

10-1-2012

## Smokejumper Magazine, October 2012

National Smokejumper Association

Ross Parry

Tommy Albert

Follow this and additional works at: [https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper\\_mag](https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_mag)

---

### Recommended Citation

National Smokejumper Association; Parry, Ross; and Albert, Tommy, "Smokejumper Magazine, October 2012" (2012). *Smokejumper and Static Line Magazines*. 81.

[https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper\\_mag/81](https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_mag/81)

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

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER  
ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE  
OCTOBER 2012

# SMOKEJUMPER



Land At Nearest Airport .....	8
Read It Again—Analysis of ADFP Report .....	16
NSA Awards Scholarships to Current Jumpers .....	42



# CONTENTS

Message from the President.....	2
Cliff Creek Fire – A Most Memorable Series Of Events.....	3
Blast from the Past.....	6
The Longest Walk-Out In Smokejumper History—Almost.....	6
“Land At The Nearest Suitable Airport”.....	8
The Jump List.....	10
A “Bearable” Kodiak Adventure.....	14
Analysis Of The Aerial Delivered Firefighter Final Report.....	16
An Interview with Greg Greenhoe.....	17
The View from Outside the Fence.....	20
Former Smokejumper Jumps In Full-Time To His Plein-Air Landscapes.....	21
The Last Word On The Higgins Ridge Fire.....	22
Phoenix Arises On The Gobi.....	23
Rural Free Delivery.....	26
All In A Day’s Work – The King Creek Fire, Part I.....	28
The Outhouse Detail And The Scheme That Got Scotched.....	32
Book Review: <i>More Than My Share</i> .....	33
Memories Of A Missoula Jumper.....	34
Smokejumpers And Hotshots – A Compliment To ‘Crazy’ And Survival.....	36
Great Accommodations, Lots Of Work In Priest River Experimental Forest.....	37
Off The List.....	39
A Humble “Thank You”.....	41
Barry Burris NSA Scholarship Award.....	42
Pope Awarded 2012 Jukkala-McBride Scholarship.....	42
Quick Work By Insurance, Fellow Jumpers Save Property After Close Call.....	43
Book Review: <i>Uncle Sam’s Cabins</i> .....	45
Odds and Ends.....	46
“Everybody’s Grandfather Was A Smokejumper”.....	48
If You Are Over 29 Years Old You Cannot Jump.....	48



SMOKEJUMPER, ISSUE No. 78, OCTOBER 2012  
ISSN 1532-6160

Smokejumper is published quarterly by:  
THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION  
C/O IO JUDY LANE  
CHICO, CA 95926

The opinions of the writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the NSA. Permission to reproduce *Smokejumper* in any manner must first be obtained in writing.

NSA Web site: <http://www.smokejumpers.com>  
Managing Editor: *Chuck Sheley*

Associate Editor: *Ed Booth*

Editing: *K. G. Sheley*

Photo Editor: *Johnny Kirkley*

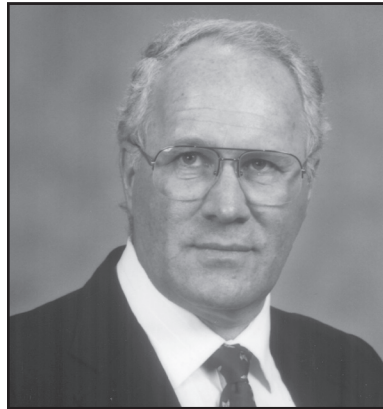
Illustrators: *Dan Veenendaal*, and *Eric Rajala*

Printing: *Larry S. Jackson*, Heidelberg Graphics,  
[www.HeidelbergGraphics.com](http://www.HeidelbergGraphics.com)

Cover photo: *Hastings Fire 2011, Alaska SJ Mateo Corley* (Courtesy Mike McMillan)



## Message from the President



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

PRESIDENT

AT THE TIME of this writing, we have just broken a hot spell in Iowa that has left a lot of our corn crop in poor condition, some of the 200 oak and black cherry trees I planted this spring starting to die, and we still have no rain forecast for yet another week.

In general, the weather across much of the country has been “hotter than a Saturday night special.” The fire season has been blistering and has left thousands with the requirement to evacuate for a time, and hundreds homeless.

By the time you read this in the fall, the story will have continued ... but in what direction we won't know for a while.

We have learned that **Dick Jeppson** (MYC-67) lost his home to the Charlotte Fire near Pocatello, Idaho. **Warren Pierce** (CJ-64) nearly had the same thing happen in the Waldo Canyon Fire near Colorado Springs. Aside from his forest and a few deck boards, Warren's home survived a close call with the fast action of the firefighters.

I want to remind everyone that the NSA has a **Good Samaritan Fund** that is available to provide help in time of need. If you know of any current or former jumper who is in need of assistance, please let me know. We are a “band of brothers” in more than name alone.

I have been following the progress and placement of the smokejumper crews on the Internet. Go to the NSA website and click on *Smokejumper Status Report* on left navigation bar. Looks like it will be one of those years when jumpers returning to base will try to hide in order to get a little sleep before the horn goes off again and it's out the door one more time.

Another great site for keeping up with the fire status nationwide is [www.inciweb.org](http://www.inciweb.org). The aerial views of the vegetation and terrain and the ability to zoom in for close-up views of what those on the ground are facing are all outstanding.

The NSA has been able to award \$1,000 scholarships from the **Art Jukkala-Jon McBride NSA Scholarship Fund** to four applicants this year. You will find information about each award winner and their educational goals in this edition and the January edition of the magazine.

The scholarship committee of **Larry Lufkin** (CJ-63), **Hiram “Doc” Smith** (MSO-59) and **Gary Baker** (MSO-67) had a real challenge, given the high quality of all the applicants. Thanks to them for their excellent work.

Our next NSA board meeting will be held in Seattle, Oct. 3-4, at the International Academy of

Design & Technology, located at 645 Andover Park West. As always, our board meetings are open to having visitors. If you

would like to sit in on one of our meetings to learn more about the workings of the NSA, please drop me a note at [jimcherry@wctatel.net](mailto:jimcherry@wctatel.net).

*net*. We will make sure to have a chair available for you. We always welcome and encourage input from members. 💡

# Cliff Creek Fire – A Most Memorable Series Of Events

by Rob Shaver (McCall '67)

## *NSA Members—Save This Information*

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

### *Smokejumper magazine*

*Articles, obits, change of address*

Chuck Sheley 530-893-0436

[cnkgshley@earthlink.net](mailto:cnkgshley@earthlink.net)

10 Judy Ln.

Chico, CA 95926

### **Membership**

John McDaniel 785-668-2093

[jumpercj57@hotmail.com](mailto:jumpercj57@hotmail.com)

P.O. Box 105

Falun, KS 67442-0105

### **Historical items**

*Photos, letters, documents*

Larry Longley 360-654-1720

[ldlongley@gmail.com](mailto:ldlongley@gmail.com)

16430 Marine Dr.

Stanwood, WA 98292

### **All else**

NSA President

Jim Cherry 641-927-4428

[jimcherry@wctatel.net](mailto:jimcherry@wctatel.net)

2335 300th St.

Ventura, IA 50482-8502

### *Smokejumper base abbreviations:*

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

**I**t was a busy fire season when I rookied at McCall, Idaho, in 1967. I was fortunate to have 14 fire jumps, which included four in Oregon. It was jumper number 13, on a small Oregon blaze, that was most memorable.

In late August there had been a rash of lightning fires in the Cascade Mountains, and the Redmond jumper unit was stretched to the limit. Around 5 p.m. Aug. 28, those of us high on the McCall jump list were placed on standby for possible deployment to help out.

I was eager to go and see some new country. It was a bit after midnight when we were finally rousted out. We boarded the DC-3 about 1:30 a.m. for the 250-mile trip to Redmond. On arrival we were provided bunks and caught a few hours sleep.

After an early breakfast, we boarded the DC-3 and headed west to the Willamette National Forest. Four of us jumped a fire on Skunk Creek. Nearing tree-top level above a small clearing, I could see several small, rock ledges in the grass that appeared too hazardous for landing, so I opted for the top of a pine tree.

We all landed safely and were soon at work on the fire, which was already a few acres in size, burning in heavy fuel.

By late afternoon or early evening, we were still struggling to contain it when a small ground crew arrived, followed by a dozer. The dozer soon completed a line around the fire, and we were able to take a break.

Our relief was short-lived because the local crew chief decided that we jumpers should man the fire line through the night, while his men rested for the morrow's mop-up work. Having borne the heat and toil of the day with little sleep the previous night, we were much offended, but being courteous and outranked, we struck off to our task, muttering only to ourselves about such insult.

We took our positions around the fire perimeter and just hunkered down most of the night. From time to time a snag would burn off at the base, begin to snap



and creak, then come crashing down out of the overhead darkness to jar us back into nervous wakefulness.

Later in the night the crew chief relented a bit and called us in for a couple hours sleep, but then, all too soon, sent us back to the fire line until dawn.

We had a quick breakfast of cold rations, then packed our gear out some distance to a highway and then were driven into Salem. There we boarded two small planes and flew back to Redmond.

We got to the jumper base about 11 a.m. It was nearly deserted, except for us and maybe four other jumpers who had straggled in earlier. Grubby, tired and ravenous, we headed straight for the kitchen.

The crew there advised us that the hot meal would not be ready until about 12:30. We protested that we would not be here that long, that fires were still showing up, and we would almost certainly be gone before noon.

The cooks, bless them, stepped forward and said: "You come back in 30 minutes and we'll have something for you." So off we went to wash and freshen up a little.

Half an hour later we were in the cafeteria line. There were hot dogs and steaming pork and beans, potato chips and some fresh fruit to vanquish our gnawing hunger. I filled my tray and was about to get a beverage when the fire signal sounded. Oh, the despair of leaving a laden tray right there on the chow line! But worse was yet to come.

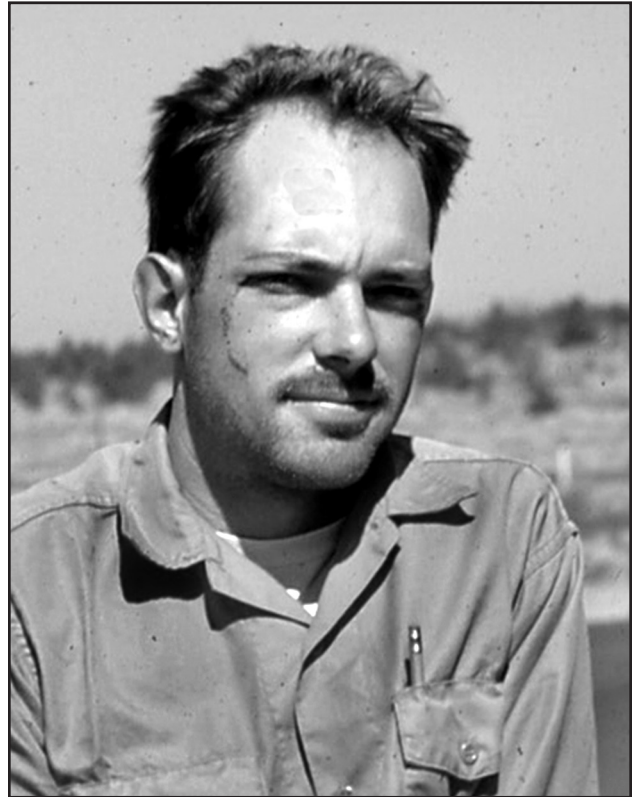
Shortly, about eight of us were aboard the DC-3 again, heading back west to the Willamette. We arrived over aptly named Cliff Creek at a fire where four jumpers were already on the ground from the previous day.

As we circled above and dropped streamers to gauge wind drift, we could see that the east facing, rim-rock cliff ran roughly north and south high up on the west side of the deep canyon. The cliff was a sheer 80 or so feet high. The fire was burning at the top, at the head of a 100-foot-wide steep notch or chute in the cliff face.

The wearied jumpers were doing their best to keep it from spreading in the thick timber above the cliff, but below them, embers kept rolling down the chute and igniting fresh fuel, requiring them to divide their labors.

They had dug two or three good roll trenches below the fire, but the trenches filled with tumbling ash and debris and burning cones, and the embers spilled again further down the slope to kindle new fuel and come roaring back to life.

Our streamers showed there was a pretty strong breeze out of the west. There were few openings in the timber large enough to insert a canopy, so we were es-



*Rob Shaver at Redmond Base September 1967. (Courtesy R. Shaver)*

entially jumping for the trees in the somewhat-flatter ground above the precipice.

Our pilot circled upwind of the cliff, and when the spotter slapped my shoulder, I lunged out of the plane into the swirling air blast behind the 1,200-horsepower radial engine and waited for the opening jolt of the canopy.

Things did not go well. Apparently, as I was tossed by the propeller blast, some shroud lines slipped behind my neck and possibly inside the high collar of the jump suit. At full extension, when the canopy caught air, the lines snapped violently taut. The sensation was a savage, stupefying blow to the head.

My helmet, despite the securely buckled, leather chin strap, was ripped off in an explosive jerk. Cold air rushed around my exposed head. Dazed, it took me a few moments to begin functioning. I was relieved to see that the canopy had properly deployed, but the shroud line mishap had cranked me up like an outboard motor, and I was spinning – not fast – but the shroud lines were twisting and I couldn't steer.

I pulled the risers wide apart until the turning slowly stopped and I began to unwind. By the time I had regained control, more than half my altitude had been lost while I drifted toward the cliff. I steered into the wind, but the chute's 6-mph forward speed was no match, and I was driven steadily backward

toward the drop-off.

I maintained my heading into the wind, hoping to tree up at the last instant in the timber at the top of the cliff. Bad mistake!

As I overshot the trees and dropped out of the wind, I instantly gained forward momentum right toward the rounded brow of the cliff top. A shot of terror went through me. To this day I can still visualize exactly where my boots were going to hit on that bald rock face, and there would be nothing to grasp, nothing to prevent my plunging helmetless eighty or so feet onto the boulder strewn talus below.

Instinctively, desperately, I yanked the right guide line and at nearly the last instant veered away from the cliff, missing it by perhaps a dozen feet, then steered for the nearest tall tree.

Plowing into the top of a spruce just to the right of its slender upper trunk, I encountered an inch-thick, horizontal limb about throat-high, grasped it with both hands, and tore it from the trunk as I plunged through the branches and finally came to a stop.

For a few moments I just rested in the security of that tree top after the tumultuous trip that landed me there. Stinging sweat running down into various abrasions and the friction burn across the back of my neck soon tempered my relief.

Entangled in limbs and cords, I still had to rope down about 40 feet to the ground then clamber back up the steep slope to retrieve gear and join the others in containing the fire.

The next day, trying to get a photo of my chute still in the tree just below the cliff, I crept to within eight or 10 feet of the sloping edge, got onto some loose pea gravel and began to lose my footing. Had to scramble to get back to firm ground, getting another unwanted thrill. This whole Oregon venture was losing its appeal.

Two days later back at Redmond, I had a pair of black eyes in addition to several abrasions around my head and ears, and the three-quarter-inch-wide friction burn high across the back of my neck. The black eyes were puzzling, and I could only speculate on the cause.

After this same Oregon fire bust, another of our McCall jumpers, who was there recounted his experience.

On our first day out we had watched him jump over a large, hot fire with a number of other men. He descended toward a small ridge top clearing, but at the last moment steered into the standing timber at its edge and treed up within a hundred feet of crowning fire.

We watched with some concern while he quickly made a rope descent to safety. Later he said that the clearing he aimed for had been an old helispot, and

upon his approach he could see many small saplings that had been slashed off at a sharp, angle-like punji stakes, waiting to impale him, so he intentionally treed up despite the approaching fire.

He further related that on the same fire, a Redmond jumper was rendered unconscious in a chute opening mishap and hung limp in his harness, while his partner watched helplessly as the injured man drifted over the fire and disappeared into the dense smoke plume.

About the time the partner reached the ground, the other jumper reappeared from the smoke at nearly the same altitude where he had gone in, having been held aloft by the hot updraft. He regained consciousness about the time he finally reached the ground.

With this backdrop, I dismissed my experience as incidental to the adventurous nature of the job and gave it little serious thought.

Years later in law enforcement work, I learned that twinned black eyes – “raccoon eyes,” or in clinical terms, bilateral periorbital ecchymosis – can be the result of a severe blow or trauma to the base of the skull. I don’t know if that fit my case. I don’t think I had a skull fracture, but it made me wonder.

I was further sobered when viewing the documentary film “Smokejumpers – Firefighters from the Sky,” which recounts the tragic death of jumper **Tom Regennitter** (RDD-67) in June 1970. His helmet was similarly ripped off as his parachute opened, resulting in a fatal neck injury.

Looking back, I don’t know if my chute-opening mishap was caused by something I did or didn’t do. But there were two factors that did contribute to the near calamity going over the cliff.

Had I planed my chute into the wind – that is, pulled down the leading edge of the canopy and spilled air out the back – I could have increased my rate of descent and possibly touched down before reaching the cliff.

Second and most critically, when it became apparent I was not going to land above the cliff, I should have turned downwind and gotten completely away from that death trap to avoid being drawn against it by my own forward speed and the rolling air currents below the drop off.

Sometimes when you’re not smart, it helps to be lucky, and I was very lucky that day. That was a narrow escape.

I had a couple other stirring events that summer when the future was in doubt, but those two very close calls in a single descent made Cliff Creek my most unforgettable jump. I’m grateful for the outcome. It did contribute to a very memorable fire season. 🍄



# BLAST FROM THE PAST



by Jack Demmons  
(Missoula '50)

THE *DAILY MISSOULIAN*, Thursday, March 29, 1945 has the following interesting article headlined "Jumpers Defy '13' Superstition."

Thirteen Army parachute men jumped from planes for the first time in their lives Tuesday afternoon at the Johnson Flying Service field in Missoula and debunked the ancient "13" superstition by coming through the experience without mishap other than the acquisition of a minor bruise here and there. There were actually 14 jumps made but



Forest Service officials, who have charge of the training program, said it did not count. One of their own men, ex-Marine **Jack Allen** (MSO-44), jumped to

show the beginners how it was done before they attempted their jumps.

The trainees are two officers and 11 enlisted men of the Air Transport Command, Alaska Division, sent here for training in search and rescue work. They completed their preliminary ground training last week.

The program is directed by Forest Service smokejumper project men, of whom **Frank Derry** (MSO-40) and **Jim Waite** (MSO-40) supervised the jumping, one working on the ground and the other in the plane. ♣

## The Longest Walk-Out In Smokejumper History—Almost

by **Ross Parry** (Missoula '58)

**O**n Aug. 14, 1960, after an overnight lightning storm, I was assigned as an assistant to **Al Cramer** (MSO-43) to spot jumpers on a bunch of lightning-caused fires. These fires were primarily in the Selway-Bitterroot area of Montana.

We were in the DC-3 with a full load of jumpers. After we had found and spotted jumpers on a couple of smaller fires, we were directed to a larger, six-man fire. During this drop it appeared that one jumper had been hurt, so Al dropped the Demerol kit, which in those days accompanied most smokejumper drops.

After spotting all our jumpers, we returned to base. We had been in the air five or six hours, and it was getting late in the afternoon. As we taxied up to the fire depot, the MSO dispatcher came running out with my jump gear.

He threw it on the plane and said, "Parry, you have a four-man fire in the Bob Marshall Wilderness." He then threw the "in-charge packet" at me and said, "You have

the longest walk-out in smokejumper history."

Fire packs and three other smokejumpers were loaded: **Ray Honey** (NCSB-55), **Don Marble** (MSO-60) and **Wayne Finney** (MSO-60).

I was intrigued by the thought of the longest walk-out in smokejumper history, so I opened the packet and looked at the walk-out map. The walk-out was scheduled to be down a well-defined drainage with marked trails. It appeared straightforward. The walk-out crossed about 38 mile squares on the map and so was approximately 38 or 40 miles.

