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Smokejumper Magazine, April 2010

National Smokejumper Association

Earl Cooley

Chuck Sheley

Rufus Robinson

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**SPECIAL
ISSUE**

In Memoriam Earl Cooley, 1911–2009

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
APRIL 2010

SMOKEJUMPER

INSIDE: SPECIAL FEATURES INCLUDING ...

Stories about and photos of the pioneer smokejumpers

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Check the NSA website



Message from the President



by **John Twiss**
(Redmond '67)
PRESIDENT

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED about the future of smokejumping? Part of the National Smokejumper Association's mission states that “we will advocate for the smokejumper program's evolution.”

Is smokejumping valuable and needed today? Who decides how many smokejumpers are needed on an annual basis and what criteria are used? In which situation are smokejumpers most cost-effective? Who decides if and when a smokejumper gets called to a fire and what guidelines are used? How long will the smokejumper program last?

These are questions that the NSA board is discussing. Our goal is to be supportive of the current smokejumper programs, where appropriate, while under-

standing the agency's total fire-management program.

Through board members **Jerry Williams** (RAC-72) and **Tom Boatner** (FBX-80), we have learned that 98 percent of all fires are successfully suppressed during initial attack. We also learned that the 2 percent that escape initial attack – and often become megafires – result in 70 percent of the agency's annual fire-suppression costs of approximately \$1.5 billion.

We wonder: Can additional or different utilization of the smokejumper program help reduce that 2 percent?

With 105 million acres congressionally designated as wilderness and 60 million acres of Inventoried National Forest Roadless Areas, it appears that quick access to remote forest fires will be a future need. Add to that the fact that 140 million acres of National Forest lands are unhealthy – overgrown, diseased, bug-infested – and highly prone to large, hot fires, you have a need for highly-skilled wildfire fighters who understand prescribed-fire and large-fire behavior.

I think smokejumpers fit that need and more. What do you think? 🧐

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National Smokejumper Association Founder

300 Come Out To Honor Pioneer of Smokejumping: Earl Cooley

by Kim Briggeman – Missoulian staff writer

This article was published Nov. 17, 2009, in "The Missoulian," Missoula, Mont. Reprinted with permission.

Not everyone who paid final respects to Earl Cooley (MSO-40) on Monday knew the man. Some, if not most, came to the Sunset Memorial Funeral Home west of Missoula because of the legends and the legacy Cooley left behind when he

died Nov. 9 at age 98.

"I'm just a jumper," shrugged Court Wallace (GAC-04), who sat in a back wing at a memorial service that drew some 300 people.

Wallace and most other current smokejumpers know Cooley through the stories that have been passed down of his work in the early years of the Forest Service smokejumping era and his part in the first jump onto a wildfire in Idaho in 1940.

They had met the ailing Cooley only when he presented them their freshman class jump pins and certificates. Even as his health deteriorated, Cooley took pride in the task every summer up to and including the past one, said Ed Ward (MSO-80), superintendent of the Missoula smokejumper base.

Wallace had a ball cap on his lap that read "Nez Perce Forest," the forest where Rufus Robinson (MSO-40) of Kooskia, Idaho, and Cooley, who grew up in Corvallis, made their jump into history and lore 69 summers ago.

Though he now jumps out of Missoula, Wallace worked on the Nez Perce for several years, he said. In September 2005, he and some fellow jumpers took time out of a cabin protection project in the Selway-Bitterroot to hike some 15 miles to the Marten Creek site where Cooley and Robinson first jumped.

With the help of a GPS locator and a Forest Service map, they found it – and Wallace still shakes his head. Cooley always said it was remote. Wallace said it's still at least two miles from the nearest trail. "It's funny. We were hoping to find a big meadow," he said.

Instead they found a spot "way down in this gnarly canyon that's solid spruce," he said.

On that windy July day in 1940, first the strings of Cooley's chute tangled and then he landed in one of those spruces. He made it down safely to join Robinson in containing the blaze.

He made 16 more jumps that first summer and 48 in the next nine years. But that first was the closest call he ever had, Cooley said in a 2005 Public Broadcasting System interview played in the funeral home.

Other "chuters" found trouble sleeping, but never Cooley.

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Smokejumper base abbreviations:

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



Rufus Robinson, Frank Derry & Earl Cooley



Earl Cooley 1967

Pioneer Smokejumper Earl Cooley

Photo's Courtesy Earl Cooley Collection



Earl Cooley & Rufus Robinson 1970's



Earl Cooley 1940



Roy Mattson & Earl Cooley



Moose Creek Loft 1940

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

“Oh yeah – hell, I enjoyed jumping,” he said in the interview, eliciting a chuckle from Monday’s mourners.

Cooley’s impact on smokejumping and firefighting was felt around the West – and honored around the nation. *The Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* were among the national publications that carried byline stories of his life and death in the past week.

“We make a lot out of his first jump, but he did a lot of other things for smokejumping,” pointed out **Jon McBride** (MSO-54) of Missoula, a retired jumper.

Cooley was at the forefront in the development of firefighting tools and technology. Among his contributions was testing and then improving the old Eagle parachute with which he made his first jumps, and which McBride said would “open with a bang and just about knock the wind out of you.”

From his home in Missoula, McBride coordinates the Art Jukkula Trails Maintenance Program – named after retired smokejumper **Art Jukkula** (MSO-56) – for the National Smokejumper Association, an organization Cooley founded.

Indeed, Cooley’s history is directly linked with that of smokejumping. He was the spotter in the airplane on jumping’s darkest day, at the Mann Gulch Fire north of Helena in 1949 that claimed 13 lives.

When he got too old to jump, he was a Forest Service district ranger on the Nez Perce and at Noxon. He returned to Missoula in 1958 and spent the last 13 years of his Forest Service career running the smokejumper base.

He and Irene, his wife of more than 70 years, raised five daughters who survive him along with their husbands, 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Cooley’s remains were buried at the Corvallis Cemetery on Monday afternoon.

Back in Missoula, Cathy Scribner, a chaplain for Hospice of Missoula, eulogized Cooley and spoke of his wit, his courage and passion, his inner strength and his iron grip. She noted what she called his “heroic status among smokejumpers around the world.”

“He found his church in the mountains and the wild blue sky,” she said.

Court Wallace recalled another day, this one in 2004,



Spring training, 1941. Nine Mile Remount, Old CCC camp west of Missoula, Montana. Back row, left to right: Roy Abbott, George Honey, Jim Alexander. Front row: Francis Lufkin, Chet “Moose” Derry, Fred Braer, unidentified. (Courtesy Jim Alexander)

his first year as a smokejumper. His crew was en route to a fire above the Selway-Bitterroot when at one point over a nondescript stretch of rugged country, the spotter threw a streamer from the plane. It wasn't until later that Wallace understood why.

The date was July 12, the anniversary of that first jump, and the streamers commemorated the otherwise-unmarked site where Rufus Robinson and Earl Cooley

launched the smokejumping era.

"He's really the father of smokejumping, is how we look at it," said Ward. "He has been an inspiration to all of us, and we'll miss his laughter, and all the fun we've had with him.

"Our job now is just to continue on and work hard like Earl taught us to, and keep the tradition going for another 69 years." 🧠

Early Smokejumper History

by Earl Cooley (Missoula '40)

The following article was printed in the January 1997 issue of "The Static Line." It has been edited slightly for clarification purposes.

In the fall of 1939, a group of "barnstormers" was dropped into timbered areas on the Chelan National Forest – now named the Okanogan National Forest – near Winthrop, Wash., to determine the feasibility of dropping firefighters by parachute to combat forest fires.

This original crew of barnstormers included instructor **Frank Derry** (MSO-40), along with **Chet Derry** (MSO-40), **Virgil "Bus" Derry** (NCSB-40), **Glenn Smith** (NCSB-40), **Richard Tuttle** and **Allan Honey**. **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40), a Forest Service employee, made one jump during the last part of the experiment.

This experiment proved to be very successful, and it was decided that Region 1 and Region 6 would each have a small group of jumpers to continue the experiment in 1940.

Region 6 built its crew around a nucleus of the original barnstormers, with Lufkin and **George Honey** (NCSB-40) – Allan Honey's brother – being trained to jump out of Winthrop, Wash., along with Smith and Virgil Derry during the summer of 1940.

Tuttle and Allan Honey dropped out of the program in the fall of 1939, as they were not Forest Service employees.

Region 1 had sent **Rufus Robinson** (MSO-40) from the Nez Perce Forest over to take his training at Winthrop, and to be available to go to Moose Creek and start construction on a parachute loft. Rufus came back to Seeley Lake, northeast of Missoula – selected as the Region 1 training base for 1940 – and made one demonstration jump on the Seeley Lake Airport. He

then went on to Moose Creek to start work on the loft building.

Region 1 was to select one key fireguard from each of the seven forests. They included **Jim Waite** (MSO-40) from the Clearwater Forest, **Jim Alexander** (MSO-40) from the Old Cabinet Forest, **Bill Bolen** (MSO-40) from the Kootenai Forest, **Dick Lynch** (MSO-40) from the Flathead Forest, **Leonard Hamilton** from the Lolo Forest, and Earl Cooley from the Bitterroot Forest, in addition to Robinson.

"Region 6 built its crew around a nucleus of the original barnstormers"

Chet Derry was to be the parachute rigger for the Region 1 crew. Frank Derry was retained to serve both regions and was, like his brother Chet, already an accomplished parachutist. Frank had worked for the Eagle Parachute Company.

When we reported to Fort Missoula to take the regular ROTC cadet physical, Hamilton was diagnosed as having an enlarged heart and had to drop out.

Maj. William Lee Carey had been present at Seeley Lake to observe the training jumps and cargo drops. He would return to Fort Benning, Ga., and begin establishing the first U.S. Army parachute unit.

During the time at Seeley Lake, Bolen made three training jumps and decided to drop out for personal reasons. On his first jump, he freefell almost a third of the distance to the ground before he pulled his rip cord; this may have influenced his decision to drop out. He had also been dragged by his chute in a strong wind and suffered scratches and severe bruising.

Alexander had caught his arm in the load lines of his chute and got a bad sprain, so he missed several of his training jumps. Lynch had pulled his legs up on a strong-wind jump and landed on his tailbone, and also missed several jumps.

However, by July 10, 1940, we went to Moose Creek. Waite and I had 10 jumps each – the only two to have achieved this. Alexander and Lynch were to finish their training after we got to Moose Creek, whereas Chet Derry and Robinson had made all their training jumps.

They left six jumpers at Moose Creek Ranger Station for the summer. We were bunked in the ranger's dwelling since his family did not come in that season.

Merle Lundrigan (MSO-41) – not a jumper at that time – went in as squadleader for the summer. However, Merle made several training jumps in the spring of 1941, before he was called into military service.

George Case (MSO-44), the Moose Creek ranger, was selected as project leader. He had spent some time during training with the jumpers at Seely Lake to familiarize himself with the jumping process. 🔦



June 1940 first smokejumper training group at Seely Lake Ranger Station. Back L–R: Glenn Smith (rigger/jumper), Earl Cooley (jumper), Merle Lundrigan (project leader), Jim Alexander (jumper), Chet Derry (rigger/jumper). Front L–R: Rufus Robinson (jumper), Jim Waite (jumper), Frank Derry (project manager), George Case (district ranger), Dick Lynch (jumper), Bill Bolen (jumper). (Courtesy Jim Alexander)



July 12, 1940: Earl Cooley (left) and Rufus Robinson waiting for the plane at Moose Creek while Frank Derry checks their equipment. (Courtesy Earl Cooley collection)

Description of The First Actual Fire Jump in The United States

by Rufus Robinson (Missoula '40)

Reprinted from January 2004 "Smokejumper."

On July 12, at 2:00 p.m., Merle Lundrigan (MSO-41) asked me to go to a fire on the head of Martin Creek, Section 35, Township 31 North, Range 11 East. I started collecting my jumping suit, fire pack and equipment to take to the fire. Rest of the crew helped haul all equipment out to the airport.

Dick Johnson arrived from Missoula at 3:05 p.m.

with plane. One of the crew helped me dress and get into the harness of chute. At 3:21 p.m. we left the ground. Johnson headed the plane down river to gain elevation. Turned at Goat Mountain and headed back toward Bear Creek. Turned again and followed Ditch Creek, over top of Moose Ridge close to Wyles Peak lookout. Spotted fire on east slope of Martin Creek. Johnson circled fire at about 7,000 feet elevation. Fire looked to be about two and one-half acres in green timber fairly open. I asked Johnson to take plane up

higher to around 7,600 feet. He circled over fire once more and spotted alder patch of about two acres, above fire, to jump into. Dropped burlap test chute at 3:55 p.m. Chute drifted down into Martin Creek, north and east of the fire.

I bailed out at 3:57 p.m. Wind had changed between time of dropping burlap test chute and when I jumped. I caught a down draft and heavy ground wind, carrying me over alder patch half mile north. Landed in small green tree, 25 feet tall. My feet were about two feet above ground. Unhooked harness and set up radio. Talked to ship at 4:03 p.m. Lundrigan reported Earl Cooley had landed northwest of me in tree. Lundrigan agreed to hold up dropping of fire packs until I reached Cooley. I misunderstood location of Cooley, and after waiting 15 minutes Lundrigan dropped fire packs near Cooley.

We started on fire line at 4:45 p.m. Cooley started working around north side of fire, throwing dirt on hot spots and building some fire line. I took the south side, cooling down hot spots and building some fire line. Worked until 7:00 p.m. when I sent Cooley back to find the other fire pack. He met four-

man maintenance crew 300 yards from where his chute was hung up in the tree. They said they would be down to help us early next morning. Cooley did not find fire pack so came back to fire at 9:00 p.m. We worked on fire line until 10:00 p.m., ate lunch and watched rest of the night for snags falling across fire line. Had coffee at 3:30 a.m. Started building more fire line at 4:00 a.m. Fire controlled at 10:00 a.m. Four- man crew took over at 10.00 a.m. Had lunch at 12:30 p.m.

“I bailed out at 3:57 p.m.”

Cooley and I started after chutes with one mule, at 2:30 p.m. Arrived back to fire at 6:30 p.m. We spent one hour looking for saw and climbers. Thought Lundrigan had dropped them although neither Cooley nor I saw them dropped. Maintenance crew found second fire pack on their way to fire.

Packer Howard Engle, Earl Cooley and I left for Moose Creek at 7:50 a.m. July 14. I arrived Moose Creek 3:10 p.m. Cooley and Engle stayed at Toney Point lookout over night. 🔦



July 12, 1940: Rufus Robinson just before takeoff. (Courtesy Earl Cooley collection)

Description of The Second Actual Fire Jump In The United States

by Earl Cooley (Missoula '40)

Reprinted from January 2004 "Smokejumper."

On July 12 at 1:40 p.m., our project leader, **Merle Lundrigan** (MSO-41), was informed of a fire on the Nez Perce Forest on which two of us jumpers were requested. **Rufus Robinson** (MSO-40) and I were selected to go. The plane was ordered immediately after we received the fire call. While the plane was on its way from Missoula to Moose Creek Ranger Station, the group had collectively gathered all necessary equipment, including lunch from the cook house, fire packs, climbing spurs, saws, burlaps, suits, chutes, etc. We didn't put on our suits until the plane was on the field.

As soon as the ship arrived at the airport, each man took an assigned job. One put the aerial on the plane, one put on the steps, others helped Rufus and me into our suits, while others were loading the material into the plane.

We were soon ready to take off for the location of the fire. Pilot Dick Johnson, Merle Lundrigan, Rufus Robinson and I left the airport at 3:21 p.m. We went upriver to Ditch Creek, swung around south of Wiles Peak to the designated location of the fire, which was in the head of Martin Creek, Section 35, Township 31 North, Range 11 East, on the Nez Perce Forest.

Rufus knew the country so he chose to go out first; consequently, I was the second man out. Rufus threw the burlap out directly over a small elder patch about 300 yards from the fire on the uphill side. The burlap evidently hit two distinct currents of wind and was carried approximately one mile down the canyon from the spot. Dick circled the plane around the fire, and Rufus made the correction for the burlap and informed Dick as to where he wished to make the jump. I believe Rufus was about 2200 feet above the timber when he took off. He made an excellent takeoff from the ship, but ran into more drift than was expected and was carried beyond the spot a quarter mile or so. Rufus landed on the edge of a small clearing in a small tree.

