army before joining the Missouri State Highway Patrol where he was a helicopter pilot, motorcycle patrolman and aide to Governor John Dalton. He was on the security team of Sec. of Interior Stuart Udall during a float trip on the Current River. After the trip, Udall helped to pass the Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. Mike owned and operated Centre Island Lodge in Canada and served as a State Marshall for the Missouri Supreme Court before he fully retired in 1999. Mike jumped at CJ 1954-56.

Ed J. Kurowski (Missoula '61)

Ed died August 26, 2021. He was born November 23, 1938, in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he grew up and graduated from high school in 1955. Ed served two years in the Air Force and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin and his master's from the University of Idaho. He taught physics and electronics for forty-two years including Portage, Wisconsin Jr./Sr. high schools 1963-72, Lakes Jr. H.S. Coeur d' Alene, Idaho 1974-78, and Coeur d' Alene H.S. 1979-2005.

Ed's career with the USFS was exceptional and covered an amazing forty-seven seasons. He jumped 1961, 63, 82, 84-85 at Missoula, worked as a smokechaser, and finally ended up managing the Air Tanker Base at Coeur d' Alene, Idaho.

Albert C. "Al" Goldammer (Missoula '64)

Al died August 25, 2021, in Parkston, South Dakota. He was born April 23, 1943, in Douglas County, S.D. Al graduated from Wartburg College and Wartburg Seminary in Iowa with a master's in Divinity. His parishes included many towns in South Dakota and missions overseas. He jumped at Missoula 1964-66. He was involved in life and enjoyed family, youth and Congregational camping, family Wilderness backpacking trips, pheasant hunting with three yellow labs, spending family time at the cabin on Long Lake, WI, cross country skiing, annual trips to Canada to visit relatives, and climbing the Canadian Rockies.

Gordon Mitchell Woodhead (Redding '83)

"Woody," 65, died August 18, 2021, as a result of an auto accident. He was born in Corona, California, December 3, 1955, and grew up in Southern California before moving north to Susanville, California. After high school Woody worked as a Hotshot before his rookie year at Redding in 1983. He jumped the 1983-84 and 1992-97 seasons.

In 2003 he moved to Mt. Shasta, California, where he established a construction company and built homes.

Dan Gerald Dunnigan (Redmond '69)

Dan died July 2, 2021, in Las Vegas, Nevada. He was born July 28, 1945, in Pendleton, Oregon, and graduated from Pendleton H.S. in 1963. Dan attended Eastern Oregon College and worked on the Dale Ranger District before jumping at Redmond 1969-72. He resided in Aspen, Colorado, during the winters and became a certified ski instructor at Aspen for some 40 years. In the summers he worked as a professional guide for groups rafting the whitewater of the West's largest rivers. Dan sandwiched in real estate work between these jobs.

In recent years, Dan retired from skiing and rafting work. In its place, he took up full-time RV travel in western states. He often worked as a staff

person at large campgrounds.

A close friend recently remarked, "I knew Dan for 60 years. He was slow to criticize and the first to laugh with you and at himself.

Joseph J. "Joe" Gutkoski (Missoula '50)

Joe, 94, died August 5, 2021. He was born and raised in Wilkes-Barre, PA., and graduated from the township high school. Joe enlisted in the Navy in WW II where he served on the Destroyer Lansdowne. He graduated from Penn State University under the WW II GI Bill with a BS degree in Landscape Architecture. He began work with the US Forest Service in the late 1940s as a firefighter in Idaho. He transferred to Missoula where he jumped 1950-62.

Joe then transferred to Bozeman where he worked as a Landscape Architect for the Forest Service Regional Lands Office doing land planning and design. In 1964 he was assigned to the Gallatin N.F. in Bozeman. He retired from the USFS in 1982 with 32 years of service.

He then started a licensed practice in land planning and design up to the time of his death. Joe was a lifelong environmentalist and defender of public lands and waters. Joe was President and founding member of Montana Rivers and Yellowstone Buffalo Foundation. He also served as President of Gallatin Wildlife Association, member of Montanans for Gallatin Wilderness, and Vice President of Montana Wildlife Federation. Joe was an NSA Life Member.

Larry R. Adams (Missoula '67)

Larry died December 1, 2020, in Sterling, Alaska, after a 14-year struggle with Parkinson's and dementia. He was born January 4, 1947, in Ironton, Ohio, where he graduated from Rock Hill H.S. in 1964. Larry attended Ohio University for two years before jumping at Missoula in 1967 and Anchorage in 1971. Following a stint in the Army, he returned to Missoula and completed his degree and took a position with the BLM. Larry worked in California, Oregon, and Colorado before finishing in Glennallen, Alaska.

He worked for the Division of State Forestry 1979-92, and the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge 1993-99. After a break, he returned to fire working for the BIA 2004-12. Larry flew and owned his own plane and took up sailing where he and his wife, Toni, enjoyed numerous sailing vacations.

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Contributions since the previous publication of donors October 2021
Total funds disbursed to Smokejumpers and families—$271,200.
Mail your Good Samaritan Fund contributions to:
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Tim Hart's Death Should Matter

by Michelle Hart

On May 24, 2021, I received the phone call every firefighter's spouse dreads and hopes will never come. My husband, **Tim Hart** (GAC-16), a smokejumper out of West Yellowstone, Montana, was being airlifted to a hospital after a hard landing while parachuting into a wildfire in southern New Mexico.