I was thrilled. I planned to use two days and enjoy a couple of days of viewing some of the most prestigious areas of the United States. My desire for the "longest walk-out in smokejumper history," in part, was because of the negative experience of the walk-out on my first fire jump.

In 1958, on my first fire jump, I was in an eight-man crew spotted on the north fork of Moose Creek in the



Nez Perce N.F. (Interestingly, this fire was not too distant from the Higgins Ridge Fire, from which I and 19 other jumpers were rescued by the heroic efforts of Rod Snyder with his helicopter in 1961.)

The leaders of our crew in 1958 were **Delos Dutton** (MSO-51) and **Ray Schenck** (MSO-56). They were two tough “bulls-in-the-woods” and, I think, somewhat competitive.

The weather on the fire turned cold, and we were able to control the fire the first day and night. After a very short night, we were up, mopping up and retrieving gear. At about 4 that afternoon, our leaders decided we should start walking out. And so we walked, and we walked, and it got dark, so then we walked with our headlamps. And it was cold, so that even the short breaks were miserable.

Finally, about midnight, we came to a Forest Service cabin. We entered and rested a bit. I felt we should spend the night, but no—our leaders decided we should continue. So we walked, and we stumbled, and we walked.

At about 10 or 11 the next day, we arrived at the Moose Creek Resort. This resort was located four miles east of the Forest Service Moose Creek Ranger Station, which was our destination.

After a short break, our leaders took off at an outlandish pace. I kept up, but most of the crew did not. Some of our crew had new boots, which wore blisters and caused severe bleeding. Consequently, some of our crew were miles behind.

At Moose Creek Ranger Station, Delos and Ray “high fived” each other because they had completed the last four miles in one hour.

We had walked more than 19 hours straight after working two days on a fire. I felt this was unnecessary, so as I thought about that long walk, I hoped the one ahead would be better.

It was getting late as we arrived over our wilderness fire, so Al selected a jump spot high on a ridge with few trees or hazards. This jump spot, however, was about a half-mile from the fire. So, in my wisdom (or lack thereof), I decided I would ride the wind down the ridge closer to the fire and closer to where we could leave our gear for the “walk-out.”

However, the farther down the ridge we went, the more snags and hazards there were, but I felt confident I could avoid the hazards.

We jumped and as planned, I rode the wind, but unfortunately Finney followed my lead. Finney was a first-year jumper and therefore a little less experienced.

The wind was relatively strong, so going with the wind you could travel about 15 miles per hour. At landing, I turned into the wind and landed well. Finney was not so fortunate; his chute caught the top of a 35-foot snag and the force of his movement not only deflated his

chute and caused him to dangle below, but caused the snag to break at the base and fall toward him.

Finney knew the snag was coming, so as soon as he hit the ground, he jumped back, but he was unable to get one leg back in time. That snag hit his upturned leg about halfway between the ankle and the knee and flipped his leg up around the snag until the sole of his boot was pointed at his face.

I was beside myself; I was so concerned with getting the help we needed that I somewhat neglected the injured. I had checked on him and assessed the situation. I felt I could not lift the snag from Finney’s leg by myself, so I ran up to put out the distress signals. I’m sure these signals were not necessary because Al Cramer undoubtedly could see what was needed.

As I ran back down toward Finney, I saw Ray Honey with superhuman strength trying to lift that snag from Finney’s leg. Surprisingly to me, he was able to do it. This allowed Finney to withdraw his leg from under the snag.

We splinted Finney’s leg and hoped and waited. About dusk, a helicopter came in and landed. They had Demerol.

As the helicopter landed, I sent Marble to check on the fire. I was pleasantly surprised to see that one of the occupants of the copter was a smokejumper friend, **Harry Roberts** (MSO-53). He was on some special assignment on the Flathead N.F.

By the time the copter landed, it was very late—so late that the pilot did not want to try taking off in the dark. This created a bit of a problem because the helicopter had a radio problem: it could receive but not send. Consequently, Flathead Headquarters did not know what had happened to their rescue helicopter.

As we sat around the copter listening to the radio, we could monitor the concern. The Flathead radioed messages to lookout towers asking for information. One lookout responded that yes, he had heard a helicopter earlier that evening, and he thought maybe he’d heard a crash. Naturally, that message sent waves of concern through the F.S. headquarters, and they spent the night trying to organize help for not only an injured smokejumper but also for a missing helicopter.

During this time of waiting, Finney was hurting and Ray kept asking him if he wanted a Demerol shot. Wayne kept saying he was okay but about 9:30 or 10, he told Ray that he’d try a shot.

Naturally, our copter pilot was stressed at the situation and wanted to get off at first light—or before. Sometime around 11:30 p.m., I knew I needed to check on Marble and the fire. So I gathered together food, drink, and tools and headed to the fire. Interestingly, about the time I was leaving, I heard Finney ask Ray if maybe he didn’t have another shot of that stuff.

I found the fire without much problem, primarily because of the smell of smoke. The fire was not all that large, maybe a fifth of an acre, and at night it was not burning very much, but Marble had it completely contained. I worked with him about an hour to secure the containment and then headed back to the helicopter. I wanted to make sure it could leave with Finney before dawn.

As I left Marble at the fire and headed back to the copter, I had my headlamp, but I could not find them. Those SOBs had let their warming fire go out. I eventually stumbled upon them, and we were able to get Finney off just before dawn.

After the fire was out, I was ready for the “longest walk-out in smokejumper history.” Unfortunately for me, but maybe fortunately for Honey and Marble, the Flathead sent their helicopter to ferry our crew to a remote airstrip in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. We were later picked up by the DC-2 and transported back to Missoula.

The longest walk-out in smokejumper history will happen or has happened, but it will not happen for me.

In conclusion, I want to express my appreciation and admiration to Ray Honey for his concern and compassionate care of the injured jumper and also to Don Marble for controlling the fire on his own. 🙏

## “Land At The Nearest Suitable Airport”

by Tommy Albert (Cave Junction '64)

**A**ir traffic control: “*This is for all aircraft on this frequency. Land at the nearest suitable airport, I repeat, land at the nearest suitable airport. This is a national emergency!*”

This startling instruction – or something close to it – was broadcast nationwide soon after the Pentagon was hit at approximately 0940 EDT by American Airlines Flight 77.

Most on the West Coast were still sleeping when the north tower of the World Trade Center was hit by United Airlines Flight 11 at 0846 EDT. My alarm rang at 0600 PDT and on my way to the shower, turned on the TV and saw the upper floors of a skyscraper burning. After showering, the TV was showing a second building burning.

Needless to say, my attention was now riveted to the events unfolding that morning. I immediately recognized the buildings as the World Trade Center twin towers, having seen them a couple of years before while in New York attending the flight safety simulator training for the Forest Service, Sherpa smokejumper airplane.

On this fateful morning, I was an AD lead plane pilot (*Administratively Determined* in bureaucratese, kind of a part-time hired hand) assigned to a fire east of Stockton, Calif. We had initial-attacked the fire a day or so before and were staying at the La Quinta Inn in Stockton and flying out of Stockton Metro, where the Forest Service had a reload tanker base.

What was just a routine fire – the details of which would have eventually faded into the fog of my memory – became a fire I will never forget; just as all

of us will never forget what we did and where we were on the infamous day of Sept. 11, 2001.

Made my way to the lobby where all the other pilots and aviation types were glued to the TV waiting for direction from the powers-to-be on what we were, or weren't, going to be doing. The news had by then been broadcast that the national airspace was closed.

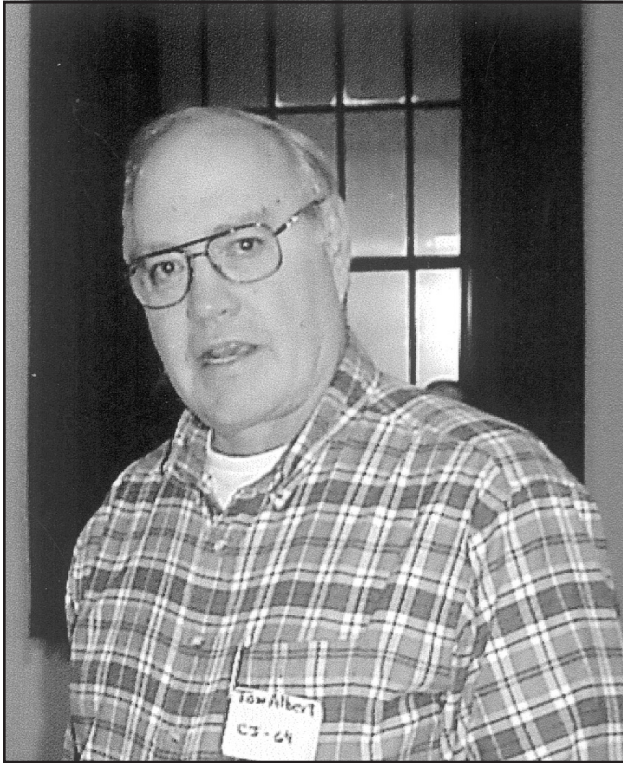
It was soon determined that we were to head to the airport and await further word. Upon arriving at the airport, confusion reigned. We weren't going to fly, then we were. then again we weren't. It took until midmorning for the word to come down that we had received permission to fly to the fire, but someone was coming to brief us on strict procedures that we were to follow.

The briefer arrived and started instructing us on the procedures. Can't remember all the details, but we were to always be under positive air traffic control (ATC) en route to and from the fire. We were to be assigned en route altitudes and had to get permission to descend when we reached the fire.

He went on to say we had to get a discreet squawk (transponder code) from the tower. I asked if we were to get this “discreet” squawk over the phone, and he replied, no, over the radio.

*Discreet squawk over the radio?* I thought. How do you get a “discreet” anything over the radio? Were they going to give us a squawk and we were to add “Jack Benny” to it? You remember, Jack Benny was always 39 on his birthday. The war movies used it and I understand some in Vietnam actually used it.

Turned out that they just gave us a squawk – yes,



*Tommy Albert (NSA file)*

over the radio – and we entered the openly broadcast, four-digit code in our transponder; really discreet, eh?

In actuality, though I didn't know it at the time, "discreet code" meant a transponder code "assigned" by ATC, rather than the standard VFR or Emergency published codes.

Looking back, maybe we shouldn't have flown. Going through the checklist, one had to put the events of the morning behind and concentrate on the task at hand. All of us were able to do this but definitely not to the desired level.

Stockton Metro is usually a moderately busy airport, but that morning the silence on the radio was "loud," if you know what I mean. Air Attack and the S-2's were coming out of the California Division of Forestry (CDF) base at Columbia, a small town in the Mother Lode region of California. The large air tankers in Stockton were preparing to crank, so I was the only airplane taking off from Stockton at that moment.

After arriving at the fire and getting clearance to change to the tactical fire frequencies, interfacing with the fire brought me back to the "here and now."

The three-hour fuel cycle I flew over the fire was the strangest cycle I have ever experienced. When tankers checked in over the fire and we joined up for the low-level drop runs, it was pretty much business as usual and we were able to devote our full attention

to the task.

But, after the drops, when circling waiting for the next tanker to report, I found myself 3,000 miles away thinking about the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and wondering what else was possibly happening. It was a feeling I never want to experience again, especially in an airplane. This mental on-again, off-again cycle repeated itself with each tanker.

My relief checked in and told me the arrangements had been made for me to recover into Mather Air Field in Sacramento. The CDF had experienced a midair between two S-2 air tankers while setting up an orbit adjacent to a fire, earlier in the summer in central California. The Forest Service had installed Traffic Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS) in all the lead planes, and I was to pick up a CDF pilot/manager for a prearranged over-the-fire demonstration of the instrument.

The reason I am relating this to you is to recount another incredible facet of that day. First, I had my own personal controllers en route, then approach control, and finally tower. Sacramento is usually a very busy area. When flying there, the TCAS usually looks like a pimply faced kid with all the aircraft depicted on the instrument. It was blank.

The talk on the radio is normally nonstop at that time of day. I was the only aircraft flying, and "my" controller and I were the only ones talking. I say I was the only one flying; there most certainly were military fighters flying CAP over the state capital, but too high to show up on my TCAS and, of course, talking on UHF frequencies rather than the VHF frequencies I was working.

It turns out that those of us flying the fire were among the total of 47 civil aircraft that flew that afternoon throughout the contiguous United States. To say it was strange is an understatement.

As strange as it was to us, I can't even imagine the thoughts that were going through the two F-15 pilots' minds, who were scrambled sometime between when United Flight 175 hit the south tower and American Flight 77 hit the Pentagon with initially conflicting instructions as to their mission, but later instructed to shoot down any non-responding airliner flying towards New York City.

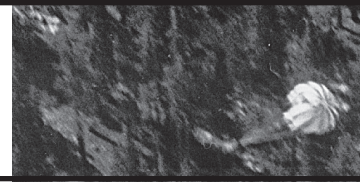
And then there is the allegation, supported by the wreckage distribution, that United Flight 93 was shot down by a lone F-16 over Pennsylvania. If this is true, I pray this brave pilot has been able to come to terms with his ordered action and can now sleep at night. 🙏

*(Tommy jumped seven years in Oregon and Alaska and ended his career as North Zone Aviation Manager, R-5, for the U.S. Forest Service.)*





# THE JUMP LIST



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

**HAL SAMSEL (Missoula '49)**

**Now living in:** Polson, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 49-50, 52-54, 56-70, 80

**Since jumping:** Retired to Flathead Lake, where he and wife still reside; spent 18 winters in Yuma, Ariz., and met old smokejumper friends and new friends; still get to most smokejumper reunions.

**Hal says:** "I love getting Smokejumper magazine. Health and old age have slowed us down some."

**GLEN T. "RIP" SMITH (Idaho City '54)**

**Now living in:** Meridian, Idaho

**Jumped:** IDC 54-55

**Since jumping:** Worked as surveyor from end of 1955 fire season until retirement in Sept. 2002, primarily laying out and surveying transmission lines, along with aerial mapping projects all over the West; not much excitement – about only thing done was wear out several pairs of Whites.

**Rip says:** "Keep the stories coming. I like to read about the old-timers and what they've been up to. Unfortunately, too many of them have shown up in the Off The List section."

**PHILLIP MIKE HODGE (Cave Junction '54)**

**Now living in:** Jefferson City, Mo.

**Jumped:** CJ 54-56

**Since jumping:** Worked 36 years in state and county law enforcement; now retired.

**D. ROSS PARRY (Missoula '58)**

**Now living in:** Ogden, Utah

**Jumped:** MSO 58-63

**Since jumping:** At the end of the 1963 season, transferred to the regional office in Missoula as a road design technician; after about a year, transferred into the computer technology section as a computer programmer, a promotion; transferred in 1966 to Ogden, Utah (R-4) as a computer specialist, another promotion; transferred in 1969 to Washington, D.C. (a couple of promotions); transferred in 1971 to Fort Collins, Colo., in connection with the Department of

Agriculture Computer Center – no promotion, but a nice place to live; selected in 1979 as the group leader of the computer science section of the Intermountain Research Station in Ogden – not a promotion, but finally back in my home state and close to my wife's and my own extended families.

**Ross says:** "I have had a really good life and really good Forest Service work experience, but the very best and most memorable were as a smokejumper. In the early or mid-1970s, former smokejumper **Doug Bird** (MYC-57), an assistant director at BIFC in Boise, came up with the idea that there needed to be a national evaluation of the qualifications of fire overhead positions on national forest and Bureau of Land Management major fires. He coordinated this idea with USFS and BLM officials in Washington, D.C., and the project was turned over to me in Fort Collins. So, whether you like it or not, the 'Red Card System' was conceived, designed, developed and implemented by a couple of smokejumpers."

**GORDON L. QUIGLEY (Idaho City '55)**

**Now living in:** Dunnellon, Fla.

**Jumped:** IDC 55-58

**Since jumping:** After leaving the Forest Service, spent 25 years in teaching and administration in Idaho and Oregon; while working, completed B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. studies; spent last 10 years of employment at international schools; moved with wife, Betty, in 2001 to Florida to play golf and enjoy the weather.

**Gordon says:** "I enjoy Smokejumper magazine and look forward to the various reunions. Thanks for all you do."

**DOUG WHISMAN (McCall '55)**

**Now living in:** Bellevue, Wash.

**Jumped:** McCall 55-56

**Since jumping:** Served four years in the Navy, seven years in aerospace and 30 years as a Washington State Parks ranger; presently retired and like to travel, hunt, fish and canoe.

**DAYTON GROVER (Missoula '55)**

**Now living in:** Edina, Mo.

**Jumped:** MSO 55-56, 58, 62-65

**Since jumping:** Taught and farmed in Missouri, 1959-61; taught during the summertime in Bolivia

(winter here), 1963-65; taught and performed civilian work in Vietnam, 1966-69; youth work counseling and placement, 1970-74; full-time teaching in rural New Mexico and Missouri districts, 1974-92; water plant operator for three different utilities, 1992-2005; Kraft Foods environmental crew, 2005-present; returned to local sheriff's department as dispatcher, which I've held as a part-time radio operator since 1980.

**Dayton says:** "It's been an up-and-down trip and one that the smokejumping experience shaped me for tough times. The reunions have been great! It has been an important part of my smokejumping experience to reconnect with what I consider to be one of the unique firefighting organizations worldwide. The NSA quarterly is amazing to read, especially about jumpers I knew and all their accomplishments and adventures."

### **HERB HIDU (North Cascades '56)**

**Now living in:** Alna, Maine

**Jumped:** NCSB 56

**Since jumping:** Earned B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Connecticut, Pennsylvania State University and Rutgers University, respectively; worked as shellfishery researcher in Milford, Ct., USBCF, University of Maryland and University of Maine; retired since 1992; now into woodlot management, ornamental plant culture, casino gaming, and the smokejumper travel program in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, Aug. 2001.

**Herb says:** "Anytime you're back east, give me a call at (207) 882-7209."

### **BRUCE HRONEK (Idaho City '55)**

**Now living in:** Bloomington, Ind.

**Jumped:** IDC 55, MYC 56-57

**Since jumping:** Graduated with bachelor's degree in Forestry from the University of Idaho; master's in Business Administration, Western International University, Phoenix; and law degree, Antioch Law School, now called University of the District of Columbia Clarke Law School; active military service (Army Airborne) 1958-59; worked for 31 years for the Forest Service where I continued to be involved in fire control activities as a forester, district ranger (2), regional planner, forest supervisor (Uinta and Tonto national forests); Washington Office Land Use Planning; and Eastern Region Resource Staff; retired from the Forest Service in 1989 and was offered a position as a professor at Indiana University in Bloomington; taught resource management and outdoor recreation law 1989-2010, receiving three university-wide outstanding teacher awards; retired in 2010;

currently keeping busy as a legal consultant and professor emeritus, teaching law part time (I seem to have a problem with knowing what "retirement" means); married with five children, 17 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren; family is the center of our activities and hope for the future; authored two law books entitled "Risk Management – Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services" and "Legal Liability in Recreation, Sports, and Tourism"; co-authored a Society of American Foresters book entitled "Forests of Discord," and published an autobiography; wife and I have enjoyed an exciting life that included travel and lecturing throughout the United States and Canada and extensive overseas travel in Europe, Asia, and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand, Pacific Islands).

**Bruce says:** "My career was jump started by my summers with the smokejumpers. My smokejumper experience instilled in me confidence and the importance of training and working together. When I get nostalgic I relive my smokejumper experiences again. Lessons learned while a smokejumper have been retold many times with friends and students. I sometimes overhear my students comment to others: 'Did you know he was a smokejumper?' That says something about what it means to be a smokejumper."

### **BILL LONG (Cave Junction '55)**

**Now living in:** Palmer, Alaska

**Jumped:** CJ 55

**Since jumping:** Spent 60 years as a student of the Earth; educated to a Ph.D. at Ohio State University; exploring the world, particularly Antarctica, making geological, geographical and sporting (mountaineering) discoveries; homesteading in Alaska; as a professor and lecturer, inspiring younger geologist and other students to achieve success; traveling to new world locations to increase my knowledge of foreign places; competed five times in the Trondog Snowmobile race – 2,000 miles across Alaska – and finished as the oldest "pro" at age 67; romancing and loving three wonderful women.