As soon as I noticed Rufus standing on the ground by his chute, I decided to spot myself and bail out. At this point I should have thrown another burlap because I could not see exactly where Rufus was when

he took off. To the contrary, I only roughly guessed, allowing a little more for the drift. We hit two very bad air pockets before I was in position to jump, and I do not believe we were much over 1800 feet above the timber; nevertheless I was anxious to leave ship and get into action. At 4:01 p.m. I bailed out and jerked my rip cord when I was clear of the plane.

I didn't make such a good takeoff because I was beginning to turn over in the air when the chute opened. I think I received the hardest opening shock of any previous jump I had made. My risers were twisted above my head, and it seemed some time before they started to unwind; but eventually they did unwind and I located my position in reference to landing.

I had drifted west of the spot, but was evidently coming down in line north and south. A stiff ground current caught me about 500 or 600 feet above the timber. I knew it was impossible to hit the spot under these conditions, so I just turned my chute toward the fire and got well in my mind my directions and plans before I hit the timber. It seemed to me that I was traveling about 15 miles per hour when I went over the timber below me.

When I was about down, I could see that I was going to land in large timber by a small creek. I picked a large spruce tree about 120 feet high. The chute hung on the limbs about 10 feet from the top of the south-east side of the trees. I went through the branches on the side of the tree, breaking many of them. I noticed the chute on the side of the tree and didn't want to swing back because I thought there might be a possibility of the chute slipping off the limbs and going on down to the ground. So I grabbed the stub of a broken limb and climbed onto the trunk of the tree. I just climbed up the tree a few feet and unwrapped my risers from the harness.

Fortunately, the tree was easy to climb down, and I did not need my rope to descend to the ground where I took off my suit and set up my radio. Due to some unknown condition, I could not get a very good reception from the plane, but was able to contact Merle a time or two. Merle didn't get to tell me where he was going to drop our packs, but I kept watching every time the plane came within dropping distance from me. I caught a glimpse of the first fire pack through

the timber but only knew the direction and approximate distance to the fire pack. The second pack was released from the plane almost directly over my head and came in about 100 feet from me. I took the latter pack, filled my water bag and canteen, put the burlap with my suit and equipment, and started for the fire which was about a quarter or a half mile east of where I landed.

I was about 200 yards from the fire when I met Rufus. We took the one fire pack and went down to the fire. The fire was burning very slowly and only had

a few hot spots that could have been very dangerous. Rufus started around one side and I the other. We cooled down the hot spots and trenched where they were the worst. We found a lot of dead line that we passed up.

About 8:30 p.m. I decided to go back to my chute and look for the other fire pack. I was following the small creek back when I heard a horse bell. So obviously I went to see where they were. About 400 yards above my chute on the same creek, I found a camp with four men. After a short conversation with them

Rufus Robinson-Pioneer Smokejumper

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)



Rufus Robinson 1940 (Courtesy Frank Derry Collection)

With the passing of Earl Cooley (MSO-40) news media have also been asking about **Rufus Robinson** (MSO-40). We did not even have a date of death in our NSA database. Thanks to research done by **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46), we have the correct date of May 3, 1987.

Rufus was the first of the 1940 Missoula crew to receive smokejumper training, going over to Winthrop to do so. He then returned to Montana to start construction of the parachute loft at Moose Creek.

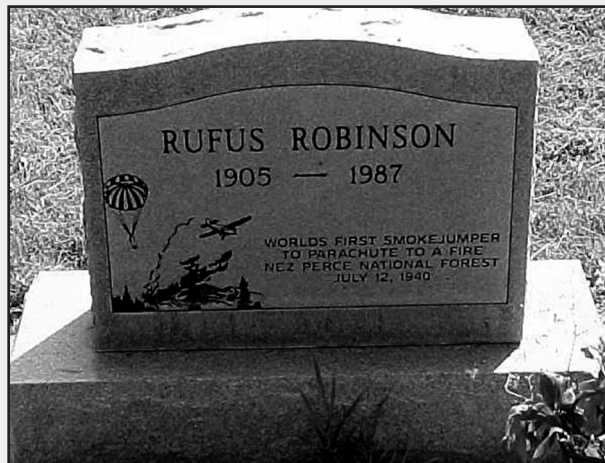
On July 10, 1940, Earl Cooley, **Jim Waite**, **Jim Alexander**, **Dick Lynch** and **Chet Derry** joined Robinson at Moose Creek. **Merle Lundrigan** (MSO-41), not a jumper at that time, was assigned as the squad-leader for the group.

On July 12, 1940, Rufus Robinson and Earl Cooley made the first fire jumps on a fire in the United States. A detailed description by Rufus is on page 8.

Rufus was born in 1905 at Wallowa, Oregon, and

the family moved to Turlock, California, in 1919.

Robinson only jumped the 1940 and '41 seasons before moving on to pursue work in the roofing business. He married in 1942 and lived in Santa Cruz, California, and Pasco, Washington. In 1958 he moved to Klamath Falls, Oregon, and in 1966 to Lenore, Idaho, where he worked as a roofer until he retired. He is buried in the Wallowa Cemetery.



they informed me that they would be down on the fire early in the morning. Rufus and I worked the hot spots that night and until 10:00 a.m. the next day when these men arrived. Rufus and I had practically trenched the whole fire, which was about three acres, scattered over about five acres of ground.

We ate a lunch that these men brought down to us and were ready to turn the fire over to them about 10:00 a.m.. I remained on the fire while Rufus went up and set out a manta and streamer to locate the position for the plane that had been ordered to drop supplies and pumps. The plane did not come when we expected it, so Rufus and I decided to retrieve our chutes from the trees, get them in camp and ready to pack the next morning.

“At 4:01 p.m. I bailed out and jerked my rip cord when I was clear of the plane.”

We took a mule and went after Rufus’ chute first. We had to cut the tree down to get the chute because it was draped over the top of the tree. A small hole was torn in the apex of the chute. After returning to camp with Rufus’ chute, we started to where my chute was hung in the trees. I followed, with the mule, the same trail back to the place where the maintenance crew was camped the night before. I knew exactly where the chute was from this point. I followed the small creek down to where I had blazed a couple of trees on the creek bank. The chute was only about

150 feet from this place.

The retrieving of the chute was apparently a big job since it was a good 85 or 90 feet up the tree to where the risers were attached. I took my 100-foot rope and climbed the tree. Rufus tied the Pulaski on the end of the rope. When I got up the tree to my chute, I pulled it up to me in this order. I tied one end to my risers and threw the other end down to Rufus. When Rufus got the rope he pulled on it and I chopped the limbs off in which my chute was tangled.

Rufus and I were both surprised at the ease with which we took the chute out of the tree. We spent a short time looking for the other tools which we were not sure had been dropped. I eventually came to the conclusion that the tools, which consisted of spurs and saw, had not been dropped. Due to the fact that the trail crew had found our other fire pack when they came down to the fire, we were relieved of our search for this pack.

We got back to camp with my chute about 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. By the time we ate supper, it was nearly dark and we retired for the night. I dressed in my jump suit and pulled a manta over me.

The next morning Rufus, the packer Howard Engle and I started out for Moose Creek. We went down Martin Creek and cut across country to Moose Ridge. Rufus took a different trail and went on into Moose Creek. Howard and I went to Tony Point that evening. The next afternoon I brought the chutes down with a mule and horse that had been brought up from the station. At 4:00 p.m. July 15, I arrived back at the Moose Creek ranger station. 🐾

1939 Experimental Project—Pioneer Smokejumper-Francis Lufkin

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

With the focus of this issue being on Earl Cooley (MSO-40) and the establishment of the smokejumper program in the U.S., it is appropriate to review our early history. Details sometimes vary according to the writer. I’m going directly to *The History of The North Cascades Smokejumper Base* by Bill Moody (NCSB-57) and emails with Steve Smith who was involved in detailed research when he produced the NSA video *Firefighters From the Sky*.

The experimental program ran from October-No-

vember 1939 on the Chelan N.F. (now the Okanogan N.F.). The Eagle Parachute Company from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was contracted to provide experienced parachutists and basic equipment. Professional jumpers Frank Derry (MSO-40), Glenn Smith (NCSB-40), Chester Derry (MSO-40) and Virgil Derry (NCSB-40) plus two locals, Dick Tuttle and Alan Honey, were the contract personnel.

The Forest Service assigned nine support personnel, including Francis Lufkin (NCSB-40), to the project.



Francis Lufkin 1939 Experimental Program (Courtesy Larry Lufkin)

After making “dummy drops” in various terrain types, 58 live jumps were made by eleven different jumpers. The first experimental jump into timber was done by Glenn Smith. There were no major injuries, and the program proved that firefighters could be parachuted into rugged mountainous terrain to fight forest fires. Walt Anderson, Fire Assistant Chelan N.F., has

been credited with naming the parachuting firefighters “Smokejumpers.”

As a result of the successful experimental program in 1939, two smokejumper programs were established in 1940. The five-man unit in R-6 at Winthrop consisted of Glenn Smith, Virgil Derry, Francis Lufkin, and rookie George Honey (not to be confused with Alan Honey

from the 1939 group). Dick Tuttle from the 1939 group was originally hired, but was seriously injured in a tree climbing accident before the program started.

The R-1 program consisted of Project Leader Merle Lundrigan, Frank and Chet Derry, and seven rookie jumpers selected from each of the region's national forests. Earl Cooley was the representative from the Bitterroot N.F.

On August 10, 1940, Francis Lufkin and Glenn Smith made the first fire jumps in R-6. George Honey and Virgil Derry jumped the second fire the next day.

Even though expansion of the program to ten jumpers was recommended at Winthrop for the 1941 season, the threat of war and lack of funding concentrated smoke-jumping to Region 1. Lufkin, Honey and Smith joined the R-1 jumpers at Nine Mile for that season. Only nine fires were jumped during the 1941 season. After training, Lufkin would return to R-6 and manage air cargo operations at the Twisp R.S.

By 1943 with WWII in full swing, there were only five experienced jumpers and only four candidates who could pass the physical exam. The introduction of the CPS-103 men (Conscientious Objectors) added 62 physically qualified personnel to the smokejumper program. The 1943 jumpers were stationed at Nine Mile

or assigned to the two newly established bases at Cave Junction, Oregon, and McCall, Idaho.

Francis Lufkin continued to manage the cargo operations and satellite smokejumper base at Winthrop through 1944. In 1945 Winthrop re-opened with a crew of 15 CPS-103 jumpers, and Lufkin became the Aerial Project Officer. He continued at that job until 1972 when he retired after 33 years as a smokejumper. During that time, he received a presidential citation from President Lyndon Johnson and a Department of Agriculture Secretary's Award, plus numerous citations from the USFS. His two sons **Ron** (CJ-60) and **Larry** (CJ-63) followed him into smokejumping.

Francis died February 12, 1998, in Bellingham, Washington, at age 83.

The Forest Service assigned nine support personnel, including Francis Lufkin (NCSB-40), to the project.

Frank Derry, born July 27, 1904 in California, died August 2, 1968 in Kalispell, Montana, five days after his



1939 Experimental Project Crew L-R: Walt Anderson, Richard Tuttle, Glenn Smith, Virgil Derry, Harold King, P.T. Harris, Francis Lufkin, David Godwin, Frank Derry. (NSA Files)



L-R: Frank Derry, Chet Derry, Harold King (pilot), Alan Honey. (NSA Files)

64th birthday. He was a resident of Bigfork. Frank is responsible for the development of the steerable parachute in 1942-43. The addition of "Derry slots" and guidelines allowed any standard flat parachute to be converted into one that fit the needs of a person parachuting into rugged terrain. Frank continued on with the smokejumper program until 1945.

Virgil W. "Bus" Derry, born November 7, 1908, died January 31, 1995, in Sun City, Arizona at age 85. He jumped at NCSB during the 1940 season. After leaving smokejumping he worked in logging, heavy construction and as a commercial fisherman in Texas.

Chet Derry made the first rescue jump when he

parachuted to a downed Johnson Flying Service Travelair on July 15, 1940, on the Nez Perce N.F. Pilot, Bob Maricich, was on a cargo drop when a wing clipped a tree. He was killed and cargo kicker, Del Claybaugh, was seriously injured.

Chet was killed April 20, 1947, in a mid-air collision while piloting a plane from Missoula to Hamilton, Montana. He jumped at Missoula in 1940 and '41.

Glenn Smith jumped at Missoula during the 1941 season, was gone 1942-43, and returned to jump 1944-49. He is listed as working at Missoula in 1950-51 but not recorded in any jump records. See more about Glenn in an additional article in this issue. 📖

Leap of Faith

by Sherry Devlin

Reprinted from July 1990 "Missoulian" and January 2002 "Smokejumper."

The afternoon before Earl Cooley (MSO-40) made his first jump out of an airplane, he got his first

lesson in jumping out of an airplane. An instructor draped a silk chute from a ponderosa pine at the Seeley Lake ranger station and told Cooley and five other would-be jumpers to gather around. "This is the apex," the instructor said. "These are the risers. These are the

guide lines. Tomorrow we jump.”

“And tomorrow we jumped,” said Cooley. Ten jumps later, on July 12, 1940, Cooley made history as one of the first two smokejumpers to parachute to a wildfire. His jump will be remembered Thursday at a ceremony in Grangeville, Idaho, commemorating 50 years of smokejumping.

Now 78 and semi-retired, Cooley sifted through his memorabilia in an interview this week at his real estate office in Missoula. He has written a book, “Trimotor and Trail,” on his adventures as a pioneer smokejumper.

Fifteen years after retiring from the Forest Service, Cooley still lives and breathes parachuting and firefighting. He’s never without his smokejumper belt buckle and cap. Cooley said he “wasn’t thinking about history” in the spring of 1940 when he volunteered for the experimental smokejumper program. “I was thinking about doubling my salary. If I had known we were making history and would have to tell about it for 50 years, I might have thought twice.”

Cooley was working on a fire crew in the East Fork of the Bitterroot when he heard about the smokejumper program. He was weary of 20-mile hikes to backcountry fires. He knew jumpers had landed safely in “all kinds of green timber” in trials on the Okanogan National Forest in 1939. What he didn’t know until later was that regional forester Evan Kelley had argued against the parachute program as early as 1935, writing Forest Service brass in Washington, D.C. that “all parachute jumpers are more or less crazy, just a little bit unbalanced, otherwise they wouldn’t be engaged in such a hazardous undertaking.”

Cooley’s own foreman, **Merle Lundrigan** (MSO-41), later wrote that “it is not a good plan to tell a new jumper too much about the job of chute-jumping before he has made a few jumps.” “If he is too well-informed,” Lundrigan said, “it is inclined to unnerve him.” Nevertheless, Cooley and six other experienced firefighters were to try parachuting to fires during the 1940 fire season. Dry, hot weather and a record number of lightning strikes provided the targets. One of the seven didn’t pass the physical exam and another quit after three jumps.

A makeshift training camp was established at Seeley Lake. Recruits hung their parachutes from two tents and gathered at the airstrip to watch a pair of barnstormers demonstrate a jump. Then came the quick lesson on parachute mechanics. “I didn’t know enough to be scared,” Cooley said. “I had never been in an airplane before and never landed until I’d made five jumps.”

The night before the first jump, the crew drew straws to see who would be the first out of the plane. Cooley got the No. 5 straw. The jump spot was at Blanchard Flats, 20 miles from Seeley Lake. Sitting around the campfire

that night, the barnstormers started talking about jumpers who got hung up on the tail of the airplane or who were dragged across airports and a cargo dropper who had fallen out of a plane without a parachute.

Jump day dawned clear and warm, despite the recruits’ prayers for fog. Jump gear consisted of a leather football helmet, a baseball catcher’s mask, a back brace, ankle braces, logger boots and a heavy canvas suit with a high collar. “We were so bundled up we couldn’t move once we got on the ground,” Cooley said. “We landed so hard with those old Eagle parachutes. A doctor in town had told our instructor that the best way to land was stiff-legged, just the opposite of what we know is best.”