In a daze, I traveled to the intensive care unit in El Paso, Texas, and spent the next nine days making life-altering decisions for both of us. I was grappling with emotions that changed my life, my outlook on the future, and fundamentally who I am.

On June 2, I sat next to Tim, holding his hand, and stroking his shaved head as life support was removed. I played the song we danced to on our wedding day and sang to him as he took his last breath and his heart finally stilled. I can still close my eyes and see that last moment etched in perfect clarity.

Tim's tragic death has helped bring to light many concerns, often overlooked, that plague wildland firefighters in the line of duty.

These heroes endure brutal conditions. They sleep on the ground for weeks, work in smoke without the aid of respiratory protection, endure extreme physical and mental fatigue from 16-hour shifts, and combat dangerous conditions through a fire season dramatically extending with each passing year.

Often, the places firefighters serve in during fire season are far away, forcing them to pay rent while also paying their family's housing costs back home. In even bleaker, but all-too-common scenarios, the lack of affordable housing forces them to live out of tents or personal cars. Tim lived three summers out of his truck because there was no housing available at his base in Idaho.

Exacerbating these concerns is the mental strain and emotional toll caused by these brutal work conditions. Isolation from friends and family translates into frightening statistics that are taking deep root in the firefighting community and impacting their well-being. The suicide rate for federal wildland firefighters is beyond troubling. The divorce rate among women in this field is multiple times higher than the national average, with many more issues manifesting in ways we are still learning about.

For all they are expected to sacrifice and endure, one might think our heroic defenders would receive fair and competitive compensation and benefits. Sadly, I know firsthand this is far from the case. Entry-level wildland firefighters start at just over $13 per hour—a base salary less than many service workers. As their careers progress, they often find themselves in an untenable situation to earn as much overtime and hazard pay to make up for a low base salary. To offset low wages and off-season bills, a perverse incentive is created to work, no matter how physically drained or emotionally exhausted they become.

This outdated and merciless system demands a call to action. I join the Grassroots Wildland Firefighters' call for Congress and President Joe Biden to immediately enact meaningful reforms.

These include significantly increasing federal wildland firefighter wages, offering year-round and long-term health benefits, implementing proactive and robust mental health programs, and providing housing stipends for those who work far from home.

Federal firefighters should receive their own "wildland firefighter" classification and pay scale—just like other federal government employees. Temporary workers should be allowed to "buy back" their time served as a firefighter to credit their retirement when they are hired as a permanent employee. Finally, programs should be created to study and track the effects of chronic exposure to smoke and firefighting chemicals, and to retrain or re-educate firefighters who wish to transition out of the profession.

These initial steps are the bare minimum and serve only as a starting point of what our country should give those who defend our lives, our homes, and our public land.

In life, Tim had an impact on so many people. I choose to hope that his passing can serve as a wake-up call to the needs of his brothers and sisters who are out fighting on our behalf today.

Notes from the Ranks

Pat McGunagle
(West Yellowstone '19)

It's the end of a busy season and many Boise bros and aircraft that I haven't seen since May were already gone by the time I got back from the Wind Rivers—so close to an October jump but "not quite yet," says Big Ernie.

Up there in the Winds among rocks taking in their last sun before eight months of snow, with elk bugling in the distance and a congenial bull moose wandering through our fire, I wind down from the high pace of summer. All those jumps in Nevada and Utah seem to be last year already. The Grand Staircase of Utah with ninja beetles biting every bit of you, and you think then you'd trade them for Alaska mosquitoes? Under canopy at 1000', looking at a spot that was way bigger from the plane, wondering how the next forty seconds will go, thinking, yeah, anytime now is a good time for that training to kick in. Yeah, last year already.

Little things stick out. That first night's campfire, talking about the jump, talking about anything. Wildland fire is a privileged lifestyle, especially at the lower ranks of it. Stay away from the constant drum of politics and the "whodunits" of mandates, those upper echelon discussions. We just pull handles, pull cord, drink water, repeat. Oh, and enjoy the scenery!

Those campfires: We like these places where night seems to have more meaning. Like a jungle, voices in the dark belay the true conversation. Our fires are kinda like church; our congregations change with the God-given List. Eight bros in the woods. As with good whiskey, around these flames with obscured faces, we unlock the ability to voice personal thoughts.

I'm so proud to be a smokejumper and to be part of such a dynamic group. It's tough calling a Type A fitness fanatic "misinformed." Just as society is lumping people into collective bins, here are the bros, many of us outliers in our own right. We are critical thinkers and perfectionists—we wouldn't have jumped if we weren't. None of us are virologists, however. My love and respect for the people I work with is so much greater after the healthy debates I heard around campfires this summer. "Natural immunity" against "do it for my kids, bro," against "so you're saying it doesn't turn you magnetic? I want to be magnetic." Outside of the bros, you get "there's no debate on this" or "I don't want to work with selfish people anyway." Shots (or be) fired.

There is still a debate on this whole thing, and to ignore it is to ignore many people, including some of our best in wildland fire. There's a new mandate for federal workers, and the bros will adapt as always, pitting invincible ego against these appeals to conscience—albeit a slightly desiccated conscience after so many unconscionable leaps from planes. I'll miss these campfires during the winter months. I do hope all these bros can be hired back next year, especially the holdouts; maybe there's something they can finagle, a Church of Big Ern.

The conversation drifts to topics closer to hand, like "Hey how long are we going to be on this one and should we save our bean dip or crush it tonight with the SPAM and chips?" Smokejumper communion, come as you are, in Big Ern's image.