**Bill says:** "Smokejumper training proved invaluable by developing the characteristics I needed to succeed in many other life opportunities, as a model and as an achievement to provide a positive self-image."

### **JOHN R. MCDANIEL (Cave Junction '57)**

**Now living in:** Falun, Kan.

**Jumped:** CJ 57-58

**Since jumping:** Entered U.S. Navy, completed flight training and flew 30 years (props/jets from attack

carriers), Vietnam; retired in 1984; worked in aviation industry 11 years before forced retirement; took over National Smokejumper Association duties as membership coordinator and still participate in NSA Trail Program; moved from Virginia to Kansas to be closer to our grandkids.

**ROBERT “BOB” WILSON (Missoula ’57)**

**Now living in:** Georgetown, Texas; spends summers in Lyons, Ore.

**Jumped:** MSO 57-58, WYS 59-61

**Since jumping:** Retired; spending winters in Sun City, Texas, senior community playing tennis and golf; sadly there are no trout here; prior to retirement at 57, traveled 11 Far East countries, including China, 19 years selling machinery for beer and soft-drink factories.

**Bob says:** “I’m in great health and fondly recall those summers jumping, as they were the most memorable of my life. They also paid for my degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Oklahoma.”

**CHUCK SUNDSTROM (Missoula ’57)**

**Now living in:** Alberton, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 57, WYS 59

**Since jumping:** Graduated with degrees in Wildlife Tech (1959) and Forestry (1963) from the University of Montana; worked for Wyoming Fish and Game Department as antelope research biologist until 1971 and for the Forest Service until 1994; retired as district ranger in Deer Lodge, Mont.; moved to Alberton where my wife taught school until she retired in 2006.

**Chuck says:** “I love trap shooting and hiking Forest Service trails, and floating the Missouri River (and a few others).”

**RAWHIDE CALVIN “CAL” PAPRITZ (Missoula ’58)**

**Now living in:** Auburn, Wash.

**Jumped:** MSO 58-59, 64, 66, FBX 67

**Since jumping:** Taught geography at college level (1964-2005); spent one year teaching in England and met Queen Mother during that time; have traveled extensively, mainly professionally, to more than 50 countries including Japan, Kenya, Tanzania, Ecuador, Brazil and Greece; spent three summers as fire coordinator, back-country ranger in Yosemite National Park (early 1960s); also spent three summers as back-country ranger in Grand Teton National Park, patrolling the Snake River 25 miles daily from Moran to Moose.

**Rawhide says:** “ ‘Rawhide’ is my actual given name; it’s on my driver’s license. I used my middle name, Cal, my first two seasons jumping in Missoula. I was asked by ABC’s science editor, Jules Bergman, to assist him in replicating D.B. Cooper’s skyjacking. I retired in 2005; my present interest is oil painting of Western U.S. landscapes.”

**DEAN WEEDEN (Missoula ’57)**

**Now living in:** Eureka, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 57

**Since jumping:** Forest ranger, Tongass National Forest, Alaska (1958-68); forest ranger, Kootenai National Forest, Montana (1968-78); head of Land and Recreation, Tongass National Forest, Petersburg, Alaska (1978-86); shrimping and fishing, Petersburg, Alaska (1986-2006).

**Dean says:** “The largest fire I jumped was in Wisdom, Mont., in 1957. My number is (406) 471-9517.”

**JIM “HUTCH” HUTCHINSON (Missoula ’57)**

**Now living in:** Hamilton, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 57-58

**Since jumping:** Retired since 2000; participated in NSA Trail Projects (2001-04).

**Hutch says:** “This summer will be my sixth season at a real, paying job with the Forest Service on the Nez Perce Forest near Grangeville as a fire lookout on Corral Hill. Come up and visit sometime.”

**FREDRICK “FRITZ” KOEPP (Redding ’57)**

**Now living in:** Huntington Beach, Calif.

**Jumped:** RDD 57-58

**Since jumping:** Earned bachelor’s degree in Forest Management from University of Minnesota (1960); forester with Forest Service (1960-65); worked for Southern California Edison Company (1965-94); served as forestry and water rights agent, forester, and associate fire control and conservation representative retiring in 1994; Bureau of Land Management forester in Anchorage, Alaska (1979); consulting forester (1994-2010); retired 2011; fellow, Society of American Foresters; worked on California NSA trail crew (2009).

**Fritz says:** “I’ve been married since 1962, with two children and five grandchildren.”

**WILLIAM BRADLEY “BRAD” WILLARD (Missoula ’58)**

**Now living in:** Shelton, Wash.

**Jumped:** MSO 58

**Since jumping:** Graduated from Virginia Military



Institute (1960); served as second lieutenant, Infantry, at Fort Benning, Ga., as member of the Airborne Training Committee, Eubanks Field; 250-foot steel jump towers and then a military career as an Army Engineer; company commander, "Charging Charlie," 19th Engineer Battalion (combat) from Fort Meade, Md. to Oakland in 17 days on World War II Liberty Ship across the Pacific Ocean in August 1965 and then an amphibious landing at Qui Nhon, South Vietnam, followed by a second tour (1968-69) as engineer staff officer, Highway and Bridge Construction Program at Long Binh, South Vietnam, and a variety of tours at Fort Belvoir, Va.; headquarters of U.S. European Command, Stuttgart, Germany; executive officer, 864th Engineer Battalion, Fort Lewis, Wash.; deputy district engineer, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; deputy district engineer, Seattle; engineer advisor, Peacekeeping Forces in the Sinai, Egypt; finally retiring at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, in 1984; pursued real estate investments and operations; constructed a small seven-room hotel in the Dutch West Indies known as "Willard's of Saba" – Saba is 5 square miles with a population of 1,500 near St. Maarten; operated Willard's of Saba for 16 years and recently sold it; now residing on Harstine Island in Puget Sound, just north of Olympia, where I have a majestic view of Mount Rainier (14,410 feet), which I climbed in 1976.

**Brad says:** "Earl Cooley (MSO-40) mistakenly hired me in 1958, believing I was from Wyoming, when actually I was from the District of Columbia. I understand I remain the only smokejumper in history to be from the District of Columbia, where the highest mountain is Capitol Hill. In April 2011 I had a great reunion with Pat Scheid (MSO-58) with his lovely wife Louise in Chevy Chase, Md., but we never quite reached the point where we were doing PLFs off our dinner table. We agreed there were never any better smokejumpers than those at Missoula in 1958. Geronimo! Life has been good but my high point was serving as a smokejumper with great buddies at Missoula in 1958 and working for Len Krout (MSO-46) and Earl Cooley. Smokejumpers are immortal! We all know that."

**DUB RABORN (Missoula '59)**

**Now living in:** Smyrna, Tenn.

**Jumped:** MSO 59-61, 64

**Since jumping:** Worked for Travelers Insurance corporate bond department for several years; resigned in 1972 and started an independent insurance agency in Smyrna, Tenn.; turned the business over to sons several years ago; now retired.

**Dub says:** "I've been married more than 50 years to wife Margie. We enjoy the outdoors – camping, fishing, hunting, etc. We've been spending a week or two every summer since the mid-1970s canoeing and camping in Quetico Park, Ontario, Canada, and hope to continue that for many more years. We own 425 acres about 60 miles west of Nashville, where I spend lots of time deer hunting in the fall and fishing the rest of the year."

**ROGER SIEMENS (Missoula '59)**

**Now living in:** Silver Star, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 59-63

**Since jumping:** Worked 35 years for Forest Service in Montana and National Grasslands in North Dakota; retired in 1994 as district ranger, Jefferson Ranger District, Deerlodge National Forest, Whitehall, Mont.

**Roger says:** "I've been married to Rita for 50 years, and we have five grandchildren. Rita has a small gift shop in Silver Star. I own and operate an ADC (animal-damage control) business called R&R Resources, doing contract and consulting work in all phases of natural resources and conservation. I specialize in the control of 'nuisance' animals, especially coyotes, wolves and rattlesnakes."

**GARTH HAUGLAND (Missoula '59)**

**Now living in:** Dillon, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 59

**Since jumping:** Served as Montana state game warden (March 1960 to July 1985); owner of Green Garden Enterprises (1985-94); own landscape contracting business (1994-present); serving as Beaverhead County commissioner, representing the Big Hole District.

**DALE E. GRAFF (Missoula '60)**

**Now living in:** Helena, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 60-62

**Since jumping:** Graduated from University of Montana in 1962 with a degree in Wildlife Technology; hired by Department of Fish and Game in 1963 as a state game warden; served in Billings, Miles City, Baker, Sidney, Superior and Kalispell as a captain; returned to Miles City as captain; moved to Helena as assistant chief in 1984; retired after 31 years in 1994; started a wildlife photography business but now mostly take photos of grandkids; have two sons, one an architect in New Jersey and the other a tanker base manager in Redmond, Ore., working his entire career with the Forest Service.

**Dale says:** "I also worked at Bonita and Nine Mile ranger stations on wildlife projects when not jumping. It was a 'career development' program. I remember

Ranger Del Cox at Nine Mile, putting me to work after I graduated that winter (1962) and keeping me from starving! Ha!”

**LARRY NEWMAN** (Missoula '60)

**Now living in:** Missoula, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 60-63

**Since jumping:** Graduated from University of Montana School of Forestry in 1964; worked two years on the Colville and Nez Perce national forests, and about 36 years with the Bureau of Land Management in Missoula; retired 2003; spent 24 years as operations chief, Type 1, Northern Rockies; since retirement have traveled to Eastern Europe, South America and the

Mediterranean; spend summers at our cabins in Condon, Mont., and Lake Almanor, Calif.

**Larry says:** “My wife Nadine and I have been married 20 years.”

**HAL NELSON** (Missoula '60)

**Now living in:** Missoula, Mont.

**Jumped:** MSO 60, GAC 61

**Since jumping:** Spent 21 years in the Army and retired in 1984; been in the business world since then; co-owner of Big Sky Mobile Catering, feeding firefighters in the Western states; co-owner of some commercial buildings in Missoula; avid elk hunter in the fall. 🍄

## A “Bearable” Kodiak Adventure

by **Gary G. Johnson** (Fairbanks '74)

**I**t was early June 1984 when the siren in the standby shack sounded its alarm. My heart jumped, as I was on first load, along with seven other jumpers. While suiting up we heard somebody in “the box” yell out that it was a call for Kodiak Island.

Excitement ran high as we boarded the Volpar. **Roger Vorce** (FBX-82) was our spotter. The flight was going to be a long one. The pilot and Roger figured they could fly directly to the fire, staff it, and still make it to the town of Kodiak for a refuel.

Arriving over the fire we could see that it was at 50 acres and only a mile out of the village of Old Harbor, on the southwest corner of Kodiak Island. Roger came to the rear of the aircraft, concerned about fuel, and said we would have to make the drop as quickly as possible.

We were a mixed load of rounds and squares. I was incident commander and would be first out with a ram-air parachute. Because of the terrain and the fire location, our jump spot was very close to the ocean’s edge!

I exited the aircraft with a full view of the Gulf of Alaska in all its shining glory. What a view – especially for a fire jump! Roger did a great job (his first live spotter run) of getting us safely to the ground.

We hit the fire and continued work throughout the night. It was close to full moon and the trees of Kodiak, not quite leafed out, were ghostly in appearance. This was a magical night to remember!

The following day was mop-up and pretty much

the end of the fire. On the third day we got a fly-over, and I was informed it could be two to three days before a demob might be arranged. What a sweet deal.

After we put the fire out, we hiked to the ocean’s edge and discovered a rusted shipwreck, testimony of the many ferocious storms in the Gulf of Alaska. I wondered about the long-ago fate of its crew.

Next, we decided to check out Old Harbor. The villagers were excited for us to see the little church above the village. The church was the only structure to survive the devastating tsunami of the 1964 Anchorage earthquake. The villagers were glad we came to fight their fire, and we were happy to be there. Fire jumps on Kodiak Island are very rare.

On the fourth day, the temperature at Old Harbor was nearing 90 degrees – another rarity for Kodiak. Six of us decided to climb into the high country with hopes of seeing a giant Kodiak bear. **Mike Lipka** (MSO-77) and **C.R. Holder** (MSO-70) would remain on the fire.

**Zeke Reister** (NCSB-70), **Gary McMurtrey** (MYC-73), **Dalan Romero** (FBX-83), **Jim Raudenbush** (FBX-82), **Clay Dalen** (FBX-80) and I went in search of bear. Being too warm, I stripped down to just a t-shirt, my underwear, and white boots. It almost felt like a normal summer hike, except for a bad case of black leg!

We climbed 2,000 to 3,000 vertical feet and found a lofty perch to scan the grand view for bears. I think

we had a small pair of binoculars to search the valleys for an hour or so.

All six of us were gazing in the same direction when Mac looked behind and uttered the words, “Oh, no!” In that same moment we all turned to see a frightening, nine-foot Kodiak brown bear standing on his hind legs, swaying back and forth, sizing us up. He was no more than 30 yards away. I vividly recall his long claws shining in the sunlight!

While waiting for the bear’s next move, I knew that I did not want to die or return to Old Harbor in just my underwear – something about male pride. I scrambled to remove my whites, and then pull my fire pants on, all the while keeping a close eye on that bear.

Luckily for us, the big bruin wanted nothing to do with us. He turned 180 degrees, loped down a steep snow slope only to lose his footing, rolled over on his back and tumbled in a long slide to the bottom on the snowfield. We witnessed an amazing explosion of bear, water and mud at the snowfield’s end. He quickly disappeared.

We stood speechless at what we had just seen. To this day I’m haunted by the memory of the bear’s size and how fortunate we were that he decided to leave us alone.

We demobilized to Kodiak town and Fairbanks the next day, our adventure now only a memory. Twenty-eight years later, the jump on Kodiak Island still stands out as one of my most memorable. 🐻



L-R: Jim Raudenbush, Dalan Romero, Clay Dalen, Gary Johnson, Zeke Reister. (Courtesy Gary Johnson)



# Analysis Of The Aerial Delivered Firefighter Final Report

by Jim Veitch (Missoula '67)

## *Time To Read This Again!*

The following article, done by Alaska Smokejumper Jim Veitch, was printed in the **January 2001** issue of *Smokejumper*. The subject was the *Aerial Delivered Firefighter Study (ADFF)* completed in 2000. The study looked into management, efficiency and cost effectiveness of ADFP resources.

Following this reprint, you will find an interview with Greg Greenhoe, who headed up the ADFP study team also written by Jim Veitch and printed in the same issue. As the climate gets warmer and fires get bigger and hotter, have we made any changes in the past twelve years to meet these changes?

**T**he Aerial Delivered Firefighter (ADFF) study was completed early in 2000. The study looked at how aerial delivered firefighter resources were being utilized, and to ensure they were managed at their most efficient and cost-effective levels.

A Management Options Team (MOT) then reviewed the study and considered outside comments before releasing its recommendations in late September 2000. The MOT's Final Report was very positive about the effectiveness of smokejumpers. The report was, however, critical of how the U.S. Forest Service manages its aerial resources.

Many veteran and active smokejumpers contributed important comments to the MOT. These comments had a major impact on the final outcome of the report. It was recommended that no smokejumper bases should be closed at this time.

Comments from all sources highlighted the management problems that led to the poor utilization of smokejumpers. The report found that, "Current cultural philosophy within the Forest Service, regarding ADFP resources, does not foster efficient use. There are inherent biases that stereotype these resources (i.e., smokejumpers are only good on wilderness fires, smokejumpers cost too much, helicopter modules are more flexible). Comments indicate these biases exist at all organizational levels."

*The report states that aggressive initial attack is the key*

*to minimizing the loss of property and money in wildland fire. It goes on to say that aerial firefighters are "highly effective, and offer a great deal of flexibility to deliver initial attack resources."*

Nine recommendations were made that fell within three broad categories: smokejumper management should be centralized and streamlined; *smokejumpers and other aerial resources should be increased*; and *Forest Service organization and culture leads to poor management of aerial resources*.

*The Forest Service management structure is antiquated, inefficient and provincial in its utilization and dispatch of smokejumpers.* This is a management problem at the highest level of Forest Service Fire & Aviation Management – a problem that only the Washington Office (WO) managers can fix by overhauling management structure.

*To break the crippling provincial hold on smokejumpers, the report recommends that smokejumper "budgets and administrative support ... (should be managed) ... at the highest organizational level possible."*

The report states: "Our current decentralized dispatching system is based on a 90-year-old model. (Order send – based on **existing** need instead of **expected** need.) We are on the threshold of new information technology which will allow us to move resources to where they are needed in advance of fire events."

And: "A key ... (is) ... *dispatching the closest resources ... (as calculated by **time**) ... to fires and moving or pre-positioning resources in critical areas."*

The report goes on: "It was very clear to the MOT that we need to improve how ADFP resources are utilized. A plan needs to be developed by the fire managers and coordination center communities to freely move these national resources to where fire activity is expected or is occurring."

And, "Ingrained cultural biases will be difficult to change. Any recommendations that go outside the existing norm will be met with resistance."

The ADFP study set out to judge the effectiveness of aerial firefighters, but ended up praising the firefighters and condemning the managers.

Jose Cruz, director of Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management, sent a letter July 28, 2000 – two

months before the report was released – describing how the MOT recommendations would be handled:

“We will not consider consolidation of smoke-jumper bases at this time” ... “*We will not increase the number of smokejumpers at this time*” ... “We will fund ADFP resources following existing procedures. Regions may increase or augment funding for National Shared Resources (NSR) as local conditions and situations dictate” (business as usual).

But the director promised to “develop more efficient and effective operating procedures and strategies, such as *pre-positioning* and increased utilization of ADFP resources.”

He ended by saying: “The economic assumptions and methods used in the report are not without controversy. Therefore, before engaging in major changes in the ADFP program, there are numerous operating inefficiencies that must be corrected first and foremost.”

Out in the mountains, it is felt that the MOT recommendations have been quietly set aside.

After the severe 2000 fire season, Congress unleashed \$1.6 BILLION in new funds. Not one cent of WO money is for Forest Service smokejumpers. In contrast, the Bureau of Land Management WO is increasing jumpers by 20.

What will the Forest Service do with the money? The money is going to upgrade helicopter contracts and crews and to increase the number of hotshot crews and engines. Any increase of smokejumpers must come from regional budgets (not national funds) *and is thus subject to the ingrained cultural biases mentioned in the report.*

Redding may increase jumper head count by 20 and Missoula by 25, but none in Region 6 (Redmond and North Cascades). *No meaningful action is being taken to overhaul the archaic dispatch system* that contributes so much to the poor use of smokejumpers.

The Forest Service Washington Office is floating with new money. They have a fresh, new ADFP study that points to fundamental management problems. The response is to pour money into a system “based on a 90-year-old model ... ingrained with cultural biases.”

The Forest Service Washington Office must start focusing on the core issue – management and efficient use of resources. It is time for “the existing norm” to change and time to remove the hobbles from smokejumpers.

Congress is interested in how all the new money is being spent. NSA members can contribute to change by writing Congress and Forest Service managers urging them to rebuild fire management on a modern model. 🦋

---

## An Interview with Greg Greenhoe

by Jim Veitch (Missoula '67)

---

### *Time To Read This Again!*

*The following interview, done by Alaska Smokejumper Jim Veitch, was printed in the January 2001 issue of Smokejumper. The subject was the Aerial Delivered Firefighter Study (ADFP) completed in 2000. The study looked into management, efficiency and cost effectiveness of ADFP resources. (Ed.)*

**G**reg Greenhoe was the Chair, Management Option Team, ADFP Study and is the Deputy Director – Fire, Aviation and Air, USDA Forest Service, Northern Region.

In late October the *Smokejumper* submitted a number of questions to Mr. Greenhoe about the Aerial Delivered Firefighter Study which was completed in September. Many NSA members contributed to the study with comments. *Mr. Greenhoe's answers show the important role NSA members can play in the decision-*

*making process of our Federal agencies.* We wish to thank Mr. Greenhoe for taking the time to respond to our questions and congratulate all NSA members who contributed to the process.