Cooley and company sat on boxes inside the airplane, eyeballed their own jump spot, then stood outside on the step, signaled the pilot to cut the engine, jumped and pulled their rip cords. “It didn’t seem natural to jump out into space,” Cooley said. “But the jumping never really bothered me.” He jumped 46 fires in 11 years as a smokejumper. “We would’ve jumped more if we had had more parachutes.”

Cooley and **Rufus Robinson** (MSO-40), squadleader for the smokejumper project, got the call for the first fire jump about noon on July 12. The fire was at Martin Creek, 50 air miles from Missoula. The first fire jump nearly cost Cooley his life. He bailed out of Johnson’s Travelair, pulled the ripcord and looked up to a “full streamer.” Cooley fell for 1000 feet while he tried to deploy the chute. He started to go for his reserve at 500 feet but his main opened at that time. Cooley hit a lodgepole pine and stopped, dangling over 100 feet off the ground. He climbed down the tree and hiked to the fire.

He later learned that project leader Lundrigan had caught his foot on a cargo rope and almost fell out of the plane. Lundrigan was so shaken that he never again worked cargo on a smokejumper mission. Cooley met up with a trail crew that told of a smokejumper free-falling to the ground. They had been dispatched to retrieve the body. “I’m your carcass,” Cooley said. “I made it.”

Cooley’s career as a smokejumper eventually included training paratroopers during WWII and conscientious objectors who worked as smokejumpers during the war. He was the spotter on the plane that dropped jumpers at the tragic Mann Gulch Fire in 1949. Twelve jumpers and a fireguard died in the fire.

Two of Cooley’s five daughters eventually married smokejumpers. He went on to another first, as one of the first firefighters to travel by helicopter to a fire.

“I never cared about stripes or promotions,” Cooley said. “I just loved the work. You know, in those early days, there was never anybody above you to tell you what to do because nobody up there knew what do do.” 🔦



Sounding Off from the Editor



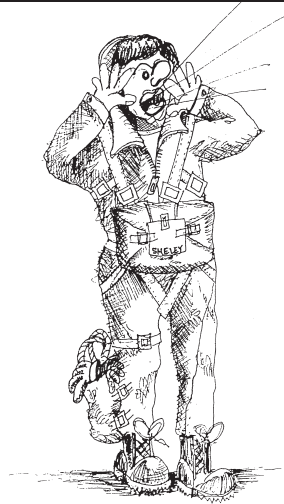
by Chuck Sheley
(Cave Junction '59)
MANAGING EDITOR

THE OFFICE OF *Smokejumper* sits in a remodeled bedroom at my home in Chico, California. I usually get an article, cut words, close spacing and give it an initial edit. From there I walk to the dining room and hand it to my wife, K.G., who sits with a stack of dictionaries and style guides. In about ten minutes the document is returned to me marked with red lines, circles, notes and arrows. After those corrections/changes are made, back it goes to the dining room again and so on.

I've always wanted to get more involved in the NSA Trails Program, but found it almost impossible to leave Chico for any length of time and still get a magazine out on time. You would think that three months between issues is a long time but with the layout, printing and mailing processes, I'm still chasing down address changes from a prior issue when the layout for the next issue starts.

In steps an old friend, Ed

Booth (Associate). Ed is an ex-student of mine and comes from a newspaper background. He now takes a lot of the articles and edits and puts them into the proper format. This enabled my wife and me to drive over 8,000 miles and take part in four different projects last summer. Thanks, Ed.



Back in 2007, **Johnny Kirkley** (CJ-64) told me it would be a good idea to start doing a centerfold where we could group photos for our readers. He now has become the go-to person to handle the centerfold and get photos ready for the next issue. Johnny, as are most jumpers, is no-nonsense and gets to the bottom line quickly. I still remember the time in the barracks in Fairbanks, 1969, when Johnny (recently returned from Air America) was searching for the jumper who took a "cheap shot" at one of his engine crewmembers downtown the night before. It was made very clear that in the future, this would not happen again. You will see his great work on display again in this issue.

All this being said, I have the groundwork for three issues done and set in advance of the issue date in order to spread out the workload and meet deadlines.

The passing of **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40) November 9, 2009, changed the normal operating procedures. Earl's passing was covered nationally in magazines and newspapers. This issue had

to relate to Earl. Move everything from the original April issue forward and start from scratch. If this issue got to you anytime before the 2nd week in April, thanks to all of the above, many long days at the computer and **Larry Jackson**, who does the layout and printing.

I'm going to break down this issue as it is, in my opinion, special. When I went to the archives and started pulling everything written by or about Earl, I decided that the start and evolution of smokejumping was a team effort, of which Earl was an important part. However, when I looked in our obit section to get more information on **Rufus Robinson** (MSO-40), **Glenn Smith** (NSCB-40), **Frank Derry** (MSO-40), **Virgil Derry** (NCSB-40), and **Chet Derry** (MSO-40), there was very little information. Outside of **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40), who had a long career in smokejumping, there was not a lot known about the other "Pioneers." Thanks to work by **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46), **Roger Savage** (MSO-57), **Jack Demmons** (MSO-50), **Larry Longley** (NCSB-72), and **Ben Smith** (MSO-64), we now have additional information about the Pioneers.

This issue has more photos than any past issue. Many of them are historical. Most photos in the centerfold have never been printed before.

Several years ago a man who started in firefighting on one of my Type II Crews as a college student contacted me. He's now a Fire Captain in Yuba City, California. He asked if I had ever heard of Frank Derry? He related that he had come into contact with Frank Derry's granddaughter, Louise Zannotto. To shorten the story, I was able to get a disk of remarkable photos from the 1937-40 time period when the Derry brothers and Glenn Smith went from "barnstormers" to smokejumpers. See some of them in the centerfold.

Rufus Robinson was 35 years old when he started jumping in 1940, and he only jumped two seasons before moving on. Thanks to Jim Allen we now have a date of death and some knowledge as to what he did the rest of his life. There are also a couple of good pictures of "Rufe" in this issue. He looks like a pretty sturdy guy.

Out of the original four professional parachute jumpers, Glenn Smith stayed with smokejumping the longest. His two sons also became smokejumpers. His oldest son, Ben "Snuffy" Smith, did a great job in filling in the blanks in the article about his dad.

This being the issue on the U.S. Pioneers, it is appropriate that we moved part IV of "The Birth of Smokejumping," to the July issue. Translated by **Bruce Ford** (MSO-75) and **Tony Pastro** (FBX-77) from the 1949 notes of **Giorgy Alexandrovich Makeev**, it wraps up the story of the man with the idea to parachute firefighters and he made it work against all odds to create the first smokejumper program in the world. Makeev had many factors going against

him. Besides his susceptibility to airsickness, age had to be a negative factor. I don't know his age, but he was a professional forester which took time for his education. He had ten years of fieldwork in forestry, and he said he was involved in the "imperial and civil wars." I don't know how many times he felt like giving up, but you can see that his determination resulted in a program that, at one time, had jumpers that numbered in the thousands. Look for the final part of the story of the creation of the world's first smokejumper program in the July issue.

Jim Budenholzer (MSO-73) did one of the best articles that we've printed in a past issue with his interview of Pioneer Smokejumper **Jim "Smokey" Alexander** (MSO-40). A revealing account from the mouth of a person who was with the first crew.

I want to thank Earl's oldest daughter, Sharron Cooley Hackman, and granddaughter, Amanda Ranstrom Adams, for gathering photos from the Cooley collection and getting them to me. In another of the "small world" situations, Sharron had lived in Chico for 20+ years and her kids had gone to school with our kids in elementary school.

While the beginning of smokejumping is the emphasis of this issue, there is an excellent article on the future of smokejumping. Retired Director of Fire & Aviation **Jerry Williams** (RAC-72) emphasizes a fresh vision for the continued success of the smokejumper program.

Mike McMillan (FBX-96) continues to put together one of the toughest to do, but most read columns in the magazine, with a great "Touching All Bases" piece in this issue. Mike contacts all the

bases and continually pushes to get this column together. What happened in smokejumping last season and what might this summer? Read "Touching All Bases" on page 38.

Jim Cherry (MSO-57) initiated the idea of the Good Samaritan Fund whereby we, as the NSA, could reach out and assist fellow smokejumpers in time of need. The Good Sam Fund has helped a number of jumpers with financial assistance. We recently sent a check for \$1000 to help a fellow jumper during his cancer treatments. Please respond to the insert in this issue.

The NSA Trail Maintenance/Restoration Program continues to grow in numbers and scope each year. **John McDaniel** (CJ-57) is laying the groundwork for a project in the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia in 2011.

Jim Cherry has added another project in the Boundary Waters in Minnesota in May. The setting is at the Wilderness Canoe Base near the end of the Gunflint Trail. There will be cabins and a dining hall available. It is open to jumpers/NSA associates, spouses, children/grandchildren (min. age 16). The work will fit all ranges of physical conditioning and the opportunities for good old fellowship are the best ever. There are canoes and fishing available. If this doesn't get your attention, check out the "Off the List" for this issue. Now is the time to see old friends and make new ones.

You will have received the 2010 National Smokejumper Reunion information and registration by this time. We're set to go June 11-13 in Redding. Hope to see you there and on one of the Trail/Restoration projects. 🍄

An Interview With A Pioneer Smokejumper-Jim Alexander

by James Budenholzer (Missoula '73)

Reprinted from January 2004 "Smokejumper."

A member of the first smokejumper force in 1940, Jim "Smokey" Alexander is a true pioneer. Alexander recently sat down with James Budenholzer (MSO-73) to share his recollections of that first season—and what it was like to make history.

"The way the smokejumpers were started was in the late 1930s. The Forest Service decided they needed another method of fighting fire so they didn't have [a] repeat of the horrible 1910 fires. I worked on the St. Regis district of the old Cabinet National Forest. I'd been up to see the 1910 fire. It was something to see—miles and miles of blackened snags.

"A man named David Godwin out of Washington, D.C. was the national forest-fire officer for the U.S. In the fall of 1939, there was an experimental jump group in Winthrop, WA, where they had a pioneer squad; trained people, riggers and parachutists, and they did experimental work and some jumps. They became our riggers at Seeley Lake [MT].

"To choose who would be the first smokejumpers for the first smokejumper fire season in 1940, Godwin had decided to choose ten men, one to represent each of the ten major forests. He wanted each man to have a minimum of five years experience fighting fires. I was working the old Cabinet National Forest and they asked for people who'd be interested. I volunteered. The supervisor chose me in the spring of '40 to represent the Cabinet National Forest. [This was] just after everyone came back from four to five days of rigorous training. The selected ones of us went out to Fort Missoula, which was still an active army post with the infantry stationed there. They had a hospital facility, and we had to take a medical exam. One guy named Hamilton didn't make it. He didn't pass the physical. The rest of us went up to Seeley Lake and put up a bunch of tents behind the ranger station.

"Godwin was there and several other people from Washington representing the Forest Service, and a whole bunch of Army guys and Air Force people, because they were thinking about starting what would become the Airborne 82nd and the 101st, and they took about 2,000 pictures of all our techniques and interviewed us all. They were going around the country looking for any

working parachute operation. Turned out ours was the only one. They were thinking about creating airborne divisions.

"The man I became acquainted with was Major William H. Lee. The next time I heard of him, he was a Major General and in charge of training the 82nd Airborne and the 101st. There is a big memorial to him down here in Fort Bragg at the 82nd headquarters. He wanted me and a buddy to come with him and join the Army. He offered me a 2nd lieutenant, but I didn't go.

The First Camp at Seely Lake

"We were at a place called Blanchard Flats, just north of Seeley Lake. This was about 35 miles northeast of Missoula. Each new jumper made six practice jumps: three jumps at Blanchard Flats and three jumps at the landing strip before any were made in timber. Instructions were given to the men on rolls, letdowns and other basics. We had two minor injuries during the training. One was a sprained ankle. The other was, we were pulling our own rip cords, and [one guy's] rip cord got caught in the shroud lines, and he pulled his shoulder pulling the rip cord. We jumped at 6,000 feet. [Another] guy didn't pull his rip cord until 2,000 feet, and Frank Derry sent the guy on his way. The guy didn't want to continue jumping anyway.

The First Fire Jump

"I didn't make the first fire jump; I made the second fire jump.

"I have a picture of Earl Cooley and Rufus ("Rufe") Robinson. My personal recollection is that there was a fire on Martin Creek, and they decided to make the first jump. They went 'eeny-meeny-mieny-mo' and then decided [on] Rufe and Earl—Rufe, a little because he was an older man, about 35, and Earl had to be about 23. I was 20."

"We were all looking up to Rufe as the more experienced. He was the guy that had a lot of experience fighting fires and kind of calmed us down. [He was] easy-going and completely unflappable. Earl was sort of



Jim Alexander making a jump from the Fairchild on Hughes Creek south of Missoula, Montana, 1940. (Courtesy J. Alexander)

a ‘yup-no’ man, didn’t have a lot to say. He was one of the nicest guys. These days, we talk every year. He says to me, ‘Smokey, about this annual subscription for the National Smokejumper Association magazine: Do ya think we’re gonna make it through another year?’ He stayed on with the Forest Service. On our practice jumps, Earl and I went together, and he almost always got sick when he made a jump. It was very hard. He was at the cookie bag all the time.

“When Rufe and Cooley got back, we were all elated they had made a safe landing. We figured the project was underway and that it was going to be a success, and there was going to be a good way to fight small fires. We wouldn’t be having to walk in a hundred men.

“Periodically, big shots would fly in from Missoula—like Major Evan Kelly. He was the regional forester. There were letters on file that he was *not* in favor of the smokejumper squads, and that it was a waste of ‘honest suppression money’ that could have been spent on

good men. We all knew that he was against us. He was overruled by Washington. David Godwin had overruled him. Godwin was the chief fire officer for the U.S. Forest Service, and he was with us at Blanchard Flats when we did our training jumps. From time to time, he’d show up. He had the entire U.S., but this was his baby. He wanted this thing to go.

“There was a lot of barracks gossip. As if we were under a microscope, the whole Forest Service was looking at this project, seeing where it was going to go. But we felt the Forest Service guys were with us. We all had experience with the pickup crews out of the bars. They weren’t worth anything. After a day, their feet hurt from walking in their shoes, and they wanted to get back to the bar and get a jug of wine.

“As untested smokejumpers, we were afraid that if they decided they were spending too much money, they’d cancel the whole project. So we worked as hard as we could to make sure it did work. We were planning for

1941. We were thinking there would be three squads, one at Moose Creek, one at Big Prairie and one at Nine Mile, which would be the main one, because there was a CC barrack there at Nine Mile, and the Forest Service had hundreds of mules there.

“We were very good friends, and everybody helped do everything. The first year, we didn’t have the static line; it was freefall. We felt that if a guy didn’t feel like jumping, [he] didn’t have to. The Forest Service never chastised them. It was their decision. When we got the static line, [however,] it was a horse of a different color; they had to jump.

“Frank Derry had been experimenting with the static line, so we decided to try and work that out for the 1941 group. We worked that out in 1940. So they were making pioneer static parachute packs on the feasibility of the static line at the loft in Moose Creek.

“In 1940, we were pulling our own rip cords. We stepped out on the step of the Travelair, and we’d go and count to five or 10 or whatever to clear the plane. Some guys would pull just when they were clear, and others would wait until they were at 1000 feet. Bill Bolen pulled his at 400 feet, and we were all on the ground watching him come. Frank Derry kept raising his leg and praying, “My God, my God.” We thought he was going into the ground. [Afterwards,] Frank told him he was through,



1940 First Static Line: Metal ripcord attached to line running to apex of parachute; rope static line attached to junction of ripcord/line to apex. (Frank Derry collection)

but Bill first said, ‘I don’t want to jump any more.’

“The rest of 1940, Frank Derry worked on this static line and the cover on the backpack. They made any number of different models using the sewing machines at Moose Creek, and Chet Derry made the first jump with a static line. It had never been done anywhere, as far as I know. It worked perfectly.[In] the winter of 1940, they went to California and perfected it. In 1941, we used it in the spring out at the old Nine Mile Remount west of Missoula during training.

