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Smokeyumper Obituary: Hammer, Loren (Pilot 0000)

National Smokeyumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Hammer, Loren (Pilot 0000)

Butch loved to collect experiences. He had gone scuba diving alongside whales, jumped from airplanes and piloted smokejumpers.

Recently, Hammer got a job as a contract pilot flying CASA-212 planes- a two-engine turboprop aircraft - in transport missions in Afghanistan for the U.S. Air Force. "He really wanted the adventure, and to travel to new places," said Bend resident Deanna Chambers, who grew up next-door to Hammer in Redmond. "It was the whole package of something different, and that was Butch. He was always ready to try something new."

On Saturday (Nov. 27, 2004), a CASA-212 took off from Bagram Airfield, 27 miles north of Kabul, carrying Hammer and five other Americans on a transport and supply mission southwest to Farah. The plane never arrived at its destination.

According to a statement from military officials, coalition forces launched an immediate ground and air search for the missing plane. They finally tracked transmissions from the aircraft's emergency locator device to a mountain range in Central Afghanistan. There were no survivors.

Butch Hammer was born on Nov. 26, 1969 in Needles, Calif., where the family lived before settling in Redmond. Hammer became an Eagle Scout, and joined the U.S. Coast Guard for a short time after graduating from Redmond High School in 1988.

Hammer earned his pilot's license and in 1997, he began flying airtankers for Butler Aircraft during wildfire season. Most recently, Hammer spent summers flying smokejumpers out of Winthrop, Wash.

Information from Alisa Weinstein

The Bend Bulletin.

(end of excerpt)