**SMOKEJUMPER:** Many people submitted comments to the MOT. How did these comments contribute to the report recommendations?

Mr. Greenhoe: **As a group, the Management Option Team (MOT) felt that it learned as much from the comments as we did from the study itself. The comments allowed us to see the perceptions of the users of ADFP resources and helped us get an understanding on how they could be more efficiently used in the future.**

**SMOKEJUMPER:** How many submissions did you receive from the smokejumper community?

Mr. Greenhoe: **Including e-mail messages and formal letters, around 120 comments total, 90 of those from the smokejumper community.**

**SMOKEJUMPER:** Were the smokejumper submissions mainly emotional or did they contribute in a reasoned manner?

Mr. Greenhoe: Some were emotional but I felt all were professional and contributed to the work of the MOT.

**SMOKEJUMPER:** What role do you see for organizations like the National Smokejumper Association (NSA) in contributing to governmental decisions?

Mr. Greenhoe: In the new age of information management, it is very important to helping make both the ADFP community and the user community aware of upcoming studies and reports. This gives the decision-makers more information to work with and allows everyone to participate. *I see this only improving the decisions we make.* This was really the first time that Internet resources have been used in such a manner on an administrative study, such as this one.

**SMOKEJUMPER:** The Final Report mentioned competition between two camps, helicopters and smokejumpers. What are your views on this matter?

Mr. Greenhoe: Both communities are very proud of the jobs they do and have very strong feelings about which is “the best” resource for Initial and Extended Attack. I think there was a lot of fear that the MOT would recommend downsizing one resource for another. What we found is that they complement each other and that it cannot be viewed as a competition between resources. *As the study showed, both resources are under-funded and additional funding would be cost effective.* We felt that we did not have enough information to be able to exchange one resource for another.

**SMOKEJUMPER:** The Final Report emphasized the need to *overhaul the national fire dispatch system.* Do you see any indications that this might happen and in what time frame?

Mr. Greenhoe: I think there are two things here: Information Management (real time tracking of all resources) and the Command Function at the dispatch level. We need to know what we have, where it is, where it needs to go, and the command authority to get it there. *Our whole dispatch system is based on an on-the-ground need and requests rather than moving resources in advance of the need.* The ROSS (Resource Ordering and Statusing System) will give us the information of where our resources are, and better intelligence will let us know where they are needed. *Now we need the command function to get them moving.*

**SMOKEJUMPER:** The Final Report recommended an

increase of 50-60 smokejumpers. Recent indications are that this *will not happen* for 2001. Why would that be so?

Mr. Greenhoe: In the final decision, the Washington Office (WO) did not accept our recommendation for centralization of the smokejumper program. We felt the savings from this would have given us the funding to increase the program by 50-60 jumpers. Several regions are looking at centralizing administrative functions at the regional level and increasing the numbers as the savings dictate. Also several bases are located on National Forests that add jumpers at their Most Efficient Level of funding. With MEL funding coming in 2001, we will see additional jumpers at these bases. With a combination of centralization of administrative functions and MEL funding I would not be surprised to see 50-60 additional jumpers in the national in 2001.

**SMOKEJUMPER:** The Final Report recommended an upgrade of helicopter performance. Recent developments indicate that most areas are funding this. *Won't this put more funds into the helicopter program and neglect the findings concerning smokejumper staffing?*

Mr. Greenhoe: Helicopters are justified by local NFMAS analysis, so at the MEL level there will be additional funding. But a lot of forests were going to shared contracts (as recommended in the report) and doing “Best Value” contracting. This is where you indicate the funding available and the vendor bids “days of availability” and “type of platform.” Selections are then made on the best value. Many times this includes a higher performance aircraft. This is just better use of the dollars that are available.

Another recommendation was the crew size. We recommended a minimum helicopter crew size of 10 so that additional helicopter managers could be pulled from the crew to staff Call-When-Needed helicopters to respond to large fires leaving the exclusive use helicopter in place for initial attack.

**SMOKEJUMPER:** Have there been any indications that national aerial resources will be funded off the top?

Mr. Greenhoe: Perhaps at the regional level but not at the WO level at this time. The report recommended we fund National Shared Resources at the highest possible level and consolidate administrative functions to maximize the dollars that reach the ground.

**SMOKEJUMPER:** Have there been any indications that *aerial fire resource management will be centralized?*

Mr. Greenhoe: Again, some regions are looking at



doing this on a Regional level, but *I don't see it at the National in the near future.*

**SMOKEJUMPER:** The Final Report stated, "Current cultural philosophy within the Forest Service, regarding ADFP resources, does not foster efficient use." Could you give examples and steps that might overcome the current culture?

Mr. Greenhoe: **This is what I was talking about above. Our process is to have a need first before we move resources. Then the resources are moved on a request basis. A lot of times resources are not made available due to a perceived need on that unit. We need to take a big picture look of what is available and move it to where it is needed before we have a big incident.**

**SMOKEJUMPER:** Now that the ADFP report has been submitted, *what indications are there that the report will change Forest Service policy?* Are you disappointed or encouraged by what you've seen so far?

Mr. Greenhoe: **I think the report eliminated a lot of myths and fallacies about the programs and gave us a lot of information on how these resources are used.**

Some of the recommendations will be adopted and some will not for the present time. *Yes, there will be tremendous change over the next few years and the ADFP Study and MOT Report will just be part of that change.* I think regional and local managers have already begun to use these recommendations and look at how they are utilizing these resources. I am very encouraged.

**SMOKEJUMPER:** Please feel free to add any other comments you might feel appropriate or that might be edifying to our readership.

Mr. Greenhoe: *I was very impressed and pleased with the comments and recommendations of the Smokejumper Community, especially those who were jumpers many years ago and remain loyal and concerned about the program and where it is going. Smokejumping remains a very valuable tool in appropriate fire response for three reasons: Speed, payload and range. Until another method of getting large numbers of firefighters to an incident quickly over long distances is discovered, then there will be a need for this method of delivery.* 🙏

*L-R: Col. Alan Muench (IDC-69), 2nd Lt. Lee Muench, Staff Sgt. (Ret.) Tony Beltran (IDC-69) Tony had privilege of being invited to the commissioning of rookie bro's son, Lee, June 2012. It is tradition that after an officer gets his first salute from an enlisted man, the officer gives that person a return salute and a silver dollar. (Courtesy T. Beltran)*



# THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE THE FENCE



by **Chris Sorensen**  
(Associate)

Wow! UNPRECEDENTED FIRE activity since we last visited. So much has occurred since the last issue went to press that we could fill an entire issue with just the news from June. We can't confirm it, but it is believed that more acres burned in Montana in June than the entire 1910 fire season.

This spring, John Lauer, **Nathan Ochs** (MSO-11), and other members of the Tatanka Hotshots launched an online petition drive to give temporary federal firefighters the right to buy into the federal health insurance plans. The online petition went viral and had 126,000 signatures on it by mid-July.

The impetus for the petition was the Tatanka Hotshots' anger over Ochs and his wife being hit with a \$70,000 hospital bill after their son, Rudy, was born seven weeks prematurely in 2008. More recently, another member of the Tatanka Hotshots had a child who required specialized medical care; the parents now

have a \$40,000 bill to pay.

President Obama issued an order July 10 that all temporary federal firefighters be allowed the opportunity to buy into the federal health insurance system. Access was supposed to begin in July. I have been very surprised at the number of people who have between 10, 15 or 20 years with the five federal resource agencies and still aren't receiving federal benefits.

I sincerely think this move is going to help recruitment and retention. The cost of offering insurance to seasonal firefighters is going to be offset by the high cost of recruiting and continually training new employees.

Nine Russian smokejumpers were killed in a burnover in southern Siberia sometime in June. Four jumpers survived. There has been no information out of Russia since the initial report. If any jumpers who have developed a relationship with the Russian smokejumpers have any more details, please submit them to the magazine for publication.

**Buddy Rausch** (IDC-57) died in May. I had known Bud nearly 20 years and I never knew he was a smokejumper until I read his obituary.

Smokejumping just never came up in our conversations. Most of our visits usually consisted of talking about dogs, bird hunting, and high school and college sports. Bud was a basketball and football official in Montana for nearly 40 years.

When I learned that Bud had been a smokejumper, it all began

to come together. Of course he had been a smokejumper. He had all of the attributes: He had a slightly over-the-top personality and was a robust, athletic hard-charger. (*Buddy was also a 1959 NCAA boxing champion while at Idaho State*)-Ed

But he also had the soft skills. You don't spend 38 years in sports officiating and 34 years in the property and casualty claims business without having some highly developed people skills.

Bud could handle people. I can see Bud encouraging the other jumpers during PT, and I can also see him poking somebody in the ribs to get a reaction out of him at dinner. Unfortunately, Bud was taken from us at the relatively young age of 75 from the scourge of Alzheimer's disease.

There seems to be some question about whether or not a load of Bureau of Land Management jumpers out of Rawlins, Wyo., made the first fire jump in history in South Dakota on the Parker Peak Fire July 2, 2012. Some commentators on *www.wildfiretoday.com* claim there was a jump north of Rapid City in 2006.

Contact me if you can confirm or deny a previous fire jump in South Dakota. Thanks.

As always: Work safely. Aggressive initial attack. Speed-Range-Payload. 🧯

*You can reach Chris Sorensen at [cmsorensen59@gmail.com](mailto:cmsorensen59@gmail.com). Please put "Smokejumper" or "NSA" in the subject line.*

# Former Smokejumper Jumps In Full-Time To His Plein-Air Landscapes

by Vicki Larson

(Copyright 2012, the Marin Independent Journal.)

**D**avis Perkins (NCSB-72) is used to it by now. Someone will stop by his workshop during an open studio event, discover that he was a smokejumper for 13 years and begin peppering him with questions about his dangerous former profession instead of looking at his landscapes.

“That does happen a lot. Sometimes it gets a little frustrating,” he says.

Perkins doesn't mind too much, though; he's incredibly proud of his work not only parachuting into raging forest fires in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, but also as a former firefighter and paramedic with the South San Mateo County Fire Authority and his yearly volunteer medical relief missions to Haiti.

Still, he admits it's a rather unusual background for a plein-air artist.

“I always love talking about it. I get fired up,” says Perkins, 62, who lives in San Rafael with his wife, Crystal Wright, a paramedic in San Francisco.

Perkins is among the 260 artists who will open their studios during two weekends in May for the Marin Open Studios.

Although he had been drawing since he was a boy growing up on an Oregon farm, it was his years as a 20-something smokejumper and the incredible camaraderie he developed with his crew that gave him the boost he needed to develop his art.

“You'd fly for hours looking for fires, so guys would be sacked out with all their jump gear on and sound asleep, so I'd sketch them,” says Perkins, who always brought along a good book, a fishing rod, a sketch pad and a few pencils on his jumps. He sketched scenes from nature – the way the rivers curved, and how the fires changed the look of the clouds – as well as of the crew.

His fellow smokejumpers were impressed.

“Sitting around a campfire, they'd say, ‘You have this great talent. Don't squander it,’” says Perkins, whose drawing of a smokejumper is included in a smokejumping memoir, *Jumping Fire*, by his longtime friend **Murry Taylor** (RDD-65). “They were the instrumental ones who told me to paint, to be an artist,



*Davis Perkins working with patient in Haiti. (Courtesy Lisa Long)*

and gave me the courage to do it.”

So, too, did a professor at the University of Oregon, where Perkins was studying history during the winters and jumping during the summers.

He promptly switched majors and graduated in 1978 with a bachelor's degree in Fine Art. The artworks of smokejumpers that made up his graduating thesis were included in a one-man show in 1981 at the Alaska State Museum.

Selections from that show were included in an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., in 1983. Three are in the museum's permanent collection.

“It wasn't that I was a great painter,” he says somewhat modestly. “It was kind of the uniqueness of it.”

Perkins, a former Army paratroop sergeant, has his artworks in the Pentagon's United States Air Force



Art Collection, the U.S. Department of the Interior in Fairbanks, Alaska, and the U.S. Forest Service in Washington, D.C., among other places. His paintings also have been accepted in a few notable national shows, such as this year's Telluride Plein Air festival and the Oil Painters of America Juried Artist, both in Colorado.

"It's gone better than I thought it would be. Fortunately, I had my other career to fall back on, which I loved," he says. "I'm very fortunate. I'm full of gratitude."

Perkins retired from the fire authority two years ago and is finally devoting himself full-time to his art,

landscapes that give ample space to brilliant blue skies and billowy clouds.

Given that he has spent so much of his life outside in nature, it was a natural that he would become a plein-air artist. He paints almost daily around Marin and in his studio at the Artworks Downtown building in San Rafael, where he's been for 12 years.

Now he's focusing on getting represented by a big gallery.

"I've been painting for 40 years. I have seven exhibitions the rest of the year. It's about time," Perkins says with a laugh. 🍄

---

# The Last Word On The Higgins Ridge Fire

by Tom Kovalicky (Missoula '61)

---

**R**oss Parry (MSO-58) did a great job of capturing what happened on Higgins Ridge that hot day of August 4, 1961.

To help with the drama of events that unfolded, I offer the following: The uniformed Forest Service employee who had the radio was the Moose Creek District ranger, Bill Magnuson. As I recall he came in with Rod Snyder piloting the Bell G3 on the initial landing.

Things were going to hell rather quickly and visibility was pretty much zero. He told **Fritz Wolfrum** (MSO-53) to follow him (I happened to be lying near Fritz when Rod landed). Fritz said something like: "Bull——. We're staying put" (good call).

Rod put the ranger and our worst injured jumper in the bubble and took off. When he came back, he squeezed two in the bubble with him. I didn't think I would see him again but here he comes back.

He told Fritz that the visibility and heat were shutting things down, so he told two jumpers to get in the bubble and two others to roll into the skid baskets. He repeated that scenario until we were evacuated. Fritz and I were in the last batch out.

In my excitement I rolled into the starboard basket with my head pointing toward the rear of the machine and hung on. Not certain what I grabbed, but I had to alternate hands because my gloves were smoking and turning black.

It was a wild-ass ride because of the bumpy air. Once he cleared the burn, that fresh air was almost as good as an ice cold Lucky Lager.

I was working on the Sawtooth National Recreation

Area, Ketchum, Idaho, in 1976. It was our country's 200th birthday. I read an article about the resurrection of our national award for firefighting heroism that had been put on hold during World War II. They figured 1976 would be a great time to let it out of the box.

I did not tell Rod for fear he wouldn't cooperate, but got the forms and nominated him. It was absolutely a thrill to learn he was chosen. He deserved it and more.

As a side note – and only Rod can confirm this – he was told to abort his search for us and head to Boise, as his wife was heading to the hospital to give birth. He chose to continue looking for those orange shirts.

What was really informative and helped close the door on some unanswered questions was the follow-up article by **William Gary Shaw** (MSO-62).

We had stashed our jump gear and PG bags on the top of the ridge not far from the rock slide we took refuge in. We lost all our gear and were told to fill out forms because we would get compensated for personal gear. My camera was a brand new 35-millimeter single-lens Ricoh, valued around \$200, plus a new jacket, and spare glasses.

It did not matter how much value you lost; everybody got a check for \$100. They said there was a rule that prohibited payments above that.

In closing, they cleaned us up pretty good at St. Pat's in Missoula. Back at the base, Effie the cook had 2-inch t-bones waiting for us. **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40) told us to get ready to go out the next day.

1961 was the year the Missoula base broke all the records for fire jumps. 🍄

# Phoenix Arises On The Gobi

by Harold Hartman (Cave Junction '65)

A true arising has occurred in far southwestern Oregon. Just a few miles south of the small, rural, former logging community of Cave Junction, one of the three original U.S. Forest Service Smokejumper bases is coming to life.

In a modern-day revival, almost unheard of and considered impossible a few years ago, a few hardy souls took on the “powers that be.” How did this happen?

Step back for a minute to 1943, when the first smokejumper base in Oregon – and third in the nation – was established. The base was developed over time with a number of sources for the various buildings. A number of buildings were moved in from other Forest Service and Civilian Conservation Corps developments; some were built on site.

The base was operated continuously until closing in 1981. Subsequently, the airport – including all the base buildings – was transferred from the U.S. E.S. to Josephine County.

The site was “maintained” as an airport. Some of the buildings on the base were rented out for various purposes – a restaurant in the old mess hall, a shop in the loft – but basically, most of the smokejumper base languished with little attention to survival.

Then came a discussion among county government as to what to do with the buildings. Plans began to be made for the demolition of the entire area (including cutting all the trees to make a “clean” site) and replacement with “modern commercial” endeavors. Names many of you know – Gary Buck (CJ-66), Wes Brown (CJ-66), Gary Thornhill (CJ-68), along with a retired National Park Service manager, Roger Brandt – heard of talk of the destruction. They mobilized like good smokejumpers would when faced with a firestorm.

While the fight was long and contentious, the result has been, and is, absolutely incredible. Facing superior forces, with limited “shovel and pulaski” in hand, they struggled for many years. But in the end (which is really a new beginning), they prevailed and, truly, I attest they have created a “bird of great beauty,” a true phoenix of Egyptian mythology. The phoenix is said to live 500-600 years – wow! What a trip this is going to be.

The mythological “bird” consumed itself by fire (governmental destruction, in this case) and then rose from the ashes. Well, I’m here to attest that the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base has risen and continues to rise “from the ashes” in our own “Gobi” desert!

Many of you are aware of the progress of the last few years from other reports in this magazine. Work projects have been held the past few years. Truly, this effort has – with a vision of the past for many of us who worked in CJ, visited as backup crews, and married into the smokejumping culture – inflicted many people.

The list of workers includes many: jumpers from all bases, spouses, girlfriends, government workers (including county commissioners), local community citizens and organizations. The result is truly a beautiful sight – and site – to behold. I mean that literally.

On a number of trips to the base for small projects, I have stayed in the new apartment, and the site viewed in the late evening or the early morning is truly inspiring, peaceful and serene, a great place for an early morning run of the runway – really, at least a jog, or a walk.

The list of restoration efforts is lengthy, with every building being brought back to near-original status. One aspect that is especially unusual is the self-guided, handicapped-accessible tour that takes people through a circuit of the main base grounds and fills visitors with a sense of what happened here.

I was very pleased when our youngest son and his wife and two young boys stopped at the airport on their way back from the coast. They were aware that Grandpa had spent a few days at that airport but really didn’t know what we did there.

There was no one around, but our son took the boys on the tour. They came back with an excited response to what they learned. I believe we have truly developed a historical site that will be enjoyed by many.

The restoration is well on its way with some additional aspects still to be pursued. The next big steps are creating displays that entice visitors to stop and that relay additional information for educational purposes.

We are currently developing a number of displays, including a static display of an aircraft, initially of a Twin Beech (and others as time goes on, we hope); training area reconstruction; parachute simulator ride for all to challenge their ability to “hit the spot”; and action figures depicting the process of responding to a “fire call.”

The board of directors includes a number of individuals with backgrounds in education. An effort is underway to develop an educational program for on-site

*Continued on page 26*





*Willie Lowden (NCSB-72)*



*Tommy Albert (CJ-64)*

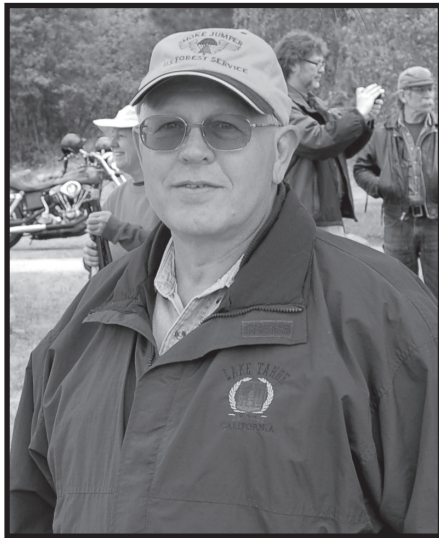


*Karl Hartzler*



# Smokejumper Heritage

*Photo's Courtesy Tommy*



*John Berry (RAC-70)  
President, OldSmokeys*



*Annie von Domitz, President  
Oregon Travel Experience*

**OREGON**

**HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM**

Circumference  
6 feet

Approximate Height  
60 feet

Average Crown Spread  
Approx. 30 feet

Age  
150 years

Dedicated by  
Heritage Tree Committee  
Oregon Travel Experience  
- June 2012 -

OREGON

Sm...