“During a practice jump, a guy stepped out on the step, and before he jumped, he pulled a rip cord while still on the steps of the plane. Frank had to push the chute out the door, and it caught briefly on the tail of the plane. Luckily, the guy landed safely.

“At any rate, Earl Cooley and Rufe Robinson went on the first fire at Martin Creek. [They] dropped fire-packs on it. Dick Johnson was the pilot. They worked it all night and had it out before ten the next morning, [when] a four-man walk-in crew took over. The theory was, knock it in the head, control, and if you couldn’t control it, watch it until help came.

Second Jump

“I did the second fire jump along with Dick Lynch (MSO-40) from the Flathead Forest. That was on July 20, 1940. They decided to make an experiment. Two lookouts saw this lightning bolt go way down at the head of Moose Creek Range in Idaho, but they never saw any fire or smoke, but both had an azimuth reading.

“George Case was the District Ranger at Moose Creek. George Case had authority to dispatch jumpers from [the creek] to anywhere in the region. It was his responsibility. The crick drainage was huge drainage, and this strike was at the head of it. Even though they didn’t see any smoke or fire, they decided to jump in two jumpers.

He wanted each man to have a minimum of five years experience fighting fires.

“George Case ordered us in. Dick and I landed on a meadow about a half-mile from where the fire would be. Because it was a long, flat ridgeline, very open, we could see both lookouts through the trees, and with our compasses, we followed [the] azimuths until they met. Then we smelled smoke. It had just started out. We put it out.

“It was in the early afternoon, so we left all our gear up there piled up for packers to go in and pick it up. We took our jump jackets and Pulaskis and dropped



1940 training jump at Seely Lake Ranger Station (Courtesy Jim Alexander)

down seven or eight miles into Moose Creek Basin, which was 6000 feet down. We were told there would be food at the Forest Guard Station, but there wasn't, only a can of Sege Milk (condensed) and coffee. That's all the grub we had.

"We headed out at 4 a.m. when it was just getting light. We hiked along at a good clip of 3 or 4 miles an hour over very good trail, all downhill gentle grade, one of the main trails paralleling Moose Creek all the way. There were so many elk in that canyon we were slapping them on the butt to get them out of the way, literally thousands of elk. At noon we opened that can of milk: Dick had half, I had half. 40 miles later at about 10 or 11 p.m. we walked into the main Moose Creek Ranger Station. We were so tired we could hardly take our boots off. We were pretty sore from that long hike. It was a success, because with our compasses we were able to get to the fire. I never heard of them doing that again.

"Two days later at Moose Creek, we were building an irrigation ditch. Dick and I were sent to do the job with dynamite. Dick said he had plenty of experience. We dug the holes and buried the dynamite. He set the caps, and when we hit the plunger, it didn't go off. He

hit it a second time, and we had to then go in and dig out the dynamite. I was afraid we'd get our hands blown off. We dug it out okay.

The First Loft

"Frank Derry, his brother Chet, and Glenn Smith had set up a temporary loft, just a bunch of tables they had made. We decided to build a loft. The Forest Service flew in a cement mixer in a Ford Trimotor. We poured the base. The first loft wasn't even enclosed; it was all open. We couldn't extend the parachutes vertical; they had to be dried [horizontally]. We put on a roof made of cedar shakes made from trees we sawed down that served as [a] parachute loft for 1940-1941 at Moose [Creek], and I don't know what ever happened to that. It was very serviceable, over a hundred feet long. Frank Derry was the project manager. We had shelves to store the parachutes and a couple of heavy sewing machines to make repairs.

"In 1941, Dick Lynch went on to be the squad leader at [the] Big Prairie ranger station with about 15 men. I went there in 1941. It was a long flight from Missoula in a Ford Tri-Motor.

Early Days

“Let me go back further. I graduated from Great Falls High School in 1936, and I was active in the Boy Scouts and became an Eagle Scout. After a campout, we scouts came into Great Falls, and they were rounding crews to go to the Bear Paw Mountains, east of Havre, where there were two bad fires on the Indian reservation and the Forest Service lands. I volunteered to go up there. They sent us in an open truck, driving all night. We didn't have any covering, just open air and sleeping bags.

“I was 18, one of the youngest guys. [We] rode all night, got there at breakfast. They were bringing down a guy on a horse, who was in the last stages of dying. He'd been burned, made quite an impression on me.

“We were there a couple of weeks, fighting that fire. Then we came back to Great Falls and fought another big fire that had started on Straight Crick, back up against the Rockies, where Charles Russell used to paint a lot of his paintings. We lost two guys on the Straight Crick Fire. Then we went back to Great Falls.

“We were fighting fires for 27 cents an hour. The grub was wonderful. We were growing up in the Depression. Those were hard times. So for us, the food was great. Some of us jumped the rails and rode boxcars to Missoula to keep on fighting fires. I signed up for more, and we went up to north of the Flathead where there was a huge fire of about 17,000 acres. I stayed there. I was almost

the last guy off. I was on the mop-up crew.

“I went back to Missoula, and we rode the boxcars to Spokane. We fought a bunch of fires there. Some of my buddies wanted to go north and fight fires near Seattle, but I went back to Missoula in a boxcar and fought a fire south of Missoula. By then, it was getting on to about September, getting pretty cold. When that fire ended, I went back to Great Falls.

“There was another call for a fire around Lewiston. By that time, I had enough experience; they made me a sector boss. I set up my first fire camp. It was really getting cold. And in the end, it snowed.

A Pretty Girl

“It is an interesting side story that in 1941, my wife, Dorothy, rode on the flights with Dick Johnson from Missoula to Big Prairie. Dorothy came from an old pioneer family in Montana. [Her people were] in the legislature and the senate and everything. On one flight, [Dick] had a cement mixer that broke loose in the plane, and because she was the only passenger, she had to secure it. He liked to take newspapers and have Dorothy throw them out to the lookouts. There were about 15 of them between Missoula and Big Prairie. Boy, were the lookouts happy to get those. They'd be waving! It was a pretty girl throwing out newspapers they enjoyed getting.” 🗨️

Earl Cooley, The Hunter

by Ross Parry (Missoula '58)

Reprinted from October 2004 "Smokejumper."

In the early 1960's, **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40) and I were elk hunting in the O'Brien Creek drainage near Missoula. Our plan was to hunt in the same general direction, but not together, and eventually meet at the end of the road. We started off with me in the bottom "thick stuff," while Earl worked his way up toward the ridge top where the going was easier.

As I struggled through the "thick stuff," I heard a commotion off to my left. I raised my rifle and through the scope spotted a patch of hair about 20 yards away. I knew it was an elk and, since the hunt was either sex, I felt 99% sure it was safe to shoot. However, I was not certain of the body location of hair or if perhaps it was a deer? I figured if I took one step to my right, I could see more clearly. So I took that

one very slow, cautious step and crash, bang, the beast was gone.

I continued my struggle through the bottom, then up the ridge, down to another bottom and up another ridge to the end of the road; cursing myself for failing to shoot when I had the chance. I waited for Earl – and I waited – and I built a fire and I waited some more. The bull I had spooked had run up the ridge toward Earl and he shot it square between the eyes. It was a three or four-year old bull and, while I had been waiting, Earl had skinned and quartered it and had propped it up in the shade to allow the meat to cool properly.

I heard a story once that Earl shot an elk late in the afternoon and, rather than hastily cleaning and leaving, he had stayed out all night to make sure the meat was taken care of. I believe it.

Continued on page 26



Frank Derry Stunt Jump Team, Mines Field, Los Angeles 1937



Pioneers & Earlier Years 1937-40

Photo's Courtesy Frank Derry Collection



Frank Derry 1940



Steerable Eagle Parachute 1940



Frank Derry Jumpsuit Design 1939



Glenn Smith 1939



L-R: Rufus Robinson, Virgil "Buz" Derry & Richard Tuttle 1940



L-R: Richard Tuttle, Francis Lufkin & Glenn Smith 1940



Chet Derry 1937



*Frank Derry 1938
Packing Seat Pack*



Frank Derry 1939



George Honey 1939



Chet Derry & Frank Derry, Mines Field, Los Angeles 1938



*Evolving Jumpsuit & Parachute 1940
Layout Design by Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)*

A few days after our hunt, Earl and I and our wives processed the meat. Earl had all the supplies and equipment to make cube steaks and hamburger, etc.,

plus the know-how and patience to do it properly. In the next two years Earl and I shared three more elk. I can guarantee that Early Cooley knew how to make elk meat into “prime-eatin.”

The View from Outside the Fence



by **Chris Sorensen**
(Associate)

WHEN EARL COOLEY (MSO-40), passed away my RSS feed began filling my mailbox with tributes and stories from around the world. Both the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* covered the story along with many smaller local and regional newspapers, mostly in the West.

Even the prestigious British magazine *The Economist* noted his death with an article and a 1940 photo. An Australian newspaper referred to Earl as “One of the U.S. Crazy’s.”

In some ways it’s unfortunate that smokejumpers are still perceived as being “crazy” when they have an impeccable safety record that cannot be equaled in either the firefighting world or the parachuting world.

Twenty-five years ago – before e-mail was common outside of government and academia, and there was no World Wide Web,

and the National Smokejumper Association had yet to be formed – I carried on a correspondence with Earl via the mail. I still have those handwritten letters on Cooley’s Realty stationery.

I also purchased a copy of “The Pictorial History of Smokejumping” from him back in the days before buying a book on the Internet became as simple as typing a few keystrokes.

If you are ever in the Phoenix area, I recommend visiting the Hall of Flame – one of the premiere fire museums in the United States. The Hall of Flame has one of the better wildland and smokejumper exhibits in the country. Smokejumper artifacts were provided by the Missoula Base through the efforts of **Wayne Williams** (MSO-77). **Stan Cohen** (Associate) also provided assistance to the museum’s wildland gallery.

The museum opened in 1961 and is located at 6101 E. Van Buren Street. Hours of operation are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. The phone number is (602) 275-3473 and the web site is www.hallofflame.org/index.html.

A tip of the hard hat to the Coloradans **Jim Dollard** (CJ-52), **Doug Wamsley** (MSO-65) and **Rich Hilderbrand** (MSO-66) for following up on my concern about the spruce tree that is blocking the view of Storm King Mountain from the memorial in

Glenwood Springs. The Colorado crew has been meeting with the BLM (see the NSA web site), and talks have been underway for the NSA to do trail maintenance on Storm King Mountain.

Trail maintenance on Storm King Mountain will be required in perpetuity. With the change in Forest Service policy from benign neglect and eventual destruction to historical preservation and the backlog of needed trail work, there is certainly enough work for the next 100 years.

My day job is working for a public works department. I have been assisting with the teaching of various ICS courses through the 400 level the past few years. It was a struggle, but last year 95 percent of our employees reached their appropriate level of ICS training.

There were some turf battles and some big egos got in the way, but we got the job done. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 designates public works departments as first responders. I consider myself an ICS evangelist, and we have done some preliminary work in trying to form a local Type 3 Incident Management Team.

One of the biggest problems with ICS training is that the government had tied funding to ICS training. The result has been massive cheating on the online courses. When I took the ICS 700 course years ago online, there was one exam. The federal

government has now added multiple random exams to the online courses to deter cheating.

Outside of the federal resource agencies and some of the largest fire departments in the country,

I really question the competency of most agencies that have gone through ICS training and claim to be ICS-competent. A lot of people think they know the system but really don't. I will address

some of these problems either in this column or an article in a future edition of the magazine.

This column is dedicated to Earl Everett Cooley and to **Shane A. Ewing** (MSO-04). 🕯

Smokejumper Magazine Opinion Piece

by Jerry Williams (Redmond '72)

With Earl Cooley's (MSO-40) passing, an important part of Forest Service smokejumper history and pioneering spirit has passed as well. *The New York Times'* obituary for Earl (11/15/2009) characterized the early smokejumper concept as "efficient and audacious." In Earl's time, only 30-years removed from the Great Burn, controlling remote, inaccessible wildfires was a priority. That need became the foundation of the smokejumper mission. "Hit 'em hard and keep 'em small" was, in clear text, the mission statement.

The viability of any program almost always rests on the value of its most recent contributions.

Across today's National Forest System landscape, fewer areas are inaccessible, and those that remain remote are often managed to allow natural processes – including wildland fire – to operate "unencumbered by the hand of man." The downward trend of Forest Service smokejumper bases and Forest Service smokejumper numbers over the past few decades probably reflects, in part, the diminished demands for the program within the agency. In today's budget-conscious world, the smokejumper program is often perceived as a relatively expensive tool with a mission largely oriented around protecting lower values at risk.

The viability of any program almost always rests on the value of its most recent contributions. Although the smokejumper program enjoys wide public and political respect, no program can forever rest on the accomplishments of its past and hope to last. If the trends in Forest Service smokejumper numbers are any indication, perhaps the program would benefit from a fresh vision.

In some places and at some times, there will remain the need to deal with small, isolated wildfires, but the smokejumper program is capable of larger roles. Specialized, self-sufficient forces with the speed, range, and payload attributes of fixed-wing aircraft delivery make

the smokejumper program well-suited to today's other fire management challenges; including extended attack, wilderness fire management, and backcountry prescribed burning operations.

Certainly some bases and some leaders are adapting to new fire management realities. Some individuals are involved across the full spectrum of fire management activities. However—at the *program* level—there seems a need to re-define the core mission and—in strategies aimed toward safely reaching that end—better position smokejumper training, qualifications, equipment, and parachute systems.

The National Smokejumper Association advocates for a viable, enduring smokejumper program. Maybe Earl's passing signals the need to take pause and think strategically about its future. After all, that's the legacy of Earl and the other pioneering jumpers. In their time, they represented something new. They made good on a remarkably "efficient and audacious" vision. 🕯

Jerry was National Director of Fire & Aviation Management and is retired from the USFS and is a current member of the NSA Board of Directors. He can be contacted at: jwilliams50@msn.com.



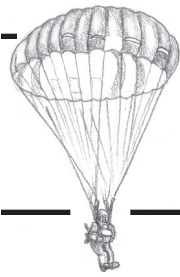
Self-Spotting 1939 Experimental Program (NSA Files)

Fire Jump Leaders

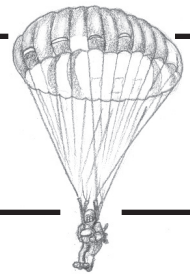
As of Dec. 15, 2009
Bold Indicates Still Active

Name	Rookie Base/Year	Years Jumping	Fire Jumps	BASES JUMPED
1. Walt Wasser.....	(MYC-79)	31	371	MYL, NIFC
2. Dale Longanecker	(RAC-74)	35	358	RAC, NSCB
3. Steve Reynaud.....	(NCSB-65)	30	351	LDG, NCSB
4. Doug Houston.....	(RAC-73)	29	324	RAC, NCSB
5. Mark Corbet.....	(LGD-74)	31	305	LGD, RAC
6. Bruce Ford.....	(MSO-75)	31	286	MSO, FBX
7. Rod Dow	(MYC-68)	32	284	MYC, FBX
8. Tony Pastro.....	(FBX-77)	28	276	FBX
9. Charles Flach	(MSO-68)	35	263	MSO, WYS
10. Tim Quigley	(RDD-79)	31	262	RDD
11. Troop Emonds	(CJ-66)	23	259	CJ, FBX
12. Ron Rucker.....	(RAC-76)	29	258	RAC
13. Joe Chandler.....	(MSO-71)	29	257	MSO
14. Al Seiler	(FBX-85)	20	252	FBX, NIFC
15. Mike Cooper.....	(MYC-86)	24	251	MYL
16. Larry Wright.....	(MSO-71)	29	247	MSO, GAC
17. Ken Franz	(LGD-75)	31	242	LGD, FBX, NIFC
18. Rick Hudson.....	(BOI-73)	35	240	BOI, MYC
19. William Craig.....	(MSO-66)	37	240	MSO, GAC, WYS
20. Dave Hade	(MYC-77)	28	239	MYC, FBX
21. Tony Loughton.....	(RDD-83)	27	235	RDD, RAC
22. Tim Pettit.....	(MYC-75)	27	233	RDD, MYC, FBX, NIFC
23. Ron Omont	(RDD-78)	26	232	RDD
24. Mel Tenneson	(FBX-86)	24	231	FBX, NIFC
25. Frank Clements.....	(NCSB-88)	21	231	NCSB, NIFC
26. John Button.....	(NCSB-75)	35	231	NCSB
27. Mark Motes	(RDD-86)	24	230	RDD, NIFC
28. John Dube	(RAC-70)	25	230	RAC, FBX
29. Mike Burin	(MYC-88)	20	228	MYC, NIFC
30. Paul Chamberlin.....	(MSO-71)	29	227	MSO
31. Eric Rajala.....	(MSO-82)	28	220	MSO
32. Steve Mello	(MYC-74)	33	217	MYC
33. Bruce Nelson	(FBX-81)	23	217	FBX
34. Jon Curd.....	(FBX-82)	24	210	FBX, NIFC
35. Jim Raudenbush.....	(FBX-82)	28	209	FBX, NIFC
36. Dan Hernandez.....	(RDD-85)	25	208	RDD, FBX
37. Bill Moody.....	(NCSB-57)	33	208	NCSB
38. Palmer, Chris	(RDD-75)	22	208	RDD, MYC, FBX, NIFC
39. Hartmut Bloemeke	(MSO-77)	32	206	MSO, GAC, WYS
40. Thad Duel	(MYC-56)	32	206	MYC
41. Eric Hipke.....	(NCSB-90)	19	205	NCSB, NIFC
42. Shannon Orr.....	(RDD-92)	18	204	RDD, NIFC
43. Steve Nemore.....	(RAC-69)	27	203	RAC, NCSB, FBX, NIFC
44. Jon Ueland.....	(MSO-80)	29	202	MSO, WYS

Any adds/corrections contact: Tim Quigley (530-226-2885) or tquigley@fs.fed.us



Odds and Ends



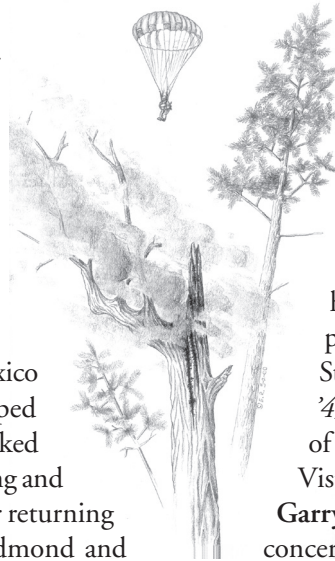
by Chuck Sheley

Congratulations and thanks to those jumpers who donated a **Life Membership** in honor of **Jim Diederich** (RDD-70). Also want to thank latest **Life Members** **Kim Maynard** (MSO-82), **Glenn Hale** (MYC-57), **Guy Hurlbutt** (IDC-62) and **Tom Boatner** (FBX-80) for their support.

Dave Torgrenud (MYC-66): "In 1968 we sent a crew of McCall jumpers to New Mexico for a couple weeks. The only fire we jumped was in the western part of the state and looked like it was in a rock pile. I remember landing and finding it was a field full of cow pies! After returning to McCall, we immediately went to Redmond and jumped fires out of there. I almost landed in a 3000-acre fire. What a couple weeks those were."

Luke Birky (MSO-45): "Chuck, the January *Smokejumper* just came a few days ago. Thanks for 'keeping us informed,' great job. Of course I have been thinking of my days in Missoula in 1945. The death of **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40) made me sad, but it also brought back so many pleasant memories of when Earl was my trainer and boss. What a great, good man he was. I appreciated him a lot—tough, fair—a straight shooter. I was glad to see the extensive coverage—*Missoulian*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *New York Times*—Earl left his mark. Keep up the good work."

Lee Gossett (RDD-57): "Thanks for including the plaque photo in the recent issue. I scanned it and sent it on to Judy Porter and Judy will put it in the Air America Log also. Speaking about **Allen D. "Mouse" Owen** (CJ-70), a couple of weeks ago a friend at the little airstrip where I keep my planes, George Holberton, came over to my hangar and handed me a nylon pouch that contained Mouse's rigging and skydiving log books, along with his membership card and photo I.D. for the U.S. Parachute Club. Apparently when Mouse was killed skydiving in Alaska, his things were gathered up and sent to relatives, but **Ron Lund** (FBX-64) thought these items should go to George as Mouse had jumped out of 'Beagle', the airport where George has his skydiving business. George tucked the items away for all these years and came across them recently and brought them to me to pass on to one of Mouse's friends. I selected **Troop Emonds** (CJ-66), as



they were the best of buddies, and sent it on about a week ago. I guess those of us that had the pleasure of knowing Mouse will never forget what a great guy he was, Corvette, Super Man cape and all. They broke the mold when they made Mouse."

Starr Jenkins (CJ-48) put together many of his previously published stories into a recently published book, *More Than My Share*. One of Starr's better-known books was *Smokejumpers '49/Brothers in the Sky*. Anyone interested in any of Starr's books can contact him at 285 Buena Vista Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93405.

Garry Peters (CJ-63) recently sent me an email concerning the USAA insurance company. Since we have so many military veterans, I want to pass this on to our readers.

"USAA is opening its enrollment to all veterans with an honorable discharge. USAA is an insurance company that started out as a co-op for officers of the armed services only. They are the best company I have ever dealt with. They mainly cover auto and homeowners. I don't think I know an officer that doesn't have it. The nice thing is, in addition to the low premiums, you get money back at the end of the year if they have a good year. They opened it up to all active military a few years ago, but now they are opening their doors to everyone with an honorable discharge. This is a good deal. You can contact them for a quote at www.usaa.com/join or call them at 800-531-8722."

In the October 2009 issue of *Smokejumper*, **Hank Brodersen** (MSO-54) threw out the name of a person, who lives close to him in Maryland, who thought he had been a smokejumper. Turns out that person was only a smokejumper in his own mind. This is not an uncommon occurrence. Several times a year names and articles of people who claim to have been smokejumpers are forwarded to me. I check them out in the database and then contact the newspaper if the information is false.

A couple years back a major Minneapolis newspaper ran an article in one of their Sunday sections featuring a lady who had done just about everything, including being a smokejumper. The biggest clue that the person is a "wannabe" is their failure

to answer my emails and phone calls. The latest two listed in publications are a med-school student and one of the five finalists for a national Teacher of the Year Award.

Besides the dishonesty of the individual, what bothers me the most is the newspaper writer taking everything as fact without doing any checking to see if the material is factual.

Just read today (1/2/10) about a firefighter retiring from a fire department after 37 years in the fire service. In his career summary he lists smokejumper. Not in our database however.

In the January 2008 issue of *Smokejumper* it was reported that **Scott Anderson** (MYC-84) was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia and underwent a bone marrow transplant.

In a recent email (Dec. 10, 2009) Marie Bates, NIFC Administrative Assistant, relayed on the following news: "Just wanted to let you know that Scott's leukemia cells came back about a month ago, and he was admitted to the local hospital here in Boise. He went through one round of chemo and last week had a bone marrow biopsy done and no leukemia cells found - so that was good. He struggled with a fever for about a week and is having some side issues due to the chemo, but the plan is to wait another week or so, do another bone marrow biopsy and make a plan on the next step. He will eventually be going back to the Seattle Cancer Center again to get a different procedure done, called a lymphocyte infusion. This is a much milder type of procedure and will require less time in the hospital than the stem cell transplant." *The NSA sent Scott a check from its Good Samaritan Fund to help with expenses for the Seattle trip. Please read the Good Sam Fund insert in this issue and donate to that valuable effort; smokejumpers helping smokejumpers, across the generational lines, in times of need. (Ed.)*

If you are in the market for any artwork, take a look at Scott's website: www.anderson-illustrations.com.

With the passing of **Jerry Sullivan** (NCSB-49), **Bill Moody** (NCSB-57) passed along an interesting event that Bill recorded in his diary concerning a rescue jump to help Jerry in 1971.

"June 20, 1971, while on trail crew in the Pasayten Wilderness, Jerry was disposing of dynamite caps when one of the 'unstable caps' struck a rock and exploded. The explosion blew his hand off and sent bits of shrapnel over various parts of his body. Shortly after 2100 **Don Fitzjarrald** (NCSB-62) dropped me, **Dick Wildman** (NCSB-61), **Mike Marcuson** (NCSB-64) and **Craig Boesel** (NCSB-

66) near the accident. Jerry had blown his left hand off and was in great pain. From about 2130 until 0630 the next morning when we evacuated him via helicopter to the Twisp Medical Clinic in Twisp, Washington, I administered multiple Demerol shots, each effective for a little over an hour. Jerry was transferred to Wenatchee for final medical attention. He recalls that the worst part of the ordeal was the medevac in the Bell G3B1 helicopter. Fitted with a prosthesis Jerry returned to work as a range technician on the Winthrop Ranger District until he retired in 1982."

John McDaniel (CJ-57), NSA Membership Chairman, wants to remind any of you who are renewing your membership that anyone renewing or upgrading to a 10-year membership will receive the new "Smokejumpers-Jumping Fires" license plate holder and a copy of the "Cold Missouri Waters" DVD. A good deal! 📌



Francis Lufkin After 1939 Experimental Jump (NSA Files)

Newly Minted Smokejumpers Make First-Ever Rescue Jump After Civilian Crash

This article was published July 16, 1940, in "The Missoulian," Missoula, Mont.

Robert Maricich, 26, Missoula manager of the Northwest Airlines division, was killed Monday in a plane crash near Cub Point, 25 airline miles due west of Darby, when a private plane he was piloting for the Forest Service was believed caught in a "down-draft" and crashed as it circled over a "pothole" between a 700-foot wall of rimrocks and a heavily wooded section of forest land.

Dell Clabaugh, "cargo dropper" and brother of Civil Aeronautics Inspector C.L. Clabaugh of Helena, was "badly injured" in the crash, which smashed the left wing of the plane as it made a forced landing in the 400-foot pothole clearing.

Clabaugh was given first aid treatment by Harry Neilsen, lookout at Cub Mountain, and later by **Chet Derry** (MSO-40), who dropped from a plane piloted by Earl Vance. Maricich and Clabaugh left here at 6:30 o'clock Monday morning, and the crash occurred about an hour later.

Neilsen said that he saw two bundles drop from the plane as it circled. He said that he did not see the plane after the bundles dropped and "believed he heard a crash." He immediately telephoned Hamilton officials, and they in turn relayed the message here. Hamilton authorities instructed Neilsen to hike to the scene so that he could be of help to the men.

He started from his lookout point and reached Cub Point and administered first aid.

At 11:40 o'clock Earl Vance flew to Moose Creek, an emergency landing station, and picked up Parachute Instructor **Frank Derry** (MSO-40) and two jumpers, **Chet Derry** and **Richard Lynch** (MSO-40). Vance had trouble getting his plane into the air because of the "hot, dead air conditions" and had to circle constantly for elevation before he could turn his plane in the direction of Cub Point.

It was shortly after 2 o'clock when the men spotted the wreckage. As they circled they could see a man waving to them from the ground and a radio was dropped to him. The plane continued circling above. There was no word from the ground via the radio. The plane then started to climb.

Parachutist Chet Derry dropped from the plane and landed near the wreckage. He made contact with the circling plane almost immediately and reported that Maricich had been killed and that Clabaugh was suffering from broken ribs and internal injuries.

A first aid kit was dropped to him, and he administered treatment to the injured man. Then blankets, water and food were dropped. They fell in a densely wooded area but were found easily by Chet Derry and Neilsen, who were given instructions from the plane via radio.

The gas supply in Vance's plane was diminishing and a squall was reported over the Moose Creek area, so he headed his ship for Missoula.

Hamilton dispatched Ranger Bert Waldron and Alvin Renstraw, dude rancher, to the scene of the accident with pack mules with which to carry the body of Maricich and to get Clabaugh. The men were to have been put on stretchers and carried between the mules, but because Clabaugh was in a serious condition, the plan was abandoned and it was decided that more men would be sent to carry Clabaugh.

The men trekked 20 miles to Shearer's emergency landing field with Clabaugh. Arrangements were being made Monday night to take a doctor by plane to the landing field.

Robert George Maricich was born here February 22, 1914, and was educated here, graduating from Missoula County High School with the class of 1931. Since that time he has been intensely interested in aeronautics and has been manager for the Northwest Airlines. 📖



Frank and Virgil Derry Display Jumpsuit Pants Unzipped with Helmet on Ground. (NSA Files)



Virgil Derry wearing back brace, boots with leggings, and a helmet. 1939 Experimental Program (NSA files)

The Death of Chet Derry

Chester “Chet” Derry (MSO-40) was among four people killed when two airplanes collided over the airport in Hamilton, Mont., April 20, 1947.

Derry was piloting a plane for Missoula-based Johnson Flying Service and preparing to land on a flight from Missoula. His craft met another almost head-on at about 1,000 feet altitude; the planes crashed about 600 yards apart and were demolished.

The other aircraft, a Piper

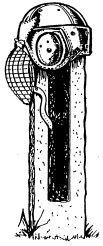
Cub training plane, was flown by Gordon Wetzsteen, a student pilot on his second solo flight. He was an appointee to the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

The passenger in Derry’s plane was chiropractor E.L. Williams of Missoula.

Derry was 31 at the time of the crash. He was born in Wenatchee, Wash., April 16, 1916, and was an expert parachutist. He and his brother **Frank Derry** (NCSB-40) made experimental jumps for the Forest Service in Winthrop, Wash., in 1939, leading to the establishment of the smokejumping program.

Chet Derry spent 1940-42 training smokejumpers. He joined the Army Air Corps – the predecessor of the U.S. Air Force – in 1942 and was a pilot with the Air Transport Command in China and Burma.

He spent a year in Tulare, Calif., as an instructor at the Rankin Aeronautical Academy, a civilian flight school for the Army Air Corps. Upon his discharge from the military in 1946, Derry returned to Missoula and joined Johnson Flying Service as an instructor and pilot. Derry had more than 100 jumps and 3,000 hours of flying time to his credit 🧢.



Off The List

We want to know! If you learn of the death of a member of the smokejumper community, whether or not he or she is a member, your Association wants to know about it. Please phone, write or e-mail the editor (see contact information on page three of the magazine). We'll take it from there. Any gifts in honor of these jumpers will be added to **NSA Good Samaritan Fund** and recognized in this magazine. Mail your Good Samaritan Fund contribution to Charles Brown, NSA Treasurer, 2723 Wilderness Ct., Wichita, KS 67226-2526.

Kenneth R. Wicks (Cave Junction '56)

Former Juneau, Alaska, resident Kenneth R. Wicks died October 28, 2009, at the Queens Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. He moved to Hoonah, Alaska, in 1972 where he taught until 1984. After retiring he owned and operated Beartrack Charters in Juneau. Kenneth later moved to Ocean View, Hawaii.

William E. "Bill" Selby (North Cascades '61)

Bill died October 29, 2009, in Gresham, Oregon. He graduated from Utah State University with a degree in Range Management and began a 40-year career with the government. After working on the Okanogan National Forest, Malheur National Forest and Fremont National Forest, he retired in 1998 from the R-6 Regional Office in Portland, Oregon. Bill continued contracting with the Forest Service as a member of an Interagency Incident Management Team responding to fires.

Earl E. Cooley (Missoula '40)

Earl, 98, died November 9, 2009, at his home in Missoula. He graduated from Corvallis (Montana) High School in 1930 and started Forestry School at the University of Montana in 1937, graduating in 1941. Earl was a member of the first smokejumper group trained in 1940. On July 12, 1940, he and **Rufus Robinson** made the first fire jumps in U.S. history on the Martin Creek Fire on the Nez Perce National Forest.

Earl started work as a District Ranger on the Nez Perce N.F. in 1950 and returned to Missoula as Smokejumper Base Superintendent in 1958. In 1971 he became a Regional Equipment Specialist, retiring in 1975 to pursue a career in Real Estate.

Earl was founder and past president of the National Smokejumper Association.