In Oregon, Je...

southwest cor...

local dry, inf...

surrounding fl...

trees resist fire...

like thick, ins...

construction o...

Jeffrey pine wa...

and shade.

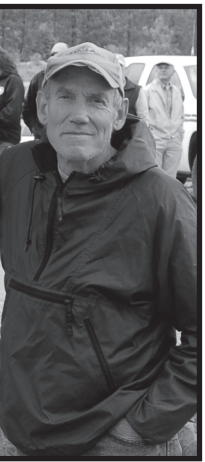


*Steve Anderson & Gary Buck (CJ-66)*



*Layout Design: John*

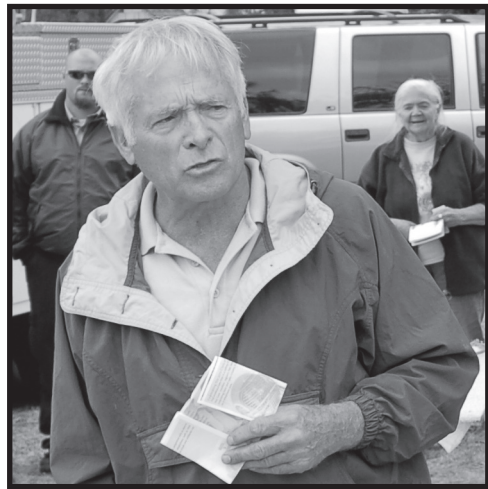




*Bill (BOI-70)*



*Colly & Hugh Rosenberg (CJ-59)*



*Harold Hartman (CJ-65)*

# Heritage Tree Dedication

*by Albert & Roger Brandt*



## Smokejumper Tree

*Pinus jeffreyi*

Jeffrey pines are found only in the state's interior. They are especially adapted to infertile, serpentine soils as seen in the photograph at lands and distant mountains. These trees survive through a variety of adaptations including thick bark and open crowns. During fires, the Siskiyou Smokejumper base, this tree is likely spared for use as a telephone pole.

OREGON HERITAGE TREE



*Jennifer Karps, President  
Oregon Heritage Tree Committee*



*Greg Gonzalez (CJ-76)*



*Tommy Kirkley (CJ-64)*



*Ruth & Al Boucher (CJ-49)*

presentations as well as visits to and a “curriculum” for local schools.

A volunteer host program is being developed. We have a volunteer handbook, an formal agreement for those offering to man the site, and an apartment for them

to stay in. We have our first volunteers this summer and fall, including our editor and his wife, K.G. 🍄

*If there are any of you who are interested in being a host contact me. We have a good place to stay at no charge. A few days in Southern Oregon talking to people about smokejumping might add to your vacation experience. (Ed.)*

## Rural Free Delivery

by LeRoy Cook (Cave Junction '64)

I'm a simple man, you see. My itch is easy to fix. I go fishing! Sometimes it's good to check out of the human race.

The other day I got up early as the rest of the camp slept. Quiet and still, the pink flame on the tops of the hills was still far away. The cool air and the evergreens seemed to hold the day back, and as I sat by the cold fire, the air tasted good.

I always liked looking across the landscape as the day began – watching the changing sky, with its hues and tones filling a peaceful need. The view and I are old friends. Good medicine. Moments like these can speak volumes if you know how to listen, a gift that others might consider.

Like many my age, these days I've become a bit worn and rusty, perhaps like the mailbox out by the road. I get a lot of junk mail pulling me in ways I don't want. A loyalty to the old ways, it's now my duty to be embarrassingly old-fashioned when others visit.

It seems to me there's a privileged responsibility with being a man. Masculinity, its fashion and style are now overemphasized with people trying to stand out. What's wrong with being normal? More than jumping out of air-planes or fighting a foreign war,



L-R: LeRoy Cook and Alex Thieos (CJ-65)

the real mettle of a man's character is also doing what must be done to care for others every day.

If you look past the gaudy pseudoness of today's life with all its sound and fury, you can see an inner strength in many people. It's hard to see if you're young, for this inside stuff is like the silent toughness of a feral tomcat that comes and goes in the night, unseen.

The code of a man or woman's character is self-sacrifice as life slips by, caring for others. One of the most courageous men I

know is my brother. Every day of his life he gets up and takes care of his handicapped son, shaving him and getting him ready for the day; then after work he comes home and again does the same thing.

Always accompanied by an unseen wingman called *Love*, he never complains. I'm sure you know someone like this. One day I hope to take him fishing and see him smile as he catches a trout or sits by the fire.

Those who came before us were tough, like oak knots in



the family tree. They all lived through some grim history, and I'm sure they thought they didn't have it so good; but I look back at my time with them and see how rich parts of their lives had become. Theirs was a laborious, indomitable spirit.

We all know people today who think they don't have it so good, encouraged by one-eyed umpires cracking life open like a burnt hot dog. Many can't see the view that's right in front of them, complaining about things that are either their own making, or their wants and self-centeredness.

We reach a point in our lives where we begin to have less of an influence on our youth, for all children must be released to the world. Certainly today they have more knowledge and with that more choices and opportunities; perhaps it's harder to identify with something these days.

I was told early that if you

have your health, a roof over your head and food in your belly, you don't have anything to complain about. It helps to find something you like to do, for liking your work is important – it fills the directional void, strengthens the bonds of men and women, and keeps you strong.

My childhood was such a vexed privilege not allowing me to adapt well to urban life. I married late, doing what I thought were manly things, thinking I knew how to live alone, and if ever being alone happened again, that I'd be all right. Wrong!

Naurine and I don't have a fancy house like rich folks with a groomed yard, a big swimming pool behind locked gates with a pedigreed dog. I'm just a middle-class clodhopper with a lot of fishing tackle, its clutter spread from one end to the other.

It may seem strange, but you can have rich memories while not

living in a big home. Wealth is not always measured with a savings account.

Getting up early may not be for everyone, but getting out is a vaccination against today's chaos. I'll never be wealthy in some eyes, but when I step into the water, I'm a prince with the words "wonder what the poor people are doing today," for I have something really wonderful – craggy western vistas, miles of beautiful river to wade, and the glorious, speckled stars at night. A collection of letters of a life well wasted.

Fishing trips take me back to that time when I stood on a cold, wooded floor, the radio on in the dim light, looking out the window at dawn splaying light across a rolling patchwork of green and gold.

The view makes me rich. Robins nest in my mailbox and RFD still stops. 🐦

## *No matter which you choose, you'll love how it looks!*



**NAVY  
BLUE**

**WITH GOLD  
LETTERING  
AND TRIM**

Stylish and comfortable, our newest cap model has the features you love ... *at two sensational prices!*

After the incredible success of our khaki U.S. Forest Service Smokejumpers cap, we decided to try to top it. So with the help of a graphic designer, we came up with a design that really hit the jackpot! And we're sure you'll agree!

• • •

Gold "SMOKEJUMPERS" embroidery and trim adorn our navy blue cap. The DELUXE model features Velcro strap and silky-smooth, 90 percent nylon body that wicks moisture from your head. Our ECONOMY cap is 100 percent brushed cotton, with exactly the same design. Looking for a new favorite? Order one today!

**Stylized Smokejumpers cap** | Deluxe model ... just \$19.95  
Order using the enclosed flyer! | Economy model ... just \$13.95



# All In A Day's Work – The King Creek Fire, Part I

by Major L. Boddicker (Missoula '63)

**A**s I began the task of writing my memories about the 1969 Alaskan fires, I started rummaging through my photos and paraphernalia, trying to reconnect my memories with reality.

My wife, Jan – the same wife I had in 1969 – reminded me that I had written her long and detailed letters from the fires. She had kept them. They were locked up in her treasure trunk. She locked them up to make sure the kids didn't read the pornographic proposals that I was suggesting we do when I got home.

The letters are full of descriptive detail that jibes very well with my memory of events. At the time, when I wrote or spoke of my jumping experiences to her and to my parents, I downplayed the danger and close calls. All of them were really jumpy about me smokejumping anyway, so telling them embellished stories did not seem smart to me.

I told them stories of the events in understated ways, or mentioned an event with obtuse language, so as to dampen their anxiety.

Now, I know what you're thinking – I'm setting you up for some grossly embellished silk stories. Well, these are stories from my memory, not history. Enjoy them.

A beautiful Alaska morning rose from the twilight of the Arctic night. It was June 22, 1969, about a month before man walked on the moon for the first time. After a satisfying breakfast at the base – a real treat compared with C-ration beanie weenies – the fire buzzer blared. It was a 16-manner at King Creek between Eagle and Chicken, Alaska.

We loaded into the DC-3 and lumbered up and on toward eastern Alaska. The landscape was beautiful, but not spectacular – a sea of green with small scattered mountains, hundreds of lakes, streams, and swamps. There was hardly a sign of human activity.

The DC-3 is a plane built in World War II and, like the Liberty Ships, it was an invaluable workhorse of the war and Korean War after that. It was my favorite plane from which to jump. Compared to modern planes, it was slow and unsophisticated with a distinct engine sound that, to me, sang a song of dependability.

After a two-hour flight, we could see the small fire along the gravel road from Chicken to Eagle, Alaska. The fire was not very hot or large and had a very nice jump spot just on the northeast corner of the fire.

Gene Bartell (MSO-67), Steve Clairmont (MSO-62), Mark Lennon (MSO-67), Steve Livergood (MSO-67), Bill Meadows (ANC-66), Rollie Moore (MSO-67), Larry Ukestad (MSO-67), Steve Williams (MSO-65), Pat Brooke (MSO-67), Lindsey Davenport (FBX-69), Steve Goldammer (MSO-66), Don Gordon (MSO-59), Don Havel (FBX-66), Bob Hooper (CJ-67), Charley Moseley (CJ-62) and I jumped the fire.

If I recall correctly, Lennon and I jumped the first stick, which was a real treat in every way. We jumped and floated down for a soft landing on the muskeg. We unhooked from our chutes and began to collect our gear.

The wind suddenly turned on, and the fire started gobbling up the taiga, going northwest. Mark and I watched the next stick jump: Williams and Meadows. After they bailed out, their chutes opened perfectly, but instead of a nice, controlled descent, they got into a stream of air being sucked in the fire blowup. Both of them turned into the wind correctly to slow down the pull on them toward the fire. It did not work. Mark and I had a short discussion that went something like this: "Jesus, Major – they're getting sucked into the fire!" Mark yelled.

"Yeah, looks bad. We need to get after them. They are going to be s--- out of luck. You go after Meadows; I'll try to find Williams," I yelled as we ran toward the fire.

The fire was torching off in that ever-increasing roar that goes with a blowup. The smoke was boiling skyward with that mixed black, white, red, orange, and the kaleidoscope of colors in between. It was hot.

(Note: Lennon and Meadows have reviewed these stories and affirmed that they are close to what they remember about the King Creek fire.)

Williams had the wits about him to steer at an angle toward the back end of the blowup, and he dropped inside the perimeter of the hotly burning conflagration. Meadows was going down more into the blowup, the hot part of the fire, when I lost sight of him.

Lennon and I ran hard up to the perimeter of the fire, dodging the tundra humps. I remember it being very hot and very smoky. I stopped and wet my ban-

dana from my canteen, doubled it, and tied it over my mouth and nose, and then jumped inside the fire perimeter, picking my way into the fire on the unburned and cooler parts towards where I thought Williams had landed.

Breathing was difficult; embers burned my shoulders and back. There were moments when there was nothing to breathe but hot smoke. I vomited and swallowed it, repeatedly. When I found a green, unburned spot, I would drop to my hands and knees and breathe into the moss for a few seconds.

When I felt I could go, I would move again, looking around for Steve. The flash blaze was over, but the burning taiga was still very hot with spots that were roaring hot, which I had to work around. I had figured Steve had landed about 75 yards inside the fire, about 150 yards from where I had landed.

How much time I spent looking for Steve, I don't remember – maybe 10 minutes. He was not where he should have been. I yelled for him repeatedly, hoping he could hear me above the sound of the fire.

My feet were very hot. I had remoistened my bandana several times and emptied my canteen, trying to replace the water that seemed to boil out of me. I had a splitting headache and was so dry I couldn't spit.

No Williams – where the hell is he? I thought. He landed in the blowup fire. Maybe he landed in a cool spot and ran out to the edge. Maybe he landed in one of the blowup hot spots and is dead and skin bubbled. The litany of *ifs* rolled through my brain.

I couldn't take it any longer. I needed water, and so I picked my way through the smoke, fire and ashes toward the road, which was 200 yards to the east.

What a miserable blackened, sweat-soaked mess I was. I had a coarse, hacking cough and splitting headache on top of the uncertainty of not being able to find Williams.

I stumbled out of the fire onto the road about 20 yards from Williams, who was sitting on a couple of boxes of C-rations, eating peaches and pound cake.

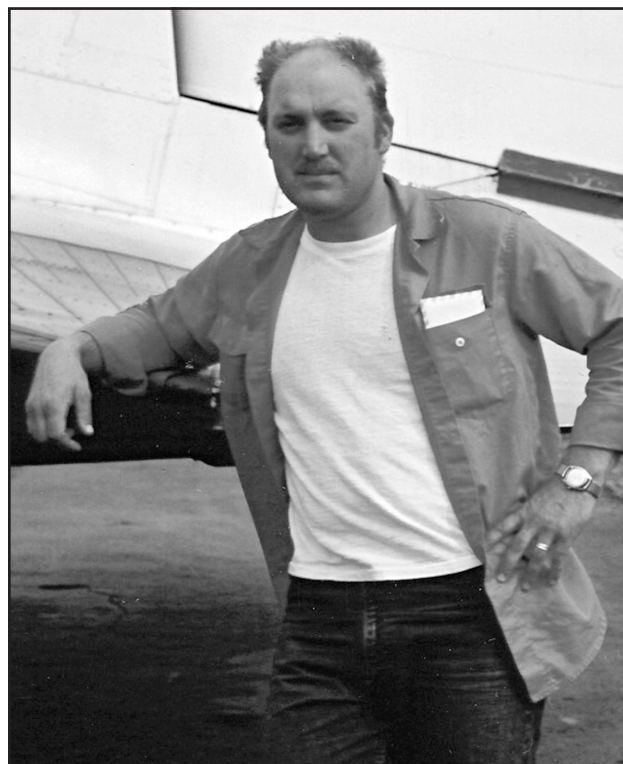
How did the C-ration boxes get there? I am not sure. I think when the decision was made not to drop any more jumpers until the fire cooled down, the DC-3 made a pass over the road and the crew dropped a fire pack with rations and tools.

"Christ, it's great to see you, you sorry SOB!" I said. "I figured you'd be skin-bubbled," I continued.

"Hell, it was a close call," Steve responded. He looked like he had just left the loft – clean, crisp, and relaxed.

"How the hell did you manage to get out of that blowup?" I asked.

"Oh, at the last minute, I found a green spot and



*Major Boddicker (Courtesy M. Boddicker)*

steered into it. Then I wrapped my chute up in my arms and ran like hell for the road. I got out from under the blowup just as it was happening. You all right?" he replied.

"Do I look all right?" I croaked. "Where's the water?"

Unless you've been a half-cooked jumper, tongue dry as jerky, nose bleeding from cracked skin, dry skin on the hands, skin on the feet splitting and bleeding, eyes, nose, lungs burning, you can't fully really appreciate water. I drank my fill and flushed down with it. What a treat!

Maybe 10 minutes later, Meadows and Lennon showed up, unhurt, with a similar story. We had missed the bullet by sharp wits and physical stamina and plain damned good luck.

How long did that incident take from start to finish? Maybe 20 minutes.

Because of the blowup side draft, the balance of the jump was delayed until the wind died down, maybe 30 minutes later. We sat on the ration boxes and watched the jumpers bail out of the yellow-and-orange DC-3, floating to the ground like it was supposed to be – safely.

The remainder of the day, we collected gear and started work on the base camp. No doubt, this was going to be a project fire, as the front of the fire was roaring to the west-northwest, unabated. There was no point in 16 guys trying to fight it.

Sometime toward evening, Meadows, Lennon and I were hauled down near the southeast corner of the fire and ordered to put in a line and hold it through the night. There was nothing unusual about that. So, we checked the fire line and beat out small hot spots on the edge of it from the road west several hundred yards.

The fire had been started by a discarded cigar, which we found at the side of the road.

We puttered around, working the fire edge until about 11 p.m. when we set up for a rest and eats by the only active fire, which was burning in a snag. *Dead tired* would describe us well. The night was cold, so we sat as close to the warming fire as we could, dozing on and off as we could.

I'm guessing about 2 a.m., we heard an airplane drawing closer.

"What's going on?" Meadows asked.

"Sounds close," Lennon added.

"Coming right at us!" I concluded.

"It's a PB-4y retardant plane. You don't suppose it's going to drop on us, do you?" Bill asked.

"That would be ... Oh, s—!" I exclaimed. I snapped a photo just as it dumped the retardant.

"Goddammit – nothing like a smokejumper to be miserable and then have a retardant drop on our only warming fire," Meadows said.

One thing about it: the retardant pilot put the whole load right on target. We were covered totally with the pink slime. Our warming fire sure wasn't going anywhere.

The rest of the night was cold, and I dozed off intermittently. I was too tired and miserable to sleep. Sometime in the early morning, we were picked up and hauled back to base camp where we washed up and got a few hours of rest. We caught a ride at about 8 o'clock to get breakfast at the local restaurant, O'Brien Creek Lodge.

Nothing particularly remarkable about the O'Brien Creek Lodge except it was there out in the middle of nowhere. One of the two characters I remember was the proprietress. This gal was the homeliest woman I had ever seen who hadn't been run over by a Mack truck. She was a 10 on a 10 scale for homely.

She reminded me of the Bigfoot lass who was trying to score on the Oregon timber cruiser in one of my previous stories; however, her pancakes were great.

Her husband was about half her size and an average sort of backcountry guy. He was hopping mad at the Alaska Game and Fish. On the floor of the O'Brien Creek Lodge was a huge, rather fresh bloodstain, which had dried into the rough floorboards.

One of us jumpers asked him what the stain was,

whereupon he replied: "I just got back from Fairbanks. I had to go there to fill out a report for the Game and Fish. Now I got a letter that says I got to go back to the damned place because my report wasn't complete," he complained.

"Well, what did you say?" somebody asked.

"A grizzly bear broke into our lodge, scared my wife, so I shot the SOB," he said flatly. "The Game and Fish said they required more details on the incident – f— them!

"That's all the detail there was – bear at the bar; bang; I shot the SOB. Stinking bastard bled all over the place. What a mess," he grouched.

He didn't figure he needed to drive all the way back to Fairbanks to add the extra facts. Besides, it was the Game and Fish's bear, and he had to drag it out of his bar and into the woods since none of them was around to help.

The breakfast was great as was the storytelling. The proprietress was a friendly, cheerful gal and enjoyed visiting with us jumpers.

I recall spending that day helping set up a better base camp, organizing for the crews which were being brought in. About 9 a.m., the sun had reached the proper position in the sky to heat up the fuels to the kindling temperature, and then – bang – the fire boiled up and ran west-northwest, putting up a 30,000-foot smoke cloud.

I remember being happy that I wasn't out in front of it. It roared, checked only by an occasional retardant drop the rest of the day.

Sometime late that morning, a fire boss arrived on the scene. He was a National Park Service administrator, who had been to *Wonder Boy Firefighting School*,



*Bill Meadows (ANC-66) checking out disabled dozer. (Courtesy Major Boddicker)*



and was there to save us smokejumpers and the Alaskan environment.