D. Ellis Roberts (Missoula '43)

D. Ellis Roberts, 90, a physicist at the National Institute of Standards and Technology whose work in material testing helped develop the windows used on the space shuttle, died of kidney failure October 19,

2009, at a nursing home in Newark, Del. He was a member of the CPS-103 jumpers and jumped all three years the program existed. Ellis graduated from Oregon State University in 1951 with a degree in physics. He joined the NIST in 1953 and retired in 1997.

Lewis T. Thoman (Missoula '50)

Lewis, also known as "Bunk," died November 7, 2009. He was from Alabama and attended Auburn University and served in the U.S. Navy. Bunk lived in Missoula for many years and considered the Northwest as his home. He jumped four seasons at Missoula.

Tom Marshall (Missoula '49)

Tom of Madison Heights, Va., died August 2, 2009, in Lynchburg, Va., due to complications from Alzheimer's disease and other health problems. He was 82. Tom earned a bachelor's degree in botany from Louisiana State University and served in the U.S. Navy. Tom became a smokejumper as a college student in 1949, working just his rookie season. After graduating from LSU, Tom became a forester, working for major paper-producing companies in Louisiana, Alabama and North Carolina, retiring in 1991.

Gerhart Blain (Pilot)

Gerhart died January 14, 2009, at his home near Billings, Montana. He was one of the pioneer helicopter operators in the area and worked for the Johnson Flying Service in the early 50s.

Jerry Sullivan (North Cascades '49)

Jerry died December 6, 2009. He served in the Army Airborne from 1950 to 1953 and was in the Korean War. Jerry then went to work for the USFS on the Okanogan N.F., retiring in 1982. Jerry's father was involved in the 1939 experimental program making parachute harnesses and improving the jump suits.

Edmund Ladendorff (Missoula '46)

Ed, 84, of San Antonio, Texas, died December 1, 2009. During WWII Ed flew 29 missions in B-17s

over Europe. After the war he received his business degree from the University of Oregon and later his M.B.A. from Harvard Business School. Ed retired in 1990 from Thomas J. Lipton where he was vice president in charge of the Beverage Division. He jumped at Missoula 1946-49 and was a member of the NSA.

Donald O. Whitmarsh (Missoula '42)

Don died December 2, 2009, in Edmonds, Washington. He rookied in 1942 and was drafted into the Army during WWII in October of that year. Don was stationed in the Aleutians until his discharge at the end of the war at which time he returned to smokejumping for the 1946-48 seasons. He was injured while working as a faller in Montana and moved to Washington where he worked on his parent's farm and various family businesses.

Richard "Dick" Gassner (Redmond '68)

Dick died December 11, 2009, in Bend, Oregon. He began his work with the USFS as a member of the Redmond Hotshots in 1961 and jumped at RAC 1968-70. Dick retired in 1994 as the Fire Management Officer for the Six Rivers National Forest.

George H. Dwight (Missoula '50)

George, 81, died February 27, 2009, in New York. He graduated from Harvard and then Columbia Law School in 1952, where he was the articles editor of the Law Review. As a young lawyer, George was Special Assistant Corporation Counsel under Mayor Robert Wagner. On the boards of the United Neighborhood Houses of New York, he most recently crusaded to prevent the Washburn Wire Factory site from becoming a mall and to create Vision Harlem, a plan to highlight Harlem's landmarks, re-link its neighborhoods and connect the entire community to the rest of the City. He was a partner at the firm of Richards & O'neil and, most recently, of counsel at McLaughlin & Stern. George jumped at Missoula in 1950 and '51.

Shane A. Ewing (Missoula '04)

Shane died December 22, 2009, in Missoula. He attended high school in St. Labre and Colstrip (Montana) where he was all-state for three years in basketball. Shane continued his education at St. Mary's (ND), Miles Community College (MT) and received his AA degree from Chief Dull Knife College in Lame Deer, Montana in 1998. He started work with the forest service out of high school at Lame Deer and went on to spend five seasons with the Santa Fe

Hotshots. Shane rookied at Missoula in 2004 and had been jumping there since then.

Doy A. Herred (Missoula '46)

Doy died August 27, 2009, in Blaine, Washington. He was retired from the U.S. Border Patrol and jumped at Missoula during the 1946 and '47 seasons.

David B. Griggs (Missoula '67)

David, who lived in Reno, Nevada, died December 25, 2009, from a head injury due to a fall. He was an outstanding athlete at Davis (CA) High School where he participated in track, wrestling and football. David graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in forestry. He then served three years in the Peace Corps before returning to Idaho to work on his master's degree. He started his career with the BLM in 1976 in Idaho, became an Area Manager out of Winnemucca, Nevada, and moved to Reno in the 80s where he worked for the BLM until his retirement in 2009. David jumped at Missoula during the 1967 and 1973 seasons.

Timothy D. Taylor (Missoula '60)

Tim, of Eustis, Florida, died October 3, 2009, of cancer. He served in the U.S. Army and attended UTEP and graduated from the University of Washington. Tim worked as a military contractor for the Dept. of Defense in the U.S., Japan and Germany before retiring in 2004. He jumped at Missoula in 1960-61.

James "Jay" Bertino (Missoula '58)

Jay died January 9, 2010, in Billings, Montana. He came to Montana after high school and a year at Oklahoma State University to work in forestry. Jay graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in forestry and started ranching. He jumped at Missoula during the 1958 season and was an NSA member.

Charles B. "Chuck" Sigler (Missoula '53)

Chuck, 78, died January 11, 2010, at his home in Columbia Falls, Montana, from Sarcoma Cancer. He graduated from Oklahoma A & M with a degree in forestry and jumped at Missoula during the 1953 season before entering the U.S. Army and becoming a helicopter pilot. Upon his discharge in 1957 he received an appointment as forester in the St. Joe National Forest in Idaho. Chuck later flew as a commercial helicopter pilot before starting his career with the National Park Service. He was Chief Ranger at Glacier National Park when he retired in 1995. 🙏

Shane Ewing

by Kurt Rohrbach (Missoula '03)

Shane (MSO-04) was recently struck and killed by a car in Missoula, Montana. This unfortunate accident has dealt the smokejumper world a tremendous blow as he was a fine jumper and a great human being. As his friend and fellow jumper, I remember Shane always with a big smile on his face and a joke up his sleeve. He was tough as nails, always grabbing the chainsaw first and going full tilt. I became accustomed to seeing him up ahead of me on tough hikes. Iron lungs and strong legs were one of his many fine qualities.

Shane was an Eastern Montana boy, growing up in Lame Deer. Every summer he would fight and claw his way through the list to get to Miles City (MSO sub-base) in Eastern

Montana. Once in Miles, Shane would stay there till the end of the season. Shane was at his best in Eastern Montana, knowing the locals and the lay of the land. He was always looking for the next good hunting spot, and most recently had his sights set on "The Muddy Creek Monster," as he called it.

In memory of Shane, the Missoula Smokejumper Welfare Fund has set up a scholarship fund for the children of deceased smokejumpers. Shane had one daughter, Shaye Ewing. We would appreciate any donations that could be made. Please send the contributions to: Missoula Smokejumper Welfare Fund, 5765 West Broadway, Missoula MT 59808

Shane, we miss you bro. 🍄



Shane Ewing (Courtesy Kurt Rohrbach)

Pioneer Smokejumper Glenn Harrison "Smitty" Smith 1914-1988

by Ben Smith (Missoula '64)

In order to fill in our historical "blanks" about the four professional parachutists who came north from Los Angeles to Winthrop in 1939, I asked Ben "Snuffy" Smith (MSO-64) to give us some memories about his Dad. (Ed.)

Dad was born in Weirton, West "by God" Virginia (as he would say). Early in his life, his father moved the family to Southern California, where his father worked in the oil fields.

Dad attended and graduated from Gardena High School in the Los Angeles area. He lost his left eye in a basketball accident while in high school. I never thought much about it as a kid, but later in life I admired him for

doing the dangerous things that he did, (barnstorming, smokejumping, CIA) without being overly protective of his only good eye.

Sometime after high school he learned to parachute and would perform at county fairs, etc. When I asked him about this time period, he told me he would do things like a wing walk, pretend like he fell off and then open his chute. These were the "barnstorming" days!

According to history, he worked for Frank Derry at the Derry Parachute Company in Inglewood, California, about ten miles from Gardena. In 1939 the Eagle Parachute Company obtained the contract to conduct parachute tests in Winthrop, Washington, to determine

the feasibility of the idea to drop firefighters by parachute. Dad told me once that he made the first timber jump during the tests and that there was a plaque on the tree where he landed. I would like to see that some day if it is still there.

On August 10, 1940, **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40) and dad made the first fire jump in Region 6.

Dad, as did most of the original smokejumpers, left in 1942 to serve in the war effort. Dad once told me that he wanted to be a submariner but couldn't because of the loss of one eye. I believe he served as a civilian instructor for parachute rigging during the war. I know he spent time in Chandler, Arizona, and San Diego, California. I was born in San Diego in 1944.

As far as I can tell, it was back to the smokejumpers in 1944. Some of my early memories include airplanes, lofts, the sounds of the inertial starter for the Trimotor being cranked, and poker night at the house with all his great smokejumper buddies. I was allowed to listen in to the "silk stories" as long as I was quiet and delivered beer as needed! I can remember many special days at the loft at Hale Field. I have been told that I was allowed to run up and down the packing tables, but no one else was allowed to even sit on the tables.

Sometime in the 50s, the CIA recruited dad, and we spent many years living in such exciting places as Japan, Okinawa, Washington D.C., Texas and Arizona. (*According to other Agency Smokejumpers Smitty worked in the Agency loft in Okinawa and was loft foreman at Marana, Arizona*). Ed.

One of the things that most fascinated me about dad was his skill with a sewing machine and his ability to design and create anything out of fabric. He was a wizard. I still have many of the things he made for me: including a knife sheath, a backpack, and a wooden fabric-covered file case. They all work as well as they did 30 years ago. I am sure he had much to do with the early design and manufacture of the jump suit and all the gear the early jumpers used.

Dad died of natural causes in Tucson, Arizona, March 28, 1988. 🕊

Ben "Snuffy" Smith jumped at Missoula 1964-66 and graduated from Montana State University in 1966, where he was in ROTC. He then went to pilot school at Reese Air Force Base, Texas. He flew F-100s in his first tour of Vietnam in 1968-69 and F-4s in his second tour in 1970-71. Ben retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1987 and then spent 19 years as a financial consultant for Merrill Lynch. He now spends summers in Philipsburg, Montana, and winters in Camden, South Carolina. He is an NSA life member.

Smitty's second son, Michael Ray Smith, was born in Missoula in 1948. He rookied at Missoula in 1969 and jumped that season before heading to California, where he did stints on helitack, law enforcement and was an aviation advisor for a fire team. He also became a pilot and was killed June 21, 1995, when the USFS lead plane that he was piloting collided with a DC-4 retardant plane approaching the airport at Ramona, California.



1940 Region-6 Smokejumper Crew. L-R: Francis Lufkin, George Honey, Glenn Smith, Virgil Derry. (NSA Files)



Glenn Smith (L)



Glenn Smith



Pioneer Smokejumper Glenn Smith

*Photo's Courtesy: A Pictorial History of Smokejumping
Phil Stanley, David Goodwin & Glenn Smith*



Glenn Smith (C)



Glenn Smith (R)



Tri-motor Loaded for Fire Jump 1945



Glenn Smith (L)

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)



Touching All Bases



Alaska Base Report

by Mike McMillan (FBX-96)

A wildfire season was celebrated during the Alaska Smokejumpers 50th Anniversary in 2009. We also hosted a three-day open house party in June for hundreds of jumpers, their families and friends.

2.95 million acres burned across the state last year, and the fire season had three endings before it was over. One hundred twenty boosting smokejumpers flooded the Alaska Base from June into August, stuffing AFS' megabarracks to capacity. For extra accommodations, we set up a paracargo canopy in our units plot – ideal shelter from the rain brought by eager boosters.

In April, refresher training and classes kept the crew employed. In May we trained twelve New-Man Ram-Air smokejumpers from the USFS. Also in May, the city of Homer invited 20 or so Alaska Jumpers to an urban interface wildfire that burned a few structures. The rest were saved through heroic effort.

June brought light fire activity, rain, and a great party. It was inspiring to see so many retired jumpers make the trip - we had fun and it looked like they did too.

By July 4th it was "Showtime." We celebrated America's 233rd birthday under soaring temperatures, plunging humidity and, best of all, lightning. Soon there were fires of all shapes and sizes gnawing at Alaska's Interior and fringes. Sub-bases were set up in Bettles, Fort Yukon, Galena, Kenai, McGrath and Palmer.

The Rock Slough Fire along the Porcupine River provided just about any assignment a jumper could want, from Zodiac boat operator to bear guard. Team-managed incidents were common when defending life and property from unruly wildfires. The largest of all was the Railbelt Complex, which burned 636,000 acres around sleepy Nenana. Evergreen's 747 'Super-tanker' dropped 20,000 gallons at the Railbelt, the ship's first operational drop in the U.S. Order one today.



Our season by numbers: We jumped 122 different fires in Alaska (four in the lower 48). We sent 791 smokejumpers out the door on fire jumps in Alaska (six in the lower 48). The next best jump seasons (stat-wise) were enjoyed in 2004 and 2005 with 730 and 729 total jumpers out the door, respectively. The Alaska Crew spent 2,951 days on fire assignments in 2009, an average of 39 days for each of Alaska's 76 jumpers.

It was a record-setting summer for our paracargo section.

508,785 lbs. were kicked from our CASA 212s and speedy Doorknob. It was the most PC dropped in the CASA era, and the most tonnage dropped since 1988. Project fires in the Yukon

and Tanana Zones accounted for most of PC's bulk missions.

Our Zodiac Boat Program gained steam in 2009 with several operational uses and improvements.

We won't be training rookie candidates in 2010, our third season without new jumpers. So we're more experienced than ever.

In wedding news, **Ben Dobrovolny** (FBX-04) married Summer last fall, really.

As of January, we will be missing just one jumper in 2010. Not returning is **Travis Hart** (FBX-06), now a Boise Smokejumper. Travis is also the proud new father of son Jaxon, a lively one.

For a photographic look at another great wildfire season in Alaska, visit www.spotfireimages.com.

Boise Base Report

by Quincy Chung (NIFC-03)

Hello, from the Boise Smokejumpers to all past and present jumpers. We had three planes staffing the Great Basin and Rocky Mountain states, and we're still supporting our sister base to the north in 2009. Boise jumpers were in Alaska, starting the last week in May, and jumped fires until the last jumpers came home in late August.

We also had some new personnel changes in Boise. **Hector Madrid** (MYC-89) has returned to take over

as the new Boise Base Manager, while **Eric Reynolds** (NIFC-90) has gone in search of the perfect catch on some pristine river in the country. **Mike Haydon** (RAC-97) has become the new training manager at the base, and **Derrick Hartman** (RDD-98) has taken over as the new assistant training manager, while **Jared Hohn** (NIFC-01) and **Paul Lenmark** (FBX-96) have become the two newest spotters at the base. **Steve Stroud** (NIFC-03) recently accepted the rigging supervisor position and will be the successor to **Mike Burin** (MYC-88), who retired in September.

Jumping to the near past and current situation, the summer of 2009 was the slowest jump season in the last decade. The Boise jump base had a total of 77 active jumpers with three planes in the fleet. The Boise Smokejumpers accounted for 460 individual jumps or pounders throughout the season, with Colorado being the most consistent place to be (not including the activity in Alaska). The New-Man Ram-Air program continued with the Region 1 Smokejumpers and plans to further develop and expand in the 2010 season.

The Boise base plans to have an 81-person head count which will include a 4-6 person 2010 rookie class. As for planes, we are currently filtering through contracts and will have three planes in the fleet with **John Stright** (MYC-83) as our permanent pilot.

We have had a few good smokejumpers move along into new positions this winter. Their work ethic and leadership will truly be missed, but some district, forest, or zone will benefit greatly from our loss. Until the next report, enjoy and we will update you later.

Grangeville Base Report

by **Nate Hesse** (RDD-01)

A Happy New Year to all readers from the Grangeville Smokejumpers. This winter has little to report, though it has treated most folks kindly. Operations has sent the usual contingent of southeast burners this fall and winter, as well as **Jodie Baxter** (GAC-07), to the Schenk Job Corps crew in the southeast. Jodie accepted a squadleader job here this year and also purchased a house here in Grangeville.

Grangeville has a vacant squadleader and permanent GS-6 open, so get your apps beefed up. Burn modules will also be heading to Arizona this spring too. Looks like Grangeville will host rookie training for the region here this upcoming season. Grangeville had a successful experience for the new recruits and is looking forward to the upcoming training. Training is also taking care of the folks here this winter getting all the usual fire schooling done over at the Northern

Rockies training center.

The loft is busily running around building jump suits and articles for the neighboring districts. Other tentative plans for the upcoming season are re-treading our ATGS **Tom Bates** (GAC-95) and Coville N.F.'s **Will Markwardt** (GAC-07) again for another season.

Crumb snatcher update: **Isaac Karuzas** (RDD-01) and Erica had daughter Cora Lee Aluk Karuzas, born on June 24th at 7 lbs., 1 oz. Isaac is working on a patent to make a hunter-friendly snuggly and earplugs for babies. Nate Hesse and Elena welcomed Lucas Daniel on Sept. 23rd at 8lbs., 1 oz. Other news reports are coming in of an awesome steelhead run combined with a little bit of chucker hunting, too. Winter stories of GAC jumpers off-season traveling, hunting, and skiing endeavors continue to trickle in with the surf being up, freezers getting full, and super light powder turns.

McCall Base Report

by **Chris Niccoli** (MYC-98)

McCall Smokejumpers, like the rest of the fire world, had a season that was well below the 10-year average with May, June and August well above normal precipitation (118%, 205% and 137% respectively).

The base saw 63 jumpers, nine of them being NEDS, complete training. 2009 MYC NEDS: **Lane Lamoreaux, Jared Hendee, Tim, Garity, Clay Yazzie, Phil Reid, Adam Humbach, Matt Ingram, Kellen Smick, Peter Dutchick.**

Alaska seemed to be where the majority of the McCall jumpers spent their time, but the first fire jump out of McCall was on July 18 out of Battle Mountain, Nevada, and the last on September 28 on the Caribou/Targhee demobing through West Yellowstone in the snow.

The McCall jumpers nationwide made a total of 256 jumps on 61 incidents, which represents an activity level of approximately 50% of the 10-year average for the McCall Base.

In-house the loft and assistant loft positions were filled by **Brett Bittenbender** (MYC-98) detailing in as the Foreman and **Todd Franzen** (MYC-98) as the assistant. **Jason Class** (MYC-04), **Matt Galyardt** (MYC-02) and **Todd Haynes** (MYC-02) became new spotters and **Ryan Myers** (MYC-02) detailed in as a spotter for 2009. The squadleader positions were filled by Ryan Myers, **Jon Patton** (MYC-05), **Jeremy Cowie** (MYC-06) and **Derek Hoban** (MYC-02). Picking up permanent Smokejumper positions were **Wes Gregory** (MYC-04), **Keith Suemnick** (MYC-07), **Kurtis Ryan**



L-R: USFS Employee Harry Tuttle, Harry's Wife, Dick Tuttle 1939 Experimental Jump. (Vern Gray Collection)

(MYC-08), **Marcus Swan** (MYC-08), **Bennett Childs** (MYC-07) and **JT Belton** (MYC-04).

Locally, we provided tours to over 3300 visitors and participated in smokejumper presentations to the local school district and to the McCall Outdoor School, providing a positive image of the Forest Service to more than 1000 students. Nationally **Robert Charley** (MYC-93) and **Clay Yazzie** (MYC-09) traveled to Washington D.C. to make a smokejumper presenta-

tion to the Raytheon American Indian Network's Native American Heritage month program.

Non-fire related projects kept the McCall jumpers on their toes. Jumpers contributed to numerous projects supporting regional and national goals. Projects included: trail maintenance, Rx fire, tree climbing for cone protection (White Bark Pine), cone harvesting, owl box installation, thinning and piling, road decommissioning, hazard tree removal, Bighorn Sheep

radio collar retrieval, and USDA Asian Longhorn Beetle Eradication Program.

Most notably the McCall Smokejumpers participated in the Payette National Forest's assistance to the Valley County Sheriff's Department with a backcountry rescue jump involving a private aircraft crash at the Monumental Creek Airstrip. Patient assessment, care and transport were coordinated with state EMS and Life Flight. Two individuals injured in the aircraft survived life threatening injuries due to prompt first aid.

Additionally, McCall Smokejumpers were first to respond and assist the McCall EMS in the care and transport of four individuals injured by a lightning strike at the McCall Helibase.

The 2009 jump season in McCall started the same way it ended, having a couple happy-hour beers at Salmon River Brewery "SRB," McCall's newest and finest brew pub owned and operated by former jumper **Matt Ganz** (MYC-01). The pub features some fine food and beverages. **Wild Bill Yensen** (MYC-53) took the time to wood burn a fine pair of jumper wings into the rafters, and **Scott Anderson** (MYC-84) is showing off some of his classic artwork.

Finally, a big thanks to smokejumping's finest pilots for keeping us safe and our office staff for keeping us paid. Looking forward to 2010, McCall will see a few changes as Operations Foreman **Eric Brundige** (MYC-77) will be sweet 57 and get his walking papers in May 2010. Eric will end his 33-year jumping career with an impressive 587 jumps, unless he decides to gut one more PT test and pick up a few more. We'll see!

Missoula Base Report

by **Court Wallace** (GAC-04)

Two thousand nine was a fairly slow season for Region 1 thanks to August rains. During August some parts of Region 1 received up to 2.5 to 4 inches of rain...and that was just during a 24-hour period. Overall 27 fires were jumped out of Missoula (up from 17 fires in 2008, but only 60% of the 10-year average) and Missoula jumpers jumped on 62 other fires nation wide. Despite the efforts of the "system" holding onto Region 1 jumpers to fight "potential fires," otherwise known as "fires we don't have," Missoula jumpers managed to salvage a slow season doing fuels treatments and project work, getting out on 11 separate boosts, and filling various single resource assignments.

Once again **Sarah Doehring** (MSO-91) led the charge to Silver City, with 19 other jumpers from Missoula, West Yellowstone, Grangeville, McCall,

Boise, and Fairbanks each getting a piece of the action. Thanks to the Diamond Fire, the Gila Smokejumpers were able to stay somewhat busy and out of trouble, completing a total of 235 shift days worked among all assigned personnel. In total they were able to jump five fires out of Silver (the Diamond Fire twice).

For the second year Missoula sent jumpers to Alaska to train on the BLM Ram-Air system. **Dan** "Bad Monkey, Bad Monkey" **Helterline** (GAC-89), **Tim Wallace** (MSO-06), **James** "Spartacus" **Gray** (MSO-00), **Knute** "I love Jameson" **Olsen** (MSO-00), **Audrey Banfill** (RAC-06), and **Jake Besmer** (MSO-03) successfully completed "New-Man Ram-Air" training and spent the beginning of the Alaska fire season in Alaska. They were sent to Missoula when the Alaska fire season looked like it was "over," spent a couple weeks in the Basin watching Boise BLMers rotate up to Alaska (who's season apparently wasn't over), then were sent back to Missoula, did some sitting around Missoula, and then were sent back to Alaska (for the end of the Alaska fire season...again). They all managed to get a lot of practice jumps and a handful of fire jumps, and at the end of the summer, it was ruled a success! The Forest Service Ram-Air parachute program is going to continue. Training of a 10-person "New-Man Ram-Air" class is scheduled to start in May in Missoula with BLM trainers, along with some FS Ram-Airs, administering the training. A big thanks goes out to the Boise and Alaska bros for their excellent training, their relentless and meticulous critiquing and "beat downs," and steadfast commitment which allows this to happen.

"Hey, Rookie!" This year Grangeville hosted the Region 1 rookie training which commenced in May. Missoula had two rookies, who both endured the wrath of the Grangeville trainers (and the Triangle) as well as Missoula's most feared rookie trainer, **Jessie Thomas/Besmer** (MSO-04). **Kristina Pattison** and **Brandon Sheehan** were good rookies... sometimes, and as you can imagine they were kept busy trying to please the other 71 Missoula jumpers. It looks like for now they both will be returning for more in 2010.

At one point during the summer after receiving our 2nd season-ending rain event, it seemed as if no one in the country would call for a boost. Then on August 14 the call came in, but it was not from anywhere in this country. For the first time since 2004, Region 1 jumpers found themselves north of the border boosting Ft. St. John, British Columbia. After going through the list to figure out who had passports and who didn't, who had a felony or a DUI or some sort of record and who didn't, who was on baby hold and who wasn't, the select number were chosen and spent two weeks heli-

tacking and pounding fires. **Enrique Olivares** (MSO-07), **Jen Martynuik** (MSO-99) and a couple West Yellowstone bros got the only fire jump, and for **Burke Jam** (WYS-04) it was his second jump out of the plane (his first was in 04), but he just hasn't landed on the ground, maybe next time, Burke. Hopefully there will be more of this international cooperation in the future.

Following **Andy Hayes'** (MSO-79) retirement there have been no retirees, however we did lose a couple of jumpers to other circumstances. **Jordan McKnight** (NCSB-04) accepted an AFMO job on the Clifton District, Apache-Sitgreaves NF. **Ryan "Gerber" Weldon** (WYS-05) managed to bribe and cheat his way through Law School and actually passed the Montana Bar Exam. Way to go, Gerber. I am sure you can provide legal advice to many of our jumpers. He will most likely not be returning, even though he will try to convince the federal court judge he is clerking for, that jumping is a necessity. It was looking as if there was going to be zero turn-over among the overhead ranks until...**Mike "Goke" Goicoechea** (MSO-99) landed a job as the Forest AFMO on the Flathead National Forest, another step towards becoming the next director of Fire and Aviation. Speaking of which, our most recent retiree, **George Weldon** (MSO-75), Region 1 Deputy Director of Fire, Aviation and Air, quietly left his office December 31 for the next chapter.

The 2009 season brought several special missions for Missoula Jumpers. On August 19th a call came in for a rescue jump in a remote part of the Idaho Panhandle. Additional EMTs were added to the load in preparation for the worst. With a planeload of jumpers, an airforce rescue helicopter with no radio communications, and **Steve Reed** (MSO-95), what could go wrong? It actually went about as smooth as you could imagine, and the victim made it out safe thanks to professional medical care provided by EMTs and good decision making by those on the ground.

Another special service provided by Missoula and other Region 1 jumpers was the "rapid deployment" Type 3 Incident Management Team. The team was activated twice with good feedback from the Region, except from the Type 2 team ICs and members who apparently were a little upset because they didn't get to go. The Type 3 teams were made up of Region 1 jumpers with assistance from local districts. They proved it is possible to manage a fire without having all the bells and whistles of the larger teams. The Region was very pleased and hopefully in 2010 there will be more action for our Type 3 teams.

In collaboration with the Lolo Hotshots, **Billy Phillips** (MSO-01) and his team of "Google Earthers" continue to impress forest leadership across the

country with their Google Earth skills. The Geospatial Equipment and Technologies Applications (GETA) group traveled all over the US, assisting with national wildland fire priorities, and increased their staffing as validation of concepts has resulted in higher demand for their services. Some of their current projects include: Simulation and Design Delivery, L-580 Leadership in Action Course Development, Development for PMS-490 Fatality Fire Case Study Series, National Common Operation Picture Development, Intelligence Unit Planning and Implementation, Integrating Networking and Mobile Technologies into Field Operations, and Prospect Fire Development for Flame Act Implementation.

A big congratulations "boo-ya" goes out to the half dozen Missoula jumpers who either added to their families this summer or became fathers for the first time. **Josh Clint** (MSO-04) and **Charles Savoia** (MSO-01) added to their families, and **Court Wallace**, **Seth Hansen** (MSO-00) and **Darby Thompson** (RDD-04) became new fathers and are learning the meaning of "no sleep." That brings the count up to nine new babies in the last 2 years... perhaps a daycare is not a bad idea. Either way the rookie class of 2030 is looking promising. Also after dating for nearly a decade, **Jessie Thomas** (MSO-04) and **Jake Besmer** (MSO-03) tied the knot in November.

Until next refresher, the plan is to stay busy working on fuels treatment and project work for Regions 8, 3, 5, and 1, building harnesses, packs, cargo cutes, jump suits, letdown towers, coffee carts, geospatial Google Earth stuff, and getting in shape for the next season, which we can only hope is as good if not better than the last.

Parting thoughts- Off the List in Missoula: **Shane Ewing** (MSO-04), deceased December 22, 2009; **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40), deceased November 9, 2009; **Rich Garcia** (MSO-91), deceased September 25, 2009; **Rich Strohmeyer** (MSO-77), deceased July 23, 2009; **Tim Eldridge** (MSO-82), deceased June 27, 2009; **John "Bup" Murray** (MSO-00), deceased June 25, 2009. Our condolences to family, friends and bros of all other jumpers current and past whom we have lost in 2009.

North Cascades Base Report

by **Nan Floyd** (RAC-00)

It was 70 years ago this past fall that the Methow Valley witnessed the first intrepid, green-blooded

bodies being spit out over her autumn-colored hills in the experimental jumps that laid the foundation for smokejumping American style. The North Cascade Smokejumpers are still going strong.

The pendulum continues to swing, however, and once again current fodder for discussion among the various power players is the fate of the base. Eliminate? Satellite? Status quo? Big Ernie cast his resolute vote in favor of NCSB, bestowing its smokejumpers with a munificent number of fires across the magnificent landscapes of Washington in 2009. The final score: 304 jumps on 64 fires.

Thanks to the numerous boosters representing every Forest Service and BLM base—who visited the lush lawns last summer of the place that time has forgotten. Appreciation is especially extended to the Redmond jumpers, in particular, for making endless trips across state lines even if all they got out of it was a burger at Jack's.

Captain Kevin McBride and co-pilot Jay Franklin once again adroitly maneuvered Jumper 09 in 09, delivering both parachute-clad firefighters and cargo safely. Congratulations also to Jay on achieving his captain's rating.

On July 23rd, 2009, **Dale Longanecker** (RAC-74) hit yet another milestone. Dale made his 350th operational fire jump to find himself digging line on a feisty fire burning through sagebrush and grass in the hills south of Twisp. The event was appropriately celebrated at the proper time. His tally continues to grow. In fact, Dale also walked away as Jump Hog award recipient, 11 fire jumps making the distinction.

Having returned safely from his deployment in the tireless deserts of Afghanistan where he tended those who did not duck in time, **Simon Friedman** (NCSB-00) happily traded in his camouflage-colored fatigues for the fabulous yellow fire shirt.

Charlie McCarthy (NCSB-02) and **Michael Noe** (NCSB-99) were each rewarded for their hard work, dedication and respective contributions to the base with temporary upgrades. Michael has since officially become the assistant loft foreman. **Chris Surgenor**, **Adam Pino**, **Fidel Verduzco**, and **Nick MacKenzie** (NCSB-09) proved themselves worthy, successfully surviving 2009 rookie training. They will have a large pool of new rookie candidates to indoctrinate into janitorial duties in the new decade. NCSB is expecting to hire upwards of eight or more enthusiastic newlings for 2010. **Ashley Reeves** (NCSB-07), **Guy McLean** (NCSB-07) and **Ryan McCliment** (NCSB-07) will all be on the payroll this coming season earning not only an hourly wage, but health and retirement benefits as well.

Matt Desimone (RAC-97) left the flock for a 4-month detail as acting AFMO with North Cascades National Park. Matt assisted the park with his eye-of-the-tiger leadership skills during a transitional period in their fire management and a taxing fire season. On a lovely September weekend, he returned back to the Methow Valley to wed **Heidi Bunkers** (RAC-04). The bride wore an elegant J. Crew pale-pink Sophia gown complimented by a pair of Whites. "I met the man in my boots; I figured I better marry him in them too," reasoned Heidi on her choice of footwear.