One of our jobs was to clear and rake smooth a putting green so he could keep his golf skills sharpened while he was serving his country. I do not remember what occurred to get me on his s— list, or if I was the only jumper who qualified. He had a distinctly bad attitude about jumpers.

After breakfast at O'Brien's Lodge the next morning, the fire boss assigned me and Meadows to pimp for Caterpillars being brought in to line the south and east part of the fire.

Bill and I were hauled about three-quarters of a mile south of King Creek and dropped off. One Caterpillar had already chosen a path to clear, and was about one-half mile into the woods when the track had come off the dozer. The dozer operator was cussing up a blue streak at his dozer and his bad luck.

Bill and I walked up on him and announced we were there, which did not slow down his cursing. I got on the radio and contacted base camp about getting equipment in to repair his dozer. He got on the radio and gave base camp the information they needed, which calmed him down. We sat and traded stories for an hour or so before I moved out to flag a route for him.

The only thing I remember about that conversation was that he was a local preacher and he smoked cigars – coincidentally, the same brand that started the fire.

I walked through the taiga downhill toward King Creek to pick up the fire's edge. The fire had stopped on the north side of King Creek. I walked up King Creek about three miles and found no fire on the south side. When I ran into fire again on the north side, I flagged the spot and climbed a line back toward where I should intersect the dozer, trying to flag a workable route.

There was a thick smoke cloud covering the King Creek valley. About 11 a.m., a retardant bomber dropped its loads into the smoke cloud about one-half mile south of King Creek, one-half mile from any fire in wet and green blueberry meadows. It doesn't take a genius to look at a smoke-covered valley and decide there is no active burning going on.

I radioed back to base camp that the retardant drops would be more useful on the front edge of the fire. There was no active fire at the drop locations, and the fire was out in that whole sector.

Apparently the fire boss took my recommendation as a personal insult. There were many more useless retardant drops into the quiet white smoke blanket in the area over the remainder of the day. I wondered if the fire boss was getting a bonus for every retardant drop.

Other than the thick smoke and nasty wet hiking in the muskeg and blueberry bogs, it was a pleasant day. As I hiked uphill from King Creek, I encountered alternating steep willow- and brush-covered mountainsides, then wide and wet, flat blueberry bogs with ripe blueberries. I picked and ate blueberries as I hiked upward.

Normally, I carried my .44 Magnum Ruger revolver when I was assigned such duties, but had left it in my ditty bag on that day. I soon regretted it because I started to see grizzly bear sign – not a little sign, but a lot of it where the bears had bedded, crapped and rolled, tracks and areas they had grazed.

---

*“As I topped the next bench and started across the bog, a huge grizzly stood up on its hind legs about 20 yards from me, making the warning wuff!  
“Sweet Jesus!”*

---

As I topped the next bench and started across the bog, a huge grizzly stood up on its hind legs about 20 yards from me, making the warning *wuff!*

Sweet Jesus! I didn't know whether to pee or just run and pray. So I calmly pulled out my radio and turned up the squelch, hoping that nasty sound would chase off the bear.

The bear turned, dropped to all fours and ran off as if it had been whipped in a fight. Crap, I wished I'd had my .44 Magnum.

After gathering my wits, I proceeded toward the dozer. The route was very steep, rocky, and not a practical route. Since the fire never jumped the King Creek and had burned far beyond where the dozer could do any good, there wasn't much point in the dozer continuing. The dozer, when I got to it, was in the same shape as I had left it, broken down with nobody around it. I hiked back out to the road and radioed that I was ready to be picked up.

When I got back to camp, I checked in to the boss' tent to report on the day. He was in an ugly mood, short and abrupt and acting like he already knew it all. I drew him a map of the area I had covered in a big triangle south of King Creek, three miles west then back to the dozer trail and road.

I reported that the valley was 100 percent covered with smoke, but I had seen no fire south of the creek. The retardant drops were one-quarter to three-quarters of a mile from any live fire. I added

that the dozer would be better-used on the north side of the fire because the creek and wet and green conditions of the north side of the ridge, south of King Creek, would likely not burn. The terrain was not suitable to try to cut a fire line with a dozer. I don't remember being critical or a smart ass when I reported to him.

Wow – that apparently was not something he wanted to hear. He acted like somehow I was insulting and threatening his esteemed leadership.

He informed me that if I was not any more com-

petent than that, he would assign me to a job more fitting of my talents.

“Now get the hell out of here,” he concluded.

Funny, how numb you get on a fire. I don't remember that incident as bothersome or unusual. What do you expect from a Park Service desk jockey?

Most of the smokejumpers were pulled out and left for Fairbanks at this point. 🦋

*Next: Part II, King Creek Fire: Insubordination, Refusing to get Skin Bubbled*

# The Outhouse Detail And The Scheme That Got Scotched

by Ken Wilder (McCall '57)

**W**e had just finished PT when the last eight jumpers on the jump list were told to report to Carl Rosselli (MYC-48), the project foreman. We all gathered around Carl, wondering what kind of project we had for the day.

Carl informed us we were going to carry an outhouse to a lookout. Well, we weren't too happy about this. How do you carry an outhouse up a narrow trail for several miles?

In any event, we would be out of camp for the day, and we had lunches prepared by the camp cooks. We knew that when we got to the end of the road and started the project, we could eat part of our lunch, since most of us hadn't eaten breakfast.

We got the outhouse and put it in the back of a truck and went to the end of the road. By then it was around 10 o'clock and time for breakfast. We had brought along two 2-by-4s and laid the outhouse on them and lashed it down.

Next, it was decided that it

would be best if four people carried the outhouse at a time, one on each corner. We were going to spell each other after a period of time. It didn't take long to figure out you didn't put a shorter man on the downhill side. We resolved the situation by putting two shorts on the uphill side and two longs on the downhill side.

The trail was rather narrow and we weren't making very good time. Most of the time you couldn't walk on the trail – either the uphill were off the trail or the downhill were. Larry Clark (IDC-51), the squad leader, said that maybe it would be best to carry the outhouse halfway today and finish the last half tomorrow. Great idea, Larry.

When we got back to camp the first day, we told the project foreman that it was going to take another day and maybe two. Next day – same thing. But this time we came up with a great idea.

Near the lookout was a lake full of trout. So the plan went into effect. We would carry the house to within a couple hundred

yards of the lookout this second day. We would finish the job on the third day and fish the remaining part of the day.

We were congratulating ourselves on the super plan to spend a day fishing. Well, sometimes the best of plans won't work out. We got within a couple hundred yards of the lookout and were ready to return to camp. Guess who showed up but the alternate district ranger.

He informed us that the project would be completed that day, that there would be no tomorrow. Now the fishing we'd planned was out.

This didn't go over very well with Larry Clark. Larry was really mild-mannered, but he told the alternate ranger what he thought of him interfering with our project.

What he told the ranger, I can't repeat. We were all mad as – well, very disappointed. Carl Rosselli told us what a great job we'd done in carrying the outhouse to the lookout in two days. 🦋

# Book Review

## MORE THAN MY SHARE

by Carl Gidlund (Missoula '58)

Here's a book full of adventure by Starr Jenkins (CJ-48), a prolific freelance writer and an avid outdoorsman. It's a compendium of articles he's written for a variety of magazines.

Jenkins, a career college and high school educator, worked five summers for the U.S. Forest Service. He was a smokejumper, ground firefighter, "ribbies goon" and aerial observer. He also served three summers as a ranger in Yosemite National Park.

Although he was a smokejumper for only two seasons, he's distilled those months into 58 pages that are a refresher for those of us who jumped "in the old days," and a primer for younger jumpers who have an interest in how it was during the early decades of smokejumping.

Jenkins trained at and jumped from Cave Junction in 1948 and from Missoula in 1949. His second season was the year of the Mann Gulch Fire which consumed 12 jumpers and a fire-guard who'd jumped the previous year. It was the jumper program's worst single tragedy, and he relates how it brushed his life.

I first encountered that story, "We Jump into Fire," in a 1956 Bantam paperback entitled *Man Against Nature*, reprinted from the April 28, 1951, edition of the *Saturday Evening Post*. It was my introduction to smokejumping, and no doubt served as such for many other adventure-seeking youngsters. It still resonates.

The story: The summer had been hot and dry in the northern Rockies, and during the first week of August there was a

fire bust. A call for jumpers for several fires came in from Yellowstone National Park Wednesday Aug. 3, and eight men – including Jenkins – boarded a Ford Trimotor for the 200-mile trip.

The load included Missoula jumpers **Bill Hellman**, **Bob Bennett**, **Leonard Piper** and **Henry Thol**. Of the four, all but Hellman, who trained in 1946, were rookies.

The Ford landed in West Yellowstone to pick up a ranger, and there they learned one of the fires was already manned, so Hellman and Bennett got off the plane.

The rest took off in the Ford. Jenkins wanted to be last out so he could take pictures of the other jumpers exiting the aircraft. However, he didn't ask the spotter, **Henry Shank** (MSO-47), to change the jump order, so he and his jump partner **Kermit Cole** (MSO-48) were the first two out.

Two other jumpers, **Hal Samsel** and **Short Hall** (both MSO-49), leapt to another fire on the next stick, but Piper and Thol had a dry run.

Jenkins describes his jump, the cargo drop, firefighting and walk-out; then he and Cole made their way to Livingston, Mont., where Jenkins sent a postcard to his best friend among the jumpers, **Dave Navon** (MSO-49). They rode a train Saturday, Aug. 6, back to Missoula where they learned that Piper, Thol, Hellman, Bennett and Navon were among the Mann Gulch dead.

Jenkins reflects that, had he remained in the plane to take photos, he would have been one of the dry runners and probably dead in Mann Gulch.

Another story, "The Greatest Thrill of Them all," tells of the "slip jump" he was required to make during his rookie training in Cave Junction. That called for climbing three of the 28-foot chute's load lines until the canopy dumped most of the air, causing him to fall faster and straight down.

The theory was a jumper could use the maneuver to avoid falling into a river, lake, cliff, snags or rocks. Jenkins describes the climb as arduous with 60 pounds of jump suit and gear. There was also worrisome slack in the 25 other lines; they threatened to tangle with his legs. He also twirled as he fell and his descent was breathtakingly rapid.

Jenkins survived, of course, but the slip jump is no longer part of the smokejumper's repertoire for reasons that now seem obvious: Those dangling lines, the whirling dervish effect, and the fact that the pulled-down canopy acts like a sail, "carrying you along with the wind and nullifying the very escape from a perilous drift that it is intended to provide."

That tale is from an article in the summer 1960 issue of *Air BP*, British Petroleum's aviation





magazine. "Smokejumpers of Silver City" is a third-person account of an 18-man New Mexico crew. The year is not mentioned in the article but, noting the jumpers' names, it's obvious that the two fires described were in the 1950s. It was published first in the British adventure magazine *Wide World* in February 1957.

This reviewer jumped from Silver City in 1960, and the procedures, tools, equipment and aircraft Jenkins describes in his account are identical to those in use during my season there. I'm curious whether conditions and procedures have changed since then.

A pair of stories, "120 Square Miles of Fire" and "The Hand for All to Grasp," tell of a "pounder" burn in California's manzanita-loaded Los Padres National Forest on which Jenkins worked as an assistant foreman. The Refugio Fire of September 1955 threatened the Marine Corps crews the author helped supervise, and it's worth mention that there were no "shake-and-bake" fire shelters in those days; crews could fight fire at night; and retardant aircraft weren't deployed.

His stories of that fire were published in the *Wide World* issue of February 1958 and *Light & Life Evangel* the same month.

"Hay Drop on the Gila" tells of a routine jumper mission when the fire season is slow. Jenkins went along for the ride when a jumper trio and a pair of experienced Forest Service pilots supplied two backcountry cabins with some needed horse feed.

If you've participated in such missions, there's not much to learn here. There is, however, a great description of the Gila National Forest for those who haven't worked there or for expe-

rienced New Mex jumpers who'd like a refresher. However, for most readers of the 1958 *Aircraft Annual*, where Jenkins told this story first, it probably was very illuminating.

The cast of characters includes jumpers/cargo kickers **Paul Denison** (MSO-49), **Roland "Andy" Andersen** (MSO-52), and **Randy Hurst** (MSO-54) and pilots Hank Jori and Grant Ruth.

I've highlighted those stories that would be of most interest to smokejumpers, but there are many more that might be. Those include a description of a helitack fire, a jump into Glen Canyon,

a free fall in New Mexico, and a Trimotor spruce budworm spray job on the Santa Fe National Forest.

*More Than My Share* may be ordered for \$25 from Merritt Starr Books, 285 Buena Vista Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93405. California buyers must add 7.5 percent sales tax.

Another Starr Jenkins book that might be of interest is *Smokejumpers '49: Brothers in the Sky*. It's \$23.95 and available at the same address. 📖

You can reach Jenkins at (805) 543-6463 or [starrstell@gmail.com](mailto:starrstell@gmail.com).

## Memories Of A Missoula Jumper

by Tom McGrath (Missoula '57)

Here's to the Ford in the days of yore  
And the smell of the smoke as it came in the door.  
Here's to the Doug and the Travelair too  
And to all the guys on the '57 crew.  
Here's to the old dogs who showed us the way  
And here's to the young bucks who're jumping today.  
And here's to you and here's to me  
And here's to our part in that history.  
We did it right and we gave it our best  
And now we're taking our hard-earned rest.  
But we still can hear the siren's blast  
Just like it's today and not in the past:

"I'm on this load –  
Where's my good gear?"  
"Gimme a reserve."  
"Need a canteen here."

Line up at the door.  
"Been spotter checked?"  
Forgot the radio;  
can't leave yet.

Avgas fumes  
Engines' roar  
Pattee Canyon  
out the door.

It's six to the "Bob"  
And four to "kick."  
"Goddammit, fellows,  
it's two to the stick!"

Spotter's head  
is out in the blast.  
Streamers are out  
and falling fast.

Flames are gobbling,  
Wind is blowin',  
Weekend's coming,  
"Oats" are growin'!

Spot's coming up ...  
There's the slap!  
"1000, 2000, 3000 ..."  
WHAP!

Where's it crowning?  
Look for trails,  
Pick your spot,  
Steer your tails.

Feet together  
"OK here!"  
"Heads up, men –  
here comes the gear!"

Now I'm getting old and my hair's turning grey,  
My body's been busted and you're the same way  
But when there's fire in the forest and smoke in the air  
We're scanning the horizon and sniffing the air,  
Listening for turbines and the pop of a 'chute  
And dreaming of gobblers way back in the "Root."  
Though the hills are steeper and the fires are hotter,  
I'd sure like just one more out of the Otter.

## Are You Going to Be "Temporarily Away"?

As more of our membership moves with the weather, I am getting an ever-increasing number of *Smokejumper* magazines returned

by the post office marked "Temporarily Away." Since we mail the magazine via bulk mail, it is not forwarded, and we are charged first class postage for its return to me.

If you are leaving your mailing address during the months of March, June, September and/or December, please let me know. I can hold your magazine and mail it upon your return OR mail it

to your seasonal address. Please help us save this *triple mailing expense*. My contact information is on page three.

Another option *is to be added to our electronic mailing list.* 📧

---

## Get Smokejumper Magazine One Month Ahead Of The Rest

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

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

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

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

# Smokejumpers And Hotshots – A Compliment To ‘Crazy’ And Survival

Courtesy of John Neron (Full House Productions, Author Unknown)

Some people think heroism falls freely from the sky. It’s exposed by a crack in its underbelly – say ... heroism is a belly full of fire looking to escape and sear others with a memory. Though memories are short, memories of brave souls live a lifetime – some, several.

Stepping inside the black makes a man of a boy, a girl grows to be a woman. That’s based on a trust that God will survive – not the lowly son or daughter of a farmer, mechanic or truck driver who’s suited up for a trip into the wild, to piss on a bush, fell a snag or trench a line.

It is God who’s on trial. It’s God’s will to do more, or less.

“If you get me outta this one, I swear, I’ll go to church every day ... rest of my life, Lord!”

Softly and privately, prayers have been sung.

Quietly, listen. Pay attention. There’s a chorus of these prayers whispering through forests and grasslands every day – everywhere, as the wind happens by.

All prayers are answered – *God’s will*.

God and firefighters are on a two-way squawk any day there’s trouble. If it weren’t a direct line of communication, more would be handling matters with no deliberation over “the greater good.” They’d be sports stars, movie stars and singing idols pressing their paper money with an iron.

Yet, those who don’t covet gold find happiness elsewhere – being true to themselves; being authentic – noble men and women too bold to be famous.

Thank God He leads their charge because the rest of us know, without their commitment to pull our asses from the flames and into the black, we’d have fewer things to amuse: no homes to live, no video games to play, and, no fancy cars to drive up the ridge and watch the inferno.

We’d be bored.

Of considerable concern, in our hearts, are those called *smokejumpers*, and their not-so-distant cousins, *groundpounders* – a.k.a. *hotshots*. These fanciful addicts of awesome adrenaline and spectacular tension live a life apart of “the limit.” The amazing ferocity of flames elevates their imaginings (*after prayers*).

It’s a gathering of sentients who hobnob together and buck up each other’s courage in the face of com-

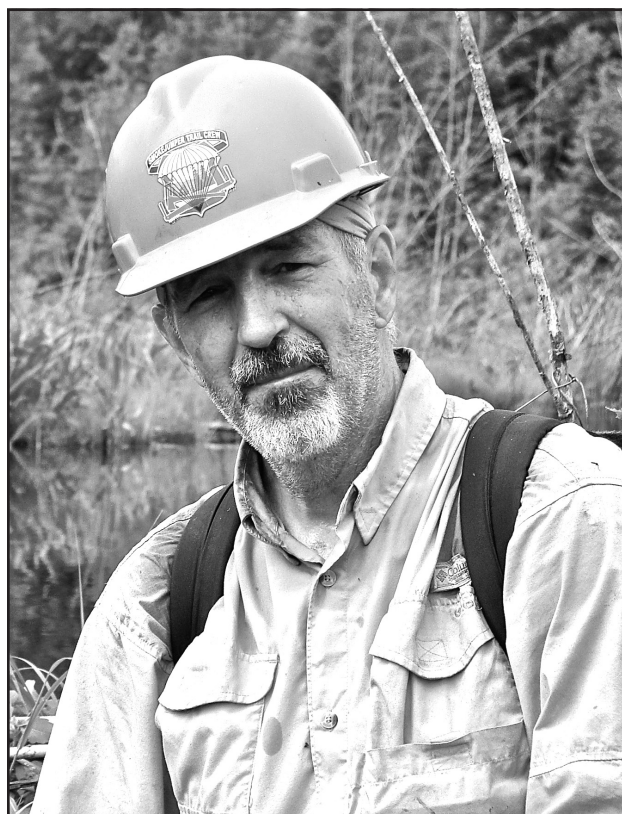
pletely insane situations – halting destruction of our national forests and grassy lowlands. God has to be at their side because no ordinary being would take that post, other than another firefighter of similar ability and faith (and lunacy) – devoted to an oath, *two-in, two-out*.

Trek or fly to this stain on our planet where chaos occurs – to do what? To risk their lives and test the human potential they have to offer – to defend a speck of Earth. Then pack, and hike, or roll back to a spartan life of applesauce and yard football.

The young should be recognized and the old canonized.

You hold our debt – *you* who’ve survived, and *you* who’ve fallen. We honor your tacit sense of duty, and share tears for the finest who passed.

All ... *heroes*. 🙏



Richard Trinity (MSO-66) Minnesota Trail Project 2011  
(Courtesy Jim Phillips)





# NSA Trail Crew



## Great Accommodations, Lots Of Work In Priest River Experimental Forest

By **Chuck Haynes** (Associate)

**S**QUAD LEADER **CARL Gidlund** (MSO-58) led a hardy band of NSA TRAMPS as we struggled through another tough week at Priest River Experimental Forest. **Bob Sallee** (MSO-49), **Paul Wilson** (MSO-50), **Jimmie Dollard** (CJ-52), **Hank Jones** (MSO-53), **Tom Oswald** (MSO-58), **Milt Knuckles** (MSO-61), **Karl Maerzluft** (FBX-67), **Mike Jones** (Associate), **Sue Palmer** (Associate), and I converged on the forest the week of July 17-23.

Carl had recruited Jimmie and Karl on short notice, when two of last year's crew members were forced to bail out (so to speak) due to personal issues.

As in the past, Forester-in-Residence Bob Denner treated us well at NSA's version of Club Med. We were housed in the VIP Lodge, which is situated in a rather idyllic setting.

The front porch has a lovely view of the grounds of Priest River's administration area and plenty of room to stretch out and relax after a hard day's work. The porch is our favorite place to gather, socialize and imbibe. The lodge has semi-private rooms, lace curtains on the windows, hot showers, etc.

It also has a full kitchen, in which Sue cooked up one glorious meal after another. She did her best to help us keep from starving. Her motto seems to be "No

matter how hard they work, they won't lose weight on my watch!" On the last night there, our domestic diva surprised us with a cake made with huckleberries that she had hand-picked fresh from the grounds that afternoon.

The Priest River Experimental Forest was established in 1911, and this year's project entailed a number of activities to prepare for the Centennial Celebration planned for Oct. 6-8, 2012. Much of the work was beautification, and when we departed the place looked substantially better than when we had arrived.

Denner has learned from experience that while age may have slowed us down a tad, there's still a lot of work left in us, and he kept us busy.

The initial research conducted at the forest was a seed source project. The researchers created a ponderosa pine plantation using seeds from all areas of North America where ponderosas are indigenous.

The plantation was laid out in a grid, and posts were placed in the ground with labels affixed to separate and identify the various seed sources.

As one can imagine, the plantation doesn't look quite the same as it did 100 years ago. Most of the ponderosas are gone, and a variety of other species have grown up in their place. Nevertheless, Denner wanted to display the area during the centennial

celebration.

Paul took the lead in that effort. Using the grid map and a compass, he walked the grid and found the posts which identified each stand. He flagged the posts and identified missing and damaged labels. Then he manufactured and installed replacement labels, a tedious task using a metal-strip label maker from the 1950s that was as contrary as a mule.

Hank, Mike, Karl, and I helped out with re-erecting fallen posts and clearing vegetation between the posts, so that visitors can more easily visualize the grid and distinguish the plots.

Many of the buildings at the forest are 1930s vintage, having been built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Signs identifying the buildings were probably not much newer, until the carpentry crew of Bob Sallee, Jimmie, Tom and Milt worked their magic. They routed, sanded and stained new signs for all the buildings using 1-by-10 western red cedar boards.

Each sign is dark brown with white paint in the recessed lettering. They are professional-quality signs that should last until the bicentennial celebration.

Denner had contracted to have a sign built for the main road entrance to the station, and the manufacturer had provided a schematic for the frame on which to mount it. Our carpenters built and installed the frame.



*Standing L-R: Milt Knuckles (MSO-61), Carl Gidlund (MSO-58), Sue Palmer (Associate), Karl Maerzluft (FBX-67), Tom Oswald (MSO-58), Bob Sallee (MSO-49), Mike Jones (Associate). Sitting Saw Horses L-R: Chuck Haynes (Associate) Paul Wilson (MSO-50), Jimmie Dollard (CJ-52), Bob Denner (Priest River Forester). Sitting Between Saw Horses: Hank Jones (MSO-53). (Courtesy C. Haynes)*

Bob Sallee said they didn't truly realize how big the frame was until it came time to load it onto the trailer. This behemoth is also likely to be standing for the bicentennial celebration, although we make no guarantees for the sign itself.

The frame is seven feet tall above the ground, with another three feet or so buried. It's six feet wide at the top, tapering to five at ground level. Our guys built it by bolting four 6-by-6 cedar posts together for each leg, then inserting three 4-by-4 posts into the legs as cross members to connect them.

The sign hadn't arrived by the time we left, but the frame is so impressive that passersby will know that something big is going on up that road.

Another major effort was finishing the Canyon Creek Trail, an early packing trail that has gone unattended over the past several years. Denner wanted it cleared and reopened because of its historical significance.

We had worked on the lower part of the trail last year, then earlier this spring a hotshot crew had worked the middle section. That left nearly a mile at the top of the trail to be

cleared. Hank, Mike, and I worked on it for two days, with Karl (who spent the week as a jack-of-all trades) pitching in on the last day.

I had done some trail maintenance work last year, but this was a whole new experience. I was astounded by the number of downed trees we had to clear off the trail. The first day we cut through 154 logs in 610 yards. That's roughly one log every four yards, most at least a foot in diameter.

The second day we went through another 157 logs in 535 yards. Hank said he'd never

seen a trail in worse shape. We had to reroute the trail around one log that was over three feet in diameter and at least 30 feet long. The previous week, I had gone through the NSA's sawyer certification in Missoula and had received training in the use of both a cross-cut and a chain saw. I'm glad we were using chain saws!

We also worked on a number of smaller projects. Last year the carpentry crew had built a new sliding barn door for the tool building. Over the winter the concrete ramp under the door shifted upward, binding the door. This year's carpenters had to trim the door to eliminate the binding.

We placed and/or replaced a number of road signs throughout the forest. We pressure-washed the station's conference center building, knocking off an accumulation of dirt and organic ma-

terials. We also pressure-washed the building's deck and steps and treated them with a penetrating deck oil.

Half a dozen of us got involved in that project, although several assumed supervisory roles. We were still brushing the oil into the steps when it started to rain. Hmmm ... maybe I should put that stuff on my steps in Austin. We could certainly use the rain.

One project, purely for beautification, involved removing the white paint from the amphitheater benches near the main office. Legend has it that a few years ago Carl and another squad member had painted the benches white. Carl claims they were told to paint the benches and that cans of white paint were what was available.

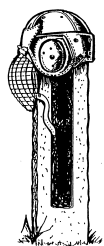
Denner, referring to Carl and his unnamed colleague as "partners in crime," claimed they had

misunderstood his instructions. This year Denner asked Carl to "rectify the misunderstanding" by sanding off the white paint and replacing it with a wood preservative.

Carl and Milt completed that project, but things got dicey at one point. Carl was sitting on one of the benches, sanding, when Milt noticed a flurry of activity under the bench. It turns out that Carl had positioned himself almost directly over a hornet's nest.

Fortunately, Milt alerted Carl to their presence before another legend could be born. Some speculated that Denner knew in advance about the hornet's nest, but I'm willing to reserve judgment.

All in all, it was a great week. We got a lot of work done. We benefited the Forest Service. And it was great fun working with a great bunch of guys. 🐝



## Off The List

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

Chuck Sheley  
10 Judy Lane  
Chico, CA 95926

### **William "Bill" Anderson** (Missoula '47)

Bill, 85, died April 19, 2012, in Stevensville, Montana. He joined the U.S. Navy in 1945 and earned an honorable discharge. After working as a Forest Service lookout, Bill trained and jumped from Missoula during the 1947 season. He worked as a parts man and service manager at Mountain Tractor Company and later served as a parts man at Missoula Truck Sales. He rode on horseback through most of Montana's western wilderness.

### **Walter Begalka** (Missoula '51)

Walter, 83, died February 6, 2012, in Ketchikan, Alaska. He attended South Dakota State University

before transferring to Colorado State University, from which he earned a bachelor's degree in Forest Management in 1951. That same summer, Walter trained and jumped from Missoula, his only season. He then joined the U.S. Marine Corps, serving from 1952 through 1954. His entire career involved work with wood products, and Walter was talented in woodworking, building large doll houses as a specialty.

### **Roddy Baumann** (Cave Junction '70)

Roddy, 62, died April 24, 2012, in Vancouver, Washington. He earned a bachelor's degree in Forest Management from Colorado State University in 1985, augmenting what had already proven to be a



successful U.S. Forest Service career. Roddy specialized in fuels and suppression as he served as a fire management officer and an assistant fire management officer; he wrapped up his career in 2004 with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a regional prescribed fire specialist. Roddy joined a Southern Oregon district trail crew at 18 and spent two seasons on the fire line before training as a smokejumper in Cave Junction in 1970. He jumped through the 1975 season. Roddy continued working in fire, contracting with federal agencies until the time of his death.

**Loyd Dale “Curly” Ross (McCall ’51)**

Curly, 82, died May 14, 2012, in Boise, Idaho. He attended the College of Idaho on a football scholarship and graduated from there in 1952, after which he joined the Albertsons grocery store chain, for which he worked his entire career. He jumped from McCall in 1951 and 1955. Curly regarded the 1951 season as “a summer he’d never forget,” according to his best friend and fellow jumper, LaVon “Scotty” Scott (MYC-48). Curly and his wife established the Colleen and Curly Ross Football Endowment Scholarship Fund at Boise State University and were major benefactors to the academic and athletic departments at the College of Idaho.

**Clarence “Buddy” Rausch (Idaho City ’57)**

Buddy, 75, died May 23, 2012, in Billings, Montana. He earned a degree from Idaho State University, where he won the 1959 NCAA national championship in boxing at 147 pounds. Buddy served in the Army Reserve, reaching 2nd lieutenant, and served as the boxing coach at Fort Benning, Georgia. He jumped at Idaho City in 1957-58 and from McCall in 1959. Buddy had a 34-year career in the claims department at Farmers Insurance, retiring as claims supervisor in 1995. He was also a prominent basketball and football official, working those sports for 38 years and earning a

spot in the Montana Officials Association Hall of Fame.

**Terence “Terry” McCabe (North Cascades ’58)**

Terry, 72, died May 15, 2012, in Twisp, Washington. He served in the Army from January 1962 through December 1963 and was stationed in Berlin, where he met his wife, Barbara. Terry worked for the U.S. Forest Service until retiring in 1994 as fire management officer. He continued to work for the Forest Service as an air attack supervisor for 10 additional summers. Terry and his wife, who were avid walkers, hiked through many European nations and covered the Pacific Coast Trail throughout Washington and Oregon.

**James “Jim” Kosy (North Cascades ’68)**

Jim, 64, died June 3, 2012, in Kennewick, Washington. After the family moved from Wisconsin to Ellensburg, Washington in 1949, Jim went on to earn a degree in Business Administration from Central Washington University in 1979. He started work with the Forest Service on the Ellensburg Ranger district and jumped at North Cascades during the 1968-73 seasons. Jim then embarked on a career that culminated as budget officer for the U.S. Forest Service and the National Resource Conservation Service.

**Robert “Bob” Howard (Missoula ’65)**

Bob, 71, died July 7, 2012, in Martin City, Montana. He earned a degree in Wildlife Management from Montana State University in 1969. Bob jumped at Missoula in 1965-66 following three years of U.S. Forest Service employment, including one as a hot-shot. As an outdoorsman, he was an accomplished angler and traveled to New Zealand and Scotland to pursue the fish. Bob was a founding member of the Montana Furbearer Conservation Alliance. 🐾

**NSA Good Samaritan Fund  
Contributions**

**Contributions since the previous publication of donors, July 2012**

**Donor**

**In Memory/Honor of**

Perry Rahn (MSO-61) ..... Dale Swedeen (MSO-61)  
 Eddie Yosick (MYC-81) ..... Mick Moore (MYC-77)  
 John Marker (Associate)

**Total funds disbursed to smokejumpers and families since 2004—\$19,800**

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

# A Humble “Thank You”

by Frankie Romero (McCall '89)

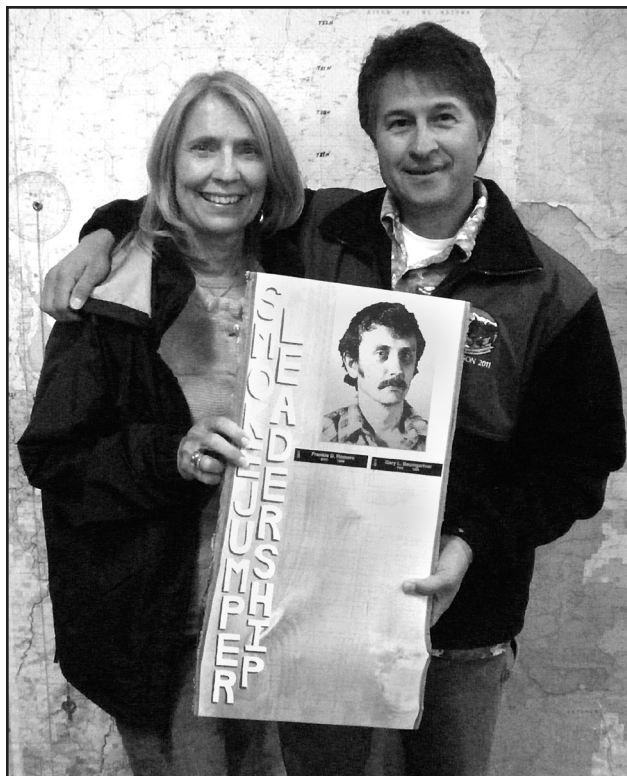
I was honored to receive the Al Dunton Smokejumper Leadership award from the Dunton family and the National Smokejumper Association. The presentation was made at the McCall smokejumper loft May 25, 2012, and in attendance were current and former jumpers, pilots, Payette National Forest fire managers, dispatchers, administrative staff, friends and family.

First, let me just say what a humbling experience this was for me. At the presentation was a collection of people whom I consider my mentors and peers. **John Humphries** (MYC-79) recommended I be hired in McCall and trained me as a “Ned” in 1989. **Chuck Buescher** (MYC-79) signed me off as a division supervisor in 1997.

I jumped and fought many fires alongside **Leo Cromwell** (IDC-66), **Jerry Ogawa** (MYC-67), **Rob Morrow** (MYC-89), **Eric Brundige** (MYC-77), **Pete Pride** (MYC-83), **Rick Hudson** (BOI-73) and others in attendance.

As base manager, I've spent the past seven years working with and learning from McCall's current smokejumpers, a high-performing and service-minded bunch of which I am so proud to have been a part.

I mentioned an old Spanish saying to the group,



Mary Dunton and Frankie Romero (Courtesy F. Romero)

which goes: *El que corre con lobos, a aullar se ensena.* Loose translation: *If you run with wolves, you're gonna learn to howl.*

I learned to do a lot of my howling from this group while practicing to be a smokejumper and fire manager. I owe all of you my thanks for sharing your knowledge, experience, wisdom and humor with me over the years.

A debt of gratitude goes out to the National Smokejumper Association for its sponsorship. The NSA board has embraced and supported the Al Dunton Smokejumper Leadership Award. “Thank you” to NSA representatives **Guy Hurlbutt** (IDC-62) and McCall pilot **Charlotte Larson** for presenting the award – it was an honor to receive it from you both.

The involvement of the NSA gives me high hopes that smokejumpers' achievements will continue to be recognized for a long time to come.

Most importantly, I want to thank Mary Dunton, **Melanie Dunton-Vining** (MYC-99), and the entire Dunton family for creating this award in the memory of one of the greats, **Al Dunton** (FBX-67). Your family's willingness to promote the recognition of others through this award is a true gift to our community and the firefighting profession.

It is very fitting that this award be named in honor of Al's legacy of leadership as a smokejumper, base manager, fire management officer, and fire director for the Bureau of Land Management.

Mary and Mel, thank you so much for bringing your family out to present the award. I hope Al enjoyed seeing you all gathered among your extended smokejumper family as much as we did.

Like the legacy that Al and his contemporaries left to us, I believe the work of today's smokejumpers reflects positively on the profession. Commitment to duty, drive to exceed expectations, and desire to always seek improvement are traits that I see in the program that make me feel good about its future.

The recognition of individuals working to make tomorrow better than today is a great way to display the quality of service the smokejumper program provides and put it on display for internal and external audiences.

Again, my sincere thanks to the Al Dunton family and NSA partnership that made this possible. You have provided the firefighting community and the smokejumper program with a great service, and I am truly honored to be a recipient of this prestigious award. 🙏

# Barry Burris NSA Scholarship Award

by Fred Cooper (North Cascades '62)

**B**arry Burris, a Missoula Jumper, rookied in 2000 when he was 21 years old. Before and during his early jumping years, Barry had a goal of becoming a primary care physician taking pre-medical courses during the off-season preparing him for the field of medicine. While jumping, he said he



L-R: Fred Cooper (NCSB-62), Barry Burris (MSO-00) (Courtesy Roger Savage)

“became hooked to this new lifestyle and decided to put his dreams of becoming a doctor on hold.” He said he was grateful for this hiatus because it allowed him to pursue his passion for smokejumping while sculpting the quality traits needed for good smokejumpers and thoughtful doctors.

When jump seasons were slow, Barry continued school, working on a degree in microbiology with sights still on medical school. During this time he shadowed medical doctors. Over time he became jaded with the practice and philosophy of conventional medicine. One day, a friend mentioned naturopathic medicine and how these doctors address the underlying cause of disease so patients don't have to rely on medications. Barry was intrigued and began shadowing naturopathic doctors. He witnessed many patients suffering for years, who were on multiple medications, and how they were cured of chronic illnesses when naturopathic doctors developed treatment plans that addressed underlying problems instead of the obvious symptoms.

Barry has now decided to finish his education in naturopathic medicine. In doing so, if he is able to jump during the next two summers, it will be very limited. The NSA Scholarship will help Barry meet his financial, educational needs. Barry said, “Smoke-jumping will always be near and dear to my heart, but I'm excited to move on to this new chapter in my life where I can help others restore health so they can have more vitality and happier lives.” 🦋

## Pope Awarded 2012 Jukkala-McBride Scholarship

**C**lem V. Pope (GAC-03) has been awarded one of the Art Jukkala-Jon McBride Scholarships for 2012. He is completing his bachelor's degree in Natural Resources at Oregon State University.

Denis Symes (MYC-63) presented the scholarship to Clem in the U.S. Forest Service headquarters exhibit area in Washington, D.C.

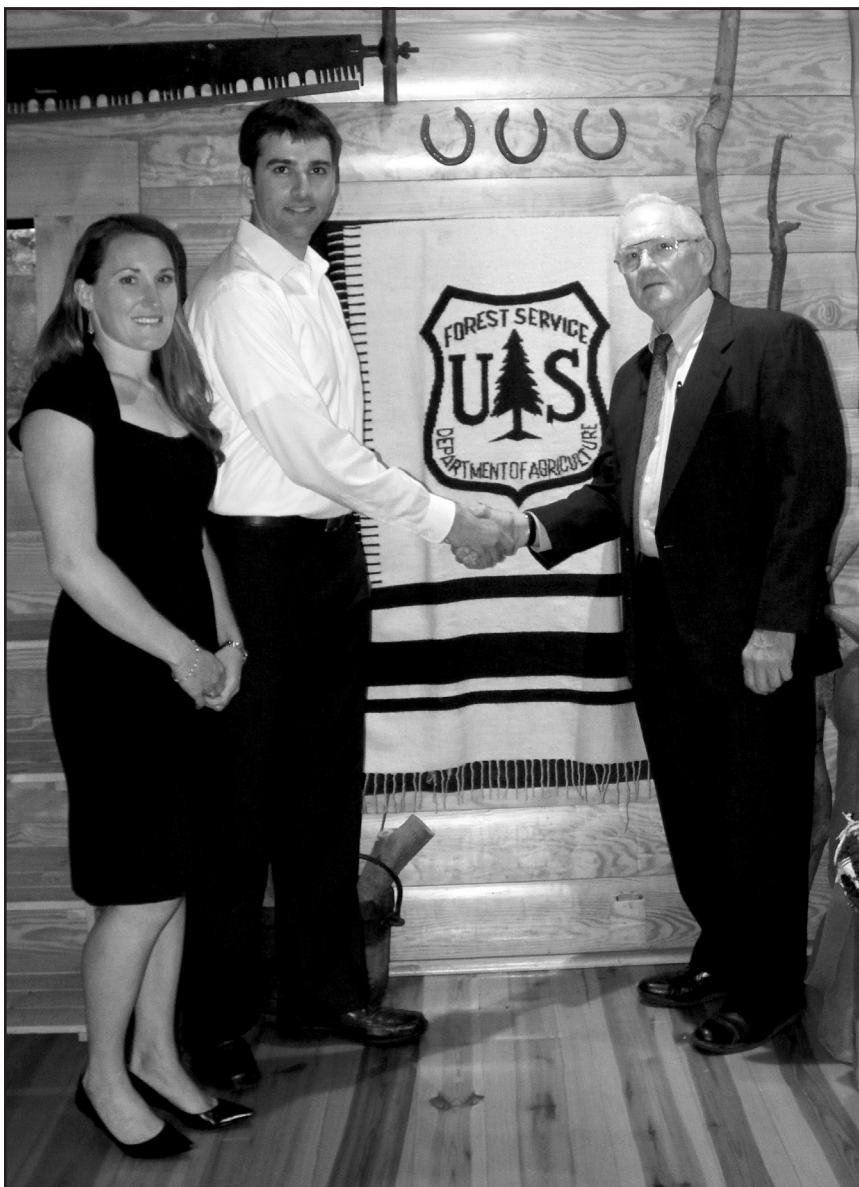
Clem jumped at Grangeville during 2003-07 and Missoula during 2010-11. His wife, Sarah Altemus-Pope, jumped at Missoula during 2001-07 and 2010.