Jamie Tackman (NCSB-75) retraced footsteps from days of yore, trading in his winged Ferrari as Lead 69 for the sturdy station wagon of the air. He returned to NCSB to pilot the Sherpa on loan from Redmond for a late season bust that had high potential, but turned out to be puny. Tickled to be back in the fold of life at NCSB, Jamie could be spotted jogging around the runway and effortlessly pumping out more than the minimums. In between ruminating on how his PJ bag represents the apex of simplicity and supplying a hefty amount of pabulum for the lofties, an ever ebullient Jamie still somehow managed to progress on his own "BFD."

At our end-of-the-season party **Andrew Myhra** (NCSB-08) delighted the spectators by throwing his wallet down and challenging the would-be winner of

You Need to Add This Book To Your Collection

The emphasis of this issue of *Smokejumper* is on the beginning of smokejumping. NSA Historian, **Larry Longley** (NCSB-72), has produced an excellent book, "Spittin' In The Wind." This 256-page book has a detailed accounting of the early years of smokejumping and the 1939 Experimental Program along with many excellent photos. For historical purposes every jumper should have this book in their collection for reference purposes. The cost is \$21.50 which includes shipping. Contact: Larry Longley, 16430 Marine Dr., Stanwood, WA 98292, 360-654-1720, ld-longley@gmail.com

Larry is finishing up the final parts of "Book Two" and will have it available soon.

the “4th Annual NCSB Trip Flip.” The bold move paid off, and as a bonus, the destination he pulled from the hat happened to be one he actually wouldn’t mind traveling to. We’ll be expecting his postcard from Valparaiso, Chile, this winter!

The philoprogenitive environment at NCSB continues to thrive. **J.T. Sawyer** (NCSB-07) and wife Lisa welcomed their first child, Luke, to the world in November. **Ryan Taie** (NCSB-00) announced the pregnancy of his longtime girlfriend, Beth, at an impromptu bachelor party put on for him in between fire calls a week before the matrimonial vows in July. Camden Taie greeted the world at the end of December.

After 11 years of landlocked summers, **Sara Mari-neau** (NCSB-99) is giving up NOMEX, the Quonset hut and a job she loves for some things she loves more: surfing and her husband. Sara tried to retire five years ago when she first married Daniel, but she was unable to tear herself away from the camaraderie and satisfaction of smokejumping. In the spirit of government acronyms, Daniel amusingly coined her retirement party the AFT or About F*&@ing Time. Thank you, Daniel, for patiently waiting for Sara to get “it” out of her system. Thank you, Sara, for your years of service with a smile, friendship and inspiration to all around you.

On January 1st, 2010, with over 30 years of smokejumping and fire service experience, Base Manager **John Button** (NCSB-75) turned in his Yale key, retiring from the Forest Service. True to his humble nature, when quizzed about the final number of jumps he made in his career as a smokejumper, John replied: “I’m not quite sure. I think it was somewhere around six hundred.” We hope that in his retirement John will make up for the sacrifices he has made supporting NCSB over the years by enjoying exotic cocktails in warm places. We suspect, though, that in the future we might occasionally hear his voice over the radio as air attack on some gobbler. His skills, knowledge and calm disposition will always be a welcome contribution back on the line.

One last tidbit for the statistic lovers: 1902. That is the number of visitors who registered in the admin shack in 2009. In actuality, the number is probably much higher. A day of uninterrupted PT sessions and lunch were a rarity for the rookies who put out an excellent effort in handling the numerous people flocking to our base for a tour from all parts of the US and world. Penned under the comment column by one impressed tourist (who obviously doesn’t know anything about cold-trailing) was the rhetorical question that speaks for itself: “Who knew smokejumping was cool!”

Redding Base Report

by Dylan Reeves (RDD-2003)

Greetings, dirt bags, from the made-up news desk here in the R double-Dizzle. As it is mid winter, and literally nothing is going on, this report will likely be a mishmash of half truths, name calling, outright fiction, leg pulling, sarcastic semi-humor (often misconstrued as vitriolic fulmination), and a smattering of actual facts, which nobody really cares about. In short, you can expect more of the usual.

What was once just a dream is now a reality, as all of our non-seasonal jumpers are now living the dream on a year round basis. Gone are the dreary days of traveling the world, snowboarding, fishing, surfing, drinking and chasing women, all the while having our roommates sign our unemployment checks. Now the base is filled with dazed, disgruntled jumpers who wander around aimlessly, cursing the injustice of the world and envying the 14 million Americans who have no jobs at all.

We are heading into an El Niño winter in Northern California. Now, I’m no meteorologist, but I believe this is the exact opposite of a La Niña winter and has something to do with the water in one of the oceans being either warmer or colder than usual. This apparently will result in a rainier than normal winter here, which will most likely have an unpredictable effect on the upcoming fire season. As you can imagine, we are all preparing to prepare to expect the unexpected.

Josh Mathiesen (RDD-94), whose body was made to be covered by a wetsuit, recently returned from his honeymoon trip to Tahiti. A day of surfing provided Josh with a far off glimpse of a dolphin fin, or as he phrases it, “the gnarliest near-mauling by the biggest shark you’ve ever seen in your life.” Visibly shaken, Josh recounts his near miss with the “fin,” most likely a buoy, which he swears was coming straight for him with jaws wide open and eyes rolled back.

Luis Gomez (RDD-94) accepted a Cal Fire job as an inmate captain, and his position as GS-9 assistant training manager was filled by **Jerry “Beef” Spence** (RDD-94), who has returned to his old desk and begun flaunting his power and abusing his authority, hurling rotten vegetables at unknowing victims who dare to walk by the training office, all the while smoking cigars and drinking brandy, and claiming that he has to “man the radio” and is therefore unavailable for manual labor.

While manufacturing and production may be at a record low nationwide, the Redding baby factory continues to crank out product. Babies that we know



Marine One on the ramp at West Yellowstone.

about include Annabell Casey, born to Stacy and **John Casey** (RDD-99), and Carver Hokanson, born to Kamie and **Mitch Hokanson** (RDD-00). Shawna and **Doug Powell** (RDD-05) are expecting, as are Laura and **Rick “Jimmy, Sal or Mikey” Rataj** (RDD-00).

Preparations are underway for the National Smokejumper Reunion, celebrating 70 years of smokejumping, to take place in Redding this June. By preparations, of course, I mean that we have ripped up all the old linoleum in the loft and locker room, revealing a beautiful layer of cracked and dirty concrete. The reunion will take place at the Redding Convention Center, and attendance is expected to exceed that of the Consumer Electronics and Monster Truck Show and “An Evening With Sarah Palin” combined.

As another fire season draws near, we must each face our own weaknesses and prepare to be tested. I

was out on a five-mile run the other day, pushing what I thought was a good pace and struggling for breath, when alongside me appeared **Tim Quigley** (RDD-79), a half-smoked Winston dangling from his lower lip. “Keep up cream puff,” Quig growled, as he flicked his cigarette in my face and tripped me. As I picked myself up from the gravel and watched Quig disappear into the horizon, the words of **Josh “I Wet My Wetsuit” Mathiesen** rang in my ears: “You still have a million miles to go....” Of course then I pictured Josh swimming for his life to escape a floating piece of Styrofoam and all at once my fears evaporated...my resolve strengthened. I think it was Sgt. Lincoln Osirus who once said, “I don’t read the script...the script reads me.” So, young smokejumpers, tighten your leg straps, get in the door and get ready to choose your destiny. The world waits.

Redmond Base Report

by Josh Voshall (RDD-03)

Greetings and salutations to all past and present smokejumpers! I hope everyone had a fun and festive holiday season as well as a safe and productive fire season.

This is my first time as base reporter for Redmond and as **Dan Hernandez** (RDD-85) would say, “keg fine.” Our previous reporter, **Jim Hansen** (RDD-87), has flown the coop to pursue a career as South Central Oregon’s Air Attack eye-in-the-sky! Congratulations to Jim on an impressive jump career and air attack position in Klamath Falls.

This past fire season at Redmond saw the addition of three new faces and one old face who jumped ship from other bases or other agencies to join the ranks among the best! Those joining and rejoining us are **Shane Orser** (RDD-08), **Matt Steen** (RDD-07), **Jeff Coburn** (NCSB-08), and **Mike Leslie** (RAC-97). Mike previously rookied in 1997, and then worked for the Nature Conservancy since last year. I guess he

missed us. The base also saw a familiar face roaming around in a pilot uniform. **Charlie Wetzel** (WYS-92) took a season off from jumping to fly us jumpers around in the mighty Sherpa. Charlie was a great asset to the program and also fun to have around, now if we can only keep him! Thanks, you guys, for joining the base and we hope you had a great year!

If you were lucky enough to be one of the 55 boosters that came through Redmond, you may have noticed something quite peculiar around the base and that is that we did not have a rookie class this year. Most of 2008’s rookie class decided it was in their best interest to return to the greatest base and job on Earth! All but two returned for refresher in May. Good job to the class of ’08 in keeping with the tradition of the rookie duties and such. Hopefully, we’ll have a new crop of eager and willing rookies to get those jobs done for you!

Congratulations go out to **Rob Rosetti** (RAC-01) and **Brandon Coville** (RAC-00) on getting their 200th jump pin. Another congratulation goes to **Tony “TL” Loughton** (RDD-83) for jumping number 499. One more to go, TL, and you can move your name on that jump board. Way to go guys!



Air Force One at West Yellowstone

Well, the fire season started pretty early for the base, or at least for three lucky jumpers, **Tony Johnson** (RAC-97), **Gary Atteberry** (RAC-97), and **Mitch Kearns** (GAC-89) who, yes, went to Australia for about 30 days to help out the Aussies. They went out with seven others from around the region to form a "Type-2 crew." We all know what that means, a lot of sunscreen.

Geoff Schultz (RDD-01), **Dave Keller** (RAC-04), and **Heidi Bunkers** (RAC-04) took off to Worcester, Massachusetts, to find the elusive Asian Longhorned Beetle, commonly referred to as the "ALB." I think we have a long way to go on this project as long as APHIS' budget can keep up!

We also kept pretty busy in the Southeast during the spring, assisting with prescribed burning. This was supremely orchestrated by **Mitch "Go Griz" Kearns** (GAC-89). This year looks to be productive as well, as we have numerous modules continuing to go down to Georgia and getting farmed out to whomever needs us.

We had two new Spotter Trainees this year, and I must say they did a great job in getting all of us wide-eyed jumpers out the door and into the spot. They were **Josh Cantrell** (MSO-97) and **Rob Rosetti** (RAC-00).

The Redmond Smokejumpers employed 50 jumpers this past year. I believe everyone had a chance to jump a fire or at least thought about jumping a fire. In all, **Bill Selby** (RAC-91) reported that from May 30th, 2009, through September 27th, 2009, we jumped a total of 57 fires from Redmond. This is approximately 83% of our ten-year average. If you knew this, you were at the base manager's meeting! We also boosted 13 times as well. Our big winner was NCSB with a total of, hold on to your hats, seven times! That might be a record. We also boosted Redding three times, two boosts to Grangeville and one to Alaska. On the boost to Alaska, **Nate "The Ghost" Robinson** (RAC-08) seemed to elude the big demobs back to the lower 48 by staying up there for 45 days on miscellaneous single resource assignments. To those bases that had us there, thanks for the hospitality.

The Redmond Smokejumpers provided two detailers this year in various positions. Heidi Bunkers went to North Cascades National Park as a Fuels Specialist. Remember the Pyramid Fire, Heidi! And **Howard "Silver Fox" McGuire** (RAC-07) detailed as an AFMO on the Ochoco National Forest. Way to represent, you two!

Congratulations also go out to Heidi Bunkers and **Matt Desimone** (RAC-97) as well. After years of driving long hours and many miles, they tied the knot in

Winthrop! Congratulations from all of us at the base.

This year will see some changes around the base. You might notice them as you saunter in for an ice cream or two, or three. That's right, **Ryan "Kuato" McCliment** (NCSB-07). I saw you! **Michael Jackson** (RAC-86), operations foreman, will be retiring this year and will probably be a snorkeling instructor in the Caribbean or some tropical island! So whoever wants Mike's job, AVUE is standing by. On a side note, Mike is the only Redmond Smokejumper to fully retire because of the age requirements as an active smokejumper in the history of the base. We are also looking to have a rookie class of six this year. Whether or not we will actually have six at the end of rookie training is essentially up to those candidates. One thing that won't change at the base is the amount of wholesome goodness you'll find in our ice cream freezer, provided by the welfare fund and stocked by **Tony Sleznick** (RDD-92) and **Tye Taber** (WYS-06). Both Tony and Tye have also been instrumental in keeping our apparel line in the welfare fund up to date with the latest fashions with an array of shirts, hats, and my favorite, the stickers. Nice work, you two.

Well, my fellow jumpers, I must say I have enjoyed telling you of the Redmond base's accomplishments and updates, but, alas, it is time to fire up the ol' grill, grab a cold one, and kick back for awhile to watch some football. So until next time, good jumpin', live the dream, and see you on the big one!

West Yellowstone Base Report

by **Ernie Walker** (RDD-2001)

The snow has finally arrived in West bringing a white winter and only a few folks in the office. Most jumpers are off for the winter with a few rotating on the Region 8 burn modules.

Cindy Champion (MSO-99) has been using the snow and training in biathlon. Both **Hardy Bloemeke** (MSO-77) and **Jon Ueland** (MSO-80) are also hitting the ski trails hard.

Base Manager **Jim Kitchen** (FBX-87) has moved on to take the FMO job in Big Bend N.P. in Texas. We wish Jim the best in his new adventures. Jim tells us, (Silver City), to keep an ear out for a jump request to Big Bend! **Jon Ueland** (MSO-80) has detailed in as base manager until the position is filled. **Charlie Wetzel** (WYS-92) has moved on, also becoming a Forest Service Smokejumper Pilot in Redmond, Oregon. Way to go, Charlie! **Brian Wilson** (WYS-98)

has just moved to a newly-built house in the West Yellowstone area. Congrats Brian!

Congratulations to **Nick Stanzak** (WYS-05) and his new wife, Haylee. They were married this last fall in Twin Falls, Idaho. Nick has recently bought a house in the Bozeman area and has settled in with his bride. **Joe Rock** (WYS-95) and his wife, Chauntelle, have welcomed a new addition to the world, Kale Robert Rock on 12/27/09 at 8 lbs 10 oz 21.5 inches. Another future jumper! Talk about a Christmas present!

Kyle Dornberger (RDD-01) has designed and supervised a new Kiosk out front at the base. Check it out when you boost.

Cole Parker (WYS-92) worked with the Marines and the Secret Service to provide a safe visit by President Obama in August. The Department of Homeland Security parked their Black Hawk on the jumper ramp

with Marine One. The West Jumpers got to visit Air Force One and talk with the president's security force. The President and family went on to visit Yellowstone National Park.

Burk Jam (WYS-04), Jim Kitchen, **Robert Smith** (MSO-06) and Ernie Walker all traveled to British Columbia to jump and boost the Canadian Para Attack in August. Burke and Smith both jumped a fire in the North. There were big fire complexes near Whistler, and the jumpers combined with the Canadian jumpers to work on the fires. The Region One Smokejumpers look forward to having the Canadians come down to the states to help in the future. We look forward to the continuing relations between US/Canada.

West is hoping for at least three Rookie Detailers this year. West is also looking to the future with the training of four more New-Man Ram-Airs. 🇺🇸

NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION

SMOKEJUMPER REUNION

CELEBRATING

70 Years of Smokejumping 1940–2010



Friday, June 11–Sunday, June 13, 2010
At the Redding Convention Center
777 Auditorium Drive, Redding, Calif.



Our milestone celebration is just weeks away. Make plans to join us for the barbecue, banquet, buffet, hosted beverages, special events, storytelling, and fun for all. A registration packet with details has been mailed to you.

All current and former smokejumpers, pilots, associates, wildland firefighters, contractors, spouses and guests are invited! We look forward to seeing you.

While visiting Redding be sure to stroll across the world-renown Sundial Bridge spanning the Sacramento River near downtown Turtle Bay Museum, tour the Redding Smokejumper Base, golf with us on Saturday, or join our fun run and walk Saturday at Lake Redding Park. Historic Siskiyou Smokejumper Base is two hours away near Cave Junction, Oregon.