Clem served in Iraq as an Air Force forward air controller in 2009 and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service. He has recently been on temporary detail to the Forest Service headquarters in the International Programs Office. Sarah is a full-time employee of the International Programs Office.

The couple is returning to Missoula for the 2012 fire season. Besides working for the Forest Service, Sarah is completing her law degree at the University of Oregon.

Clem and Sarah live in Springfield, Va., with their children, Owen (age 8) and daughter Ailah (age 4). As an interesting aside, Clem's grandfather, **Clem L. Pope** (CJ-46), was also a smoke-jumper. 🌲



*L-R: Sarah Altemus Pope (MSO-01), Clem Pope (GAC-03) and Denis Symes (MYC-63). (Courtesy D. Symes)*

---

## Quick Work By Insurance, Fellow Jumpers Save Property After Close Call

by **Bill Ruskin** (Cave Junction '58)

---

**W**arren Pierce (CJ-64) and his wife, Joan, live near the southern boundary of the U.S. Air Force Academy and adjacent to the Pike-San Isabel National Forest on the west, in Colorado Springs, Colo. Their lot is about an acre,

half of which was the Pierce Forest.

As the Waldo Canyon Fire burned north toward the academy – forcing evacuation of the southern part – the wind shifted and the fire turned easterly. It roared down a ridge

and burned out 80 percent of the Pierce Forest, as well as the vegetation of other residences with property backing up to the national forest.

The fire started consuming the Pierce's redwood deck, only to be stopped by a diligent fire crew





*Warren Pierce surveys burn behind his home in Colorado Springs. (Courtesy Bill Ruskin)*

saving the house.

In a 'fire damage update' e-mail message July 7, Warren advised friends "that (insurance company) USAA has done its thing, and the remains of the Pierce Forest is now mostly on the ground and being carted off."

Warren said: "My biggest chore now, is building check dams (with a catch basin behind) before it rains."

Warren noted, "I never

thought I'd live in a clear-cut area with a view up the hill to a burned out forest. We're planning on replanting fewer but bigger trees, but we can't replace the mature trees we lost. You would have to see the burn area to believe?"

With swift action from his insurance company, Warren's knowledge of erosion control and reforestation from his seasons with the Forest Service, and a little help from his friends, the Pierce property was cleared and

stabilized in less than two weeks of returning home.

It's encouraging to add that soon after the check dams and "straw-roll wattles" were installed, thunderstorms hit the area and the dams and wattles successfully checked the flow of the ash. After the first thunderstorm, we promptly dug out the catch basins, diverted some of the flow (evident from flow patterns), and reinforced the hillside with an additional 125 feet of wattle. 🌲

---

# Book Review

## LES JOSLIN PUBLISHES REVISED EDITION OF UNCLE SAM'S CABINS

---

LES JOSLIN OF Bend, Ore., has just published a revised and enlarged edition of *Uncle Sam's Cabins: A Visitor's Guide to Historic U.S. Forest Service Ranger Stations of the West*. Many former smokejumpers who pursued Forest Service careers may find an old home or two in this book, which is intended to advance and enhance National Forest System heritage tourism.

Les has carved out a niche writing, editing, and publishing Forest Service history these past couple of decades. The original 1995 edition of *Uncle Sam's Cabins*, long sold out, was a step back in time to 75 historical Forest Service ranger stations and guard stations throughout the West – stations from which early-day forest rangers patrolled and protected America's magnificent National Forest System.

This new, revised, and enlarged edition contains 92 such stations. There are 95, if you count the historical ranger station structure – now in its third location in its third state since 1933 – that inspired this book.

"As close as I can fix it," Les writes in the prologue of the new edition, "my interest in U.S. Forest Service ranger stations – which resulted in the 1995 edition of this book – dates from the afternoon in June 1962 when I arrived at the old Bridgeport Ranger Station to begin my Forest Service seasonal 'career' as a fire guard on the Toiyabe National Forest in eastern California."

Later that year, the one-room,

Great Depression-era district ranger's office building, replaced by a new structure, was moved to the Reese River Ranger Station site in central Nevada. "I wouldn't see it again for 42 years."

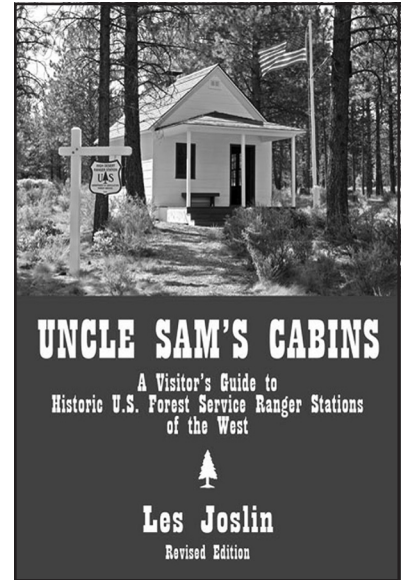
"But, over the years, I ran across many other historic ranger stations – they're historic if built before World War II – on national forests throughout the West. In the early 1990s, I hit on the idea of doing for historic ranger stations what [other writers] had done for fire lookouts."

The result was the 1995 edition of *Uncle Sam's Cabins*. And now, some 17 years later, the revised edition again tells the stories of those which best meet Joslin's criteria of accessibility, historical integrity and interest to visitors.

"The revised edition includes many of those same historic ranger stations and many others I have discovered during the ensuing years," Joslin explained.

All have fascinating stories. Some remain in service; some are interpreted historical sites; many support themselves as recreation rental cabins. Most are easy to get to; a few are in remote locations. In a poignant epilogue, Les shares what became of that one-room, Bridgeport Ranger District office building that inspired *Uncle Sam's Cabins* and is pictured in its current location – at the High Desert Museum south of Bend – on the cover of this revised edition.

The original edition had, as this revised edition has, a simple format. After an introductory

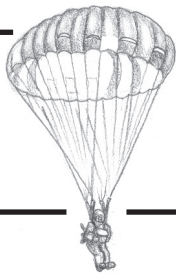


chapter on forest rangers and ranger stations, the historical ranger stations profiled appear in chronological order in seven chapters based on the Forest Service's seven western regions. Access information is provided for each.

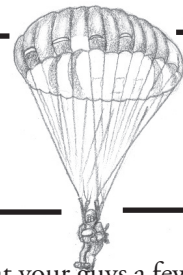
The book's purpose is straightforward: to help national forest visitors enjoy their visits by seeing "something new" in their national forests. The revised edition does this in 333 pages that include 260 historical and current photographs and eight maps.

If you don't find it at a bookseller, you can order the revised edition of *Uncle Sam's Cabins* from Wilderness Associates, P.O. Box 5822, Bend, OR 97708, or from the publisher's website at [www.wildernessheritage.com](http://www.wildernessheritage.com) for \$20 a copy, including postage, or from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) for the same price, plus postage. 🌲





# ODDS AND ENDS



by **Chuck Sheley**

**Congratulations and thanks to Cameron Lawrence (GAC-91) who just became our latest Life Member.**

From the *Missoulian* April 20, 2012: "A Drummond-area ranching family has won a \$730,000 judgment against the state of Montana after a jury agreed that backfires set during the 2000 Ryan Gulch Fire negligently ruined much of their ranch.

'I hope it will make the state think twice about these operations,' attorney **Quentin Rhoades** (MSO-89) said after the Granite County jury delivered its verdict on Wednesday. Rhoades represented Fred and Joan Weaver and their daughter, Vickie Weaver."

**Richard Zehr** (MSO-43) was featured in the April 18, 2012, issue of the *Pontiac Daily Leader*. Dick, who jumped out of Missoula 1943-45, turned 91 and has been married to his wife, Lois, for 65 years.

**Chuck Pickard** (MSO-48): "Trimotor (NC8407) recently made a visit to Vero Beach, Florida, that brought out quite a group of retired airmen from many backgrounds, including a retired Captain who flew Fords for Eastern. A large group of retired flyboys from the Air Force, as well as many retired commercial pilots visited the old lady. Only one former smokejumper was there."

**Dick Shaw** (MSO-74): "Hi Chuck, I have been meaning to contact you for several years but haven't gotten to it until now. I jumped out of Missoula from 1974-1979 and 1983. My history with you goes back before that when you coached at Chico Jr. and Chico High School. I played football and track at Bidwell Jr. and the other (better) high school in the late 60s and early 70s. I remember you and Coach **Keith Lockwood** (CJ-64) were smokejumping when I was in high school and remember thinking it was kind of cool. I was a decent shot putter and discus thrower (held the Eastern Athletic league record in the shot put for a couple of years) and threw the hammer at Chico State for two years before I decided I didn't want to weigh 230 pounds (I jumped at 175) by the time I was a senior. I don't know if you remember me—you coached many years, and I wasn't on a



team you coached (beat your guys a few times though), but you were my first look into the world of smokejumping. "I was in CJ in the late '70s (jumped two or three fires there) and met people who knew you there (Trooper Tom, Mouse before he died and others). I am sure we have other mutual friends—smoke jumping is a small world without the usually 6 degrees of separation. Anyway, just wanted to let you know I remember you, and my path has crossed yours several times in the last 40 (yikes) years. Hope all is well. Keep up the good work with the NSA."

*I remember Dick from the days when he threw the shot and disc for the other high school in town. He was really good!-(Ed.)*

**Leo Cromwell** (IDC-66): "The McCall Smokejumpers are planning on their Region-4 Smokejumper Reunion that has been held every five years since 1988. This will be number six and it is planned for *June of 2013.*"

**Gary Shade** (MSO-69): "I've recently published a book, *The Hotshot Chronicles* (not about firefighting). Check out my website: [www.hotshotchronicles.com](http://www.hotshotchronicles.com)."

**Bill Cramer** (NIFC-90 Chief Alaska Smokejumpers): "We presented **Gary Baumgartner** (FBX-88) with the 2011 **Al Dunton** Smokejumper Leadership Award on Friday (May 11, 2012). The presentation went really well with Mary Dunton, our State Director, Associate State Director, and quite a few local alumni in attendance.

The award gained an impressive amount of support on the DOI side of the house with articles in 'oneInterior' and coverage in the local press.

On behalf of the jump program, I want to thank you and the directors for your support and assistance in developing this award. Aside from the well-earned recognition to selected individuals, this award will help increase awareness of the positive contributions the program brings to both agencies."

**Fred Donner** (MSO-59): "I knew **Don Hansen** (MSO-57) my (first) rookie year at Missoula in 1958. He is a Eureka, Montana, native. Don was two years at Grangeville and was on the first Alaska crew in 1959. In 1960 I was an Air Force aviation cadet navigator upperclassman and, to our mutual astonishment, Don

shows up as an underclassman in my same squadron. I've been looking for him for 51 years and just found him through an Air Force officer who looks for old navigators like John McDaniel looks for old jumpers. (NSA had no record of him.) We talked for an hour last night getting caught up. For all you old GAC and charter Alaska jumpers, **Don is at 414 North Cedar St., Jenks, OK 74037-2913, phone (918) 299-2437.** That's near Tulsa. He is not on internet right now but hopes to replace a dinosaur computer soon. Don was a KC-135 and RC-135 navigator with several long tours in Alaska and later a U-2 mission planner before retiring from the Air Force. He knew nothing of the NSA, magazine, reunions, or volunteer crews, but he will be joining now. He is a widower with a handicapped son to care for so he doesn't travel far, and I am sure he would be glad to hear from anyone who knew him."

**Leo Cromwell (ICD-66):** "I'm pleased to announce that **Joe Brinkley (MYC-98)** has accepted the McCall Smokejumper Base Manager position. Joe is from Burns, Oregon, and started his fire career with the BLM in Burns in 1990. In 1994 he worked a Forest Service engine in Burns and from 1995-97 he was on the Prineville Hotshot crew. The next summer Joe was a rookie smokejumper at McCall. In 2004-2005 he was detailed as the Asst. Training Foreman. In 2007 he was selected for the Asst. Loadmaster and the next year he moved into the Loadmaster position. Joe has also detailed in the Payette SO as the Deputy Fire Staff Officer."

From the *Peninsula Daily News*, Port Angeles, Washington: "Former smokejumper **Howard Chadwick (MYC-52)** is offering a poetry reading at the Renaissance Cafe. Chadwick, whose summer jobs have ranged from fire lookout to being a smokejumper, has since worked as an explosive ordnance disposal officer in the Army and as a USFS researcher. Now a resident of Dungeness, he's a scenic-backdrop painter for local theater groups. He's also the artist behind the mural at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Peabody streets in Port Angeles."

**John Nichols (MSO-75):** "I retired with 40 years from the FS (four military) which included five as a smokejumper. I retired as an FS Geologist with last 27 years on the Ouachita NF. Still involved with fire, now just as an information officer."

**Buster Moore (RDD-57):** "I read with much interest the story about the Norton Creek disaster (July *Smokejumper*). That happened just as I got back to Redding in 1965 from my stint in the US Army. I had jumped a fire in 1958 in Squaw Creek with Moose (**Ken Salyer MYC-54**) and it brought back lots of memories. He wasn't

married at that time and wore a medallion around his neck that said: 'Vaya Con Dios, Mia Novia.' I asked him what that meant, not knowing any Spanish. He said his girl friend gave it to him when they parted ways and that was about all he had to say about that. The fire was a two-manner and we had a good time, other than the poison oak."

**John Marker (Associate/NSA Board Member):** "Chuck, I enjoy all of the stories in *Smokejumper* and look forward to each issue. However, **Gary Watts' (MYC-54)** story of Norton Creek gave me an emotional reaction that transported me back to my firefighting days and my own personal experience of dealing with the loss of friends in the battle with fire. Gary's writing also increased my anger and frustration with the wildfire leadership today who have no understanding of the sacrifices made by their predecessors who protected the Nation's natural resources. My thanks to you and Gary for a great reminder that these beautiful lands have a price."

**Dick Flaharty (MSO-44):** "Chuck, I thought you'd be interested in hearing about a book published by **Edward M. Arnett (MSO-45)**. You might have him listed by his nickname, "Ned." The book is a short, (113 pages) biographical account of his experience in CPS, entitled, *A Different Kind Of War Story: A Conscientious Objector In World War II*. It's a paperback, and the cover has the title superimposed on a picture of a smokejumper jumping out of a plane. In the chapter on his smokejumper experience, he gives a brief accounting of his eight fire jumps. I understand that the book is available through Amazon."

Ned is a NSA member living in North Carolina. From the Amazon website: Edward M. (Ned) Arnett was born in Philadelphia, in 1922. He grew up in the Quaker pacifist environment and served as a conscientious objector during WWII on projects described in this book. From the age of ten he cultivated an interest in chemistry and spent most of his life as a teacher and research scientist at the University of Pittsburgh and Duke University. He was elected to the National Academy of sciences for his research in organic and physical chemistry. He and his wife, Sylvia, have raised five sons and now live in Durham, North Carolina."

In response to my appeal for items for the Siskiyou Smokejumper Museum at Cave Junction, **Dan Mitchell (RDD-78)** sent along his old, aluminum, red Bullard hardhat. Very salty look with the dents. I'll take it to CJ in September when my wife and I man the museum for a week.

**Roger Wolfertz (CJ-48)** sent along an interesting article

from the July-August 2012 issue of *The Atlantic* relating to the development of a space suit designed to let “skydivers” fall from 120,000 feet. The use of

skydivers is a bit off the mark as the program is aimed at high-altitude pilots and possible astronauts in the future. It is an interesting read in any case. 🦋

## “Everybody’s Grandfather Was A Smokejumper”

by Les Kile (North Cascades ’48)

**M**y granddaughter, Jenna, is a recent graduate of the University of Montana with a Forestry degree in Range Management. She is now employed by the Leavenworth Ranger District in central Washington.

At a recent meeting of forest employees, she met up with a couple of young “smokejumpers” from the North Cascades Smokejumper Base, while waiting in the lunch lines. At some point in the conversation, she informed them that her grandfather had been a smokejumper.

The boys must have been concerned that some imposter was trying to gain fame and glory by falsely claiming to have been a smokejumper. Their response was: “Yeah, yeah, yeah – everybody’s grandfather was a smokejumper.”

In defense of my granddaughter, I will have to say: This grandfather was in fact a smokejumper. I spent the fire seasons of 1948-51 at the base in Winthrop, Wash.

Of course, this was the time during which **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40) was base foreman, **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46), **Roy Goss** (NCSB-46) and **Elmer Neufeld** (CJ-44) were squad leaders.

Some of my comrades and friends were **Keith “Gus” Hendrickson** (NCSB-47), **Carl Schmidt** (NCSB-48), **Hal Werner** (NCSB-48), **Jim Campbell** (NCSB-48), **Bud Lloyd** (NCSB-49) and others. As 1948 was the year of the flood on the Columbia River, 20 beginners were trained that year.

I made my way through the training, keeping my mouth shut about the fact that I’d never been up in an airplane. Consequently, I took off in the Nordyne six times before I ever landed in a plane (drop canceled due to wind).

In 1952 and ’53, I was employed by Forest Supervisor Bob Beeman as aerial observer for the Wenatchee National Forest, patrolling for fires after lightning storms. Ken Patton was the pilot. He was actually an aerial pesticide sprayer, operating in the orchards of this area, so his plane was equipped with tanks. Using this airplane in 1953, he doused a grass fire which was

climbing a ridge on the Wenatchee National Forest.

I do not know if this was a first or not, but it was the first I’d ever heard of. Perhaps someone else has more information as to the use of retardant airplanes. 🦋

## If You Are Over 29 Years Old You Cannot Jump

by Don Havel (Fairbanks ’66)

**O**r if you’re fat, you cannot jump! I think it’s always good to know these things before that second foot leaves the doorway of a plane that’s up in the air.

Long before I ever thought I’d someday work for the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, I read these facts in the 1949 Yearbook of Agriculture. The government published it, and I still have held onto a copy. This book was titled *Trees*.

There is an article in that book on aerial firefighting, starting on page 508. You old salts should have intently studied that article before you turned 30. You might not be limping around today.

The article was written by Mr. Claton S. Crocker, who appears to have quite a distinguished record in the area of forestry, especially fighting fires in the Rocky Mountain country. This is what he says on page 512, paragraph two, concerning fitness for the job:

“Statistics on 10,000 timber jumps offer some interesting information. For instance, men older than 29 years cannot jump ... nor can men weighing more than 180 pounds expect to hit the ground without broken bones.”

He also says: “Smokejumping is dangerous. It is no job for the timid or physically unsound.” He doesn’t say anything about the mentally unsound. After all, you are leaping out of an airplane and into a fire.

Well, there you have it – right from a United States of America government publication. How good can that be? 🦋